

EIR Feature

Will we repeat the blunders that led to World War I?

by Jacques Cheminade

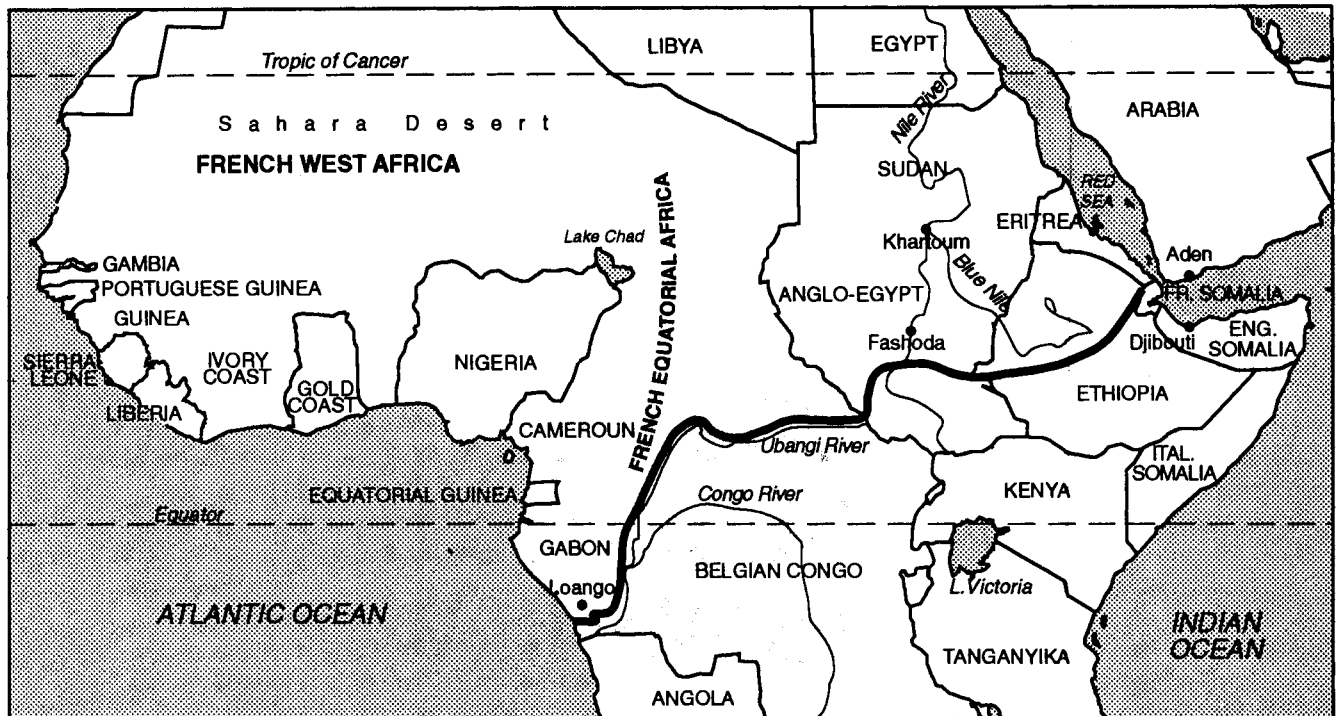
The author is chairman of the Schiller Institute in France. This article is based on a speech he delivered to a conference of the Schiller Institute and the International Caucus of Labor Committees on Aug. 31, 1991, in Alexandria, Virginia, and on a longer historical analysis which he published in the French newspaper Nouvelle Solidarité.

The two irrational monstrosities of the twentieth century, fascism and communism, have been buried; but what we now confront is the *mother* of both monstrosities: *British Anglo-American liberalism*. It is this Aristotelian liberal matrix that led the world to World War I, and then to all other evils of the twentieth century.

That is why it is necessary today to look back into the real causes of the disasters of our century: From the trenches of Verdun, where about *1 million people died*, French and German together, to the concentration camps of Nazism and communism, to the systematic looting and mass murdering by colonialism, to the racist world genocide of today. We have no choice if we want to make our world better, if we want to save humanity from being an "earthly inferno," as the Pope said; we have no choice but to challenge all our axiomatic assumptions. We must determine why Europe, at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, submitted itself entirely to the British liberal economic, political, and pseudo-scientific worldview, and why people who were at least aware of some fundamental aspects of the disaster coming, were then not able to reverse the trend.

