

*BOOK REVIEW ARTICLE***Truman and the Hiroshima Cult**

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Hiroshima in Historical Context

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Even though the crest of the recent flood of discussion marking the fiftieth anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki has passed, the argument over the bombing can be expected to continue indefinitely. In the context of this debate, it remains valuable to discuss the issues raised by one of the leading books on that subject that appeared during the anniversary year of 1995.

We will then broaden our discussion to include two important aspects of historical context suggested by the book. One of these relates to the twentieth century's degeneration into "total war," as discussed by Frederick J. P. Veale in his *Advance to Barbarism: The Development of Total Warfare from Sarajevo to Hiroshima*.¹ The atomic bombing of cities marked the culmination of a process by which civilization had become increasingly removed from the "Rules of Civilized Warfare" that developed in Europe in the seventeenth century. So vast had become the attacks on civilian populations by the end of World War II that the fate of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was, despite the spectacular nature of devastation wrought by single bombs, in fact no worse than that suffered by Tokyo, Dresden, Hamburg, Cologne and other cities subjected to massed air attack. It isn't fully appropriate for the world to discuss Hiroshima and

¹ Frederick J. P. Veale, *Advance to Barbarism: The Development of Total Warfare from Sarajevo to Hiroshima* (New York: Devin Adair, 1968); first published in London in 1948.

Nagasaki without seeing them in that context.

The second aspect suggested by Newman's book – one which calls for attention because it has been so greatly neglected – is the geo-political-ideological context of the decision to use nuclear weapons. As we will see, Newman's defense of Truman's decision is written – and this will be surprising to many, especially among American conservatives – from a perspective of what would today be called "the Old Left." Newman's discussion accordingly raises long-dormant issues relating to what the United States' strategy in Asia ought to have been as the war with Japan reached its conclusion. There were those who at the time proposed a very different strategy than that favored by pro-Mao "China expert" Owen Lattimore and adopted by President Harry S. Truman. These were people who believed that the future protection of Asia from Communism must be part of American strategy as to how the United States was to conclude the war. There can be little doubt but that the history of the postwar era would have been vastly different if their advice had been followed.

This second aspect has several dimensions. First, in Europe as well as in Asia the United States fought World War II without attempting to minimize the position occupied by Stalin at the end of the war – and even went out of its way to increase that position. With this in mind, the decisions in Asia take their place as part of a much larger question of geo-politics *vis-a-vis* the Soviet Union.

Second, the United States' actions on this larger issue were to a major extent the product of ideological skewing. Stalin had long-since shown himself a colossal butcher, but American "idealism," blinded by factors that included the overbearing influence of the leftist intellectual culture's pro-Soviet ideology, was unable to see that. American strategy would have been far different if it had done so.

Third, the immediately preceding point leads to the more general observation that much of the history of international affairs in the twentieth century has been the product of ideological skewing, not simply with regard to the United States' perception of Communism but as to several issues of major importance. Here, as before, a more complete understanding requires the broadest possible context.

Subject to the reservations that will be expressed, Robert Newman's *Truman and the Hiroshima Cult* is a welcome addition to

a literature that contains, as it is bound to, both bitter argument and deep reflection. Newman provides a summary of the debate about the use of the bombs, recounting the arguments made by the critics of the bombing and supplying with both cogency and passion a rebuttal to each. However, his analysis isn't neutral.

Most Americans have strongly supported the United States' use of the bombs. A friend of the reviewer's who fought in the tank corps entering Germany thanks their use for having saved him from transfer to the Far East to take part in the invasion of Japan, where he believes he would probably have been killed. (Admiral Leahy argued that an invasion was unnecessary because the blockade had already effectively defeated Japan;² but an invasion was planned nevertheless.) But for those who have shared this perspective, especially American conservatives, there is a surprise in store about Newman's book. He agrees with them on the specific issue of whether the bombs should have been dropped, but is otherwise quite contemptuous of them and of what he supposes to be their reasons for supporting President Truman's decision. He speaks of "right-wing Japanophobes motivated primarily by racism." (He defends Truman from the charge of racism, but he is quite ready to put it onto American conservatives, reflecting the leftist bias that is ready to see sordid motivations in literally everything that the former do or think.) Looking back to the end of World War II, he lumps highly respected Sen. Richard Russell, Rep. Roy O. Woodruff, and the *Chicago Tribune* into this category.³ This explains, parenthetically, why he expresses agreement with Japan's original anti-"western colonialism" objective; Newman is not really pro-western.

The fact is that Newman is a person of the Left, and that his book represents a split within the Left over Hiroshima. There are many on the Left who delight in "blaming America" at every opportunity, and accordingly join enthusiastically in the denunciations of Hiroshima. Newman, on the other hand, is an admirer and biographer of Owen Lattimore, the "expert on China" who among intellectu-

² Sumner Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), pp. 156-57; Hanson W. Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), p. 82.

