Top Ten Forgotten Facts About The Second World War

Seventy years after the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, a number of important historical details about the conflict have been forgotten by the US public. These facts may be unknown or ignored by the people of the United States, but much of the world hasn’t forgotten them, and they have relevance in relation to current events.

1. Hitler was a right-winger

Endless books and articles, such as “Liberal Fascism” by Jonah Goldberg, have attempted to paint Adolph Hitler as some kind of leftist. These texts often play up the fact that the Nazi Party’s official name contained the word “Socialist,” or that Hitler’s speeches sometimes talked of “revolution.”

Regardless of what Glenn Beck and much of the US media would prefer to be the case, Adolph Hitler considered himself to be a right-winger. In his speeches and writings, he frequently referred to his Nazi organization as the “Party of the Right.”

When establishing the Nazi Party in the early 1920s, Hitler made abundantly clear that he was on the right wing of the political spectrum, saying: “There are only two possibilities in Germany; do not imagine that the people will forever go with the middle party, the party of compromises; one day it will turn to those who have most consistently foretold the coming ruin and have sought to dissociate themselves from it. And that party is either the Left: and then God help us! for it will lead us to complete destruction -- to Bolshevism, or else it is a party of the Right which at the last, when the people is in utter despair, when it has lost all its spirit and has no longer any faith in anything, is determined for its part ruthlessly to seize the reins of power -- that is the beginning of resistance of which I spoke a few minutes ago. Here, too, there can be no compromise -- there are only two possibilities: either victory of the Aryan, or annihilation of the Aryan and the victory of the Jew.”

The Nazi program, despite having some populist economic policies, sought to reinforce tradition, morality, religion, and nationalism. The Nazis had absolute contempt for the “left,” which they associated with internationalism, Marxism, class conflict, and “racial impurity.”

This unfortunate detail does not fit in the with the neoconservative logic of “All bad people are on the left, Hitler was bad, so he must have been a leftist.” The ignorance of Hitler’s actual political views has led to many embarrassing incidents. In 1970, Ohio governor James Rhodes called anti-war protesters at Kent University “Brownshirts” before he sent in the National Guard, who killed four of them. During the direct aftermath of Barack Obama’s election, many right-wing activists hyped up by Glenn Beck’s televised sermons accused Obama of simultaneously being a Muslim, a communist and a Nazi.

2. The Soviet Union did more than any other country to defeat Hitler

This fact cannot be denied, but it is often unacknowledged. Even before the Second World War began, the Communist International in Moscow was directing and facilitating anti-fascist resistance from within the borders of Germany and Italy. The Soviet Union sent aid to the people of Spain to defend their republic against the Nazi-aligned
Falangists. Communists around the world formed International Brigades to fight in Spain. The Soviet Union lost 27 million of its citizens in the battle against Hitler.

During the late 1930s, many came to consider the word “anti-fascist” to be a synonym for “communist.” The alliance between Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan, commonly called the “Axis Powers” in US historical discourse, was officially called the “Anti-Communist Pact.”

3. Many Zionists collaborated with the Nazis

While the Israeli government frequently invokes the crimes of the Nazis to justify its existence as a “safe refuge for the chosen people,” most Jews were not Zionists at the time of the Second World War. The majority of the world’s Jews rejected Zionism and identified with Social-Democracy, communism, or anarchism. Zionism was a political current that was only strong among Jews in Britain, where it was funded and promoted by the Rothschild banking dynasty and had the support of many prominent Christian theologians.

In the context of competing with Marxism for support within the world Jewish community, the Zionist movement openly celebrated the rise of Hitler in Germany -- as a defeat for their main political rival. Vladimir Jabotinsky, leader of the Revisionist Party, predecessor to the Likud Party of modern Israel, famously said, “If it were not for the Nazis’ anti-semitism, we would celebrate the rise of Hitler. He saved Germany.”

The Irgun terrorist organization which operated in Palestine frequently published pro-Nazi statements in its publications. Many meetings took place between Zionist organizations and the Nazi officials. Many Zionists argued that a victory for Hitler would force European Jews to flee to Palestine.