Let's start with what in European history stands as a symbol of the French surrender to the British: Fashoda. This, not the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo, can be counted as the real start of World War I.

On July 10, 1898, France's Captain Marchand reached the Nile at Fashoda, in Sudan, on a mission to oppose the British; on Sept. 20, after having conquered the Sudanese "dervishes," Britain's General Kitchener confronted him. They remained thus for many weeks, toe to toe, until the French government gave way,



Captain Marchand's campaign against the British in central Africa ended in France's humiliation and the start of the Entente Cordiale. The black line shows Marchand's march from Loango to Fashoda, where he surrendered on Nov. 4, 1898, and his withdrawal to Djibouti.

and, on Nov. 4, 1898, Captain Marchand withdrew from Fashoda.

This confrontation between two colonial armies—French and British—around a delapidated fortress in the heart of a continent at that time only partly explored, seems very long ago, closer to a Conrad novel, than to the tragic upheavals of our own *fin de siècle*. And yet, the Fashoda incident marked a watershed in French foreign policy, and thus a transformation of the game of the great powers in Europe.

After Fashoda, the “phantoms of the night” of which the French humanist Jean-Leon Jaurès spoke, began to haunt Europe. Europe's destiny became war: war in the world of inter-imperial rivalries defined by the principles of British economic and political assumptions—“Buy cheap, sell dear.” Economic policy was left to financial interests and merchants imposing usury. Political rule was given to the monarchs and the courts. The people were trapped, humiliated, brainwashed, to make them believe that the *Other* is the enemy.

After Fashoda, the people of Europe were led by not-so-secret military alliances in a chain reaction toward war. Théophile Delcassé replaced Gabriel Hanotaux as France's foreign minister, guided by the obsession, which he confided to Maurice Paleologue: “Ah, my dear fellow, if only Russia, England, and France could ally together against Germany!”

The British strategy

The dominant ideology, universally accepted, became that of the British Empire: Divide and rule; divide up Asia

and Africa; be guided by nothing but a will to power and possession without program, the absolute right to make the most of one's stocks and bonds—all leading directly into war. France, although a republic, like the United States (which itself joined in the game, under President Theodore Roosevelt), collapsed more than the others and let itself be dragged along by the logic of empires, of monarchies and oligarchies—a “logic of war” which in this century led from the trenches of Chemin-des-Dames, the charnelhouses of Verdun, to the humiliation of May 1940, to the bloody imbecility of our colonial wars, straight to President François Mitterrand's submission to the Atlanticists of today, in implementation of the Anglo-American “new world order.”

The fundamental element of the world situation, was that the British oligarchy perceived an eternal division of Europe as being in its interest, so that the reins of power could never drop from Britain's hands. Having made of London the world center of financial, commercial, and maritime power, the oligarchy hoped to preserve this power through the domination of the sea and the colonies. That domination was incompatible with the development of Europe, with the continuation of industrial progress in France, in Germany, and in some regions in Russia, and finally, with an accord among the continental nations for the purpose of realizing a project of mutual economic growth. England, the British System, was by its very nature the wind which blew the stormclouds of war across the European sky.

The continental European nations committed a terrible

error. Instead of forming an alliance of the kind sought by a Hanotaux or a Jaurès, they tried to play more subtly and more aggressively on the very playing field defined by England. “Willy” (Wilhelm II of Germany), “Nicky” (Nicholas II of Russia), Raymond Poincaré, and Delcassé, the pathetic principal agents of this fundamental error, wanted to play better than Edward VII or Chamberlain at a game whose rules they, the continental European nations, had not set. The result was that their nations, their peoples, and their governments were all losers, and the world has not yet emerged, even today, despite two world wars, from this logic of blood and iron.