³ Newman, *Cult*, p. 64.

als was perhaps most responsible for the Roosevelt-Truman policies that undercut Chiang Kai-shek and led to the subjugation of China to the butcheries of the Communist regime that holds power to this day. Newman is author of *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China*.⁴ In that book, Newman tells how Lattimore was concerned that the Truman administration might follow the advice of a group that Lattimore and Newman join in labelling "the Japanophiles." It was a group which felt that a defeated Japan might remain a bulwark against the spread of Communism in Asia.⁵ In an article in the September 1995 issue of *Commentary*, Donald Kagan quotes Gerhard Weinberg to the effect that "'the articulate organizations of the American Left' [in 1945] resisted any concessions and 'urged the dropping of additional bombs instead.'" Lattimore and Newman can best be understood as part of that orientation. Ironically, it places Newman today in independent and somewhat courageous opposition to "politically correct" verities, which condemn the bombings.

What we have seen about the 1945 Left's position is worth pondering. Lattimore welcomed Stalin's entry into the war and resulting hegemony over Manchuria, which led within four short years to military disaster for Chiang Kai-shek; he opposed American strategists who wanted to maintain enough Japanese presence to prevent a Communist conquest of Asia;⁶ he supported the demand for unconditional surrender, thinking it necessary for a reconstruction of Japanese society; and he welcomed the use of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Newman agrees, and it is in that context that he developed his outlook that supports President Truman's decisions to use the bombs. Thus, he arrives at that support from a diametrically opposite direction than do the conservatives whom he excoriates as "racist" and as "fanatically anti-Communist."⁷

⁴ Robert P. Newman, *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

⁵ Newman, *Lattimore*, p. 138; Newman, *Cult*, p. 65.

⁶ Newman, *Cult*, p. 64.

⁷ Newman, *Cult*, p. 64; Newman, *Lattimore*, p. 135.

Total War

Something that is often overlooked is that the inquiry should treat Hiroshima and Nagasaki as part of a much larger phenomenon: that of total war, conducted unreservedly and without limited objectives against the enemy's civilian population. This is discussed with great profundity in F. J. P. Veale's 1948 book *Advance to Barbarism: The Development of Total Warfare from Sarajevo to Hiroshima*. To see that context, we will need to recall the history Veale recounted.

Before the seventeenth century. Throughout most of history, Veale says, the brutality of warfare has seen few limits. Veale supplies several of what could be endless examples of its ferocity. "In prehistoric warfare all prisoners were killed as a matter of course." He speaks of "the indiscriminate massacring of women and children – even young babies – which was so common among many ancient oriental peoples." The Empire of Assyria, in the fifth through seventh centuries A.D., he says, was "a state which existed mainly by warfare for warfare," revolutionizing methods and utilizing specialists of many kinds. "We find the Assyrians proudly erecting pyramids of skulls"; and it was routine to deport a defeated people *en masse*.⁸

The Byzantine Empire's Basil the Bulgar-Slayer "made it a practice in his campaigns with the Bulgarians to put out the eyes of his prisoners, on one occasion to the number of 15,000." And in the Albigensian Crusade of 1209 "to root out heresy in southern France...a contemporary estimate puts the total number of those who perished at 500,000." It was just a few years later that Genghis Kahn conducted his Mongol campaign across eastern Europe, in which his soldiers sorted out the skilled craftsmen and attractive women from a captured population and beheaded all the rest.⁹

A turning point came with the horrors of the Thirty Years War in seventeenth century Europe in which "it is generally agreed that ... one-third of the population of Central Europe perished," amounting to fifteen million people (an incredible number at any time, but especially so in light of the much smaller population compared to today's). In simply the one massacre at Magdeburg in 1631, "some

⁸ Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 51, 64, 58, 61, 64, 66.

⁹ Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 72, 79.

25,000 people were butchered." Although Veale cites evidence to cast doubt upon the notion that the Thirty Years War was truly a war of religion, he says that the war did give rise to a consensus among Europeans that "the belief of each individual concerning the eternal truths upon which his or her salvation depended should be decided by the predilections or whims of the prince whose subject he or she should happen to be." This involved "the tacit conclusion that, thenceforth, religious differences must never again serve as a reason for civil war."¹⁰

Development of the European "Rules of Civilized Warfare." The consensus just mentioned arose in the middle of the seventeenth century and in 1758 was articulated by the Swiss jurist Emeric de Vattel in his book *The Law of Nations*. War was to be for limited objectives and carried on between armies of professional soldiers. The consensus' elements were to limit hostilities to the uniformed forces of an enemy; not to attack civilians, destroy towns or ravage the countryside; and to respect prisoners. It was, however, all right to kill hostages as reprisal (a principle that continued to be recognized by British and American military regulations during World War II).¹¹

This was by no means a move by the world generally to the concept of limited war. Veale says it was "never practised outside Europe or in countries not under European influence." Britain, as an island nation that depended largely on a projection of power through its navy, did not agree to limit the bombardment of coastal towns. Nor did the Europeans apply the limitations to non-Europeans, as Veale illustrates with some telling examples. In the United States, the Revolutionary War was conducted according to the rules; but no such restraint was shown in either the Civil War or during the three centuries of Indian wars.¹²

The almost two-century span during which this consensus prevailed was history's most successful limitation of warfare, but there have been some limits in other times and places. Both Homer's *Iliad*

¹⁰ Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 72, 73, 82.

