

dential power over foreign affairs because of the secrecy and deception that often accompanied such power. Moreover, he accused the New Dealers in general and FDR in particular of authorizing interventionist diplomatic and military actions without public or congressional knowledge and of using government propaganda to arouse emotions and deceive the American people. Finally, he lashed out at Congress for abdicating its constitutional authority over both domestic and foreign affairs, saying that this could only lead to an undermining of the Bill of Rights and of participatory democracy.²³

Because this country has been through the traumas of Vietnam and Watergate, many Americans have almost become inured to statements about the dangers of an "imperial presidency" or of a "Gestapo frame of mind" in governmental circles. Consequently, similar statements made by Hoover and other so-called reactionary critics of both the New Deal and the Cold War do not now sound like the crazy aberrations they were made out to be in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. It is all too easy to forget in either the agony or euphoria produced by the end of the Vietnam War (followed by the fall of South Vietnam and most of Indochina to the communists, the resignation of Nixon, runaway deficits, and exposure of Reagan's hostages-for-arms deal), that not too long ago the reputations and in some cases the careers of several generations of sincere men and women who openly opposed the welfare state and the Cold War mentality could be tarnished by liberal internationalists. Ironically, such supporters of what is usually called the New Deal consensus on foreign and domestic policy used the same tactic against conservative nonconformists like Hoover that Joseph McCarthy did against alleged communist sympathizers—namely, guilt by association.²⁴

On the one hand, Hoover and others like him were conveniently labeled foreign policy isolationists, which automatically made them guilty of being friends either of Hitler before 1941 or of Stalin after 1945. On the other hand, they were also written off as domestic conservatives who were out of touch with the need for an ever-expanding economy (and national deficit) accompanied by an increasingly anonymous and autonomous governmental bureaucracy. What is curious about this use of guilt by association by liberal New Dealers before and after World War II is that they never recognized they were practicing a form of reverse McCarthyism. Their blindness with respect to the righteousness and rightness of their own domestic and foreign policies is best illustrated, I think, when the Cold Warriors of the Truman admin-

istration actually accused Hoover of being "a tool of the Kremlin" because of his strong opposition to the ideological nature of the Korean War and because his anticommunism was too moderate by their post-war standards.²⁵

Hoover was not alone in his struggle against mainstream U.S. domestic and foreign policies. In fact, he was associated with such leading liberal and conservative politicians, journalists, businessmen, and historians as Charles A. Beard, Oswald Garrison Villard, Senator Robert A. Taft, I. F. Stone, James Paul Warburg, Charles C. Tansill, Walter Lippman, Harry Elmer Barnes, Senator Claude Pepper, Henry A. Wallace, Senator Glen H. Taylor, John T. Flynn, Senator Gerald P. Nye, Charles A. Lindbergh, and Lawrence Dennis. I do not mean to imply that these men always agreed with each other, but their reputations, like Hoover's, are now undergoing a gradual rehabilitation in the hands of revisionist historians in the United States—most of whom did not experience the Great Depression, the New Deal, or even the origins of the Cold War as adults. This is not to say that all aspects of the activities and ideas of these New Deal and Cold War critics are equally laudable in retrospect. It is simply a case of their best and most prophetic thoughts and suggestions on foreign and domestic policy now being singled out for reconsideration.²⁶

What I have found most surprising in my own attempt to rehabilitate some of Hoover's best domestic and foreign policy ideas is the extent to which he was associated with revisionist historians like Charles Beard and Harry Elmer Barnes. There now exists conclusive documentary proof that he not only provided them with information from his own private files but, in the case of Barnes, actively encouraged him and sought funding for his research through the wealthy Portland, Oregon lumberman, John W. Blodgett, Jr., the Joseph Pew family of Philadelphia, and Jesse Jones, the former Reconstruction Finance Corporation chairman. Similarly, Hoover supported the projects of revisionist historian Charles Tansill.²⁷ Beard did not have private financial needs and so in his case Hoover simply provided him with access to restricted documents, including several confidential position papers that he wrote to Secretary of War Henry Stimson and President Truman in May 1945 for ending the war with Japan, which would not have necessitated the use of the atomic bomb, and for avoiding a Cold War in Europe with the Soviet Union.²⁸

This final image of Hoover, therefore, is not that of an obsolete progressive reformer, or a neo-Wilsonian, or even a moderate advocate of New Dealism, multilateralism, and globalism, let alone a precursor of Nixonomics as some historians would have us believe.²⁹ Rather he offered basic alternatives to Americans in the fields of both foreign and domestic policy that were not particularly well articulated or appreciated during his lifetime.

