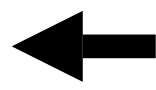
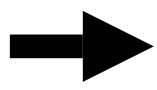
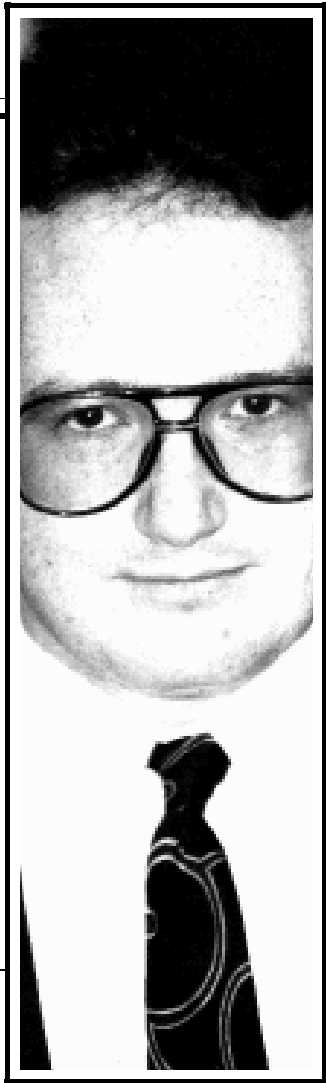




THE CASE FOR A NON-INTERVENTIONIST BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

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FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY

THE CASE FOR A NON-INTERVENTIONIST BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

DAVID BOTSFORD

In December 1998, the United States and Britain carried out an unprovoked and illegal bombing raid on Iraq, supposedly on the grounds that that country possessed weapons of mass destruction. The raid followed years of sanctions (that is, of economic warfare), which are estimated by the United Nations to have caused the death of some 500,000 Iraqis, mainly children, through lack of food and medical supplies. In a television interview, Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State, justified this loss of life, saying that it was a price worth paying. In March 1999, Nato began a series of unprovoked and illegal air strikes on Yugoslavia, claiming that the Serbs were committing atrocities against Kosovan Albanians. These air strikes have intensified Serb repression and caused a flood of Albanian refugees, some of whom have themselves been killed by Nato bombing. At the time of writing, Nato is considering a land invasion of Yugoslavia. Tony Blair claims that

This is a conflict we are fighting not for territory but for values, for a new internationalism where the brutal repression of whole ethnic groups will no longer be tolerated, for a world where those responsible for such crimes have nowhere to hide.

He continues:

We are fighting for a world where dictators are no longer able to visit horrific punishments on their own peoples in order to stay in power.¹

A statement of the libertarian case for a non-interventionist British foreign policy could hardly be more timely.

THE INTERNATIONAL RULE OF LAW

As part of his vast contribution to the post-war revival of classical liberalism, the late Professor F. A. Hayek, Nobel Laureate in economics, emphasised that the rule of law, that is, predictability as to what the government is going to do in given circumstances, is a central feature of a free society.² To extend that principle from the national to the international sphere, a world in which the rule of law prevails between nations is likely to be more peaceful and stable, and probably less repressive, than one in which states arbitrarily take it upon themselves to intervene in the internal affairs of other nations. A small nation which believes that it might be attacked by a powerful state which has taken a dislike to its domestic policies is likely to take precautionary measures such as increasing its arms spending and repressing dissidents who may be suspected of sympathy for the aggressor.

The principles of international law were first formulated by the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius, who opened his *De jure belli ac pacis* (1625) by denouncing the “license in making war” which he observed “of which even barbarous nations would have been ashamed”.³ In the 18th century, behind the flowery diplomatic protocol and the conventions of “civilised warfare”, each nation shrewdly advanced its own

self-interest, but Europe in the Age of Reason knew almost nothing of the massacres and devastation which had accompanied the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries. British diplomacy at that time aimed to preserve a “balance of power” in Continental Europe by building up a coalition of states against any power that threatened to dominate the Continent.

The period after the defeat of Napoleon was the zenith of the influence in Britain of classical liberalism, which taught that happiness, prosperity and human improvement were best served by reducing the role of the state to the minimum necessary to maintain law and order, justice and defence, and giving individual liberty the widest possible freedom. The doctrine of free trade held that international peace and prosperity would best be promoted by the abolition of tariffs and other forms of protectionism, so that goods could be freely bought and sold across borders.

Classical liberals argued that the adoption of *laissez-faire* at home and free trade abroad should lead to a repudiation of military intervention in the internal affairs of other nations. After all, if it was a bad thing for the state to intervene in domestic affairs, surely it was equally bad to intervene in foreign affairs, which are, after all, merely the domestic affairs of other countries.

The classical liberal politician Richard Cobden asked rhetorically in 1843:

Free Trade, what is it? Why, breaking down the barriers that separate nations; those barriers behind which nestle the feelings of pride, revenge, hatred and jealousy which every now and then break their bonds and deluge whole countries with blood; those feelings which nourish the poison of war and conquest, which assert that without conquest we can have no trade, which foster that lust for conquest and dominion which sends forth your warrior chiefs to sanction devastation through other lands.⁴

He called for “as little intercourse as possible between Governments, as much connection as possible between the nations of the world.”⁵ In 1846 he told John Bright, another advocate of free trade, that he “had always had an instinctive monomania against this system of foreign interference, protocolling, diplomatizing, etc.” He had often noted

... how much unnecessary solicitude and alarm England devotes to the affairs of foreign countries; with how little knowledge we enter upon the task of regulating the concerns of other people; and how much better we might employ our energies at home.⁶

In 1856 he wrote:

The truth is, it must again be told the English public and the world that our aristocratic politicians make political capital out of the Italians, Poles, Circassians, etc. for

purposes of their own, and not with any intent of promoting liberty anywhere. And this game will go on so long as the English public allow them to parade their sympathies for the grievances of foreigners instead of doing the work of liberty at home.⁷

Cobden and Bright campaigned unsuccessfully against British involvement in the Crimean War in the 1850s.

Herbert Spencer, author of *The Man versus the State*, opposed the spread of British imperialism, which he regarded as merely state intervention in the internal affairs of foreign countries. He joined in the campaign to prosecute Governor Eyre of Jamaica for murder, following brutal reprisals against an uprising, and formed an Anti-Aggression League against the extension of the British Empire into India and Egypt.⁸

CONTINENTAL PROTECTIONISM

The doctrine of free trade was rejected — and is still rejected — by the Continental European nations, which built up their industries behind high tariff walls. The separation of politics from economics, which became central to British thinking as a result of the influence of Adam Smith, is unknown to Continental thought, which regards economic activity, whether “public”, “private”, or a “joint venture” as a continuation of politics by other means. According to the Prussian economist Friedrich List:

Under the existing conditions of the world the result of general free trade would not be a universal republic but on the contrary a universal subjection of the less advanced nations to the supremacy of the predominant manufacturing, commercial, and naval power.

In other words, free trade doctrine benefited Britain for the simple reason that Britain dominated manufacturing and trade, backed up by the might of the Royal Navy. List described protectionism as “a natural consequence of the striving of nations for guarantees of their permanency and prosperity or predominant power.” War, including aggressive war, was a legitimate part of this policy:

It must not be ignored that the rounding out of the national territory must be reckoned among the most important requirements of nations, that striving to attain it is legitimate, that in some cases it is indeed a legitimate cause of war.⁹

The British government justified its initiation of aggression against China in the Opium Wars in the 1840s on “free trade” grounds.¹⁰ Millions of Chinese were opium addicts, their supplies being imported from British India. The Chinese imperial government decided to deal with the problem of drug addiction by prohibiting the importation of British opium. The British government went to war against the Chinese empire, defeated it, and forced it to accept opium imports. The British government justified its war — doubtless quite sincerely — on the grounds that it was upholding the abstract principle of free trade. Every other country in the world, probably including the United States, which was at that time protectionist, understood it as a straightforward exercise in power relationships in which a strong nation imposed its will by violence over a weaker one, with “free trade” dogma merely a manifestation of political and military power.