What we will show here, is the absolute responsibility of financial liberalism, following in the footsteps of the British System, for the outbreak of the First World War, and the part which the French Republic played. Starting from the outlook and the methods of judgment which the British System inculcated, we must understand how the idea of the nation, the republican ideal, and even religious doctrines, became progressively perverted, transformed into factors of exclusion and division—even though, to begin with, they had all been, in differing degrees, transmitters of universal values.

Today, with communism and fascism having disappeared, history has begun to repeat itself like a stutterer, even to the point of repeating the same names and the same words in the Balkans. Already, in the Serbian enclaves in Croatia, streets have been renamed for Gavillo Principe, the assassin of Sarajevo.

And this time, once again, only a grand European policy, a Franco-German policy, could create the opportunity for the recovery of the continent’s economy, and the world’s.

Will Europe live up to the greatness of her task? Looking at her leaders, one is tempted to answer, “No.” They themselves are, as are their peoples, saturated body and soul in the “British” system of thinking. The Gulf war was a terrible example of this blindness and this mediocrity. French President Mitterrand from the outset bowed to a “logic of war,” as if war were ineluctable.

As for the countries of the East, our European brothers too, we are not capable of proposing to them, as the price of their liberty, anything but the closing of their factories and the lowering of their standard of living. The neo-liberal economists are rampaging there, transferring power to a “communist” *nomenklatura* converted to theories worse than those of the years of the teens or the 1930s.

Having learned nothing, it seems, and understood nothing, our leaders have taken up again their course to the abyss, as they did after Fashoda.

Hanotaux’s grand design—and limitations

To understand this, let’s look at what happened *before* Fashoda. This leads us to examine the policies of Gabriel Hanotaux, the French foreign affairs minister between 1894 and 1895, and again from 1896 to 1899.

Hanotaux tried to shift the policies of France out of an

obsession with revenge against Germany, which had won the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and grabbed Alsace-Lorraine, into a policy of colonization and development of Africa and Asia, and a policy also of inter-European development. His plan was based mainly on economic development of energy and transportation: railways, coal, iron. Hanotaux had plans for a Trans-Saharan Railway and a Trans-Siberian Railway—and the latter was built by the Russians, in a project of Hanotaux and Count Sergei Witte, who was a minister of the Russian government at the time.

It was Hanotaux’s Trans-Saharan conception which confronted the concept of Britain’s Cecil Rhodes, of a north-south Egypt-to-South Africa link, which would place that part of the world fully under the control of the British. It was a very simple choice: north-south or east-west.

Hanotaux understood very well the strategic importance of railroads at the dawn of the twentieth century. In Africa, he saw in the railroad the “true conqueror,” and envisioned three tracks of a Trans-Saharan line:

- In the east, a Bizerte-Brazzaville link, by way of Bougrara, Gadhames, Rhat, Belma, Lake Chad, Songha and the Congo—that was the Bonnard project;
- In the center, a Biskra-Ouargla-Assiout-Lake Chad line;
- And, finally, in the west, a South-Ouranais-Timbucoo line, to link Senegal and Algeria.

His conception of the “profit” involved in the construction of these railroads was an interesting one: that of “profit-infrastructure,” which took into account the longer term impact of the project—an outlook which broke with the British conception of “profit-booty,” tied to the immediate revenues of transport.

He wrote, concerning the plan for a railway through the Sahara: “The expense is immense, they say, and the return will be zero. The traffic of the desert, what a joke. . . . That the desert doesn’t pay, I agree. But what is the desert? It is an obstacle, it is a separation. To pretend to demand of it a return, is to look at the question backwards. The sea too is an obstacle, a separation. We do not hesitate to cross it, however, to link up countries which, without the initiative and audacity of the first navigators, would have remained forever separated. And the sea still does not pay. . . . Everywhere where the railway has penetrated, peace has been established. . . . If [the railway] economizes on the costs of installation, if it economizes on the costs of refueling, if it militarily protects Algeria and Senegal, if it makes it unnecessary to set up in the south the outposts which cost so much . . . if it performs such services, it will have justified its creation.”

Hanotaux also conceived of a continental European alliance, based on the type of infrastructural progress which the railroads represented.

Fashoda was a blow against all this by the British. And Hanotaux himself ultimately proved to be too immersed in

the British System to break its mold, to offer effective opposition.

