

FOREWORD

“Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.” ~ Franklin Roosevelt

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was what *actively* and *officially* put the United States into the Second World War. Without war against Japan, any conflict with Germany could conceivably have been limited to naval engagements. But was the sudden attack a surprise to Roosevelt? Was the deliberate attack “utterly unprovoked” like Secretary of State Cordell Hull said it was?

There have been many essays, chapters in books, and whole books written over the years on the subject of Roosevelt’s duplicity and culpability regarding the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The most recent one, I believe, is George Victor’s *The Pearl Harbor Myth: Rethinking the Unthinkable* (Potomac Books, 2007). The best one is probably Robert Stinnett’s *Day Of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbor* (Free Press, 2000). I provide a detailed list in my *Rethinking the Good War* (Vance Publications, 2009), as well as concluding that the attack on Pearl Harbor was but the climax of a long series of events. It was neither a surprise nor unprovoked.

The United States had waged economic warfare against Japan by restricting exports, instituting an embargo, and freezing assets. The American pilots known as the Flying Tigers secretly trained in the jungles of Southeast Asia to fly bombing missions for the Chinese Air Force. The U.S. Pacific Fleet was moved from the West Coast to Pearl Harbor. Although the Japanese diplomatic and naval codes were broken, vital information was withheld from the commanders at Pearl Harbor, General Walter Short and Admiral Husband Kimmel. Both men were made scapegoats, relieved of their commands, demoted in rank, and denied an opportunity to defend themselves. The McCollum memo’s proposals, which were all implemented by Roosevelt, were designed to provoke Japan into war as a backdoor way to get the United States involved in the

European war. Admirers of FDR—past and present—admit that he “lied us into war.” Roosevelt sacrificed American lives to become a war president.

It is time to rethink Pearl Harbor.

Actually, it is way past time. In 1944, before World War II had even ended, Roosevelt’s nemesis John T. Flynn (1882-1964) wrote what is probably the first “revisionist” account of the Pearl Harbor attack: *The Truth About Pearl Harbor*. This was followed by a sequel in 1945: *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor*. Both were privately printed by Flynn in booklet form. Each of these works is reprinted here, together with images of eight World War II Pearl Harbor propaganda posters that bid Americans to “Avenge Pearl Harbor” or “Remember Pearl Harbor.”

John Thomas Flynn was a journalist, author, and popular economic and political commentator. During the latter part of the 1920s and throughout the 1930s, one could find Flynn’s articles in magazines like the *New Republic*, *Common Sense*, *Harper’s*, and *Collier’s*. As a partisan Democrat and progressive, he supported Roosevelt in the election of 1932. Although he never formally joined the Republican Party, twenty years later he was an Old Right supporter of Robert Taft and a defender of Joe McCarthy who foresaw the coming of the Cold War and the Vietnam War. In between Flynn became disillusioned with Roosevelt and harshly criticized the New Deal, making comparisons between the economic policies of Roosevelt and Mussolini. He served as the chief researcher in 1934 for the Senate Nye Committee that investigated the role of the munitions industry in leading the United States into World War I. He was instrumental in forming the Keep America Out of War Congress. He was the chairman of the New York chapter of the America First Committee. By the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Flynn already had a reputation as an outspoken anti-interventionist. He was forsaken by liberals for his principled stance against U.S. intervention in World War II. But Flynn also rejected the Cold War conservatism of William F. Buckley and *National Review*. He considered militarism a “job-making boondoggle.” World War II was a repetition of World War I, a fight between empires, and all about imperialism.

Flynn’s *The Truth about Pearl Harbor* first appeared on the front page of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on Sunday, October 22, 1944, under the headline of: “Records Bear Truth about Pearl Harbor.” The editor’s note preceding the article reads:

Who was responsible for the greatest naval disaster in American history—Pearl Harbor? John T. Flynn, economist, journalist, and author of books on government has compiled all the available evidence contained in numerous documents, testimony, and public records. The result is his answer—“The Truth About Pearl Harbor,” which, with only a few deletions, is presented herewith.

The “few deletions” could be from Flynn’s original manuscript he submitted to the *Tribune*, but if not, then the paper should never have used the word “few,” for the newspaper article is noticeably shorter than Flynn’s published booklet. It also contains some text that doesn’t appear in the booklet. The newspaper article occupies one column on the front page and the entire fourteenth and fifteenth pages. It contains about 260 short paragraphs and about 15,000 words. The booklet contains thirty pages of text with about 135 much longer paragraphs and about 17,600 words. There are some other differences as well. After an introduction, the newspaper article is divided into four sections with headings about every four paragraphs. It also has four pictures: Flynn, Joseph Grew, the U.S. ambassador to Japan, and General Walter Short and Admiral Husband Kimmel, the Army and Navy commanders at Pearl Harbor. The booklet adds a foreword, but contains headings only at each of the four sections, and no pictures.