¹¹ Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 14, 107, 87, 88, 94, 96.

¹² Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 73, 88, 117, 99, 120, 121-26.

and Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* show some restraint in ancient times, such as the calling of a truce to allow forces to recover the bodies of their dead. Veale says that in fifteenth century Italy there was a brief period during which princes hired mercenaries who fought wars among themselves and were dispersed when the war was over.¹³

The eventual move away from the consensus. Conditions soon began to change dramatically from those that had made the European consensus possible. The Peoples' Wars in Europe that followed the French Revolution involved large armies of conscripted civilians, mass killings and disease, and the propagandistic manipulation of populations with moralistic black-versus-white messages to induce hate for the enemy. Populations grew enormously and nations became industrial giants; advanced weapons and giant armies sprang from that industrial prowess; and the growth of democracy involved the increased power of the press and the need to cast conflict within a superficial moral context, with its attendant poses.¹⁴

World War I, produced by a "pathological wave of hysteria," resulted from these factors. Nevertheless, according to Veale, it was mainly fought within the rules. (There was one major exception: the British blockade of Germany "which was continued for nearly a year after the Armistice and led to the starvation of nearly a million German non-combatants," a fact confirmed by a British White Paper, which estimated 800,000.)¹⁵ If the war had ended with the stalemate of 1917, Europe might have maintained something of the earlier consensus (although the structural changes in modern life that I just mentioned had taken away its basis), as well as have enjoyed a peace that was tolerable to the opposing sides. As it was, American

¹³ See Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 286, where he says that under Hellenic law "it was a rule established everywhere that an invader of another country should keep his hands off the temples that were in that country." At pp. 287 and 353 he tells of the "established custom" for the sides in a conflict to call a truce to "allow them to recover their dead." This is consistent with what we are told in Homer's *Iliad*, where the war with Troy is suspended for eleven days to allow for the burial of Hector.

¹⁴ Veale, *Barbarism*, p. 94.

¹⁵ Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 111-13, 133, 140.

intervention continued the war to November 1918, resulting in the victory of the allies and the imposition of the Treaty of Versailles. That treaty "imposed harsh dictated peace terms upon the vanquished, thereby inevitably arousing in them a determination to reverse its decisions." Adolf Hitler "was the incarnation of this determination," and World War II in Europe is best understood as a continuation of the first war.¹⁶

It was World War II, Veale says, that saw the near-total breakdown of the Rules of Civilized Warfare.¹⁷ The idea of terror bombing was much debated between the wars. In *Ethics and Airpower in World War II*, Stephen Garrett tells how the idea was put forth by "the famous Italian airpower theorist, General Giulio Douhet," who argued that "a complete breakdown of the social structure cannot but take place in a country subjected to ... merciless pounding from the air."¹⁸ The German military theorist Karl von Clausewitz had written that "war is an act of force which theoretically can have no limits."¹⁹ British Air Marshal Hugh Trenchard recommended the construction of long-range bombers for attacks on an enemy civilian population. By the time the war started, Britain was prepared to project airpower in much the same way it had traditionally used seapower to take a war to the enemy, but Germany was not.

From September 3, 1939 to May 11, 1940 in the air war between Germany and Britain, the attacks by both were limited to purely military targets. At the end of this period, however, Britain bombed railway installations in western Germany, and on May 15-16 bombed the Ruhr. These attacks involved a much-broadened definition of "military objectives" that included industrial areas. Four months later, Hitler began bombing British industrial targets, and this led to the German bombing of Coventry on November 14, 1940, a bombing that in the manner it was conducted was essentially

¹⁶ Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 13, 155.

¹⁷ Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 152, 157, 158.

¹⁸ Veale, *Barbarism*, p. 112.

¹⁹ Stephen A. Garrett, *Ethics and Airpower in World War II: The British Bombing of German Cities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 6.

consistent with that sort of target. The British conducted a massed air attack on Mannheim on December 16 that again was consistent with the escalation to targets of this sort.²⁰

Veale tells us that a final major escalation occurred on March 30, 1942 when the British War Cabinet approved the Lindemann plan to focus bombing on "*working-class houses in densely populated residential areas.*" The plan ratified an escalation that the British had already been carrying out for some time.²¹ In addition to the destruction of cities, the British intent was to destroy crops, start forest fires, and kill refugees.²² As the war went on, there was a systematic destruction of German cities, including (but by no means limited to) the following: Lübeck, the first German city to be destroyed, was set on fire on March 28-29, 1942. On May 30, almost 900 planes dropped 1455 tons of bombs, two-thirds of them incendiaries, on Cologne, destroying 600 acres there. The firestorm technique, in which high-explosive bombs and land mines were used to blow off rooftops and were followed by incendiary bombs that created a tornadic storm of heat and flame that sucked in people and even uprooted trees, was used against Hamburg in July and August 1943, resulting in 50,000 dead. Starting in November 1943, 6340 acres of Berlin were destroyed by what was largely indiscriminate bombing, with the air crews rarely able to see the city through the clouds. Dresden was left untouched until the "Schreckensnacht" of February 13, 1945 when the city, filled with refugees from the onrushing Red Army, was bombed by 800 aircraft, producing another gigantic firestorm, with casualties estimated at 250,000 by some authorities.²³

For its part in Europe, the United States limited itself mainly to precision bombing of selected targets until the last year of the war,

²⁰ Garrett, *Ethics and Airpower*, p. 132.