At that time, Britain could enjoy the luxury of thinking about international relations in a different way from most of the world. In the decades which followed the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the British navy was not merely the strongest in Europe, but was approximately equal in strength to every other European fleet put together. Britain was therefore in a uniquely secure position. In the second half of the 19th century, liberal opinion came to believe that British foreign policy could, and should, be run on the basis of idealism, moral judgements and universal abstract principles, rather than hard-headed *Realpolitik*. British state intervention in the affairs of other countries, it was argued, could be justified on moral grounds in certain situations. In 1874 John Stuart Mill expressed his support for armed intervention to redress the balance when a people were fighting for liberty against a tyranny, whether foreign or native, if that tyranny was helped by foreign arms. William Gladstone argued that Cobden’s non-interventionist policy

... is not only a respectable, it is even a noble error ... but however deplorable wars may be, they are among the necessities of our condition; and there are times when justice, when faith, when the failure of mankind, require a man not to shrink from the responsibility of undertaking them.¹¹

He argued that Britain had a moral obligation to oppressed peoples in Europe arising from the brotherhood of man. In 1876 he denounced Turkish oppression in Bulgaria, in which Britain’s interests were not involved, as “the basest and blackest outrage upon record within the present century, if not within the memory of man” and demanded that Britain “apply all its vigour to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria”.¹²

Gladstone, and other liberals, increasingly took the view that Britain had a “civilising mission” that justified foreign intervention. In 1882 he justified the British bombardment of Alexandria and occupation of Egypt on the grounds that

We should not fully discharge our duty if we did not endeavour to convert the present interior state of Egypt from anarchy and conflict to peace and order. We shall look during the time that remains to us to the co-operation of the Powers of civilised Europe. But if every chance of obtaining co-operation is exhausted, the work will be undertaken by the single power of England.¹³

Bright resigned from the Cabinet over this issue, protesting that

Be the Government Liberal or Tory much the same thing happens, war, with all its horrors and miseries and crimes and cost.¹⁴

Here Bright touched on the crux of the matter: it has always been members of the upper classes who decided to fight wars in some remote country, and always the common people who go out to be killed, maimed and blinded in fighting those wars. A new biography of Gladstone by Richard Shannon has demonstrated that his invasion of Egypt was not purely altruistic:

He had around £30,000 invested in Egyptian bonds in 1881; the occupation of 1882, which he ordered, resulted in a personal capital gain on this investment of around 40 per cent.¹⁵

Intellectual justification for military intervention to assist “oppressed nationalities” achieve their independence was given by such “new liberals” as H. N. Brailsford, J. A. Hobson, T. H. Green and L. T. Hobhouse in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These political philosophers were also arguing that liberal goals could be achieved better by widespread state intervention in the economy and society than by the older doctrine of *laissez-faire*. In 1904, for instance, Hobhouse wrote that

A great part of the inspiration of Liberalism ... has been drawn from the struggles of the nations against Napoleon, of the Eastern Christians against Turkey, of the Poles against Russia, of the Italians against Austria, of the Irish against England. ... The safeguards of liberty cannot be maintained when one class or one nationality is being held in bondage by another, even though that other holds power nominally in virtue of a majority of votes.¹⁶

British foreign policy increasingly operated according to the belief that the rest of the world could somehow be induced to operate according to liberal principles as a result of British moral persuasion. This was an illusion. As the historian Professor E. H. Carr pointed out in 1946:

When Palmerston banged the despatch box with his fist and made provocative speeches, the effect was due not to the weight of the fist or the strength of the language, but to the overwhelming preponderance of the British navy and to the willingness of the British Government to use it. Today the idea apparently still prevails that to bang the despatch box with a fist twice as weighty as Palmerston’s and to use language twice as strong will compensate for the lack of British preponderance in ships and air squadrons and military divisions. This view is both seductive and dangerous; it encourages the comfortable belief, which played so much havoc in British foreign policy between the wars, that words can be a substitute for deeds.¹⁷

The vast majority of nations have never been, are not, and never will be, run according to anything remotely resembling the doctrines of British liberalism, whether in its “classical” or “revised” form, and have no desire to be governed according to such principles. The day that British and US foreign policy recognises that unalterable fact will be a good one for international peace, order and stability, as well as for the British and American peoples, who will be freed from the burden of futile wars and other interventions.

INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION

In the later 19th century, a system of arbitration in the settlement of international disputes came into existence. For instance, in 1872, the *Alabama* award was made against Britain by a court whose members were selected by Britain, the US, Italy, Switzerland and Brazil. 194 treaties containing provisions for arbitration were signed by 1914, and arbitration was successful in 90 cases. An International Parliamentary Conference was established in 1889, Universal Peace Congresses were held annually from 1892, and the conferences which led to the Hague Conventions were held in 1899 and 1907.

It must be stressed that liberal doctrines were not the only influence on British foreign policy. The Boer War (1899-1902) was an undisguised act of aggression against the Boer

Republics, for the purpose of annexing their mineral wealth. When the Boer farmers resorted to guerrilla warfare, the British burned their farms and imprisoned the inhabitants in the world’s first concentration camps, where conditions were so bad that about 20,000 Boer women and children, and about 14,000 African servants, died of disease. The campaign in Britain against the war was unsuccessful, although the conditions in the concentration camps were eventually ameliorated as a result of popular protest.

When the war broke out in Europe in 1914, much of liberal opinion was against British intervention. On 31st July the *Manchester Guardian* expressed its fear

... lest by some hidden contract England has been technically committed behind her back to the ruinous madness of a share in the wicked gamble of a war between two militarist leagues on the Continent.¹⁸

When the Liberal government of Herbert Asquith decided on war on 4th August, Sir Edward Grey, the foreign secretary, justified going to war to defend Belgium, both on the liberal grounds that Britain was upholding the public law in Europe, and on the traditional balance-of-power doctrine that Europe must not come under the domination of a single power:

If, in a crisis like this, we run away from those obligations of honour and interest as regards the Belgian Treaty, I doubt whether, whatever material force we might have at the end, it would be of very much value in face of the respect we should have lost. And I do not believe, whether a great Power stands outside this war or not, it is going to be in a position at the end of it to exert its superior strength ... to prevent the whole of the West of Europe opposite to us — if that had been the result of the war — falling under the domination of a single Power.¹⁹

Britain, in short, was not directly threatened, and the government chose a policy of intervention in preference to one of non-intervention. Most liberal opinion soon found justifications for the war. An influential group of liberals, led by E. D. Morel, set up a Union for Democratic Control to propose ideas for the post-war settlement. In 1914 Morel argued that after the war

The Foreign Policy of Great Britain shall not be aimed at creating Alliances for the purpose of maintaining the Balance of Power, but shall be directed to concerted action between the Powers, and the setting up of an International Council, whose deliberations and decisions shall be public, with such machinery for securing international agreement as shall be the guarantee of an abiding peace.²⁰

For such British liberals, the war became a great crusade in which German militarism — as distinct from the German people — had to be militarily crushed to make way for the new European order. These ideas gained enormous influence in the United States. In 1916 Woodrow Wilson was re-elected president of the United States on the campaign slogan “He kept us out of war”. In January 1917 he claimed to speak “for liberals and friends of humanity in every nation and of every programme of liberty” and called for “peace without victory ... a peace between equals.”¹⁹ In April he declared war on Germany, claiming that it was a war to end wars which would make the world safe for democracy. In January 1918 Wilson proposed the Fourteen Points, which, according to Laurence Martin,

... constituted the most comprehensive and striking presentation yet of a liberal programme, almost exactly endorsing the aims of the British radicals.²²

For British and American liberals, therefore, the war became the secular equivalent of a medieval Crusade or Muslim jihad, a holy war in which the enemy was standing in the way of some heavenly ideal of perpetual peace and therefore had to be crushed utterly. The American Peace Society declared that "There can be no end of war until the collapse of the existing German imperial government."²³ The Trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace stated

... that the most certain means of instituting a durable peace among the nations is to pursue the War against the Imperial German Government until the final victory of democracy.²⁴

