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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

CONTENTS

Mikhail Gorbachev – The Pro-Democracy Activist *Brendan Clifford* p. 2

The New Great Game: Ukraine, the South Caucasus and Eurasian Development
Pat Walsh p. 8

Ukraine trapped in a Spiral of War July 1, 2022 *Pierre de Gaulle* p. 16

Katehon - Towards a Post-Liberal Russia *Peter Brooke* p. 18

Setting of the Sun at Chanak (1922) *Pat Walsh* p. 26

NATO’s wars on Yugoslavia and Libya *David Morrison* p. 30

Mikhail Gorbachev – The Pro-Democracy Activist

Mikhail Gorbachev is best described as a pro-democracy activist. That means that he had no practical understanding of what democracy in the Western sense actually was, and how it could be established in Communist Russia. He was caught by the Western propaganda-ideal. He tried to act in accordance with that ideal. In pursuit of it he destroyed the State which he was appointed to govern. And he was himself reduced to a figure of ridicule by the actual democracies of the West, which bear very little resemblance to the ideals they propagate.

Two forms of democracy arose out of the chaos that Britain's 'Great War' produced in Europe. One was the democracy of "the hard-faced men who looked as if they had done well out of the war"—Keynes' description of the first democratically-elected British Parliament in 1918. The other was "the dictatorship of the proletariat" in the system of Soviets—of Works Councils, within a state operated by "democratic centralism", which was a vast integrated Committee system.

The former was democratic in the sense that it was conducted by a small number of elitist political parties from which one was chosen to govern the state by votes cast by everybody every four or five years. The economic system existed independently of the State. It was conducted by the hard-faced businessmen. It was essentially autonomous. The Government could exert very little influence on it. The workers, if strongly organised in Trade Unions, could by purposeful obstruction effect some local changes. But the system itself was never at issue in it. It was a capitalist arena, and its practical arrangements meant that there could be no switching to and fro between Capitalism and Socialism, depending on the mood of the electorate at the five-yearly elections.

The Soviet form of democracy was constructed on non-capitalist lines. Its economy was organised by the State for the deliberate production of all the wide range of goods required in post-feudal European society. It had no independent momentum of its own. The greater part of the population had to be actively involved in it, will it to exist, because otherwise it could not exist.

In 1945 the world was formally divided between the two systems.

In Europe, between the two World Wars, the liberal-democratic form of Capitalism had failed and a Fascist form was resorted to under socialist pressure. Fascist Europe then struck at the Communist source of Socialism in the Soviet Union, and was defeated.

The world was then divided between the Capitalist and Communist forms of democracy—each being accepted as authentic, but each also existing in a relationship of profound antagonism with the other.

That was the condition of the world when Gorbachev was appointed head of the Democratic Centralist half of it. He

was entranced by the propagandist idealism of the capitalist world. He used his power in the Democratic Centralist system in an attempt to reshape it along the lines of the Western system of Government and economy, imagining that this could be done by a mere act of will.

His maxim was that the Soviet system was a top-down authoritarian system. It was run authoritatively from the top and therefore it could be changed authoritatively from the top. A change at the top would bring about a systematic change of the whole.

He was encouraged in this view by his friends—the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, who was breaking the power of the Trade Unions, and the American President, Ronald Reagan, a Hollywood actor who saw the Communist Party as "the focus of evil" in the world.

Gorbachev saw his world through their eyes.

The notion had come into vogue that the Soviet system—which destroyed the power of Nazi Germany—was conducted by a Cult of personality". In fact, it was conducted by a very intricate system of interconnected committees, directed by a Central Committee, to which information flowed from every corner of the economy and went into the planning system at the centre and was made use of for further planning. All of these committees were connected with points of production. The whole consisted of an integrated system of workers.

There were no classes in the Ricardian sense in the system. The land was not owned by a class of landowners. Capital was not owned by capitalists. The dynamic of Rent, Interest and Profit did not exist. Entrepreneurs did not rent land and borrow capital at a rate of interest in order to make a profit for themselves. And none of the subsidiary functions serving the R I P system existed.

The system of Committees sketched out by Lenin as the alternative to Capitalism was made functional by Stalin by means of extraordinary administrative competence. Cult of personality had nothing to do with it. Charismatic orations would not have made the system functional.

Gorbachev, having reached the top as a protégé of Andropov, proved that personality cult had nothing to do with it. What the charm of his personality did was generate a feeling that the system was no longer being governed, and that was fatal to it.

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan—whose purpose was to destroy the Soviet Union—made friends with Gorbachev. He basked in their friendship. And he took personal friendship to be a sign that the systems might converge.

The idea of Totalitarianism had become fashionable as a way of explaining away the alliances of the Second World War. The German/Russian War was dismissed as a meaningless war—a mere falling out among the totalitarians.

Fascism and Communism were two forms of the same thing: Totalitarianism.

The Soviet view of Fascism was that it was a particular variety of Capitalism. (This was also Winston Churchill's view.) The rapid turn of events after 1945 proved that to be the case. The transition from Fascism back to the liberal democratic form of capitalism happened overnight in Germany.

Gorbachev seemed to expect something similar would happen in Russia: that Capitalism was there within Communism, waiting to be liberated from it: that it was what human nature did when it was left to itself.

But Capitalism was a constructed arrangement of things no less than Socialism. It had its own specific skills, talents, ambitions, expectations—visions which were different in kind from those required by Socialism. It could not be set free in Russia because it did not exist in Russia. What existed in Russia was inimical to capitalist development.

The moment for the construction of Capitalism in Russia came and went in 1917. The capitalist forces were for the most part not aware of themselves as such. It was not the raw capitalism of the West that they took as their ideal—Manchester Capitalism of the 19th century—but the ideology spun by consolidated Capitalism, with its world-wide medium of Imperialist existence, in the second half of the 19th century.

English Capitalism had been under construction for about two centuries when it took on the political form of democracy—on a restricted scale—in the late 19th century. And what that democracy amounted to was the right of skilled workers to take part in electing one of the two major capitalist parties—Whigs and Tories—to govern the state (which included an Empire which paid a large tribute to the homeland).

English capitalist ideology was founded on the existence of actual capitalism as the dominant economic force in

society; and actual capitalists and landowners, made up the substance of the two political parties. In Russia the conflict between Capitalism and Socialism was carried on by the intelligentsia—a thing which did not exist in England. And the capitalist intelligentsia were 'democrats' of the most advanced form—a form which had not yet been introduced in England in 1917. They were ahead of the game—and therefore not in the game.

The orderly construction of industrial capitalism under pre-established democratic forms has never been done in any major state. The United States is only an apparent exception because it was not a development within an existing society. Aspiring English capitalists sought freedom there, and achieved it by exterminating the native populations. The American revolution therefore did not set an example that others could follow. (Hitler tried to follow it, but was stopped by Russia.)

The political forces of Capitalism in Russia in 1917 were idealists of Capitalism and were therefore entirely unfit for the task of constructing Capitalism. (The most lasting of those parties called itself "Socialist Revolutionary".)

The Communist Party dominated the anarchy that followed the collapse of the Tsarist State because it was connected with the strongest social force that actually existed—the industrial working class produced by the small pocket of capitalist enterprise that existed in Russia. It took power through the Soviets of workers, and constructed effective State power in the course of a few months. It shared power at first with an idealistic capitalist party, the Socialist Revolutionaries, but the coalition ended early in 1918 when the SRs tried to assassinate Lenin.

Advanced capitalist ideology borrowed from the West could gain no purchase on pre-Capitalist Russia. What Capitalism needed was a Great Man who could enthral the masses by means of eloquent bewilderment—a Man of Destiny. Kerensky was too much of a pedantic democrat to make a serious attempt at it.

Seventy years later Gorbachev tried his hand at it. By means of personal charm and cult of personality he tried to overcome the mistake that had been made in 1917. By adopting bourgeois lifestyle in the most trivial form, he tried to connect Russia—which had been industrialised by means of Communist organisation of the economy—with the democratic West: meaning United States Capitalism, which had become dominant over Western Europe by reason of Britain's bungling of the Second World War, with the remnant of the British Empire as second in command.

Gorbachev reported regularly to Reagan and Thatcher, who treated him much as a schoolmaster treats an earnest but not talented schoolboy.

At the time I could only describe him as the Good Fairy who had come to live in the Kremlin, equipped with a second-hand wand. I took it that the Soviet effort at Communist development was finished and I did not care to follow the details of its destruction.

Britain's Freemason paper for Ireland, the Irish Times, showed an unexpected degree of readiness to describe the thing as it was. On this September first, it carried an

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article by one of the initiates, Conor O'Clery, under the title: "Gorbachev saw himself as chosen by fate to rescue the Soviet Union: Visionary leader set out to modernise but system proved beyond reform:

"When in their 20s, Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife Raisa Maximovna had the same dream, that they were in a deep, black well and couldn't get out but eventually escaped into bright sunshine.

"Raisa interpreted this to mean Gorbachev was destined for greatness. Gorbachev in power indeed came to see himself as the embodiment of providence. He talked about being chosen by fate to rescue the Soviet Union from the moribund totalitarian society it had become.

"When he took office as general secretary... Stalin's command economy was in crisis. Thousands of political prisoners languished in detention camps. There was no independent media, no right of assembly, no free emigration and only limited freedom of religion. There were chronic shortages and people were becoming restless.

"Everything's rotten', he said. 'Things have to change'...

"Voluble, expansive, and unfailingly charming, he took to lecturing people on the need for reform."

Matthew Arnold's description of Shelley fits Gorbachev much better than it fitted Shelley: An ineffectual angel vainly beating his wings in a void.

The ideal of Communism was a product of the European Enlightenment, which sought to establish a science of society as well as of the phenomena of nature. The question of whether human nature was "perfectible" was much discussed. Kant's insight that human nature was crooked wood that could never be made straight was discarded. The anarchic capitalist system of production for profit, with social needs being met incidentally, could be replaced by organised production for use in an organised society. It was obvious to the Enlightened mind that this must be so. Only obscurantists, dyed in the wool reactionaries, lodged in religious superstition, could disagree.

The greatest of these reactionaries was the novelist, Dostoevsky. He made war on Communism in the bud with his great tirade against Chernyshevsky's *What Is To Be Done*, with its vision of orderly life lived transparently in a crystal palace.

Lenin, a complete man of the Enlightenment, modelled himself on Chernyshevsky's ideal, and he borrowed the title of Chernyshevsky's book for his first major work.

Lenin constructed his party scientifically for the achievement of its purpose. It was constructed apart from the general drift of things, so that it could act purposefully when the established order broke down.

He was condemned for this by Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky, who imagined that the spontaneous life of the working class could be educated into coherent and purposeful class consciousness. He was described as a dictator, and a bureaucratic manipulator of the working class. But, when the established order broke down, it was to him that the energetic elements of the working class turned in order to be made effective.

He constructed an effective State out of the disorder of things, and established the framework within which the vast

peasant mass was to construct an industrial economy without Capitalism. He died in 1924 as a result of an assassination attempt. The project was continued by the Central Committee of the Party. Stalin came to the fore within the Committee without any cult of personality. It was Trotsky who had the personality. He said, quite rightly, that Stalin was only "a grey blur" in the public mind. It was through his effectiveness in handling the system of committees that Stalin came to the fore.

Trotsky then criticised the system as a bureaucracy. He forgot that from 1905 to 1917 he had berated Lenin for establishing a bureaucratic party that could only act for the workers, instead of going along with the workers in the spontaneous flow of things, which would somehow establish socialist order—a form of order in which freedom would not be constrained.

Trotsky tried to envisage Communist society. As far as I recall, he said that it would be possible only when there was a superabundant supply of goods. I did not see how there could ever be an infinity of supply which outstripped all possible demand. Supply generates demand, and there is no conceivable end to novelty within a supply/demand dynamic.

The Communist project was to construct an industrial economy by direct methods, by-passing the capitalist era, and produce a sufficiency of goods that people would be content with. But Enlightenment culture, which was committed to creating a rational world—but in fact merely made everything uncertain—was not conducive to contentment.

It is impossible to tell from the outside and after the event how much discontent there was in Communist Russia. In 1950, when 'Stalinism' was absolutely dominant and life was lived in fear, an American diplomat secretly filmed street scenes in Moscow on colour film. He then put the film away because what it showed did not tally with the picture conjured up by Western propaganda.

The film was shown on some television channel about twenty years ago. It just showed cheerful city life.

It seems reasonable to assume that life was lived within an atmosphere of terror only within very narrow circles, and that it was lived in an utterly different spirit by the mass of the population that was being enabled by the Soviet State system.

Residual groups from the Civil War, which retained the ambition to overthrow the regime and re-direct the course of events had reason to live in a state of terror, as they would in any state.

The Catholic population in Northern Ireland sustained a war against the State for a generation. This was comprehensible to certain circles in Southern Ireland only on the assumption that the Provisional IRA was terrorising the Catholic community into supporting it. It was an absurd assumption. Such a war could not have been sustained by such means. But informers did, of course, live in a state of terror.

I understand that in the Great War British soldiers who disobeyed orders in battle were either shot out of hand by

their officer or shot after summary court-martial. That does not mean that the British Army did not fight the War willingly.

By the same token, the population of Russia could not have constructed an industrial base in ten years, and then defeated the German Army which had defeated the British and French Empires, under the stimulus of KGB terror.

The vast peasant population of Russia was marked down for destruction by Enlightenment values. The proper Enlightenment way to have done it was by means of Capitalism—in the English manner, where they were dispossessed by law in order to provide a helpless labour force for capitalist enterprise.

Only Tolstoy and the Narodniks (Populists) thought that the pre-Capitalist mode of life could survive, and that it was worthwhile.

Tolstoy, looking at it through peasant eyes, in his play, *The Fruits Of Enlightenment*, mocked the Enlightenment—but this cultural bludgeon of developing Capitalism was unstoppable. Peasant society was doomed.

Lenin took power with the slogan *The Land to the Peasants*. Rosa Luxemburg reprimanded him for it. He was supposed to be a Socialist and he was laying a mass foundation for Capitalism by individual land ownership. But the peasants were slow off the mark. The mass market economy that would generate Capitalism was slow to develop. And, in the event, capitalist development was pre-empted by socialist development in the form of collectivisation. And the Collectives fed the industrialisation and supplied it with raw materials.

The capitalist politicians in 1917—not knowing that that is what they were!—wasted their opportunity by playing around with Democracy, instead of setting capitalist development in motion.

They left it to Lenin to institute the basic bourgeois programme, land distribution—which he did as a step on the way to Socialism.

It was the general assumption of the Socialist movement that Socialism would be born out of developed Capitalism. That was known as the Stages Theory. Lenin did not deny that there would be a bourgeois stage. But, since it fell to him to enact the bourgeois stage, he rushed through it at great speed, along with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, and then got onto the socialist stage.

Lenin's bourgeois stage served a purpose in the day-to-day politicking in 1917, but in the end it was all froth with no serious capitalist development.

The war of Capitalism v. Socialism was fought in Finland in the first half of 1918, as a spin-off from the Russian events. It was won by the capitalists by methods that later came to be called Fascist, and the victorious regime—sustained by immense slaughter in a small population—might be described as the first Fascist State.

The Civil War in Russia was far from being a Socialist/Capitalist class war in any clear terms. The capitalists were only capitalists 'objectively'—in the sense that their

position, if analysed in the light of wider experience, would have worked out as capitalist in the long run.

Actual capitalism was not a significant presence in Russian life. It was not lurking about in the undergrowth, biding its time. It was comprehensively pre-empted by the course of construction undertaken by the Communist Party. Therefore, when Gorbachev undermined the Communist structure of things, Capitalism could not spring up to take its place.

Gorbachev just did not know what he was doing, except on the personal level. He charmed certain circles of people who had come to value the fruits of the Enlightenment mocked by Tolstoy, but even they soon saw that he did not know what he was doing.

Yeltsin brushed him aside and inaugurated the era of Capitalism and Democracy: of grotesque Capitalism, and of Democracy that could not form an elected government for lack of a stable party system from which a Government might be chosen.

BBC Radio 4 put on an emergency programme to celebrate Gorbachev's heritage. It was conducted by John Lloyd of the *Financial Times* and the Communist Party of Great Britain—who passed briefly through the B&ICO on the way to becoming a professor of journalism at Oxford.

He knows very well that Gorbachev made a shambles of Russia. But that was a good thing for Western Capitalism and therefore has to be described in more august language.

Russian Democracy was rule by Presidential Decree. At one moment the Parliament tried to get in on the act. Yeltsin got his tanks to fire on it. Lloyd, in the *Financial Times*, thought that was a good thing.

In a syndicated article, published in the *Cork Examiner*, he took issue with "What aboutery". He denied that there was a common standard of conduct which could be applied generally. There is no means of doing things that is wrong in itself. Whether it is right or wrong depends on who does it.

It follows that what Gorbachev did to Russia was right for Reagan and Gorbachev. And, since they dominated the international situation in that period, what Gorbachev did to the State which he governed was a good thing, regardless of its effect on the populace of that state.

Progress is not cost-free. There is no such thing as a free lunch. The populace of the Soviet Union was reduced to poverty, plummeting life expectancy, and a sense of disordered existence. That was the contribution of the Russian population at large to Freedom for the world. You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs!

The population of Russia has been trying ever since to rescue itself from the democratic freedom that it enjoyed in the 1990s.

Rescue is allowable only through Capitalism. Capitalism does not come easily to it. It came much more easily to the states of Eastern Europe which were brought within the Soviet sphere in 1945. That was because they had all been capitalist states before 1941.