²¹ Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 30, 168-84; for a chronology of the air war, see Garrett, *Ethics and Airpower*, pp. 10-21.

²² Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 184-85, 18-19, 112.

²³ As to crops and forests, see Sir Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961), Vol. IV, pp. 116-17. As to refugees, see Garrett, *Ethics and Airpower*, p. 83.

but then participated in the general area attacks on German cities, including the firestorming of Dresden.²⁴ The bombing of civilian populations continued in the war against Japan (with respect to which it is worth noting that the Japanese had been far from innocent in their treatment of civilian populations). Garrett speaks of "the American fire-bombing of Japanese cities, notably the March 9, 1945 raid on Tokyo (in which 300 B-29s destroyed over 16 square miles of the city), as well as the atomic devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." More than 100,000 people died in the Tokyo firebombing.²⁵

This, then, was the context in which Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed. The use of the atomic bombs would hardly have been thinkable without this prelude of total war and complete devaluation of the lives of the enemy's population. What we have traced has merely been the history of massed bombing, which is most directly pertinent as a prelude to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Conceptual aspects of total war. The underlying factors had their mental, ideological side that reflected the new realities and the power of propaganda and of distorted moralism. Among these were:

- A total blackening of the opponent, who came to be viewed as the distillation of evil. (It would be appropriate to call this "the Darth Vader syndrome." Indeed, the Darth Vader character in the Star Wars series illustrates how deeply rooted this demonizing propensity is.)

- A resulting sense that to lose would be intolerable, so that anything whatsoever, no matter how extreme, must be done to avoid defeat.

- The premise, also, by each side that it must "do unto the enemy whatever it takes to win before the enemy does the same unto you."

- The abandonment of the distinction between "combatant"

²⁴ Veale, *Barbarism*, pp. 62, 175, 185, 187; Garrett, *Ethics and Airpower*, pp. xii, 17, 15; Sir Arthur Harris, *Bomber Offensive* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1947), pp. 112, 174-75, 186-88, 242. See especially Webster and Frankland, *Strategic Air Offensive*, pp. 310-15, for a vivid description and technical analysis (from a scientific meteorological standpoint) of the Hamburg firestorm.

²⁵ Garrett, *Ethics and Airpower*, p. xiii.

and "non-combatant."

● A willingness to accept means, when used against the enemy, that would previously have been beyond consideration.

The post-World War II era. The "mutually assured destruction" entailed by the superpowers' possession of nuclear weapons during the Cold War was perhaps the major cause for World War III's not occurring despite the face-off between the Communist and the non-Communist worlds, and for the reintroduction of "limited wars." Mass slaughter, however, has by no means been abandoned, but has become internalized, occurring within rather than between countries, as we saw under Mao with the Great Leap Forward, in Cambodia under Pol Pot, in Uganda under Idi Amin, in Rwanda on more than one occasion, and in other similar episodes. Clandestine terrorism has become a way to strike brutally without provoking a massive response; and conquest on quite a vast scale can be accomplished imperceptibly (and without anyone's conscious intention) by immigration rather than by armed invasion, as is seen today in the Third World's on-going recasting of Europe and America.

It has become a truism that the human race has developed modes of mass destruction before it is morally prepared to handle them. This dilemma in large measure amounts to the fact that the situation cries out for world government and a world "rule of law" at a point in human development when the cultural and civilizational prerequisites for them are so lacking that there is little reason for confidence in creating a massive centralized power. Given the context reviewed in the preceding paragraph, world government bodes just as likely to be a Leviathan of horror as a deliverer of peace, freedom and good order. Imagine a world government acting out the illusions of ideology and propaganda!

The lessons of the past show that it ill-behooves any people to become so militarily weak *vis-a-vis* a possible opponent (if they can possibly avoid it) that that opponent will feel free to use whatever means it likes. One would prefer to believe that there is a limit to what human beings are willing to do to each other, but it takes no more than a reading of the history just recounted or of the daily paper to show that that is not so.

The Role of Ideological-Intellectual Skewing

The preceding section placed Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the

broader context of total war in which they are best understood. The decision to use the bombs relates, however, to an equally significant dimension that virtually all of the discussion of President Truman's decisions overlooks. It is, as Hanson Baldwin made clear, that the United States fought World War II in Europe and the Pacific without long-term geo-political objectives reflecting a concern about the strengthened condition that Communism, another brutal totalitarian system, might find itself in at the end of the war. (It will become clear later how this relates to the dropping of the bombs.)