Wilson stated that

There can be but one issue. The settlement must be final. There can be no compromise. No half-way decision would be tolerable. No half-way decision is conceivable.²⁵

In November 1918 the German government accepted Wilson's Fourteen Points, with their guarantees of self-determination for all peoples, as the basis for the Armistice. At the Versailles peace conference the following year, however, the French, British, Belgian and Italian governments imposed on Germany a harsh and vengeful treaty which violated the right of self-determination by carving off huge parts of Germany and transferring them to the control of foreign states. In 1922 Lord Buckmaster declared that

... to induce any nation, however evil and abominable they might be, to lay down their arms on one set of terms and then, when they were defenceless, to impose another set, is an act of dishonour which can never be effaced.²⁶

According to Sir Michael Howard, professor emeritus of modern history at Oxford University,

Behind a façade of high-flown liberal sentiments about democracy and national self-determination, the British government and its allies had conducted the war as they had conducted all previous wars — for the national self-aggrandisement of their own states, making secret agreements to distribute enemy possessions among themselves taking no account of the wishes of the peoples concerned.²⁷

LABOUR INHERITS THE LIBERAL TRADITION

At the end of the war, the UDC liberals transferred their loyalties *en masse* from the Liberal Party to the Labour Party, which became the main inheritor of the "new liberalism" in foreign policy. Leonard Woolf said that

The Labour Party inherited its foreign policy from Cobden and Bright through Gladstone Liberalism.²⁸

The executive of the Independent Labour Party described the Versailles Treaty as

... a capitalist, imperialist and militarist imposition. It aggravates every evil which existed before 1914. It does not give the world peace, but the certainty of other and more calamitous wars.²⁹

According to Howard,

Labour critics picked specifically on the injustice of subjecting millions of Germans to alien rule in Czechoslovakia; on the proposed annexation to France of the Saar; on the annexation to Poland of German areas of West Prussia; and on the prohibition, in defiance of the wishes of the population, of any *Anschluss* between Austria and Germany.³⁰

Enormous hopes were invested in the League of Nations and collective security. In 1928 the Labour Party called for

... whole-hearted support of the League of Nations as the arbiter of international peace and order, in preference to the basing of peace upon separate pacts, ententes and alliances.³¹

The League was seen as body which would enforce peace everywhere in the world, and its basic principles had strong support in British public opinion. In 1934, 11.5 million British voters replied to the Peace Ballot; ninety percent supported the use of economic and non-military measures against a nation which attacked another, and just over half supported military measures against such a nation. Only twenty percent returned a definite "no" to both concepts. In the same year, the National Government declared that "the League of Nations will remain the keystone of British foreign policy."³²

The League and collective security were put to the test when fascist Italy invaded Abyssinia in 1935-6, and failed dismally. In that crisis, the British government, like every other, put its own interests before that of an international world order, and practised balance-of-power politics rather than internationalism. Concerned about the potential threat to the British Empire from Japan, and the possibility of war with Germany, the British government promoted the Hoare-Laval Pact which accepted the Italian occupation of Abyssinia.

British liberal attitudes towards the foreign policy of the Third Reich were conditioned by a distaste for the internal regime imposed by the National Socialists on the one hand, and a belief in the essential justice of German claims for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles on the other. In 1935 Philip Lothian wrote that

... in some degree the brutality of National Socialists is the reaction to the treatment given to Germany herself since the war [and that] the best way of restoring rights to the Jews in Germany is not to counter hate with hate, but to undermine the source of the evil aspects of National Socialism by giving Germany her rightful place in Europe.³³

In the same year, when Adolf Hitler re-introduced conscription in Germany, in violation of the treaty, the *Daily Herald*, which supported the Labour Party, welcomed it as a sign that Europe was "bright with hope" since "the poison of Versailles is at last draining from its blood."³⁴ In 1936, when Hitler re-militarised the Rhineland, the Labour politician Hugh Dalton told the Commons that

... the Labour Party would not support the taking of military sanctions or even economic sanctions against Germany ... [and drew a distinction between] ... the action of Signor Mussolini in resorting to aggressive war and waging it beyond his frontiers, and the actions ... of Herr Hitler which, much as we regard them as repre-

hensible, have taken place within the frontiers of the Third Reich.³⁵

Labour MPs at this time repeatedly opposed the Defence Estimates. In 1937 Clement Attlee, the Labour Party leader (and later Prime Minister), wrote:

The Labour Party ... can only tolerate armaments as a necessary support for a policy of collective security. ... I do not believe that the entry into a competition in arms would give security. On the contrary I think it is leading us straight to the disaster of another World War.³⁶

During the Sudeten crisis of 1938, Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman*, suggested that

... the Czechs make an imaginative offer of partnership to the Sudeten Germans, to reconcile them to existing frontiers. But if ... this is impossible, the question of frontier revision, difficult though it is, should at once be tackled. The strategical value of the Bohemian frontier should not be made the occasion of a world war.³⁷

The historian A. J. P. Taylor wrote of the Munich Agreement, which transferred the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia to Germany, that

British policy over Czechoslovakia originated in the belief that Germany had a moral right to the Sudeten German territory, on grounds of national principle; and it drew the further corollary that this victory for self-determination would provide a stabler, more permanent peace in Europe. ... The settlement at Munich was a triumph for British policy, which had worked precisely to this end; not a triumph for Hitler, who had started with no such clear intention. Nor was it merely a triumph for selfish or cynical British statesmen, indifferent to the fate of far-off peoples or calculating that Hitler might be launched into war against Soviet Russia. It was a triumph for all that was best and most enlightened in British life; a triumph for those who had preached equal justice between peoples; a triumph for those who had courageously denounced the harshness and short-sightedness of Versailles. Brailsford, the leading Socialist authority on foreign affairs, wrote in 1920 of the peace settlement: "The worst offence was the subjection of over three million Germans to Czech rule." This was the offence redressed at Munich.³⁸

After the transfer of the Sudetenland, Poland and Hungary seized other parts of Czechoslovakia and the Slovaks declared their independence. In March 1939 the Czech president, Emil Hacha, went to Berlin of his own accord, and Bohemia and Moravia were made into a German protectorate and incorporated into the German Reich with his agreement. The British government recognised this change by transferring Czechoslovakia's gold reserves at the Bank of England to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia after German forces entered Prague. Taylor concludes of these events:

All the world saw in this the culmination of a long-planned campaign. In fact, it was the unforeseen by-product of developments in Slovakia. ... Nor was there anything sinister or premeditated in the protectorate over Bohemia. Hitler, the supposed revolutionary, was simply reverting in the most conservative way to the pattern of previous centuries. ... He did it without design; it brought him slight advantage. He acted only when

events had already destroyed the settlement of Munich. But everyone outside Germany, and especially the other makers of that settlement, believed that he had deliberately destroyed it himself.³⁹

At that time, Germany was attempting to regain Danzig and the Corridor, which had been part of Germany forcibly transferred to Poland, without regard to the wishes of its population, by the Versailles Treaty. On 31st March 1939, the British government gave Poland an unconditional guarantee of its frontier with Germany, a guarantee that was supported by the French government. This guarantee represented a complete reversal of British policy. Taylor comments:

Danzig was the most justified of German grievances: a city of exclusively German population which manifestly wished to return to the Reich and which Hitler himself restrained only with difficulty. The solution, too, seemed particularly easy. [Lord] Halifax [the British foreign secretary] never wearied of suggesting that Danzig should return to German sovereignty, with safeguards for Polish trade.

