

Common Sense

Alfred Mendes

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Slavery?

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From the Revolution Against Philosophy to the
Revolution Against Capital

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An Alternative View of the Yugoslav Crisis

Alfred Mendes

To elicit some sense of logic out of current events - with America firmly ensconced in the rôle of 'World Policeman' and the entry of NATO on to the Balkan scene - it is necessary to recall some crucial events from 1917 onwards.

The vast wealth amassed by the Vanderbilts, Astors, Morgans and other such like at the turn of the century fuelled the extraordinary growth of the American mass-production machine, and the resultant corporations were soon looking abroad with the intention of extending their interests. On the other hand, the Bolshevik's seizure of power in Russia in 1917 created, in effect, a call to wage-earners worldwide for the setting up of a Marxist system of social distribution of wealth - the very antithesis of the capitalist system of garnering profit from the wealth created by labour. The corporatists now had little option but to commit themselves to the destruction of this subversive, Marxist threat, even though this entailed the dubious - if not impossible - concept of the destruction of an Idea, an Ideal! Above all, they had to avoid this dichotomy being seen as one of ideology per se, the inequity inherent within their capitalist system being too vulnerable to scrutiny. No, the struggle had to be seen by their public as one of 'Good Nation' against 'Evil Nation'; 'White' against 'Red'. This would be made easier both by ownership of the means of communication - the media - and the subordination of political parties of all shades outside of America (as in Italy post-World War 2): the weak Left in America itself would be squashed by bâton and gun.

Such was the ideological impasse that lay at the root of all subsequent events. It is therefore essential to look more closely at the rôle of Corporate America, the key stall-holder in the world market, and the group that would stand to lose the most in the case of failure. For them, political control was now important: politicians could not be entrusted with the task of avoiding, repudiating the temptations of this new ideology. Control was accomplished in two ways:

(1) By direct secondment of top corporate executives to high government posts, thus skirting the democratic process. An example of this was the fact that in the first two years of Truman's presidency, of the 125 principal appointments made: 56 were corporate lawyers, industrialists and bankers (one of whom, James Forrestal of Dillon, Read & Co., was probably the earliest and most vigorous promoter of what was soon to be known as the 'Cold War'); and 31 were high-ranking military officers.

And (2) by the formation of influential 'advisory' groups. A survey of these reveals that, contrary to the popular view of America as the epitome of a pluralistic, competitive society of 'rugged individuals', its corporations display a very high degree of cohesion of purpose, and this cohesion is exemplified by their manifest urge to form cabalistic groups, many of a pseudo-social character. This is a phenomenon that should come as no surprise to anyone who has attended an American university, with its fraternity-ethos which invariably leads to the masonic lodge on graduation. Indeed, when it is recalled that its first president, Washington, and nine of the signatories to the Declaration of Independence in 1776 were known Freemasons, and that the subsequent rituals used for both Washington's inauguration and the laying of the Capitol's cornerstone were Masonic - then it would seem that this phenomenon has certain traditional roots.

The result is groups such as:

- (1) The Business Council: Formed in '33 by businessmen and bankers as an advisory body to the US Department of Commerce, they were subsequently commissioned by FDR to draw up his Social Security Act of 1936 - thus defusing a potentially revolutionary situation - since when they have held immense political clout in Washington. This is borne out by the fact that, for example, in '72 the chairmen/presidents of 26 of the 50 largest industrial corporations were members. It is interesting to note that, from FDR onwards, the only time the Council withdrew its advisory status was during JFK's presidency after its confrontation with him.
- (2) The Bohemian Club, with its prestigious membership and its 127-lodge Grove Camp north of San Francisco on the Russia river - where, for instance, the atom-bomb Manhattan Project was conceived in 1942 at the prompting of physicist Professor Ernest Lawrence.
- (3) The Euro-American Bilderberg group, formed in 1954 to serve as a forum for lobbying at the highest political level in order to ensure that consensual policies were adopted by the West in general, and signatories to the NATO alliance in particular. On the international scene it is almost certainly the most influential and prestigious of these groups/cabals. Implicit within the structure of this group, with its publicised claim to having no formal organisation; no 'membership' as such; no

charter, and no elected officers is its unaccountable, autocratic nature. However, the very fact that it has a chairman (currently Lord Carrington), a steering committee, and annual conferences surely means that - contrary to the claims above - it has a formal organisation. All doors to the seats of power are open to the Bilderberg.