He saw the world as a duel between France and Britain: sometimes war, sometimes dialogue, but in any event, he thought, it's the determining concept. He admired Talleyrand, the French foreign minister of the Holy Alliance—the worst of the worst, whom Napoléon aptly described as “a piece of shit in a very beautiful glove.”

Hanotaux tried to make peace with Germany. He sent the French fleet, in June 1895, as a graceful gesture to the opening of the Kiel Canal. At the same time, he also wanted to make arrangements with the British. Everything was solved, except that question of Fashoda, that question of an east-west or north-south connection—French or British. He wanted to achieve a French-Russian agreement, not against the Germans, not as an offensive agreement, but as a defensive agreement. He wanted to patch things up; but what was lacking was a higher conception of statecraft.

What is the worm in the fruit, where you can see the fundamental problem? It's *colonialism*; and we face the very same problem today, in a different form.

The logic of Hanotaux's thinking was determined by the Treaty of Berlin, which cut Africa into pieces. And Hanotaux had, to be honest, racial views not much better than those of the British.

Hearing him, in *Le Partage de l'Afrique*, (“The Division of Africa”) in 1909, talk of “the noble qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race . . . a grand and noble race,” we understand that his categories of thought were not, alas, different from those of London, or those of the entire European oligarchy, marked by the social Darwinism of Spencer. “The fittest” had triumphed, and that was justice; the inferior races had no destiny except to be taken in hand by “noble colonizers” of France and Britain, who certainly had their disagreements to settle, but only “gentlemen's disagreements.”

Speaking of Africa, Hanotaux wrote of the “barbarism of those immense regions” peopled by “poor inferior races . . . stupid and wild populations, having neither art, nor wealth, and consequently incapable of commerce and industry, nomadic tribes, surviving or defeated according to the outcome of a fortunate hunt or an ephemeral conquest, black demons in some clearing glimpsed by the light of the fire of a cannibal feast, sinister faces appearing or disappearing in a thicket, idle tribes stuffing themselves with food from the windfall of a good catch; then, the next day, decimated—reduced to nothing by misery and famine, roaming with sunken bellies, or bellies full of soil and filthy insects—that is life in this cursed land. And it is there that we speak of colonizing!”

The conception is that of Rudyard Kipling, who was a leading British Freemason of the Cecil Rhodes camp: the “white man's burden.” Hanotaux did not understand what Pope John Paul II has recently elaborated in his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, for example: that the poor of the world,



French Foreign Minister Gabriel Hanotaux. His grand strategy was a threat to the British, and was ultimately defeated.

those who have not yet had access to universal history, are really the people who should be helped the most, because they represent a higher potential. Hanotaux only sees them as what they are at a given point. From that, you can see what Aristotelianism does to a mind.

Delcassé and the Entente Cordiale

Jules Méline, the prime minister while Hanotaux was foreign minister, fell from power on June 15, 1898, and Théophile Delcassé came in as foreign minister in the new cabinet. The interesting point, if you look at all these arrangements, is that Delcassé was already colonial minister in the government in which Hanotaux was foreign minister. So, it was internecine rivalry, and not a fundamental difference on Hanotaux's part, nor the capacity to act from a higher standpoint.

Delcassé destroyed the potential for any entente on the continent based on a community of sovereign republics. Instead, he proclaimed the French surrender at Fashoda, turned French policy fully against Germany, and made the French-Russian Alliance a totally offensive alliance rather than a defensive one. He organized the British-French Entente Cordiale, signed on April 8, 1904. Delcassé explained his conception to his advisers: political and military alliance with England; expansion of the alliance with Russia, and splitting Italy from Germany.

He is totally opportunistic, cynical; he believes in nothing but power. Power for him is where money is, and money is in the City of London. So he is pro-British by interest, but also his territorial and geopolitical conception of the world is British. He is obsessed to get back Alsace-Lorraine as a piece of land belonging to France. And he is pro-British by snobbery. He is the type of “republican” who is more than happy to be coopted at court by the lords. He has a group of snob-ambassadors around him, his own network.

Delcassé is cold, nasty, egoistic. He is a strong personali-

ty, compared to the wheeler-dealers of the Third Republic. And that's why he was able to impose himself. He seized the occasion which Fashoda presented him, to wipe out Hanotaux's policy and impose his own—the policy of the Entente Cordiale.