Hitler wanted this also. The destruction of Poland had been no part of his original project. On the contrary, he had wished to solve the question of Danzig so that Germany and Poland could remain on good terms.⁴⁰

The Poles used the guarantee as a reason to refuse any concessions to Germany. Hitler then actually reduced his demand from the return of the entire Corridor (which every German government had requested since 1919) to a demand for the return of Danzig, with guaranteed port facilities for the Poles, and an extra-territorial double-track railway and motorway to unite East Prussia with the rest of Germany. Yet still Britain and France maintained their unconditional guarantee to Poland, a guarantee which neither country was in a position successfully to uphold with military force. As a result, Hitler first signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union and then invaded Poland on 1st September. On 3rd September Britain and France declared a war they were not in a position to fight. Germany, followed by the Soviet Union, occupied the whole of Poland. They then appealed to Britain and France for an end to the war, without success. As the *Daily Worker*, the newspaper of the Communist Party of Great Britain, pointed out on 1st February 1940:

Against this historical fact there is no reply. Britain declared war, not Germany. Attempts were made to end the war, but the Soviet-German peace efforts were rejected by Britain. All through these months the British and French Governments have had the power to end the war. They have chosen to extend it. ... War should never have been declared on September 3rd.⁴¹

Britain's most distinguished military historian, Captain Sir Basil Liddell-Hart, wrote of the declaration of war by Britain and France:

The immediate purpose was to fulfil their promise to preserve the independence of Poland. The ultimate purpose was to remove a potential menace to themselves, and thus ensure their own security. In the outcome, they failed in both purposes. Not only did they fail to prevent Poland from being overcome in the first place, and partitioned between Germany and Russia, but after six years of war which ended in apparent victory they were forced to acquiesce in Russia's domination of Poland —

abandoning their pledge to the Poles who had fought on their side.

At the same time all the effort that was put into the destruction of Hitlerite Germany resulted in a Europe so devastated and weakened in the process that its power of resistance was much reduced in the face of a fresh and greater menace — and Britain, in common with her European neighbours had become a poor dependant of the United States. ... The outcome dispelled the persistent popular illusion that ‘victory’ spelt peace. It confirmed the warning of past experience that victory is a mirage in the desert — the desert that a long war creates, when waged with modern weapons and unlimited methods.⁴²

During the course of the war, British official attitudes towards the German people changed. On the outbreak of war, Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, declared that

In this war, we are not fighting against the German people, for whom we have no bitter feelings, but against a tyrannous and foresworn regime.⁴³

By 1942, this attitude had changed. In that year, the TUC President said

... that until the German people, not alone their gangster rulers, have meted out to them what they have meted out to millions of their fellow creatures ... the German people will again, if not prevented, make another attempt to enslave Europe.⁴⁴

Similar sentiments were expressed even more explicitly by the American leadership. In 1943 President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke of the need

... to drive home to the German people the fact that they had lost the war and had been engaged in a lawless conspiracy against the decencies of civilisation.⁴⁵

In 1948 Cordell Hull, US Secretary of State, argued that Germany should be kept under military occupation, and that

... the standard of living of the German population should be kept below the average of neighbouring populations but should be raised gradually in proportion to the rate of change on their part away from Nazism, racial superiority and the like, towards ideas of human rights, individual liberty, freedom and peace.⁴⁶

As during the first world war, liberal opinion once again put its faith in a supra-national organisation, the United Nations, as a means of upholding the public law internationally, this time with the US as a member. In 1943 Hull declared that

It is abundantly clear that a system of organised international co-operation for the maintenance of peace must be based upon the willingness of the co-operating nations to use force, if necessary, to keep the peace.⁴⁷

THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Although we are primarily concerned here with British foreign policy, that policy has been so dominated by the United States since 1941 that it is worth briefly discussing US foreign policy as well. The founding fathers of the United States established a foreign policy based on maintaining good relations with all other nations while repudiating any US intervention in their internal affairs or international

conflicts. George Washington said to the American people in 1793:

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; Cultivate peace and harmony with all. ... In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The Nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. Sympathy for the favorite Nations, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and including into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification.⁴⁸

John Quincy Adams, who was President from 1825-29, explained American foreign policy in the following terms:

America goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standards of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force.⁴⁹

In fact, as early as the 1830s, the Monroe Doctrine was propounded and used to justify US intervention in Central and South America. In the 1840s the US invaded and took over large parts of Mexico, an event against which Henry David Thoreau protested, and which led to his writing his famous essay on civil disobedience. In 1861, the US invaded and re-annexed the Southern states which had declared their independence from the US, just as the American colonies had declared their independence from Britain in 1776. In 1898 the US first broke with its policy of non-intervention in European affairs with the invasion of Cuba and the Spanish empire. In 1917, Woodrow Wilson's intervention in the European war in order to promote such abstractions as “democracy” and “a war to end wars” opened the door to unlimited US global interventionism, but the experience was soon rejected by the American people. In 1919 Congress refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, or to bring the US into the League of Nations. Wilson lost the 1920 presidential election, and the US returned to a policy of non-intervention, which was affirmed by the Neutrality Acts of 1935 and 1937, which aimed to prevent the US from becoming involved in another war. After war broke out in Europe in 1939, the Roosevelt administration was secretly doing everything in its power to involve the US in the conflict, while telling the American people the opposite. During the 1940 election campaign, for instance, he said:

While I am talking to you, mothers and fathers, I give you one more assurance.

I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again.

Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.⁵⁰

The Roosevelt administration unsuccessfully attempted to provoke a German attack on the US by such measures as the undeclared naval war in the Atlantic in 1941, in which US warships were ordered to “shoot on sight” any German warships they encountered. However, the administration did successfully provoked the Japanese into attacking the US naval base at Pearl Harbor by imposing an oil and raw materials embargo on Japan and freezing Japanese assets in the US, both of which were acts of economic warfare. The Japanese attack on 7th December 1941 brought the US into the war. Roosevelt’s insistence from 1943 onwards on the unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan meant that those two nations were removed as impediments to the spread of Soviet and Chinese communism in Europe and Asia at the end of the war.

Various dates have been given for the onset of the cold war, including the British invasion of Greece in 1944, Winston Churchill’s “iron curtain” speech in Fulton, Missouri, in 1946, and the promulgation in 1947 by Harry S Truman of the Truman Doctrine. In 1956 Truman summarised his doctrine as follows:

Our way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative governments, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed on the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections and the suppression of personal freedoms.

[The US would] not realise our objectives unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose on them totalitarian regimes. [Therefore the US had to] support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. ... The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership we may endanger the peace of the world.⁵¹

The Truman Doctrine formed a central ideological justification for the global expansion of US political, military and economic power which is still continuing today, and of which the attacks on Iraq and Yugoslavia are merely the most recent manifestations. It is interesting to note that it was actually American “liberals” such as Truman who took the lead in the introduction of the cold war. Professor Ronald Radosh, of the City University of New York, demonstrated that American conservatives who had opposed US intervention in the second world war, such as Senator Robert A. Taft, Charles A. Beard, John T. Flynn, Oswald Garrison Villard and Lawrence Dennis also campaigned against US expansionism in the early cold war years from 1947.⁵² Professor Radosh drew the obvious parallels with the development of a “new left” critique of American globalism which emerged in the mid-1960s, of which Professor Noam Chomsky, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is the best-known figure. In Britain, the Labour government of Clement Attlee took a leading role in the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in 1949, which placed the British armed forces under foreign command for the first

time in their history, while some of the more traditional Conservatives expressed opposition to the subordination of British policy to that of the US.

DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF “DEMOCRACY”

The Truman Doctrine rested on a number of fallacies, perhaps the most important of which was the concept that the word “democracy” means the same thing in the “Anglo-Saxon” countries as it does in the rest of the world. The word “democracy” is what is known in linguistics as a nominalisation, that is to say, a verb (referring to a process) which has been turned into noun (referring to an object). It means completely different things to different people. As the French political philosopher Gustave Le Bon wrote in 1896:

For the Latin peoples the word “democracy” signifies more especially the subordination of the will and the initiative of the individual to the will and the initiative of the community represented by the State. It is the State that is charged, to a greater and greater degree, with the direction of everything, the centralisation, the monopolisation, and the manufacture of everything. To the State it is that all parties without exception, radicals, socialists, or monarchists, constantly appeal. Among the Anglo-Saxons, and notably in America, this same word “democracy” signifies, on the contrary, the intense development of the will of the individual, and as complete a subordination as possible of the State, which, with exception of the police, the army, and diplomatic relations, is not allowed the direction of anything, not even of public instruction.⁵³

Indeed, it is the “Anglo-Saxon” conception of political philosophy which is the peculiar one, not those of the rest of the world. The “Anglo-Saxon”, or “libertarian”, conception emerged out of certain events and ideas in 17th-century England, and are unknown or incomprehensible to the world outside the British Isles, North America and Australasia, with the partial exceptions of Holland, Scandinavia and Switzerland. Carr writes of the English settlement of 1688-89:

... the result was a compromise which left undisputed mastery to neither side. This was particularly true of the religious compromise between Anglicanism and dissent. The whole settlement, religious and political, strongly reflected the views of the dissenters who had preached tolerance and the doctrine of the “inward light”. The philosophy of the English revolution as developed by Locke was based on the rights of the individual both against the church and against the state. Locke and his followers envisaged the state as a sort of wall or fence within which a society of individuals, guided by their own lights, conducted the essential processes of social life. The right to dissent — or in other words, the protection of minorities — is the essence of English democracy; and the rule of law means the enforcement of the rights of the individual against the state. Hence the feeling, rarely formulated quite explicitly but always latent in American if not in English politics, that democratic government means weak government, and that the less government there is, the more democracy there will be.⁵⁴

In the 18th century, the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, principally Adam Smith and David Hume, com-

bined Locke's political ideas with an analogous concept in economics, and proposed the separation of economics from politics, a concept that has never been accepted (and rarely even heard of) outside the English-speaking world. As a result, the British concept of democracy came to refer exclusively to political democracy, with no necessary element of social or economic democracy, at least until the Labour Party began to promote such ideas at the end of the 19th century.

In Continental European philosophy, by contrast, there has never been any separation of politics and economics. Their concept of democracy necessarily includes social and economic democracy as much as it does political. Continentals take the view that the citizen's right to vote in an election would be meaningless if it were not combined with economic and social rights extended from the state to the individual, and obligations from the citizen to the state, such as compulsory military service, in return for the political, economic and social rights which the state extends to him. Nor are Continental systems noted for their tolerance of dissenting minorities. The individual who tries to "buck the system" by promoting some idea, or trying some unconventional way of doing things, which officialdom disapproves of, will generally find that the heavy hand of the state comes down quickly and hard against him, with little by way of legal protection, or of the squeamishness about "civil liberties" which exists in the English-speaking countries. Anybody who believes that the modern French political system is characterised by tolerance ought to study such historical episodes as the Jacobin Terror of 1793-95, the Paris Commune of 1870 and its suppression, the *Épuration* of 1944-45, and the massacres of both Algerians and *pieds noirs* which occurred during the Algerian conflict of 1958-62.

Carr explains that the Continental conception of society derives from the French revolution, which itself derived largely from the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau:

Rousseau, in accepting the social contract, treated it, like Hobbes, as a final surrender by the individual of his rights against society. Rousseau, far from making the state a ring-fence to protect the working of a society of individuals, identified society with the state and posited an all-powerful "general will" from which it was treason to dissent. The spiritual father of the French revolution, he was also the father of modern totalitarian democracy. ... Hence the French revolution, unlike the English, did not issue in a balance or compromise; it was a victory not for political toleration, or the rights of the individual against the state, but for a particular view of the authority of the state.⁵⁵

The French historian R. Soltau explained:

All that the revolution did was to transfer the existing system from one nominal ruler to another, to substitute "popular" for "royal" sovereignty, to give to the "people" the powers hitherto enjoyed by the crown — but without any questioning of those powers in themselves.⁵⁶

Under both Robespierre and Napoleon, France became an authoritarian democracy with strong tendencies which we would today describe as "totalitarian". For example, one of Napoleon's ministers stated quite frankly that:

Education must impart the same knowledge and the same principles to all individuals living in the same so-

ciety, so that they will make as it were one body, informed with one and the same understanding and working for the common good of uniformity of views and desires.⁵⁷

Guizot, a 19th century French politician and historian, stated equally frankly:

Absolute power cannot belong in France except to the Revolution and its heirs, for they alone, for many years to come, can re-assure the masses about their interests while refusing them guarantees of liberty.⁵⁸

In the 19th century, the French model was adopted, with modifications, throughout Continental Europe. In 1952, J. L. Talmon, after tracing the direct line that links 18th-century French revolutionary thought with 20th-century totalitarianism, wrote:

Totalitarian democracy, far from being a phenomenon of recent growth, and outside the Western tradition, has its root in the common stock of eighteenth-century ideas. It branched out as a separate and identifiable trend in the course of the French Revolution and has had an unbroken continuity since. Thus its origins go much further back than nineteenth-century patterns, such as Marxism, because Marxism itself was only one, although admittedly the most vital, among the various versions of the totalitarian democratic ideal, which have followed each other for the last hundred and fifty years.⁵⁹

BEYOND EUROPE

If the concept of global "democracy" promulgated by Wilson, Truman and their successors sharply diverged from Continental European practice, it had even less relevance in the world beyond Europe. In 1964 Professor Geoffrey Barraclough, of Oxford University, wrote that in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the Soviet example had more appeal both to the elite and the masses than the Anglo-Saxon one:

If the mass of the people were to be lifted out of squalor, if hardly won independence were to be preserved, what the west did in several centuries had to be done in Asia in two or three generations. The impact of the Soviet Union was due first and foremost to the practical evidence it provided that this could be done. It was frequently argued that a 'free economy' could achieve as much and more, 'in time'; but time was precisely what was lacking. And if the appalling human cost of planning on the Soviet or Chinese scale was pointed out, the answer was that — in the conditions obtaining over most of Asia, and probably in Latin America and Africa also — the human cost of large-scale planning was unlikely to be greater than the cost of not planning at all. For people who had known little of the traditional western freedoms — and that is the case, for example, of the fellaheen of Egypt or Iraq and the labourer in the paddy-fields of Burma — the consequential restrictions and compulsions were a small price to pay. ... It would be foolish also to underestimate the political attraction of communism for the lawyers, the scientists, doctors, technologists, and managers who — in association with army officers from similar social strata — were emerging as the dominant element in Asian and African societies. To them it offered prospects of leadership and genuine achievement, and what they may have had to give up as individuals — in Asian society it would

usually not be much — they stood to gain in professional standing. Communist forms of political organisation have marked affinities with the traditional Asian system of an authoritarian state which is the incarnation of absolute law. On the other hand, civil and political liberties of the western type carry less weight than we are apt to think in societies where it has always been regarded as natural for governments to impose duties and obligations, rather than protect and safeguard individual rights. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that democratic institutions of the western type will necessarily be effective under Asian conditions. In countries where the contrast between wealth and poverty is still extreme, and where parliamentary institutions can readily be manipulated in the interests of the former, dictatorship may be the only method — or at least the only practical method immediately available — of securing democracy in the original sense of the word, as used by Aristotle: that is, as the antithesis of aristocracy or plutocracy, or of the predominance of any other narrow class interest exercising power on the basis of the control of property.⁶⁰

Third World leaders who were far from being Moscow-line communists accepted the basic principles of socialist economics. Kwame Nkrumah, of Ghana, stated that “Capitalism is too complicated a system for a newly independent nation.”⁵⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru believed that for India there was

... only one solution — the establishment of a socialist order ... with a controlled production and distribution of wealth for the public good.⁶²

In the past fifteen years, of course, the governing economic ideas in these countries have changed. For instance, a recent newspaper advertising supplement about Ghana has a street market on the cover and the headline “Opening up the market”. Inside, more headlines tell the story: “Privatisation: Firms face a strict assessment of worthiness prior to divestiture”; “Investors profit from tax free zones”; “‘Open skies’ policy places no limit on foreign interest”; “Privately run lotteries win state approval”.⁶³ If the dominant economic ideas of the Third World have changed, that is because they have accepted the technical superiority of free market economics as a means of wealth creation over nationalisation and central planning.