The inevitable interlocking of membership among such groups resulted in the creation of an intricate web of influence (The Bohemian Club, with tongue in cheek, cautions its members - and equally influential guests - on entry to the Grove: "Spiders Weave Not Here!" - as if a spider could exist without weaving its web!). The following table covering nine of such clubs/groups illustrates concisely the complexity and scale of the web, as it existed in the early '70's (Two points: The Bilderberg is not included because of its structural ambiguity noted above, and it must be kept in mind that each figure represents a top-ranking executive in the American military/industrial/banking complex):

	BO	PU	CA	RA	LI	CE	CFR	CED	BC
BO									
PU	252								
CA	136	96							
RA	40	20	45						
LI	67	69	33	1					
CE	22	8	7	1	57				
CFR	34	25	15	1	108	332			
CED	20	24	17	2	60	23	52		
BC	27	24	14	2	77	12	42	49	

KEY: BO = Bohemian Club PU = Pacific Union
CA = California Club RA = Rancheros
LI = Links Club CE = Century Club
BC = Business Council CFR = Council for Foreign Relations
CED = Council for Economic development

Table from "The Bohemian Grove" by G. William Domhoff (Harper '74)

Three notorious, well-documented examples of the use to which this influence was put are:

- (1) In Iran, mid-'53, the Americans deposed Mossadegh, who had nationalised the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (latterly BP) in 1951, and installed the Shah by means of a CIA operation codenamed 'AJAX'. Legal counsel for the AIOC had for years

been the distinguished New York Corporate law firm, Sullivan & Cromwell, the senior partners of which were the Dulles brothers (another partner was Arthur Dean, who was later a co-chairman in the Bilderberg for some years). At the time of the coup, John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State; Allen Dulles was CIA Director. It is worth adding here that the AIOC was financed from its early years by the Industrial Bank of Iran, an offshoot of the German Schroeder banking house (about which, more later).

- (2) In Guatemala, June '54, a CIA-sponsored coup d'état removed the reformist, constitutionally elected government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman (a land-owning, military officer), and replaced it by a military dictatorship. Arbenz had, in 1953, expropriated, as part of his much-needed agrarian reform, large, uncultivated tracts of land belonging to the American United Fruit Company, whose earlier predatory incursion into Central America had caused the area to be known as 'the Banana Republics'. For years, the counsel for the UFC had been Sullivan & Cromwell, and at the time of the coup the Dulles's still held the posts they had held in 1953. Indeed, John F.D. was also a large stockholder in the UFC. This coup, incidentally, was a blatant violation of Article 15 of the US-inspired Organisation of American States (OAS) which specifically forbade any interference - political or military - by one state in the affairs of any other state.
- (3) Chile, Sept. '70: the CIA, with the collaboration of International Telephone & Telegraph (ITT) and Pepsi-Cola, tried - unsuccessfully - to mount a military coup in order to prevent the left-wing Salvador Allende winning the presidential election. They planned this coup without the privity of the American ambassador, Edward Korry, who was opposed to such intervention. This did not stop the CIA and its corporate allies: in September '73 Allende was overthrown - and killed - and the dictatorship of General Pinochet installed. Among those who played an active, influential rôle in the above were: Harold Geneen (Pres./Chm. of ITT), John McCone (Board of ITT, Dir. of CIA '61 - '65, Bohemian Club), and Donald Kendall, (Chm. of Pepsi-Cola, Business Council - and friend of Nixon).

These examples of corporative power-wielding reveal the lack of any democratic accountability, as well as a disregard of national frontiers, this latter aspect due largely to the now-multinational nature of the corporations. There were even a number of cases in the '30's and '40's when such activities militated against the national interest of their own country - to the benefit of Germany in the instances that follow.

The 1920's had been a particularly crucial period in Germany because of the extraordinarily rapid rise to power of the Nazis:

what had been a rag-tag of street dissidents had, within a decade, become a well-uniformed, well-organised, and obviously well-financed organisation. Above all, it projected a very marked anti-Bolshevik bias. This attracted Corporate America, and contacts were soon made. ITT and Sullivan & Cromwell were among the more high-profile firms to do so. In the case of both firms, the German contact used was Dr. Gerhardt Alois Westrick, Hitler's financial agent - and through him deals were made with Baron Kurt von Schroeder of the Schroeder banking house (see AIOC above). This bank was a channel for funds for the Nazi Party in general, and the Gestapo in particular (it was in von Schroeder's villa in Köln on the 7th January 1933 that Hitler and Franz von Papen had met to plan details for their subsequent seizure of power, and von Schroeder was later made SS Gruppenfuehrer).