To get an idea of the differences between Flynn’s article and book, here is a comparison between the first paragraph of the book and the corresponding first three paragraphs of the article. Text crossed out appears only in the article. Text in bold print indicates additions found only in the book. Text in brackets appears only in the article, and replaces the word, words, or punctuation mark preceding it:

On December [~~Dec.~~] 7, 1941, Japan struck our base and fleet in Pearl Harbor. [;] Her [~~her~~] planes knocked the American Pacific Fleet, for all practical purposes, out of the war. [;] ~~and killed 3,000 American sailors and soldiers.~~ Within 24 hours the Japanese struck at the Philippines, Wake, Midway, Guam, and Malay.

Having knocked us out of the, war in the Pacific for the time being in a single day, **the way was open to the Japanese to push their victories across the whole Southwest Pacific until** within six months they [~~the Japs~~] had conquered the Dutch and British

East Indies, Indo-China, and Malay, —**perhaps the richest empire of resources in the world. Without any single exception in our history,** Pearl Harbor was the most disastrous defeat ever suffered by American arms.

Practically all that has happened in the last two years in the Pacific, ~~including~~ the great loss of life, **the immense destruction of material, the greivous blow to our prestige in the Orient and the costly exertions which lie before us,** are [is] traceable to that humiliating defeat in Pearl Harbor.

I have seen four printings of this booklet, although there may have been more. I didn't notice any differences in the printings. My copy had a promotional flyer inserted with the title of "Why This Pamphlet?" The flyer is reproduced in this reprint after the pamphlet. An edition of *The Truth About Pearl Harbor* was published in Scotland in 1945, but I have not personally seen a copy. Flynn estimated not only that he had sent out about 100,000 copies by the middle of 1945, but that he could have distributed a million copies if only he could count on an adequate supply of newsprint.

Flynn's sequel, *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor*, first appeared on the front page of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on Sunday, September 2, 1945, under the three headlines of:

Exposes More Secrets of Pearl Harbor Scandal

Blame for Tragic Delays Fixed; Blunders Bared

John T. Flynn Charges Government Knew Jap Cabinet Intended to Break Relations

The editor's note preceding the article reads:

John T. Flynn, investigator and publicist, author of "The Truth About Pearl Harbor," has written a second sensational article on this catastrophe. He discloses new and starting information that was in the possession of the United States high command during the final days and hours before the great Pacific base was attacked by the Japanese on Dec. 7, 1941. In this inclusive treatise, he fixes the blame for the disaster squarely upon Franklin D. Roosevelt, then President of the United States.

Unlike Flynn's earlier work, the text of the pamphlet he published this time was substantially different from the newspaper article, except for the conclusion, which agrees exactly. The length of each work is about the same. And once again, the booklet adds a foreword while the newspaper article contains pictures and headings, although the booklet this time contains headings and subheadings. On the back cover of some printings there appears a "History of This Pamphlet." This is reproduced in this reprint after the pamphlet.

In addition to his two works on Pearl Harbor, Flynn is also the author of:

Investment Trusts Gone Wrong! (1930)

Graft in Business (1931)

God's Gold; the Story of Rockefeller and his Times (1932)

Country Squire in the White House (1940)

Men of Wealth; the Story of Twelve Significant Fortunes from the Renaissance to the Present Day (1941)

Meet Your Congress (1944)

As We Go Marching (1944)

The Epic of Freedom (1947)

The Roosevelt Myth (1948, 1956)

The Road Ahead; America's Creeping Revolution (1949)

While You Slept: Our Tragedy in Asia and Who Made It (1951)

The Lattimore Story (1953)

The Decline of the American Republic and How to Rebuild It (1955)

Many of these books are online at the Ludwig von Mises Institute website and/or available for purchase.

Some of Flynn's articles and speeches were published as pamphlets:

Graft in Business (1931)

The Thought Police; an Episode in Radical Bigotry (1946)

The Smear Terror (1947)

Communists and the New Deal (1952)

They War on Our Schools (1952)

America's Unknown War: The War We Have Not Begun to Fight (1953)

McCarthy: His War on American Reds, and the Story of Those Who Oppose Him (1954)

Militarism: The New Slavery for America (1955)

Betrayal at Yalta (1955)

Fifty Million Americans in Search of a Party (1955)

An excellent resource on Flynn's articles is *Forgotten Lessons: Selected Essays of John T. Flynn* (The Foundation for Economic Education, 1996), edited by Gregory P. Pavlik, and with a foreword by Flynn's son, Thomas D. Flynn.

The best things written about Flynn are chapters 7 (John T. Flynn and the Coming of World War II) and 8 (John T. Flynn and the Cold War) of Ronald Radosh's *Prophets on the Right: Profiles of Conservative Critics of American Globalism* (Simon and Schuster, 1975); chapter 4 (John T. Flynn: From Liberalism to Laissez-Faire) of Justin Raimondo's *Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement* (Center for Libertarian Studies, 1993); and John E. Moser's *Right Turn: John T. Flynn and the Transformation of American Liberalism* (New York University Press, 2005).

I take pleasure in bringing back into print Flynn's valuable "revisionist" pamphlets.

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