In his assessment of Soviet intentions in the immediate post-war period, Howard writes:

The policy of the Soviet Union, or rather of Joseph Stalin, appears to have been based even more squarely upon traditional principles of power politics than was even that of the United Kingdom. ... In a world with no certain allies it was clearly wise to extend one’s frontiers by unilateral action and consolidate one’s power as far to the west as possible; certainly as far as the frontiers of the Russian Empire as they had existed before the Treaty of Brest Litovsk.⁶⁴

Stalin’s policy, in short, was not fundamentally different from that of the Russian tsars. His regime inherited the distrust of the west characteristic of the tsarist regime, where for centuries the tsar would ceremonially wash himself after meeting a representative of a European power to avoid the supposed contamination of such contacts. As Russian power extended westwards after the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, it was inevitable that eastern Europe would end up

under Soviet domination, as a manifestation of power politics. But that does not necessarily mean that in the earliest post-war years (1944-48), the Soviet intention was to impose a slavish replica of the Soviet model on eastern Europe. For example, the German Communist Party, in its statement of 11th June 1945, explicitly stated that it did not want to import the Soviet model, and sought instead to work with other “democratic” forces to achieve such goals as the punishment of those whom they considered to be National Socialist and war criminals, and the “democratisation” of German society through such measures as widespread nationalisation and the destruction of the economic power of those groups, such as the Junkers, whom they believed had undermined the Weimar republic. What happened in eastern Europe in 1944-48 was broadly similar to the pattern in western countries such as France and Italy, where the bulk of the economy was nationalised, Communist Parties participated in government, and individuals who were alleged to have been “collaborators” or “fascists” were killed, imprisoned or expropriated by kangaroo courts which featured none of the niceties of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence.

Only after the onset of the cold war was the Soviet model imposed uniformly over the whole of eastern Europe. Norman Davies, professor of Polish history at the School of Eastern European and Slavonic Studies at London University, explains:

In the immediate post-war years Stalin had insisted on close control only in the Soviet zone of Germany, in Poland, and in Romania. Elsewhere, whilst building communist influence, he had not insisted on rigid conformity. But from 1948 discipline was tightened: all chinks in the Iron Curtain were to be sealed in response to the Truman Doctrine. All the main features of late Stalinism were to be ruthlessly enforced wherever they did not already exist.⁶⁵

US DOMINATES BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

Since 1941, Britain’s foreign policy has been increasingly subordinated to that of the United States. The wartime and post-war US political and economic agenda has been to promote its version of international “free trade” world-wide, and to destroy, by warfare or diplomatic and economic pressure, any trading arrangement which gets in its way. In the 1930s, for instance, the Japanese created a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in the territories they controlled, which clashed with the traditional US “Open Door” policy towards China. The US inflicted unconditional surrender on Japan, achieved by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, more in order to destroy the Co-Prosperity Sphere than from military necessity. At the same time, arrangements such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) were imposed by the US on its allies, such as Britain and France, in order to override protectionist arrangements such as the British system of imperial preference which had been adopted at the Ottawa Conference of 1931. In the immediate post-war period, most of Europe, the Soviet Union and Asia were in ruins. The US was not merely the world’s most powerful nation, economically and militarily, but was probably equal in power to every other nation put together. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the US had built up its economy behind high tariff walls; after 1941 international “free trade” suited its economic interests better, as no other country was in a position to compete with it. All of a sudden, the US political elite became enthusiasts for

unrestricted free trade which had not before been such a central feature of US policy. As List recognised, when a nation, such as Britain in the 19th century or the US after 1941, supports “free trade”, it is a manifestation of that country’s power interests, and has little to do with any sudden intellectual conversion to the theories of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Richard Cobden and John Bright. What the US has been aiming for since 1941, and what it has very largely achieved, is an international system in which multi-national corporations and financial institutions, mostly based in the US, and to some extent in western Europe and Japan, can profit from access to raw materials, cheap labour and markets throughout the world. As Professor Noam Chomsky has amply documented,⁶⁶ this world-wide expansionism is inseparable from the imposition of US state power, and has been accompanied by US military invasions and bombings, the overthrow of lawful and elected governments which refuse to conform to Washington’s plans, the financing and arming of repressive governments and terrorist movements against sovereign governments, as well as the use of military, economic and diplomatic aid as a lever to obtain international compliance with US goals. Behind the rhetoric about the wonders of “democracy”, “human rights”, “free trade” and the rest, lay power interests. As George Kennan, head of the State Department policy-planning staff, wrote in 1948:

We have about 50 percent of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population. ... In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity. ... We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction. ... We should cease to talk about vague and ... unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.⁶⁷

The US support for such concepts as “international free trade” and the “free movement of capital”, in other words, was and is a manifestation of American political, military and economic power. The American science-fiction writer Robert A. Heinlein coined the phrase “There ain’t no such thing as a free lunch.” The massive US aid to western European nations under Marshall Aid, and the subsequent US military commitment under Nato, came with a high price tag. Part of that price was an end to any military action by western European nations which was not approved by the United States government. A clear demonstration of this occurred during the Suez crisis of 1956, when the Egyptian government nationalised the Suez Canal, which had been jointly owned by Britain and France. The British and French governments decided to take military action to get it back, against the strong diplomatic pressure of the US government. British and French forces assembled in Cyprus and set forth at night under a naval escort without navigation lights, under the command of a British admiral. They encountered the entire US Sixth Fleet drawn up in line facing them, with the intention of intimidating them into turning back. The Sixth Fleet evidently did not realise they were dealing with the Royal Navy. The admiral gave the command to show navigation lights and the convoy sailed in between the US warships to its destination, without inter-

ference by the Sixth Fleet. Sir Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan, of course, being British politicians, rather than British admirals, conceded a humiliating withdrawal from Suez under the threat of UN sanctions backed by the United States. Britain has never since taken any military action not approved by the US. This is not to say that the Suez expedition was justified, but the lesson was clear.

THE EUROPEAN UNION

In the post-1945 period, the US used its economic, military and political power to encourage the nations of western Europe to abandon their national independence and sovereignty to institutions of European integration financed by the US and organised by its collaborators, such as Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman in France, Konrad Adenauer and Walter Hallstein in West Germany and Alcide De Gasperi in Italy. West Germany was only granted the restoration of limited sovereignty in 1949 and 1955 on condition that it fully subordinated itself to the unelected, unaccountable supranational bodies of the European Coal and Steel Community (1951), the abortive European Defence Community (1953), the European Economic Community (1957) and Euratom (1957).

In the early years, British governments recognised the threat to Britain’s constitution which would have arisen from such a transfer of national sovereignty. In 1950, in his maiden speech, Edward Heath, a new Conservative MP, urged the Labour government to join the proposed Coal and Steel Community. Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister, replied:

We are not prepared to accept the principle that the most vital economic forces of this country should be handed over to an authority that is utterly undemocratic and accountable to nobody.⁶⁸

Unfortunately, the US undertook to change such attitudes by setting up and financing the European Movement, a wealthy and influential pressure group which campaigned to overthrow Britain’s Parliamentary constitution and subordinate the British people to the alien and unaccountable EEC. CIA agents operating in this country poured millions into the European Movement and actively assisted its growing influence in the 1960s and 70s.

Here British law is in sharp contrast with that of the United States. In the US, agents of foreign powers are required under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 to register with the Justice Department, and the law prohibits the entry into the US of aliens who intend to engage in political activities aimed at the overthrow of the United States Constitution. Long prison sentences can be, and have been, imposed on those who are convicted of violating these laws. Britain has no comparable laws, and agents of a foreign state were free to finance and organise for the overthrow of the British constitution and the abolition of national independence, which occurred with the passage of the European Communities Act 1972.