Hoover was not alone in anticipating the negative, internal results of modern total warfare. These were commonly held fears among many old-time Progressives of both parties, the Republican Old Right, those concerned primarily with domestic reform, and knowledgeable isolationists and pacifists in the late 1930s. World War II did effectively end New Deal reform, just as World War I had killed progressivism as a national movement and the Indochina war was to end Lyndon Johnson's attempt to create the Great Society. Most important, from Hoover's point of view, was the abandonment of noncoerciveness as a mainstay of U.S. foreign policy in direct proportion to the acceptance of unlimited U.S. intervention in world affairs. Stimsonianism rather than Hooverism became the most pervasive of all the diplomatic legacies of World War II; the defense of a U.S. political, economic, and military empire abroad was its major *raison d'être*. Such an empire—based on rigid ideological motivation and military tactics—meant to Hoover the extinction of both international and domestic cooperative communities. He had always defined such communities as self-regulating entities. If self-serving groups of political, business, and military bureaucrats were to manage the governing process, then the people would no longer be in control of the country or its foreign policy. The Indochina war and the Watergate scandal have amply demonstrated his worst fears of a society and economy run from the top down by a coercive system of expertise and by what has been called an "arrogant elite guard of political adolescents."³⁰

The real tragedy of World War II for Hoover lay ultimately, therefore, in its impact on his domestic dreams: U.S. self-sufficiency, cooperative individualism, associationalism, and a decentralized economy. The Great Depression and the New Deal had already retarded serious consideration of the merits of public versus private power, of the importance of cooperative versus elitist individual action in a modern, technological nation, and of the impact on the democratic process of employing the

immense power of a managerial, corporate state in an unlimited fashion at home and abroad. Moreover, the material benefits associated with the New Deal and World War II further delayed consideration of these basic questions; only recently have domestic and foreign-policy problems been increasingly attributed to a bureaucratic, elitist, community-destroying federal power that borders, some say, on U.S. fascism.

Like many Marxist and non-Marxist anti-establishment historians, Hoover had been asking these significant and enduring questions about the domestic and foreign affairs of the United States since the 1920s. It is no wonder that he criticized the negative implications of such an arrogant, interventionist approach to reform and foreign policy before they were anything but the vaguest fears to most critics of the New Deal.

It is true that Hoover placed too much confidence in the ability of his own informal corporatism both to employ expertise in the public interest without succumbing to selfish elitism and to establish a proper balance among industry, agriculture, and labor. He also had too much faith in the willingness of capitalists to produce efficiently and maintain enough competition to ensure that profits would pass on to the workers in the form of lower prices and higher wages. Hoover himself realized that these ideals were unrealized and that the problem of technological unemployment, for example, was very real. While his belief in a cooperative, humane, commonsense capitalism never materialized in the 1920s, it was rooted in the sound idea that only through scientifically controlled expansion could the best of individualism and neo-guildist corporatism serve the people, the country, and the world. In other words, there were clearly defined limits to the American system that had to be honored if the United States was not to stumble onto the path of state socialism, fascism, or monopoly capitalism—all of which would destroy the material independence of people, their innovativeness, and their sense of significant political participation.

However correct his theories may appear in retrospect, there were serious defects in Hoover's methodology. Nonetheless, there is much to be said for the best of the transitional ideas that Hoover came to embody. Despite the limitations of his personal philosophy and temperament, they did allow for an alternative foreign policy after both world wars that was not based on unlimited interventionism or the military suppression of revolutions based on communist ideology, but rather on disarmament and peaceful coexistence. His views also recognized the relationship between domestic reform and international relations and