4. Hitler had many supporters in the USA

Henry Ford, one of the wealthiest men in the United States, was awarded the Iron Cross by the Nazi government. He was paraded throughout Germany as a hero for his development of industrial methods. Henry Ford wrote a book called “The International Jew” which put forward the Nazi perspective that the world was ruled by “Jewish Bankers” and that communism was a “jewish conspiracy.” During the 1930s, Henry Ford began his own newspaper, The Dearborn Voice, which put forward a pro-Hitler analysis of international events.

Henry Ford was not alone. Brown Brothers Harriman, considered one of the most important Wall Street banks, had its assets frozen under the “Trading With The Enemy Act.” The Wall Street firm was essentially operating as the Nazi regime’s Wall Street stockbroker. At the time, its employees included Prescott Bush, whose son and grandson would both become US presidents.

Charles Coughlin, a Roman Catholic priest with a weekly radio program, broadcast pro-Hitler sermons over the national radio waves across the United States. He formed a pro-Hitler organization called the “Union for Social Justice.” He preached that “Jewish bankers” controlled the Federal Reserve, and were attempting to foment communist revolution to destroy Christianity. His weekly broadcasts urged Roman Catholics to join violent strikebreaking organizations and fight the labor unions, which he considered to be a Jewish-communist conspiracy.

Charles Lindbergh, the famed aviator, went to Nazi Germany many times, and spoke highly of Hitler in many public speeches. When it looked like war was imminent, Lindbergh led the “America First Committee” that urged the US to “stay out” of Europe. Among the members of the America First Committee was future US President Gerald Ford.

Many pro-Nazi organizations existed across the United States during the late 1930s. Among them were the German-American Bund, the Silver Legion of America, the Black Legion, and the Mother’s Campaign. The Ku Klux Klan collapsed due to infighting after Pearl Harbor, because many of its members supported the Nazis. The Black Legion, a pro-Hitler organization of Roman Catholics in Michigan, murdered the father of Black revolutionary Malcolm X, and mobilized to attack striking autoworkers during the famous Flint Sit-Down Strike.

When the German-American Bund held a pro-Hitler rally in Madison Square Garden in 1939, hundreds of thousands of labor unionists and left-wing activists poured into the streets to protest. A group of communist activists even charged the stage and brawled with Nazi sympathizers inside the stadium.

5. Hitler and Stalin did not “divide Poland”

The non-aggression pact signed between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany was not an alliance, but a temporary statement of non-hostility. The Molotov-Ribentrop Pact of 1939 did not “divide Poland.”
When the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, the Polish government officially collapsed. The idea that the USSR “invaded Poland” in coordination with the Nazis is false. The USSR moved its troops into Poland, in response to the presence of hostile Nazi troops.

The Polish government-in-exile raised no objection when the Soviet Union moved its troops into the parts of the country that were not controlled by the Nazis. This was a logical move, as it prevented the Nazis from moving their troops right up to the Soviet border.

6. London subways were not officially allocated as bomb shelters
Many movies, documentaries, and histories tell of London residents hiding from the Nazi bombs in the subways. What’s not told is that British officials originally attempted to outlaw this. Communist Party organizers in the East End of London occupied the subways in defiance of the police. The use of the subways as a place for refuge from Hitler’s Blitzkrieg was only the result of grassroots, communist-led community organizing that saved countless lives.

7. The war secured the victory of Chinese communism
The Chinese Communist Party did not take power until 1949, but its activities from 1937-1945 were key in securing its victory. In what Chinese historians refer to as the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, Mao Zedong’s military strategies proved to be highly successful.

The Eighth Route Army, led by communists, proved itself to be very, very effective in defeating the Japanese invaders, waging war with methods called “Protracted People’s War.” The communists won popularity with China’s civilian population by redistributing land and enacting other popular reforms in the areas they controlled.

After the war ended, the Nationalist Party banned the Chinese Communist Party from participating in the elections. In response, the communists, who had become highly popular over the course of the war, were able to rally their forces, and wage a civil war that created the People’s Republic of China.

8. Korea was not “divided” at the end of the war
When Japan surrendered, Soviet troops had already liberated the northern half of Korea. The agreement at the war’s conclusion was not that Korea should be divided into two countries, as it remains today. The agreement was that a nationwide election should take place for a constituent assembly.