They came to be under Soviet hegemony because (with the exception of Poland) they had invaded Russia in 1941 in alliance with Germany, and the defeat of Germany required

the defeat of them too. Russia asserted authority over them after it had to defeat them to free itself, and it ensured that they could not take part in another assault on it in alliance with the United States.

Was the Second World War really a war between Civilisation and Barbarism? If it was, then the major force of Civilisation was Russian Communism.

Britain declared war on Germany without having the will to fight it in earnest. In June 1941 it became dependent on the power of Communist Russia to defeat Germany and enable Britain to take credit for the War it had declared.

From June 1941 until the Summer of 1945 Communist Russia was depicted in the British media as an oasis of freedom on which the fate of civilisation depended.

Before 1941 Russia was depicted as the “focus of Evil” in the world (as President Reagan put it later), and after 1945 it was presented in that way again—but with an increased power for Evil because of the greater strength it acquired through defeating Germany and saving Civilisation. Communist Russia was Animal Farm, it was 1984, it was the Evil from which James Bond was defending us.

We are greatly concerned these days about the danger to the Truth posed by the forces of Post-Truth. Which British picture of Communist Russia is the true one? Is there a casuistical liberal dialectic in which both can be true? Or is truth in political affairs strictly a matter of the political expediency of the moment?

The Soviet world presented in eulogies on Gorbachev is the world of 1984. The Soviet world that saved Civilisation—if that is what it did—is not even hinted at.

It seems that Memory and Progress are incompatible to the truly enlightened mind.

*

Gorbachev attempted to govern, as a dictator, by means of cult of personality. The dictator has arbitrary power, acquired largely by virtue of personality. He has personal power as a Tribune, a man of the people, or as the General of an Army. Within the reach of that power he can say ‘Do this’ and it is done. He is not limited by a structure of power which exists independently of him.

The Secretary General of the Soviet Communist Party did not have the arbitrary power of a Tribune of the people resting on his personal relationship with the masses. His position bore little resemblance to that of a Cromwell or a Napoleon or a Peron or a Franco. There were no displaced masses for him to appeal to. There was no proletariat in the historical sense. There was an organised population of workers each with a proper place in the structure of things. There were no free-flowing masses that might be directed this way or that by a Man of Destiny.

Gorbachev’s job was to be the managing director of the complex structure in which life was lived. He tried instead to be a Man Of Destiny. He had the illusion of personal power for a moment as General Secretary and he went on an ego trip, leaving the system to fall into disorder.

In his appeals to the people he was by all accounts personally corrupt. He would make local deals in exchange for a brown envelope.

When the system seized up and starvation loomed, the BBC gave him an hour on Radio 4 to appeal to the capitalist world to put something in his begging bowl.

It might be that the Soviet system had reached the end of its potential. I don’t know. All I know is that Andropov’s replacement of Marxism with Sociology, and the invention of the “socialist commodity”, were not the means of dealing with it.

The commodity in free circulation becomes Capitalism. And the medium of organised Soviet life in Russia, where there was no prehistory of Capitalism, blocked the gradual emergence Capitalism. The populace, accustomed to security, did not have the makings in it, either of capitalist entrepreneurs or of the mass proletariat which Capitalism requires. Its habits were all wrong.

The east European countries, which were taken in hand by Russia after taking part in the Fascist attempt to destroy Soviet Russia, and failing, demonstrated their difference after 1991. They had all been capitalist societies undergoing strong nationalist development when they invaded Russia in 1941. They experienced “liberation from Fascism” in 1944-5 as conquest. Capitalism remained in the culture, and in a stratum of personal memory. Their intelligentsia, from about 1960 onwards, groped for Capitalism in the form of “market socialism”, which they must have known to be a subterfuge.

Amidst all of this, the best way of describing Gorbachev is probably the Christian way: he was a lost soul!

Postscript

The ideology of Western Capitalism was, until last year, globalism based on the international division of labour. The international division of labour was assumed, a priori, to be beneficial to everybody involved in it, and the intention of the West was that no corner of the world should be free of it.

The rationale of the system—its ideology—was that, if every country specialises in doing what it is best at, that will be good for everyone.

The Financial Times of September 7th had a major article declaring that “Europe Can, And Must, Win This Energy War. Victory Will Be Costly, But The EU Has To Free Itself From Russia’s Chokehold”.

The article begins:

““Europe will be forged in crisis and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for these crises”. These words from the memoirs of Jean Monnet, one of the architects of European integration, echo today, as Russia closes its main gas pipeline. This is surely now a crisis... Vladimir Putin has assaulted the principles on which post war Europe was built. He simply has to be resisted...”

Last March, the President of the Commission said that the EU would destroy the foundations of the Russian economy. Putin has now responded by cutting off the supply of gas to the EU—which the EU has forbidden its component members to pay for.

The EU threatened to destroy the Russian economy under one aspect of the international division of labour. Russia has decided to keep Europe cold under another aspect of it.

Russia is accused of “weaponising” gas. The USA weaponised Money long ago, and President Obama explained that US sovereignty extends everywhere that money is a derivative of the dollar.

The first major weaponised use of money was in 1956 when Washington stopped Britain’s attempt to retain a degree of Imperial control over Egypt after it nationalised the Suez Canal. It said it would destroy British credit if British troops were not withdrawn.

Europe was a shambles in 1945 as a result of the failure of its attack on Russia. It was put back in business by American resources and American money—money having ceased to be a material commodity with a value of its own and having become credit. And credit was American.

But “the principles on which postwar Europe was built” were not globalist. They were Protectionist. Europe set about making itself self-sufficient in basic goods by building up Butter Mountains, Meat Mountains, etc. It applied the political economy of List, rather than Adam Smith. But it admitted Britain in 1972, and Britain set about breaking down its Protection. Tony Blair appointed a Minister for Competition in Europe—effectively a Minister for

Globalism. And it says a lot about Britain that the Minister was Kim Howells, who had been Arthur Scargill’s second in command a few years earlier.

Globalism could never have become an autonomous system, and the International Division of Labour could never have been universally beneficial.

Actual Globalism could not be anything but universal dominance by the United States. This is what it was, insofar as it was realised. And it gave America immense destructive power without the use of armies, and therefore by peaceful means. Another pertinent remark of President Obama was that the USA did not usually need to invade its neighbours to get them to do the right thing.

The EU discarded “the principles on which postwar Europe was built”. It abandoned List for Adam Smith. It has so far failed to deliver on President von der Leyen’s undertaking to destroy the Russian economy by sanctions, and it finds itself on the wrong side of the international division of labour.

Brendan Clifford

Advertisement

Blockading The Germans! With an overview of 19th century maritime law The evolution of Britain’s strategy during the First World War, Volume 1 (Paperback) by Eamon Dyas

Belfast Historical and Educational
Society 2018

This is the first volume of a Trilogy examining overlooked aspects of the First World War and its aftermath from a European perspective. Comprehensively sourced with scholarly research, it explains how Britain used a continental blockade to force the capitulation of the Kaiser’s Germany by targeting not just military, but also civilian, imports—particularly imported food supplies, upon which Germany had become dependent since its industrial revolution.

After joining the European War of August 1914—and elevating it into a World War—Britain cast aside the two maritime codes agreed by the world’s maritime powers over the previous almost 60 years – the Declaration of Paris in 1856 and the Declaration of London in 1909.

In defiance of these internationally agreed codes, Britain aggressively expanded its blockade with the object of disrupting not only the legitimate trade between neutral countries and Germany but trade between neutral countries themselves. Britain’s policy of civilian starvation during the First World War was unprecedented in history. Whereas it had used the weapon of starvation against civilians in the past, in such instances this was either through the exploitation of a

natural disaster to bring about famine (Ireland and India) or the result of pre-conceived policy against a non-industrial society (France during the Revolutionary Wars). Its use against Germany was the first time in history where a policy of deliberate starvation was directed against the civilian population of an advanced industrial economy.

This volume traces the evolution of Britain’s relationship with international naval blockade strategies from the Crimean War through the American Civil War and the Boer War culminating in its maturity during the Great War. It also draws out how the United States—the leading neutral country—was made complicit in Blockading The Germans during the war and brings the story up to America’s entry into the War.

Eamon Dyas is a former head of The Times newspaper archive, was on the Executive Committee of the Business Archives Council in England for a number of years, and was Information Officer of the Newspaper Department of the British Library for many years.

The New Great Game: Ukraine, the South Caucasus and Eurasian Development

By Pat Walsh

Exactly a year ago, when Charles Michel from the European Union was heavily courting Armenia the present writer noted in an article entitled *EU Expansionism in the South Caucasus* (See IFA September 2021):

“It seems that the EU, blocked in Ukraine after it provoked the disintegration of the Ukrainian state (in 2014), is now hell bent on expanding into the Southern Caucasus... It seems determined to probe and aggravate Russia there and undo the delicate situation, and Russian brokered armistice, that has existed since the Karabakh war. Its number one target is Armenia. Its secondary target is Georgia... Azerbaijan it pays lip service to, but it is clear that it is lined up as an “authoritarian state” in the EU sights. It is also Turkish - so persona non grata to the European Christian club. So we can see what the EU is aiming to do in providing Armenia and Pashinyan with the money to get out of his responsibilities (under the Trilateral Agreement that concluded the Karabakh War) and cause problems for the Russians in the cause of “democracy”.”

We should recall that after this was written its view was confirmed as accurate in December 2021 when the US Department of State organised a global “*Summit for Democracy*”. It was held under the slogan of the US President, Joseph Biden: “*Democracy doesn’t happen by accident. We have to defend it, fight for it, strengthen it, renew it.*” And of course every US war is fought for the cause of democracy, even though democracy has little to do with it.

Among the 150 or so states invited to the US-sponsored “*Summit for Democracy*” were Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine. Among the minority of states who were not invited were Hungary, Turkiye and Azerbaijan.

The World has changed fundamentally over the course of the year. The 8 year civil war in the east of Ukraine has become a bigger, wider war, and it seems, as a result of the blowback to Europe from the economic sanctions imposed on Russia, Azerbaijan has now become the main focus of Western attention in the Southern Caucasus, rather than Armenia. How war concentrates minds!

Azerbaijan’s Key Role

A very interesting article by the Indian geopolitics writer M.K. Bhadrakumar appeared in *Oriental Review* on 20 July 2022. It is entitled *Ukraine’s Great Game Resurfaces in Transcaucasia*. The article backs up much of what the present writer described in the aforementioned piece last year and brings the situation up to date.

M.K. Bhadrakumar identifies the Russian capture of the Black Sea coast of Ukraine, which has prevented British and US designs on the area coming to fruition, as a very important geopolitical event:

“The capture of Kherson in early March practically spelt doom for the NATO’s design to extend its military presence in the Black Sea basin. Today, the game is practically over for the US and NATO, once Russia took control of the entire basin of the Sea of Azov. Russia now de facto controls the access of the Dniepr to and from the Black Sea. And the Dniepr happens to be the main river way for Ukraine’s transportation links to the world market.”

This development has had repercussions for Western strategy with regard to the South Caucasus:

“Washington has belatedly understood that Russia has outwitted the western alliance and gained the upper hand in the great game in the eastern Black Sea region. So, the Western strategy towards the Caucasus and Central Asia is being reworked. The NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg scheduled a meeting in Brussels today with the foreign minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov.

Importantly, Bayramov also attended a meeting of the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council today in Brussels. The EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell later said at a joint news conference with Bayramov that “Azerbaijan is an important partner for the European Union and our cooperation is intensifying.” Meanwhile, yesterday, the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited Baku to sign a memorandum of understanding with Azerbaijan on energy cooperation.

All this is taking place against the backdrop of Charles Michel, the president of the European Council, spearheading efforts to mediate between arch rivals Azerbaijan and Armenia. As part of the EU’s diplomatic efforts, Michel hosted in April a meeting in Brussels between Azerbaijan’s President Aliyev and Armenia’s Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan where the two sides expressed willingness to secure a peace agreement. Last week, the CIA Director William Burns paid an unpublicised visit to Yerevan in this connection. Evidently, Washington and Brussels are jointly strategising a game plan to replace Russia and Turkey, which have hitherto taken the lead roles in Transcaucasia.

There should be no doubt that Moscow is watching closely the synchronised US-EU-NATO moves in the Caucasus targeting Azerbaijan with a view to undermine Russia’s consolidation in the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea regions, which poses a formidable hurdle to the advancement of the NATO strategies toward Central Asia and Xinjiang. This is a high-stakes game.

It will be recalled that on February 22, just two days prior to the launch of the special military operation in Ukraine, Putin hosted the president of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev in the Kremlin. They signed “a wide-ranging agreement,” the details of which were not divulged. The document is titled the Declaration on Allied Interaction.

Clearly, oil-rich Azerbaijan, which is not only a littoral state of the Caspian Sea but a gateway to both Central Asia and Russia’s Volga region, is destined to play a key role in the great game in the period ahead.”

This is the political agenda that may lie behind the EU’s overtures to Baku but for now, to borrow a famous Irish slogan, Europe’s Difficulty is Azerbaijan’s Opportunity.

The Russia/Azerbaijan Declaration on Allied Interaction (February 2022)

As M.K. Bhadrakumar noted, the Azerbaijan President signed a Declaration on Allied Interaction with President Putin in late February 2022, on the eve of the Russian Special Military Operation in Ukraine. An article entitled *How the Conflict Over Ukraine Affects Security in the South Caucasus* by Nargiz Gafarova in the excellent *Baku Dialogues* (Summer 2022), throws some light on the Declaration on Allied Interaction between Moscow and Baku:

“This document aims at deepening diplomatic, political, and military cooperation between the two states. Widely viewed



Map showing the two parts of Azerbaijan

as a way to balance the impact of the Shusha Declaration, it has garnered further attention in light of the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine and Russia's recognition of Ukraine's breakaway territories, notwithstanding the fact that its timing was largely coincidental since negotiations on its language had gone on for a year or so. Still, the relevance of Article 1 of this document is not to be discounted in light of the events taking place outside the South Caucasus."

The Shusha Declaration is a wide ranging co-operation agreement between Azerbaijan and Turkiye including mutual defence guarantees signed in June 2021. President Aliyev of Azerbaijan referred to it as "*an alliance*".

Certainly, as Nargiz Gafarova notes, for Azerbaijan the Declaration on Allied Interaction with Russia is a balancing counter-weight to the Shusha Declaration with Turkiye. However, the more Turkiye is drawn into the web of Eurasian relationships that are being established and which will become functional over the coming years the more the Shusha Declaration will become another layer of such relations rather than a counter-weight.

Although the Declaration on Allied Interaction may have been in preparation for some time a reading of Article 1 leads the present writer to conclude that the timing was far from coincidental. It was actually imperative for both parties in light of what was about to happen.

Here is Article 1:

"The Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan build their relations on the basis of allied interaction, mutual respect for independence, state sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the state borders of the two countries, as well as adherence to the principles of

noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful settlement of disputes and nonuse of force or threat of force."

This was an important concession won by Azerbaijan from Moscow at a time when the Kremlin was going out of its way to ensure its own security in light of the great transformation which it was about to embark upon would produce. That is why Putin took great care to go around his allies and good neighbours to ensure their needs were taken care of prior to the Russian military intervention in Ukraine.

By launching the military operation in Ukraine the Kremlin knew that Russia would be assailed by a massive response from the West that would entail a long-planned military, political and economic assault on Russia aimed at regime-change. The Russian military intervention and the Western response to it, therefore, would transform the geopolitical situation in the world. A new iron curtain would fall and a new great game would begin. Russia would be forced by the West's reaction to fully embrace the Eurasian project which had been talked about for a long time, but which the preferred Western-orientation of Russia had obstructed over the years. With Europe being marshalled by Washington in its economic war against Russia the economic linkages that bound Russia to Europe, in the mutual interest, would begin to be severed. Russia would have to turn eastward due to the loss of its main energy market and the withdrawal of Western business. The 30 year Russian attempt to establish capitalist economic and political relations with Europe, after the collapse of the Soviet system, would come to an end. Russia would be reorientating economically and politically toward Central and Southern Asia and China in the future.

For Baku the Declaration on Allied Interaction pre-empted the possibility of the Kremlin recognising Armenian separatist territorial claims to the former Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. Given the presence of Russian peacekeepers in the rump of the former NKAO, within Azerbaijan's sovereign territory, this obviously represented a danger for Baku, particularly since the separatists, unable to achieve union with Armenia, may be tempted to bid for permanent "Russian protection" to prevent their *de facto* re-incorporation into the state of Azerbaijan in 2025, when the Russian peacekeeping mission can be terminated under the Trilateral Agreement of 2020.

There can be little doubt that Russia will use its peacekeepers in Karabakh as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Baku during 2024, to exact some concessions from Azerbaijan in return for withdrawal, but the Declaration on Allied Interaction indicates that Moscow will presumably not override sovereignty or territorial integrity.

This was a shrewd move by the Aliyev government, not fully appreciated by the anti-Russian element in the country. The fact that Azerbaijan has had a problematic relationship with Russia for two centuries did not negate the need to take account of the substance of Russia that existed, in the national interest. The substance of Russia and what it was capable of was soon there for all to see in Ukraine for anyone who doubted its will to power.

In December 2020, Türkiye's President Erdoğan announced the 3+3 initiative at a joint press conference with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan. The 3+3 format for regional co-operation is an initiative that built on an idea that originated in Iran during the Karabakh war. The proposed grouping for political collaboration and regional development would cover the three countries of the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) plus the three most important countries neighbouring this region (Russia, Turkey, and Iran).