Although Baldwin blames this on American naivete and errors of perception,²⁶ it is more accurate to see the lack of concern as due primarily to a monstrous ideological skewing. The United States was profoundly affected by its intellectual culture's 1917-1947 enthusiasm for Soviet Russia's "Communist experiment."²⁷ The result was that Americans chose to fight to the death against the dictatorships of Hitler and Mussolini, seeing them as the epitome of evil, while allying themselves with yet another totalitarian power that had a far bloodier record. Having done so, they persuaded themselves that they were, to borrow a phrase made famous by President Truman, dealing with "good old Joe." So persuaded, they disregarded recommended strategies that would have seen to it that Communism came out of the war with the most minimal position possible.

Looking back to World War I, perhaps the most important factor leading to the United States' eventual participation in World War I was the American public's acceptance of atrocity propaganda, with the result that Germany came to be seen as an outlaw power, indeed an outlaw people. The sordid history of this propaganda was told in 1928 by Arthur Ponsonby, a member of the British parliament, in his book *Falsehood in Wartime*. In a barrage of false reports, German soldiers were said to cut the breasts off of nurses, to cut hands off children and eat them, to impale babies on bayonets and nail them to doors, and to boil down bodies for oil. The Germans also spread false reports, such as of the gouging of eyes, and the French were the most accomplished at manufacturing false photo-

²⁶ Baldwin, *Great Mistakes*, p. 9.

²⁷ See Dwight D. Murphey, *Liberalism in Contemporary America* (McLean, VA: Council for Social & Economic Studies, 1992), pp. 47-48, 60-66.

graphic evidence; but it was the British propaganda that largely reached the American public.²⁸ So effective was this propaganda that the present author's mother, who was a young girl in the United States at the time, often told him in later years of nightmares she had had of German soldiers committing atrocities.

This demonizing of Germany created one of the most fateful preoccupations of the twentieth century, akin to the "Black Legend" that had earlier been for so long laid upon Spain. Thoroughly convinced by this demonization, my parents and grandparents would have been scandalized by the merest suggestion of what I am about to say. The image was of a Germany militaristic far beyond anything seen in other countries, and that threatened the very existence of democracy in the world. (World War I was accordingly declared "a war to make the world safe for democracy.") But it was France, with its Napoleonic tradition, that had by far the greater heritage of militarism; and it was Britain, with colonies throughout the world, that insisted on having a navy that was always equal to the two other largest navies in the world. It is significant that, as Veale tells us, "the Reich, after its foundation in 1871, preserved an unbroken peace with its neighbours until 1914, a period of forty-three years..."²⁹ Indeed, the Kaiser, despite his penchant for military dress, was known as "the prince of peace" because of his services as a mediator between disputing nations.³⁰ So far as the cauldron of illiberal thought was concerned, Julien Benda's famous book *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals* makes it clear that the rampant anti-Enlightenment opinion in the nineteenth century, with its illiberal theories of class and race struggle and the like, was as much, or perhaps more, a product of French as of German thinkers.³¹

The hindsight that is now possible shows that American

²⁸ Veale, *Barbarism*, p. 68.

²⁹ Harry Elmer Barnes, *The Genesis of the World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), pp. 590, 595.

³⁰ Harry Elmer Barnes, *The Genesis of the World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), pp. 590, 595.

³¹ Julien Benda, *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1930), pp. 81, 116, 119.

intervention, resulting from propaganda and skewed ideology, had disastrous results. The warring powers were stalemated in early 1917, and this created, according to Veale, a "golden opportunity to establish a lasting settlement." The slaughter had been so great that "had peace been concluded in 1917, for several generations at least the militarists and armament manufacturers would have striven in vain to banish the memory of such an experience."³² The historian A. J. P. Taylor says "the first World war would obviously have had a different end if it had not been for American intervention; the Allies, to put it bluntly, would not have won."³³

What would have been the consequences if the United States had not come in and the stalemate had continued, producing victory for neither side?

- Almost certainly there would not have been a successful November Revolution in Russia bringing the Bolsheviks to power. The eventual reverberations of this can be traced into eastern Europe, Korea, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Cuba and countless other places throughout the world. Even the United States would have experienced a vastly different twentieth century history without many decades of confrontation with Communist expansionism.

- Germany would not have been caused to burn with the passion that led it into Nazism and from there into World War II. Taylor says that "Germany fought specifically in the second war to reverse the verdict of the first and to destroy the settlement which followed it."³⁴

- World War II and its attendant horrors would not have occurred.

- Europe's decline as the center of world gravity, with all that that entails now and in the future, would either not have occurred or have been greatly slowed.

³² Veale, *Barbarism*, p. 152.

³³ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (Greenwich, CN: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1961), pp. viii, 36.

³⁴ Taylor, *Origins*, p. 23.

Any such enumeration can do no more than hint at the differences, which extend incalculably. It isn't too much to say that American intervention into World War I was one of the single most pivotal events of the century. (This is not the same thing as putting the blame upon the United States for all that followed. While we can say that "*but for* the intervention, the things we have mentioned would not have occurred," the century's horrors had many other causes of a more proximate nature.)