In ITT's case, in return for directorships for both Westrick and von Schroeder in ITT, the latter acquired a number of German firms, the most intriguing of which was a 28% share in the Focke-Wulf aircraft company, whose aircraft saw much service in the ensuing World War 2 - much to the discomfiture of Allied servicemen and civilians. Moreover, in 1967, ITT were paid \$25 million in compensation by the American government for war damages to its factories in Germany!

For its part, Sullivan & Cromwell acquired as clients:

- (1) I.G.Farben, the German chemical conglomerate which, in 1937, developed the deadly nerve gas, Tabun.
- (2) The well-known Swedish ball-bearing manufacturer, SKF, which supplied 60% of its production to Germany - primarily for its armaments.
- (3) The Schroeder banking house itself, Allen Dulles becoming a director of its New York offshoot - a post he held until 1944. Inasmuch as it exposes one of the filaments of the 'Corporate Web', it is pertinent to note here that the man who initially approached Sullivan & Cromwell on behalf of Schroeder was the latter's vice-president, John L. Simpson, the chief confidant of Steve Bechtel Sr. (of Bechtel Corporation) who was a member of the most influential 'Camp' in the Bohemian Grove, Mandalay Camp (Bechtel was later to supply the US Government with such figures as John McCone, George Schultz and Caspar Weinberger).

Implicit in the political unaccountability of the American corporate oligarchy is its secretiveness. We are thus justified in assuming that the few examples that are in the public domain - as above - must mean that there are many more of like import and gravity not in the public domain, and any concerned curiosity about such unpublicised activities, or hidden agenda, is therefore equally justified.

At this point it is necessary to recall that at the end of World War 2, America emerged with three-quarters of the world's invested capital and two-thirds of the world's industrial capacity - Russia with its infrastructure decimated. The distribution of American aid that followed was significant in the choice of countries so aided, and the relative amounts involved. Russia was denied aid, and the reason given by the US for this denial (which, incidentally, circumvented UN agreements) was that, at the critical Moscow Conference which started on the 10th March 1947, the Russians had spurned America's gestures of compromise - conveniently disregarding the fact that on the 12th March 1947 (just two days into the Conference) Truman had dropped his bombshell of a speech to Congress - his 'Doctrine', which was, in effect, an ultimatum to Stalin: you're either with us - or against us! The Marshall Plan was announced three months later. What is conveniently forgotten today is that, under this Plan, more aid was distributed to the right-wing, fascist régimes of Turkey, Greece, South Korea, South Vietnam and Formosa, than to Europe. George Kennan, who was head of the US State Department Planning Staff in the late '40's (and protégé of James Forrestal), supplied the official rationale that lay behind the above facts concisely in articles he wrote at the time under the pseudonym of 'Mr.X'. He stated "...the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate..and..to promote tendencies which eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power". Prophetic words!

These irreconcilable ideological differences between Russia on the one hand, and Britain and America on the other, meant that their wartime alliance had been an alliance of convenience, of pragmatism (e.g. contrary to America's assurance to Russia in May '42 that a 'second front' would be opened later that year, this, in fact, did not occur until June '44 - when it became clear to the Western Allies that the Russians were advancing inexorably westwards). Thus, at war's end in 1945, the Western Allies, for their part, immediately reverted to their pre-war anti-communist strategy, and given their common, fervent anti-communist bias, it was also inevitable that there would be co-operation between Corporate America and the Vatican. Examples of this co-operation were the setting up of the anti-communist propaganda radio stations: Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, joint ventures of the CIA (for funding) and Knights of Malta (SMOM) members J. Peter Grace (W.R.Grace Corp.) and Frank Shakespeare (CBS-TV, RKO & US Information Agency) - among others. This group - the SMOM - was the most active catholic group which so co-operated. Although membership of the Order was opened to Americans only in 1927, it is a measure of that country's influential standing that by the 1940's the American Cardinal Spellman held the post of 'Grand Protector' within the Order, whereas King Leopold and Queen

Wilhelmina were mere 'protectors' within their respective countries! To name but a few of its members, past and present, is to reveal its élitism and power: Juan Péron, CIA Directors John McCone and William Casey, King Juan Carlos, Ex-NATO Commander and ex-Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Joseph Kennedy and Nazi Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen, who negotiated the Hitler/Vatican Concordat of 1933.

