

Feb. 9 bombing, that “shattered the peace process, and led to the breaking of the cease-fire.”

Similarly, in a Feb. 17 interview with the German daily *Frankfurter Rundschau*, parts of which were reprinted by the *Berliner Zeitung* and Austria’s *Die Presse*, Sinn Fein Vice Chairman and Chief Negotiator Martin McGuinness charged that the bombings were a pretext welcomed by London “hard-liners” to disrupt the peace process, and that Major “broke his promise. His commitment for peace is nonexistent. . . . The British prime minister was offered a golden opportunity to cut through the knot of the entire conflict, and he wasted this opportunity. . . . What else can be said about it, than that the Irish peace process has been sacrificed on the altar of British calculation?”

The *Berliner Zeitung* version of the McGuinness interview added the observation, that there is suspicion in certain Sinn Fein circles about the automatic readiness, without further investigation, to hold the IRA responsible for the terror bombings.

A Mountbatten-Windsor ‘Reichstag Fire’?

For the skeptics and empiricists who will object that what we have outlined above is, as one London strategist put it, “over-conspiratorial,” a couple of other important considerations must be kept in mind.

Certain British spokesmen, most explicitly such as Sir Peregrine Worsthorne of the Hollinger Corp.-owned London *Sunday Telegraph*, in his Feb. 4 column, are screeching that Britain must move rapidly toward establishing the infrastructure of an overt (rather than traditional low-intensity) police state, at a time when the welfare state must be dismantled, and when mass protests from the poorer elements of the population can be anticipated.

Since Feb. 9, security is being reinforced throughout the United Kingdom, supposedly in response to new bomb threats from the IRA, not only in London but also in Britain’s provincial cities. Highest-level meetings of Britain’s police, security, and intelligence officials have been taking place. Obviously, this provides a perfect occasion for implementing the infrastructure that Worsthorne and co-thinkers desire.

One “IRA threat” being reported by British security officials, is to the British royal family. In the current mood of a British establishment aware that the U.K. itself is entering a period of grave constitutional crisis and that the global financial system is on the brink of major shocks, it is not to be excluded that what were formerly “unthinkable,” might now become “thinkable,” and that an attack on a leading royal would be “arranged.” It need be recalled, that Lord Mountbatten was assassinated in 1979. Certain British planners might think it useful, to then blame leading adversaries of the Crown for this, in what could be likened to the Nazis’ cynical use of the Reichstag Fire for political ends. The British secret services have, previously, exploited high-profile assassinations of leading public figures, to accomplish political goals.

Reviews

Chatham House pushes new strategy for Empire

by Mark Burdman

Economic Opportunities for Britain and the Commonwealth, Discussion Paper 60

by Katharine West

Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1995

66 pages, £7.50

On March 29, 1995, London’s Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA), often referred to as Chatham House, sponsored a conference entitled “Britain in the World.” Various British government ministers and senior establishment policymakers were joined by the soon-to-be-knighted Henry Kissinger and others, to discuss how Britain might escalate its neo-imperial offensive around the world. *EIR* was among the few publications outside Great Britain at the time, that assessed the importance of that conference (see *EIR*, March 31, 1995, “British Elites Gather to Reverse ‘Inevitable Decline’”).

One of the polemics, was that British policymakers have been too narrowly focussed on problems in continental Europe. Now, they said, they must instead play the “globalist” cards that Britain has, capitalizing particularly on the areas of the former Empire that today comprise the (British) Commonwealth.

The criticism of the “Euro-focus,” was largely premised on a view that continental Europe would be destroyed. Western Europe, caught in the stranglehold of a Maastricht Treaty that was, in large part, architected by the British-allied late French President François Mitterrand, was adjudged, not incorrectly, to be heading into economic and political collapse, while eastern Europe and Russia would be destroyed by International Monetary Fund “reforms” imposed by Margaret Thatcher and George Bush.

