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"Every nation, if it is to survive as a nation, must study its own history and have a foreign policy"
- C.J. O'Donnell, The Lordship of the World, 1924, p. 145

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Editorial

This is the 70th anniversary of the German attack on Russia in the World War launched by Britain on the pretext of defending the independence of Poland.

The *Irish Examiner* (formerly *Cork Examiner*) commemorated the event with an article by Geoffrey Roberts, formerly a member of the former Communist Party of Great Britain on its patriotic wing and now a Professor at Cork University. Roberts is an 'anti-revisionist' in England and a 'revisionist' in Ireland—he holds a pretty standard English view of things and brought it to Ireland with him—and condemns Irish neutrality. He explains the World War as follows:

> "Operation Barbarossa ... was the climax of Hitler's bid to establish Germany as the dominant world power. That bid had begun with the invasion of Poland in September 1939, followed by the German conquest of France in June 1940. By 1941 the German war machine had conquered most of Europe as country after country was invaded or forced to join Hitler's Axis alliance. In the West, only Britain, protected by the English Channel and the strength of the Royal Navy and Air Force, remained defiant and undefeated. In the east, the Soviet Union was the last remaining obstacle to German domination of Europe..."

Hitler's bid for world dominance is one of the mesmeric myths by which Britain sought to dominate the mind of the world and divert it from consideration of its own irresponsible warmongering. There is no evidence that Hitler aimed at anything more than *"Lebensraum"* in a corner of Eastern Europe and, but for Britain, he would have had little hope of making a serious attempt to get that.

Germany had been starved by the British Blockade during the Great War and for six months after it ended and Hitler aimed to get control of oil and corn resources in Eastern Europe so that Germany could not again be reduced to starvation level by the Royal Navy.

But how was he to go about getting to those resources? Britain and France had disarmed Germany and had set up a line of new states to the east of it by destroying the Hapsburg Empire. Those states had defence arrangements with France, which had the strongest land army on the Continent, and in the world. And Britain, which ruled the waves, and had a vast Empire spread around the world, was the guarantor of that Post-Great War order of things.

Was Hitler a fantasist who in disarmed Germany devised a plan of world conquest? And, if he was, how did he come close to achieving it only eight years after becoming Chancellor?

When one looks at Europe as it was in 1933, it is evident that Hitler could not have got where he was six years later without active support from Britain and France. By June 1940 he was at war with Britain and France, which had both declared war on him, and he had defeated their armies. This could not have happened without their support of him after he came to power. It was they who enabled him to resist them when they decided to crush him.

This becomes plainly evident as soon as one frees oneself from the mesmerism of the Churchillist myth—and indeed it is evident enough in Churchill's own history of the War, if it is not read under the spell cast by his worshippers.

The Versailles order of Europe would have made a revival of *"German militarism"* completely impossible, if it had not been subverted. The subversion was done chiefly by Britain. It was not happy that France, which had borne the main cost of the 1914 war on Germany, was then restored to a position of dominance in Europe by the defeat of Germany. On the balance-of-power principle, which had determined its European policy for a couple of centuries, it could not resist supporting Germany against France. It did this in small ways during the period of the Weimar democracy, and in large ways after Hitler took power.

Britain established a moral ascendancy over France in the 1920s, disabling its foreign policy. France responded by becoming a seconder of British policy. By the time Hitler came to power, the Soviet State had not only survived, but had secured the main threat to its social base through collectivisation, made itself an industrial power, and was approaching the status of a Great Power.

The active British support for Nazi Germany is only comprehensible as a counter to Soviet development.

Initial British support for Hitler was on the basis that he was saving Germany from Bolshevism. But Germany was soon saved. Bolshevism melted away during the first year of Nazi power. That was when the really serious British support for Nazism began.

The word *"appeasement"*, as applied to the British attitude towards Germany in 1934-1938, is a complete misnomer. It carries the suggestion that Germany was a powerful bullying state which was conciliated in the hope of getting it to behave better. But in 1934 Germany was still a very weak state, effectively disarmed, with armed states to the east and west of it

.

Hitler, from a position of great weakness, set about breaking all the Versailles conditions on Germany. Britain either pretended not to notice or collaborated with him (Naval Agreement of 1934). Military conscription was introduced. The German Army, such as it was, was put into the demilitarised Rhineland. Fascist Austria merged with Nazi Germany—a thing which democratic Austria had been prevented from doing with democratic Germany.

Italy had been a strong supporter of Austrian independence against Germany. But Mussolini, seeing how Britain itself was subverting the Versailles restrictions on Germany, began to reorientate himself.

By the Summer of 1938 Germany was very much stronger than it had been in 1934, but was still very far from being a military power of the first order. The decisive change of quality came with the acquisition of the Sudetenland, the falling apart of the rest of Czechoslovakia, and the transfer to Germany of the advanced Czech arms industry. And that was a gift from Britain to Hitler.

If Hitler had attempted to take the Sudetenland by force, he would possibly have been removed by a *coup* and, if not, would probably have been defeated. The Czech frontier was physically strong, and Treaties would have brought the French Army and possibly the Russian into the conflict. It was possibly to ward off the latter that Britain threatened the Czechs into peacefully giving Hitler what he was asking for.

The following year Britain encouraged the Poles to refuse a moderate proposal made by Hitler to resolve the German/Polish border dispute. Democratic Germany had refused to accept the border made by Versailles. Hitler was willing to accept it, on the condition of having an extra-territorial road across the Polish Corridor, to connect the two parts of the German state, and the German city of Danzig being transferred to adjacent East Prussia. When that proposal was being made, Britain suddenly gave a military Guarantee to Poland, and France followed suit.

Apparently backed by the two greatest military Powers in Europe, the Poles refused to negotiate. They accepted the Guarantee and set about formalising it into a Treaty. Hitler took this to negate the Treaty he had made with Pilsudsky in 1934 (Pilsudsky was now dead) and an attempt to establish a powerful military encirclement of Germany. Observing that Britain and France were not making active preparations for war, he broke the encirclement by striking at Poland on 1st September 1939. The RAF bombarded Germany with leaflets, but otherwise the Western Allies of the Poles did not interfere in the German/Polish War. Britain declared war on Germany, but proceeded with it at a leisurely pace as a World War that was no bit of use to the Poles.

The Polish military position collapsed in a few weeks. The Soviet Union then took possession of an area that Poland had taken from it in the war of 1920. This was done by prior arrangement with Germany covering the contingency of a Polish collapse. The Royal Navy stopped German trade by sea, as in 1914, but this time Russia was neutral and continued trading with Germany beyond the reach of the Royal Navy. French and British Armies were placed along the German frontier, but only fired an occasional shot.

The Soviet Union, to make Leningrad more defensible against whoever might attack, proposed transfers of territory to the Finns, which were rejected. The Red Army moved into Finland and was resisted. Britain and France got the League of Nations to expel the Soviets, and began to make active preparations to get involved in war against the Soviet Union in alliance with the Finns. But the Finns made a settlement, conceding territory in the Baltic in exchange for territory further North.

Britain then started planning to invade Norwegian neutrality in order to obstruct the sale of Swedish iron ore to Germany.

Germany, discovering this, launched a hasty operation towards Norway and got in just before the British. While the British were retreating from Norway, the Germans responded to the Anglo-French declarations of war, which had lain on the table all this time, and won a quick victory in a novel campaign which might easily ended in disaster.

France, being occupied as a consequence of defeat in its third war with Germany in 70 years (two of which had been launched by itself) had no choice but to make a settlement. The Franco-German settlement of 1940 was temporary, pending a settlement with Britain. Britain refused to settle. Hitler had ordered his tanks to halt, which enabled about a third of the British Army to be evacuated from Dunkirk.

With the Royal Navy still ruling the waves, Britain refused to settle. Secret Intelligence from the Enigma machine confirmed that it was itself safe from invasion. It denounced France for settling, charged it with moral degeneracy, and made war on it, attacking its Navy in North Africa.

During the following years the British strategy was to spread the war, launching pin-pricks here and there and drawing the Germans in. The Soviet object in that year was to stabilise the situation. It launched a great propaganda campaign against Britain's 'Spread The War' policy, knowing that the great prize for Britain was a German/Soviet War.

Britain, while being either unable or unwilling to prosecute its declaration of war with any reasonable hope of winning, was able to keep Europe in a condition of war with its refusal to settle and its pin-pricks. Its purpose was to prevent the world which it had shaken up from settling down. Historically it had shown great skill at fishing in troubled waters.

In those circumstances the Soviet Union and Germany had to contemplate the possibility of war with each other. Quite independently of ideological concerns, Germany had an interest in removing the Soviet Union from the scene. If it defeated Russia, Britain, with no further hope of winning, was virtually certain to settle. And any German attempt to bring about a British settlement by invasion—the alternative course—would be a risky venture with the Red Army poised on the eastern frontier.

At this point, something like world conquest was on the cards for Germany. But Germany had not arrived at that point through the systematic implementation of a plan—or fantasy—of world conquest conceived by Hitler before he had an army to speak of. One might almost say that he had been lured and nudged towards that position by the combination of deviousness and bungling that was the foreign policy of the British Empire during the generation after 1918 when it was cock of the walk.

Russia, on the other hand, was committed in principle to a kind of world conquest.

Professor Roberts concludes:

> "As the old saying goes, the British gave time, the Americans gave money, and the Russians gave their blood..."

"Britain gave time". How modest! What an extravagant piece of English understatement! What Britain gave the world was that War. □

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Starving the Germans: the Evolution of Britain's Strategy of Blockade During the First World War – Part Two.

by Eamon Dyas

The inherited wisdom.

In order to understand the behaviour of the British delegations during the Second Hague Peace Conference of 1907-1908 and the London Naval Conference of 1909 it is necessary to refer to three essential elements that contributed to the outcome of these events from the British standpoint. Firstly, the inherited experience of the British navy in the immediate years prior to these events. Secondly, the extension of diplomatic subterfuge to domestic politics in the era of the evolving democracy. And finally, the competing influence on Government policy of the social Liberal and the Liberal Imperialist outlook at the time (this latter element will be explored at a later stage).

The experience of the British navy in the use of blockade went back hundreds of years but the particular way it was used in conjunction with the application of the principles of "continuous voyage" and the definition of "food as contraband", was something that only emerged during the Boer War and predated the arrival of Liberal Imperialist influence on the Government of 1906. It had little to do with political influences but was essentially a naval development that emerged within the Admiralty "culture" of the day and which found expression in the aftermath of the decision of the Salisbury Government to make war on the Boer republics in 1899.

Once the politicians decided on war the British armed forces went their own way and acted to a greater or lesser extent within the terms of their own 'culture'. This was a "culture" which had continued to gestate along its own lines in times of peace in full expectation of the inevitable day of war. In the aftermath of its experience of war the armed forces ensure that the lessons learned are handed down through their own educational and training establishments and are included in their internal codes of practice. Once a particular tactic or strategy has proven itself it is retained within the "culture" unless or until it becomes discredited through a technological development or the experience of a superior strategy that renders it obsolete. Thus, we should not be surprised to find that certain tactics and strategies which first had an airing during the Boer war were used again by the British, albeit on a larger scale, against Germany in the First World War.

As soon as the armed services of the State are unleashed the main role of the establishment in general and official politics in particular is to sustain the military effort not only in terms of organising society along the lines of a war footing but to ensure that the morale of the nation is upheld through internal and external propaganda. Part of this propaganda is designed not only to highlight positive advances and episodes of heroic action on the part of the armed services in the course of the war but also to deny, neutralise and obscure those actions that might offend civil moral sensibilities at home or provide examples that contradict the core war purpose of the propaganda. This, combined with the freedom of action devolved to the armed services inevitably involves a willingness of Government politicians to acknowledge certain military actions in private while denying the existence of such actions in public. The supreme example of this can be seen in any reading of the Parliamentary debates during the Irish War of Independence when the British State continued to deny or distort the savage actions of its armed forces in the face of the overwhelming evidence. But that was by no means the first or the last example of this relationship.

The duplicity practised by the Liberal Imperialists from1906 onwards was something that they inherited within the political culture itself. Although it can be dated to the governing practices of the Elizabethan state, in its modern context it can be traced to the Salisbury Government of 1895-1902. Salisbury was unusual as a British Prime Minister in the fact that his expertise was in foreign affairs and for most of his time as Prime Minister he did not hold the normal concurrent title of First Lord of the Treasury but that of Foreign Secretary. Thus, he was an expert in the required 'diplomacy' that can be seen in operation throughout British history. However, Salisbury laid the basis for the use of this 'diplomacy' to operate within domestic as well as foreign affairs under the conditions of the evolving democracy. The Boer war provided the stage where this new mode of 'diplomacy' first showed its particular qualities. Politicians and the Admiralty continued to sustain a curtain of deception at home while imposing a strategy of starvation on the Boer people. They operated this strategy first through a quietly imposed naval blockade (although technically it was not called this) off the coast of Portuguese Africa and then through exerting pressure on the Portuguese to operate a proxy blockade in the port of Lourenço Marques on Britain's behalf. As Portugal was a declared neutral in the conflict all of this was done outside the existing understanding of what constituted international maritime law and all of this was done under conditions of sustained ignorance among the British populace.

International Maritime Law at the end of the 19th century.

The two main areas of interpretation of international maritime law at this time consisted of the Anglo-American model and the European Continental model. The Continental model provided more rights for neutrals and included a less ruthless interpretation of the law of blockade and the law relating to contraband. For instance on the law of blockade:

> "The fundamental principle governing blockades is that a blockade in order to be binding must be effective. This rule was formulated in the Declaration of Paris of 1856 in the following language: 'Blockades in order to be binding must be effective, that is to say, maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of an enemy.' It will be noticed that this statement is somewhat indefinite and that there is no attempt to really explain in detail what is necessary to constitute 'a force sufficient to prevent access to the coast of an enemy.' This question has given rise to considerable debate and has resulted in two divergent views - one known as the Continental and the other as the Anglo-American. The extreme Continental doctrine, championed par-

ticularly by French publicists, requires the blockading ships to be permanently anchored in the immediate offing of the ports to be affected, and the distance between the ships to be such as to subject to cross fire any vessel attempting to pass the line of blockade."

(*Phases of the Law of Blockade*, by Alexander Holtzoff. Published in the American Journal of International Law, Vol. 10, No. 1, January 1916, pp.53-54)

In opposition to the Continental model the Anglo-American model did not accept the principle that a legitimate blockade was restricted to stationary ships or that the ships be restricted to within the offing of the target ports.

"The Anglo-American view is to the effect that a blockade may be maintained by cruisers. This principle is sustained by the practice of nations, for most of the important blockades of the last fifty years were so enforced. This is true of the blockade by Great Britain of the Russian Baltic coast in the Crimean War; of the blockade of the Confederate ports by the North in the American Civil War; of the blockade by Denmark of the coast of Prussia in 1864; of the Turkish blockade of the Russian Black Sea coast in the Russo-Turkish War; of the blockade of the Peruvian and Bolivian coast by Chile in 1880; of the American blockade of Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Spanish-American War; and of the Japanese blockade of Liaotung peninsula in the Russo-Japanese War." (ibid. pp.54-55)

Although the tactic of a mobile blockade had been used previously by the British, the practice of what came to be known as the Anglo-American type was used extensively for the first time by the United States navy during the American Civil War.

During that war the United States navy imposed its blockade on the coast line of the Confederate States and policed it with cruisers in stationary and sailing mode, in some instances within sight of the coast and in others beyond the horizon. It also applied the widest possible interpretation of the doctrine of "continuous voyage" which the British went on to emulate and which by the time of the Hague Conference had become part of the accepted Anglo-American doctrine of blockade. The history of the legal interpretation of "continuous voyage" is explained in a paper published just after the end of the First World War in a series on International Reconstruction published in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*:

"The period of the Civil war marked a radical departure from the historic attitude of the United States on almost all questions of maritime warfare. Prior to that time we had been concerned mainly with the defense of neutral rights, but during the Civil war the United States pushed belligerent rights to the utmost limits. The contraband list was extended; the doctrine of continuous voyage was given a new application; a commercial blockade of the entire Confederate coast was established which in the last year of the war became the most rigid 'starvation blockade' in history; and the British practice of seizing a vessel bound for a blockaded port the moment it left its home waters was adopted.

In applying the doctrine of continuous voyage the United States made a most radical departure from the recognized rules of international law in seizing cargoes bound for neutral ports adjacent to the Confederacy on the ground that they were to be reshipped to Confederate ports. The doctrine as previously developed by the English Admiralty courts applied only to cases where the ship was to continue the voyage to a belligerent port. The sole rule for determining the destination of the cargo prior to the American Civil war was that the destination of the cargo followed the destination of the ship. The American doctrine separated vessel and cargo, and held that a vessel might have a neutral destination while the cargo might have a belligerent destination. The case of the *Springbok* decided by the United States Supreme Court in 1866 affords perhaps the best illustration of the extension of the doctrine of continuous voyage. This vessel sailed from London in 1862 for Nassau in the Bahamas. She was captured before reaching that port and brought into New York, where she was libelled as a prize. The district court condemned both the vessel and the cargo. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, which affirmed the decree as to the cargo but released the vessel. The court thus held that the ultimate destination of the cargo rather than the destination of the ship determined the liability of the cargo to condemnation. This decision was in conflict with the established rule of law that neutral property under a neutral flag, while on its way to a neutral port was not liable to capture of confiscation. Several other cases involving the same principle were decided by the Supreme Court at the same time." (*The Freedom of the Seas*, by John H. Latane. Published in Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 84, International Reconstruction, July 1919, p.166-167)

This decision by the United States Supreme Court was heavily criticised by British and European jurists at the time. However, despite the criticism by British legal jurists the British Government itself was notable by its lack of public pronouncements on the subject. It did not dissent from the decisions of the U.S. Prize Courts and made no demand for the U.S. Government to provide reparation for the confiscation of its mercantile cargoes. The reason for this, as history now shows, was that it had no wish to provide a hostage to fortune in the event of itself wishing to use the same methods in the future. Whatever the criticism by its jurists of United States' behaviour such criticism was never going to inhibit the future actions of the British State. It was careful not to get involved in any legal or political challenge which would force it to adopt a public position contrary to that of the American interpretation of "continuous voyage". This position was stated with some clarity by Sir Roundell Palmer, the British Solicitor General when the Government came under pressure from its marine merchants to take up the issue with the U.S. Government:

"England has as strong an interest as any power in the world in understanding well what she is about, when she is invited to take a step that may hereafter be quoted against herself and may make it impossible for her, with honour or consistency, to avail herself of her superiority at sea" (quoted in *Incidents of Confederate Blockade*, by Kathryn Abbey Hanna. Published in The Journal of Southern History, Vol. 11, No. 2, May 1945, p.217)

The author of the above article goes on, with some justification, to say, "Never were foresight and discretion better rewarded, because during World War I chapter and verse of the experience of 1861-1865 were quoted [by Britain – ED] to great effect." This is in reference to the counter-arguments used by Britain in the wake of U.S. protests at Britain's use of blockade tactics against neutral shipping in the early years of the First World War.

Yet, during the American Civil War, and for many years

afterwards, the British Admiralty continued to adhere to the orthodox interpretation of "continuous voyage" – at least that was its nominal position. British rules on the matter were later laid out in the Admiralty's *Manual of Naval Prize Law* which was issued in 1888. But, rules laid out in an internal Admiralty manual were one thing, naval behaviour in practice came to be quite another.

Britain's adoption of the United States version of "Continuous Voyage".

The thing that drove Britain's stance on the issue of the American interpretation of "continuous voyage" was not law and not morality but the practicalities of the moment. As an empire with a long history of seeing enemies come and enemies go, it was not going to rule out the practical option of using the American version of "continuous voyage" as a weapon against any enemy at some point in the future.

That enemy—the one that in so many ways was to act as Britain's oilstone on which it honed and sharpened its military strategy in preparation for its much bigger world war—was the Boer Republics. It was the Boer Republics that provided Britain with the opportunity to introduce its strategy of blockade that it later put to such effective use against Germany.

At the end of the nineteenth century neither of the two perceived threats to British interests, Russia or France, were candidates against which she could use the American interpretation of "continuous voyage'. In neither case would it have proved an appropriate or a particularly useful weapon. In the case of Russia, although it had a limited seaboard which would be easy to blockade, the sheer size of the country's land borders made it impossible to impose an effective economic stranglehold without the presence of a large army. In the case of France, it had an extensive seaboard as well as a significant hinterland bordering on several countries through which raw materials and foodstuffs could be transported—a situation which impaired the efficacy of "continuous voyage" as a weapon. The U.S. imposition of its version of "continuous voyage" on the Confederate States had been relatively effective because, although the coast line was long, there were few modern ports suitable for the unloading of significant cargoes. Consequently, the Confederate Government relied on places like Mexico and the West Indies as intermediate ports from which cargoes could be transhipped. Mexico posed a problem for the U.S. as goods could be shipped to ports like Matamoras and then transported overland and across the Rio Grande into Texas. Nonetheless the blockade did succeed in intercepting a significant proportion of the blockade running vessels destined for that port. Although it was not absolutely successful with regards to stopping the blockade running into Matamoras, what the American experiences showed was that its version of "continuous voyage" was most useful where the enemy possesses a limited coast line and where its access to a hinterland could be neutralised.

As things turned out the place where Britain first used and built upon the American version of 'continuous voyage" was in circumstances where it could not formally declare a blockade. Because the Boer Republics had no seaports through which they could import supplies and no hinterland with a sufficiently developed infrastructure to provide other options they were compelled to use Lourenço Marques on the Delagoa Bay as their principal port of entry for goods bound for the Transvaal. This was Portuguese territory and therefore designated a neutral port and under international law a neutral port could not be subject to blockade by a belligerent. This of course did not inhibit British actions. A contemporary American academic described the British move:

> "During the war the question of blockade could not arise for the reason that neither the Transvaal nor the Orange Free State possessed a seaport. Lorenzo Marques being a neutral Portuguese possession could not be blockaded by the English. General Buller, commanding the British land forces in South Africa, had indeed urged that such a declaration be made, but it was realized by Great Britain that such a step was not possible under the laws of war. More stringent measures, however, were taken to prevent the smuggling of contraband through Delagoa Bay, a transaction which the English alleged was an everyday occurrence." (*Neutral Rights and Obligations in the Anglo-Boer War*, by Robert Granville Campbell. Published by the John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1908, p.78).