This Concordat was an agreement that meant, in effect, that a government with an ostensibly strong anti-religious bias had taken the seemingly extraordinary step of imposing a church tithing on its populace! To understand this apparent paradox it is necessary to recall the ties that bound Germany to Rome for some eight centuries (926 - 1806) under the aegis of the Holy Roman Empire, with its succession of German kings. The unavoidable conclusion to be drawn here is that these ties were still alive in 1933, and the setting up of the puppet states of Slovenia and Croatia in 1941 are thus comprehensible. That these ties still exist today is attested to by the facts that (1) the Concordat is still in effect, and (2) since World War 2 the German political scene has been dominated by Christian Democratic (Catholic) Parties. Indeed, there can be no other rational explanation for Germany's extraordinary action on the 15th January '92 when, following on the Vatican's recognition of the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, and contrary to the advice and warnings given them by the UN, EEC and Bosnia itself (Itzebegovic had even gone to Bonn in a vain attempt to dissuade them from taking this step) they broke the universally accepted rôle of not interfering in the domestic affairs of a foreign, sovereign nation, and unilaterally recognised the independence of Slovenia & Croatia, thereby sanctioning the violent outbursts of nationalism that had occurred as a result of the earlier Declarations of Independence by those two autonomous members of the Yugoslav Federation. It was inevitable that the German action would lead to the Bosnian débacle - and it is difficult to believe that Germany was not aware of this (about which, more later).

Any further historical review of the region would be inadequate if it did not include the rôle that religion in general, and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, has played in it - but in view of the schism that exists in the Church between the oligarchic 'Integralists' and the liberal 'Base Communities', it should be noted here that any reference/s to 'the Church' is/are directed towards the former: the autocrats in the Vatican. The involvement of the Church in the region was inevitable, given its geographical juxtaposition to, and historical association with Slovenia and Croatia - long regarded by the Church as a bastion against both the Orthodox Serbs (since Pope John 10th's crowning of Tomislav as King of Croatia in 925 AD) and later, the Muslim Ottomans. The Roman/Orthodox split in the Christian Church and the subsequent five centuries of Muslim Ottoman rule ensured that the

Yugoslavia that was to be formed in 1918 would be a land simmering with religious discord - a situation not eased by the earlier incursions of the Habsburgs from the north and the Bulgars from the east. The setting up of the Catholic state of Croatia under the fascist Ustase in the wake of the German invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941 ignited this discord, resulting in large-scale massacres of Orthodox Serbs, jews, muslims and gypsies. Another area of discord during the war - and one of pertinence to the current crisis - was the split within the Serbs between the nationalist/royalist Cetniks under Mihailovich and the communist/republican partisans under Tito - most of whom were Serbs. The British and Americans were well aware of this schism, the British having seconded Brigadier Fitzroy McClean to the partisans, and the Americans Robert McDowell of the OSS to the Cetniks.

One significant aspect of the Vatican/Yugoslav relationship during the early post-war period was that, whereas the Polish government (a Russian satellite) had intervened far more in the internal affairs of the church than had Yugoslavia (which had broken off relations with Russia), the Vatican had adopted a far more intransigent attitude towards the latter (as exemplified by their opposition to Tito's agrarian reform, their stance over the Istria confrontation, and their ban on priests joining the long-established Priests' Associations) than towards the former. This could only have been a case of political opportunism aimed at Tito's comparative weakness - it was certainly not a case of religious principle.

Another post-war event that was to play a crucial rôle in Yugoslavia's future was the Greek civil war. The popular communist-led Party, EAM - with its military wing, ELAS - would have assumed power in Greece in 1944 had not the British intervened militarily with two divisions, as a result of the (then) secret deal Churchill had made with Stalin in October '44: in effect, allowing the British a free hand in Greece in return for Russia having a free hand in Bulgaria and Romania. The British installed the right-wing Tsaldaris as dictator of Greece, and thus found themselves embroiled in a civil war which they could ill afford. In February '47 they notified the Americans of their intention to withdraw from Greece, as a result of which Truman made his crucial speech calling on the West to rally to his crusade against the "...un-American communist way-of-life": the Truman Doctrine, as it became known. America had now replaced Britain as the broker in the Balkans - and was faced with the fact that ELAS was an effective military force due primarily to the aid/backing it was receiving from neighbouring Yugoslavia.