*As the world swept toward World War II:
the double-standard toward totalitarian systems.*

The average American takes pride in seeing himself as "practical and not ideological." It will shock an American, therefore, to be told that ideology and propaganda played a commanding role in the United States' entry into World War I and then in guiding the United States during the two decades between the wars.

A double standard came into being toward the Nazi and Stalinist regimes, with the Nazi seen as pure evil and the Stalinist as neither evil nor dangerous. As a consequence, the United States was willing to go to war to defeat the first while allying itself with the second, something it would hardly have done if it had had a realistic understanding of Soviet Communism. Additionally, the United States fought that war in a way that did not attempt to minimize the position Soviet Communism would command at the end of the war. There would seem to be two major reasons for this double standard. One was that World War I had accustomed the American public to seeing the Germans in the worst possible light, so that the United States was predisposed toward the first half of the standard. The other was that the predominant American intellectual culture, in common with leftist intellectuality in Europe, was deeply infatuated with the "Soviet experiment" until at least 1947. As we look back, we must see it as one of the great intellectual crimes of history that this subculture was willing to ignore, and hence to fail to inform the world about, such things as Stalin's deliberate seizure of all food from the Ukraine and other areas during the winter of 1932-33, resulting in what historian Robert Conquest has estimated as the

death of *some seven to nine million people*; or about the millions in concentration camps (the "gulags" that Solzhenitsyn was able to bring to the world's attention years later), in which Conquest says that eventually *an estimated twelve million people died*.³⁵

Seven to nine *million*!

Twelve *million*!

Not figures on a page, but living, breathing human beings.

The intellectual culture said nothing about these (and still to this day says virtually nothing, erecting no museums and filming no television mini-series), although it did undergo serious shocks from Stalin's purges, which resulted in the execution of many of the old Bolsheviks whom American "liberals" had met on pilgrimages to Soviet Russia in the 1920s and early '30s. We are told the startling fact that of the 1966 delegates to the 17th Communist Party Congress held in January 1934, 1108 were shot in the purges.³⁶

This double standard is built into the conventional understanding today, so that it seems natural for the United States to have fought with the Soviet Union against Germany. But there were some who did not hold to the double standard and for whom such a course did not seem natural. Those whom the world has since the late 1930s excoriated as "appeasers" of Hitler are said by A. J. P. Taylor to have had a fundamentally correct insight: they "feared that the defeat of Germany would be followed by a Russian domination over much of Europe. Later experience," he continues, "suggests that they were right... Only those who wanted Soviet Russia to take the place of Germany are entitled to condemn the 'appeasers.'"³⁷ Stephen Garrett tells us that Liddell

³⁵ Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 710; Report to Congress, Commission on the Ukraine Famine, submitted to Congress on April 12, 1988, p. 63. See also Dwight D. Murphey, "Soviet Communism's Deliberate Murder of Millions," *Conservative Review*, October 1992, pp. 38-44.

³⁶ Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror* (Middlesex, England: Penquin Books, 1968), p. 63.

³⁷ Taylor, *Origins*, pp. 291-92.

Hart "viewed the effective elimination of Germany as a factor in the European power balance as something that would invite Soviet domination of the Continent once the war was ended."³⁸

Perhaps foremost among those who understood this was former American president Herbert Hoover, who spoke out repeatedly. On October 26, 1938 he said, about "an alliance with dictatorial Russia," that "far from standing on the side of Liberty, we should be standing on the side of Communism. And Russia is certainly not a Democratic state."³⁹ On June 29, 1941, a week after Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, Hoover said about the United States' promise of aid to Stalin that collaboration with Russia "makes the whole argument of our joining the war to bring the four freedoms to mankind a gargantuan jest. We should refresh our memories a little. Four American Presidents and four Secretaries of State beginning with Woodrow Wilson refused to have anything to do with Soviet Russia...."⁴⁰ He, too, foresaw the postwar threat: "If we...join the war and we win, then we have won for Stalin the grip of Communism on Russia and more opportunity for it to extend in the world." He urged that the United States provide the Soviet Union only enough aid to enable it and Nazi Germany to fight each other to exhaustion.⁴¹

As it turned out, within a short five years after the end of World War II Communism stood in control of eastern Europe and of China, and had launched its attack on South Korea. In light of this, is there any justification for Americans, other than those on the Left, to hold to the perceptions they have so long taken for granted? It is time that thoughtful people, most particularly in the United States, reassess the understanding they have long had of

³⁸ Garrett, *Ethics and Airpower*, p. 108.

³⁹ Herbert Hoover, *America's Way Forward* (New York: The Scribner Press, 1939), p. 32.

⁴⁰ Herbert Hoover, *Addresses Upon the American Road* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 93.

⁴¹ Hoover, *Addresses*, p. 95; Richard Norton Smith, *An Uncommon Man: The Triumph of Herbert Hoover* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), pp. 312, 343.

these things.

The failure to pursue an appropriate geo-political strategy during World War II to block postwar Communist expansion.