These measures were in effect more stringent than a naval blockade as, once declared, certain restrictions on how the belligerent could implement a blockade come into play. British actions avoided such restrictions and involved, in effect, the placing of the entire area of the Delagoa Bay under embargo. Britain took upon herself the right to stop and search every ship entering that port. But, not only that, as we shall see, it also took on itself the right to capture neutral ships sailing as far away as Aden if that ship's manifest showed that it would call at that port at some point on its journey. As long as a ship had Lourenço Marques as its port of call at some point in its journey it was considered fair game for British warships to intercept it in the vicinity of any intermediate British controlled port. Given the territory possessed by the British Empire at this time, this involved an awful lot of ports. In fact it was extremely difficult for any non-British European merchant vessel not to have to call at some port in the British Empire for re-coaling in the event of it travelling any distance outside of Europe.

Although it is not part of the topic explored in this investigation, it should be acknowledged that Germany, as an emerging manufacturing and exporting country, needed a maritime fleet to transport raw materials and goods to and from overseas destinations. A maritime fleet at this time required ports at which its ships could re-coal without fear of interception and, as Britain had control of most of the ports on trading routes world-wide, Germany was forced to attempt to establish such ports in the more obscure areas of South-West, West and East Africa (its later concern for the fate of Morocco can also be seen in this context). British policy, on the other hand, was one designed to deny such facilities to Germany and the behaviour of the British Navy during the Boer War revealed just how vulnerable German shipping was at the hands of Britain. This in turn fed the growing awareness on the part of the German Government that it needed to increase its naval strengths if it had any chance of providing protection for its maritime fleet in the face of British hostility.

The British effectively imposed a blockade of the Delagoa Bay area in all but in name and this began to cause a strain on British-German relations almost from the beginning. In December 1899 two German vessels, the *Bundesrath* and then the *Herzog*, were seized by the British navy on the grounds that, although they were bound for a neutral port (Lourenço Marques), it was claimed that their cargos included contraband that was

eventually destined for the Transvaal Government. This was the first time that Britain used the U.S. interpretation of "continuous voyage" to intercept a neutral ship travelling from a neutral port (in this case Hamburg) to a neutral port. The events that unfolded in the following week were described nearly four months later in March 1900, when, under pressure from the German Government, the British Foreign Office released some of the diplomatic correspondence relating to the incident. This is how that correspondence was reported in the press:-

"The Foreign Office yesterday issued correspondence respecting the action of her Majesty's naval authorities with regard to certain foreign vessels,or, in undiplomatic phraseology, the seizure of German steamers by British cruisers on the ground that they carried contraband of war. From the correspondence it appears that on learning of the seizure of the *Bundesrath* the German Ambassador sent to her Majesty's Government a note which Lord Salisbury described as 'of a tone very unusual in diplomatic correspondence.' The first of these notes was addressed by Count Hatzfeldt on January 4th. After referring to the seizure of the *Bundesrath* the Ambassador contended that there would be no justification for taking the vessel before a prize court, because the presence of contraband of war had not been proved, and that, moreover, 'there could have been no contraband of war, since, according to recognised principles of international law, there cannot be contraband of war in trade between neutral ports.' The Ambassador then quoted in support of the German contention from *The Manual of Naval Prize Law* by the British Admiralty, which he declared justified his Government in claiming the release of the *Bundesrath* without investigation by a prize court. Lord Salisbury promptly traversed the Ambassador's arguments, but reserved their fuller consideration for another occasion.

The next day, however, the equanimity of the German Government was upset by the news of the arrest of the German liner *General*, at Aden. Acting under telegraphed instructions from Berlin, Count Hatzfeldt handed Lord Salisbury a note in which, after mentioning the stoppage of the *General*, and the occupation 'by force of British troops,' he said, 'Expressly reserving any claims for compensation, I have the honour to request that orders may be given for the immediate release of the steamer and her cargo, for the portion of her cargo which has already been landed to be taken on board again, and for no hindrance to be placed in the way of the ship continuing her voyage to the place mentioned in her itinerary. I am further instructed to request your lordship to cause explicit instructions to be sent to the commanders of British ships in African waters to respect the rules of international law, and to place no further impediments in the way of trade between neutrals. I should be obliged if your lordship would send me a reply at your earliest possible convenience.'

In reply to this communication, Lord Salisbury, on January 7, telegraphed to Sir F. Lascelles, in Berlin, as follows: - 'I have received two notes from the German Ambassador of a tone very unusual in diplomatic correspondence respecting the arrest of the *Bundersrath* and the search of the *General*. We are pressing the authorities in Natal for prompt completion of the investigation in the case of first named ship, and making enquiry into the facts as regards the second. The principle which we have maintained in regard to contraband of war is not that which the Geman Government supposes. Both notes will be answered in due course, under advice of the law officers of the Crown.' While the diplomats were thus at work, the third German liner, *Herzog*, was seized off Delagoa Bay, but almost immediately released upon an order cabled by the Admiralty to Rear-Admiral Harris, at Simonstown. On January 9 Baron von Eckarstein, First Secretary to the German Embassy, called on Lord Salisbury, and was informed by his lordship that he could not undertake to arbitrate on any legal question under dispute, but he thought that the question of indemnity, demurrage, or damage, if they arose, were very suitable for arbitration. His lordship added that England was wholly unable to agree with the German Government in the alleged right of a neutral to transmit contraband to a belligerent through a neutral port, and on the following day he sent a despatch by mail to Sir F. Lascelles in which he entered at length into the arguments put forward by the German Government, and disputed the applicability of the precedents quoted. On the 17th January Lord Salisbury returned to the subject in a despatch to Sir F. Lascelles, in the course of which he said, referring to Count Hatzfeldt's second note, 'I received with some surprise a communication from the representative of a Power with which he Majesty's Government believe themselves to be on the most friendly terms, worded in so abrupt a manner, and couched in language which imputed to her Majesty's naval commanders that they had shown a disrepect to international law, and placed unnecessary impediments in the way of neutral commerce. There is no foundation for these imputations.' Sir F. Lascelles took occasion to bring to the notice of Count von Buelow the fact that Lord Salisbury resented the tone and language of Count Hatzfeldt's Note, but there is no record in the correspondence that the German Foreign Minister made any apology, or even any attempt to mitigate the asperity of the Ambassador's language."

(*The Seizure of German Ships*, Birmingham Daily Post, 14 March 1900)

The German ship, the *General*, mentioned above was intercepted by the British navy and had its cargo forcibly unloaded and searched in the port of Aden. The *General* was a mail-steamer and its interception and search was a particularly provocative act. During situations of conflict involving blockade, the presumption was that unscrupulous mercantile merchants would attempt to use their vessels to ship lucrative contraband cargo but ships carrying mail were traditionally treated with more circumspection as they were commissioned directly by Governments to undertake this service and consequently deemed to be 'cleaner' than normal mercantile ships. For that reason the conventions of maritime practice dictated that neutral mail ships would not be apprehended by belligerents unless there was strong suspicion that they were carrying contraband and certainly would never be searched in the absence of definite evidence of them carrying contraband. Another unusual feature of this operation was the fact that when the *General* was arrested it was over 1,000 miles from the seat of war, again a situation without precedent.

However, what interests us here is the contending positions adopted by the German Ambassador to Britain, Count Hatzfeldt, and the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Salisbury, in relation to the legality or otherwise of the action of the British navy in seizing the *Bundesrath*. The German Ambassador quoted the British Admiralty's own Manual *of Naval Prize Law* as justification for the German claim that the British action was illegal. Salisbury, on the other hand, dismissed this claim but would not engage with the argument. If we look at the actual *Manual of Naval Prize Law*, issued by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in 1888 and which was still in operation during the Boer War, we find the subject fully covered in the following paragraphs:

"71. The ostensible destination of the vessel is sometimes a

neutral port, while she is in reality intended, after touching and even landing and colorably delivering over her cargo there, to proceed with the same cargo to an enemy port. In such a case, the voyage is held to be 'continuous,' and the destination is held to be hostile throughout.

72. The destination of the vessel is conclusive as to the destination of the goods on board. If, therefore, the destination of the vessel be hostile, then the destination of the goods on board should be considered hostile also, notwithstanding it may appear from the papers or otherwise that the goods themselves are not intended for the hostile port, but are intended either to be forwarded beyond it to an ulterior neutral destination, or to be deposited in an intermediate neutral port.

73. On the other hand, if the destination of the vessel be neutral, then the destination of the goods on board should be considered neutral, notwithstanding it may appear from the papers or otherwise that the goods themselves have an ulterior hostile destination, to be attained by transshipment, overland conveyance, or otherwise." (Quoted in Latane, op cit. p.167)

The crux is in the last paragraph and there is little doubt that, according to its own manual, the seizure of the *Bundesrath* was prohibited as it was a neutral vessel travelling to a neutral port and there was no evidence that it was carrying contraband. However, the Admiralty rules were of its own making and did not constitute international law. International law was, and continues to be, whatever the strongest nations of the world deem it to be and is usually dictated by their own national interests. Count Hatzfeldt may have proved that the British actions were hypocritical but that's a long way from showing that they were an infringement of international law. The treatment of the mail-steamer, *General*, was bad enough but the situation experienced by the *Hertzog* was an even more blatant infringement of convention as its cargo contained medical materials from the German Red Cross and ambulance material from the Belgian Red Cross— all goods to which even more stringent protection was supposed to have been guaranteed under the conventions of maritime law.

No doubt British national interest dictated its infringement of maritime conventions in its capture and search of the three German ships and no doubt the same national interest was at work when it decided to release these vessels, having found them not guilty of carrying contraband. The *Bundesrath* and the *Hertzog* were taken before the British Prize Court in Durban and after examination found not to be carrying contraband before being released and allowed to complete their journey to'Lourenço Marques. This however, was not the end of the British "blockade" but it did, as we will see later, presage a change of strategy which left the British less exposed to international opprobrium. In the meantime however, British tactics took an even more sinister turn.

Food as a weapon

"Sir, - There are disquieting intimations in The Times which appear to point to our Government's having treated foodstuffs as contraband of war.

As this is a matter of supreme importance, I venture to address this line to you, in the hope that it may elicit an authoritative statement on the subject.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

Rosebery
38 Berkeley Square, W., Dec. 28.

The above short letter from Lord Rosebery, the ex-Prime Minister, was published in *The Times* on 30 December 1899. Rosebery, who supported the War in South Africa at the outset, was already beginning to have concerns about the methods deemed necessary to ensure victory. Shocked at the reports of these methods and concerned at the failure of any Government representative to respond, he wrote this letter in an attempt to flush one of them out with an official statement on the subject. Two weeks later there was still no response from the Government. However a long letter replying to Rosebery from the Liberal Unionist politician Thomas Barclay was published on 12 January 1900. Thomas Barclay is one of those interesting individuals thrown up at regular intervals by British imperial culture who remain unknown but who play an important background role in seminal events in Imperial history. He was a Deputy Chairman of the International Law Association and as President of the British Chamber of Commerce at Paris was a significant figure in the work leading to the *Entente Cordiale* with France (resulting in his repeated nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize for many years afterwards). His letter to£*The Times* is headed *Foodstuffs as Contraband of War and Continental Opinion* and is basically an argument for the adoption of a new code of international law which embraces the changing circumstances under which the old objections from Continental jurists to things like "continuous voyage" and "food as contraband" are claimed to have passed. He explains the reticence of Government politicians to respond to Rosebery's challenge as follows:

"Sir, - Lord Rosebery's request for an authoritative statement as to the course our Government intends to take with regard to the conveying by neutral vessels of foodstuffs destined for the Republics with which we are at present at war has not yet elicited an official answer. This is possibly due to some doubt at the Foreign Office as to the views of Continental Governments on the delicate questions involved in any interference with ordinary neutral trade.

If, as is believed, the present war would be brought to a speedier conclusion by stopping the importation of food into the enemy's territory, the matter is one of great importance to Great Britain, the more so as, neither the Transvaal nor the Orange Free State having any coast, there is no means of imposing a blockade, the ordinary course pursued in order to starve an adversary. Not to prevent neutral vessels from carrying food to the enemy means that the farmers who form the enemy's fighting force will be able to carry on the war so long as they have the means of purchasing neutral produce. The question, then, is whether in such circumstances the British Government has the right to interfere with supplies by neutral vendors where [they are – ED] highly detrimental to her interests as a belligerent." (Extract from *Letter to the editor*, The Times, 12 January 1900, p.14)

Leaving aside the technical obfuscation that Britain could not operate a blockade against a country without a sea port, what is significant is the argument he marshals for the imposition of a food embargo on the Boer Republics. He returns to this argument later when he says:

"The Boers are not professional soldiers, but farmers. One of the chief objects of Great Britain is, therefore, to reduce them to the necessity of returning to their civilian occupation. The sale by neutrals of food to the Boers is thus a direct and immediate help

to them in prolonging the struggle." (ibid)

Thus, by implication, he justifies the abandonment of the traditional designation of food destined for the civilian population as non-contraband. While it was already acknowledged that food destined for enemy Government and armed forces be designated as contraband, food for use by civilians in the enemy's territories was traditionally exempt. In the case of the Boers, the distinction between civilians and the Boer armed forces was blurred and as a consequence of this Barclay posits the argument for treating all food destined for the Boer Republics as contraband. The implication of his position was that there was now no longer any legal entity constituting the civilian population of the Boer Republics and therefore all food destined for the Transvaal and the Orange Free State should be treated as contraband.

A variation of the argument was used by Britain at the early stage of the First World War in justification of its food blockade against the German people. The British used the German Government's understandable requirement to ensure a more equitable distribution of foodstuffs among its population in times of scarcity as an excuse for the furtherance of its starvation strategy against Germany's civilian population. In order to better organise the dwindling food supplies which had resulted from the British blockade the German Bundesrath on 25 January 1915 issued a decree which placed the supply of grain and flour under Government control. This decree was almost immediately re-issued to make it clear that it was only meant to apply to domestically produced supplies and that any imported foodstuffs remained in private hands and outside Government influence. However, the British Government used this decree to make official what was already unofficial policy of treating foodstuffs as contraband and it justified this with the argument that:

> "The reason for drawing a distinction between foodstuffs intended for the civil population and those for the armed forces or enemy Government disappears when the distinction between the civil population and the armed forces itself disappears.
>
> In any country in which there exists such a tremendous organization for war as now obtains in Germany there is no clear division between those whom the Government is responsible for feeding and those whom it is not. Experience shows that the power to requisition will be used to the fullest extent in order to make sure that the wants of the military are supplied, and however much goods may be imported for civil use it is by the military that they will be consumed if military exigencies require it, especially now that the German Government have taken control of all the foodstuffs in the country."
>
> (*Communication from Sir Edward Grey, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Ambassador W.H. Page, 10 February 1915*. Published in the Official Documents Supplement to the American Journal of International Law, Vol. 9, 1915. Baker, Voorhis & Company, New York, pp.80-81)

Germany, although it produced a higher proportion of its required foodstuffs domestically was, like Britain, dependent upon food imports to sustain itself. Notwithstanding the fact that the logic of Grey's argument would mean that if the German military were so disposed, they could be sustained by domestically produced foodstuffs, any shortfall in food requirements was bound to impact disproportionately on the civilian population. This would have remained the case whether or not Grey's argument is conceded. But then again the real purpose of the exercise, despite Grey's dressing up a barbarism in civilized terminology, was to starve the civilian population of Germany.

The genesis of this thinking can be traced to the way that Thomas Barclay sought an expansion of the definition of contraband to include foodstuffs during the Boer War. However, Barclay, as is usually the case in these matters, was merely performing the role of the partisan intellectual. His role was to supply a theoretical justification for actions that the Government was either already undertaking, or eager to take but loath to describe in terms that might impact on the international community's perception of such behaviour—there was, after all, the public sensibilities of civilised behaviour to sustain. Here is the observation of the Irish nationalist *Freeman's Journal* on the behaviour of the Government on the question of foodstuff as contraband at this time:

> The British cabinet is attempting to play a dishonest and, need it be added, a stupid game in relation to the question of foodstuffs as contraband. Lord Rosebery, who now realises that he did not achieve such a tremendous coup in identifying himsef with the war, and is casting around for a means of dissociating himself from it, has taken up this contraband question. He evidently intends to attack its promoters if they declare food contraband. He wrote a letter to the *Times* on the subject, which reached that journal on Thursday last, but which it did not publish until Saturday. In the meantime the *Times* got its 'line' from Lord Salisbury, and that line will be seen to be tricky, and at the same time transparently foolish.
>
> What the British Government wants to do is to make foodstuffs contraband without committing itself to any declaration on the point." (*Freeman's Journal*, 1 January 1900)

The problem facing the British Government in its naval campaign against the Boer Republics was that it had decided to act in a manner that was in complete contradiction to recently adopted positions on issues like "continuous voyage" and "food as contraband". We have seen how the German Ambassador in his note to Salisbury had pointed out that the British navy's behaviour in capturing German vessels was in marked contradiction to the Admiralty's own *Manual of Naval Prize Law* but the situation in terms of treating food as contraband was far more sensitive. The position adopted in relation to "continuous voyage" in the *Manual* was made in an internal Admiralty document which did not reach a wider audience whereas the British Government had recently made very public statements against the definition of food as contraband and as such its official position was publicly known. This happened in 1885 when the French, during the war with China, had declared that rice was to be designated as contraband. Britain responded to this not only by criticising France on the issue but refusing to abide by such a ruling and daring the French to impound any British mercantile ship that infringed it. As anticipated, the French, with due regard to the strength of the English navy, discreetly backed down (although not in public) and no action was taken against ships carrying such cargo.

Without making any announcement of the policy, Britain had already placed food destined for the Boer Republics under contraband. However, just as happened during the First World War when it applied a similar strategy to Germany, it brought Britain into early conflict with the United States Government. At

the beginning of January 1900 the first reports appeared in the press of the capture of the *Mashona*. The ship was seized at Port Elizabeth almost a month earlier in December 1899 by *H.M.S. Partridge* with a cargo of 17,000 sacks of flour destined for the Transvaal and was taken to Table Bay under British naval escort for assessment by a British Prize Court. It emerged that the ship had been chartered by the American-African Line and the event became an issue of contention between the two Governments. The U.S. Ambassador to Britain, Joseph Hodges Choate, made representations to the Government about the seizure and disquiet was expressed in the U.S. Senate about the British move. Eventually, at around the same time that the two German vessels were released, the *Mashona*, along with two other American ships, was also released, these vessels having been found to be free of contraband. However, in the case of the *Mashona*, its cargo of flour was confiscated by the British as constituting contraband (of which more later).

Pressurising Portugal.

No doubt these ships were released on the basis of a political judgment of the implications of acting otherwise. Germany had within its power the ability to make life much more difficult for the British in South Africa if it chose to supply effective support to the Boers, and the U.S., on whom Britain depended for much of its own food imports, also had significant leverage. However, in the absence of an alternative, there is little doubt that Britain would have continued to capture German and U.S. ships off the African coast as well as others that fell into their net. It was, after all, fighting its most important war since the threat posed by Napoleon. Such was its importance that the Boer War was referred to at the time as Britain's "Great War" (a title that it continued to be known by until Britain's next "Great War"). By January 1900 the British press was in full cry in response to well-placed propaganda claiming that Portugal was in widespread breach of its responsibilities as a neutral by permitting its port at Lourenço Marques to be used as an importing point for Boer military supplies. Typical of these reports was one published anonymously in *The Times* on 11 January 1900 which, after the usual charges that the port was facilitating the supply of contraband of war to the Boer forces, goes on to state:

> "It is plain that if aid and comfort to the enemy are to be prevented—and this assistance to the Transvaal is equally disadvantageous to British interests, whether conveyed by British or by foreign steamers—either the Government of Great Britain should obtain from the Continental Governments every facility for the examination of goods intended for the Transvaal at the ports of shipment, or very definite efforts should be made by our Government to insist upon the opening and examination of goods passing through Delagoa Bay to the Transvaal and the Free State. But whether more extreme measures may yet have to be taken will necessarily fall within the serious consideration of the Queen's Government.
>
> No doubt, it may be contended, in the interest of foreign Governments, that even contraband of war shipped by their subjects is entitled to be conveyed through neutral territory, but the necessities of the case entitle us to ask the question—How long are we to allow Portugal to facilitate the importation and transit of contraband of war to be used against us?" (*Delagoa Bay*, The Times, 11 January 1900, p.5)

What this amounted to was a demand that Continental Governments permit Britain access to cargoes at all "ports of shipment" in order to deprive the Boer forces of supplies. The term "neutral" has been effectively deleted from this scenario because the inclusion of such a term in the above context would have revealed the extent to which the proposal represented a blatant infringement of international maritime conventions. The author also indicates that other "more extreme measures may yet have to be taken" by the British Government in the event of neutral countries not cooperating with this demand. Such proposal could have been dismissed as of no consequence if it was not for the fact that it was published as a feature article under the implied approved byline "From a Correspondent" in *The Times* and because of its author. The "marked copies" of *The Times* (held in that paper's archive) by which the authorship of all post-1890 articles can be identified reveal that the author of the above report was Sir Donald Currie. This correspondent was not just any individual writing on the conditions faced by the British forces at the time of the Boer War. Currie was a Scottish born and Belfast educated ship-owner who operated a successful shipping line between Britain and South Africa. He was one of a group of Scottish Presbyterians who, in conjunction with missionary expeditions at the end of the 19th century, were responsible for the colonisation of south and east Africa and who advocated the supplanting by Britain of existing Portuguese territories. Among his other commercial interests were diamond and gold mines in South Africa. His businesses suffered mixed fortunes as a result of the Boer War. Many of his diamond and gold mines lay in the territory of the Boer republics but at the start of the war he gained a lucrative contract from the British Government to ship troops and war materials to South Africa. According to his entry in the old Dictionary of National Biography his shipping line transported "172,835 men to and from South Africa, together with thousands of tons of stores" at the beginning of the war (this fact has been curiously omitted from his entry in the latest version of the DNB).

While the press campaign was in full cry, a rumour was deliberately planted by political elements in the country that Britain was about to annex or forcibly purchase Lourenço Marques from the Portuguese (one of the conditions of the British-Portuguese treaty of 1891 was that Britain would have first option should Portugal decide to sell the port). This prospect caused serious concern in Russia and France who made it plain that such an act would be resented by themselves and other continental powers. It would have been strange if Britain had not considered the forcible taker over of Lourenço Marques as a means out of its difficulties, but the realization that the other European powers would not tolerate it undoubtedly acted as an inhibitor of such action.

The potential for the Boer War to expand into a wider one was avoided when the British Government managed to establish a new arrangement which ensured that its war purpose was met in a way that enabled it to tone down its vigorous seizure of neutral ships. This arrangement was also a forerunner of the 'arrangements' that Britain made with Holland and other European neutrals during the First World War to ensure that their shipping and their ports could not be used for the carrying and unloading of raw materials and foodstuffs destined for transhipping overland to Germany. The cue for this new arrangement came earlier in a suggestion made in the *New York Journal of Commerce:*

"The *Journal of Commerce* thinks that England is drawing a large cheque on the future to settle a comparatively small present bill when she lessens the security of neutral commerce and makes food contraband. These, it says, are surely not England's only resources in the Delagoa Bay difficulty. England cannot have less influence with Portugal that the United States had with England during the Rebellion, and she ought to use greater pressure to compel neutrals to discharge

their duties. Portugal should be induced, or obliged, or assisted to put a stop to all wrong ful traffic, and should be protectd in doing so. For England, as an alternative, to herself oppress neutral commerce is a confession of incomtetence by those responsible." (Seizure of Vessels, *The Standard*, 6 January 1900).