June '48 saw the Tito/Stalin schism, resulting in the former being expelled from the Comintern. The West's reaction to this was best spelt out by Pavlowitch in his book "Yugoslavia": "The American and West European governments were faced with a

dilemma. Should they help a now weak and isolated, but otherwise successful, instance of communism, while 'containing' communism generally?". On the one hand "...if Yugoslavia were left to collapse, only the Soviet Union would benefit. If, on the other hand, Tito's regime were helped to survive economically, his rift with Moscow could be widened to the point where no reconciliation was possible any longer, and his independent position could then entice other East European régimes to follow his example. Thus, at the same time as the states of Western Europe and North America were grouping together to constitute the North Atlantic Alliance, it was decided, as a calculated risk for a long-term advantage, to assist Yugoslavia without asking its government to alter its domestic policies in any way."

In July '48 America released Yugoslavias' frozen gold-assets, which had been blocked earlier when the latter had refused to compensate for nationalised American property - as a result of Yugoslavia now agreeing to pay such compensation! The following year America relaxed export controls to Yugoslavia and instigated a series of loans and grants totalling some 2 to 2_ billion dollars up to '59. Tito then stopped assisting ELAS, thus ensuring the latter's defeat. Yugoslavia had now embarked on a debt-ridden course which would eventually lead to the dissolution of its Federation - helped in no small measure by Tito's setting up, in '74, of a New Constitution which, in effect, split the Republic of Serbia into three parts by giving its provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina a higher degree of autonomy than it had previously held - thereby exacerbating underlying dissidences of a political, ethno-religious nature.

The collapse of the Soviet Union meant that Yugoslavia's usefulness as a tactical foil to the Soviets (see above) had now lapsed, leaving it - Yugoslavia - in the vulnerable position of now being one of only two remaining nominally communist states in Europe- the other being Albania. Moreover, as noted above, American aid had ensured that Yugoslavia would be a country heavily in debt, and with an economy in turmoil. This was a situation exacerbated by the disparate economies of the various Republics within the Federation, and the historical ethno-religious discord of the region. Disintegration was inevitable, and was to begin in 1990.

On the face of it, and in simplistic terms, the resulting turmoil in the region was just another anarchic stew of religious ingredients. After all, there had been many such throughout history (indeed, still are!), usually characterised by the cruel acts of the warring parties (which begs the question: when is a war not cruel? Can it be that it is when, by the simple, dehumanised act of pressing a button, or pulling a lever, a nuclear or napalm bomb is sent on its way?). Be that as it may, such a simplistic approach to the Balkan maze, not taking into account the inexorable rationality

of historical events leading to the débâcle, has led to many a dead-end of irrationality in this crisis - epitomised by the many diplomatic statements and journalistic reports.

Intervention by the West, in the form of the EEC and UN, soon followed, but the initial attempts to bring the warring factions together, punctuated as they were by frequent about-turns of tactics - were of such an irresolute nature as to nurture doubts as to their aim. For a start, peacebrokers of questionable qualifications were appointed: Carrington, an eminent Bilderberger and his successor, Owen, had each served as Foreign Secretary of a country, Britain, that had for years been (and still is!) conspicuously unsuccessful in solving its own Balkan/Irish problem. Again, Carrington and Vance, Owen's co-broker, were board members of arms-dealing businesses: the former with Kissinger Associates (of Iran/Iraq infamy), and the latter with the prestigious General Dynamics. Surely, a case of 'conflict of interests?'

In the middle of these peace-brokerings came Germany's recognition of Slovenian and Croatian independence (as noted above), which ensured that the conflict would spread to neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina with its potentially explosive mixture of three ethno-religious groups. On the face of it, it would seem that, having been given the chimerical task of untying the Balkan Gordian Knot by the Germans, the peace-makers had little choice but to make the best of it. However, in view of the clonal nature of the EEC/NATO partnership (of which, more later), it is hard to believe that fellow-members were not party to Germany's action on recognition: were not two crucial NATO posts held by Germans at that time (Werner as Secretary General, and Wegger as Assistant Secretary General of Political Affairs)? Indeed, the fact that NATO was to adopt a more overt rôle in the Yugoslav crisis from hereon calls for scrutiny of that organisation.