The “Commonwealth as the new face of Empire” polemic confirms what *EIR* and its founding editor Lyndon LaRouche have repeatedly stressed: The “Empire” never, in fact, died, but today exists in a somewhat modified form from its heyday of the 1688-1940 period. Great Britain exercises vast control

over global strategic raw materials, energy resources, and food production and distribution. It also controls, primarily via the City of London, but also through de facto City of London subsidiaries in Asia and elsewhere, a significant percentage of international financial flows.

‘An extensive networking capacity’

The “neo-imperial Commonwealth” perspective has been promoted by a number of British Conservative Party spokesmen, including the outgoing chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, David Howell, and by “Euro-skeptic” Conservative parliamentarian William Cash. From the government, Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind has been increasingly on Howell’s wavelength, while from the opposition Labour Party, so has party head Tony Blair and several of his advisers.

The Commonwealth-centered approach is elaborated in a new report of the RIIA, “Economic Opportunities for Britain and the Commonwealth,” authored by Katharine West. Based in Australia, West wrote the report while a fellow at the University of London’s Institute for Commonwealth Studies (ICS). The ICS complex also includes a Sir Robert Menzies Center for Australian Studies. Sir Robert was the pre-World War II prime minister of Australia, who stripped Australia’s national defenses at the behest of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The British-Australian “special relationship,” as a pillar of the Commonwealth, is a subject dear to West’s heart.

West acknowledges that she received significant help in writing the report from “diplomatic, commercial, and other representatives of many Commonwealth countries, as well as a large number of people associated with the diverse commercial activities of the City of London.” One such figure in the latter category, Warwick Lightfoot of the Royal Bank of Scotland, praised her thesis, in an article in the *Wall Street Journal-Europe*.

While the report is laden with jargon common to the academic think-tank world, and is replete with neologisms popularized in British and U.S. “New Age” circles of the type that generated U.S. Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, West’s report is an unabashed call for Britain to assert its global imperial power, via the Commonwealth. As she sees it, the Commonwealth is a unique instrument for Britain to penetrate all corners of the world.

For one, the Commonwealth has “the real advantage of transregionalism,” because it is “a link between regional and global elements in the international relations system.” This makes it a “third kind of influence, strengthening the other two by supplementing but not competing with them. Instead of being seen negatively as an in-between association lacking the clout of either regional or global systems, the Commonwealth can be more positively analyzed in terms of its potential to exercise a constructive transregional influence on a wide range of policy issues affecting the economic futures of

member states. These issues involve not only the obvious areas of investment and trade, but also related areas such as environmental and climate control, human ecology, and human rights.”

This, she says, gives the “modern Commonwealth” an “extensive networking capacity.” She quotes a May 10, 1995 speech by Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku of Nigeria: “In the language of modern mathematics, outside the United Nations, the Commonwealth is the next largest intersection of the many sets represented by regional organizations. It cuts across regional bodies and helps indirectly to draw them together.” According to Anyaoku, the Commonwealth has a “web of relationships with a wide range of multilateral organizations.”

West argues that, thanks to the array of Commonwealth member-countries, it has significant influence in the Group of Seven, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the developing sector nations’ Group of 15 and Group of 77, and so on. She speculates that the Commonwealth could even provide an alternative, in the future, to an increasingly discredited United Nations.

The vast extent of the Commonwealth

Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku of Nigeria boasted, in 1992, that the Commonwealth represents “a cross-section of the international community, with its nearly 1.5 billion people inhabiting all the continents, living in one-third of the world’s nations, and constituting one-quarter of the human race.”

Including the dependent territories of Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, the Commonwealth includes over 28% of world population, and over 23% of world land-area.

The members of the Commonwealth are: Antigua and Barbuda; Australia; Bahamas; Bangladesh; Barbados; Belize; Botswana; Brunei; Canada; Cyprus; Dominica; Gambia; Ghana; Grenada; Guyana; India; Jamaica; Kenya; Kiribati; Lesotho; Malawi; Malaysia; Maldives; Malta; Mauritius; Namibia; Nauru; New Zealand; Nigeria; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; St. Christopher (St. Kitts)-Nevis; St. Lucia; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Singapore; Solomon Islands; South Africa; Sri Lanka; Swaziland; Tanzania; Tonga; Trinidad and Tobago; Tuvalu; Uganda; United Kingdom; Vanuatu; Western Samoa; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.