Pax Caucasia and 3+3

Vasif Huseynov has written in *Baku Dialogues*, in a piece entitled *Prospects for Pax Caucasia?* The 3+3 Regional Cooperation Initiative, about the important early manifestations of this regional co-operation which have occurred since the liberation of occupied Karabakh War unblocked the impediments to regional development:

"The resolution of the conflict over Karabakh and the commitment contained in the tripartite statement to (re) establish transport and communication links in the region is a notable chance to set in motion a virtuous circle of economic, political, and societal developments. The envisioned transportation projects, in particular the Zangezur corridor, constitutes the core of the 3+3 initiative. The Zangezur corridor will not only connect mainland Azerbaijan with its Nakhchivan enclave through the southern part of Armenia but also will provide a transportation link between other members of the 3+3 group. Armenia will gain ease of access to Iran and Russia through the territories of Azerbaijan, thanks to this corridor. The corridor will also provide a stable overland communication between two major regional powers: Turkey and Russia. By connecting the 3+3 members through infrastructure, the Zangezur corridor will open up an opportunity for their political rapprochement and the deepening of economic cooperation.

In a recent deal with Iran on 11 March 2022, Azerbaijan obtained an alternative route to the Zangezur corridor, which in turn markedly strengthened Azerbaijan's negotiating position with Armenia. The memorandum of understanding signed by the two states in Baku mapped out

a plan to establish new transport and electricity connections to link the western part of mainland Azerbaijan with its Nakhchivan enclave via Iran's northwestern region. In a way similar to the Zangezur Corridor (approximately 43 km), the transIranian route (55 km) is also supposed to include both railway and motorway links in addition to communication and electricity connections. This new route is planned to be constructed in proximity to the Iranian-Armenian state border and will generally mirror the Zangezur corridor...

The new agreement between Iran and Azerbaijan that provides a direct alternative to the Zangezur corridor is of huge importance... Nevertheless, it does not mean that Azerbaijan has abandoned its plans to build a transportation passage through southern Armenia. The bottom line is that both the Zangezur corridor and the trans-Iranian corridor will provide a practical basis for substantive talks on the establishment of a regional co-operation platform."

In terms of the wider implications of the 3+3 initiative Huseynov writes:

"The opportunities for the realization of the Pax Caucasia initiative and the benefits it promises for the future of the region can be manifold. This would create a security situation in the South Caucasus that has never existed before in the history of the region. The external powers, which have traditionally competed for influence in the region, used to manipulate conflicts taking place between the region's countries, playing them off against each other. The Second Karabakh War and the subsequent emergence of the 3+3 initiative, which would bring these powers together in an allinclusive regional mechanism for the first time ever, would open a new chapter in the history of the South Caucasus."

In March 2022 Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk stated at the "Current state and prospects of Russian-Azerbaijani relations in the context of integrated processes" conference in Baku, that active work was now underway to unblock transport communications in the South Caucasus.

Russia Briefing (14/3/2022) noted:

"Russia needs to open up new supply chain routes in the wake of the massive wave of sanctions that has enveloped much of its European potential and start to improve transport and logistics to the East. That includes routes from Russia and the Caucasus, no easy feat in that the significant Caucasus mountain ranges divide the two regions. Russia needs to develop better access especially through to Baku, Azerbaijan's major Caspian Sea Port. That gives Russia better trade access through to Armenia, its Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) trade partner, the Caucasus markets of Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as west to Turkey and beyond to EU markets in Bulgaria and Romania. West from Baku, goods can be connected through to Kazakhstan and onto China, while south they can head via the INSTC to Iran, the Middle East, East Africa, and onto India and South Asia. It is important therefore that the South Caucasus bottleneck be solved.

"We are moving along the path of economic integration. Today we see that the region is turning into a Macro Region, a single cooperation in the production and delivery of goods is being established. Today we are working to create a space for working citizens and the transportation of goods" ... Overchuk said."

Economic Corridor Development

Pepe Escobar, a thoughtful observer of geopolitical trends, has also drawn attention to the increasing importance



Map showing the Rasht-Astara railway line connecting Iran and Azerbaijan

of economic corridors in the South Caucasus/Caspian region. He argues that the most crucial recent geo-economic development is the US/UK/EU-provoked collapse of trade/supply lines along the borders between Russia and the EU which have highlighted the economic sense of the International North-South Transportation Corridor (INTSC). The Russia-Iran-India corridor, planned 2 decades ago, links northwest Russia to the Persian Gulf via the Caspian Sea and Iran.

This is very important in ending Iran's commercial isolation and connecting it up to Russia, via Azerbaijan. At present, the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway is 70% complete, and the Tehran government has approved the construction of the Rasht-Caspian port railway as a separate rail route section for combined cargo transportation to Russia and the Caspian Sea countries, including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan. The involvement of Russian construction assistance financed by Iranian oil will bring the completion of the route forward to mid-2023. Currently, 160 km of track has been laid, and a joint Iranian/Azerbaijani financed waterfront project has been built in Astara by Iran Railways, connecting the rail route from Astara in Iran to the similarly named Astara in Azerbaijan, where the track goes onto Russia.

The Rasht-Astara and Rasht-Caspian rail routes are an integral part of Iran's International North-South Transportation Corridor which links Caspian maritime trade directly via rail to Iran's Persian Gulf ports, giving access to Middle East, East African, India and South Asian supply chains. The route is already operational but only through road before the completion of the rail sections. Getting these operational is a key logistics issue, especially due to the changing geopolitical situation and interruption of supply chains between Europe and Asia. However, the political and economic benefits could be immense.

The transportation time between St. Petersburg and Indian ports is 25 days. This corridor, using a combination of land and sea transportation, carries an enormous geopolitical significance for two BRICs members and a prospective member of the "new G8" because it opens a key alternative

route to the established alternative from Asia to Europe via the Suez canal which is both faster and cheaper. It is something like the Berlin-Baghdad Railway for the 21st Century.

In his article In Eurasia, the War of Economic Corridors is in full swing and under the heading "Caspian is key" Escobar writes:

"The genesis of the current acceleration lies in Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent visit to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan's capital, for the 6th Caspian Summit. This event not only brought the evolving Russia-Iran strategic partnership to a deeper level, but crucially, all five Caspian Sea littoral states agreed that no NATO warships or bases will be allowed on site. That essentially configures the Caspian as a virtual Russian lake, and in a minor sense, Iranian – without compromising the interests of the three "stans," Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. For all practical purposes, Moscow has tightened its grip on Central Asia a notch... Stronger trade and financial links with Iran now proceed in tandem with binding the three "stans" to the Russian matrix...

Caspian littoral state Azerbaijan... presents a complex case: an oil and gas producer eyed by the European Union (EU) to become an alternative energy supplier to Russia – although this is not happening anytime soon...

Compared to the other "stans," Azerbaijan is a relatively minor producer (despite oil accounting for 86 percent of its total exports) and basically a transit nation. Baku's super-wealth aspirations center on the Southern Gas Corridor, which includes no less than three pipelines: Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE); the Turkish-driven Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP); and the Trans-Adriatic (TAP). The problem with this acronym festival – BTE, TANAP, TAP – is that they all need massive foreign investment to increase capacity, which the EU sorely lacks because every single euro is committed by unelected Brussels Eurocrats to "support" the black hole that is Ukraine. The same financial woes apply to a possible Trans-Caspian Pipeline which would further link to both TANAP and TAP... The bottom line is that Russia remains in full control of the Eurasia

pipeline chessboard. Gazprom executives know all too well that a fast increase of energy exports to the EU is out of the question. They also factor the Tehran Convention – that helps prevent and control pollution and maintain the environmental integrity of the Caspian Sea, signed by all five littoral members.”

The Trans-Caspian International Transportation Route (TITR), which has a future projected capacity of 10 million metric tons has gained in importance since the Ukraine war. This corridor aims to link the Caucasus and Central Asia with both Europe and China. It is the West-East route between Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan across the Caspian that will meet the North-South Transportation Corridor at Baku. A declaration on deepening strategic partnership and expanding comprehensive co-operation was signed by the governments of Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan in late June 2022. Türkiye has already been engaging with Tashkent, with the Expanded Military Cooperation Agreement signed in late March 29 in Tashkent by the Turkish and Azerbaijani Defense Ministers.

Pan-Turkic co-operation and integration is therefore proceeding within the general Eurasian development. There should be no surprise about that. The Turkic states, many of them landlocked, stand to gain immensely from economic development brought about by the great inland commercial trade networks of the new silk roads, far from the disrupting influences of the Atlanticist maritime powers. Their transnational character make them perfect for regional integration.

The necessary infrastructural investment required to transform the potentially significant Trans-Caspian route is more likely to be borne by China than by Europe given the bleak economic outlook that faces the EU and its engine room Germany, given the loss of low cost energy and the pledge to divert resources to rebuild what's left of the Ukrainian state. What is happening as a result of the Ukraine war is an intensification of Eurasian economic development which will tie in states like Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Türkiye to great economic infrastructure projects upon which future prosperity is built. These great projects are largely outside the sphere of influence of the West, and the US and Europe has detached itself from this development because of its sanctions regime on Russia. Early in the war in Ukraine the question that was being asked in the South Caucasus was what kind of Russia would exist after the conflict? How much would it be weakened perhaps? But this question has been superseded by the geopolitical tectonic shifts that are occurring as a result of the war and sanctions regime. The embrace of the East and the rejection by the West, aside from energy supply, may be the most important development of the war. It seems that the brief two century European hegemony in the world, extended by the rise of the US, is coming to an end. The future is Asia and Eurasia.

The EU and Azerbaijan

It appears, however, that the South Caucasus, and Azerbaijan in particular, is coming increasingly within the sights of both the European Union and United States and we are seeing the opening stages of geopolitical conflict in the new Great Game.

With reference to the escalating conflict in Ukraine, Nargiz Gafarova has written in *Baku Dialogues*:

“... two silver linings to the escalation of the conflict over Ukraine in the context of the South Caucasus seem to be visible. First, the European Union has further increased its presence and engagement in the region. The EU seems more open to political and economic rapprochement with

the region, as reflected in its facilitation to the process of normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as its willingness to take (admittedly) tentative steps in advancing Georgia's membership prospects. Second, the restoration of a nuclear deal with Iran, which would include the lifting of at least some of the sanctions imposed on the country, would be greeted positively by its Tehran's northern neighbors. Iran's rapprochement with the West would dramatically reduce one of the biggest threats to regional stability; it would also enable Iran to become an important energy diversification partner for the region and the West.”

In the light of Eurasian economic developments already noted this an over-optimistic reading of things. As recent events have demonstrated, at both the Ashgabat Caspian and Tehran Summits, Russia has been carefully rearranging the landscape in alliance with China, Iran and even NATO member, and ally of Azerbaijan, Turkey, at the expense of the West. The three most significant BRICS states - Russia, India, and China are slowly co-ordinating their strategies across Western Asia, with Iran involved in all of these moves. The four most important energy-producing nations - Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela - are acting to break free of the Western capitalist system in favour of the construction of an alternative economic bloc within a multi-polar world.

There would be something rather pathetic about the US going cap-in-hand to Venezuela and Iran to bail the West out of the difficulty it has got into through its economic war on Russia. Both these states have been subject to rigorous and damaging US sanctions and were openly considered to be Washington's enemies. Biden, therefore, could not bring himself to beg for their help or to make the necessary concessions to bring them onboard an anti-Moscow coalition. In fact, Biden chose to go to what he recently described as “*a pariah state*” in preference to knocking on the door of Iran.

The Iranians were probably open to a renewed nuclear deal with the US after Trump's fall and Biden's coming to power. But after experiencing Washington's ripping up of the previous treaty and the Biden administration's prevarication, with negotiations seemingly going nowhere, Tehran has had enough. It is now common knowledge that the US had become agreement-incapable, perhaps due to the volatilities of its democracy. Who knows who makes the big decisions in Washington? Probably not President Biden, so how can the US be relied upon, in the same way that Russia and China can be relied upon, where the source of decision-making is clear. With the division of the world arising from the West's economic war the Iranians have chosen Russia as a more reliable future partner within a Eurasian economic development taking in India and China that will overcome the Western sanctions imposed upon them. No need for negotiations with the treaty breakers again.

President Biden has failed miserably in his diplomatic missions to garner support against Russia, even with the US's former allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and these failures stand in stark contrast to the successes of Putin in re-arranging the geopolitical chessboard across Eurasia. The non-European world seems to be taking the Ukraine conflict as an opportunity to break out from US hegemony and establish a multi-polar world. When the US launched its “*devastating sanctions*” against Russia, it expected most of the world to be intimidated into line. However, most of the world suddenly concluded that it did not wish to be on the receiving end of similar devastating arbitrary sanctions, including loss of national reserves, and defied the American power which showed signs of decline.

In her *Memorandum of Understanding* statement in Baku, Ursula von der Leyen noted that because Russian gas supplies were “no longer reliable”,

“The European Union has therefore decided to diversify away from Russia and to turn towards more reliable, trustworthy partners. And I am glad to count Azerbaijan among them. You are indeed a crucial energy partner for us and you have always been reliable. You were a crucial partner not only for our security of supply, but also in our efforts to become climate neutral. The Memorandum of Understanding that we have just signed makes our energy partnership even stronger.”

The *Memorandum of Understanding* promised Baku the investing of EUR 60 million of EU funds in Azerbaijan until 2024, with the Economic and Investment Plan having “the potential to mobilise up to EUR 2 billion in additional investments.” Von der Leyen also promised that the EU would be the “leading donor in de-mining” of Karabakh and announced a new EUR 4.25 million package for this purpose.

Who could blame Azerbaijan for taking advantage of this sudden benevolence from the EU after so many years of being treated as second class in relation to Armenia?

The EU’s interest in Azerbaijan as energy supplier

Pepe Escobar’s view that Azerbaijan could not be “an alternative energy supplier to Russia... anytime soon” is backed up by the estimation that while at present around half of the 500 billion cubic metres of Europe’s gas needs are supplied by Russia, Azerbaijan could at most only replace about 4 per cent of its requirements.

Gubad Ibadoghlu, a Senior Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics asks “how feasible is it for the EU to use imports from Azerbaijan as an alternative to Russian gas?” in an article entitled *Could Azerbaijan help the EU reduce its dependence on Russian gas?* for the LSE website. He answers the question as follows:

“Last year, Azerbaijan supplied 8.15 billion cubic metres of gas to European markets via the TAP pipeline... The order from Europe to Azerbaijan for 2022 is 9 billion cubic metres, and for 2023, it is 11 billion cubic metres. Europe wants the Southern Gas Corridor to be expanded. If the expansion works begin soon, the pipeline’s capacity will reach 31 billion cubic metres in 2025, which is the maximum design capacity.

However, in order to increase exports to Europe, Azerbaijan must launch at least the second project in the Absheron field. In the future, it is expected to sell 5-6 billion cubic metres of gas to the European markets within this project. However, it will take at least four years to increase production in the Absheron field. This means that if the deeper installation of the platform begins in 2023, construction will take until 2027. At the same time, in 2027, along with the Absheron field, gas volumes may be increased in the Karabakh and Kapaz oil and gas fields, as well as in the Umid field. Thus, in around five or six years, Azerbaijan can increase gas exports to Europe by 5-7 billion cubic metres.

As things stand, Azerbaijan will be unable to help Europe meaningfully reduce its dependence on Russian gas in the near future. There are at least two reasons for this. The first is the limited annual capacity of the TAP pipeline, which delivers Azerbaijani gas to Europe. At present, the capacity of the TAP pipeline allows for the transportation of 10-11 billion cubic metres of gas. The capacity of the TAP pipeline can be expanded to 20 billion cubic metres. In addition, the Southern Gas Corridor project requires additional investment and time. This project needs to be developed and

its annual capacity can be increased first to 24 billion cubic metres and then to 31 billion cubic metres. At the same time, European gas buyers must make legal and commercial commitments to Azerbaijani gas producers. These changes will take time.

Second, even if the capacity of the TAP pipeline is increased in the short term, Azerbaijan will not be able to increase gas exports to Europe in the coming years. As noted, in order to achieve this, along with Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli and Shah Deniz, gas production from the Absheron, Karabakh, Kapaz, and Umid oil and gas fields must be increased.

In the short term, Azerbaijan simply does not have the opportunity to provide an alternative to Russian gas for the EU. In fact, even if there was enough gas, it would technically be impossible to deliver it to Europe. At best, in five years, Azerbaijan will be able to transport 20 billion cubic metres of gas to Europe within the second phase of the Southern Gas Corridor. Therefore, among the alternatives for Europe to decrease its dependence on Russian gas, Azerbaijan’s capabilities seem weak compared to the United States, Qatar, Algeria, and even Iran.”

President Aliyev has been playing down the notion of Azerbaijan rescuing Europe from its predicament by replacing Russian energy and has, more accurately, described it as helping Europeans out in time of need. That is an important distinction because it is realised in Baku that whilst Azerbaijan may gain a more even-handed approach from the Europeans in the future, and better relations, there will not be an overturning of the current power relations in the region.

So what is the EU’s game in relation to the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan? Is it just benevolent soft power that Baku can avail of? Or is it a “synchronised US-EU-NATO move in the Caucasus targeting Azerbaijan with a view to undermine Russia’s consolidation in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions” as M.K. Bhadrakumar argues. In other words, a kind of probing political advance that occurred in Ukraine during 2013-14 that caused the disintegration of Kiev’s balancing between Russia and Europe and the road to war and fragmentation of the Ukrainian state?

Only time will tell.

However, what is clear is that both the EU and US are onlookers peering into the window at the transformative geopolitical developments in the Eurasian heartland that have been accelerated by Western action against Russia.