The collapse of the communist states in the East caused many in the West to query the future need for NATO. It is now evident that this query was based on two grave misconceptions: (1) that NATO had been set up solely to resist Soviet expansion, and (2) that the collapse of the latter had meant the end of the Marxist ideal. Had this been so, logic would have decreed immediate redundancy for NATO! From its birth in April '49, NATO has operated under American patronage and hegemony: patronage whereby, under its article 3, it finances the organisation; hegemony, as attested to by a glance at NATO's command structure which reveals that both its commands', (1) Allied Command Europe (ACE) - with its two sub-commands SHAPE and SAFEUR (in Brussels), and (2) Allied Command Atlantic, ACLANT (in Virginia) come under statutory American control (It is significant that the third command-that-was - CINCHAN - the only command previously not under statutory American control, was recently

disbanded). NATO's true role since its formation has been to act as a counter-revolutionary, counter-reformist arm of the Corporate West. This was clarified by no less a person than George Kennan (once again) when, at the BBC Reith lectures in '57, he stated that the State Department had created the organisation as a shield behind which the West could meet "the communist danger in its most threatening form - as an internal problem - that is, of Western society, to be combated by reviving economic activity". In plain English: NATO had been formed to deal with the internal political problems of Western society - and if anybody should have known, it was he: was he not Head of Planning at that time? This was a statement, moreover, that conformed precisely - and understandably - to the tenets of Corporate America. That this was indeed its mandate, and that NATO was not subject to any democratic accountability can be attested to by the fact that, in 1959, under its Article 9, which empowered the setting up of 'subsidiary bodies', GLADIO (aka GLAIVE, aka ZWAARD) was brought under the control of SHAPE's Clandestine Planning Committee. GLADIO was a secret anti-Left terrorist group set up by the CIA and British Intelligence in Italy in 1950, with the aim of countering the influence of the communist party in that country. Subsequent judicial investigation revealed that it had been actively involved in such as the Bologna station bombing.

Kennan could have added that NATO had another, more immediate, rôle to play. In the immediate post World-War two period, well aware of the potentially lucrative markets that would result from the reconstruction of war-damaged Europe, Corporate America, with its vast capital reserves, was determined to benefit from it. The first step towards this end would be the Marshall Plan, which, in turn, would be implemented by the Congressionally passed Economic Cooperation Act of '48, the aim of which was clearly spelt out by its Administrator, Paul Hoffman (of Studebaker) who called for an integrated Europe, "the substance of such integration.." being "...the formation of a large single market within which quantitative restrictions of movement of goods, monetary barriers to the flow of payments and eventually all tariffs are permanently swept away". A Common Market if there ever was one! But some Europeans, fearing loss of sovereignty and suspicious of America's motives, opposed such integration. The following year, 1949, NATO was formed, and by incorporating these crucial, dissenting nations (Britain being one) under the guise of shielding them from any move west by the Soviets, America thereby attenuated such dissension and gained a valuable foothold in Europe. NATO had thus played an important rôle in the formative stage of what would ultimately become the Common Market-cum-EEC-cum-EU. Any doubt as to the close relationship between the two is dispelled by a glance at recent events in Europe: before an applicant country, such as Poland or Hungary, is accepted as a

member of the EU, it must first be - in effect - vetted by NATO. Indeed, this relationship is such as to cast doubt as to whether the EU is calling the tune within its own domain. The answer probably lies behind the closed doors of Corporate cabals, such as the Bilderberg - listed above.

NATO's involvement in the Yugoslavian crisis was a gradual process, from its avowed readiness in June '92 to support peace-keeping under the authority of the Conference on Security & Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) - through to its use of air strikes over Bosnia from '94 until September '95, when the strikes were suspended pending the Dayton peace talks. The reason for this somewhat tentative initial approach to the crisis on the part of NATO was that they were playing for time: as a result of a strategic review undertaken in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO, in October '92, had inaugurated a plan to create an Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) of some 250,000 troops, a force that would be deployed whenever NATO deemed it necessary to intervene in order to 'keep the peace'. This was a force which would presumably augment its American twin: CENTCOM (of 'Stormin' Norman' fame) which had been similarly formed to protect (control) the Middle East oilfields. Now, the Yugoslav crisis had presented just such an opportunity - but, as originally foreseen, the ARRC would not be in operational readiness until 1995.