This defined a road toward hell. A Franco-German war was almost declared in 1905 over the question of Morocco. Delcassé wanted war. In a brief reaction of sanity in the French government, Delcassé was kicked out in 1905; but France did not break with Delcassé's policy, which continued without him. Part of it was a French-American agreement on the Panama Canal: The Panama Canal was given by the French to Theodore Roosevelt and Wall Street, and in return, Roosevelt supported France in Morocco. This is a very little-known history; but I have the text of the deal.

History between 1880 and 1914 was a set of mafia-type agreements and counter-agreements; nothing but that. Between 1904 and 1914, Europe went from confrontation to confrontation into war. When the Moroccan question was solved, the Balkan question flared up, and ultimately led to war.

The oligarchical mind

What underlies this descent of Europe into the maelstrom, is a world defined by *usury*, *malthusianism*, and *entropy*.

Usury: France, like England, became at the time a rentier country, and not a country geared toward productive investment. The Rothschilds and the Paribas banking group, as in Morocco, controlled the French economy. In Morocco, they trapped the sultan with debt, just as the usurers do today. And when the sultan could not repay his debts, they imposed a protectorate and French domination of Morocco.

If you look at the period between 1904 and 1914, French business—banks, for example—invested abroad. *Seventy-five percent of their investment was entirely oriented toward speculation abroad*, domination abroad, and not national development. About half of the French total income came from investments abroad. A Moroccan Committee ruled the country. Take the case of the loans to Russia. First these loans *were* for economic development—energy and transportation. But when Delcassé took over, they were shifted to military-strategic purposes. Railroads continued to be built in Russia, but as strategic lines toward the German front, because the French and the Russians were preparing for a war with Germany.

Delcassé in 1914 declared, just before the war: I finally have my war. I have checked everything in Russia; all the railroads to the front are in perfect shape.

So, France was under a regime of usury, and small rentiers made the political and social base for the financial forces allied to England and Czarist Russia.

Then you have *malthusianism*, which always goes along with usury: a polite name for mass murder. The renowned

French philosopher Henri Bergson, as president of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (which was the United Nations of those days), declared at the turn of the century that the war of all wars is over population. It is necessary to tax children heavily produced in excess in those countries afflicted by overpopulation. We have to rationalize the production of man through authoritarian methods, if need be, he said.

Sound familiar? It is the spirit of the 1910s and 1920s. This was exactly the moment at which the Harriman family had organized the first pro-euthanasia meetings in the United States.

Then, *entropy*. Entropy is a degeneration of classical science into a concoction of sociological-algebraic radicalism. You take the Second Law of Thermodynamics, usefully applied to a single isolated machine, but which becomes totally insane if applied to the world conceived of as a machine. It is a total rejection in science of non-algebraic functions, of transcendental functions.

So you have *usury* in economics; *malthusianism* as a social policy, and *entropy* in science. This is the trinity of evil that has ruled the world since the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century.

Assault against Christianity

At the same time, the gnostics' dualism, the separation of pure spirit and matter, led to destruction—mainly, at that time, from Paris. This is the true cultural background to the collapse of France and other European countries. It is the systematic destruction of Christian principles, of classical European civilization. It is the Bogomils, Aristotle, Mount Athos in Greece, Descartes, and the positivism of Auguste Comte.

In France, it took the form of the Cartesian separation between pure spirit and matter: the *res cogitans*, the pure spirit, knowledge, and the formal extension, matter. The connection between the two, is a God who intervenes from outside, the *deus ex machina*, who is kicked out of nature, and is also kicked out from inside man.

So, if you accept this dualism, what happens is that you have destroyed the dignity of man. Man is no more in the image of God, the source of Creation. He can no longer intervene into history. His capacity to arrive at conceptions of a higher ordering is destroyed.

The French philosopher Jacques Maritain, who is one of the inspirers of Pope John Paul II, says that the Cartesian world is like an angel running a machine: the spirit and the matter separated. An angel on a motor-bike.