The reference here to the relationship between the United States and England "during the Rebellion" is to the American Civil War and the willingness of the British Government of the time to acquiesce with the terms of the U.S. blockade of the Confederate states. No doubt the *New York Journal of Commerce* in making the suggestion that "Portugal should be induced, or obliged, or assisted to put a stop to all wrongful traffic" through its port of Lourenço Marques was meant to point Britain in the direction of a strategy which ensured that Britain's "blockade" goals could be met while at the same time reducing the necessity of impounding U.S. and other neutral shipping with all the associated diplomatic fallout that this was generating. In all likelihood Britain had already been thinking along these lines. The ideal solution to the problems created by the "blockading" of Delagoa Bay was to get the Portuguese authorities themselves to do Britain's work by ensuring that the goods and foodstuffs that Britain had arbitrarily declared as contraband of war be impounded at Lourenço Marques. Thus, the object of "blockading" the Boer Republics could be achieved in a way that enabled the British Navy to tone down its aggressive policy towards neutral shipping on the high seas.

In the meantime, Britain's ongoing conflict with the U.S. over the earlier seizure of the *Mashona* forced the Government at last to make a public pronouncement on the issue of food as contraband: (See p.41 for quote)

Thus Britain finally acknowledged that it was treating foodstuffs as contraband of war. The usual burden of proof when it came to treating foodstuffs as contraband was that the intercepting belligerent would require proof that the cargo of the intercepted vessel was destined to be used by the enemy and not by the population of an enemy's territory before it could be confiscated. The British recast this equation to place the burden of proof on the intercepted vessel that the cargo was not bound for an enemy's use—an impossible stipulation requiring the proving of a negative that continued to be a tactic used by the West, for example in its treatment of Saddam Hussein's Iraq and the so-called "weapons of mass destruction" and today of the current regime in Iran in terms of its nuclear programme.

Returning to the issue of British pressure on Portugal. This was applied to Portugal on a number of fronts. Unofficial efforts to get Portugal to cooperate culminated in March 1900 when Britain asked Portugal's permission to land a large quantity of foodstuffs, mules and wagons at the Portuguese port of Beira in Mozambique for transportation to Rhodesia. When this was refused a new stage began which involved some significant armtwisting on the part of Britain. On 9 April 1900, General Sir Frederick Carrington landed at Cape Town with orders to proceed immediately to Portuguese Beira where he was to take command of five thousand troops being mobilized at that port. The early explanation for this action was that it was an expeditionary force gathered to suppress a native insurrection in Rhodesia but, as it later emerged, the real reason was for Carrington's forces to advance towards Pretoria from the north at the same time that General Roberts reached the city from the south. Towards this end Carrington's forces were transported across Portuguese territory into Rhodesia. Although Carrington's tactic was not put into operation, the acquiescence of the Portuguese authorities in permitting British troops and military supplies to traverse its territory in order to prosecute a war in which it was a neutral was proof enough of British pressure, particularly in view of Portugal's earlier refusal to permit British war material to be landed at Beira. The excuse furnished by Portugal for its actions was the terms of the Portuguese-British treaty of 1891. The Transvaal Government was informed by Portugal of these arrangements with the explanation that it was compelled to agree with British demands under the terms of the 1891 treaty. The incident generated quite a stir among the other European Powers as to the legality of British actions and the legitimacy of Portugal's interpretation of the treaty of 1891:

"The consensus among European Powers was that the landing of troops at Beira and the passage by rail to Rhodesia with the consent of Portugal constituted a breach of neutrality on the part of the latter. The opinion was freely expressed that the British Government not only placed a strained interpretation upon the only basis for her action, the treaty of 1891, but that even upon this interpretation she possessed no real servitude over the territory used by her for warlike purposes."

(*Neutral Rights and Obligations in the Anglo-Boer War*, by Robert Granville Campbell. Published by the John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1908, p.70)

And Campbell, himself an authority on international law, concluded:

"In the light of modern international law the action of England in sending troops through neutral Portuguese territory against a nation at peace with Portugal was based upon a flagrant misreading of a purely commercial treaty. The action of the Portuguese Government in allowing this to be accomplished was a gross breach of the duties incumbent upon a neutral State in time of war." (ibid., p.77)

Not long after these developments we find a change of behaviour of the Portuguese authorities in Lourenço Marques which suited Britain's requirement in terms of cutting the supply of material and foodstuffs to the Boer population in the Republics.

Blockade by proxy.

On 4 April 1900 the Portuguese Foreign Minister announced in the Portuguese House of Deputies that the Portuguese Government had granted permission for the transportation of British soldiers by railroad from Beira to Umtali. At the same time he was compelled to announce to the House of Peers that the Lourenço Marques Railway (Delagoa Bay Railway) would remain the property of the Portuguese Government. (See report in the New York Times, 5 April 1900). It would appear that in the throes of the British-induced pressure, it was necessary for the Portuguese

to provide some assurance of the continued status of Lourenço Marques. Within weeks of the new "understanding" between Britain and Portugal on the use of the Beira railway, the British Consul at Lourenço Marques, Alexander Carnegie Ross, was transferred after 16 years of connection with Portuguese Africa and having been consul at Lourenço Marques since March 1894. It is difficult to see why he had been removed and there are two different explanations. Either he was removed at the insistence of the Portuguese authorities as part of the new arrangement or he was removed by the British because he had proved too ineffective in the past in getting the Portuguese authorities at Lourenço Marques to comply with British requirements. With regards to the first explanation, in 1885 Alexander Carnegie Ross had been an active participant with the African Lakes Company in their illicit inducements of local chieftains in Portuguese territories to sell their lands to the company. Between 21 April and 24 August 1885 the African Lakes Company had negotiated 23 separate treaties with local chiefs on extortionate terms and which the Portuguese authorities refused to acknowledge as legal. Thus, there was good reason for the Portuguese authorities not to trust his continued presence at Lourenço Marques. Regarding the second explanation, the report of his departure in *The Times* tends in that direction:

> "But the real difficulties of Mr. Ross's position arose from the necessity of securing proper control over consignments of goods destined for the Boer republics, and the increased stringency which the Customs authorities now exercise is in large measure due to the representations which the British Consul made from time to time. It is characteristic of Portuguese officials that they are not easily moved to any course of action that does not suggest itself to their own minds, and it is hardly too much to say that Mr. Ross's 16 years' connexion with them and his mastery of their language enabled him to render important and valuable services to the Empire during the crisis." (The British Consul Lourenço Marques, report in *The Times*, 4 May 1900, p.11).

The question that remains unanswered is, why, if he had done such a good job, he was not retained in his post particularly as the war was still very much in progress and, alternatively, if he had done such a bad job he was not replaced earlier?

In the meantime, it wasn't long after Ross's departure that arrangements began to show results more in tune with British requirements, as a report in *The Times* indicated:

> "Our Lourenço Marques Correspondent writes on May 16: - Considerable commotion has been created among Continental merchants, through whom the bulk of the Transvaal's supplies have been imported during the war, by the stoppage by the Portuguese authorities of a large consignment of khaki clothing, boots, etc., palpably intended for the use of the burghers. In that instance there has been little disposition to question the validity of the right of the authorities to treat the goods as contraband of war. Pending adjudication on the legal aspect of the matter, the Portuguese officials have also refused to grant delivery of about 240,000 lbs. of American corned beef imported through the firm of Mr. Ifhel, a Transvaal burgher, and entrusted to the house of the Transvaal Consul-General for clearance. The grounds upon which the customs department acted were that reasonable grounds existed for the belief that the provisions were intended for the use of the burghers on commando, which brought the shipment under the category of contraband. As a matter of course this assumption was vigorously denied by the parties interested, and realizing the loss which the application of such a principle in future would entail upon Transvaal traders most of the German, Portuguese, and French merchants held a meeting at which it was resolved to lodge an emphatic protest on the subject before the acting Governor-General and to bring the matter under the notice of their respective Consuls. Mr. Hollis, the United States Consul-General, has been taking an active interest in the matter. The grounds of his interference are not, however, very clear, as although the goods had been purchased in America, the transaction was a cash one, and the goods had passed the importer who is a subject of the Power at war with England." (Restrictions upon Boer Imports at Delagoa Bay, *The Times*, 12 June 1900, p.10)

The significant delay between the date that this report was sent from its correspondent in Lourenço Marques (16 May 1900) and the day it was published in *The Times* (12 June) is rather mysterious but may have something to do with the fact that the paper was waiting on a possible reaction from Russia and the U.S. But as far as the US was concerned the seizure by the Portuguese authorities at Lourenço Marques of the American cargo of corned beef had already been reported through the Reuter's agency on the 16 May 1900 in the context of its accepted legality by the U.S. State Department as follows:

> "(Through Reuter's Agency.)
> Washington, May 16.
> The State Department knows nothing officially of the reported detention of American canned beef at Lourenço Marques or of the alleged intention of Mr. Hollis, the United States Consul at that place, to lodge a protest on the matter. It is admitted that Portugal has an undoubted right to prescribe certain goods as contraband so as to prevent their transport across Portuguese territory, but apart from this Portugal, not being under treaty obligations to the United States, is held to have liberty to prevent any kind of United States goods from crossing Portuguese East Africa. The only trade treaty between Portugal and the United States expired in 1892, and commercial relations have since been conducted on the basis of international courtesy. Therefore, if Mr. Hollis protests or attempts to protest he will not be supported." (*The Times*, 17 May 1900, p.5).

It seems that the U.S. was prepared to accept the impoundment of foodstuffs shipped on one of its maritime vessels if it was done by the Portuguese authorities at Lourenço Marques. As a neutral Portugal was entitled to act in such a manner with regards to any cargo unloaded in its ports. However, a similar action by Britain acting as a belligerent was deemed by the U.S. to be outside its authority and an infringement of the rights of neutral trade. This distinction highlights the advantages accruing to Britain through the new arrangements with Portugal.

Despite the new arrangements the British continued to seize ships and even German ships carrying foodstuffs. However, after the release of the *General*, the *Herzog* and the *Bundesrath*, it desisted from seizing German ships emanating from German ports. As the summer wore on the situation at Lourenço Marques continued to evolve in Britain's favour. On 4 August 1900 all the customs officials at the port were dismissed and their places filled by military officers and a force of twelve hundred men was sent from Lisbon two days later. The border between the Portuguese frontier and the Transvaal was placed under strong guard and communication with the Transvaal Government placed under severe restrictions. British naval policy towards Portugal had proved in the end to have been highly successful.

(To be continued.) □

What is Democracy?

by Brendan Clifford

"Defining the nature of the Franco regime has been a challenge for scholars because of its significant evolution in the course of 40 years. In the first decade after the Civil War ended in 1939, the regime was characterized by massive repression, including up to 200,000 killed and many more incarcerated in concentration camps and prisons. Until 1945, the regime was also characterized by fascist trappings, such as the salute, the military uniforms, the corporatist syndicates that would vertically integrate the population into the regime, and the co-ordinated mass spectacles, showcased by the fascist-dominated Movimiento, the single party created by the Nationalists in 1937, and the prominent face of the regime in these early years. Above the party was the leader, Francisco Franco, who promoted a messianic vision of his role as saviour of the Spanish nation that placed him in the company of other fascist leaders. His belief system was more militaristic and catholic than fascist, but his ambition to purify a Spain corrupted by the "foreign" ideologues of liberalism and Marxism went well beyond an authoritarian ""restoration of law and order". As part of this purification, the regime also tried to impose ideological unity through a marriage of nationalism and Catholicism, disseminated by the Church and the Movimiento. While the regime never approached the totalitarian or fascist pretensions of Nazi Germany, in the 1940s it belonged in the same family as the other new mass dictatorships.

"By the early 1950s, however, the regime was already evolving, spurred by the defeat of fascism, the onset of the Cold War, and the economic stagnation of the regime's autarchic policies. After 1945, the regime began to downplay the fascist rhetoric and symbology, while Franco defined the regime as an "organic and catholic democracy" An important turning point was the 1953 agreement with the United States, which exchanged military bases for foreign aid and welcomed Spain into the democratic West as a partner in the Cold War " (*Making Democratic Citizens In Spain: Civil Society And The Popular Origins Of The Transition, 1960-78*, by Pamela Beth Radcliffe of the University of California, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p4-5).

The problem with Fascist Spain is that it ran its full course, dealt with the matter that gave rise to it, and in the 1970s became and normal and functional state of the Cold War democracy of Western Europe.

This is a problem because of the War that Britain declared on Germany in 1939—notionally but not actually in support of Poland in the Polish/German dispute over the German city of Danzig—a war that was conducted so disastrously that, by the Summer of 1940, it was increasingly presented as an Anti-Fascist War, an ideological war, and Germany was defeated by the main Anti-Fascist force in the world—Bolshevik Russia, which was the force against which the Fascist movement had arisen in the first place.

If the World War brought about by Britain in 1940-41 was a war against Fascism, how was it that it let a major Fascist State survive in 1945 when it might have been crushed?

And how was it, if Fascism was as it was depicted in the war propaganda, that Spanish Fascism ran its course and delivered a bourgeois democracy at the end of it? That was something that should not have been able to happen. But it did happen. The paradox was then explained away by an assertion that Franco Spain had been mistakenly characterised as a Fascist State. The alternative explanation, that Fascism had been misconceived because of demonisation in the World War, seems to be unacceptable still.

For Britain certainly, and especially for Britain in its moral browbeating of Ireland for its refusal to declare war on Germany (without an army), the Churchillian mythology of the War remains sacred.

But this is a mythology of Churchillians, rather than of Churchill. Churchill was a Fascist and never apologized for it. He saw Fascism as the only effective counter to Bolshevism in the conflict of elemental forces that the Great War, and British post-War policy, had set loose in Europe. He went to Rome in 1927, as a British Cabinet Minister, to praise Mussolini, and to say that if he was an Italian he would join the Fascist movement. His stand against "*appeasement*" was not a stand against Fascism but against concessions made to Indian nationalism that would tend to erode the Empire. If the Parliamentary system had been unable to cope with the crisis of the early 1930s—it coped only by suspending party government and establishing all-Party National Government—it is probable that he would have been the Fascist Saviour of England. And, when Hitler came to power in Germany—or brought power with him to the governing of Germany—Churchill said that, if England in defeat had been placed in the position which Germany had been placed by the Versailles Treaty, he hoped that a man like Hitler would have arisen to restore the nation.

Churchill's view of Fascism was that it was a force capable of pulling a disintegrating situation together in the capitalist/democratic interest, even though it was a formal breach of democracy, thus warding off Bolshevism.

Though Churchill has been accorded the position of Leader of the war against Fascism, he did not believe in that war.

The authentic Anti-Fascist power was Bolshevism. Bolshevism was the power against which Fascism had arisen. Victory over Fascism, which brought Bolshevism to dominance in Europe, would have been a catastrophe in Churchill's view.

Churchill's campaign against Germany began only when Fascism made it a viable State again. It was not a campaign against Fascism, but against Germany.

He wished for Italy as an ally and saw the antagonising of it over hollow League of Nations pretensions as craziness.

Italy for its part was very willing to continue being Britain's ally. Mussolini began his transition from Socialism to Fascism as a British agent in the campaign to lure Italy into irredentist war on Austria-Hungary in 1915. In the 1920s and 1930s one of his major concerns was to preserve Austrian separation from Ger-

many. Though it was a condition of the Versailles Treaty that Austria and Germany must not unite, and democratic Austria had been prevented from uniting with democratic Germany, it became evident that Britain did not have the will to prevent the merger of Fascist Austria and Nazi Germany. Italy had to resign itself to this.

When Britain, having actively facilitated the establishment of Nazi German dominance in Central Europe, embarked on a bizarre change of course in 1939, declared war on Germany in September 1939, and after nine months of military inactivity against Germany, lost the war in France in May-June 1940, Mussolini joined the War on the German side, took back some territory from France, and gave support to the New Order in Europe. Of course he was called a Jackal for joining the winner, but when Britain is winning that is what it encourages states to do.

When Mussolini entered the war in the moment of Anglo-French defeat, he did not anticipate that Churchill would seek an alliance against him with the great evil Power which a dozen years earlier he had praised him for saving European civilization from. But that is what Churchill did.

If Mussolini had bided his time, and chosen an opportune moment to joint the war on the other side, he might have been amongst the victors in 1945 in the great war against——against Fascism?

On the other hand, if he had not gone to war in 1940, Churchill would have found it more difficult to spread the war, and the delay imposed by Balkan events on the German invasion of Russia might not have happened, and the whole outcome might have been different. Such variables are incalculable. But there seems little doubt that the diversionary activity into which Germany was drawn by Mussolini's entry into the War was not advantageous to Germany.

Franco, having just won his Civil War, refused to be drawn into the World War. His view was that it was not an integral war but three wars which were different in kind. He took part in one of them, on a limited scale: the war against Bolshevism.

There is nothing paradoxical or problematic in the evolution of Spain through Fascism to what we call democracy, if one discards the essentially mindless war demonisation—which is something we should be able to do in Ireland—and take something like Churchill's view of Fascism as expounded in 1927. But of course that is something that is not allowed in our Universities, now that they have placed themselves under British tutelage.

In the US, however, a degree of realistic investigation is beginning to be allowed in this matter. Or, rather, certain facts that were never hard to see are becoming sayable.

There was a very considerable degree of bourgeois freedom of opinion in Italy, Germany and Spain during their Fascist periods. That kind of bourgeois freedom is not to be found in Soviet Russia. Bolshevism was remaking society on new principles, while Fascism was a holding operation for capitalism in an emergency situation. It was only in Spain that the holding operation ran its full course and brought the social elements back into working combination, providing a stable national framework for what we call *democracy* to be functional in.

> "It {Jack London's *The Iron Heel*} is merely a tale of capitalist oppression, and it was written at a time when various things that have made Fascism possible—for example, the tremendous revival of nationalism—were not easy to foresee ..." (George Orwell, *Prophecies Of Fascism*, July 1940).

> "'Pure' pacifism, which is a by-product of naval power, can only appeal to people in very sheltered positions ..." (Orwell, *The Lion And The Unicorn*, February 1941).

> "What has kept England on its feet during the past year? In part, no doubt, some vague idea about a better future, but chiefly the atavistic emotion of patriotism, the ingrained feeling of the English-speaking peoples that they are superior to foreigners ..." (Orwell, *Wells, Hitler And The World State*, August 1941).

> "The Left Book Club was at bottom a product of Scotland Yard, just as the Peace Pledge Union is a product of the Navy ..." (ibid).

Orwell demonstrates the ultimate meaninglessness of the Left/Right ideological division in foreign affairs. He became the great literary hero of the Left/Right—of the Ultra-Left/Ultra Right. *Animal Farm* and *1984* were Labour/Tory literary-political classics of the Cold War, written by the upper-class proletarian who had gone to Spain for the war but was ideologically too pure a Socialist to be able to approve of the *realpolitik* that might have saved the Republic.

He is one of the few British writers, and certainly the only Socialist writer, to have *a Collected Works*—and a very big Collected Works it is.

The *"tremendous revival of nationalism"*, which made Fascism possible, was unforeseeable when Jack London wrote *The Iron Heel* before 1914. In the 1930s the London Left could be contemptuous of patriotism and be pacifist because it lived in security behind the shield of the Royal Navy and under the protection of Scotland Yard.

Why was there a tremendous revival of nationalism a generation after Jack London wrote *The Iron Heel*? Because the national framework of life had been disrupted in Europe by the Great War and the destructive peace imposed at the end of it. Nations needed to be constituted as viable political entities—and new *"nation-states"* conjured into existence for the convenience of the British and French Empires, without prior national development, had to fill themselves out nationalistically to give substance to the new forms.

But the integrity of English national life remained secure behind the shield of the Royal Navy and under the supervision of Scotland Yard. Under these circumstances England could play at great ideological disputes. But, when it decided to make war again, and even gave that war an ideological name, the war was fought in the old-fashioned way, as the patriotic war of a people who knew they were superior.

England could play at ideological dispute, and at war it could shift from one ideological façade to another and back again, because it had an oligarchically founded system of representative government, stabilized by the inertial force of generations of habit. As a democracy gradually established by a ruling class, its resourcefulness as a state was not limited by the superficial political forms of the moment. And it made sure that the democracy was not spoiled by excessive education—or by Culture, which its propaganda had made a dirty word in the 1914 war on Germany. And there was a wealth of English political literature showing this to be the case—the influential conservative literature of its radical development, of which Clarendon, Burke and Bagehot were never out of print.

Britain was top-dog in the world in 1919. Major Street, an important figure in the Dublin Castle Government of Ireland in 1920, had told the world during the Great War that it was being fought to determine who was to be top-dog, as there could not be

two top-dogs, and Germany had become too strong for Britain to rest easy in its dominance.

Britain was top-dog. And, more than any other state, Britain had reason to know that democracy, as it was being presented in the ideology of the time, was not practically functional. And yet it chose to behave, in laying out the new order of Europe at Versailles, as though democracy was like a chemical formula that could be applied to a group of elements anywhere and produce a result.

The two most influential English socialist writers were Robert Blatchford and George Orwell. Both began as earnest socialists—Blatchford more so than Orwell. Blatchford aspired to restore something of the life of Merrie England: England as it was before capitalist industrialization. (I do not recall if he sought to go back further, to beyond the Reformation, as William Cobbett did in the 1820s when the truth about English history suddenly struck him. One of the central purposes of the English Reformation was to stop England from being merry, and it had considerable success in that regard.)

Blatchford came to realize that Merrie England was dead and gone, and that what made life tolerable for the mass of the people of capitalist England around 1900 was Imperialist plunder of the world. Blatchford then became an Imperialist and a campaigner for strengthening a Navy that was already stronger than any other two Navies combined. And he was disarmingly frank about where he stood. He summed up his position as *My Country Right Or Wrong*.

When Orwell sloughed off the Utopianism of his younger days, and decided to face the facts of English life squarely, and to scourge liberal intellectuals who preferred to slither around them, his slogan was *My Country Right Or Left*.

England had no need of the constructive nationalism that arose in countries that had been split apart into their elements. The classes never fell into all-out antagonism with each other, even though the ideological rhetoric sometimes suggested that they did. They were held in an evolved combination that was the actual framework of both economic and political life. And the political parties, regardless of the theatrical display of fundamental antagonism in the Parliamentary show, were complementary parts of a system which embraced them all. And, when a situation came about in which there was a danger that the role-playing of all-out conflict might become real, the game was suspended for a while by means of all-Party Government.