The US and Azerbaijan

The US also has begun to take a renewed interest in Baku and the Azerbaijan/Armenia peace process with Secretary of State Anthony Blinken recently discussing current issues with President Aliyev.

The US State Department’s *Integrated Country Strategy*, released in April 2022, indicates the renewed importance Washington views Azerbaijan as having in achieving its strategic interests in the South Caucasus:

“The intensive fighting in the fall of 2020 in and around Nagorno-Karabakh fundamentally altered the geopolitical order in the South Caucasus, elevating the importance of our bilateral relationship with Azerbaijan in achieving U.S. strategic interests in the region...

Azerbaijan’s shared border with Iran and Russia, close relationship with Turkey, and extensive energy links make it an important player in South Caucasus and European regional security... We will also prioritize increased NATO interoperability for Azerbaijan to strengthen our joint capacity to contribute to international security efforts...

Azerbaijan's geographic location also gives it great strategic importance as an energy producer and transit hub. The United States has long recognized the importance of Azerbaijani gas exports through the Southern Gas Corridor to ensure European energy security and reduce dependence on Russian gas...

U.S. Embassy Baku will strengthen its internal operations to reflect U.S. policy goals and interests and ensure we have the operational platforms in place to engage in robust bilateral diplomacy."

The United States is, of course, an important balancer for Baku. At the very least it is insurance against being pushed around by two powerful states to the North and South - Russia and Iran - both with historically antagonistic relations with Azerbaijan. And since Azerbaijan is now in alliance with NATO member, Türkiye, both Russia and Iran have to think twice before they do anything to the displeasure of Baku. Moscow and Tehran also know that the present government in Baku is the one most likely to have good relations with them both. Any more West-leaning alternative would be worse for both Russia and Iran and could destabilise the region.

The down-side of the US interest for Azerbaijan is the US insistence that the OSCE Minsk Group still has a role in the future of Karabakh. This is despite the fact that President Aliyev has made it clear that the Karabakh issue has been settled in the only way it could after 28 years of fruitless diplomacy and the failure of the Minsk Group to fulfil its mandate. According to Aliyev the Minsk Group is "*defunct*" and "*has now left the stage.*" Sergei Lavrov has also made it clear that he considers the Minsk Group no longer active or useful.

This flogging of the dead horse of Minsk seems very like mischievous meddling by the US in an issue which was settled on the battlefield and through a peace brought about by diplomacy involving Russia and Türkiye, that achieved a managed end to the war. It is in the interests of Yerevan, which attempts to employ both Washington and Moscow as obstructors of the peace process and is therefore very unpopular in Azerbaijan and, consequently unlikely to increase Western leverage in Baku.

The new found US interest in the well-being of Azerbaijan contrasts strongly with the pro-Armenian resolutions the US Congress passed during the Karabakh liberation war and the statement of the then candidate for the US Presidency, Joe Biden. Biden issued a strong pro-Armenian statement on his campaign website stating:

"A large-scale humanitarian disaster is looming for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, who have already suffered too much and need to have their security protected. After a month of fighting, it is long past time for President Trump to directly engage the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey to push for immediate de-escalation and stop the advance of Azerbaijani troops into Nagorno-Karabakh."

The Armenian separatists were to have their "*security protected*" by the US when the Russian-oriented separatists in Donbas were to be bombarded indiscriminately by US supplied long-range artillery!

The South Caucasus Balance Sheet

Svante Cornell writing in *Baku Dialogues (The Centrality of Karabakh in Caucasus Geopolitics)* has noted that of the three South Caucasus states:

"Azerbaijan has been a leader in the region in building sovereignty and true independence. It has relied on its own resources and rejected dependence on any outside power

while forging friendly relations with all outside powers that respect Azerbaijan's independence. This has been possible for two reasons: Azerbaijan's economic strength, and its stable leadership."

Georgia, after separating from the crumbling Soviet Union, had tried to build its sovereignty and independence in a similar way to Azerbaijan, under presidents Eduard Shevardnadze and Mikheil Saakashvili. They had some success in building a functional independent state. However, NATO courted Georgia as a member at the same time as Ukraine and Saakashvili made the fatal mistake of reciprocating and underestimating Russia's stated firm opposition to this. Georgia lost the 2008 war with Russia that resulted from this miscalculation. It was punished by a loss of territory and could have been punished more by Putin if he had had a mind to do so. Saakashvili fell from power in 2012 and the Georgian government has since pursued an accommodationist policy with Russia, which has increased Georgia's economic dependence on Moscow again, while Europe expresses criticism of Georgian accommodation with the Kremlin. As a result Georgia has been shut out by the EU whilst the EU welcomed Ukraine. This is causing growing resentment in Georgia.

Cornell says the following of Armenia:

"Armenia is in an even worse position than Georgia, with a society remaining in shock following its defeat in the Second Karabakh War. Armenia now has no choice but to rethink its entire national idea since independence, which had been based on the imperative of securing longterm control over the territories it had conquered in the First Karabakh War.

This objective had informed all of Armenia's major decisions since independence—above all, its everdeepening dependence on Russia for security. At this point, Armenia needs to accept the need to work together with its neighbors rather than somehow resecuring control over Karabakh. If Armenia does this, it will realize that it no longer needs to depend on foreign powers—whether they be Russia, the European Union, Iran, or anyone else. The reason for Armenia's dependence on Russia was always purely related to Karabakh. There is no longer a rationale for this policy; Armenia is now left only with the downside of dependence, without the upside of territorial control.

A debate in Armenia has existed for a long time between those advocating for territorial expansion at all costs, and those proposing a more sustainable approach. The latter have not yet come out on top—and they are not likely to do so tomorrow. Still, there is no question that the Second Karabakh War, as tragic as it was for Armenia, accelerated the process of shifting from an expansionist policy to a more conciliatory one—if only because it showed the unsustainability of an approach focused on the expansion of irredentist territorial control."

That is a fair summary of Armenia's position at the crossroads that the present writer has written about many times in the past.

If we briefly step outside the South Caucasus, to the other side of the Black Sea, we see Ukraine having made the same miscalculation as Georgia did in 2008. The difference, however, is that Ukraine represents a much more substantial instrument for the West with its larger population and its ability to take on Russia, once supplied with substantial military training, armaments and economic subvention that were never provided to Georgia. (Note: there is a question mark over Ukraine's population. It is usually said to be 44 million but there is now a strong suspicion that the Ukrainian population has declined from 52 million in 1991 to only

30 million on the eve of the Special Military Operation in February 2022. As Kiev has not held a census for over two decades this adds to the suspicion of large population decline).

The much greater threat Ukraine represents to Russia and the West's much greater willingness to back it militarily to the hilt in war against Moscow means that the destruction of Ukraine is likely to be qualitatively greater than what happened to Georgia. Five months after the Russian Special Military Operation Ukraine has lost about 20% of its territory, around 3 thousand towns and villages, half of its gross national product, and a third of its coal production. It has completely lost access to the Sea of Azov, and traffic through the Black Sea ports has been suspended due to the conflict and mining of the water access routes. The number of refugees has probably reached 7 million. And this will get worse the longer Ukraine keeps fighting and is supported by Washington.

Azerbaijan's successful balancing policy has also enabled it to come up with a functional position toward the Ukraine conflict. All the South Caucasus states have adopted a wait and see policy, careful about how a change in the global power might affect them. Because of their respective situations Armenia has adopted a policy that has attempted to place some distance between it and Russia while Georgia has adopted a policy that maintains a careful distance from the West. Both of these policies are likely to dissatisfy domestically and internationally.

Azerbaijan's functional balanced policy has involved protecting its national interests by maintaining a good neighbourly policy toward Russia, during a period of the utmost danger for Moscow. At the same time Baku has provided humanitarian assistance for the Ukrainians affected by the consequences of the war and has declared its support for the principle of Ukrainian territorial integrity.

Azerbaijan is the stand-out successful state of the region. As Svante Cornell notes "*Azerbaijan's economic strength, and its stable leadership*" are the things that have marked out the country as a successful state over its Caucasus neighbours and the tragic Ukraine.

But that is only part of the story. Economic strength can easily be squandered, as we have seen in the case of Russia in the 1990s and Ukraine, since independence. And stable leadership must be backed up with good statecraft if it is to be effective, mindful of the regional interests that lie around it. The ability to empathise with the interests of those which one formerly had problematic relations with, whilst maintaining a strong independent state, is vital to successful statesmanship.

One important thing needs to be said about stable leadership, which Azerbaijan has had since Heydar Aliyev rescued the country from the disasters of the early 1990s. Every single one of Georgia, Armenia and Ukraine - along with many other states - have suffered Western-prompted Colour Revolutions, instigated by US and other Western NGOs and intelligence agencies in one form or another. Only Azerbaijan has been spared these destabilisations. Azerbaijan's enemies would dearly love something of this kind to occur to revive their revanchist designs which at present lie dormant, with little hope of revival.

The very thing that has made Azerbaijan the most successful independent state in the region is what has made it now the centre of geopolitical attention with significant opportunities for the future as the "*Caspian keystone*" of Eurasian development.

Books by Eamon Dyas

Starving the Germans

**this is Volume Two of *Blockading The Germans!*
With an overview of 19th century maritime
law**

**The evolution of Britain's strategy during the First
World War
by Eamon Dyas**

This is the second volume of a Trilogy that examines the manner in which the First World War was fought by Britain and its Allies against the civilians of Germany and the Central Powers and the way in which the outcome of that war distorted the prevailing trajectory of European history. The first volume — *Blockading the Germans* — explored the way in which Britain as the world's primary naval power shaped the use of the naval blockade as a weapon against civilians from the time of the Napoleonic Wars to the advent of the First World War. It also dealt with the way which United States' actions as the main supplier of munitions and financial credits to the Allies compromised its neutrality and made the British pursuit of that war possible.

This current volume begins at the point when the United States formally joined the war in April 1917. It shows how, through the use of food embargoes on the northern neutral countries, the United States completed Britain's food strangulation of Germany and brought misery and death to the civilian populations of those countries in the process. It explains the way in which the terms of the November 1918 Armistice was arbitrarily expanded by the Allies to ensure that Germany was made malleable to the British demand that it accept total responsibility for the war and at the same time hampered its chances of a post-war recovery.

It further explains the impact of the Armistice on the food supply mechanism that had been established in the United States to supply its own troops and the Allies during the war. In addition it reveals the way in which the post-Armistice attempts by Herbert Hoover and the American Food Administration to use the American food surplus to feed Europe were thwarted by obstacles placed in its path by France and Britain.

Finally, the volume reveals Britain's role in formulating the reparations demanded of Germany in the face of initial American opposition. The volume ends with an examination of the way in which the powers of the Reparations Commission undermined the incipient democratic institutions established in Weimar Germany. Eamon Dyas is a former head of The Times newspaper archive, was on the Executive Committee of the Business Archives Council in England for a number of years, and was Information Officer of the Newspaper Department of the British Library for many years.

Books available to order from <http://www.atholbooks.org>

Ukraine Trapped in a Spiral of War

July 1, 2022 Pierre de Gaulle

The speech that follows was given by Pierre de Gaulle, the grandson of Charles de Gaulle, at the Russian Embassy in Paris, on June 14, 2022, to mark Russia Day. It is a speech that has been heavily censored in France and we are happy to provide this English translation.

M. de Gaulle addresses the current Ukraine-Russia conflict by way of a blunt and brave denunciation of the French political elite who have succeeded in undermining the great ideals of his grandfather, who always sought the inclusion of Russia within Europe. The opening words of greetings Mr. de Gaulle made in Russian.

‘Your Excellencies, Official Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you, on behalf of my family and my father, Admiral de Gaulle, for inviting us to celebrate your national holiday. Our peoples are linked by long years of friendship and by the blood shed against the Nazis. This is an opportunity for me to repeat that the Franco-Russian relationship was of particular importance to General de Gaulle. France and Russia are close to each other, but are also united by the awareness of their common interests and destinies.

Furthermore, Russia was seen by my grandfather as an inverse ally, indispensable for his security, but also because it was part of his conception of the stability of Europe and of Europe’s place in the world. The General even said, “Napoleon’s disastrous decision to attack Alexander I is the biggest mistake he ever made. Nothing forced him to do so. It was contrary to our interests, to our traditions, to our genius. It is from the war between Napoleon and the Russians that our decadence dates”

I have come here to affirm once again, loud and clear, that it is in France’s interest to maintain good relations with Russia and to say that we must work together in order to help the union and security of our continent, as well as the balance, progress and peace of the entire world.

Today, everyone recognizes the responsibility of the United States in the current conflict, the disastrous role of NATO, which is constantly expanding, and the reckless policy of the Ukrainian government. The latter, strengthened by beautiful promises and fed by American and European illusions, has led a very condemnable policy towards the Russian-speaking populations of Donbass, multiplying discrimination, plundering, embargoes and bombings. Unfortunately, the West has allowed Zelensky, his oligarchs and the neo-Nazi military groups to be trapped in a spiral of war.

This blindness has serious consequences for the Ukrainian people. But let’s make no mistake—what do the Americans want, if not to provoke a new East-West confrontation, whose only goal is to weaken and divide Europe in order to impose their directives, their economy and their system? Since the First World War, the Americans have made a pact to establish a necessary balance of forces in Europe and to be involved in the security of the European continent. It is not by organizing a systematic military escalation in Ukraine that they will fulfil their commitment, nor their great principles of freedom and democracy!

The United States is wrong, NATO is wrong, whose unbridled and thoughtless expansionism leads inexorably to the imbalance of the world and to injustice. The beautiful promises of the Americans not to enlarge NATO to the East, nor to the North, have not been respected. The Minsk agreements have not been respected.

The reality is that the Americans have never accepted, nor the West with them, that after the difficult transition of 1991 and the reconstruction that followed, Russia would not fit into their unipolar world. Neither the Americans nor Europe have ever accepted that Russia should transform itself according to the Western model—in its own way.

Because of this, and from the beginning, President Putin was perceived as a dictator, whereas he is a great leader for his country!

The United States has also never accepted the loss of the role of the dollar as the dominant currency in the settlement of international trade in the world. The worst thing is that, in this blindness, they are only reinforcing, by moving the economic and financial interests to the East, the position of China and the Chinese currency that they also want to fight! Sanctions—which are the policy of the weak—are inoperative, except to weaken the Europeans and other nations of the world. Even Africans, through the intermediacy of the President of the African Union, Mr. Macky Sall, are very worried about this.

By provoking a deep, systemic and lasting economic crisis that is already affecting us all, from the price of bread to heating and fuel, but also by the shortage of food, raw materials and industrial metals that all this entails, the Americans are weakening the Europeans for their own benefit. Have we forgotten that for at least a century, all the major financial crises have come from the United States? “Our dollar, your problem,” said Henry Kissinger. The Americans still hold us by their debt, which they export.

By imposing a cultural and social model based on the cult of pleasure and consumption, the Americans are undermining the foundation of our traditional values and the two pillars of civilization—the family and tradition.

Europe, and of course France, have everything to lose, if they entrap themselves into this military and ideological escalation desired by the United States and NATO. As Charles de Gaulle said, “America is not part of Europe. I believe I discovered that on the map.”

France can and must play a key role in the current terrible and formidable situation. France and Russia are both daughters of Europe. France must not forget that she is the eldest of the European nations and that none of them has such a long trail of glory behind her. My grandfather always supported and defended the imperative need, even in the most difficult moments of history, to build and preserve a strong and shared relationship with Russia.

He loved Russia. My family and I love Russia and its people. The Russian people, whose property rights are so unjustly violated around the world. It reminds me of the worst moments of the occupation and the Vichy regime in France. And are Russian artists and sportsmen also responsible?

This systematic and blind policy of confiscation and discrimination of the entire Russian people is scandalous and shocks me greatly.

Allow me to quote General de Gaulle once again: “In France, we have never considered Russia as an enemy. I am for the development of Franco-Russian friendship; and I have never sent and I will never send arms to people who would have fought against Soviet Russia.”

The Americans give money (and weapons). We pay them with slices of our independence. I regret that the French government is committing itself to this submission to NATO and thus to American policy.

I deplore the fact that, because of the will of certain French presidents, France has dissolved into NATO. However, General de Gaulle always tried to maintain France’s independence in the integrated command of NATO.

NATO is absorbing Europe. And so the Americans no longer speak to France and no longer consider us a strong and independent nation.

Do we need to recall the recent slap in the face suffered by France in the brutal and unilateral breach of the contract for the purchase of French submarines by Australia, a member of the Commonwealth, which was orchestrated by the British and the Americans? Can France be satisfied, in addition to its loss of sovereignty, with the three-day advance in ammunition and fuel that NATO grants it? I do not understand the policy of the French President.

On the strength of his convictions, his army and the deterrent force that he himself built to the great displeasure of the Americans, General de Gaulle had the determination to leave NATO, while remaining a full member of the Atlantic Alliance. I wish that the French President had this courage and this will, rather than being subjected to the throes of single-mindedness and the common policy imposed by the Americans, which make him dependent.

In the same way, I do not recognize myself in today’s France, in this policy of “en même temps,” which weakens us. I do not recognize myself in the current abandonment of values, of our history, of our culture, of our great principles of freedom, duty and security.

General de Gaulle wrote, “There is a twenty-fold pact between the greatness of France and the freedom of the world.” Our goal is and must remain to establish a European entente between the Atlantic and the Urals. In the midst of the alarms of the world and the dangers of the present crisis, France can and must once again throw all her weight behind seeking an arrangement with the belligerent countries, and Russia in particular.

One does not wage war alone!