In a world trapped by such an ideology, what happens to religion? On the one side, the Freemasons move in. The Grand Orient Lodge of France decided, in 1876, to rule out of its statutes all references to God or immortality of the human soul. It was prohibited to believe in the immortality of the human soul. Then, probably, you have another choice:

religion as something you need to secure social order, a state religion.

And then you have the Catholic reaction. It was based on a conservative principle, to keep things together, against those evils; yet it had a temptation to submit itself to earthly purposes and designs—specifically, to monarchies. This was another type of Aristotelian organization of society, based on the negation of the divine spark which exists equally in every individual human being. And that destroys religion completely. Religion becomes destroyed in that universe. There is no more theological truth.

The battle of Pope Leo XIII

Leo XIII, from his accession to the papacy in 1878, rightly attempted to intervene into the crisis and to establish an understanding between the Church and the French Republic. It was a matter of defining, for Catholics, a position from which they would plainly accept the framework of the Republic, at the same time that they fought vigorously for the rights of the Church.

If this policy had succeeded in any lasting way, it would have been the end of the influence of British liberalism in France, if not in Europe as a whole.

For two reasons: First, the social doctrine of the Church, as it was defined in the Pope's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, was totally incompatible with economic liberalism. Second, the Christian message thus revitalized was resolutely and absolutely anti-malthusian; and malthusianism was a doctrine and a policy which was essential to British liberalism.

Even more important, as Jaurès had well understood, the Christian referent—institutionalized or not—made it possible, in the name of the presence in each person of a “divine spark,” to challenge the established opinions and order of things, and not to allow oneself to be caught up in sectarian irrationalism or the fluctuations of opinion. Now, it was certainly the manipulation of this irrationalism—with all the attendant rebirth of spiritualism, pseudo-mysticism, and occultism—on which relied those in London, in Paris, and elsewhere in Europe, who wanted to impose their “cult of the masses,” making possible a rigid social control. From the standpoint of the British ideology, it was absolutely necessary to prevent the *entente* between the French Republic and the Catholic Church—or at least, to prevent the spread of an authentic Christianity in France.

The strategy adopted to destroy the effort of Leo XIII operated simultaneously within the Republic and the Church. In the Republic, it functioned by arousing a violent anti-clerical spirit, by making anti-clericalism, for many years, a fundamental and obsessive issue. A “mass base” for this agitation: radicalism, inspired by the Grand Orient lodge, and transmitted by the “free-thinking societies” in which legitimate social goals were wedded to rituals that were ridiculous but popular: For example, people ate meat on Good



Pope Leo XIII's effort to find an understanding between the Church and the French Republic, had it succeeded, would have meant the end of British liberalism in France.

Friday (a Catholic day of abstinence) to prove their freedom of conscience.

Within Catholicism, it was the card of irrational mysticism (in which Bergsonism played a major role) which was played, and forms of popular devotion were encouraged which were as irrational as the practices of the anti-clerics: miracles and prophecies, relics and visions.

Many times, between 1878 and 1889, the Pope made clear that French Catholics must accept the institutions of the Republic. On the eve of the legislative elections of 1889, he intervened. His objective was to affirm the distinction between the spiritual power and the temporal—a distinction which, traditionally, French Catholics did not make—to break up the solidarity between French Catholics and the monarchy, and to safeguard the Concordat and the funding of religious services, which was threatened by radical agitation.

The ultimate failure of Leo's effort—fiercely resisted by the majority of the French cardinals, while repeated provocations were stirred up by the Freemasonry—marked the final descent of the century. By 1901, the Bloc of the Left, dominated by Radicals and Masons, had promulgated a law which denied religious congregations the right to associate without legislative authorization, and in July 1904, after it suppressed all congregational teaching, France broke off diplomatic relations with the Holy See. The rupture set up the dynamics of our century, against a theophanic universe, a universe in which God can think and be understood, and which is seen fully organized by the work of God, by the Creation. Instead, it set the terms of the coming century toward a self-destructive universe, a universe of cyclical wars.