An essential feature of the Fascism that arose in societies splintered by the Great War and the Versailles Peace was that the classes and political trends which had fallen into real antagonism were brought back into functional combination in corporations in which the antagonistic elements were represented and were required to make workable compromises. From the viewpoint of the Communist Party and of left liberal socialist ideals, this was described as class collaboration and was condemned. And *it was* class collaboration.

The condemnation made sense from the Communist position, which aimed to stabilize the situation by reconstructing society comprehensively on the basis of the working class and phasing out the other classes. But, from the liberal socialist viewpoint, the condemnation involved a large measure of blindness to the conditions of its own activity, which had class collaboration as is medium of action.

The difference between Britain and Italy in that regard was that the class collaboration did not need to be formally organized by the State in Britain. It was habitual because it had grown up with capitalism in England, where capitalism originated. In Italy class collaboration had broken down, but Bolshevism was unable to dominate the chaos by establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat. Fascism restored class collaboration through its Corporations. Then Fascist class collaboration was denounced by liberalist socialism in England, which was seemingly unaware that it operated at home within a very well established system of class collaboration.

Fundamentalist analysis was applied to foreign situations but was shunned at home. It was an instrument of foreign policy. And so it remains.

Force was applied to the setting-up of the Fascist combinations, but, in Italy and Germany, very much less than the propaganda history of the *"Antifascist war"* would lead one to expect. And, once established, those systems functioned on the basis of a very substantial degree of consent. The welter of party-politics melted away under a mild degree of suppression. It was experienced as relief to be free of a wild party-politics unconnected with an effective system of government.

Spanish Fascism did not arise out of mere civil disorder. It was constructed in the course of war. And drastic violence was applied to the consolidation of the regime. But, forty years later, the Right/Left character of the dictatorship—in other words, the Fascist dictatorship—produced a national society with a body politic capable of operating the very artificial system that we call democracy.

(Fascism, despite the nationalism which is its essential feature, is often described as if it was a third kind of internationalism—liberal Imperialism and Bolshevism being the two others. If Franco had been a Fascist internationalist, he would have collaborated with Hitler to take Gibraltar, shutting Britain out of the Mediterranean, and probably obliging it to make a settlement with Germany before it succeeded in bringing about the catastrophe of the Nazi/Soviet War.)

A book with an interesting title was published by Oxford University Press recently: *Forging Democracy* by Geoff Eley. It promises to be a book about how democracy is made, but it isn't. It fits in with the suggestion cultivated by the Western media that democracy is what happens naturally when it is not being suppressed. That notion of it is used to justify the invasion and destruction of states on the ground that they are not democracies. Ireland contributed to the frivolous invasion of Iraq in accordance with that notion.

Iraq is a state thrown together by Britain for its own purposes after 1918, and given its first experience of elected government when Britain kidnapped the candidate it did not want to win. At the time of the 2003 invasion of destruction, the Baath system was giving Iraq cohesion as a liberal, secular State, but not an electoral democracy operating through the free conflict of parties. The invasion set free the forces that were being curbed in the construction of the liberal national State, and set the component elements—Shia, Sunni and Kurd—in conflict with each other.

The liberal, secular State that was smashed in order to unloose religious and tribal war was fairly enough described as Fascist. It had a very considerable degree of economic and social freedom of the European kind within the political form of the nationalist dictatorship and might have evolved in the Spanish manner, if it had not been destroyed by overwhelming force applied against it from the outside.

Eley writes concerning Spain:

"Throughout Francisco Franco's long reign democracy was imagined heroically as resistance exploding after the dictator's death Yet democratic transition proved prosaic. The old order was dismantled from within, not by revolutionary confrontation. Democracy took a parliamentary form via carefully managed consensus This contradiction, between heroic image and prosaic reality, popular mobilization and negotiated deals, went to the heart of the new Spanish Socialist Party emerging from the process " (p422).

This is not said approvingly.

At the same time revolutionary socialist events, where they gave rise to functional states, are reviled as Stalinism.

The architects of post-1945 democracy in Germany and Italy are barely mentioned. De Gasperi is not mentioned at all. Adenauer is mentioned in passing as attacking civil liberties in the 1960s, when:

"Conflict was fired by emotionally charged languages of antifascism, as students accused older generations, SPD and CDU alike, of evading Nazism's continuing legacies. West German antiauthoritarianism subsisted on this historical critique" (p417).

I could never figure out what Adorno had in mind as the right thing to do when he attacked Adenauer's Christian Democratic system as being scarcely distinguishable from the Nazi system. It was certainly the case that there was a large carry-over of personnel from the one system to the other but, seeing that the Nazi system functioned with the active consent of the great bulk of the population, that was certain to be the case if there was to be a bourgeois-democratic German state after 1945. And the fact that Nazis could play such an extensive part in what was in many respects the exemplary European democracy surely means that, to that extent, and in spite of all the disruption and excesses of the War, Fascism performed much the same function in Germany as in Spain.

Deprived of the means of understanding, and subjected to the *"critiques"* of the Frankfurt School, some young Germans engaged in Anti-Fascist activity against the virtual Fascism of the Christian Democratic State constructed by Adenauer, and we got the Baader-Meinhof terrorism.

Eley condemns the *"Stalinisation"* of Eastern Europe after 1945. He also condemns the Marshall Plan which made Western Europe economically viable. He says that in Italy: *"The US policy entailed reviving conservative authority, including the Church's societal power, and breaking the labour movement's unity"*.

The World War launched by Britain was extended by Britain until it fell to others, the USSR and the USA, to conclude it. If Eley sees Britain as some intermediary form between these two, then it disabled itself for playing that part by the recklessness with which it handled the War, and it fell to the two others to arrange the peace in accordance with their own starkly opposed systems. Cold War seems the inevitable outcome of this, but it was Britain that hurried it on, when it felt the Americans were too slow about it. And America gave cover for the establishment of the Christian Democratic regimes which Britain was not at all happy with.

(Christian Democracy was a European form, free of Fascist taint, which is incomprehensible to British political understanding, and therefore is not manipulable by it and can only be destroyed.)

Eley says at the outset:

"I was formed in the protective and enabling culture of the post-1945 political settlement. I was a child of the welfare state Though I was not born until 1949, I remember the war very clearly; it was all around me. I knew why it was fought" (px).

There is nothing paradoxical in his remembering the war that was over before he was born. That is a normal British experience. The society was saturated for a generation with memory of the war, accompanied by appropriate knowledge of why it was fought. The war was better remembered and known for not having been there when it happened. I worked in London about a dozen years after the war ended, with people who had taken part in it, and some of them remembered awkward facts about it that were not part of the appropriate memory determined by the cinema.

The post-War generation in Britain lived in comfort and stability. But that post-War settlement was very unsettled for others. It included the comparatively clean war in Korea, and two very dirty wars, in Malaya and Kenya. And the war in Malaya was directly relevant to comfortable life in England. The tin and rubber in Malaya could not be let go to the Malayans.

Eley begins with nostalgia for the post-War settlement, but a few hundred pages on he goes at it analytically with his hazy notion of democracy:

"A key figure was the foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, fresh from the wartime Ministry of Labour, with a militant but right-wing trade union history. Incorrigibly authoritarian and anti-intellectual to a fault, Bevin was the archetypal labour bureaucrat, crudely hostile to rank-and-file activists and socialist thinkers alike, belligerently intolerant of democracy, whether on the shop floor, in the general meeting, or in the committee room, let alone on the streets. Beside Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Bevin was the government's dominant personality and brooked no criticism, bullying parliamentary critics into acquiescence and overruling his cabinet colleagues. He subscribed wholly to the "official" Foreign Office view of British policy—preserving Britain's role as a great power in full continuity with the Churchillian policies that came before. This included the "special relationship" with the US, axiomatic anti-Communism and extreme anti-Soviet animus" (p303).

This post-War arrangement was for capitalism regulated by Keynesianism, giving high wages and full employment:

"It allowed popular patriotism to be rewarded with a strengthening of democracy and social justice, without denying capitalism as the source of future prosperity. Capital's interests would be guaranteed by national economic management, social peace, and rising productivity. The people would be served by full employment, rising incomes, expanding social services, and the government's commitment to social equality.

"Corporatism

"The guarantors of this implied social contract were national union barons. Epitomized by Ernest Bevin, they brokered indus-

trial discipline and their members' productivity. Sections of workers won unprecedented security New workplace deals brought union recognition The new factory regime would feed a new consumer-oriented boom, where profits could escape older challenges to the nature of the system.

"At the apex was the state. Postwar industrial relations required a corporatist triangulation {labour, capital, the state} This corporatism was held together partly by national systems of consultation and partly by Keynesianism's ending of mass unemployment It produced a system of "reform or managed capitalism". This held a central place for organized labour, while bypassing socialism as such" (p316).

"At the birth of the British wartime coalition, in a speech before two thousand union leaders on 25 May, 1940, Ernest Bevin, then newly appointed minister for labour, asserted the unity of socialism and patriotism in the promise of a Labour-dominated political future:

""I have to ask you virtually to place yourselves at the disposal of the state. We are Socialists and this is the test of our Socialism If our Movement and our class rise with all their energy now and save the people of this country from disaster, the country will always turn with confidence to the people who saved them."

"By 1945 this promise had been fulfilled. The war years endowed an ethic of collectivism that resounded for another three decades. But the larger vision, of exercising moral-political leadership in the nation, in the manner Gramsci or the architects of Red Vienna or the militants of little Moscows had imagined, or the Swedish Social Democrats still pursued, was lost" (p319-20).

It is not clear what this has to do with *"forging democracy*", unless the implication is that democracy is a kind of reflex of socialism.

I have come across the view that democracy without socialism is not democracy. And then, of course, there is the view that socialism is so much the most important thing about democracy that it scarcely matters whether the political forms that are thought of as democracy in the affluent and dominating countries of the West are present or not.

About forty years ago Malcolm Caldwell concluded that liberal democracy was a phenomenon of imperialist capitalism (in its home bases, of course). I discussed this with a friend of his, Bill Warren, who was a Professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Unfortunately Bill died soon after and I don't think that line of thought was followed up by any other academics. My vantage point on the question of democracy was Belfast, where there was an unusually high level of electoral activity, but it was all disconnected from the party-political system through which the state was governed. That, as far as I could discover, was a unique form of disfranchisement, and it existed in a corner of the state governed by the Mother of Parliaments. Eley does not mention it. It is not something that the Oxford University Press allows to be mentioned in its books. And neither does Eley mention the 28-year war fought within the advanced liberal democracy of the UK.

The corporatist *"reform capitalism"* of which Eley is so dismissive was both in conception and implementation the work of Ernest Bevin. He describes both the system itself and the means by which it was brought about in terms which suggest that it was ranging on fascism. It was the major reform of capitalism ever enacted within what is now considered to be the only real form of democracy by the states that won the Cold War and have been knocking down other states in the name of democracy. It is this form of democracy that some understanding of is needed. Eley does not apply his mind to it.

Gramsci, Red Vienna, and the Parliamentary Socialists who opposed the authoritarian Union boss, Ernest Bevin, constructed nothing which would enable us to see that they had a better grasp of things than Bevin. Gramsci was a thorn in Mussolini's side, and of course there was merit in that. But, beyond that, it is hard to see what he was about. And Red Vienna seems to have found itself thrown together in prison with Fascist Vienna by the Nazis after the *Anschluss* and worked out a *modus vivendi* with it which was put into effect after 1945.

In Britain Harold Wilson's Government set up a Royal Commission, chaired by Bevin's biographer, Alan Bullock, to look into the possibility of establishing a measure of Workers' Control in the management of enterprises in the corporatist *"reform capitalism"* established by Bevin. The Commission reported in favour of workers' control and proposed a mechanism to implement it. The Gramscians, the Parliamentary Socialists, the Communist Party, the Institute of Workers' Control, etc., etc. all opposed it. The Bullock Report was defeated by Anti-Bevin socialism to the great relief of Tories who aspired to restore freedom to capitalism.

Margaret Thatcher launched a campaign against Corporatism which the Anti-Bevin Left could not but support. She won the 1979 Election and set about dismantling Corporatism, and putting workers back in their place, and the socialist movement evaporated.

Bevin's ideas for reform capitalism were worked out in the course of Trade Union activity in the 1930s. He began groundwork for the actual reform as unelected Minister for Labour in 1940. He was quickly given a seat in Parliament but was never drawn into Parliamentary badinage. As Labour Minister in 1940-45 he ran the Home Government while Churchill ran the War. He was unexpectedly made Foreign Minister in 1945, and made arrangements to hold off the *"Stalinist juggernaut"* (Eley p309) and to hold what could be held of the Empire. When democratization was first entertained as a practical possibility by English ruling circles in the late 19 century, it was generally thought that what made it possible at home was Imperialism abroad. Although—or because—Bevin was an effective socialist reformer at home (or at least an effective reformer in the working class interest), he was not anti-Imperialist.

As Spain was evolving from fascism to democracy there were vigorous discussions about what kind of democracy to have. Was it to be a state system or a system of active citizens:

" the end of the story is not so simple as the victory of democracy over dictatorship. At stake during the transition was defining what sort of democracy Spain would have. From the grass-roots perspective there was no predetermined formula for democratic citizenship, as evidenced by the broad debates about participation, procedure and representation that had been carried on since the mid-1960s. After 1975 these debates coalesced into the "citizen movement", whose theorist-activists helped to define a "communitarian and participatory vision" of democratic citizenship But in the end, this "democratic alternative" faded away, triumphed by the liberal, rights-based model of citizenship promoted by the political elites

"In fact, there was a certain paradox, between a Constitution that celebrated the principle of participation, and the eventual demobilization of the citizen movement that strove to make this principle the core of democratic practice" (*Making Democratic Citizens In Spain* p321-2).

" almost as soon as the right to active citizen participation was both formally endorsed and given the Constitution, the citizen movement began to demobilize The pressure for popular demobilization from above came largely from the new political parties" (p324).

There was *"focus on the state as the democratic protagonist"*. And the Socialist Party began to sound *"like an enlightened despot whose job was to protect a weak society:* (p327).

Rousseau figured out many of these things more carefully than he has ever been given credit for, especially in Ireland where he has been strongly denounced by our progressives. He did not consider representative government to be democratic government, so he did not consider that large states could have democratic government. Representative government, operated by tightly organized political parties, is at least something quite different from government by the people of themselves, and it gives rise to very different effects.

Representative government, based on universal adult franchise, by tightly organized parties, which engage in electoral conflict with each other in a demagogic rhetoric of extreme antagonism, soliciting votes which will entitle them to be the Government of a bureaucratically functional State for a few years, before giving way to a rival party which they have denounced as a danger to civilisation: that is the only form of democracy acknowledged by the victors in the Cold War. Words like *"community"* and *"active citizenship"* are tossed about in its rhetoric but are deprived of reality. It is a historically evolved system in places, not a system constructed according to a principle.

When states of this kind invade other states, declaring that their purpose is to establish this democracy in them, when it is evident that its preconditions do not exist there, the basic precondition being the atomizing of actual living communities, it should be assumed that their purpose is mere dominance under a system of Imperialism appropriate for globalist finance capitalism.

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The Prehistory of 'The Special Relationship' - An American on Britain and its Subjugation of the World (1864)

by Pat Walsh

The Prehistory of 'The Special Relationship' - An American on Britain and its Subjugation of the World

After the United States had survived its civil war the Reverend Charles Brandon Boynton gave a Thanksgiving Sermon to the House of Representatives in which he pointed out that the enemy without was more dangerous than the enemy within:

> "We should be thankful to God because He baffled the plot which was formed against us in Europe. With the evidence now before us, no candid man can doubt that the conspiracy against our Republic led to Europe, and that the foreign branch then was more formidable than that on our own soil. The plot was prepared with as much care in France and England as in the Southern States. The European part of it was ready quite as soon as their accomplices here. When the moment arrived, France and England, by proclamation, and according to previous agreement, lifted the traitors to the position of lawful belligerents... England was on hand to aid in crippling a commercial and manufacturing rival, and gratify her jealousy of the United States, and get ready her Alabamas, and swift steamers to run the blockade. Nothing saved us at the outset from more active interference, but the perfect confidence of France and England that our ruin was sure through what had been done already. They watched and waited for our destruction in vain; but they thought it certain. They were ready to strike, but thought the blow not needed." (National Thanksgiving Services held on December 7, 1865, in the House of Representatives of the United States of America by Reverend Charles Brandon Boynton, Chaplain of the House pp.10-11)

These were the days before the 'Special Relationship' when war between America and Britain was still a living memory (England had burned Washington in 1813) and perhaps a distinct possibility of the future.

Charles Brandon Boynton

Charles Boynton was not just Chaplain to the House of Representatives; he was also author of *English and French Neutrality and the Anglo-French Alliance in their relation to the United States and Russia* (1864). This book was republished as *The Four Great Powers: England, France, Russia and America* (1866).

These two publications lay out a very interesting view of Britain from a time prior to the 'Special Relationship.' It is a view that is of interest not just in its description of the nature of the British State in the 1860s. It is also relevant to the time half a century on when Britain decided on war—but not against those whom Boynton imagined might be her enemies.

Boynton could not imagine that Germany might emerge as England's perceived rival half a century later because at that time Germany was the *"land of poets and dreamers"* and was not even a state. But in the description of England and what it was about in the world he gave a very good account of how it might perceive Germany and what it might attempt to do to her and why, in the future.

In the 1860s Boynton described why Britain had attempted to deal with two emerging rivals in the world—Russia and America. But there is nothing to suggest that the nature of the British State changed in any way that made it less likely that it should do the same thing again a few decades later. And there is much in Boynton's account to explain why the British State became, if anything, more likely to attempt to destroy a perceived commercial competitor as the reality dawned on it in relation to America and Russia.

Charles Boynton was not alone in America in the belief that Britain was engaged in everything short of formal alliance with the Southern rebels to break-up the United States. In *English and French Neutrality and the Anglo-French Alliance in their relation to the United States and Russia* Boynton argued that British 'neutrality' was not neutrality at all since it gave equal recognition to the Southern rebels and to the legitimate government of the United States. Boynton saw this policy as designed by England to be *"a war in disguise, war without risk"* aimed at opportunistically destroying US commerce and development. By a formal Proclamation of the Crown the Southern insurgents were given legitimacy and a national standing in recognising their Navy—which hardly existed in 1861. By this move England, according to Boynton, wanted to establish the South as a new entity on the American continent and free herself of a potential rival in the form of the United States.

The Royal Proclamation opened a great market for Britain for munitions in the US. England helped build a Navy for the South, arming and manning Confederate ships in British ports in order to reduce US commerce and transfer it to the British flag. When the South seceded in 1861 it possessed only 10% of the industrial base of the United States but Britain helped it to sustain its war for four years through the use of her naval shipyards, factories and mills and her help in running the Union blockade.

Boynton recognised that by the mid-nineteenth century capital and machinery and war-making potential went hand in hand and it had become England's objective to inhibit these productive forces being developed by potential rivals to prevent other nations becoming first-class military powers. Britain was using her navy to extend her own capital and produce across the globe as sources of wealth and power. She wanted to see the United States divided and dissolved so as to destroy a potential industrial rival and be left with the agricultural American South to deal with—which Britain viewed as virtually a mere agricultural colony supplying her looms with cotton and being a market for her textiles.

The English Navigation Acts of 1651, 1660, 1663, 1696 and 1712 were a series of laws that restricted the use of foreign shipping in trade between Great Britain, its colonies and the rest of the world. They prevented the mercantile fleets of the Dutch and others from importing produce to Britain and its colonies and put some restrictions on exports too (It was thought that preventing exports was impractical because that would lead to retaliatory measures being taken by other nations that would prevent British goods being exported to the European market.) The effect of these laws was to force colonial economic development along lines favourable to the interests of England and to inhibit the productive development of America. (The Navigation Acts were repealed in 1849 under the influence of laissez-faire. The Navigation Acts were passed during the time of mercantilism under which wealth was believed to be increased by restricting trade to colonies rather than through free trade. By the 1840s Britain changed its policy to reduce the cost of food through cheap foreign imports and in this way to reduce the cost of labour. Repealing the Navigation Acts along with the Corn Laws therefore helped stave off revolution by providing the English masses with cheap food.)

Boynton argued that the Navigation Acts destroyed Dutch competition and repressed American development by retarding the use of its natural resources by the colonists—excepting those which the British interest demanded. The Navigation Acts required all of the colonies imports to be either bought from England or resold by English merchants in England no matter what price could be obtained elsewhere. In this way the American colonies were prevented from developing indigenous manufacturing and were supplied by English mills and ships, being unable to build ships of their own and with all their trade in British hands.

Boynton described Britain in the 18th Century as the *"slaveholder of the world"* —treating the globe as a resource to enrich and empower the British ruling class. This made the British aristocracy akin to the Southern slave-owners writ large:

> "It was the serf or slaveholding principle applied to nations so far as was possible, and England grew haughty with the increase of her power, nursed her ambition and her pride until she thought to become the great slaveholder of the nations; she aimed to hold in subjection the territory, the resources, the labor of the world.
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> When her colonists were spirited and intelligent, like those of America, she hedged them round, and fettered them with oppressive enactments; and where they were weak and ignorant, she reduced them, as in India, very nearly to the condition of serfs upon the soil, laboring to supply cargoes for her ships, and material for her mills.
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> So far as lay in her power, she made of the earth one vast plantation, owned in England, and worked for the benefit of British capital. It is not surprising that with such a spirit and aims, the English aristocracy should sympathize with our slaveholding rebels." (pp.53-4)

Boynton argued that the true nature of Britain, the one hidden behind the liberal façade that it began presenting to Americans, was revealed in its conquest and subjugation of India and the treatment it meted out to its native population:

> "In no other quarter of the globe has Great Britain had an opportunity of exhibiting her real character on a large scale as she has done in India. In dealing with her American colonies, she was restrained by intelligence and power, on the part of those whom she attempted to tread down; but the feeble Hindoo could offer no effectual resistance, and on that vast field where there was no let nor hindrance, we have a right to infer that the real national spirit of England was revealed.
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> There, she had none to judge and none to restrain; she was not forced to any act which her judgment or her heart rejected, and she was not compelled to refrain from anything which she desired to do, and if any one asks what is the real temper and conduct of England in dealing with others, it is a perfectly legitimate answer to point him to her course in India, from the landing of Clive in 1751, down to the close of the Sepoy mutiny." (pp.65-6)

The brutal English treatment of the Indian led Boynton to suggest that the American should always maintain the following position with regard to Britain: *"In dealing with England, our ironclads and Parrott rifles, and fifteen-inch guns, will be found more convincing arguments than the most good natured and eloquent words."* (p.87)

England's Strategy of Domination

Boynton argued that there were three major elements to England's policy in the world:

1. To manufacture everything for the rest of the world.
2. To capture and confine all commerce to her ships.
3. To make herself the banker and capitalist to the world.