It is a conviction that ideologies, and therefore the regimes that express them, in Ukraine as elsewhere, are only temporary. “Only the patina of centuries and the capacity of countries to remain great count, based on political foundations.”

As General de Gaulle said in 1966 during his second trip to Russia: “The visit I am finishing to your country is a visit from the France of always to the Russia of always.”

I thank you. ‘

The full text of the speech in French may be accessed by clicking on this link:

https://www.thepostil.com/ukraine-trapped-in-a-spiral-of-war-pierre-de-gaulle/?utm_source=sendfox

‘England’s regard for the truth – by one who knows both’ by Roger Casement

These articles by Sir Roger Casement, originally published in *The Continental Times* of Berlin, have lain forgotten for over a century. Now, for the first time, they are published as a collection by Athol Books to bring the authentic Casement to the general public.

They take up the theme of his only published book, *The Crime Against Europe: British Foreign Policy and how it brought about the First World War*. They reveal Casement as a consistent Liberal when English Liberalism failed its great test in the ultimate moment of truth in August 1914. They show Sir Roger as a consistent Irish Nationalist when the Home Rulers collapsed into Imperialism. The ground shifted under his feet but he remained solid.

For Casement action was consequent upon thought and knowledge. Remaining true to his principles he attempted to forge an Irish-German alliance. Not for Casement “my country right or wrong” but who was right and who was wrong.

This collection explains why Casement did what he did and how it led him to Easter 1916. It shatters the British narrative of the Great War by “one who knew”. It shows why Casement was the most dangerous Irishman who ever faced up to Britain and why they had to hang him and attempt to foul his memory.

They have not succeeded.

‘Casement – decoding false history’ Recent research by Paul R. Hyde

Foreword by Angus Mitchell

(120pp). ISBN 97 9781903497951 €15, £12 Published by the Aubane Historical Society 2021

The book published here is the result of original research undertaken since publication of *Anatomy of a Lie* by Paul R. Hyde in 2019. This book represents a further penetration into the century-long ‘Black Diaries’ controversy. Here readers can see for the first time the secret memo of 1914 which gave birth to the later scandal. Here Casement’s defence counsel, Serjeant Sullivan, is revealed as playing a major role in the deception. For the first time the seven conflicting versions of the diaries’ provenance are analysed with devastating conclusions. And here the astonishing revelations of an ex-naval officer, Commander Clipperton—suppressed by all biographers—can be seen for the first time. Published in 1973, Brian Inglis’ biography provided a new and convincing template for the interpretation of the Casement controversy; its consequences still resonate today. The Inglis template was convincing, detailed, clever and false. Without any source notes, it remains unsurpassed for the subtlety of its deceptions, rapidly becoming the standard biography which has conditioned the understanding of later generations of trusting readers and historians. But Inglis spun a web of deception exploiting logical fallacies, selective framing, omission, altered documents, innuendo, false attribution—all the sins of intellectual dishonesty. *Anatomy of a Lie* exposed many of his sins for the first time; this volume reveals even crimes against truth.

Both books available from <http://www.atholbooks.org>

‘KATEHON’ - TOWARDS A POST-LIBERAL RUSSIA

By Peter Brooke

In deciding on the ‘*special military operation*’ in Ukraine, the Russian government must have known that it was renouncing one of the lines of possible future development that was still just about open to it - the collaboration with Europe, and particularly with Germany, that was implicit in the Nord Stream 2 project. Nothing in politics is ever totally predictable and there is still a possibility that Germany will change its mind. The opening of Nord Stream 2 and resolution of the problems of Nord Stream 1 (problems imposed as a result of the US/EU/UK/Canada sanctions régime) would at a stroke resolve the problems of gas supply that are likely to weigh so heavily in Winter. But Germany is faced with a choice that is now very stark between an orientation towards Russia or an orientation towards the US - the possibility of balancing the two is not available to it (and ‘*Europe*’ still has no existence as a political unity). Germany could theoretically reckon that an alliance with Russia has more to offer than alliance with the US but it also has the problem of the new ‘*hinterland*’ - the territory that used to make up the Austro-Hungarian Empire - that has opened up since the fall of the Soviet Union. With the exception of Hungary this whole area is viscerally anti-Russian.

So we can for the moment assume that Russia must seek its destiny elsewhere than in the West and, by the same token, in the adoption of so-called ‘*Western values*.’ But what might be the alternative?

In this article I want to look at the website ‘*Katehon*’ which is proposing a more or less coherent political philosophy which it regards as consistent with a specifically Russian spiritual and intellectual tradition. I’m not in a position to say how important or influential *Katehon* actually is in Russia, but one thing can be said with certainty - with the intervention in Ukraine and consequent proxy war with Europe, the *Katehon* writers arguing for an Eastward, ‘*Eurasian*’ turn in Russian foreign policy, as well as for a religiously - Russian Orthodox - based political philosophy feel at present that they have the ball at their feet.

This is how they themselves define their project (machine translation):

‘The Center aims to develop a worldview, political, diplomatic, economic and military strategy for Russia of the future, based on the principles of greatness, deep civilizational sovereignty, a revived identity and all-encompassing social justice.

‘The figure of *Katechon* in political philosophy and theological ideas is the intersection point of the main themes of human history: religion and politics, spirit and power, ideas and matter, internal and external, time and its end. *Katechon* is the one who keeps humanity from the death of extinction, absorption into chaos and a whirlwind of irreversible catastrophes. This is the task of the Church, religion and faith; this is the highest goal of the state and

power, this is the vocation of the Empire, which combines the spirit and power.

‘It is this figure, both in the Christian context and in the field of political science, that is the main semantic moment: the legitimacy of the political system, the criteria of justice and the source of law are associated with it.’

At least that is how they define it in the Russian language website. The version on the English language website is a little different:

‘We, at *Katehon*, view the world as being a global space in which there will always be permanent and distinct civilizations or “civilizational spheres.” These polylogue spheres of influence are not going to disappear in the near or even distant future, nor should they. We follow the realist school of international relations with its varying forms - e.g. defensive, offensive, neo, hyper - and so we are obliged to recognize the great diversity of values, traditions, interests and visions which exist among all of the world’s distinct civilizations. In particular, we are engaged in studying the following “great spaces” which comprise the majority of all world civilizations - North America, South (or Latin) America, Europe, Russia-Eurasia, China, India, the Islamic world, Africa, and the Pacific. We consider all of the preceding global-regional “poles” to be different civilizational entities, all possessing certain commonalities and yet also differences which should neither be ignored nor denied. This demands a new multipolar approach to studying each civilization and the many subtle distinctions that exist within them.

‘We, at *Katehon*, understand our mission to be one that seeks to assist in the creation and defense of a secure, democratic and just international system, free from hegemony, violence, terrorism, persecution, slavery and extremism of any kind.’

The Russian language statement is signed by Konstantin Valerievich Malofeev: Alexander Gelievich Dugin; Sergey Yurievich Glazyev; Leonid Petrovich Reshetnikov; Andrey Arkadieyevich Klimov; Zurab Mikhailovich Chavchavadze.

The same names, with the exception of Dugin and the addition of Alexandr Makarov, appear on the English language site.

In a ‘*Special Report*’ by the US State Department on ‘*Pillars of Russia’s Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem*’ (August 2020) *Katechon* is described as ‘*Konstantin Malofeyev’s mouthpiece*.’ The Report goes on to say:

‘Often referred to as the “Orthodox oligarch,” [he made his fortune as an investment fund manager - PB] Malofeyev runs one of Russia’s largest private foundations, the St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation. He is also the deputy head of the World Russia People’s Council, an international organization led by the Russian Patriarch Kirill. Malofeyev

is also the head of the “pro-Putin monarchist society” the Double-Headed Eagle; and serves on the Advisory Board of the Safe Internet League, a state-linked organization ostensibly dedicated to “fighting dangerous Web content” but accused by independent Russian media of “frequently blacklisting socio-political content.”

It goes on to give a brief account of the other names listed on the English language site:

‘Sergey Glazyev, President Vladimir Putin’s former economic advisor and currently a Minister in charge of Integration and Macroeconomics at the Eurasian Economic Commission. Glazyev is under U.S. sanctions related to Russia’s hostile actions in Ukraine.

‘Andrey Klimov, Deputy Chair of the Russian Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs and Head of the Council’s Interim Committee for the Defense of State Sovereignty and the Prevention of Interference in the Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation.

‘Leonid Reshetnikov, a retired Lieutenant-General of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), where he led the Analysis and Information Department. Until 2017, Reshetnikov was the head of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS), a Moscow-based think-tank that used to be a part of the SVR [Foreign Intelligence Service - PB] and now conducts research for the Kremlin. According to press reports, RISS research has included plans for Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections and proposals for the Bulgarian Socialist Party to “plant fake news and promote exaggerated polling data” in advance of that country’s presidential elections the same year. In 2016, RISS and Katehon co-authored a report allegedly analyzing U.S. ideology.

‘Alexander Makarov, a retired Lieutenant General of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB).’

Chavchavadze goes unmentioned. He is a Georgian Prince, direct descendant of Ilia Chavchavadze (1837-1907), described in his Wikipedia entry as ‘*a Georgian public figure, journalist, publisher, writer and poet who spearheaded the revival of Georgian nationalism during the second half of the 19th century and ensured the survival of the Georgian language, literature, and culture during the last decades of Tsarist rule.*’ In 1987 Ilia Chavchavadze was recognised as a saint by the ‘*Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Georgia*’ for his efforts to free the church from control by the Russian Holy Synod. The independence of the Georgian Orthodox Church (which is actually one of the oldest Christian churches) was finally recognised by the Russian Orthodox Church on 31 October 1943 on the orders of Stalin.

Richard Sakwa, Professor of Russian and European politics in the University of Kent, in his book *The Putin Paradox* gives the following brief account of the main influences on Russian policy making:

‘the economic liberals shape macroeconomic policy, the neo-traditionalists the cultural sphere, the security agencies foreign policy (although not unchallenged) and the Eurasianists Eastern policy ...’

On the Katehon website Malofeev represents the ‘*neo-traditionalists*’ in their more Orthodox monarchist orientation, Dugin and Glazyev are leading figures in the Eurasian movement, Reshetnikov and Makarov represent the powerful security, ‘*silovki*’ bloc. Glazyev is also a leading figure among the economists proposing an alternative to

economic liberalism. A frequent contributor to the site is Alexandr Prokhanov who represents the ‘*neo-traditionalists*’ in their more pro-Soviet orientation. Thus all the tendencies are represented except of course the liberals whose position has been seriously undermined by the Ukrainian war and consequent sanctions imposed by the West. One assumes that the elements represented in Katehon will be only too happy to take their place.

WHAT IS A KATHECHON?

The Russian language Katehon website features three subject headings that do not appear on the English version - ‘*Empire*’, ‘*Katechon theory*’ and ‘*Zemsky Sobor*.’

‘*Katechon theory*’ is mainly concerned with discussing the meaning of the term ‘*Katechon*’. It is a Greek word meaning ‘*the one who restrains*’ and it is found in the second epistle of St Paul to the Thessalonians (vv 1-12):

‘Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming. The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.’

The website provides a little anthology of interpretations of this passage from various church fathers - Tertullian, Jerome, Hippolyte of Rome, Theodoret of Cyr, Augustine of Hippo, Irenaeus of Lyon, and John Chrysostom. These, incidentally, are all, with the exception of Irenaeus (born perhaps in Smyrna and writing in Greek), Theodoret and John, Western - Latin - writers, albeit from the period before the Great Schism, and none of them, with the exception of Irenaeus and John, are recognised as Saints by the Orthodox Church.

Tertullian, Jerome, and John interpret the katechon as the Roman Empire, despite the fact that the Emperor at the time of St Paul was Nero. Hippolyte gives it as the ‘*fourth beast*’ in the Book of Daniel (Dan 7: 7-8), also widely regarded as symbolic of the Roman Empire. Theodoret interprets it as the grace of God. Augustine is non-committal but gives the Roman power as a probable interpretation. Irenaeus so far as I can see doesn’t address the question. John interprets it as the Roman Empire:

‘Some say that this is the grace of the Holy Spirit, while others say that it is the Roman state; I agree more with

these latter. Why? Because if (the apostle) wanted to speak about the Spirit, he would not express himself vaguely about it, but (would say) definitely that now the grace of the Holy Spirit, i.e. (extraordinary) gifts, prevents him from appearing ... But since (the apostle) says this about the Roman state, it is understandable why he only hints at this and speaks covertly for the time being. He did not want to incur excessive hostility and useless danger. Indeed, if he had said that the Roman state would collapse in a short time, then he would immediately be wiped off the face of the earth as a rebel ... when the existence of the Roman state ceases, then he (Antichrist) will come. And rightly so, because as long as this state is feared, no one will soon submit (to Antichrist); but after it is destroyed, anarchy will set in, and he will strive to steal all - both human and divine - power. Just as before that the kingdoms were destroyed, namely: the Median - by the Babylonians, the Babylonian - by the Persians, the Persian - by the Macedonians, the Macedonian - by the Romans, so this last will be destroyed by Antichrist, and he himself will be defeated by Christ and will no longer rule.'

The relevance of this to the current situation of Russia may be hinted at in a Christmas greeting from Konstantin Malofeev:

'Merry Christmas, dear friends! 2021 years ago in a cave near Bethlehem in the family of Joseph from Nazareth the Divine Infant Jesus Christ was born. Saint Joseph the Betrothed and the Virgin Mary traveled to Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem to participate in the census. This census was announced by the Great Emperor Caesar Augustus throughout the Roman Empire. And so the Savior of the World, the Lord Jesus Christ, became a subject of the Empire in his earthly life. The Epiphany sanctified the Augustan Empire and made it the Catechon, the force that keeps the world from evil. Therefore, the Roman Empire will exist until the Second Coming. The first two Romes, Old and New, Constantinople, fell. Moscow is the Third Rome, and there will never be a fourth. Therefore, for our Orthodox and Monarchist Society "Tsargrad" Christmas is a celebration of the founding of our Faith. Faith in the Kingdom of Heaven and hopes for the revival of the Kingdom of the world - Katechon, the Empire of the Third Rome, in which Christ Himself was born.'

THE KATECHON AND CARL SCHMITT

The concept of the katechon as the force charged with restraining a collapse into anarchy was revived in the twentieth century by the German political and legal theorist Carl Schmitt who regarded it, in his book *The Nomos of the Earth*, published in 1950, as the only possible means of reconciling Christian belief in an imminent collapse into anarchy and irruption of the Antichrist with the continued existence of a powerful Christian Empire - in his case thinking principally of the Holy Roman Empire (thanks to John Minahane for providing me with a translation of the relevant parts of the *Nomos*). The Katechon website has an article by an American legal theorist, M. Blake Wilson [associate professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at California State University, Stanislaus] under the title: "*Counterrevolutionary Polemics: Katechon and Crisis in de Maistre, Donoso, and Schmitt*," (originally published in the *Philosophical Journal of Conflict and Violence*, Vol. III, Issue 2/2019, December. The original is accessible on the internet).

His starting point is the idea most commonly associated with Schmitt, the famous first sentence of his *Political Theology*: '*Sovereign is he who decides on the exception.*' Wilson suggests three things that the three counter-revolutionaries, the Spanish Juan Donoso Cortes, the French Joseph de Maistre and the German Schmitt have in common:

first, the counterrevolutionary constitution and its role as katechon of revolutionary violence; second, the philosophy of the decision and the sovereign's identity as the katechon personified; and third, bourgeois romanticism's katechonic failure to engage in meaningful political action.

It is actually only Schmitt who uses the word '*katechon*':

In Schmitt's view, the katechon, while still retaining its theological/eschatological roots, becomes a secularized and historical concept whereby political entities (persons, empires, and institutions) can be understood as restrainers against revolution, chaos, and disorder, which are the political precursors of liberalism and socialism ...

'The theorists fear that a revolutionary crack in the state's façade will let in the Antichrist and its dark chaos. Liberalism's weak state, as well as socialism's strong state but weak society, also lets in the darkness. Together, the theories argue, the strong state and its religion restrain the Antichrist and return order: religion asserts internal control through guilt, hell, and perdition, while political organizations exert external control through constitutional law (at its most benign) and tyranny (at its most repressive).

'For Donoso, sin and evil are the result of disorder, and it is heresy to subordinate the religious to the political and the political to the economic. Politics, rather, must be subordinated to theology ... Because man's dark nature justifies his domination, myth, religion, and political compromise are better methods to relocate and secure order. The church as katechon saves the world from chaos whereas philosophy's endless discussion cannot ... For Donoso, dictatorship is the apogee of politics, and the fall of religion is directly proportional to the rise of politics, which he characterizes as repression and tyranny.'

He ascribes to Donoso the idea that Liberty, Equality, Fraternity should be seen as theological categories - '*the revolutionary dogmas of liberty, equality, and fraternity come not from "the Republic, but from Calvary."*' We are all equal before God but '*When concepts such as equality are secularized, they lose their religious foundation and violence ensues.*' All the writers are opposed to the idea of a written constitution which is an obstacle to the evolution, the history, of a people and which stands above the sovereign, interfering with the sovereign right to decide the exception. Much admiration is expressed, especially by Donoso, for the unwritten British constitution and the dictatorial nature of the power it gives Parliament: "*The English constitution is the only in the world (so wise are the English) in which dictatorship is not an exception in the law. It is in the common law. This matter is clear. The Parliament has dictatorial power on all occasions and at all times whenever it decides to exercise it.*" Most interesting however, from our present point of view is Schmitt's critique of romanticism (in his book *Political Romanticism*, published in 1919):

'Schmitt echoes the Catholic de Maistre when he writes that "law, constitutions, and language are products of human society." Society produces the nation, but nations have boundaries. The epitome of universalist romantic politics is the antithesis of this idea: without boundaries, "the unlimited

community is essentially a revolutionary god that eliminates all social and political barriers and proclaims the general brotherhood of humanity as a whole.” Accordingly, Schmitt writes, “Any relationship to a legal or moral judgment would be incongruous here, and every norm would seem to be an antiromantic tyranny. A legal or a moral decision would be senseless and it would inevitably destroy romanticism. This is why the romantic is not in a position to deliberately take sides and make a decision.”

