Tension and
GROWTH

Ralph Lutz’s successor in 1943 was Harold H. Fisher, under whose directorship the Hoover Institute and Library on War Revolution and Peace (as it was renamed in 1947) changed the emphasis of its operations. Beginning with the Revolution and the Development of International Relations (RADIR) project, the Institute embarked on a new course of research, focusing more on innovative works of interpretive analysis than on traditional documentary studies. The relationship between Herbert Hoover and Fisher, who had been the chief of the history department of the American Relief Administration, became strained when Hoover insisted that the director and staff not promote their political viewpoints as the Institution’s official position without a disclaimer. The growing tension prompted Hoover to reduce his financial support until Fisher retired in 1955.

In 1956 the name was changed to its current form, the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. Also in 1956, Herbert Hoover got the Institution’s advisory board to mandate that the library’s publications be documentary, not analytic, in nature, with which the Institution initiated a new research and publication program. One project of the new program was a book on the Russian Provisional Government of 1917, which, when published in 1961, consisted of three volumes, including 1,400 translated documents. That work, compiled and edited by the former prime minister of the Provisional Government, Aleksandr Kerensky, and Robert P. Browder, professor of history at the University of Colorado, provided the necessary documentation for a thorough reappraisal of the reasons for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of the communist state.

Hoover’s relationship with Fisher’s successor, C. Easton Rothwell, was as contentious as it had been with Fisher. Hoover was upset that Rothwell didn’t emphasize publishing documentary histories and that he was attempting to cede some control over the Institution to the university. Finally, after several long conversations in Hoover’s suite in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, Stanford’s president, Wallace Sterling, agreed to restore the Institution’s original independence, making it free from faculty control; Rothwell resigned in early 1959. In May 1959, after a 1946 resolution was rescinded, the Hoover Institution was proclaimed “an independent institution within the framework of Stanford University.”

At the suggestion of Raymond Moley, a former member of President Roosevelt’s New Deal “brain trust,” Hoover selected W. Glenn Campbell, a thirty-five-year-old Harvard PhD in economics, as the new director. Until his selection, Campbell had been the director of research at the American Enterprise Association (now the American Enterprise Institute). Having begun on January 1, 1960, Campbell would continue as director of the Hoover Institution for the next thirty years.

The Founder’s
LEGACY

The antagonisms given rise to by the ideological divide between Herbert Hoover and certain members of the Stanford faculty and administrators of the Hoover Institution led him to bequeath his presidential papers to the federal government rather than his alma mater and to the establishment of his presidential library in his birthplace, West Branch, Iowa. Despite the disagreements, however, Hoover loved Stanford dearly. In the last two years of his life, he helped raise $7 million to build a new Graduate School of Business, for which the university honored him with the first Herbert Hoover Medal for Distinguished Service.

Hoover died in New York on October 20, 1964. His accomplishments at Stanford alone include being a university trustee for fifty years, helping select four Stanford presidents, reforming the school’s finances, saving the medical school from elimination, founding and funding the Stanford Union, the Lou Henry Hoover House, the Food Research Institute, the Graduate School of Business, and the Hoover Institution, which he considered his crowning achievement. Hoover began his documentary collection decades before public and university libraries became interested in such material. Through his personal initiative and his talent for entrusting responsibility to the right people, Herbert Hoover assembled one of the largest and most comprehensive private libraries and archives on twentieth-century history in the world. Generations of scholars owe him an immense debt of gratitude.