On the Continent, the purpose of the European Union was always understood, quite correctly, as the incorporation of all western European nations into a unitary national state which would be considerably more centralised and integrated than such federal systems as the US, Switzerland and Australia. It was taken for granted that military and foreign policy was a central part of its remit. In 1965, for example, when Britain was still a nominally independent country, Franz-Josef Strauss, former West German defence minister, argued that:

We must establish the basis of a European nuclear potential by pooling the British and French armoury. Then, thinking in terms of a process lasting up to twenty years, work towards a European Federation, with the gradual transfer of sovereign rights in stages to a European authority. This will involve two processes. One is the reduction of national states to the standing of the present member *Länder* of the German Federation, or the individual American States, and the other is the building up of a federal or central authority.⁶⁹

This nuclear capacity, Strauss argued, could be used to threaten the Soviet Union into granting German reunification:

... the entry of Western Germany into a European confederation or federation must be made conditional on the acceptance into the charter of European policy that the reunification of Germany and the freedom of all European nations forms the basis of political action.

If the Common Market is to develop into a confederation, accepts the membership of Britain, and develops further into a federation, then this must be done in conjunction with the Bundesrepublik and not without it and only on condition that every nation has the same rights. The legitimate aspirations of Germany must be adopted as part of a European policy, thus removing for all time the fear of a remilitarized and aggressive Germany.⁷⁰

Strauss argued that

The Munich Agreement is once and for all a valid agreement in international law, which remains valid even though it was arbitrarily and unilaterally broken by one of the parties to the agreement — namely Hitler, who sent German troops into the rump of Czechoslovakia in spring 1939.⁷¹

He also stated that

You surely know what I think of the conduct of the units of the Waffen SS who served at the front. Of course I extend to them the high honour I accord to the German soldiers of the last World War.⁷²

In other words, Strauss was arguing that Britain must be brought into the EEC and induced to hand over its nuclear weapons to Brussels. Then the EEC would use the threat of using those weapons to impose on the Soviet bloc not only German demands for reunification, but also, presumably, for the annexation of those parts of Czechoslovakia ceded to Hitler in 1938. British military forces, in other words, would be placed under the control of an unelected institution which would have the power to use them, without the consent of the British people or Parliament, in acts of military aggression against nations with which Britain had no quarrel. I summarised above the mistakes of British foreign policy before 1914 and 1939 which brought this country into commitments which led to unnecessary and futile wars *against* Germany. In 1965 Strauss was arguing that Britain should be brought into a commitment which could have led to an unnecessary and futile war *for* Germany against the Warsaw Pact nations. And of course other EU members have long-standing territorial claims against other nations. For instance, Greece claims northern Cyprus from Turkey, and Italy claims a part of Slovenia. The argument I am making is a simple one: Britain should not get involved in pursuing any other nations' claims or quarrels, and instead

follow a policy of non-intervention. This would, of course, involve pulling out of both the European Union and Nato.

We have seen above how British foreign policy in the post-war period was increasingly subordinated to the United States. This process took a major leap forward in 1986, when the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, permitted the US to launch its illegal and unprovoked bombing raid against Libya, in which numerous civilians, including Colonel Gaddafi's adopted daughter, were killed. The Reagan administration claimed that Libya had supported "terrorism" against US servicemen in West Germany; no evidence was ever produced to prove that claim. When the attack on Libya took place, the Labour Party took out display advertisements in the newspapers condemning it as an unprovoked and unjustified attack on an independent nation, and an abuse of the US bases in Britain, which were supposedly for strictly defensive purposes. Since then, Labour policy has changed a bit. In 1998, with Labour in power, the Royal Air Force actually joined in the unprovoked bombing of Iraq, and now, in 1999, Britain is the US's most enthusiastic partner in the illegal bombing of Yugoslavia, which is the first military attack on a sovereign nation in Europe since the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

NEW LABOUR AND UNCLE SAM

Never has a British government been more subservient to a foreign nation than Blair's Labour government is to the United States. From the 1920s to the 1980s, it was a common for individuals of "progressive" or "left-of-centre" views to visit some Marxist nation such as the Soviet Union, China, Albania, Cuba or Tanzania and to come back enthused about the wonderful new society around which they had been carefully stewarded by official guides. Now that the Marxist vision has dissipated, the US seems to have taken its place among "new Labour" figures such as Blair. This is bad news for British libertarians. There was a time when many people, both in the US and outside it, were under the illusion that the US was some sort of haven of individual liberty in the economic, political and social spheres. Surely nobody who bothers to read the newspapers can possibly believe that today. Two examples at Federal level include the murders by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the unarmed wife and 14-year-old son of Randy Weaver in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, in 1992, and the burning to death of 76 Branch Davidians, including 18 children, at Waco, Texas, in 1993. It has been claimed that the total amount of property seized without a court order in "drug forfeitures" throughout the US exceeds the total amount of property nationalised in the Soviet Union in 70 years of communism. At state level, California has recently introduced the world's strictest anti-smoking legislation: you can be fined for smoking in any "public place", including a bar, your car, or your own back garden. Alabama has recently prohibited the sale and use of vibrators on the grounds that "women have no fundamental, constitutional right to an orgasm".⁷³ And these people, we are told, are going to invade, bomb, starve, terrorise, bribe and blackmail the rest of the world until they undergo a spontaneous mass conversion to the ideas of Jefferson and Gladstone. Does anyone seriously believe that?

The American taxpayer finances various propaganda bodies which bring foreign politicians to the United States with the intention of influencing them in the direction desired by US international strategy. Many of the principal figures in "new

Labour”, including Tony Blair, have participated in these operations and returned home with the same uncritical adulation of US policy as the likes of the Webbs, George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells displayed with regard to Stalin’s Russia in the 1930s. “New Labour” figures Peter Mandelson, Mo Mowlam, George Robertson, Chris Smith and Lady Symons are all members of the US-financed British-American Project for a Successor Generation (BAP). The headline in the BAP newsletter for June and July 1997, following the general election of that year, was “Big Swing to BAP”.⁷⁴ Blair is quite open that his political agenda is to use Britain as Washington’s mouthpiece in the European Union. He intends to subordinate the UK to far greater European integration, through Economic and Monetary Union, *corpus juris*, a common European defence policy and other measures, and seeks to persuade the dominant French and German political-bureaucratic-financial elites to modify their traditional protectionism in favour of “free trade” agreements on terms dictated by Washington, for the benefit of US big business and finance. What remains of British democracy, in short, is to be abolished in order to increase the profits of US corporations and to extend American power. As Blair stated in 1995:

... the Americans have made it clear they want a special relationship with Europe, not with Britain alone. If we are to be listened to seriously in Washington and Tokyo, or the Pacific, we will often be acting with the rest of Europe. ... [T]he Labour Government I hope to lead will be outward-looking, internationalist and committed to free and open trade, not an outdated and misguided narrow nationalism.⁷⁵

One result of this virtual take-over of the Labour Party by the US has been British participation in the illegal US acts of aggression against Iraq and Yugoslavia. As Noam Chomsky put it recently, in foreign policy the UK is “by now, about as much of an independent actor as the Ukraine was in the pre-Gorbachev years”.⁷⁶ With regard to the EU, of course, Chomsky’s comment is a statement of legal and political fact, for Britain is not even nominally sovereign in a growing area of its internal affairs. In view of this development, it is worth examining the background to the current crises which the US has created in Iraq and Yugoslavia.