ORDER AND CHAOS, LAND AND SEA

The right of the sovereign to decide the exception implies the existence of a norm. Where there is no norm there can be no exception. This connects with the theme of an essay by Schmitt published in the ‘Empire’ section of the website - the contradiction between the land, subject to ordered division, and the sea, which is without limits.

According to Schmitt, it is no accident that England which, in the sixteenth century, detached itself from Europe and adopted a whole hearted commitment to the sea, was also, in the eighteenth century the pioneer country of the industrial revolution. The sea has no limits and the advance of technology has no limits. He draws a sharp contrast between a ship and a house:

‘The island ceased to be a separately located fragment of the Land and turned into a Ship anchored near the continent ... The ship is the basis of the marine existence of people, just as the House is the basis of their land existence. Ship and House are not antitheses in the sense of static polarity; they represent different responses to different challenges of history. Both the Ship and the House are created with the help of technical means, but their main difference is that the Ship is an absolutely artificial, technical vehicle based on the total domination of man over nature. The sea is a kind of natural environment, sharply different from the land. The sea is more aloof and hostile. According to the biblical story, man received his habitat precisely through the separation of the Earth from the Sea. The sea remained fraught with danger and evil. Here we refer readers to the commentaries on the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. In the third volume of “Church Dogmatics” by Karl Barth. Let us only emphasize that in order to overcome the ancient religious horror of the Sea, mankind had to make a significant effort. The technical effort made to overcome this is essentially different from any other technical effort. A man who dares to embark on a sea voyage - the word “pirate” originally meant one who is capable of such a risk - should, according to the poet, [have] “triple armor on his chest” (aes triplex circa pectus). Man’s overcoming of the inertial resistance of nature, which is the essence of cultural or civilizing activity, differs sharply in the case of shipbuilding and the development of the Sea and in the case of breeding livestock and building dwellings on the Land ...

‘The terrestrial existence, of which the House is the center, has a completely different relation to technology than the marine existence, of which the Ship is the center. The absolutization of technical progress, the identification of any progress exclusively with technical progress, in short, what is meant by the expression “liberated technical impulse”, “liberated technology” - all this could originate, grow and develop only on the basis of marine existence, in the climate of marine existence ... the island of England accepted the challenge of the opening of the world ocean and brought to its logical conclusion the transition to a purely marine existence, it gave a historical answer to the question

posed by the era of great geographical discoveries. At the same time, this was both a prerequisite for the industrial revolution and the beginning of an era whose problems we all experience today.’

This gives him a framework for understanding the October revolution:

‘Marxism was adopted by the elite of Russian professional revolutionaries, who managed to make a revolution in the Russian Empire in 1917 and transfer the double superstructure to the conditions of their agrarian country. In all this, it was by no means about the practical implementation of pure teaching and about the logical implementation of the objective laws of historical development. It was about the fact that an industrially backward agrarian country felt the need to arm itself with modern industrial technology, since otherwise it would be provided with the role of prey for other more developed industrialized large powers. Thus, Marxism turned from an ideological superstructure of the second stage of the industrial revolution into a practical tool for overcoming the industrial and technical insecurity of a vast country, as well as for removing the old elite, which clearly could not cope with the historical task’

A footnote, almost certainly written by Alexander Dugin, expresses approval:

‘One of the most original and correct explanations of the October Revolution, complementing its interpretation, typical of the National Bolsheviks (both German and Russian) and Eurasians, according to which it was a purely national and geopolitical transformation aimed at strengthening the positions of the Land and organization of a New Order in Eurasia, more effective and consistent than the New Order created in Central Europe by Mussolini and Hitler.’

Dugin has written extensively elsewhere about the ‘*National Bolsheviks*’ and ‘*Eurasianists*’ who emerged particularly in the 1920s among the Russian emigration arguing that the great achievement of the Bolsheviks had been to save the Russian state (and, ultimately, empire) from the disintegration that threatened it after the February revolution. Mention has been made earlier of the French counter-revolutionary theorist Joseph de Maistre (who, as it happens, lived in Russia for fourteen years, from 1803 to 1817. One of his most important books is called *Les Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg*).

In his *Considérations sur la France*, published in 1797, he argues that the Jacobins had saved the French state from the disintegration that threatened it after the French revolution of 1789 and the disastrous policies adopted by the Girondins. It could only be done by terror and in de Maistre’s view it was a grace of God that the terror was executed by the revolutionaries, otherwise it would have had to be done by a restored monarchy, much less well-adapted psychologically for the job.

DUGIN ON PUTIN

So the Katechon defends what is solid and bounded - Empire, land, traditional morality, ‘freedom for ...’ - from what is nebulous and limitless - Romanticism, the sea, LGBTQ+ rights, ‘freedom from ...’

In another article in the 'Empire' section of the Katehon website - *Neutralisation and its limits: the political system of modern Russia*, published in March 2021, Dugin gives a fairly coherent account of the practical political aims of the project. He begins with a positive assessment of the current political arrangements:

'From the point of view of formal logic, in the current situation, the configuration of power in Russia as a whole is quite good. There is a strong leader, there is a well-functioning centralized management structure that resists entropy, separatism and decay. There is complete control established by Putin over the main strategically important industries, formalized either legally or on the basis of internal system agreements that are strictly observed. It would never occur to anyone today - unlike in the 90s - to question this and challenge the system itself.

'From the standpoint of statehood at the current historical stage, such a power structure is optimal. The level of centralization and concentration of power in the hands of the ruler is sufficient to maintain sovereignty, and this is already a lot.'

Russia, in other words, has, at least temporarily, the character of a monarchy:

'We know how the State Duma depends on Putin, how all parties depend on Putin. They exist only because of his consent that they exist. They exist, they are present in parliament and they are headed by those who are headed, only because Putin agrees with this or even wants this. Even when criticizing Putin, they do it in strict agreement with him. Therefore, of course, subjectivity here is minimal. And it is in the current conditions, in my opinion, fine. This contributes to risk neutralization.

'As for the government, here again a transcendental power is at work, turning the entire government, including the prime minister, into purely technical executors. Putin personally directs strategic issues, international politics, defense, and in many respects the economy. And the people who are responsible for this in the government, only carry out his instructions.'

Referring to the three powers that are normally talked about in Western constitutional theory - legal, executive and juridical:

'Therefore, in the Russian Leviathan there are simply no three powers that could build a model of interaction with each other. There is one power, spreading into three channels. And for the current Russian reality, this is optimal.'

But this concentration of power is only the first stage of what Dugin believes should be a two stage process. Putin's achievement has been remarkable but his success is entirely dependent on his own personality. He has not established an order that could succeed him. His system lacks a solid intellectual and moral foundation.

DUGIN ON SURKOV ON PUTIN

Following the murder of Dugin's daughter, an article in *Russia Today* ('*Western media's favorite Russian philosopher: Who is Aleksandr Dugin, whose daughter was killed in a Moscow car bombing?*' 21st August 2022) complained that:

'Dugin has been dubbed 'Putin's brain' and 'Putin's Rasputin' by the anglophone press for his supposed

influence on the worldview of President Vladimir Putin and the country's ruling elite. *Foreign Policy* magazine included him in its 2014 'Global Thinkers' list "for masterminding Russia's expansionist ideology."

'However, the reality is that he's not influential in the Kremlin. Nor is he even a mainstream figure in Moscow. Instead, he's become a totem for ultra-nationalist campaigners, most of whom believe President Vladimir Putin is too moderate in his foreign policy.

'Thus, Dugin has become a curious anomaly: famous in the West, but a fringe figure at home.'

This is probably more or less right. But on the Katehon website Dugin finds himself in quite distinguished and influential company. And he writes better than any of the others (with the possible exception of Glazev). His particular eccentricity, apart from his interest in esoteric 'traditionalist' philosophy, is that his sphere of intellectual influences is largely Western orientated - René Guénon, Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, but also the contemporary 'new right' philosophers, Alain de Benoist and Claudio Mutti. He has a most unconventional, from a Russian Conservative point of view, interest in 'post-modernist' thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze and Toni Negri, seeing them as usefully pushing liberalism to the point of a total collapse of western society.

He doesn't claim any particular influence on Putin but in this article he does refer to conversations he had with Vladislav Surkov, one of Putin's closest advisers in the early years of the century, apparently responsible for the 'macho' image Putin adopted at that time. In 2019 Surkov published an essay ('*Putin's long state*', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 02/11/2019) in which he argued that Russia now had, in 'Putinism', '*an organically formed model of the political system that will be an effective means of survival and exaltation of the Russian nation for the next few years, but also decades, and most likely for the entire coming century.*'

In part, the essay resembles what we have just read from Dugin, praising Putin for reversing the process of disintegration which had occurred in the 1990s: '*Having collapsed from the level of the USSR to the level of the Russian Federation, Russia stopped collapsing, began to recover and returned to its natural and only possible state of a great, growing and gathering land of a community of peoples.*' He argues that one of the distinguishing marks of the Russian system is its '*honesty*'. The pattern in the West is a liberal facade covering over a '*deep state*' -

'The term means a rigid, absolutely undemocratic network organization of the real power of law enforcement agencies, hidden behind external, flaunted democratic institutions. A mechanism that in practice operates through violence, bribery and manipulation and hidden deep under the surface of civil society, in words (hypocritically or innocently) condemning manipulation, bribery and violence.'

In Russia however the functions fulfilled by the deep state operate quite openly:

'Our state is not divided into deep and external, it is built as a whole, with all its parts and manifestations outward. The most brutal constructions of its power frame go straight along the facade, not covered by any architectural excesses. The bureaucracy, even when it is cunning, does not do it too carefully, as if proceeding from the fact that "everyone understands everything anyway."

'The high internal tension associated with the retention of vast heterogeneous spaces, and the constant presence in the thick of the geopolitical struggle make the military-police functions of the state the most important and decisive. They are traditionally not hidden, but on the contrary, they are shown, since Russia has never been ruled by merchants (almost never, the exceptions are a few months in 1917 and a few years in the 1990s), who consider military affairs to be lower than trade, and the liberals accompanying the merchants, whose doctrine is being built on the denial of everything at least a little "police". There was no one to drape the truth with illusions, bashfully pushing into the background and hiding deeper the immanent property of any state - to be an instrument of defense and attack.

'There is no deep state in Russia, it is all in sight, but there is a deep people.'

It is the '*deep people*' that constitutes an obstacle to the machinations of the elite - '*With its gigantic supermass, the deep people create an irresistible force of cultural gravity, which connects the nation and pulls (presses down) to the earth (to the native land) the elite, from time to time trying to soar cosmopolitanly.*' The essence of 'Putinism' is its capacity to hear the people:

'In the new system, all institutions are subordinated to the main task - confidential communication and interaction between the supreme ruler and citizens. Various branches of power converge to the personality of the leader, being considered a value not in themselves, but only to the extent that they provide a connection with him. In addition to them, informal methods of communication work bypassing formal structures and elite groups. And when stupidity, backwardness or corruption interfere with the lines of communication with the people, vigorous measures are taken to restore hearing.'

How does Dugin disagree with this? In his reply: '*It's time for a Super-Putin*' (geopolitika.ru, 16th Feb, 2019) he agrees that '*Putin saved Russia, hovering over the abyss, returned it to history. It is excellent.*' but continues:

'none of his successes have reached the point of irreversibility.'

'The modern political regime in Russia that has developed under Putin is a compromise. Compromise between all poles and the forces of the state and society. It is stable only because of Putin himself, who is a compromise - between patriotism and liberalism in the economy, between Eurasianism and Europeanism in international politics, between conservatism and progressivism in the sphere of ideas and values, between people and elites, between sovereignty and globalization, between 90s and non-90s (that is, "something else"). But this compromise is valid while Putin is there. It is intuitive and authoritarian, based on the manual control and constant adjustment of the course by Putin himself. It is not reflected in either the strategy or a project, it does not rely either on society as a whole or on the elites.'

Indeed,

'with all the criticism of the 90s, Putin left the main elements of the existing system intact. Constitution, elites, parliamentary parties, government structure, education and information system. On the whole, they remained the same, only by swearing to another ruler. They adjusted to Putin's personal patriotism, to his style, but were not systematically transformed into some intelligible and clearly stated idea.'

As for listening to the '*deep people*':

'The people, society in a broad sense, is a generally organic carrier of two main values: patriotism + social justice. The elite is on the exact opposite position: cosmopolitanism (Westernism) + freedom of large private capital. In the 90s, power as a whole was anti-people. Putin changed this formula somewhat by adopting patriotism, which the masses liked, but retaining liberalism in the economy, which was acceptable to the elites. Therefore, the people accepted Putin for patriotism, which was in short supply in the 90s, but retained their dislike for the elites and clearly regretted more and more about the complete absence of social justice in Putin's regime.'

In the essay on '*Neutralisation*' Dugin asks of Putin:

'Can he move on? After all, this requires a completely different strategy, a different style of power and, finally, a different political system. The compromise of implicit monarchism behind the façade of simulation democracy with many liberal compromises and combined with an unprincipled, immoral elite and a complete lack of social justice in society has been exhausted ...

'Maybe this is not Putin's task. But since in modern conditions he - and only he - possesses all the complete - transcendent! - power, then who, besides him? The rest were successfully neutralized.

'This is a very subtle point. And God forbid that we [fail to? - PB] survive this most difficult and turning point in our history.

'We need a new beginning of Russian statehood. Leviathan must be enlightened by the idea, must acquire a new ruling one - this time a moral one, that is, a truly aristocratic one! - the elite must become not a despotic mechanism of coercion and enslavement, but an instrument of the people themselves, freely and sovereignly making their dramatic and heroic path through history.'

Incidentally it shows a rather surprising insensitivity to biblical symbolism to call Russia, as the great land power, by the name of the great sea beast, '*Leviathan*'. Doubtless he has in mind Hobbes's *Leviathan* but Hobbes of course was English ... Maybe he has in mind Andrey Zvyagintsev's film of the same name in which the enormous rotting body of a whale serves as a symbol for the director's view of Putin's Russia.

ZEMSKY SOBOR

It is in the theoretical part of the *Katehon* website - Theory, *Zemsky Sobor*, Empire - that we would expect to find concrete ideas for this new development beyond what has been achieved by Putin. I've already commented on the '*katehon*'. The '*Zemsky Sobor*' - assembly of the land - was an institution established by Ivan IV ('the Terrible') and subsequently suppressed by Peter I ('the Great'). According to various accounts on the *Katehon* website it differed from the various councils of the boyars in that the peasantry was represented. It purported to represent the whole people though the introductory account '*About Zemsky Sobor*' does introduce the important qualification 'except serfs'. The nineteenth century slavophile, Ivan Sergeevich Aksakov (*Katehon*, 7th November 2020), rejects with indignation the suggestion that it bore any resemblance to the French Constituent Assembly of 1789:

'It was above all a free act of autocratic power, its prerogative, which naturally followed from the very essence of tsarist autocracy. The Russian tsar is not "the

first aristocrat of aristocrats”, as in England; not the “first nobleman”, as the French kings called themselves at the time (le premier gentilhomme du pays), but the first man of the Russian land, vested, for the good of the land, with the supreme state power. No class concept is associated with it; he is a representative of the universality of the zemstvo and the state. His interests are the interests of the whole people, and the stronger his power, the more it guarantees the masses of the people - the poor, orphans, defenseless - from the predominance of the rich, noble, endowed with all sorts of advantages (including “higher culture”), social classes closer to the throne.’

It had no legislative power and was simply the means by which the Tsar could hear the voice of the people. It was unthinkable that the pre-petrine Tsar would see it as a subversive force:

‘They would only open their eyes wide and ask in the most simple-hearted way: “But how can one rule otherwise? Will power decrease from advice? Power will not decrease, but light and truth will arrive, - and light and truth will arrive, so it will be to the king in honor, glory and a greater fortress. This is what our simple-minded kings would say; this was their point of view on their relationship to the land and the people - a point of view canceled by Peter I and replaced by him with the point of view of German absolutism or a police, all-encompassing state mechanism.’

When the Russian monarchy collapsed after the reign of Ivan, resulting in the Polish invasion and the destruction of Moscow, it was restored by a ‘Zemsky Sobor’ which, out of a rather dizzying array of possible candidates, chose Mikhail Romanov, whose successors would continue to Nicholas II (and included of course the much reviled Peter). It may be some equivalent of the 1613 Zemsky Sobor that the Katehon writers have in mind to establish the succession to Vladimir Putin and more importantly to his system of government. According to Dugin:

‘Surkov and in his person the ruling elite begins to introduce the project of “eternal Putinism”, that is, turning the status quo into an endless repetition of the same thing, in a kind of “Groundhog Day”. But it will not be a compromise, but a simulacrum of compromise, not Putin’s lively and sincere patriotism, albeit inconsistent and unsystematic, but his cyborg imitation. The new “Putin”, apparently, in the spirit of the advanced technologies with which the Russian government is raving, is supposed to be printed on a 3D printer.’

