

**Background:** This essay is dated 30 November 1941. The United States was not yet in the war, but the Nazis had been preparing their public for American involvement since spring 1940. Goebbels' attack on Roosevelt is part of that preparation. His job was made easier by the fact that Roosevelt's charges of German plans to conquer South America were far-fetched. The essay was a lead article in *Das Reich*, the prestige weekly Goebbels founded in 1940.

The [map Goebbels discusses](#) was, in fact, forged.

**The source:** "Kreuzverhör mit Mr. Roosevelt," *Das eherne Herz* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1943), pp. 99-104.

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## Mr. Roosevelt Cross-Examined

by Joseph Goebbels

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On 28 October, more than a month ago, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave a radio speech that apparently had as its goal plunging the American people into uncertainty and panic, thus to prepare gradually for the fateful intervention which the American president desires, regardless of American public opinion. The speech differed from all of his previous speeches in that Roosevelt did not limit himself to the almost traditional and unconscionable and slanderous attacks on the Führer and National Socialist Germany. This time he made concrete accusations against the policies of the Reich, which he attempted to prove though compromising documents he allegedly possessed.

Mr. Roosevelt claimed that he had proof in his hands that the Axis powers were planning to reorganize South and Central America. They were planning to transform the existing fourteen countries into five states that would be under their control. His proof was a secret map allegedly produced by the Reich government. The American government also claims to possess another Reich document. According to it, the Reich government plans to abolish the existing religions of the world once it has won the war — Catholicism, Protestantism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism. They are to be replaced by an international National Socialist church, the cross by the swastika, and God by the Führer. That is what he claims.

It is clear to us that Mr. Roosevelt needed this grand swindle to whip up American public opinion. He needed the heaviest possible ammunition, since the American people are at the moment more intelligent than their government and want absolutely nothing to do with the war in Europe. We really are not all that interested in Mr. Roosevelt's opinion of the intelligence of his people nor in what he thinks them capable of believing, and normally would see no need to reply to his bald-faced and outrageous lies which so clearly bear the signs of fabrication. In this case, however, it is a matter of a political falsification which seems to us to have a clear and ominous purpose, and gave us such an easy chance to show up the liars to the entire world that we could hardly let the opportunity pass. We had to overcome our moral scruples, however, to confront the liar and ask him where he got these alleged documents from, where they can be found, and if he was ready to show them to the public.

Things went as we expected. Mr. Roosevelt, the president of a nation of 130 million, dodged our questions. He claimed the authenticity of the documents was unassailable; he had them. They could not be published, however, since they were secret and publishing them would reveal the source. And the map in question that carved up Central and South America had markings in pencil that could compromise the source that provided them. He, Roosevelt, did not want to cause any difficulties for the poor chap who passed them along.

Would that we had such a president! He is a well-meaning soul who cares for his scoundrels. Given his speeches and actions, he would not hesitate to send hundreds of thousands of soldiers to the battlefield, even perhaps sacrificing them in service to his crazy plans of conquest, but the thought of causing a fine and honorable traitor any trouble breaks his heart. As one can imagine, Roosevelt's answer was not very convincing proof of his hair-raising allegations either at home or abroad. Our tough questions bore fruit. We used the press and radio to propose to the American president that he might publish the incriminating map of Central and South America, perhaps either erasing the ominous pencil markings or covering them up with paper, or to at least publish the text of our notorious plan to begin a campaign against all the world's religions once the war was over, from Jehovah to Confucius to Christ.

Mr. Roosevelt sank into silence, saying nothing at all. Only one of his creatures, the former Argentinean bordello-owner and pimp Taborda, who happened to be visiting him at the time, said that he had been able to sneak a look at the map, and that all was as Mr. Roosevelt had said. More he could not say, since he had given his word of honor.

One can understand our reluctance to consider the word of honor of so dubious an underworld figure as absolutely convincing. We looked further, and since we could learn nothing more given the stubborn silence of the accuser, we attempted to lure him into a response by massive attacks. Alas, the normally talkative gentleman seemed to have forgotten how to speak. Even the attempts of the American press to learn something more as he visited one of the famous skyscrapers were in vain.

The Reich government published two formal denials on 1 November, which boxed Roosevelt's ears so strongly that he had to choose between revealing his documents or proving himself a forger and liar to the entire world. He chose the latter. The U.S. press gave headline treatment to the German denials and asked for a response. Mr. Roosevelt accepted the blows, rubbed his cheeks, and said nothing. We made every conceivable suggestion to ease the publication of the documents, but the U.S. president preferred to be thought a liar and forger than to prove his absurd accusations.

That's the way things are. We do not flatter ourselves by believing that we have some way to force Mr. Roosevelt to speak. He apparently has every reason to hope the matter will be forgotten. When he made his charges, one could perhaps generously grant that he believed them. It was at least possible that he had been the victim of some sort of swindle and had believed in the documents' authenticity. That is no longer possible, for if he had been acting honestly he would have provided the evidence supporting his accusations. He has not done so. That is sufficient proof that he was not the victim of a forgery, but rather that he himself was directly or indirectly involved. This is a matter of war and peace, and the American public has every right to examine its president and his actions, to ask him about these documents, why Mr. Roosevelt has not published them, whether he still stands by his speech of 28 October, and what he plans to do to restore the damage done to his reputation by the two German denials that accuse him of forgery.

One always feels the need to wash one's hands after being forced to deal with the methods of U.S. interventionism. It is so unpleasant and filthy that one shudders. When one hears the pious nonsense of the Jewish-led world plutocracy over the radio or reads it in the press, one need only to look behind the scenes to feel pity for the miseries of mankind. That such a man has the impudence to judge us, to call on God and the world as witnesses of the purity of his deeds, to incite war and send innocent people singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" to battle for his filthy financial interests can only fill anyone with even the most primitive sense of decency with the deepest horror. Were there only such people in the world, one would have to despise humanity.

Mr. Roosevelt is Churchill's accomplice, but apparently reckons that in the case of England's defeat a respectable portion of Britain's possessions will be left over. Thus he rushes to war despite the opposition of public opinion in a manner incomprehensible to those not familiar with democratic

countries. Whatever policy he may follow, he is no longer able to change England's fate in this war. If Mr. Roosevelt does not want to accept our argument, he might at least consider that we are unlikely to attack the American continent because it simply is not feasible. This must be clear to him, since it is equally infeasible for the Americans to attack us. As far as American armaments go, they are first not up to the quality of those in Europe, much less better. Second, the American material must cross the insecure Atlantic to reach England. We, on the other hand, can receive everything that we ourselves do not produce over secure rail lines from every nation of Europe.

Even in America the trees do not reach the heavens. We can tell which of our enemy's threats are serious and which are bluffs. We do not underestimate the United States, but neither do we overestimate it. If Mr. Roosevelt succeeds in provoking war, he will find its reality considerably less pleasant than his fantasies. We will follow his continuing machinations with stoic calm. Here, too, the food is hotter on the stove than on the plate.