The idea of the nation is degraded

The nation is a secular reflection of Christian faith, in a first approximation. It was, until then, conceived as a will to live together to achieve the Good; to embody in a nation some universalizing design. This was destroyed, in a way

that is very relevant to the United States and to France today. It was destroyed by a beast with two heads: anti-Semitism and Zionism, produced on a mass scale during the years in which Hanotaux was active. The two-headed monster was created to counter the work of Leo XIII, to extend the fight against religion, and to destroy the nation as a secular earthly base for a true conception of religion.

Instead of the republican idea as it once had been, there emerged, during the infamous Dreyfus Affair, the "religion of the country," which led toward the exaltation of an ethnically or racially homogeneous state, basing itself on its armed forces—to the detriment of the universal respect for life and the rights of man.

The nation abandoned republican principles. The new "nationalism," a more or less synthetic pastiche which united the left, the old Communards, and the right, royalists or Bonapartists, posed as the defender of the national army, an instrument of unity, and an opponent of foreigners in general and of Judaism in particular, which was branded "treason by nature."

It was in 1890 that Edouard Drumont founded the Anti-Semitic League. In May 1892, *La Libre Parole*, ("Free Speech"), Drumont's newspaper, began its provocations by publishing an investigation titled "The Jews in the Army," and demanding, of course, their elimination. Such developments prepared the soil in which the Dreyfus Affair grew, and the first information published in the press on the Affair appeared in *La Libre Parole*. On Nov. 1, 1894, the newspaper ran a banner headline: "High Treason! Arrest of the Jewish Officer Alfred Dreyfus."

The Dreyfus Affair formed the backdrop for the entire period, from the end of 1894 to Sept. 19, 1899, when the President of the Republic finally signed Dreyfus's pardon. The Affair inflamed passions, and helped to pervert the idea of the nation. Anti-Dreyfusism was a sort of ersatz republican idea, based on the "cult of terror," the "mystique of the race," and the power of "sacrifices for the military." It was in this synthetic "national" context—manufactured both in France and Germany—that Alsace-Lorraine, for some a part of the soil of France, for others the legitimate extension of the German Empire, became an insoluble question which could not be disentangled except by war.

Remember that Dreyfus was accused of espionage for Germany, by means of a crudely forged letter between the Italian military attaché, Pannizardi, and the German military attaché, von Schwartzkoppen. The Affair maintained an anti-German climate, split France in two at a time when a grand continental policy would have been possible, and threw most of the Catholics into the same political camp as the anti-Semites.

Beyond the terrible injustice done to one man, it was an immense political and moral disaster.

As another indication of the spirit of the times, take the case of Vacher de Lapouge, who wrote at the end of the

century a book called *The Aryan*, which inspired Hitler. In it he says that the most beautiful conquest of man is not the horse; it is the slave. He divides the world between Semites and Aryans. So this is only an example of how man is divided into categories. This is a typical Aristotelian view. You divide, you cut, you cut, you cut, like a salami.

In this climate of irrationalism and godlessness, faith and reason were separated. You have the intellectual on the one side, who thinks very deeply. But he ratiocinates; he's indecisive. It's impotent reason. On the other side, you have the soldier. He doesn't think at all, but he obeys the nation without hesitation. It's irrational faith. The intellectual is left-wing, and the soldier is right-wing—it was at this time that such insanity was promoted.

The nation becomes blood and soil—with animal symbols. The French hawk against the German eagle—two Sun cult symbols. The question of Alsace-Lorraine, trapped into that, becomes insoluble. It is an issue of blood and soil, caught in a universe defined by blood and soil.

Our challenge today

Let me return to today's challenge, to try to locate what is demanded from us, as a lesson of what happened before World War I.

Today, the increase of mankind's physical power over nature, is, to say the least, not secure. Much worse, mankind's physical power over nature *has been systematically*

Nehru: The 'Great War' cost humanity greatly

One of the most biting critiques of the so-called Great War came from Jawaharlal Nehru, in his letters from prison to his daughter Indira, which she later published in a volume as Glimpses of World History (Oxford University Press, New Delhi). His book was reprinted by her son Rajiv Gandhi to commemorate the centenary of Nerhu's birth in 1989. On April 1, 1933, Nehru wrote of the war's devastation:

The war was over. But the blockade of Germany by England's fleet continued and food was not allowed to reach the starving German women and children. This amazing exhibition of hatred and desire to punish even the little children was supported by reputable British statesmen and public men, by great newspapers, even by so-called liberal journals. Indeed, the Prime Minister of England then was a Liberal, Lloyd George. The record of the four

reduced. This means chaos, anarchy, wars, a Hundred Years' War of continuous self-attrition, decreasing the potential population density.