But Katehon is vague as to how the new Zemsky Sobor will perform its task. The closest I have found is in an article by Arkady Minakov, Professor in the Voronezh State University and Director of The Center for the Study of Conservatism (*‘Zemshchina’*, Katehon, 6th January 2021). He concludes what is still mainly a historical account both of the sixteenth/seventeenth century Sobors and the nineteenth century zemstvos:

‘Is it possible now the revival of the zemshchina? In fact, this is a question about the possibility of returning Russian civilization to its deepest foundations. It is impossible to stop it, and sooner or later a return to the traditional zemstvo system will become inevitable. The experience of history shows that the initial unit of local self-government (community) should not exceed 2-3 thousand people. Only

in such a limited “zemstvo space”, where everyone knows everyone, will election work be relatively effective.

‘Moreover, the election system in a large country should be phased: universal direct, secret and equal voting will remain only at the level of primary zemstvo associations, and then the zemstvo bodies will build themselves to the top, i.e. community (volost) vowels [sic, machine translation - PB] will elect district (county), district (county) - provincial, provincial - Zemsky Sobor. Of course, all living and competent forces of the country should be represented in these bodies - from church parishes to professional corporations’

It may be noted that this is very similar to the proposals of Alexander Solzhenitsyn who seems to be completely forgotten in these circles, perhaps because he wanted Russia to take a rest from the great historical adventures beloved of Katehon. But he too believed that democracy in the sense of direct elections in which everyone participates, should only operate in small communities where everyone could know everyone. He greatly admired the local community politics he encountered both in Switzerland and North America, arguing that the first task for Russia was to restore the viability of small rural communities.

EMPIRE

Despite their enthusiasm for the war in Ukraine the Katehon writers don’t give the impression of wanting an expansionist Russian empire. It is more a matter of redefining Russia. No longer a *‘Russian federation’* but a *‘Russian Empire.’* The difference is that a federation is a purely secular political structure put together as a matter of practical convenience whereas an *‘Empire’* has a sacred character. In an essay - *From Archeomodern to Empire* (Katehon, 8th August 2022) Dugin says that:

‘European Modern - at least since Montesquieu, and in England even earlier - has long set itself the goal of depriving the authorities of any hint of sacredness. The separation of powers and the constant rotation of the ruling class serve exactly this - the dispersal of the highest center of decision-making among different and regularly changing their composition of the ruling instances. Of course, such a democracy did not achieve its goals in the West itself, stopping the dispersion of power at the level of the oligarchic class, within which a rotation takes place, from time to time including “new blood” - but only those who are ready to play by the rules of the existing elite.’ [apologies for the machine translation but I think the sense is clear enough]

In Russia the ruling elite attempted something similar but it didn’t work because of the deeply ingrained instinct of the Russian people to see government as a sacred function:

‘Until 1917, such sacralization was based on the theory of Katekhon, the Retainer, borrowed from the Byzantine Empire and transferred to Russia (Moscow-Third Rome) at the end of the 15th century. But even after 1917, having changed, this tradition did not disappear anywhere, but spread to the new communist rulers - the “red monarchs”, which led to an almost “religious” cult of Lenin and the glorification of Stalin’s personality.

‘For all his weakness and dependence on the oligarchs, even Yeltsin was something of a “liberal tsar.” And with the advent of Putin and by virtue of his really decisive patriotic reforms and - let’s note, completely against his will - the autocratic principle unfolded in full force. The people want

only Putin and no one else, and for this they are ready to change the Constitution and everything else. Putin is the Supreme Ruler, the savior of Russia. This is how the archaic core perceives it.'

As a result he complains that Russia is now suffering from 'a disease, a kind of social schizophrenia:

'One and the same society realizes itself in a diametrically opposite way. Outwardly and from above it is a modern Western-style liberal democracy, from within and from below it is a world power with the will to revive the Empire, with a sacred Supreme Ruler at the head, with traditional values and with a conservative psychology that rejects "progressive" Western attitudes (LGBT+, ultrafeminism etc.) as perversions.'

But how can the character of the sacred be restored not just *de facto* in the instincts of the Russian people (if we accept Dugin's thesis) but also *de jure*? Obviously the Church has a role to play and the Empire section of the website includes an article on the 'Symphony' - equality of powers between Church and State that was supposed to reign in Constantinople and in pre-petrine Russia (in fact the power of Emperor and Tsar in both cases was overwhelmingly preponderant). It is often pointed out that only a small proportion of nominally Orthodox Russians actually go regularly to Church (they do all tend to turn up at Easter) so Dugin make a point of saying that anyone who defines him or her self as Orthodox is Orthodox as far as he is concerned whether they go to church or not.

Dugin outlines several paths towards the establishment of a sacred Empire in his article '*Empire and Practice*' (18th May 2022). He begins by insisting that it requires a miracle:

'Every Empire has a supernatural origin. If this is not a miracle from God, then this is the "black miracle" of the devil. People are not able to create an Empire. It is always something sacred. No miracle - no Empire.'

He then outlines several more 'practical' paths, among them:

(2) Development of a political theology within the church. Here he draws particular attention to the glorification of the 'Holy Royal Martyrs' - Nicholas II and his family, initially within the emigré Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia but subsequently adopted by the Moscow Patriarchate: '*no other normative teaching on the political theology of Orthodoxy was created in the MP ROC itself during the Soviet period (and could not be after the failure of the Renovationists). Therefore, the Orthodox monarchy is the only normative model of Russian Orthodox Christianity. Noisy and stubborn "church liberals" do not count, they are only "foreign agents"*.' The reference to the 'Renovationists' is interesting. Dugin almost seems to hint that their attempt in the 1920s to reconcile Orthodoxy and Soviet Communism could have worked, or at least established a '*normative teaching on the political theology of Orthodoxy*.' Dugin, incidentally, claims to be an 'Old Believer'. What else could he be?

(4) Restoration of a dynasty. '*Here, the Kirillovich line has the most grounds, no matter how they are treated today in Russia*.' [The monarchist website <https://tsarnicholas.org> rules the Kirillovichs out on the grounds of collaboration with Hitler. Apparently the Kirillovich heir has recently married, but his wife does not belong to any royal family.

According to <https://tsarnicholas.org/> 'In January 2019, the RU_ROYALTY blog reported that Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, had made a formal request to the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, to change the law of the succession to the Russian throne, according to which the children of a representative of the dynasty who entered into an unequal marriage would be deprived of their rights to the throne.' This seems a very unlikely path to the re-establishment of a sacred monarchy but it would be interesting to know what Malofeev thinks.]

(5.) An empire can be created as real military successes and expansion of the zone of control. Then the inner power becomes evident. The very gathering of Russian lands - relying both on military force and on the economy, diplomacy and culture, strengthens the imperial potential. [So maybe I'm wrong in suggesting that the Katehon writers 'don't give the impression of wanting an expansionist Russian empire.' - PB]

(6.) The empire can live at the level of the people's will. In this case, the Empire is not established from the top down, but will be demanded by the people - from the bottom up. This is the zemstvo scenario. The Zemsky Sobor makes a historic decision for the Empire to exist and restores the monarchy. The modern cult of Stalin, widespread among the people, from a sociological point of view, is nothing but a form of "monarchism from below", a request for the Tsar.

(7) As in the case of Julius Caesar in Rome, the original 'Tsar', a decision on the part of a strong ruler.

He concludes: '*If the Empire is our goal (and if it is not a goal, then we are lost), we now know what to pray for, what to fight for and what to do*.' If I've understood rightly the reason Russia is lost if it doesn't become a sacred Empire is that the only alternative is some form of liberalism which can only be destructive because it cannot give the Russian people the faith that is needed to hold together the enormous territory that they occupy. This of course is all at a fairly abstract, generalised level. Perhaps in a future article I will descend more to particulars, the particular shape of 'Russia' and its population(s).

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Setting of the Sun at Chanak (1922)

By Pat Walsh

The “*Chanak incident*”, which occurred a century ago during September/October 1922, is virtually written out of British history – or referenced as a mere incident of no consequence. It is mentioned in the downfall of Lloyd George’s Coalition Government, with the Carlton Club and 1922 Committee, but only in passing, without explanation of its wider significance. There are clues to what happened in the writings of some of the participants, such as Churchill’s, but the impression given is that the whole affair, including the British instigation of the Greek adventure that preceded it, and did for the Greek population of Anatolia, is one that is best forgotten.

So let us take a look at one of the most significant forgotten aspects of Britain’s Great War on Ottoman Empire.

British policy to impose a punitive treaty on the Ottomans had led to the Greek tragedy in Anatolia because the puppet government under Venizélos, installed in Athens through Allied bayonets, was enlisted as a catspaw to bring the Turks to heel after the Armistice at Mudros. They were presented with the town of Smyrna first and then the Greeks, encouraged by Lloyd George, advanced across Anatolia toward where the Turkish democracy had re-established itself, at Ankara, after it had been suppressed by the British occupation in Istanbul. Britain was using the Greeks, and their desire for a new Byzantium in Anatolia, as a catspaw to get the Turks to submit to the Treaty of Sèvres, and the destruction of not only the Ottoman State but Turkey itself.

This was because after its Great War Britain was virtually bankrupt, and in hock to the United States, and the promise had been made by Lloyd George to demobilize the troops immediately in order to win a snap election he called just after the armistice. So the Greek Army was needed to do the imposing of the Treaty of Sèvres which British Imperial forces were unable to undertake themselves.

But the Greek Army perished just short of Ankara after being skillfully manoeuvred into a position by Mustafa Kemal in which their lines were stretched. And the 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.

After the liberation of Smyrna the Turkish objective was the recovery of Istanbul from the British, and Eastern Thrace from the Greeks. But Mustafa Kemal found his way barred by British forces stationed at Chanak on the Asian side of the Dardanelles. A stand-off ensued with something of the character of High Noon.

There is a book about The Chanak Affair by David Walder (then a Tory M.P), which tries to explain it away. But it is written in 1969 when the British Empire was no more – or had not been re-imagined yet as Global Britain.

The Chanak Affair is not written with the purpose of explaining the significance of Chanak for the Empire but rather of putting a gloss over it. It explains Chanak as a kind of triumph of British reasonableness over momentary British recklessness. British reasonableness had become the dominant idea by 1969, particularly amongst the Heathite Tories who were attempting to make the necessary post-Imperial readjustment and point Britain in a different

direction to the past. But, of course, the Empire was not built, or could not have been built, on reasonableness. And it was often expanded through recklessness of catastrophic proportions, and lately the buccaneering spirit has been evident again in British Foreign Policy, with even a return to the Straits in contemplation.

Chief among the reckless of 1922 was, of course, Churchill. The arrival of Mustafa Kemal’s Turkish forces at Chanak transformed Churchill’s attitude to the Turks. Churchill was a fierce anti-Bolshevik who wanted to settle swiftly after the armistices in 1918 with the Germans and Ottomans and employ them against the Communist menace. However, as Lord Beaverbrook later noted: “*Lloyd George was a great partisan of Greek imperial pretensions. He believed the Greeks were a strong people, prolific, and capable of establishing and maintaining a domination of the Eastern Mediterranean.*” Lloyd George’s view, according to his secretary/mistress was that “*A new Greek Empire will be founded, friendly to Britain and it will help all our interests in the East. He is perfectly convinced he is right over this, and is willing to stake everything on it.*” (Lord Beaverbrook, *The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George*, pp.152-3)

Churchill had previously advised Lloyd George against his Greek adventure as military madness and argued for a placating of the Turks to ensure British interests in the region but he now reversed his position when he smelt the possibility of war. He viewed Mustafa Kemal’s challenge to Britain as one that could not be backed down to without losing the prestige necessary to keep the lesser races of the world in order. He did not wish to see the tremendous aura of invincibility that Britain had won at great cost in the war surrendered to those it had beaten. “Chanak had now become a point of great moral significance to the prestige of the Empire,” Churchill warned the Government. And he stated at a Cabinet meeting that if the Turks took Gallipoli and Istanbul/Constantinople the Great War, and its great sacrifices of blood and treasure, would have been in vain.

Lloyd George, himself, described the Straits at the same meeting as “*the most important strategic position in the world,*” the lack of possession of which “had added two years to the war.”

So the British Cabinet decided to resist the Turks by force and determined this should not be a bluff. In the meantime Britain began to scramble about for suitable allies that would do the bulk of the fighting for them, to allay the costs and prevent a new call-up of Englishmen to the colours. Suggestions included France, Serbia, Rumania and Bulgaria and, particularly, the nations of the British Commonwealth/Empire.

Churchill was asked to draft a telegram to the White Dominions on 16th September asking for support; and then to prepare a press statement announcing this support (since this was an Empire/Commonwealth requirement it was taken for granted).

However, in his excitement at the prospect of a new war, Churchill forgot about the time difference between Britain and the White Dominions and released his press statement too early. As a result the Prime Ministers of the Dominions embarrassingly read of the Imperial call to arms in their

Sunday papers before they were even given the courtesy of being asked for their agreement.

Here is part of Churchill's extravagant communiqué – the declaration of a statesman who saw himself directing the forces of an Empire at the pinnacle of its power which would have no truck with any defiance of its will:

“The approach of the Kemalist forces to Constantinople and the Dardanelles and the demands put forward by the Ankara government... if assented to, involves nothing less than the loss of the whole results of the victory over Turkey in the last war... That the Allies should be driven out of Constantinople by the forces of Mustapha Kemal would be an event of the most disastrous character, producing, no doubt far-reaching reactions through all Moslem countries, and... through all states defeated in the late war, who would be profoundly encouraged by the spectacle of the undreamed of successes that have attended the efforts of the comparatively weak Turkish forces... The reappearance of the Turk on the European shore would provoke a situation of the gravest character throughout the Balkans, and very likely lead to bloodshed on a large scale in regions already cruelly devastated.” (The Chanak Affair, pp.224-5)

Churchill could not have made it any clearer – the defeat of Mustafa Kemal and Turkey was life or death for the British Empire.

Lloyd George believed a war would save his skin:

“The Conservative Party and their Coalition allies would be united at last. United in a war effort which always brought a united front in the Government, in the House of Commons and in the country.” (Lord Beaverbrook, *The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George*, p.163)

The Prime Minister calculated that England would be at peace with itself by engaging in war, its most unifying state.

France remained unimpressed with the British call to arms at Chanak, despite four visits by Curzon to Paris. Convinced that the British were leading them into another war, the French and Italians decided to withdraw their forces from Chanak. The other European ‘allies’ also declined and the response from the Empire was embarrassingly lukewarm (only New Zealand offered to help) despite the moral blackmail Churchill resorted to about “the sanctity of our graves at Gallipoli” (to which E.M. Forster wrote a spirited reply). And the British public and press expressed widespread astonishment that they might be going back to War given Lloyd George's election pledges of rapid demobilisation, and so soon after the “war to end all wars.”

The alliance between England and France which had been formed in 1904 to deal with Germany started to become “a mockery and a delusion” as soon as Germany had been beaten. Both countries had had differing reasons for the Entente Cordiale. France had been encouraged to join with England because of irredentist considerations concerned with Alsace-Lorraine. Britain had looked upon the alliance as an exercise in the readjustment of the Balance of Power Policy to deal with Germany.

In 1914 Britain had aimed to destroy Germany's commerce and capture large areas of territory from the Ottoman Empire. This process began to involve the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, which would mean that the Russian and French Allies would also pick up a cut of the territory in the area. So the object, from Britain's point of view, was to make sure that she maximised her gains and minimised those of her Allies – her future rivals in the new Balance of Power.

But one of her Allies was counted out during the War, before the knock-out blow could be landed on Germany.

Russia collapsed and then treacherously reneged on her part in the effort against Germany, and, was taken over by Bolsheviks. So she was absent when the vultures gathered around the carcass of the Ottoman Empire.

However, France remained, and Britain could not conclude the Peace entirely in the way she wanted. And both had to take care of the interloper, America, which had rescued the Allied cause and whose President had issues with old style European Imperialism.

During the course of the war France had made the greater sacrifice in terms of men and materials and she was determined to protect herself from Germany in the future by establishing a Rhine frontier – with the German land on the east bank forming a buffer state between France and Germany. Marshall Foch, the Commander of the Allies, argued that France was as entitled to this security, as Britain had been when she set up the Belgian buffer state in the 1830s to keep Antwerp from any major European power. Clemenceau, the French Premier, who had experienced the debacle of 1871, concurred with this view. But despite setting up buffer states in other parts of Europe, this was one buffer state that Britain was intent on obstructing, to facilitate Germany's future resurrection.

A month after the Armistice with Germany Clemenceau met with Lloyd George in London. The French understood that they had received a British commitment to supporting French requirements in Europe, in relation to Germany, in return for deferring to England's desires in the Middle East. However, when it came to the bit, Britain refused to allow France to gain the security of a Rhine frontier against Germany, despite a degree of acquiescence in the Rhineland existing for it. Britain was still operating the Balance of Power policy and France was replacing Germany as the object of it. And the presence of a strong French State amongst all the small buffer states in central Europe that had been created, and which the French wanted to add to, with the Rhineland and Bavaria, was unacceptable to London.

England blocked the French requirement for a Rhineland frontier with the argument that the British Empire had fought the War for self-determination and the Rhenish people were undoubtedly German. And the French could not counter this argument with reference to the Middle East, where Britain had showed no respect for such principles, because the Mandate system only applied to the backward races who could not, as yet, supposedly govern themselves. Britain had an answer for everything it did, as usual.

The French became very disillusioned with the peace that Britain arranged in 1919-20. Whilst the British imposed a much harsher peace on Germany than the Germans had on the French in 1871 with the scuppering of the Kaiser's fleet and the appropriation of the cream of the merchant navy England refused to countenance French demands for the security of their land frontiers.