These were the objectives by which Britain sought to dominate and subjugate the world to its interests:

> "The one central idea of this policy is, to make Great Britain the manufacturing, the commercial, the money centre of the world. For this purpose she has seized upon every available spot on earth and made it tributary to herself, taking the Lion's share of all that could be produced, stripping her American colonies by oppressive enactments, and leaving the people of India just enough to enable them to continue their toil for her.
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> ... she struggled hard to render manufactures, commerce, and a navy, impossible in America, for the same reasons that she would gladly destroy them now; and she ruined the domestic manufactures of India, in order to compel the Hindoos to raise the raw material for her own mills, and then to purchase from her the manufactured articles, the Indian consumer paying thus not only the profit of manufacture to England, but the freight to her ships for carrying it twice across the ocean.
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> The position of England... was the natural result of the policy which she had been pursuing for more than a hundred years, to compel the nations to be tributary to her capital, skill, machinery, and ships, to make them virtually mere colonial appendages of her own central power.
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> Her aim was, to control, and bring to her own mills, as far as possible, the raw material of the world, and having manufactured it, resell it in all markets, levying upon the people the tribute of her profits, and the freight of her ships.

To the full extent of her ability she prevented every other nation from manufacturing for itself, or building up a commerce or a navy of its own. While her own manufactures were in their infancy, she excluded every rival from the markets that she could control, as she did from the American colonies; but so soon as her accumulated capital, her skill and experience, and her perfected machinery, gave her the necessary superiority, then she proclaimed the doctrine of free trade to all the nations, knowing well that if she could thus gain access to the markets of the world, her capital and skill would thus enable her to crush the growth of manufactures elsewhere." (pp.65-7)

As Boynton noted, England was a restrictor of trade up until the 1840s, using its Navigation Acts and other policies to exclude potential competitors from its markets. However, the repeal of the Corn Laws proclaimed a general doctrine of free trade in order that the world could supply the growing English proletariat with cheap food. And from that moment the Royal Navy began to act more in the role of policeman than war-machine (signified in the Declaration of Paris that gave up some aggressive rights to disable any that might think to acquire them and interfere with England's food supply).

This was just one of the great volte faces the British State conducted in the last couple of centuries. One of the most significant was its change from being the greatest operator of the global slave trade, which the Royal Navy operated and which led to a vast accumulation of wealth in Britain. From the 1830s the British State declared itself the champion of anti-slavery when the trade had outlived its usefulness for England.

Despite the championing of anti-slavery, the Southern Independence Association, which supported the Confederate slave-owners, established branches across Britain, all dedicated to the cause of the Confederacy and the break-up of the United States. Their members included prominent members of the British aristocracy, driven partly by a desire to secure a continued supply of cotton and partly by a fear that the United States was becoming a rival to Britain. Efforts to push a Bill through Parliament to officially intervene on the side of the Confederates stalled over the question of slavery, since England had become a champion of anti-slavery, but this did not stop supporters from raising vast amounts of cash through the sale of the Confederate Cotton Bond. In London, Bristol and Liverpool it was a huge success from the very beginning and the list of people who subscribed to it was enormous. In the first year of the Cotton Bond being quoted on the London Stock Exchange, it raised over 3 million pounds (the equivalent of 140 million pounds today). Among the subscribers to the Bond that was used to buy munitions and ships were two future Prime Ministers.

The Problem of Russia (and America)

Boynton put the Crimean War down to England's attempt to cut an emerging Russia down to size, by making an alliance with her long-standing enemy France. He also noticed that there had been a change in the character of the British Empire from a mainly military one backed by commerce to a commercial one backed by military force:

"Her supremacy had become a commercial rather than a military one, notwithstanding the immense strength of her navy, and it was necessary for her, if she would rule the world, to retain her markets, to prevent, if possible, the growth of commercial rivals, and to secure the colonial possessions which she had wrested from others. As she surveyed the world, an eastern and a western vision troubled her.

Hitherto Russia had been regarded as a mere military, barbarian Colossus, whose joints were not well compacted, composed of heterogeneous materials, that could not be united in one true, organic, political structure, with a common life, which would insure a regular and healthy growth.

But Russia, under Nicholas, began to give signs that she was more than a mere barbarian camp, more than a nation of serfs and wandering Tartars. She gave evidence of a true national life, of enlargement, which was growth from a national life centre. Under many disadvantages the Russian Emperor was striving to give his country the means of independent self-development, and was laboring to establish manufactures and internal commerce, and to make profitable use of the great resources of his empire. He was establishing schools for his people, literary, and agricultural, as well as military, opening roads, projecting railways and canals, and putting steamboats upon his numerous rivers.

He was improving his navy and his mercantile marine, and in all his operations he seemed to prefer American mechanics, and American machinery, a fact which, of course, did not escape the watchful eye of England.

He had constructed a large fleet upon the Black Sea, and its fortified rendezvous, Sebastopol, was only a few hours sail from Constantinople; Turkey, unless defended by other powers, was apparently within reach of the Czar, and once in possession of Constantinople, Russia would have the means not only of becoming a great military power, but she would certainly be a first class manufacturing and commercial nation.

Russia, moreover, had already extended the outposts of dominion far on eastward, from the Black Sea along the Caucasus, and the northern frontier of Persia, and England saw, that if Turkey were overgrown, even the peaceful march of Russia eastward would bring her at no distant date to the borders of her Indian possessions. The English Press at this time was complaining, as if it were ill-treatment of Great Britain and Europe, that Russia was planting vineyards in the Crimea with the intention of making her own wine, and that she was multiplying her flocks of sheep for the purpose of manufacturing her own woollens, and that in general, she was disposed to cherish and protect her own workmen, and develop her own resources, instead of following those free-trade doctrines, which England was then proclaiming to the world.

It was apparent that by this course, Russia in time would not only manufacture to supply the wants of her own people, and to this extent curtail the foreign markets for English goods, but with her boundless mineral wealth, her great facilities for internal trade by her navigable rivers, with the control of the Black Sea, with Constantinople, and access to the Mediterranean, she might become in all respects a very formidable rival of both England and France...

Her crime was, in the opinion of France and England, that she

was growing too fast. As Englishmen have lately expressed themselves in regard to our own nation, Russia was growing so strong that measures had to be taken to cripple her, 'to take her down.' She had done no wrong at that time to provoke or justify an attack, but she was too prosperous to suit the interest of England, and hence the Alliance and the Crimean war." (pp.88-90)

Confronted in the East by a power that needed taking down, Britain was simultaneously confronted in the West by another potential rival:

"At the same time, England saw in the West a rising Empire, whose marvellous growth gave her more anxiety than even the progress of Russia. The population of the United States was almost equal to her own. The Americans had just obtained California and the Pacific coast, Texas had been annexed, Mexico seemed ready to fall into their hands, and their commercial marine was even then second to none in the world. In spite of inadequate protection, and the combined influence of the slave States and England, American manufactures were making rapid progress in many departments, American mechanics were already ahead of the world—and in all the markets of the United States, British fabrics were being rapidly displaced by the products of American skill.

English statesmen knew well, that a people that could create for themselves an unmatched fleet for commercial purposes, that had covered their rivers and lakes with swift steamboats, could also produce a navy with equal ease whenever it should be needed, and with resources of all kinds to which man could assign no limit, fronting on two great oceans, what could prevent the United States from overshadowing even England with her greatness, unless indeed... she could 'be taken down.'" (pp.90-1)

Boynton believed that the Crimean War of 1854 and the American Civil War of 1861 represented an attempt and an opportunity on England's part to take down emerging rivals to British world dominance—a thing that British statesmen did instinctively.

The Crimean War

Boynton argued that Russia had been attacked in the Crimea by the Anglo-French alliance because she was feared as a growing power which would soon become a great commercial force by the acquisition of Constantinople and the destruction of the Ottoman Empire.

In Chapter XII, *England's Course toward Russia in regard to the Eastern Question and the Crimean War*, Boynton wrote:

"The course of England towards Russia in regard to the Eastern Question and in the invasion of the Crimea, was so similar to her treatment of us, that the one explains the other... in her course towards us she is governed by the same policy which guided her then; that this is her national policy, to be applied to Russia or America, as the case may demand; and whether she strikes eastward at monarchy or westward at a republic, her general purpose is precisely the same.

Particularly is it to be observed, that as France created a cause for war, and forced Russia into the conflict with her, so also England, on her part, sought an occasion for quarrel with Russia, and, notwithstanding all the denunciations of the British Press, it was England and not Russia who began the war.

England sought a war with Russia, and nearly the whole power of her Press was employed to cover this intention by the most violent accusations against Nicholas and his people, knowing all the while that the Czar desired more than all things else peace with England, in the same manner that the English Government stirred up the people to fury in the case of the Trent, with the charge that we desired to insult and declare war upon England, when at the same time they held in their hands official evidence that we were earnestly desirous of peace on any terms which would save our national honor.

Americans... should hesitate to give credence to the specious declarations that England was forced into that war, in defense of civilization and humanity, statements which have been made merely to render the war popular, and to excite the people against Russia, a work which has been so thoroughly done that the English people disgraced themselves by savage cheering at the Emperor's death. England having possessed herself, by her maritime superiority, and by her conquest of India, of the commerce of the East, adopted the double public policy of securing to herself the advantages she had won, and of excluding if possible other nations from a participation in this lucrative trade." (p. 138-140)

David Urquhart took a sceptical view of the British motives for the Crimean War. Unlike Boynton he did not see it as a serious attempt to take Russia down. Russia was too vast and too large in landmass for that. He viewed the war as a phoney war in which England and France pretended to come to the aid of the Turks—but instead had different intentions entirely in the region.

Urquhart believed that England and France combined to establish a foothold at Constantinople using the Russian threat as an excuse. This was because both realised that this was a war of convenience and that either party might suddenly desert the other and ally with the Russians instead. This prompted Lord Hebbert to say *"we were in accord with our enemy but not with our ally."*

India and the Ottoman Empire

Boynton viewed England's 'protection' of Constantinople and its alliance with the Ottoman Empire as nothing but a concern for the interests of Britain's Indian Empire and the desire to control the gates to the east. This involved the forced exclusion of trade and the development of commerce in the region by any other agency except itself:

"It has been... one of her chief anxieties to establish, if possible, and hold for her own benefit, a monopoly of the East, and for this purpose her jealous care has been to prevent the re-opening of any of the old highways of that trade whereby it could be diverted from her own marts, or to gain possession of them herself. While the ocean route could remain the only or the main channel between India and Europe, by her ships and her possessions in Hindostan the monopoly of the trade would be hers, and she would rest content. But when the question of establishing other communications arose, England was almost omnipresent to secure herself against a rival. Hence her intrigues in Central America, and her

establishment on the Mosquito shore, and her projects on the Isthmus of Panama, for ship canals, in order that she might gain possession of the American key to the Indies; hence, also, her fleet at the mouth of the Nile when Bonaparte was in Egypt threatening to re-open and hold for France the old Red Sea route to the East; which scheme, had it been successful, might have restored to the cities of the Mediterranean their ancient wealth and power; and hence, too, be it remembered, her anxieties for the fate of Constantinople.

No sympathy for the Turk has ever moved the heart of England, but every movement in connection with Turkey has been made with anxious reference to her Eastern trade.

It is because she has not been contented to share this commerce with the rest of the world. She has coveted a monopoly of its profits, and has been ready with her fleets and her armies to prevent any other Power on earth from building for itself a highway to India. She has endeavoured to frustrate the United States in Central America; she succeeded in forcing the French army from Egypt—and she has also determined not only to prevent Russia from establishing herself at Constantinople, but to wrest from her the control of the Black Sea, and prevent her from occupying the old northern road to the East.

Let it not be forgotten here that it is not the conquest of British India at which Russia is aiming, or which she has ever proposed, but to open for herself a commerce with northern Asia by a route of her own; that she proposes not war on England, but an honorable competition for the trade of Asia; and this England opposed with a war whose object was to destroy forever all hope of maritime or commercial prosperity for Russia, which done, she would hold a complete monopoly of the richest commerce of the world, while at the same time the manufactures of Russia would be ruined, and she would again become dependent on Great Britain.

It is now easy to perceive the real policy of England in regard to the proposition made to the British Government while Nicholas was in London. He frankly informed England that the time was near when the Turkish Government must inevitably fall, without any external force, that it had no vitality, was in fact already seized by death, and that he desired some friendly understanding with England as to the course to be pursued when that event should come, that all of Europe might not then be embroiled, because other nations would be constrained to abide by the joint decision of England and Russia. It is understood that he proposed that England should occupy Egypt, while the control of Constantinople should be given to Russia." (141-4)

The Ottoman Empire was known in British propaganda as the *"sick man of Europe."* The origin of this phrase dates back to the time of the Crimean War. In January 1853, Czar Nicholas I met Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British Ambassador in St Petersburg and their conversations turned to the Czar's main preoccupation—Constantinople. Nicholas attempted to convince Sir Hamilton that the Ottoman Empire was on the point of collapse. He told the British Ambassador, *"we have a sick man on our hands, a man who is seriously ill; it will . . . be a great misfortune if he escapes us one of these days, especially before all the arrangements are made."* (Alan Palmer, *The Banner of Battle; the Story of the Crimean War*, p.56)

The *"arrangements"* the Czar had in mind involved the sharing out of the Ottoman Empire by Russia, France and England. But at this time (despite the notable exception of Richard Cobden, the Manchester Capitalist) England was most unwilling to see the Russians down at Constantinople and instead of a sharing of Ottoman spoils they went to war, along with their traditional enemy in Europe, France, against Russia in the following year to 'defend' the *"sick man of Europe"*.

Boynton saw the offer of Czar Nicholas as reasonable and generous to Britain and her subsequent policy of war on Russia, in conjunction with the French, as reprehensible on Britain's part. He believed that if the Ottoman Empire was about to collapse it should have been left to Russia to supervise its dissolution and for it to 'civilize' the area in the interests of Christianity. He believed that Britain was merely playing her Balance of Power game again to prop up the Sultan in order to organise a future partition of the Ottoman Empire in the interests of herself and her French ally.

One can also see the significance of the Baghdad Railway for Britain, fifty years on, from what Boynton accurately described. The Baghdad Railway was feared in England because of its potential to link up mercantile interests on the European heartland with Asia and thereby develop the commercial potential of Germany, Europe and Asia free from the seas.

By that time (1900) Germany, in entering the global path of development pioneered by England, had encountered the problem Britain had run into a half century before—how to feed itself. The Railway proposal came about because the increasing industrial production of Germany made the question of raw materials, new markets and security from outside interference an acute one in relation to the ability of the Royal Navy to starve it into submission.

The Railway to the east promised not only to meet the economic needs of Germany but would have also opened a much shorter and safer route for its trade than that through the Baltic and North Sea, through the English Channel, the Straits of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal—all controlled by the guns of the Royal Navy. Eastern Europe, the Near East, the East coast of Africa and the Far East all offered Germany raw materials and potential new markets free from blockade. And the railroad constructed through Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey, Mesopotamia to Baghdad and the Persian Gulf, along with the necessary conventions with the countries concerned, threatened to unleash the economic potential of the Eurasian heartland—a thing England had worked for nearly a century to prevent.

Whilst Boynton, the fundamentalist Protestant, welcomed the spread of Russia into the region and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire with regard to the ending of its rule over Christians, he saw British and French Imperialist expansion into the area as having catastrophic effects for the Moslems. And he was of the belief that if they were to be absorbed into another Empire it was better the 'civilising' Russian one than being made a giant plantation in the interests of Britain and France:

"From what has been presented two conclusions seem to be inevitable: first, that the Turkish Empire, as such, can not be maintained, and that its preservation forms no part of the policy of the Allied Powers, except as a mere dependency of their own; and, second, that whatever change may occur in the form of the

government, the settled policy of France and England requires that the lands of Turkey should form merely a vast plantation, worked for the benefit of its masters...

England and France have chosen to terminate that arrangement by which the *Porte* might have tottered on yet longer in a state of merely nominal independence, and the only question now remaining is, by whom shall Turkey hereafter be exclusively controlled—by the East or the West?

Another inquiry may be added: will it be better for other nations, and for Turkey, that it should become virtually a colony of the Western Powers, or that it should be incorporated with Russia? Between these two alternatives there seems now no middle ground." (pp.166-7)

Boynton noted that Britain's developing relationship with the Ottoman Empire was not an 'alliance' of equals but what Americans called 'a protection racket'. England 'protected' the Ottoman Empire from Russia in order to make English power indispensable to the Sultan—so that a gradual Ottoman decline would lead to British gains in the region. This was accomplished through a combination of military and financial means.

At the root of this protection racket lay the financial dependency that England and France had engineered in Istanbul. The Ottoman financial problems began with the Crimean War when the *Porte* had to foot the large bill to pay for the expenses of the British and French armies stationed in Constantinople and the Black Sea coast. Britain and France lent the Turks the money to pay the debt—which came back to them with interest. They crippled the Ottoman Exchequer with the interest rates imposed on the loan and through an insistence that the Ottomans restrict their tariffs on British and French imports to below 5%. This forced the Turks to buy all manufactured goods abroad and discouraged the growth of any indigenous industry within the Empire. As a result, in 1874, over half of the *Porte*'s expenditure went on paying off the foreign debt and the Empire began to decay as it was bled dry by the Franco-British protection racket.

The Ottomans were also forced to cede to Western business interests special privileges called Capitulations that included freedom from taxes and the Ottoman courts (which amounted to Embassy rights outside the Embassy). The loans and Capitulations were found to be an effective way of both buttressing the Ottoman Empire against Russia and controlling the *Porte* by holding its purse strings.

In the light of what Boynton says about Britain's method of subjugating the world to its interests its relationship with the Ottomans is not as particular as it might first seem. It was very much part of Britain's world-wide strategy which Boynton described.

Prospects for the future

In the following passage Boynton describes how, despite its present world-wide power, Britain could never remain top-dog in the world, despite its persistent attempts at retarding the development of the rest of humanity:

"What, then, are the elements of her power and sources of her life, and what does her present condition indicate for the future? The first essential element of enduring national greatness is a home territory sufficient for the support of the population of a first-class power...

There may be... a greatness derived from separated colonial territories, a manufacturing and commercial greatness and power, enduring or temporary, according to circumstances; but the territory of a nation, its extent and quality, must, in the end, be the measure of its power.

Of course, territory alone can not insure national power; but, if one nation has a domain which will support a home population of twenty-five millions only, and another holds land enough to maintain one hundred millions, and is equal in all other advantages, the latter has elements of power four times greater than the former, nor would distant colonial possessions make up the deficiency of territory at home.

These colonies, while they can be held simply as tributaries, may increase the wealth and power of the home government through its manufactures and commerce; but, in the end, prosperous colonies throw off the yoke of bondage, and new nations spring up to compete for the commerce of the world.

What, then, is the condition and prospect of England in regard to this point? What are the foundations of her national structure, and what are her prospects in rivalry with, or hostility to, Russia and America, for the next quarter of a century?

England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, together, have a territory of about one hundred and twelve thousand square miles. This constitutes the whole home territory of Great Britain. It is less than that occupied by our three States of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and less than half the size of Texas. England, alone, is not quite as large as the single State of Alabama.

The arable land of England is estimated at only twenty-eight millions of acres, which is less than the estimated arable land in the single State of Illinois. While the home territory of Great Britain is about one hundred and twelve thousand square miles, that of the United States is about three millions of square miles, all in one body, and which, by navigable rivers, lakes, railways, and coast-line navigation, can be controlled by one people and one central government.

These numbers form the proper basis of comparison between the United States and England which reach into the future, though they are by no means indications of their present relative strength. But such comparisons will be truthful guides in the future, because the time is not distant when Great Britain will lose the control of every one of her principal colonies, and our present war is consolidating our people into one American nation, whose life is vigorous enough to extend over a continent. England, at no very distant period, must rest her power upon the resources of her home empire, competing as she may with the rest of the world for the trade of her present colonies.

England is almost a miracle of energy and power; she is the most wonderful product, thus far, of modern civilization, and no American should desire to diminish aught of her proper glory; but, when she proposes to interfere with our private affairs, when she

seems to desire our ruin, and gives her sympathies to our bitterest enemies, and forms alliances to hinder our progress, and holds herself in a threatening attitude, it will do us no harm to remember that, ere this century closes, she will see here a hundred millions of people, who will be at least her equal in every thing pertaining either to peace or war, and outnumbering her nearly three to one...

It is evident, therefore, if we regard the land as a basis, the British Empire has reached the limit of growth, and, indeed, has passed that limit, unless her great estates are divided, for one-third of her population is, even now, fed from foreign countries. Her power to maintain her present rank among nations, and even her ability to keep her population from starving, depend upon her being able to supply the markets of the world with her fabrics, and retain her position as the chief factor of the world's commerce. Should other nations succeed in competing with her on this, her chosen field, her political supremacy would at once be stricken down. Hence her extreme anxiety in regard to the progress of Russia and America, and her attempts to put them down by force, when she fears that they will not only manufacture for themselves, instead of buying from her, but will become her rivals in the great markets of the world...

These things show at once the fears and perils of England. She knows that, if Russia and America become great manufacturing nations, with a commercial marine and navy proportioned to their power in other respects, her own supremacy will be gone. She will be tempted to make desperate efforts before she will yield her present place of pride, and hence our own continual danger. She will watch for our overthrow. She will ruin us if she can." (pp.390-5)

How England changes course under the reality of changing power relations and produces ideas to sustain its change of course is very well illustrated by its changing relationship with America.

A half century after Britain's financial and material support for the Confederacy the Round Table/Chatham House group took inspiration from the United States war on its rebels and sought to emulate its example for the British Empire. F.S. Oliver's famous book *Alexander Hamilton— an Essay on American Union* became the blueprint for Imperial unity. The movement for Imperial Union attempted to address all the disadvantages that the British State possessed in relation to its American and Russian rivals that Boynton pointed out.

The solution for Milner's Kindergarten was a unitary British Empire with a much larger population, territory and agricultural land consolidated into a federal state to counter the states that Britain could never hope to keep down as merely the United Kingdom. And a feature of this trend was that much of the propaganda directed against Irish Home Rule was of the kind that as the United States could never tolerate the dissolution of its territorial unity neither could the U.K. (Lloyd George continued to use this argument into the negotiations over the Treaty to concentrate Irish minds on what befell the Southern States: it might also befall Ireland if it persisted in its democratic demands.)