This “transregional” character and “extensive networking capacity” overlaps a second point, namely, that because of its vast size across the planet, one Commonwealth country can easily provide, for another, “an effective jumping-off point” for activities in a “geographically distant part of the world.” Her pet example is the role that Australia can play for Britain in Asia, but other possibilities could be “South Africa for the rest of Africa, Cyprus for the Middle East, Britain for the European Union, or Canada for NAFTA [the North American Free Trade Agreement].” This, again, can be enhanced by “creative networking.”

‘An informal financial empire’

The roots of West’s ideas lie in the legacies from the heyday of the British Empire. Hence, she supports those British strategists and planners “who maintain that ‘globalism’ is Britain’s natural and logical style, and that the world as a whole, including the Commonwealth, is Britain’s natural economic territory.” West endorses the view of Bill Jamieson, economics editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, the newspaper owned by the imperialist, Canada-based Hollinger Corp. West praises Jamieson as “one of the most forceful advocates of a global Britain,” and quotes him stressing Britain’s “marked pre-disposition to trade and invest worldwide. . . . Her island history, the growth of sea trade in the 17th and 18th centuries, the global market requirements of the industrial revolution, the experience of empire and the *dynamics of an informal financial empire that maintained its vibrancy long after the formal empire went into decline*” (emphasis added).

West says that the “result” of what he is describing, is “Britain’s huge portfolio of overseas assets, spread globally, with a gross total which, at the end of 1994, exceeded £1.4 trillion, up 20% from the level of 1992.”

Throughout her pamphlet, the Commonwealth is put forward as the organization which most embodies that worldwide neo-imperial capability, and those British policymakers are chided, who have “sought to ignore or deny the potential of the Commonwealth in the international arena.” She is happy about “encouraging signs in Britain of a change of mood about the Commonwealth.” But “until the recent signs of a renewed and positive interest, the preceding three decades of British comment on the Commonwealth had far more often than not been negative, concentrating on what the association could not achieve rather than what it could. . . . Critics continued to stereotype (and sometimes caricature) the Commonwealth as a modern (and powerless) version of the old British Empire. . . . After three decades of being either criticized or ignored, the Commonwealth is being reassessed and is now coming to be valued. . . . The potential influence of Commonwealth links should not be underestimated.”

‘Positive feelings’ toward Mother London

Particularly important in this regard, West writes, is the “shared Commonwealth business culture,” otherwise referred

to as the “‘English-speaking’ business culture.” This is reinforced by “the inheritance of English common law” in Commonwealth countries, the which “provides a unifying element of the legal systems of most member-states of the Commonwealth.”

The broader point about this “shared culture,” is argued in the following way: “As well as strong criticism of Britain from some in the Commonwealth, there is from others much affection and respect for aspects of Britain’s cultural and institutional influence. These positive feelings should not be underestimated, nor their value ignored, as highly constructive building blocks for Britain’s future bilateral and multilateral economic relations with Commonwealth countries. . . . It is equally important to be aware, that in today’s world, the attachment of Commonwealth countries is not to the original British ‘homeland’ as such, but rather to valued linguistic and institutional legacies from that ‘homeland.’ Each Commonwealth country has selected from the English-speaking culture those practices and institutions it wishes to adopt and often to adapt.”

The ‘Anglo-Saxon empire’ and its ‘British diaspora’

One of the more astonishing features of West’s argument is her plea for the recognition of a so-called “British diaspora,” which represents a special imperial capability, if exploited effectively. This is a metaphor adapted from the notion of the “dispersion” (“diaspora” is the Greek word) of the Jews into many lands, after the destruction wrought by the Roman Empire. Today, West notes, the term “diaspora” is used less exclusively for the special Jewish case, but as an expression of the “vocabulary of transnationalism.”

For a group to qualify as a “diaspora,” is to be “scattered over a wide part of the Earth’s surface.” Writes West: “In this respect at least, the British diaspora approximates the Jewish idea-type.” She quotes from a 1950 book by one Charles Carrington: “The majority of the British race have abandoned the British Isles and made their homes elsewhere, a diaspora which in its effect upon the progress of mankind can be compared only with the Dispersion of the Jews.”