In his book *An Uncommon Man* about Herbert Hoover, Richard Norton Smith says that during the war Hoover saw that "Americans shouldn't deceive themselves into thinking of the Soviet Union as anything more than a temporary ally. Hearing of an Allied landing at Dieppe in August 1942, Hoover dismissed the idea of a second European front. It was, he stormed, nothing more than 'a bloody sacrifice to Stalin.'"⁴² Hanson Baldwin seconds this, saying that if the United States had been realistic about the nature of Communism, knowing both of its butchery and its messianic impulse, "our wartime alliance with Russia would have been understood for what it clearly was: a temporary marriage of expediency."⁴³ The United States refused to pursue any strategy designed to get American and British forces to southern and central Europe ahead of the Red Army; and American forces were even held back in the closing weeks of the war, allowing the Red Army to take Berlin and Prague.

This was compounded almost immediately after the end of the war in Europe. U. S. diplomat Sumner Welles, who was undersecretary of state until his retirement in 1943, considers a "grave mistake" to have been the United States' "withdrawal in May, 1945, of the American forces that had liberated Czechoslovakia," to which Welles adds "our failure to insure unimpeded access to Berlin from the West." Welles says "it is now an open secret that Prime Minister Churchill repeatedly requested President Truman to agree to keep the American forces in Czechoslovakia and to keep the gates of Berlin open to the West until a meeting between the President, Stalin, and himself had taken place, and that his pleas met with an adamant refusal. President Truman's refusal was presumably dictated by his desire not to take any

⁴² Smith, *Uncommon Man*, p. 318.

⁴³ Baldwin, *Great Mistakes*, p. 9.

action that could arouse Moscow's suspicion of our objectives. On the other hand, the maneuvers of the Russian armies in Austria as well as in Germany had already caused us justifiable concern."⁴⁴

In Asia, a maximizing of Stalin's position, with no provision for an effective postwar Japanese presence to serve as a counterweight.

A similar debate occurred about Asia during the war, with the issue being the position that Communism would find itself in when the war was over. As with Europe, the Roosevelt and Truman administrations accepted the policies of those who made anti-Communism no part of their thinking, and brushed aside the views of those who did.

Sumner Welles tells of "efforts of several of President Roosevelt's representatives in China to persuade Chiang Kai-shek to comply with the demands of the Chinese Communists...."⁴⁵ And former Secretary of War Stimson wrote that, quite to the contrary of desiring to keep the Red Army from occupying strategic positions north of China, "much of the policy of the United States toward Russia, from Teheran to Potsdam, was dominated by the eagerness of the Americans to secure a firm Russian commitment to enter the Pacific war."⁴⁶ This reached its culmination at the Yalta Conference in February 1945; Welles says "it was at Yalta that Roosevelt and Churchill conceded Stalin's Far Eastern demands covering the return of southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands to Russia, *and a position in Manchuria that was tantamount to full control of that ancient province*" [emphasis added].⁴⁷ Baldwin says "Stalin promised to enter the war against Japan within an estimated ninety days after the end of the war against Germany, but for it he got the Kurile Islands, all of Sakhalin, half-interest in the railways in Manchuria, Port Arthur,

⁴⁴ Welles, *Seven Decisions*, pp. 202-203.

⁴⁵ Welles, *Seven Decisions*, p. 155.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Baldwin, *Great Mistakes*, pp. 77-78.

⁴⁷ Welles, *Seven Decisions*, p. 138.

a Russian-controlled 'free port' in Dairen, *and thus strategic hegemony in important northeast Asia*" [emphasis added].⁴⁸

Ambassador Joseph C. Grew (one of those whom Robert Newman denigrates as a "Japanophile,"⁴⁹ a characterization that is quite misleading since Grew was in no sense an admirer of Japan's military regime) was among those who saw the implications. In a memorandum he made for his private use in mid-May 1945, he wrote that "once Russia is in the war against Japan, then Mongolia, Manchuria, and Korea will gradually slip into Russia's orbit...." He ended with the words "to be followed in due course by China" – a prediction, about a matter of the greatest possible significance, that events proved correct – "and eventually Japan," which fortunately was not.⁵⁰

Herbert Hoover proposed to President Truman the details of a possible negotiated peace with Japan: it (a) would eliminate the need for an invasion of the home islands; (b) would maintain the strength of the American economy to allow it to aid other nations; (c) would shore up a non-Communist China; and (d) would block Soviet expansion. And, what is most directly pertinent to our review of Newman's book on Hiroshima, such a peace would have made unnecessary the use of the atomic bombs. The bombings were integral to a strategy that was oblivious to all of the possibilities that a peace might have been negotiated that would have checked Japanese militarism while blocking Communist advance.

Needless to say, neither Hoover's nor any similar advice was followed. An invasion was planned, the bombs were dropped, and the Soviet Union came into the war to take its strategic place in Asia as promised at Yalta. It required a short four years for China to fall to Mao, less than an additional year for the North Koreans to invade South Korea, and less than ten years for Communism under Ho Chi Minh to launch its all-out attack on

⁴⁸ Baldwin, *Great Mistakes*, pp. 86-88.