The French had their own interests in the Near East and their businessmen had greatly availed of the Capitulations which the Ottoman Sultan granted to foreign capitalists. This led the majority view within the French Government to be against the destruction of the Ottoman Empire at the start of the War. But once the British had shown their intention of breaking up and colonising as much of it as possible the French were left with no choice but to grab their share. France had historic links with the Syrian vilayets, which also contained substantial Christian Maronite communities, so she demanded this slice of the Ottoman Empire. As early as 1917 Lloyd George had tried to make a secret deal with the Ottomans, through the arms dealer, Basil Zaharoff, which

would have given Britain all of Mesopotamia, Palestine and Arabia and cut the French out of Syria. The Sykes-Picot Agreement had been dished by Britain when their armies occupied Damascus. Then, according to the French Press, a secret agreement was made between the British and the Sultan with the Sultan promising to support a British mandate over Turkey and control of the Straits in return for material aid against his nationalist opponents. This involved excluding the French from the territory around Syria which Britain had agreed in the Sykes-Picot arrangement should go to France. The French were concerned at these secret British manoeuvres they became aware of and decided to cut a deal with Mustafa Kemal himself.

For England in 1900, Germany was becoming the new France, replacing France as the main enemy to organise an alliance against – to redress the Balance of Power. But now that Germany was defeated, France “was eager to step into Germany’s shoes,” which were, of course, really French shoes all along! And that was undoubtedly the truth of the matter – France (and Russia) had been the object of the British Balance of Power for centuries. Germany had only stepped in France’s shoes for a decade or so!

Under the Sykes-Picot Agreement that divided the Ottoman Empire up between the Entente, France had been awarded a vast zone including Cilicia, East Central Anatolia, and “Western Kurdistan”. This award had been confirmed by the Treaty of Sèvres. But the French found themselves incapable of holding this territory against Mustafa Kemal’s forces. So France cashed in its chips with the Turks, ceding all its spoils to the loser in the War, in an agreement of 20th October 1921. And she gave up a large amount of surplus weaponry to the Turks, including some very handy artillery (the ’75s), which proved very useful to Mustafa Kemal in dealing with the Greek and Armenian pawns of England in Anatolia.

When the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Henry Wilson met his good friend and colleague, Field-Marshal Foch in Paris, in October 1921, the Frenchman told the Briton:

“Pauvre Angleterre, pauvre Angleterre... You break your written word. You cower under the (Irish) assassin and the Jew. Your friendship is no longer worth seeking. We must go elsewhere.” (Major-General C.E. Callwell, Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson, His Life and Diaries, Vol. 2, p.310. Note: Sir Henry Wilson was assassinated by the London IRA less than a year later)

So Britain, who was operating a Balance of Power policy against France in Europe, suffered a pay back in the East as the Balance of Power manoeuvre was turned against her by the Turks and the French, not to mention the Bolsheviks.

The Turkish forces now surrounded the British Empire’s force at Chanak. The British Cabinet sent an order to General Harrington, the commander of British forces there, to give the advancing Turkish forces an hour to withdraw and if not to engage them. Large reinforcements were promised to him to back up the threat. But Harrington wisely decided, on his own initiative, despite being warned that he was purely a military man who should do his duty as instructed, to not deliver the ultimatum. He then entered into talks with Mustafa Kemal to diffuse the situation. And the British Press, right across the political spectrum treated Harrington as a hero for doing so.

The *Irish News* of Belfast recognised the significance of what had happened:

“THE GREAT CLIMB-DOWN

A remarkable document has been addressed to the ‘National Assembly’ of the Kemalists by ‘the three Allied Governments.’ Its text is published elsewhere; it might be abbreviated, without altering its meaning, into a few simple lines – thus :-

‘Please, good and kind Mr. Turk, come into a conference with us: take Thrace, Constantinople, Adrianople – anything you want; only be merciful enough, out of the fullness of your charity and in accordance with our humble request, to refrain from sending your armies against the English troops at Chanak until these troops can be withdrawn without utter discredit to England in the eyes of her Mohammedan ‘subjects’ O, Turk, pray hear and heed our appeal, and you shall be brother in the League of Nations!’

The wisdom of yielding to the Turk after he had beaten an undisciplined and disheartened horde of Greeks is a matter for the Powers directly concerned. Nothing can be gained by discussing the point now. But, for the sake of whatever little regard for Truth and Common Honesty that has been left to the world by its rulers, let there be no attempt to disguise or hide the simple fact that a handful of the Turks who were signally defeated in the Great War have come out of the recesses of Asia Minor into the borders of Europe and terrified the ‘triumphant’ Western Allies into the most abject surrender in modern history.” (September 25th 1922)

“MUSTAPHA KEMAL

There is no valid reason for Turkish aggressiveness... now that General Harrington’s masters have surrendered to the Oriental gentleman who is, like Julius Caesar, Brian Boromhe, Napoleon, and other great men of history, both a soldier and a statesman...let a tribute be paid to the personality of Mustapha Kemal. He is a real leader. He knew all along what he wanted. He went the right way about getting it. Circumstances were largely on his side, but few men could have utilised even favourable circumstances more dexterously or effectively. As an individual he deserves the success which he has achieved. He has resurrected the Turks, exalted the Bolsheviks, and finally smashed the Western European Entente.” (September 27th 1922)

“TRYING TO AVOID WAR?

The Turks have graciously consented to withdraw a little way from Erenkeuy, a small fort nearer to the Dardanelles entrance than Chanak and about 10 miles from the position occupied by the British. That is paraded as a great concession. But they are still moving quietly toward Ismid... only 50 miles from Constantinople. Ismid would be a natural base for a Turkish advance against the great city wrested from the Greeks... But the pathway to a sort of compromise is in the process of construction... Mustapha Kemal will win... His victory will mark the beginning of the end of the British Empire in the East...” (October 2nd 1922)

The Prime Minister, Lloyd George, was a Liberal who headed the powerful Coalition Government made up of mostly Conservative Ministers. The Conservatives had a majority in Parliament, which had been sidelined during the War, and wished to reassert itself. Discontent was growing among the backbenchers over Lloyd George’s foreign adventures and failure to tackle the problems of unemployment and economic depression at home. There was a “strong anti-semitic feeling” because “*far too many Jews have been placed in prominent positions by the present Government*” (Letter from George Younger to Austen Chamberlain, 10.6.1921, *The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George*, p.268). Many were in favour of Imperial Tariff

and saw Lloyd George as a Liberal Free Trader obstructing the policy. The Prime Minister's Irish Treaty, though seen as necessary, opened up further antagonism with Diehard Unionists during 1921-22.

The Chanak debacle was the event that drew together the majority Conservatives who wished to withdraw support for the Coalition and re-establish the party division in British politics. To head off the revolt the Coalition leaders conceived a plan to call an election before the Tory backbench could collect itself at the Conservative Party Conference in November. The idea was to use up all the Tory election funds in a Coalition campaign, thus installing the same government in power for another five years.

But the Coalition leaders miscalculated. Bonar Law, who was seriously ill with throat cancer at the time, was persuaded to come back from retirement to lead the opposition at a Carlton Club meeting and put himself forward as an alternative Prime Minister. He penned a famous letter to The Times in which he said that Britain could not police the world alone. That captured the public mood.

Beaverbrook recounted:

"The people by this time were against war. The Government had failed completely in their efforts to stir up a war spirit. They could not engender any enthusiasm for an adventure in the Near East. It is possible that if the Cabinet had persisted, some headway would have been made in the direction of securing public approval but, as soon as Bonar Law raised the standard of peace, around which people could rally, the whole enterprise was at an end. They could unfurl the banners and beat the drums. But the nation would not march. Lloyd George accepted the situation. He yielded to Bonar Law's warning." (Lord Beaverbrook, *The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George*, p.169)

A by-election result in which an independent Conservative candidate trounced a Coalition Conservative, and the Liberals and Labour as well, galvanised resistance to Lloyd George. A hesitant Bonar Law finally steeled himself to go to the Carlton Club meeting as alternative leader with the message that Conservative unity required the termination of the Coalition. He won the day and became Prime Minister, calling a General Election that the Conservatives won with a healthy majority.

The 1922 Committee does not, as is sometimes supposed, originate in the 19th October 1922 Carlton Club meeting in which Conservative MPs successfully demanded that the party withdraw from the Coalition Government and which triggered the 1922 General Election. The committee was formed following the election, in April 1923. But its name clearly denotes the power of Tory backbenchers in unseating a very powerful Prime Minister and government in 1922.

Britain suffered a change of government as a result of Chanak that was much more than a replacement of an administration. It represented a moral collapse, or at least the start of one, of great significance. From this point onwards great uncertainty crept into the conducting of Britain's foreign affairs and those of Empire. The Empire that thought itself as being at the pinnacle of its power, having vanquished its German Carthage, found that it had overextended itself and was caught between a rock and a hard place. It could not govern its Empire purposefully but also could not let its subjected peoples go. It began to be seen as a paper tiger by upstart adventurists, like Mussolini and Hitler, who built up their reputations by engaging in brinkmanship with it over its balance of power game – a game it no longer had the skill or will to play with authority. And instead of being a source

of stability and constancy in a new world rid of evil it turned out to be an erratic agent of further catastrophe.

Churchill called the new administration that followed the Coalition's fall "*a Government of the Second eleven.*" Lord Birkenhead described the new Ministry as "*second class intellects whose mediocrity frightened him.*" And Bonar Law's short premiership was followed by more mediocrity over the next decade and a half of Baldwin/MacDonald governments of the "Second elevens."

During this period all the successful Treaties dictated by Britain to the vanquished began to be undone by those who sensed the decline of the British Imperial will. And Britain itself blundered about in the world in an increasingly purposeless and erratic manner that ultimately led to the catastrophe of 1939-45.

The *Irish News* of Belfast was right – it was witnessing at Chanak the start of the setting of the sun on "the Empire on which the sun never sets."

Continued from p. 35

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NATO's wars on Yugoslavia and Libya

By David Morrison

NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg never ceases telling us that it is a purely defensive alliance and that Russia had nothing to fear from its advance eastwards after the end of the Cold War.

He seems to have forgotten that it made war on Yugoslavia in 1999, mounting a 98-day bombing campaign, as a result of which over 500 civilians were killed. This action was not a defensive response to one of its member states being attacked by Yugoslavia, nor was its military action endorsed in advance by the Security Council. As such, NATO's action constituted aggression against the state of Yugoslavia.

At that time, Yugoslavia consisted of two republics – Serbia and Montenegro. Kosovo was an integral part of Serbia, but with an overwhelming Albanian majority that favoured separation from Serbia, and a Serb minority that opposed separation. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA or UCK) was engaged in a military campaign for an independent state and Yugoslav armed forces (police and army) were trying to suppress that campaign, in the course of which it was alleged they engaged in widespread killing and ethnic cleansing of Albanians, bordering on genocide. The ostensible reason for NATO's bombing was to prevent or at least reduce this.

One fact alone explodes the myth of widespread killing of Albanian civilians 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.”

Widespread killing and ethnic cleansing of Albanians began with a vengeance after the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia (including Kosovo) began on 24 March 1999 – in other words, NATO intervention caused a humanitarian catastrophe, with Kosovans pouring over the borders into Albania and Macedonia.

Prior to the bombing, the Yugoslav Government had been summoned to a conference in Rambouillet in February 1999. With the threat of NATO bombing hanging over its head, it accepted proposals for the near independence of Kosovo within the Republic of Serbia, the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo and a NATO force in Kosovo to supervise implementation.

However, the Government balked at signing Appendix B of the proposals which laid down the rules for the operation of the NATO implementation force. This allowed the force

to occupy not just Kosovo but the whole of Yugoslavia: here's what Clause 8 of it said:

“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.”

Understandably, Yugoslavia refused to sign up to this total surrender of sovereignty to NATO – and, as a result, it was bombed by NATO. Had this clause been absent from the proposed agreement, it is likely that Yugoslavia would have signed.

Henry Kissinger's said of the text Yugoslavia was asked to sign:

“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.”

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

NATO troops (mostly US and UK) entered Kosovo after the agreement but, according to Amnesty International, “by the end of August 1999, an estimated 235,000 Serbs and other minorities had left Kosovo and those who remained were concentrated in enclaves and pockets, frequently guarded by KFOR”.

The agreement that brought the bombing to a halt was enshrined in Security Council Resolution 1244, 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?

Today, 26 out of the 30 NATO member states have recognised Kosovo as an independent state. Only Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain have not done so.

NATO's war on Libya

Despite the humanitarian catastrophe provoked by the NATO military intervention in Yugoslavia, it has come to be regarded as a great success. In April 2011, when military intervention in Libya was being contemplated, Labour Party leader Ed Miliband was not alone in pointing to it as a successful humanitarian intervention which had saved thousands of lives. On the basis of this falsehood, he supported NATO military intervention in Libya.

The article How NATO's "humanitarian intervention" in Kosovo led to a humanitarian catastrophe reproduced below was my attempt to refute this falsehood at the time.

The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee produced a report into NATO's military intervention in Libya, which said:

"The result was political and economic collapse, inter-militia and inter-tribal warfare, humanitarian and migrant crises, widespread human rights violations, the spread of Gaddafi regime weapons across the region and the growth of ISIL in North Africa."

NATO can claim credit for this success.

David Morrison
20 August 2022

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

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 balked 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 March 1999, when the mission was evacuated because of the impending 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 Resolution 1244 [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.

David Morrison

April 2011

References: see page 29

The Great Fraud Of 1914-18

By Pat Walsh
Athol Books 2014

The Great War of 1914 was Britain's Great War. But it should also be called Britain's Great Fraud on Ireland and the world. When Britain encouraged and then entered the European war that was taking shape in August 1914 it made it into a Great War. It was Great Britain that put the Great in the Great War. That is to say that without Great Britain's participation in it there would have been no Great War. In entering the European war Britain stated its aims in grand universal terms that were idealistic in the extreme. These aims were not only idealistic and unachievable but they were fraudulent.

The objective of the Great Fraud was to show to the world that Britain was fighting a good war against an evil that had to be vanquished. The war was proclaimed as being for "civilisation against the Barbarian", for "democracy" against "Prussianism". And it was also supposedly a "war for small nations" for "poor little Belgium" or for "gallant Serbia" and for a host of other long forgotten things.

But what it came down to was a pulverising of Germany and the taking of its trade and markets in what was a traditional Balance of Power war catastrophically invested with a great moral mission. The Fraud that was perpetrated on Ireland and the world, concerning the character of the war Britain proclaimed itself to be fighting, was produced in order to convince any doubters, at home and abroad, about the rightfulness of it.

These reasons were also later useful in enlisting the cannon fodder necessary to see the job through. And when Britain's Great War did not prove great enough to achieve its objectives and the United States had to be procured as an ally to complete the job the Great Fraud was both perpetuated and enhanced. A massive propaganda effort was launched that not only coloured the settlement of the war to the detriment of Europe and beyond but also created the myths that mystify understanding of it to this day.

And so vast armies were recruited for the waging of the war and millions of people were killed in it, including tens of thousands of Irishmen who enlisted in the British Army to fight, inspired by the professed ideals of establishing 'Democracy' and the 'Rights of Small Nations' universally, and especially in Ireland.

Britain's Great War and the Home Rulers decision to take part in it had momentous consequences for Ireland. Out of it came the fall of the Home Rule Party and of 'Imperial Ireland' as a result of Britain failing to win the quick victory that was expected. As well, in revulsion against the murderous British swindle, there came the rise of the Irish democracy and the Irish Republic.

Ireland's Great War On Turkey, 1914 - 24

By Pat Walsh
Athol Books 2009

Ireland's Great War on Turkey is largely a forgotten event in Irish history. That is despite the fact that it was probably the most significant thing Ireland ever did in the world. That war lasted from 1914 until 1924—when the Irish Free State ratified the Treaty of Lausanne and finally, along with the rest of the British Empire, made peace with the Turks. It made the Middle East (including Palestine and Iraq) what it is today, and had the catastrophic effects on the Moslem world that persist to the present.

Ireland's part in the Great War on Turkey was an embarrassment to Republican Ireland and its historians and the details of the War became forgotten. The more recent historians of a revisionist disposition and the Remembrance commemorators have also refrained from remembering it, for other reasons.

This book, the first history of Ireland's War on Turkey, explains why the British Empire really made war on the Ottoman Empire and why Irishmen found themselves part of the invasion force it sent to Gallipoli. It describes the forgotten political and military assault launched on neutral Greece and the devastating effect this ultimately had on the Greek people across the Balkans and Asia Minor. It explains the reasons for the establishment of Palestine and Iraq and why the United States was repelled from the League of Nations by the behaviour of the British Empire in the conquered Ottoman territories after the War.

It concludes on a positive note, describing the great achievement of Ataturk in leading the Turkish nation to independence from the Imperialist Powers. This was an event that Republican Ireland could only marvel at, from the confines of the Treaty and the British Empire—an Empire whose demise Ataturk set in motion through the successful Turkish War of Independence.

Lord Hankey: How We Planned The Great War

By Pat Walsh
Problems Of Communism Committee
2015

Lord Maurice Hankey gave unparalleled service to the State he served over more than three decades. He was much more than just an Imperial Senior Civil Servant. It would be no exaggeration to say that he kept the British State together over a generation. The Supreme Command (1961) by Hankey, though largely ignored today, is the most complete inside description of Britain's Great War on Germany. It contains details of the planning for that war by the person who oversaw it, coordinated it and put it into operation from August 1914.

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