Why the Future was different

But England's war to cut America and Russia down to size never came, as Boynton thought it would.

Part of the reason why is contained in Boynton's book itself—in the United States' defeat of its Southern rebels and its constituting itself into a developing force in the world as a consequence. And Russia continued its expansion until England decided to come to terms with it (in 1907) in preparation to cutting a more immediate and more possibly destructible rival down to size.

It might be said that the United States overawed Britain in two things it did in the nineteenth century. Firstly, it put down a serious rebellion to maintain the integrity of the U.S. State. Secondly, it embarked on a colonialist policy of ruthless effectiveness that led to a vast territorial expansion. Both these events were the stuff the British Empire prided itself in and they gained great admiration on this side of the Atlantic. And that admiration had a debilitating effect on thoughts of cutting the U.S. down to size.

The relationship between England, the United States and Russia, had, in fact, a direct bearing on England's relations with Germany.

Around the time that Sir Peter Charmers Mitchell wrote *A Biological View of our Foreign Policy* for *The Saturday Review* things were in transition in England with regard to America and Germany. Mitchell concluded that there was no hope of reunion with the Anglo-Saxon cousins to the West and war would be a Darwinian imperative—after matters were settled with the Anglo-Saxons to the East:

"The American type is now so distinct, and the American sentiment of nationality is so acute, that all hope of union is gone. The resemblances and identities that remain serve only to make the ultimate struggle more certain. America would be our enemy before Germany, but for the accident that America is not yet a nation expanding beyond her own territory... The rumours of war with England must be realized and will be realized when the population of the States has transcended the limits of the States.

The biological view of foreign policy is plain. First federate our colonies and prevent geographical isolation turning the Anglo-Saxon race against itself. Second, be ready to fight Germany, as Germania est delenda; third, be ready to fight America when the time comes. Lastly, engage in no wasting wars against peoples from whom we have nothing to fear." (1 February, 1896)

Elie Halévy, a well-known French historian at the turn of the twentieth century, was surprised that in all the articles produced in England during this period predicting war between Britain and other nations only one English writer entertained the thought that the next world conflict might be against the emerging United States of America.

This is a fact worth considering, particularly in relation to Boynton's views. After all, Britain had a habit of cutting any emerging rival down to size, and in other countries—including America itself—there was a presumption that sooner or later there would be a conflict between the old master and the young upstart. The United States was obviously the major potential obstacle to Britain's world wide domination and the biggest long-term threat to its Empire. The United States potentially represented a far stronger industrial and commercial competitor than Germany and had shown its ambitions in this area with the construction of the Panama Canal. Germany was the British

Empire's best customer and the only country in the world that bought from England to nearly the same degree as she sold to the Empire.

Whilst Admiral Mahan was conceiving America as a world-wide naval power and Imperial force, Germany did not even have a credible navy and was merely a federation of states with a few small scattered colonies. But whilst Britain had developed a very aggressive attitude to its other Imperialist rivals, it shirked a conflict with its strong young Anglo-Saxon cousin, the US, and neatly sidestepped the incidents and disputes which would have been made occasions for war with other nations.

Two serious territorial disputes arose between Britain and America during the Unionist Government's term of office as the nineteenth century became the twentieth. In 1895 Venezuela occupied a piece of British Guiana and when Britain threatened action, President Cleveland invoked the Monroe Doctrine to warn off the Royal Navy. Although Lord Salisbury rejected Cleveland's right to do this, he backed away from conflict and accepted the referral of the dispute to arbitration. In 1903, the new Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour, accepted arbitration again in the dispute over the frontier between Alaska and British Columbia. Amazingly, the British arbiter decided in favour of the United States and against Canada—a decision that was very badly received by the Canadians, who, from then on, determined on getting more extensive Dominion powers so that they could look after their own interests in the future.

It was perhaps realised in British ruling circles that the Empire was destined ultimately to give way to its great Anglo-Saxon cousin as master of the world. That is the only explanation for the attitude of inferiority that British Statesmen began adopting towards the United States at the turn of the century. It is most probable that Joseph Chamberlain and Balfour did not believe that the Empire would give way to the United States without conflict, and so determined on an Anglo-Saxon Alliance to prevent it. If the British Empire and the United States did not combine to dominate the world, their divergent interests would surely bring them into conflict when America, following Admiral Mahan's vision, could only expand at the expense of the British Empire.

It was ultimately decided to indirectly 'capture' the United States through ideas, rather than attempt to defeat it in war. And the building of an Anglo-American Establishment, so that the British Empire could live on *within* its great Anglo-Saxon cousin—the future master of the world—became a significant project for the most advanced Imperialists in England, centred around Lionel Curtis and the *Round Table* group.

It was determined to deal with America peacefully and to go to war with Germany. And if it were ever contemplated to destroy America after Germany had been dealt with, two exhausting wars with Germany—as a result of which the United States profited of England's difficulty—put paid to that notion for ever. □

How NATO's "Humanitarian Intervention" in Kosovo led to a Humanitarian Catastrophe

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by David Morrison

UK Labour leader, Ed Miliband, told the House of Commons on 21 March 2011 that "by taking action in Kosovo we saved the lives of tens of thousands of people" [1].

He was speaking in a debate on British military intervention in Libya, which had started a few days earlier. At the end of the debate, the House of Commons gave retrospective approval to the intervention by 557 votes to 13.

Miliband was not the only one to cite the "success" of NATO's "humanitarian intervention" in Kosovo in March 1999 as an indicator that Britain's latest "humanitarian intervention" in Libya might also be successful.

Today, NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 is almost universally regarded as a successful humanitarian operation that protected Kosovan Albanians from murderous aggression and ethnic cleansing, bordering on genocide, by Serbs. This is a myth.

The truth is that, far from saving "the lives of tens of thousands of people", as Miliband asserted, by bombing Yugoslavia in 1999, NATO caused the deaths of thousands of civilians, both Serbs and Kosovan Albanians.

After 78 days of NATO bombing, Serb forces withdrew from Kosovo. This was followed by the ethnic cleansing of nearly a quarter of a million Serbs and other minorities from Kosovo.

NATO's "humanitarian intervention" in Kosovo led to a humanitarian catastrophe

Averting a humanitarian catastrophe

On 23 March 1999, Prime Minister Tony Blair told the House of Commons:

"Britain stands ready with our NATO allies to take military action. We do so for very clear reasons. We do so primarily to avert what would otherwise be a humanitarian disaster in Kosovo. ...

"We must act: to save thousands of innocent men, women and children from humanitarian catastrophe, from death, barbarism and ethnic cleansing by a brutal dictatorship; to save the stability of the Balkan region, where we know chaos can engulf all of Europe. We have no alternative but to act and act we will, unless Milosevic even now chooses the path of peace." [2]

The following day, the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia began.

On 25 March 1999, UK Defence Secretary, George Robertson, described NATO's military objectives to the House of Commons in the following terms:

> "They are clear cut; to avert an impending humanitarian catastrophe by disrupting the violent attacks currently being carried out by the Yugoslav security forces against the Kosovar Albanians, and to limit their ability to conduct such repression in future. We have not set ourselves the task of defeating the Yugoslav army. We are engaged in an effort to reduce Milosevic's repressive capacity, and we are confident that we will achieve that." [3]

It was never obvious how NATO air power could inhibit the action of Yugoslav forces on the ground in Kosovo. It didn't. Within a few days, with reports of widespread killing of Albanians by Yugoslav forces and hundreds of thousands of Albanians streaming out of Kosovo into Albania and Macedonia, it was obvious that NATO had failed in its stated military objectives. Far from averting a humanitarian catastrophe, NATO had provoked one.

At this point, NATO changed its war aims: the purpose of the bombing became to return to their homes these Kosovan Albanian refugees, the vast majority of whom were in their homes when the NATO bombing began and who would have remained in their homes had NATO refrained from bombing.

KLA vs Yugoslav forces

In 1998, Yugoslavia consisted of two republics – Serbia and Montenegro. Kosovo was an integral part of Serbia, but with an overwhelmingly Albanian majority that favoured separation from Serbia, and a Serb minority that opposed separation.

At that time, what was going on in Kosovo was a military campaign by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA or UCK) for an independent state separate from Yugoslavia and military action by Yugoslav armed forces (police and army) to suppress that campaign.

Before 1998, the KLA military campaign was a sporadic affair but in 1998 it took off dramatically. Before 1998, there might have been 100 KLA attacks in total; in 1998 there were of the order of 2,000. The KLA attacked Yugoslav police, on patrol and in barracks, Serb civilians, and Albanian civilians who were deemed by the KLA to be collaborating with the Serbian regime.

The Yugoslav response was far from gentle. Albanian villages from which attacks on security forces emanated were shelled. Villagers had to flee and camp out in the open, sometimes for long periods. While there was some arbitrary killing of Albanian civilians, it was not widespread. There was also a certain amount of inter-ethnic killing but this cut both ways. Given the intensity of the KLA assault in 1998, the Yugoslav response was surprisingly moderate.

KLA killed more

One fact alone explodes the myth of widespread, largely unprovoked, killing of Albanian civilians, bordering on genocide, by Yugoslav forces. That is the fact that up to mid-January 1999 the KLA were responsible for more deaths in Kosovo than Yugoslav forces.

We have that on the authority of no less a person than the UK Foreign Minister, Robin Cook, who told the House of Commons on 18 January 1999:

> "On its part, the Kosovo Liberation Army has committed more breaches of the ceasefire, and until this weekend was responsible for more deaths than the security forces. It must stop undermining the ceasefire and blocking political dialogue." [4]

How many people had died? Blair told the House of Commons on 23 March 1999 that "since last summer 2,000 people have died". However, he didn't say how many had been killed by Serb forces and how many by the KLA. In fact, he didn't mention the KLA in his remarks, which painted a picture of Serb "barbarism" in order to justify the imminent NATO bombing campaign against them. Indeed, absent any other information, his audience could be forgiven for believing that Serb forces were responsible for all 2,000 deaths.

This figure of 2,000 deaths prior to the NATO bombing is frequently quoted, for example, by Tim Judah in his book Kosovo: War and revenge, p226. I don't know the origin of this figure.

In 1998/9, the Serb Ministry of the Interior published detailed information about KLA activity in Kosovo on a website, www.serb-info.com, which is no longer accessible. According to this, the KLA killed 287 people in 1998 up to 27 December 1998, out of a total of 326 killed by the KLA in the whole campaign up to that time. Of those killed, 115 were said to be police and 172 civilians, of whom 76 were said to be ethnic Albanians "loyal to the Republic of Serbia".

There is no way of telling if these figures are any way accurate. It is difficult to believe that these are an understatement, since the Serb Ministry of the Interior did not have had an interest in understating the number of deaths caused by the KLA. If they are accurate and the KLA was responsible for more deaths than Serb forces up to mid-January 1999, then the total number killed in Kosovo up to the end of 1998 must have been six or seven hundred, and probably less than a thousand prior to the NATO bombing in March 1999, in other words less than half of the figure of 2,000 which is normally cited.

Holbrooke agreement

From March to September 1998, the war between the KLA and Serb forces went on with great ferocity. By the autumn, Serb forces had the upper hand. Considerable numbers of Albanians were displaced within Kosovo, perhaps as many as 200,000, of which an estimated 50,000 were in the open.

It wasn't until September that the West reacted. On 23 September, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1199 [5] which demanded, amongst other things, that

> "all parties, groups and individuals immediately cease hostilities and maintain a ceasefire in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which would enhance the prospects for a meaningful dialogue between the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Albanian leadership and reduce the risks of a humanitarian catastrophe"

Early in October, NATO approved a plan for bombing Yugoslavia in the event of Milosevic refusing to comply with this resolution. Armed with this threat, US ambassador Richard Holbrooke went to Belgrade accompanied by US General Short, who was to be in operational charge of the NATO bombing if it

happened. On 12 October 1998, Holbrooke reached an agreement with Milosevic for the implementation of Resolution 1199.

Later (25 October 1998), NATO commander General Wesley Clark and General Klaus Naumann, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee before and during the conflict in Kosovo, went to Belgrade representing NATO and it was agreed that the Yugoslav military and police presence in Kosovo be reduced to pre-war levels, that is, levels in February 1998.

In addition, 2,000 international inspectors, the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), were to be allowed into Kosovo to monitor the ceasefire, under the auspices of the Organisation for Security Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and NATO was to be allowed to make aerial reconnaissance flights over Kosovo.

That was a humiliating settlement for Yugoslavia.

It should be noted that no attempt was made to bind the KLA to the ceasefire provisions of Resolution 1199 by a similar agreement. When asked why not, the usual excuse from UK ministers was that the KLA was an unstructured organisation without a proper hierarchy, with which it was difficult to negotiate. Strange that the West managed to negotiate with the KLA at Rambouillet, a few months later.

Note also that, by virtue of Security Council Resolution 1160 [6] passed 31 March 1998, all UN members were supposed to be applying an arms embargo to Yugoslavia including Kosovo and to be doing their best to "prevent arming and training for terrorist activities there". Resolution 1199 also requested UN states to prevent funds collected on their territory being used to contravene Resolution 1160.

Tim Judah suggests (ibid, page 188) that one reason for Milosevic doing a deal with Holbrooke was "because he was given to understand that Western countries would now move to throttle the KLA's sources of arms and finance". If so, he was misled: despite the provisions of these UN resolutions, there is no evidence that any effort was made to inhibit KLA training in Albania and their entry with arms into Kosovo from Albania, or their fund raising in the Albanian diaspora, chiefly in Switzerland, Germany and the US. On the contrary, there is ample evidence that the US was aiding the KLA.

Did Yugoslavia withdraw forces?

Did Yugoslavia keep its promises to withdraw its forces to pre-war levels? The West's story in the run up to the NATO bombing was an emphatic NO. For example, Blair told the House of Commons on 23 March 1999:

> "At the same time [October 1998], Milosevic gave an undertaking to the US envoy Mr Holbrooke that he would withdraw Serb forces so that their numbers returned to the level before February 1998 – roughly 10,000 internal security troops and 12,000 Yugoslav army troops. Milosevic never fulfilled that commitment, indeed the numbers have gone up." [2]

On 7 June 2000, General Klaus Naumann, to whom Milosevic gave this undertaking, contradicted this assertion by Blair in evidence to the House of Commons Defence Select Committee as part of its inquiry into the Kosovo conflict [7]. He said:

> "I think it is fair to say that Milosevic honoured the commitment which he had made to General Clark and myself on 25 October 1998. He withdrew the forces and he withdrew the police. There may have been some difference as to whether there were 200 or 400 policemen more or less but that really does not matter. More or less he honoured the commitment. Then the UCK or KLA filled the void the withdrawn Serb forces had left and they escalated. I have stated this in the NATO Council in October and November repeatedly. In most cases, the escalation came from the Kosovar side, not from the Serb side."

Gabriel Keller, a deputy head of the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), concurred, saying:

> "... every pullback by the Yugoslav army or the Serbian police was followed by a movement forward by [KLA] forces [...] OSCE's presence compelled Serbian government forces to a certain restraint [...] and UCK took advantage of this to consolidate its positions everywhere, continuing to smuggle arms from Albania, abducting and killing both civilians and military personnel, Albanians and Serbs alike." (see Masters of the universe?: NATO's Balkan crusade, edited by Tariq Ali, p163)

As did Wolfgang Petritsch, the EU's special envoy to Kosovo, speaking on the BBC programme, Moral Combat: NATO at War broadcast on 12 March 2000 (transcript here [8]):

> "The KLA basically came back into old positions that they held before the summer offensive."

Cook's reports

Blair's account is also significantly different from the regular reports on Kosovo to the House of Commons in late 1998 by his Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook. For example, on 19 October 1998 reporting on the Holbrooke deal, he said:

> "We also expect the Kosovo Liberation Army to abide by its commitment to honour a ceasefire. Over the weekend, there have been several breaches of the ceasefire by the Kosovo Liberation Army, including the murder of four policemen. Such continuing acts of hostility serve only the interests of those who wish to undermine the political process and return to war." [9]

And on 27 October 1998:

> "Since my statement to the House last week, Britain has remained fully engaged in efforts to implement the Holbrooke package. At the weekend, after hours of intensive negotiation, President Milosevic gave a detailed commitment to reduce the levels of army, police and heavy weapons in Kosovo to their levels before the conflict. Diplomatic observers in Kosovo report that several thousand security troops have left over the past 24 hours.
>
> "There has been a significant return of refugees to settlements in the valleys, and the UN estimates that numbers on the hillsides have fallen from 50,000 to around 10,000." [10]

A month later, on 27 November 1998, he made a statement which included the following:

> "In Kosovo, there has been steady progress on implementing some elements of the Holbrooke package. There has been a

marked improvement in the humanitarian situation. Within two months, the number of refugees on the open hillside has fallen from 50,000 to a few hundred. There has been a substantial reduction in the presence of the Serbian security forces, which have been cut, as agreed, to the level that existed before the conflict began." [11]

His statement was silent about KLA activity but in response to a later question he had to admit:

"The killing continues in Kosovo. I regret to report that most of the killings since the Holbrooke agreement have been carried out by the Kosovo Liberation Army. Since the Holbrooke package was signed, 19 members of the Serbian security forces have been killed. Five Kosovo Albanians are known to have been killed – all of them in the full uniform of the Kosovo Liberation Army. I cannot stress too strongly that a ceasefire will hold only if both sides cease firing." [12]

It is clear therefore that the Holbrooke agreement allowed the KLA, which had been under severe pressure in the autumn of 1998, to retrieve its position as Yugoslav forces withdrew in fulfilment of the agreement. Instead of maintaining a ceasefire as required by UN Security Council Resolution 1199, the KLA went on the offensive.

Racak

On the morning of 16 January, 45 bodies of what appeared to be Albanian civilians were discovered in the village of Racak. The head of the KVM, William Walker, a US career diplomat, visited the site and, without waiting for any forensic investigation, announced that Yugoslav forces had massacred them. This set in train a change of events that led, two months later, to 78 days of NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.

Despite the fact that, up to this point, the KLA was responsible for more deaths than the Yugoslav security forces (as Robin Cook admitted to the House of Commons a couple of days later), what happened in Racak was taken to be the ultimate proof of Serb barbarism, from which Albanians had to be saved by NATO bombing.

Did Serb forces massacre 45 Albanians in Racak on 15 January 1999? The BBC programme broadcast on 12 March 2000 said of these events:

"Even now, more than a year on, important questions about what happened here remain unanswered." [8]

According to the BBC account, the KLA had been using Racak as a base to launch operations against police and had killed 4 policemen in the general vicinity. In response, the police attacked the KLA at Racak on 15 January 1999, by which time most of the villagers had fled. A battle ensued in which 15 KLA personnel were killed and the KLA withdrew from the village. All this was observed by international monitors from safe high ground and when the battle was over, and the KLA had withdrawn, KVM personnel who came down to the village reported nothing unusual. It was not until the following morning, after the KLA had re-entered the village, that the bodies were discovered.

(This BBC account is broadly in line with that of French journalist, Christophe Chatelot, who was in Racak on the afternoon of 15 January 1999 after the Yugoslav forces withdrew from the village and observed nothing out of the ordinary. He reported this in an article, entitled Were the Racak dead really massacred in cold blood?, published in *Le Monde* on 21 January 1999. See [13] for an English translation.)

Having visited Racak on 16 January 1999, William Walker announced at a press conference in Pristina that a Serb massacre of Albanian civilians had occurred. However, before making his announcement, Walker had contacted both US envoy Holbrooke and US General Wesley Clark, the NATO commander. The suspicion is that he was consulting his government to see how the events at Racak should be best presented, with a view to using them, as they were used, to ratchet up the pressure on Yugoslavia.

Rambouillet

The pressure was ratcheted up by calling the Yugoslav Government to a conference in Rambouillet in February 1999. With the renewed threat of NATO bombing hanging over its head, the Yugoslav Government accepted proposals for the near independence of Kosovo within the Republic of Serbia, the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo (apart from guards on the borders with Albania and Macedonia) and an international peace-keeping force in Kosovo to supervise implementation.

However, it baulked at Appendix B, on the Status of Multi-National Military Implementation Force, in the proposed agreement, because Clause 8 of it allowed NATO to occupy not just Kosovo but the whole of Yugoslavia. Here's what it says:

"NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] including associated airspace and territorial waters. This shall include, but not be limited to, the right of bivouac, manoeuvre, billet, and utilisation of any areas or facilities as required for support, training, and operations." [14]

The Yugoslav Government refused to sign up to this complete surrender of sovereignty.

To do its job, the implementation force only needed access to Kosovo, which it was granted in Article VIII 3(d); it didn't need access to the rest of Yugoslavia. So, the presence of Clause 8 in the proposed agreement can only have been to ensure that the Yugoslav Government didn't sign and hence provided an excuse for bombing Yugoslavia. Nothing else makes sense.

Lord Gilbert (former Labour MP, John Gilbert) was a Minister of State in the UK Ministry of Defence before and during the NATO bombing and was closely involved in the day to day conduct of operations. After the event, he was very critical of the inability of NATO to agree to bomb civilian infrastructure from the outset.

Here is what he said about the Rambouillet agreement in evidence to the House of Commons Defence Select Committee on 20 June 2000:

"I think certain people were spoiling for a fight in NATO at that time ... . If you ask my personal view, I think the terms put to Milosevic at Rambouillet were absolutely intolerable; how could he possibly accept them; it was quite deliberate. That does not

excuse an awful lot of other things, but we were at a point when some people felt that something had to be done, so you just provoked a fight." [15]

Henry Kissinger's view of Clause 8 was as follows:

"The Rambouillet text, which called on Serbia to admit NATO troops throughout Yugoslavia, was a provocation, an excuse to start bombing. Rambouillet is not a document that an angelic Serb could have accepted. It was a terrible diplomatic document that should never have been presented in that form." (Daily Telegraph, 28 June 1999)

Blair's justification

Prime Minister Blair's justification for bombing Yugoslavia beginning 24 March 1999 was "to save thousands of innocent men, women and children from humanitarian catastrophe, from death, barbarism and ethnic cleansing by a brutal dictatorship".

A report to the UN Security Council by Kofi Annan dated 17 March 1999 (S/199/293) [16] based on information supplied by the OSCE gives an overview of the situation on the ground in the previous two months after Racak. It speaks of "persistent attacks and provocations by the Kosovo Albanian paramilitaries" and "disproportionate use of force, including mortar and tank fire, by the Yugoslav authorities in response". But there was no evidence that Serb forces were engaged in, or were about to engage in, arbitrary killing, bordering on genocide, against Albanian civilians.

Dietmar Hartwig, a German army officer, was the head of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Kosovo from November 1998 until 20 March1999, when the mission was evacuated because of the impending the NATO bombing.

