
A Scots Nationalist View

British imperialism still stalks globe

Alan Clayton, an activist of the Scottish Socialist Party who is here writing in his own name, sent this speech to be read to the Paris conference of the international Commission to Investigate Human Rights Violations, which Executive Intelligence Review helped to organize, on Nov. 24-25 (see EIR of Dec. 7, 1990, page 40, for a report). We are pleased to reprint it here.

The situation in the Gulf is pregnant with all the potential to precipitate a Third World War. *EIR* is to be congratulated for calling this conference in an attempt to inject a modicum of sanity into the situation.

The Scottish nationalist perspective from which I view the present world crisis is really an integral part of a lifetime of political struggle against British imperialism and its consequences for my own country and for the whole of humanity, because underneath the thinly disguised rhetoric of "Democracy, Liberty, Mother of Parliaments" et al., lurks a vicious imperialist leopard which has changed its spots not at all.

Scotland has always sat uneasily under the incorporating union with England into which it was forced in 1707. The resurrection of the old Roman colonial name of "Britain" was meant to ease the pain and disguise the reality, although it never really did. That unease is felt almost totally today.

In a sense Scotland owes the world an apology for accepting the imperialist ethos and aspirations too easily and readily. All too often it was tartan shock troops whose aggressive instincts were inflamed to charge into the rights, liberties, and wealth of other nations in the name of the British state. At the end of the day, however, I don't think the Scots did any more than any profoundly colonized peoples did; it seems part of the imperialist tradition.

It is that British state which above all else now threatens the possibility of creating peace and order out of the impending chaos in the Middle East. The post South Atlantic flag-waving, the merciless sinking of the *General Belgrano*, the de-humanizing of Argentinians within the British press, the deliberate campaign of lies and disinformation inflicted on the U.K. public, all serve to remind us of the utter ruthlessness of which the British state is capable. It is an imperial-

ist tradition which its former colonials in America have learned well.

The case of Lyndon LaRouche

Different traditions have inevitably developed on both sides of the Atlantic, of course, over two centuries. Viewed from a West European perspective, post-Watergate U.S. society seems to have developed a deep and profoundly damaging suspicion and cynicism about almost everyone in public life. From this has developed a perspective that everyone in public life is "up to something." It is probably this more than anything else that created the political climate that allows threatening, dissident figures such as Lyndon LaRouche to be incarcerated without the creation of the kind of massive political backlash that would occur in a less cynical type of society. Certainly the thought that a leading public figure in the U.S.A. can be jailed on trumped-up charges must have almost horrific implications for world peace and stability. Getting rid of tyrannies in the East, with the consequent arms buildup they cause, will do little if similar tyrannies begin to appear in the West. Crushing dissent is very much a two-edged sword.

It is not my intent however, to disparage U.S. society. While its political establishment may have one of the most effective security services in the world, the ebb and flow of public opinion has a far greater effectiveness among a population which, although cynical about its political leaders, feels it can influence them in a way that is not felt in Britain, where serious dissent in time of crisis is usually perceived as disloyal, if not actually treasonable.

I suspect that at the end of the day, one possible scenario is that George Bush will be inhibited from taking military action by an American public opinion fearful of another Vietnam and thousands of young people coming home in body bags. The British state does not have that particular inhibition, because it has never allowed its dead servicemen home, for fear of the effect on public opinion, as the countless European war graves will testify. Old John Bull is a very experienced wager of war.

Don't underestimate senile Britain

I beg that no one should dismiss the British state in its dotage. Never forget that the nearest historical equivalent to the British state, Austria-Hungary, precipitated the First World War while on its deathbed.

History can, and does, repeat itself if its lessons are not learned. Those who control the past control the present, and those who control the present control the future. In helping return the ancient Scottish nation to its rightful owners, the Scottish people, the danger to human survival from one of the most malignant imperialist systems ever to disfigure the face of the earth will be removed for ever.

What greater contribution to the fight for human rights and freedom can there be than that?