⁴⁹ See footnote #5.

⁵⁰ Grew, *Turbulent Era*, p. 1446.

the French in Indochina. The role of the Truman administration in China during the years 1945 to 1949 is well known. Welles recounts how General George C. Marshall, as representative of the administration, threatened Chiang Kai-shek "that all American assistance would be withdrawn unless he 'broadened' his government by appointing Communists."⁵¹ Within the world Left, and especially within the United States, an intensive propaganda campaign was waged to demonize Chiang Kai-shek, who not long before had been seen as both a great man and a progressive leader.⁵² Owen Lattimore, about whom Robert Newman has written a supportive biography and whose East Asian policies he reflects in his defense of Hiroshima, was central to this. In his book *Reminiscences*, General Douglas MacArthur describes the disastrous course of the Truman administration's policy toward Chiang and Mao:

⁵¹ Welles, *Seven Decisions*, p. 217. On June 14, 1951, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy made a lengthy speech in the United States Senate that reviewed the history of General Marshall's role in the geo-political issues, both in Europe and in Asia, that are the subject of the final part of the present monograph. This speech was later published as *America's Retreat from Victory: The Story of George Catlett Marshall* (New York: Devin Adair Company, 1962). Readers should notice the varieties of interpretation of the events we have been tracing. Baldwin considered the failures a product of naivete; I treat them as partly the result of naivete, but also of profound ideological skewing; Senator McCarthy looked for consciously committed assistance to the Communist cause. In McCarthy's day, and especially since, the conventional wisdom has been to decry McCarthy's view as abusive and extreme. But it was precisely McCarthy's merit that he was by far the most articulate voice urging Americans to see the struggle against Communist totalitarianism in the same moral terms in which they had seen that against Nazism. At a time when 600,000,000 additional people had fallen under Communist domination in eastern Europe and China during just the preceding five years, he had reason to wish to assign responsibility. There is no particular virtue in the refusal of others to do so. No doubt there *were* people who were responsible for the disastrous policies that were adopted.

⁵² See Murphey, *Liberalism*, pp. 256-57, 265-66. As late as August 1943 a *New Republic* editorial praised Chiang: "The meliorism of Thorstein Veblen and J. A. Hobson he finds in harmony with the best present tendencies in Chinese thought." The blackening of his image began within just a few months after this editorial appeared and rose to a crescendo during the war between Chiang and Mao in the late 1940s.

In China, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was gradually pushing the Communists back, being largely aided and supplied by the United States. For some unaccountable reason, the Communists were not looked upon with disfavor by the State Department, who labeled them 'agrarian reformers.' Instead of pushing on to the victory that was within the Generalissimo's grasp, an armistice was arranged, and General Marshall was sent to amalgamate the two opponents... After months of fruitless negotiation, he withdrew without tangible results, and the war for China resumed. But in this interval of seven months a decisive change had taken place. The Generalissimo had received no munitions or supplies from the United States, but the Soviets, working day and night, reinforced the Chinese Communist armies. The great mass of military supplies we had sent them at Vladivostok during the later stages of the war, none of which had been used, was largely transferred to the Chinese forces, so that when hostilities were resumed, the balance of power had shifted. They pressed their advantage to the fullest, and finally drove the Generalissimo's forces out of continental Asia onto Formosa. The decision to withhold previously pledged American support was one of the greatest mistakes every made in our history.⁵³

It has become commonplace for members of the American Left, such as Robert Newman in his *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China*, to scoff at the notion that all of this had anything to do with Mao's victory. But the scoffing must be understood as ideological pleading.

⁵³ General Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 320.

The Problem of Equality

Kevin Lamb

Quality is better than equality. Institutions and customs which seek equality for equality's sake are useless, and likely to be pernicious.

Edward Lee Thorndike¹

In a 40th anniversary retrospective of **Brown vs Board of Education**, *USA Today* noted how the late Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall resented society's reluctance to embrace integration.

"We are not yet all equals," Marshall wrote in a 1978 memo to his fellow justices. "As to this country being a melting pot – either the Negro did not get in the pot or he did not get melted down ... The disparity between the races is increasing."²

Typical of the post **Brown** era, Marshall's view reflects modern egalitarian assumptions about racial inequality – namely that most civil members of society are responsible for this dilemma. With a growing middle class enclave of predominantly white suburbs and an urban underclass of ethnic minorities, many continue to believe as Jack Kemp does that the right mix of economic, social and political reforms can reverse this racial fragmentation of society. The premises behind these legal and social reforms, which were intended to reverse racial inequality, are rarely if ever challenged. Can social engineering bring about universal human equality?

Although racial inequality is often viewed as a "societal" condition, social critics have failed to explain *how* "society" actually causes this inequality. Few if any distinctions are ever made between equality before the law (equal rights) and a natural condition of

¹Thorndike, Edward Lee *Human Nature and the Social Order* The Macmillan Co., 1940., p. 962.

²Mauro, Tony "Brown' Ruling 'Broke Back of American Apartheid" *USA Today*, May 12, 1994., p.2a.