He wrote a letter to German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, on 26 October 2007 describing the situation in Kosovo prior to the NATO bombing. The following is an extract:

"Not a single report submitted in the period from late November 1998 up to the evacuation on the eve of the war mentioned that Serbs had committed any major or systematic crimes against Albanians, nor was there a single case referring to genocide or genocide-like incidents or crimes. Quite the opposite, in my reports I have repeatedly informed that, considering the increasingly more frequent KLA attacks against the Serbian executive, their law enforcement demonstrated remarkable restraint and discipline.

"The clear and often cited goal of the Serbian administration was to observe the Milosevic-Holbrooke Agreement to the letter so not to provide any excuse to the international community to intervene....

"There were huge 'discrepancies in perception' between what the missions in Kosovo have been reporting to their respective governments and capitals, and what the latter thereafter released to the media and the public. This discrepancy can only be viewed as input to long-term preparation for war against Yugoslavia.

"Until the time I left Kosovo, there never happened what the media and, with no less intensity the politicians, were relentlessly claiming. Accordingly, until 20 March 1999 there was no reason for military intervention, which renders illegitimate measures undertaken thereafter by the international community. The collective behavior of EU Member States prior to, and after the war broke out, gives rise to serious concerns, because the truth was killed, and the EU lost reliability." [17]

See also Hartwig's evidence in the Milosevic trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia on 2 March 2005 [18].

NATO provoked a humanitarian catastrophe

If a humanitarian catastrophe of the kind predicted by Prime Minister Blair had been in the offing on 24 March 1999, it was inconceivable that it could have been significantly inhibited, let alone averted, by the NATO bombing.

What happened next proved that: the NATO bombing provoked a humanitarian catastrophe, which it was powerless to inhibit, let alone avert. A substantial number of Albanian civilians were killed by Yugoslav forces just after the bombing began and hundreds of thousands were either driven from their homes by Yugoslav forces or fled and became refugees in Albania and Macedonia. Initially, NATO put a figure of 100,000 on the number of Albanians killed, but this estimate was later revised down to 10,000. Post-war investigations suggested the number was considerably less.

None of this would have happened had NATO not embarked on a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia.

The bombing campaign began by attacking military targets but went on to attack civilian infrastructure, including power plants, bridges and factories – and the headquarters of Serb Radio and Television in Belgrade, and the Chinese embassy.

According to Human Rights Watch, the bombing campaign itself killed at least 500 civilians (see report Civilian deaths in the NATO air campaign [19]). About 100 of these took place in Kosovo, where in one incident a convoy of Albanian refugees was attacked, killing 73 of them and injuring 36.

As many as 150 civilians died in various incidents involving the use of cluster bombs until 13 May, when the US ceased using them. However, British forces continued using cluster bombs even after US forces discontinued their use.

A quarter of million ethnically cleansed

After 78 days of bombing, an agreement was reached with the Yugoslav Government along the lines proposed at Rambouillet, but without NATO forces having free access to the whole territory of Yugoslavia – which lends further weight to the view that presence of such a provision in the Rambouillet text was to make sure that the Yugoslav Government wouldn't sign up to it.

Under the agreement, Yugoslav forces withdrew from Kosovo and the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) entered. With 50,000 troops, it was supposed to keep the peace but in reality the KLA were now in control of the most of Kosovo.

An Amnesty International report, Prisoners in our own homes, published in April 2003, describes what happened to ethnic minorities in Kosovo over the ensuing months and years:

"In July 1999, following the signing of the Military Technical Agreement (Kumanovo Agreement) by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the governments of Serbia and the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia (FRY), all Federal and Serbian police, military and paramilitary forces were withdrawn from the province before the end of July 1999. By the end of August, the majority of ethnic Albanian refugees who had fled or had been forcibly expelled to Albania and Macedonia had returned to Kosovo, many of whom found their family members were missing or dead, and their homes deliberately damaged or destroyed by Serbian forces.

"Fearing retribution, thousands of Serbs and Roma fled to Serbia or Montenegro or took refuge in mono-ethnic areas in Kosovo as murders, violent attacks, abductions, rapes and attacks on property were perpetrated against Serbs as well as Albanians, Roma and others accused of 'collaboration' with the Serb authorities. By the end of August 1999, an estimated 235,000 Serbs and other minorities had left Kosovo; those who remained were concentrated in enclaves and pockets, frequently guarded by KFOR.

"Although not all the violence was ethnically motivated, minorities – particularly, but not exclusively, Serbs and Roma – were both individually and indiscriminately targeted, on the basis of their identity - and irrespective of their individual responsibility for human rights violations, including war crimes perpetrated by Serbian forces. By 10 December 1999, KFOR had reported the murders of 414 individuals - 150 ethnic Albanians, 140 Serbs and 124 people of unknown ethnicity – since the end of June.

"These attacks forced minorities that remained in their pre-war homes to move into enclaves, or to leave for Serbia and Montenegro, or other countries. This process has continued as members of minority groups have continued – albeit with less frequency and intensity – to be abducted, murdered and suffer attacks on their lives and property, as well as cultural and religious monuments. Although motives for the continuing violence are often unclear, at times they appear to be less informed by revenge, than by a desire to influence the final status of Kosovo, through seeking to undermine the right of minorities to remain in Kosovo, and discouraging minority return." [20]

Nearly, a quarter of a million people were ethnically cleansed – and there wasn't a squeak of protest from the West about this humanitarian catastrophe, which took place under the noses of 50,000 NATO troops.

Some of the Serbs forced out had been ethnically cleansed once before, when an estimated 200,000 Serbs were forced out of the Krajina region of Croatia in 1995 by a Croat army, armed and trained by the US.

No independent Kosovo

The agreement that brought the bombing to a halt was enshrined in Security Council Resolution1244 [21], passed on 10 June 1999 by 14 votes to 0 (with China abstaining). This reaffirmed

"the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other States of the region, as set out in the Helsinki Final Act and annex 2".

Annex 2 envisaged:

"A political process towards the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing for substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other countries of the region, and the demilitarization of UCK."

The territorial integrity of Yugoslavia was sacrosanct to the international community, wasn't it? There could be no question of an independent state of Kosovo, recognised by the international community, could there?

Well, times change. On 17 February 2008, Kosovo declared itself to be an independent republic, and was immediately recognised by the US, UK, France, Germany, amongst others. Today, 24 out of 28 members of NATO have recognised Kosovo. Serbia hasn't, and nor has Russia.

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Old Habits Die Hard – British Interference in Turkish General Election

by Pat Walsh

Two publications of the British financial elite, *The Economist* and *The Financial Times*, caused something of a stir in Turkey last month, when they advised the Turkish electorate to vote against their government in the general election. It seems that in terms of interfering in the affairs of others and desiring to order the world in the British interest old habits die hard in England.

The Economist Advises

An editorial column published in the June 2nd edition of *The Economist* called a vote against the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Government and for the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) *"a vote against autocracy."*

Below is the analysis and advice *The Economist* gave to the Turkish voters:

"Most Turks are understandably grateful to the ruling Justice and Development (AK) party, and especially to their prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Since AK first came into single-party government in November 2002, the economy has done exceptionally well. Turkey has reformed itself enough to secure the opening of membership negotiations with the European Union. It has pursued a more vigorous foreign policy in its neighbourhood. And a politically intrusive army has been firmly returned to its barracks. Thanks to these achievements, Turkey has become an economic and political power, both in its region and in the world. Although its relations with Israel and America have soured, in the Islamic world it stands out as a thriving Muslim democracy—an inspiration to the Arab awakening. This is in striking contrast to the mess that the AK party inherited: an economic meltdown, a bust banking system, weak coalition governments that came and went with dizzying rapidity, and the ever-present threat of military intervention.

That Turkish voters are poised to return Mr. Erdogan to power in the general election on June 12th is thus not surprising. It is, however, worrying. Mr. Erdogan is riding sufficiently high in the polls to get quite close to the two-thirds parliamentary majority that he craves because it would allow him unilaterally to rewrite the constitution. That would be bad for Turkey.

This judgment is not based on the canard that a theocracy is being built... No matter what the army and too many Israelis (and Americans) whisper, there is scant evidence that AK is trying to turn a broadly tolerant Turkey into the next intolerant Iran.

The real worry about the AK party's untrammelled rule concerns democracy, not religion. Ever since Mr. Erdogan won his battles with the army and the judiciary, he has faced few checks or balances. That has freed him to indulge his natural intolerance of criticism and fed his autocratic instincts. Corruption seems to be on the rise. Press freedom is under attack: more journalists are in jail in Turkey than in China. And a worrying number of Mr. Erdogan's critics and enemies, including a hatful of former army officers, are under investigation, in some cases on overblown conspiracy charges.

On top of this, on the campaign trail Mr. Erdogan has begun to take a more stridently nationalist tone: he and his party are no longer making serious overtures to the Kurds, Turkey's biggest and most disgruntled minority. Mr. Erdogan has hinted that if he wins a two-thirds majority next week, he will change the constitution to create a powerful French-style presidency, presumably to be occupied by himself. In a country that is already excessively centralised, that would be a mistake.

It would be better if a new AK government were to take a more broadly inclusive approach. Turkey's constitution does indeed need a makeover, but it should be rewritten in consultation with other political parties and interest groups, and not as an AK project. The best way to make sure this happens would be to push up the vote for the main opposition party, the centre-left Republican People's Party (CHP). Assuming that two smaller parties also get into the Grand National assembly that should be enough to deny AK its two-thirds majority...

The AK Party is all but certain to form the next government. But we would recommend that Turks vote for the CHP. A stronger showing by Mr. Kiliçdaroglu's party would both reduce the risks of unilateral changes that would make the constitution worse and give the opposition a fair chance of winning a future election. That would be by far the best guarantee of Turkey's democracy."

The Financial Times Advises

The Economist's piece was followed by a *Financial Times* editorial on June 7th. This opinion piece said *"a large win for the AKP would be problematic"* and gave similar advice to the Turkish electors to that provided by *The Economist*:

"The outcome of the Turkish general election... is not in doubt. The only question is by how much Reçep Tayyip Erdogan, whose Justice and Development party (AKP) has run the country since 2002, will win. Turks would be best served if he did not win by a landslide.

That is not to play down the AKP's successes. During its time in office the party has overseen an economic boom (though monetary policy is increasingly unorthodox); helped the banking sector back from near collapse; and defanged the army, which had helped oust four governments since 1960. Mr Erdogan's popularity is understandable, and deserved.

Nonetheless, a large win for the AKP would be problematic. After a decade in power, the party is showing unsettling authoritarian tendencies. These may be to some extent a response to alleged coup-plotting by members of the Kemalist establishment. But the clampdown has gone wider. Journalists and media outlets (most notably the Dogan group) have been intimidated. With the army sidelined, the judiciary less assertive, and EU membership less appealing, a strong opposition is the best hope of holding the AKP in check.

What gives Sunday's outcome particular significance, however, is Mr Erdogan's pledge to rewrite Turkey's constitution. This is long overdue: the current version is an authoritarian relic of the 1980 coup. But making such sensitive and far-reaching changes should be an inclusive process. If the AKP were to win 367 of the 550 seats in the Meclis, it could push contentious changes through on its own.

Most worrying of these is Mr Erdogan's intention to switch Turkey from a parliamentary to a presidential system. That is a bad idea, for two reasons. First, it would offer Mr Erdogan a way of prolonging his stint at the head of Turkey's executive for five rather than the conventional three terms. Worse, it would make resolving the grievances of Turkey's Kurdish and other minorities harder... Mr Erdogan's plan will merely deliver a more overweening executive."

Some Turkish Replies

The Turkish daily *Sunday's Zaman* of June 12th commented on the effect of these British interventions in Turkish politics:

"The controversial editorials published first by *The Economist* and later by its part-owner, the *Financial Times*, throwing their endorsements behind the main opposition party in Sunday's general elections, were widely regarded in Turkey as "wishful thinking" for a divided government for a fast-developing country whose economic performance last year outpaced the whole of Europe."

Zaman reported Egemen Bagis, Minister of State and EU chief negotiator, as having criticized the British publications' stand on the Turkish elections in the following terms:

"It is clear that they want a weak government in Turkey. Turkey has become Europe's fastest growing economy. While the EU grew by 1.5 percent on average in 2010, Turkey's growth rate was 8.9 percent. My sense is that some countries in Europe wish to slow down Turkey with a divided government."

AK Party Parliamentary Group Deputy Chairman Suat Kiliç said:

"A growing Turkey does not suit the British or the Germans or the French. They want Turkey to be condemned to coalition governments again. That is the scenario."

The same article in *Zaman* reported that this was not the first time the Turkish Government had been targeted by UK publications. Last year Britain's *Daily Telegraph* had run a story alleging that Prime Minister Erdogan had accepted a $25 million donation from Iran to fund his party's campaign for the upcoming elections. Erdogan successfully sued the *Telegraph* and won a libel suit filed with a British high court, with the publication ordered to pay £25,000 in damages.

The court ruled that the newspaper's allegations were not based on concrete evidence and that the story was inaccurate. The paper had to run an apology which stated:

"We now accept that we were misinformed and the allegation was untrue. Neither Prime Minister Erdogan nor his party has negotiated any such deal or accepted any donation of any kind from Iran. We apologise to Prime Minister Erdogan."

The British Constitution and Ireland

The present writer has no intention of advising the Turkish people who they should or should not vote for or how their constitution should be written. That is the business of the Turkish democracy. Suffice to say it is odd that two British publications feel it is their business to advise the Turkish electorate on the power of the executive in Turkey and their constitution.

This is particularly so because Britain, of course, has no formal restraint on its executive (aside perhaps from the E.U. – and that is not definite). It has no codified constitution to restrain the government. And little else can restrain it effectively in most conditions. There are no limits on the number of terms a British Prime Minister can serve. I think it was Lord Hailsham who not so long ago described the British system as an 'elective dictatorship,' in the face of Parliament's decreasing ability in holding it to account.

It might be said that the British constitution is whatever the British government, at the time, says it is. In many ways the constitution is the outcome of the balance of power between the political parties of the British State. There is little restraint on a party that can generate power in the country and a government derives confidence to do what it will upon obtaining a sufficient mandate for it. It does not expect anyone to say it is acting unconstitutionally in what it chooses to do and the opposition restrains itself from saying so lest it be subject to a similar charge when it obtains a mandate to do what it wishes.

The last time that unconstitutionality came into it was in the Irish Home Rule crisis of 1912. In this crisis Unionist legal experts like A.V. Dicey (*A Fool's Paradise: Being a Constitutionalist's Criticism of the Home Rule Bill of 1912*) argued that what the Liberals were proposing to do, in exacting a fundamental change to the British constitution, without a mandate in England for it, was unconstitutional. Liberal jurists like Professor L.T. Hobhouse, argued differently and published a volume of argument in response (*The New Irish Constitution*).

However, despite all the constitutional arguments about Irish Home Rule the issue was settled by force, or at least the threat of it. The operation of Parliament was rendered ineffectual by 1913 by the mustering of extra-parliamentary force by the Unionist Party. It was declared that there were *"greater things than parliamentary majorities,"* an army mutiny was organised and prominent Tories set up paramilitary groups to resist the Liberal Government. Parliamentary conventions were shattered and the constitution shifted from what the Liberals declared it to be to what the Unionists made it be.

The fact that the Unionists, in threatening armed rebellion against the Government in 1913, in capturing the War Office, the most important department of State, in 1914 and in taking over the Government itself in two coups during 1915 and 1916 without ever breaking the British constitution shows how little a defence said constitution is against the power of state in Britain. When the Unionists acted outrageously against parliamentary convention in 1912-3 the Liberal Government could not apply the power of state against them, even though Churchill threatened to, because the power of state went away with the Unionist opposition through the operation of the constitution.

In 1921 when letting the Irish Free State go from the United Kingdom Britain imposed a constitution on it to keep it within the Empire. In fact the imposing of that constitution on the Irish Free

State made sure that Ireland remained under the British constitution although it seemingly got its own.

The Free State Constitution was a requirement of the Treaty and the Treaty was a requirement for peace in Ireland. That is not to say that the Treaty imposed peace between Ireland and Britain. What it represented was the price Ireland had to pay to avoid immediate and terrible war being waged upon it by Britain.

Michael Collins tried to draft a constitution for the Irish Free State that could be interpreted in such a way that it would provide some cover for what had been imposed on Ireland by the Treaty. But Britain would not allow it. The constitution the Free State had to have (or else!) placed the State under the authority of the crown in an explicit way and was constitutionally unalterable.

It is usually the case that a sovereign state can alter its own constitution or determine how its constitution can be altered. But the Irish Free State did not get this power under the Treaty and the understanding was that if it tried to exercise such a power that would be the occasion for war on Britain's part.

The Treaty was also not a treaty between equals since the Irish Free State could not end it like any other treaty between two sovereign powers where both sides just walk away and make other arrangements. The Irish Free State could not walk away.

And so the constitution of the Irish State, imposed by the Treaty, was not a constitution of a sovereign state. It was for all legal and practical purposes an extension of the British constitution.

British Interference in Greece 1915

The Turks are no strangers to British interference in constitutions—and neither are the Greeks. For it was through this means that Britain began the conflict between Greece and Turkey that was to prove so disastrous in the end for Greece.

The Greek King Constantine and his government tried to remain neutral in the Great War but Britain was determined to enlist as many neutrals as possible against their opponents. So Britain made offers to the Greek Prime Minister, Venizelos, of territory in Anatolia, offers which he found too hard to resist. In September 1915 Venizelos issued a tentative inquiry about British assistance were Greece to join the war. However, Britain and France used this inquiry to send an expeditionary force to invade neutral Greece and occupy Salonica in order to nudge Greece into the war. This prompted Venizelos to issue what amounted to a declaration of war in the Greek Parliament; this was entirely contrary to the Greek Constitution, which laid down that declarations of war and conclusions of peace were solely Crown prerogatives.

In Britain it was pretended that it was King Constantine who had acted unconstitutionally in then dismissing the Venizelos Government. Venizelos went along with that fiction, even though he knew better, and it is in numerous British accounts of the affair. But Article Thirty One of the Greek Constitution, that was given to (or imposed upon) Greece by Britain and France, stated: *"The King appoints and dismisses his Ministers."* Article Ninety Nine stated that *"No foreign army may be admitted to the Greek service without a special law, nor may it sojourn in or pass through the State."* And yet Venizelos had connived at this without legislation permitting it.

It was also part of the Greek system that the King's consent was a requirement for an amending of the Constitution.

George Abbott, a British naval attaché to Greece was appalled at this behaviour on the part of Britain. In the following passage from his book *Greece And The Allies 1914-1922*, he explains how Venizelos was induced to act in the spirit of the British constitution in acting the autocrat in over-stepping the limitations placed on a Minister of the Crown by the Greek Constitution:

> "... the whole case of M. Venizelos against his Sovereign rested, avowedly, on the theory... that the Greek Constitution is a replica of the British—a monarchical democracy in which the monarch is nothing more than a passive instrument in the hands of a Government with a Parliamentary majority. It is not so, and it was never meant to be so. The Greek Constitution does invest the monarch with rights which our Constitution, or rather the manner in which we have for a long time chosen to interpret it, does not. Among these is the right to make, or to refrain from making war. That was why M. Venizelos in March, 1915, could not offer the co-operation of Greece in the Dardanelles enterprise officially without the King's approval, and why the British Government declined to consider his semi-official communication until after the King's decision. Similarly M. Venizelos's proposals for the dispatch of Entente troops to Salonica in September, so far as that transaction was carried on above-board, were made subject to the King's consent. Of course, if the King exercised this right without advice, he would be playing the part of an autocrat; but King Constantine always acted by the advice of the competent authority—namely, the Chief of the General Staff...
>
> In this again, M. Venizelos appears to have been inspired by British example. We saw during the War the responsibility for its conduct scattered over twenty-three civil and semi-civil individuals who consulted the naval and military staffs more or less as and when they chose, and the result of it in the Gallipoli tragedy. We saw, too, as a by-product of this system, experts holding back advice of immense importance because they knew it would not be well received. The Reports of the Dardanelles Commission condemned this method. But it is to a precisely similar method that the Greek General Staff objected with such determination. 'Venizelos,' they said, 'does not know anything about war. He approaches the King with proposals containing in them the seeds of national disaster without consulting us, or in defiance of our advice. Greece cannot afford to run the risk of military annihilation; her resources are small, and, once exhausted, cannot be replaced.' The King, relying on the right unquestionably given to him under the terms of the Constitution, demanded from his chief military adviser such information as would enable him to judge wisely from the military point of view any proposal involving hostilities made by his Premier. It was this attitude that saved Greece from the Gallipoli grave in March, and it was the same attitude that saved her a second time at the present juncture. But, in fact, at the present juncture the King acted not so much on his prerogative of deciding about war as on the extreme democratic principle that such decision belongs to the people, and, finding that the Party which pushed the country towards war had only a weak majority, he preferred to place the question before the electorate, to test beyond the possibility of doubt the attitude of public opinion towards this new departure. From whatever point of view we may examine Constantine's behaviour, we find that nothing could be more unfair than the charge of unconstitutionalism brought against it." (pp.71-3)

In using the Greeks to fight the Turks and in interfering in Greek constitutional affairs the British brought disaster upon the Greeks. The Greek King attempted to defend his neutrality policy

but he was deposed by the actions of British and French armies at Salonika, through a starvation blockade by the Royal Navy and a seizure of the harvest by Allied troops.

These events led to the Greek tragedy in Anatolia because the puppet government under Venizelos, installed in Athens at the point of Allied bayonets, was enlisted as a catspaw to bring the Turks to heel after the Armistice at Mudros. The Greeks, encouraged by Lloyd George, advanced across Anatolia toward Ankara where the Turkish assembly had re-established after it had been suppressed in Constantinople. Britain used the Greeks and their desire for a new Byzantium in Anatolia to get Ataturk and the Turkish national forces to submit to the Treaty of SËvres, and consequently the destruction of not only the Ottoman State but of Turkey itself.

But the Greek Army perished in Anatolia after being skillfully maneuvered into a position by Ataturk in which their lines were stretched. And the two thousand year old Greek population of Asia Minor fled on boats from Smyrna with the remnants of their Army, after Britain had withdrawn its support, because the Greek democracy had reasserted its will to have back its King.

Germany 1919

After the end of the First World War Britain pressured the German and Austrian into overthrowing their monarchies. These monarchies were essential elements in the constitutions of these two countries and this move had revolutionary effects. Britain might have simply deposed the Kaiser (or even hung him to please the British electorate) but it did not need to abolish such an important component of legitimacy and authority within the German State.

The obvious reason behind this action was the desire to impose ultra-democratic systems on Britain’s enemies in order to debilitate them. However, what was created in Germany, at least, was a political vacuum that generated great political instability and a subsequent desire for authority to emerge from wherever it might.