Koreans all across the country anticipated voting to determine a government for the entire peninsula. However, forces in the south of the country backed out of the agreement. Supported by US troops, the “Republic of Korea” was declared by military dictator Syngman Rhee. At Cheju Island and elsewhere, thousands of Koreans who protested demanding the right to vote were slaughtered.

Korea became divided because the United States and its allies in South Korea would not allow the national elections to take place, as had been agreed upon at the war’s conclusion.

Today, both the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (north), and the Republic of Korea (south), claim to be the legitimate government for the entire peninsula, based on the postwar agreement.

9. The Soviet Union did not “take over” Eastern Europe
After driving out the Nazis, the Soviet Union did not “take over” Eastern Europe. Soviet troops liberated Romania, Poland, East Germany, and many other countries. However, they did not install the pro-Soviet Communist Parties as the official governments.

All across Eastern Europe, elections took place in which all anti-fascist parties were allowed to participate. The Soviet Union constructed hospitals, schools and all kinds of infrastructure in the countries devastated by war. As Soviet aid poured in to rebuild the country, the people of these countries became increasingly sympathetic to the Soviet Union.

In East Germany, the Social-Democratic Party, the Christian Party, and the Communist Party all eventually merged to be the Socialist Unity Party that ruled the country. In most Warsaw Pact countries, similar mergers of anti-fascist parties took place.

The countries liberated by Soviet troops did not call themselves “Soviet republics” or even “socialist,” but rather “People’s Democracies.” At their inception they included anticommunist, Social-Democratic and even openly capitalist and religious parties.
Throughout the following decades, the countries liberated by Soviet troops frequently disagreed with the Soviet Union on matters of foreign policy and political ideology. Countries like Poland and Romania went as far as getting loans from US banks.

The post-WWII period in countries like Hungary, Bulgaria, and Lithuania is not remembered as a period of colonization, but as a period of national rebirth and reconstruction. Youth were mobilized to build highways. Efforts were made to promote national languages and traditions that had been suppressed by previous regimes.

Eastern European countries, despite moving toward socialism in the 1950s and espousing Marxism-Leninism, were not “colonies of the Soviet Union.” The Soviet Union did not extract wealth from Eastern Europe, impoverishing it in order to enrich itself. In fact, the USSR spent lots of money developing Eastern Europe. The standard of living of many Eastern European countries drastically increased due to Soviet aid.

10. During the war, Hollywood promoted Stalin

Many artists and writers had become sympathetic to the US Communist Party during the late 1930s. The Communist Party’s “People’s Front” strategy had focused on outreach to people involved in theater, art, and music.

As a result, when the war broke out, many people in Hollywood had a very favorable view of the USSR. When the two countries became officially aligned against the Nazis, this resulted in a lot of movies glorifying the Soviet Union.

One film, “Mission to Moscow,” portrays the infamous 1936 “Moscow Trials” of Zinoviev and Bukharin in a positive light. Stalin is portrayed as heroically exposing a secret pro-Hitler conspiracy within the Soviet government, led by a “bloc of rights and Trotskyites.”

Another film, “The North Star,” portrays a Ukrainian village taking up arms against the Nazi invaders, while frequently talking about their goal of a world without war, classes or exploitation. The screenplay was written by communist sympathizer and noted feminist Lillian Hellman.

An epic musical called “Through Russia” painted a positive picture of Soviet society.

The armed service propaganda series “Why We Fight,” which was shown to US troops as part of their basic training, contains an episode called “The Battle of Russia,” which presents a pro-Soviet interpretation of world events. The film goes as far as to describe the Russian Revolution as being similar in nature to the American Revolution.

Chinese Communists also got recognition on the silver screen. The film “Gung Ho” tells of a division of US marines who adopt a fighting style inspired by the “brilliance” of a group of peasant fighters who formed the “Eighth Route Army.”

The House Un-American Activities Committee launched a huge investigation of the film industry in the post-war period. Ayn Rand, later to become a well-known novelist and philosopher, gave testimony to congress, bemoaning the amount of pro-communist films produced during the war. Many of the pro-Soviet films created during the Second World War have been suppressed, and remain unavailable to the US public.

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