We must reverse the prevailing economic orientation. This means to reestablish the American System of Political Economy, in all its facets opposed to the political economy of America today.

What you have today, especially in America, but also elsewhere as a prevailing tendency, is the reverse of the American System of Political Economy. It is the acceptance of the British System of Political Economy, the acceptance of that malthusian liberalism against which the American Revolution was fought. Tell the American population, "Be Americans! Drop the British policies of your oppressors!"

A proper science of physical economy based on the Christian principles as laid out, for example, in *Rerum Novarum*, implies a knowledge of the increasing power of scientific progress. Physical economy does not only measure man's per capita power over nature; but studies those changes as a material effect of a *mental cause*. This is what Lyndon LaRouche has laid out, again and again, over the last 20 years—of a *mental cause*.

This is the question that I am trying to bring before you today: mass intervention to transform human history, the question that LaRouche defines as consciousness of revolutionary change as approximate cause of increase of potential population density: the precondition for humanity's fitness

to survive the crisis before it.

Our task in history, is to reestablish the hopeful direction of development, and therefore to break the logic of war which led to World War I; to make human beings and nations sovereign, to reestablish their capacity of self-government.

Then we should know what is needed to make a nation and a person sovereign. To make a person sovereign, is to develop his creative processes; his generation, its assimilation, communication, of scientific and technological progress, for the whole society. To make a nation sovereign, is to create a process of self-government based on individuals freely exerting those capacities to generate, communicate, and assimilate, scientific and technological progress; a process of self-government in that sense, requires all nations' agreement upon a conception of a development policy through a deliberation in a literate form of common language, for which geometry, music, spoken language, are elementary and inseparable.

Today, we face a world much worse than in 1914. The level of prevailing thinking, is much lower. People are not organizing themselves to revolt against these conditions. The deadly potential of AIDS is infinitely greater than that of the Spanish flu in 1918. America is no longer a reservoir of economic productivity. If we are serious, if we really see before us the sufferings once again to come, let's learn the lessons of history, and let's do individually, personally, a bit more—each of us.

and quarter years of war is full of mad brutalities and atrocities. And yet perhaps nothing exceeds in sheer cold-blooded brutality this continuation of the blockade of Germany after the armistice. The war was over, and still a whole nation was starving and its little children were suffering terribly from hunger, and food was deliberately and forcibly kept away. How war distorts our minds and fills them with mad hatred! Bethmann Hollweg, the old Chancellor of Germany, said: "Our children, and our children's children, will bear traces of the blockade that England enforced against us, a refinement of cruelty nothing less than diabolic." . . .

The long years of war had brutalized the warring nations. They destroyed the moral sense of large numbers of people, and made many normal persons into half-criminals. People got used to violence and to deliberate distortion of facts, and were filled with hatred and the spirit of revenge.

What was the balance-sheet of the war? No one knows yet; they are still making it up! I shall give you some figures to impress on you what modern war means.

The total casualties of the war have been calculated as follows:

Known dead soldiers	10,000,000
Presumed dead soldiers	3,000,000
Dead civilians	13,000,000
Wounded	20,000,000
Prisoners	3,000,000
War orphans	9,000,000
War widows	5,000,000
Refugees	10,000,000

Look at these tremendous figures and try to imagine the human suffering that underlies them. Add them up: the total dead and wounded alone comes to 46,000,000.

And the cost in hard cash? They are still counting it! An American estimate gives the total expenditure on the Allied side as £40,999,600,000—nearly 41,000 million pounds; and on the German side as £15,122,300,000—over 15,000 million pounds! These figures cannot be fully understood by us, as they are so utterly out of proportion to our daily life. They seem to remind us of astronomical figures like the distance to the sun or the stars. It is not surprising that the old warring nations, victors and vanquished alike, are still hopelessly involved in the after-effects of war finance.