Britain’s interference in the way Germany was governed proved disastrous not only for Germany but also for Europe. Without the removal of the monarchy there would have been no Hitler.

Turkey

So why are British publications so concerned with the reform of the Turkish system?

The evidence of history and a comparison with the unrestrictive executive dominance of the British system seems to suggest that Turkish commentators are right – when Britain seeks to influence the political systems and constitutions of others it is not out of benevolence, or a desire to make them better, it is out of a desire to disable potential competitors. Britain does this almost by instinct, as if it is the most natural thing in the world. And it seems that old habits die hard.

Ireland and Germany
Reprinted from *Ireland Today,* October 1936

[The item below is a comparison of Germany and Ireland, written in October 1936 and published in *Ireland Today*. The author, Frank Pakenham, stressed that the two countries had in common the unfair treaties they had been forced into. *Ireland Today* was published and edited by Jim O'Donovan from June 1936 to March 1938. It had a wide variety of contributors and covered cultural, economic, literary, historical and political affairs at home and abroad. Most of its foreign affairs commentary was by Sheehy Skeffington. The Spanish Civil war was the major issue of the time and *Ireland Today* took the Republican side.

Jim O'Donovan was the editor and publisher—he set up the magazine and had an unusual history.

He had been the IRA's leading explosives expert during the War of Independence and was a member of its General HQ staff during the war. He designed the S-Plan for the bombing campaign in the UK, 1939-40, and was the IRA's chief liaison officer with Nazi Germany. He was interned for two years in the Curragh and died in 1979. O'Donovan's name never appeared in the magazine, but he contributed under a number of pseudonyms.

Other contributors included Frank O'Connor, Brian Coffey, Daniel Corkery, Denis Devlin, Michael MacLaverty, Ewart Milne, Sean O'Faolain, Liam O'Flaherty, Mervyn Wall, Peadar O'Donnell, Nicholas Mansergh, Sean O'Faolain, Professor James Hogan, Robert Barton, Erskine Childers, Eric Gill, Patrick Kavanagh, Maud Gonne, Louie Bennett, Professor Edmund Curtis and R. Dudley Edwards. The item below is the only one by Frank Pakenham (later Lord Longford).]

Ireland and Germany.

by Frank Pakenham

I returned, not long ago, from an Educational Conference in Berlin—my first experience of Germany since Hitler came to power. On reaching Ireland I have been reflecting afresh on the analogies to be drawn and the differences to be noticed between recent Irish and recent German history.

Ireland and Germany are both nations whose nationhood has been restricted from outside. That is the essential resemblance. Both had Treaties imposed on them under circumstances of duresse, Ireland in 1921 and Germany in 1919. In each case the duresse symbolised itself in an ultimatum of short time limit. Ireland, it is true, had the luxury of sending Delegates to the negotiating table, while Germany had to put up with "dictated" terms. But Ireland's delegates were denied at the crisis the chance of reference back to their principals. Germany at least was permitted to bring the decision before her legislature at home. It would be hard to say which country was the more unfairly treated.

Apart from their origins, the Treaty of 1921 and the Versailles "dictate" bear each other a sharp likeness; they each deny to one party fundamental rights, physical and psychological. The defence facilities granted the British under "the Treaty" have, or had, their counterpart in the fifteen-year occupation clauses, and permanent disarmament stipulations of Versailles. Irish "Partition" pairs off with the exclusion from Germany of Danzig, Memel, the Saar (till 1935), Austria (which like the others wanted to be included in Germany) and the Colonies. The financial clauses of the Irish Treaty and the attempt to extract Land Annuities may be set against German reparations.

When we turn to psychological impositions, the British insistence on the disestablishment of the Irish Republic surpasses only in degree of brutality the allied attitude that made Germany sign an acknowledgment of sole responsibility for the War. The disarmament and colonial penalties of Versailles inflicted too their psychological wound. Truly, Ireland and Germany should be able to appreciate each other's wrongs from intimate acquaintance with their own.

Countries treated thus—countries in this way imposed on, cannot view the *status quo* with the same reverence, cannot subscribe to the sanctity of international contracts with the same reverence as countries that have done the imposing. I am not arguing for complete licence for all so-called "unsatisfied powers," Italy and Japan for example. I am simply saying that the Irish and German Treaties infringe fundamental National rights in a way that England would never allow her fundamental rights to be infringed, unless she were first crushed in war; that the Treaties are in that sense unjust and that no neutral observer could attribute moral blame, though he might attribute political unwisdom to any Irish or German statesman who broke the treaties in question.

Now justice tends in the long run to prevail because it lends persistence to its followers and weakens the arm of the unjust. This being so, England would have been well advised to realise from the first that the burdens on Ireland and Germany would gradually be whittled away; those of Ireland (owing to the strange expansive quality of the Treaty) by processes that we can honestly call legal, those of Germany by the written word being erased. A British policy of generosity and of ready acquiescence in amendment would in each case have won England a friend.

But the time-honoured story of the Sibylline books is the one

that no nation seems capable of learning. So Collins was goaded by Churchill and later Cosgrave tricked over the boundary, while in Germany, the dying Stresemann, martyr to the policy of fulfilment, told the journalist, Lockhart, how the British expected him to give, give, give, without repayment. Till the youth of Germany, which might have been saved for peace, had passed to National Socialism. That, said Stresemann to the Englishman, "is my tragedy and your crime."

To-day, England sighs for Collins and Cosgrave, and in the same breath, for Stresemann; when Hitler enters the Rhineland, England sighs for his offers of 1933, 1934 and 1935; when he demands Colonies in September, she sighs for him as he was in March. "No surrender" she cries, as she counts the paper assets of her international contracts. And then there comes along the *fait accompli* and the great Empire, not through cowardice, but because she does not really believe in the justice of her claims and her adversary believes in hers so passionately—the great empire after a peevish lecture, takes the *fait accompli* lying down.

International justice is a difficult conception, because there are so many questions (the Polish corridor for example), where an absolutely just decision cannot be dogmatically proclaimed. But equally there are certain fundamental rights of Nationhood attaching to each Nation, and there can be no pretence of justice while these are denied. Once England and other countries realise that such rights are going in the end to over-ride scraps of paper (which by the way are very useful if kept in proper perspective) they would distinguish between indefeasible claims, such as those of Ireland and Germany and gratuitous aggressions such as those of Italy and Japan; and they would make inevitable concessions at the time and in the manner to placate.

Ireland and Germany having been treated similarly by England, are we then to identify the state of mind of present-day Ireland with that of present-day Germany? No, that is the curious thing. And the merciful thing for Ireland.

The broad lines of the foreign policy of the two countries have been similar up to the present, but Ireland had somehow managed to retain a peaceful outlook, Germany has not. It may be said that if Ireland had Germany's military strength she would harbour militant intentions towards, for example, the Six Counties, but I do not think that is so. The new German attitude in foreign affairs is a reflex of her internal development, is the outcome, to put it plainly, of her descent to Fascism.

The Nazi economic proposals—autarchy, bold finance, curtailment of gross inequalities in wealth—will not be altogether uncongenial to Irishmen and there may be some sympathy with that fierce striving after untroubled community of feeling, with that determination to achieve a sense of fellowship, which uplifts the better Nazis to-day.

But with the political method they adopt towards their ideal—and the method is the essence of the system—there can be no compromise. That method is to eradicate everything critical and everything felt to be alien, by violence and if necessary by torture. And though a Nazi will tell you that such expedients are transitional, they will last as long as the Nazi system itself. For to enforce community of feeling by crushing thought is something that can never be accomplished in a nation once civilized so long as the human spirit remains as we have known it. Violence and torture will continue to be necessary to the maintenance of Fascism and will continue, therefore, to dominate the German domestic scene and, through their effect on German foreign politics, to poison international relations.

It is Ireland's triumph to have suffered the fate of Germany for far longer than Germany and yet to have emerged sane and democratic and possessed of peaceful intent.

Why has this been possible? Why was Ireland never brought down to the German chaos of 1932 from which in a sense Hitler had excuse from rescuing his country? The answer is simple. Ireland understood and appreciated better than Germany the meaning not only of democracy, but of nationalism. In Germany democracy had to fall to let nationalism enter. In Ireland the two have gone hand in hand.

The evil in Germany was that the democrats were neither sufficiently nationalistic nor sufficiently courageous to deal with nationalistic enemies of democracy. In Ireland each government elected since the Treaty has adequately avoided this reproach. But Irish democracy will fall as did German democracy if her government falters in a reasonable nationalism. For while there is probably no group of any consequence in Ireland that at the moment prefers dictatorship to democracy, dictatorship is the natural and often only justifiable reply to the collapse of civil order.

Progressive attainment of full national emancipation; unwavering profession of public order—based on these qualities Irish democracy will overcome obstacles that pulled down Germany, and will endure. And it is worth adding that the virtues of an Ireland so governed stand a fair chance of making their way through the traditional fogs of English Imperial calculation to the consciousness of the English people and so changing, what is already showing signs of being not quite immutable, English feeling about Ireland.

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J.S. Mill, A Few Words on Non-intervention

Introduction by Cathy Winch

Improving Britain's image in the world.

We reprint here the last part of the article, *A Few Words on Non-Intervention*, first published in *Fraser's Magazine* (December 1859) reprinted in Collected Works Volume XXI (On Equality, Law and Education) where J. S. Mill explains how the whole doctrine of non-interference with foreign nations should be reconsidered:

> There are few questions which more require to be taken in hand by ethical and political philosophers, with a view to establish some rule or criterion whereby the justifiableness of intervening in the affairs of other countries, and (what is sometimes fully as questionable) the justifiableness of refraining from any intervention, may be brought to a definite and rational test.

The one case which needs discussing is that of a people in arms for liberty: "whether a nation may justifiably aid the people of another country in struggling for liberty."

The countries that compose the British Empire for example should not fight for independence and nationality, because they are not ready for freedom, being still at the stage where it is better for them to be conquered by a civilised empire, as was once ancient Gaul and, asks Mill, "Would it have been better for Gaul and Spain, Numidia and Dacia, never to have formed part of the Roman Empire?"

To enjoy its comic aspects the text is best read in conjunction with Pat Walsh's and Eamon Dyas's descriptions of Britain's foreign affairs elsewhere in the magazine.

Mill's article is in fact about using intervention in the affairs of other countries to improve Britain's image in the world. It begins with a description of an unnamed country, (the reader is meant to understand it is Britain, but the British are too modest to give a flattering description of themselves) that has every perfection, especially as far as foreign affairs are concerned; here is a summary of the first paragraph:

"There is a country in Europe, whose declared principle of foreign policy is to let other nations alone. Any attempt it makes to exert influence, even by persuasion, is in the service of others. It desires no benefit to itself at the expense of others, it desires none in which all others do not freely participate. It makes no treaties stipulating for separate commercial advantages. Whatever it demands for itself it demands for all mankind. Its own ports and commerce are free as the air and the sky."

Yet paradoxically, continued Mill, this nation finds itself, in respect of its foreign policy, held up on the Continent as the prime example of egoism and selfishness, as a nation which thinks of nothing but of out-witting its neighbours. And this opinion is shared not just by Protectionist writers or the mouthpieces of all the despots and of the Papacy, quite the contrary, the prejudice is general among all Continentals:

> So strong a hold has it on their minds, that when an Englishman attempts to remove it, all their habitual politeness does not enable them to disguise their utter unbelief in his disclaimer. They are firmly persuaded that no word is said, nor act done, by English statesmen in reference to foreign affairs, which has not for its motive principle some peculiarly English interest. Any profession of the contrary appears to them too ludicrously transparent an attempt to impose upon them. [...] They believe that we have always other objects than those we avow; and the most far-fetched and implausible suggestion of a selfish purpose appears to them better entitled to credence than anything so utterly incredible as our disinterestedness.

The opinion of Continental politicians is:

> That the very existence of England depends upon the incessant acquisition of new markets for our manufactures; that the chase after these is an affair of life and death to us; and that we are all time ready to trample on every obligation of public or international morality, when the alternative would be, pausing for a moment in that race.

England is clearly giving the wrong impression to the world. So England must do something to remedy this unfair situation, all the more so because her own population is influenced by Continental opinion. Besides, the British must be doing something wrong if "*almost everybody but themselves thinks them crafty and hypocritical*." There are two strands in the remedy, according to JS Mill. Firstly, there is attending to "the sins of speech", that is, communication, the way the British present themselves in public. At the moment they are careless of the impression they produce and they are "*so shy of professing virtues that they will even profess vices instead*"; they must from now on be very careful with the language they use and with the impression they produce. At home, politicians do not need to speak to their non aristocratic countrymen in terms only of material interest. Higher notions should be put before them.

Secondly, the sins of action. There is something above all that can be done, something that will be a great source of prestige and transform the English into "*the idol of the friends of freedom throughout Europe*."

That thing is, to get involved in foreign intervention. Of course you have to choose carefully where to intervene, and the help should be, strictly, to make it clear to the world that you will not stand by while other countries try to intervene. England should intervene on the Continent, in countries governed by tyrants, where there is a home grown party fighting to throw off the yoke of despotism: it is fine to "*aid the people of another country in struggling for liberty*".

Foreign intervention has been done by European Powers recently (between Greece and Turkey, between Holland and Belgium) "*with such general approval, that its legitimacy many be considered to have passed into a maxim of what is called international law*." England missed a golden opportunity, when Russia intervened to help the tyrant Austria crush the Hungarian uprising: England should have stopped Russia intervening on the side of Austria; all it gained for not doing so was, that she had to fight Russia five years later, in more difficult circumstances, and without Hungary as an ally. So we must not be afraid of intervening, on behalf of the right people. And we must be *seen* to be on the side of freedom: our politicians must absolutely stop repeating the shabby refrain: "*We did not interfere, because no English interest was involved*."

Besides, if we don't do it, someone else will: "The prize is too glorious not to be snatched sooner or later by some free country." The last words of the article state that England has to lead the movement towards national self-determination in Continental Europe; if she does not want to do it from heroism, then she must do it "*from consideration for her own safety*." Here is the last sentence in full:

> The prize is too glorious not to be snatched sooner of later by some free country; and the time may not be distant when England, if she does not take this heroic part because of its heroism, will be compelled to take it from consideration for her own safety.

Mill started his article deploring the accusations of self interest aimed at England, yet he ends this piece with considerations of self-interest: Britain's "*own safety*". However, despite gaps in the argument, Mill has given a clear and useful message:

Intervening on the right side, and presenting the intervention in the right language, does not only show a country in a heroic light, but it is also a matter of national advantage (a glorious prize) and even of national safety. Whether or not Mill's advice has been instrumental in this success, Britain has certainly mastered the art of presenting herself as the champion of freedom and democracy in the world, and being believed. Who remembers today why England was ever called "perfidious Albion"?

It is Mill's advice that matters, not the consistency of his argument. We could mention some holes in the reasoning. Why is intervention a matter of national safety? Why is it a question of safety, not just of reputation? The argument using the example of intervention on behalf of Hungary has large holes in it. The British should have stopped the Russians, because, anyway, they had to attack Russia later on. But Britain's attack on Russia (in the Crimean War— see Pat Walsh *Special Relationship* article) had nothing to do with "foreign intervention".

Mill does not say why England had to fight Russia in the Crimean War; yet, that forms part of the argument in favour of intervention on behalf of freedom lovers. There is of course no mention of any political or economic advantage to England in the dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The gist of Mill's article is that England must work on her reputation, and intervening "on behalf of liberty" is a way of doing it. Mill laid out pragmatic reasons for supporting anti-Imperial movements, and claimed the moral high ground at the same time. He was a prime example of the two-faced Englishman the Continentals used to deplore.

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J.S. Mill
A Few Words on Non-intervention. (1859)

With respect to the question, whether one country is justified in helping the people of another in a struggle against their government for free institutions, the answer will be different, according as the yoke which the people are attempting to throw off is that of a purely native government, or of foreigners; considering as one of foreigners, every government which maintains itself by foreign support. When the contest is only with native rulers, and with such native strength as those rulers can enlist in their defence, the answer I should give to the question of the legitimacy of intervention is, as a general rule, No. The reason is, that there can seldom be anything approaching to assurance that intervention, even if successful, would be for the good of the people themselves. The only test possessing any real value, of a people's having become fit for popular institutions, is that they, or a sufficient portion of them to prevail in the contest, are willing to brave labour and danger for their liberation. I know all that may be said. I know it may be urged that the virtues of freemen cannot be learned in the school of slavery, and that if a people are not fit for freedom, to have any chance of becoming so they must first be free. And this would be conclusive, if the intervention recommended would really give them freedom. But the evil is, that if they have not sufficient love of liberty to be able to wrest it from merely domestic oppressors, the liberty which is bestowed on them by other hands than their own, will have nothing real, nothing permanent. No people ever was and remained free, but because it was determined to be so; because neither its rulers not any other party in the nation would compel it to be otherwise. If a people— especially one whose freedom has no yet become prescriptive— does not value it sufficiently to fight for it, and maintain it against any force which can be mustered *within* the country, even by those who have the command of the public revenue, it is only a question of how few years or months that people will be enslaved. Either the government which it has given to itself, or some military leader or knot of conspirators who contrive to subvert the government, will speedily put an end to all popular institutions: unless indeed it suits their convenience better to leave them standing, and be content with reducing them to mere forms; for, unless the spirit of liberty is strong in a people, those

who have the executive in their hands easily work any institutions to the purposes of despotism. There is no sure guarantee against this deplorable issue, even in a country which has achieved its own freedom; as may be seen in the present day by striking examples both in the Old and the New Worlds: but when freedom has been achieved *for* them, they have little prospect indeed of escaping this fate. When a people has had the misfortune to be ruled by a government under which the feelings and the virtues needful for maintaining freedom could not develop themselves, it is during an arduous struggle to become free by their own efforts that these feelings and virtues have the best chance of springing up. Men become attached to that which they have long fought for and made sacrifices for; they learn to appreciate that on which their thoughts have been much engaged; and a contest in which many have been called on to devote themselves for their country, is a school in which they learn to value their country's interest above their own.

It can seldom, therefore—I will not go so far as to say never—be either judicious or right, in a country which has a free government, to assist, otherwise than by the moral support of its opinion, the endeavours of another to extort the same blessing from its native rulers. We must except, of course, any case in which such assistance is a measure of legitimate self-defence. If (a contingency by no means unlikely to occur) this country, on account of its freedom, which is a standing reproach to despotism everywhere, and an encouragement to throw it off, should find itself menaced with attack by a coalition of Continental despots, it ought to consider the popular party in every nation of the continent as its natural ally: the Liberals should be to it, what the Protestants of Europe were to the Government of Queen Elizabeth. So, again, when a nation, in her own defence, has gone to war with a despot, and has had the rare good fortune not only to succeed in her resistance, but to hold the conditions of peace in her own hands, she is entitled to say that she will make no treaty, unless with some other ruler than the one whose existence as such may be a perpetual menace to her safety and freedom. These exceptions do but set in a clearer light the reasons of the rule; because they do not depend on any failure of those reasons, but on considerations paramount to them, and coming under a different principle.

But the case of a people struggling against a foreign yoke, or against a native tyranny upheld by foreign arms, illustrates the reasons for non-intervention in an opposite way; for in this case the reasons themselves do not exist. A people the most attached to freedom, the most capable of defending and of making a good use of free instructions, may be unable to contender successfully for them against the military strength of another nation much more powerful. To assist a people thus kept down, is not to disturb the balance of forces on which the permanent maintenance of freedom in a country depends, but to redress that balance when it is already unfairly and violently disturbed. The doctrine of non-intervention, to be a legitimate principle of morality, must be accepted by all governments. The despots must consent to be bound by it as well as the free States. Unless they do, the profession of it by free countries comes but to this miserable issue, that the wrong side may help the wrong, but the right must not help the right. Intervention to enforce non-intervention is always rightful, always moral, if not always prudent. Though it be a mistake to *give* freedom to a people who do not value the boon, it cannot but be right to insist that if they do value it, they shall not be hindered from the pursuit of it by foreign coercion. It might not have been right for England (even apart from the question of prudence) to have taken part with Hungary in its noble struggle against Austria, although the Austrian Government in Hungary was in some sense a foreign yoke. But when, the Hungarians having shown themselves likely to prevail in this struggle, the Russian despot interposed, and joining his force to that of Austria, delivered back the Hungarians, bound hand and foot, to their exasperated oppressors, it would have been an honourable and virtuous act on the part of England to have declared that this should not be, and that if Russia gave assistance to the wrong side, England would aid the right. It might not have been consistent with the regard which every nation is bound to pay for its own safety, for England to have taken up this position single-handed but England and France together could have done it; and if they had, the Russian armed intervention would never have taken place, or would have been disastrous to Russia alone; while all that those Powers gained by not doing it, was that they had to fight Russia five years afterwards, under more difficult circumstances, and without Hungary for an ally. The first nation which, being powerful enough to make its voice effectual, has the spirit and courage to say that not a gun shall be fired in Europe by the solders of one Power against the revolted subjects of another, will be idol of the friends of freedom throughout Europe. That declaration alone will ensure the almost immediate emancipation of every people which desire liberty sufficiently to be capable of maintaining it; and the nation which gives the word will soon find itself at the head of an alliance of free peoples, so strong as to defy the efforts of any number of confederated despots to bring it down. The prize is too glorious not to be snatched sooner of later by some free country; and the time may not be distant when England, if she does not take this heroic part because of its heroism, will be compelled to take it from consideration for her own safety.

Erratum

P 11 After "In the meantime, Britain's ongoing conflict with the U.S. over the earlier seizure of the *Mashona* forced the Government at last to make a public pronouncement on the issue of food as contraband:" insert quote:

> "The British Government has decided that although the rights of neutrals will receive due consideration, the work of stopping contraband of war from entering the Transvaal should not be made a dead letter. A somewhat misleading statement was published in the evening papers to the effect that so long as the ships manifests did not say the cargo was intended for the enemy it would not be liable to seizure. The Central News learns that if directly or indirectly the foodstuffs on ships arrested by her Majesty's war vessels is intended finally for the enemy's use, it will be seized and confiscated as contraband of war. A quantity of flour and other foodstuffs consigned to Delagoa Bay recently for the use of the Boers is to be diverted to the use of the British troops. The British officials acting in these matters in South African waters have been instructed that where such action is legitimate the full market value of the goods is to be paid to the owners or carriers. Whenever a cargo stopped by British warships proves to be a neutral bound for another neutral the cargo so stopped is to be released, and compensation for the resulting delay is to be paid to the parties suffering from such delay. The officers of the Prize Court at Durban have received cabled instructions from the Government to the effect that a sharp lookout is to be kept for subterfuges, and the Government is determined to exercise its logical rights of search and detention." (*Freeman's Journal*, 12 January 1900)