West gets quite carried away: “In today’s global economy, there is real value in emphasizing one of the most positive legacies of ‘the Anglo-Saxon empire’ or ‘the British diaspora.’ . . . Whatever the negative aspects of British imperialism, it provided the now obvious advantage of exposing one-quarter of the world’s population to varying degrees and kinds of contact with a transnational and transregional common culture, based on the dominant form of communication in international trade and commerce: the English language.”

The Commonwealth provides a special vehicle, with its widely used English language, and its British diaspora interacting with “other” diasporas, such as the “Indian diaspora.” She writes: “The constructive association of multiple diasporas *within the context of a uniting British diaspora* offers

dramatic opportunities for the economic and social enrichment of the Commonwealth by productive cross-cultural relationships in the modern global economy. . . . In being host to a number of economically successful diasporas, the Commonwealth has a unique asset it should seek to use in the most creative ways possible" (emphasis in original).

The shift toward Asia

West's construct is centered on a necessary (and, she claims, ongoing) "shift" in British emphasis, away from Europe, and toward Asia. "Whatever the rhetoric," she proclaims, "Britain's trade and investment overseas are in fact growing fastest not with Europe but with the successful economies of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Rim. . . . Whatever the British government's political preoccupation with the European Union, the balance of British trade is tilting heavily away from Europe." She presents various figures, charts, and tables on "net cross-border equity flows" and "foreign direct investment by destination," to back up this "Asia directionality" of British activity.

Asia is to be the prime looting ground for Britain over the coming period. The so-called "Asian tiger" members of the Commonwealth (Malaysia, Singapore) are fondly evaluated, but two other countries receive special attention: India and Australia.

From reading West, and speaking to several of her co-thinkers in Britain as well as to certain influentials from the Indian subcontinent, one would think the British Raj had never been replaced by an independent nation of India. West writes: "With a population three times greater than the whole of Europe, and projected to equal China's population by 2020, India is profoundly important to the economic and political future of the Commonwealth, half of whose total population lives within India's borders. . . . Already, India has begun to realize, on a small scale, some of the huge potential which many believe it possesses, to become a major global center for information industries. If India manages to maintain the pace of internal economic reform required for a breakthrough to sustained rapid development (of the kind achieved in smaller East Asian economies), the overall economic and political clout of the Commonwealth would be dramatically increased. To a lesser extent, the same could be said to apply to post-apartheid South Africa."

West promotes Australia's key role as a potential "regional headquarters" for British "multinational groups": "There are the obvious . . . advantages of its geographical proximity and wide range of increasingly close ties to the Asia-Pacific region. Australia is also a leading international financial center, ranking second after Tokyo in Asian equities and futures markets, and with the eighth largest foreign-exchange market in the world. . . .

"As far as British companies are concerned, Australia also offers the significant advantage of a familiar environment with the norms and practices of the Commonwealth business

culture. An increasing number of British companies are appreciating the major advantages of being able to launch their activities in culturally unfamiliar Asia from a culturally familiar Australian base. This cultural aspect of Australia's competitive edge is now being widely recognized as a key selling point in the country's 'Australia as Asia-Pacific Regional Headquarters' marketing drive. . . .

"While Australia has proved to be a significant market and location in its own right for British trade and investment, the country will increasingly be used as a jumping-off point for British companies to launch their business activities in the Asia-Pacific region."

West concludes: "Its relationship with Australia provides Britain with a classic case study of how, in the modern global economy, shared experience of the Commonwealth business culture can facilitate and consolidate mutually beneficial bilateral economic relations across regional and other kinds of boundaries. In parts of the Commonwealth where cultural differences are even more marked than those between Britain and Australia, the Commonwealth business culture has been correspondingly more important as a unifying force. In the ethnically heterogeneous Commonwealth, its common business culture is now widely considered to be *the most positive legacy of the British Empire* or what is now often called 'the British diaspora' " (emphasis added).

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