THE WAR AGAINST IRAQ

There is only one reason why the US has treated Iraq as an enemy over the past decade, and that is because Iraq is regarded as a potential obstacle to the domination of the entire Middle East by the state of Israel. The Israeli dissident Professor Israel Shahak, in a survey of the Hebrew-language Israeli press, has revealed Israel’s intention of dominating the entire Middle East militarily, politically and economically.⁷⁷

In ancient times the geographical area which is today Iraq and Kuwait was the single civilisation of Mesopotamia. Under the Ottoman empire, it was a single administrative unit. After the collapse of the Ottoman empire in 1918, Britain arbitrarily sliced off one province of the unit and made it into the “independent nation” of Kuwait. The Iraqis always claimed that Kuwait was properly one of their provinces. In 1963 the CIA backed the *coup d’état* which brought the Ba’ath Socialist Party, of which Saddam Hussein is the current leader, to power in Baghdad. In 1981 Israel launched an illegal bombing attack on Iraq which temporarily destroyed its civil nuclear power potential. The imme-

diately *causus belli* in 1990 was the fact that the Kuwaitis were illegally taking oil from a well which crossed the border, most of which belonging to Iraq. In 1990 Saddam invaded Kuwait after the US ambassador to Baghdad had given him assurances that the US regarded the dispute as an inter-Arab affair in which the US would not intervene. The subsequent Iraqi occupation was then used as a pretext for a massive US and western European military presence in the Middle East, and war against Iraq in 1991. President George Bush announced that the war was on behalf of the “New World Order”, rather than the national interests of the US or any other nation. By an amazing coincidence, one result of the war was that a company owned by the Bush family obtained the sole rights to drill oil off the coast of Bahrain, together with a permanent US military base to guard the operations at the US taxpayers’ expense. Britain’s intervention in the Gulf War, under John Major’s government, was not justified by any British interest, as Britain is a net exporter of oil, and Britain had no defence treaty with Kuwait. Since 1991, Britain has supported — and still supports — the economic sanctions which have caused the deaths of an estimated 500,000 Iraqis, mainly children, through lack of food and medical supplies. In 1998 the Blair government participated in the illegal US bombing of Iraq, which did not even have the Kuwaiti pretext as a justification. The bombing was explained on the grounds that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and was in breach of several UN Security Council resolutions. The fact that Israel has a much larger nuclear and chemical weapons arsenal, and is in breach of far more UN Security Council resolutions, has been completely ignored.

The reason for US aggression against Iraq over the past decade is the increasing Israeli domination of American foreign policy. After the state of Israel was founded in 1948, as a result of Zionist terrorism against Palestinian Arabs and the British, some 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their lawfully-held land and homes, and in some cases murdered, by the Zionist terrorists, who then re-formed as the official Israeli government army. Since then, Israel has forcibly annexed one area of Arab land after another. This has only been possible because of the ever-increasing power of the pro-Israeli lobby in the US, which ensures that American taxpayers pay over \$3 billion a year in economic and military handouts to Israel. The power of the Israeli lobby in the US is such that no member of Congress dares express the most circumspect criticism of Israel, or the size of American aid to it. In addition, the lobby uses every method available to ensure that the American public gains an picture that the Middle Eastern conflict is one between absolute good (Israel) and absolute evil (the entire Arab and Muslim world).⁷⁸ It is hardly surprising, then, that the US has directly intervened in the Lebanon (in 1983) and Iraq (since 1991) in support of Israeli expansionism. The fact that Britain is now an active participant in the US-Israeli war against Iraq, where no British or general humanitarian interest is served, is evidence of just how far the British armed forces and the Foreign Office have become subsidiaries of their equivalents in Washington.

THE WAR AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA

The attack on Yugoslavia has even less justification than that on Iraq. It is an unprecedented military attack on an independent and sovereign nation taking actions it considers to be appropriate to restore order in its own territory. The

bombing is a breach of Nato's own charter as well as of international law. At the peace treaties which ended the first world war, the "nation" of Yugoslavia was arbitrarily put together from various ethnic groups with a long history of conflict with each other. The Serbs were always the dominant group in this concoction. During the second world war, Britain and the US supported Tito's Serbian-dominated communist forces, who took over the country at the end of the war. After Tito split with the Soviet Union in 1948, the west supported his regime, despite its suppression of separatist tendencies. When Yugoslavia began to disintegrate in 1989-90, Western intervention encouraged the various separatists. In 1998 the US armed and financed the Kosovan Liberation Army, which has carried out numerous acts of terrorism against the Serbs. As a result, the Serbs have carried out stern repression, and have doubtless committed numerous excesses in so doing.

Guerrilla warfare of the sort the KLA has been carrying out is a breach of the Hague and Geneva Conventions, as it obliterates the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. These conventions state that combatants in war must wear a uniform and carry their arms openly. Guerrillas who carry out military actions in civilian clothes and then blend back into the civilian population are in breach of these laws of war. Every nation which is faced with warfare of this nature has always taken repressive measures against both the guerrillas and a civilian population which it believes is supporting them. The term "guerrilla" comes from the Spaniards who fought behind the lines in this illegal fashion against Napoleon's army during the Peninsula War. Napoleon carried out harsh and bloody reprisals against Spanish civilians in towns and villages which harboured and supplied the guerrilla forces. In other campaigns, where Napoleon fought against uniformed regular armies, he took no such retaliatory measures against civilians. An example from British history is the repressive actions of the "Black-and-Tan" paramilitary forces which fought against the Irish Republican Army during the Irish civil war from 1920-22, and carried out widespread summary executions, torture, terror, and other excesses against Irish civilians who they believed were supporting the IRA, in a similar manner to what the Serbs have been doing in Kosovo. Herbert Asquith, former British prime minister, said of Black-and-Tan outrages in Ireland at the time:

Things are being done in Ireland which would disgrace the blackest annals of the lowest despotism in Europe.⁷⁹

The reader can imagine what would have happened if, say, the US, France and Soviet Russia had decided to bomb London and the British armed forces in an act of "humanitarian intervention" to stop the British "genocide" in Ireland. It would have united the British people behind their government, and intensified the excesses of the Black-and-Tans. This is, of course, exactly what has happened in Serbia as a result of the illegal Nato bombings.

In a recent article opposing the bombings, Chomsky has pointed to the hypocrisy of the US in bombing Serbia while actually contributing to massacres on a similar or larger scale in Colombia, Turkey and Laos. He argues that

Despite the desperate efforts of ideologues to prove that circles are square, there is no serious doubt that the Nato bombings further undermine what remains of the fragile structure of international law. ... Similarly, the bombing of Iraq was a brazen expression of contempt for the UN,

even the specific timing, and was so understood. And the same is true of the destruction of half the pharmaceutical production of a small African country [Sudan] a few months earlier.

It was during the Reagan years that defiance of international law and the UN Charter became entirely open. The highest authorities explained with brutal clarity that the World Court, the UN and other agencies had become irrelevant because they no longer followed US orders, as they did in the early postwar years. Under Clinton, the defiance of world order has become so extreme as to be of concern even to hawkish policy analysts. ...

A standard argument is that we had to do something: we could not simply stand by as atrocities continued. That is never true. One choice, always, is to follow the Hippocratic principle: "First, do no harm." If you can think of no way to adhere to that elementary principle, then do nothing. There are always ways that can be considered. Diplomacy and negotiations are never at an end.

The right of "humanitarian intervention" is likely to be more frequently invoked in future — maybe with justification, maybe not — now that cold war pretexts have lost their efficacy. ... For those who do not adopt the standards of Saddam Hussein, there is a heavy burden of proof to meet in threatening or using force in violation of the principles of international order.⁸⁰

A LIBERTARIAN FOREIGN POLICY

The libertarian approach to British foreign policy should be based, then, on the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other nations, and a repudiation of the use of British armed forces for the ambitions of any foreign interest, whether it be the US, Nato, the UN, the EU, Germany, Israel, Kuwait, Kosovo or anybody else. The British armed forces, including an independent nuclear deterrent, should be reserved for the defence of the United Kingdom and its possessions and vital interests only, and the primary function of British diplomacy should be to prevent situations arising where it is necessary to deploy such forces in defensive action. The adoption of such a policy necessarily entails British withdrawal from both the European Union and Nato. Such a foreign policy in no way precludes voluntary involvement by British citizens in actions relating to foreign conflicts. Quite the reverse: it implies a greater emphasis on humanitarian, charitable and campaigning activities by the voluntary sector.

I quote again the words of Cobden:

... as little intercourse as possible between Governments, as much connection as possible between the nations of the world.⁸¹

British law (but not American law) already permits any person who wants to volunteer to serve as a mercenary in some foreign army to do so at his own risk, without jeopardising his British citizenship. Let those who want to fight against Iraq and Serbia, then, form an International Brigade to do so. I'll believe in the sincerity of Tony Blair, Robin Cook and the other enthusiasts for military intervention when they volunteer to head the charge on the first day.

NOTES

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