In September '95, with the ARRC now ready, NATO announced its readiness to deploy a large force to implement any Bosnian peace settlement. They would now be in overt control of the situation, and they pressurised the warring factions to 'sit around the table'. On the 5th October '95 they announced a 60-day cease-fire, which came into effect a week later. With the ARRC ready, ultimatums were now the order of the day - accompanied by the carrot of an embargo- lift. Simultaneously with the cease-fire announcement, the UN announced its intention to reduce its troops in the region. In the light of NATO's intention to intervene with a large force and America's subsequent cease-fire call, this UN announcement reflected its - the UN's - comparative weakness and subordination to America. The Dayton peace talks took place in the rather intimidating atmosphere of the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio; the embargo against Yugoslavia was lifted in November - and the Peace Accord signed in Paris on the 14th December '95. In early December '95, as a result of a Peace Implementation Conference convened in London to discuss the implementation of the Dayton Accord, a Peace Implementation Council was set up in Brussels. Significantly, there were no UN representatives on this Council. The resulting Implementation Force (IFOR), a force of 60,000 American, British and French troops - under the command of ARRC - was then deployed throughout Bosnia into three zones of operation. In December '96

IFOR was augmented by the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) of 30,000 troops. The cease-fire could now be ensured by this display of military might.

America's tactics in the crisis from early on had raised doubts as to its impartiality and avowed compliance with the tenets of reconciliation inherent in a peace-making process. David Owen had voiced such doubts. Certain subsequent actions were to validate such doubts. As a result of a signed agreement on military cooperation between the US and Croatia (the latter had signed a similar agreement with Turkey), the Croatian Ministry of Defence had signed a contract with Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI) in '94, under which the latter would act as military advisors to the Croat army at the Petar Zrinski military school in Zagreb. The MPRI officer in charge was a retired General Richard Griffiths who, from '89 - '91, had been assistant to the US commander in Europe for Intelligence (in Frankfurt). That the MPRI operates under the aegis of the US Department of Defence is attested to by: (1) the agreement referred to above; (2) the fact that it is staffed by many of the highest-ranking retired military officers in the US (such as its Chief of Operations, Lt. Gen. Harry Soyster - who had been Head of the Defense Intelligence Agency); (3) James Pardew, the Pentagon's representative at the Dayton talks, had subsequently flown to Sarajevo to 'persuade' the Bosnians to use MPRI's services. This was a company set up in Alexandria, Virginia, with the specific aim of promoting America's anti-left strategy on the international scene - as it had, for example, in Angola, where, with the cooperation of the CIA, it built up Savimbi's anti-communist army, Unita.

In August '95, the training of the Croat army came to fruition: their attack on the Serbs of West Krajina was so well and effectively planned that, within a matter of days, 150,000 Serbs had fled the region where, four centuries ago, they had been settled to act as a buffer between catholic and muslim. Not long after the Krajina rout, it was revealed in a Croat newspaper and later on British TV that one of the contributory factors to the Croat's victory had been CIA-organised pilotless reconnaissance flights over Krajina from a base on the island of Brac, in the Adriatic. Obviously, this could not have been done without close coordination with MPRI.

The Americans had now openly adopted a blatantly anti-Serb stance which embraced both Cetnik Serbian Bosnia and the predominantly Serbian Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, conveniently disregarding the open split between the two which had been reactivated when the Bosnian Serb leadership (avowed Cetniks) had rejected outright the Vance/Owen Plan in '93 - in open defiance of the wishes of the FRY. In the context of the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent lapse of Yugoslavia's use as a tactical foil (as previously noted), the logical inference to be drawn from this latest American stance was

that the FRY - still tainted with 'communism' in the eyes of the Americans - was now the ultimate target. And if Milosevic is not aware of that, then he is certainly not the smart politician he has so far proven to be!

The build-up of the anti-Serb Bosnian army under the guise of creating an 'even playing field', while good news for American arms manufacturers, is most certainly not a helpful move towards a peaceful solution of the Balkan problem. But if - and it is a big 'if' - it is successful in its aim, it would undoubtedly lead to a further extension of the capitalist system within the boundaries of the former Yugoslavia. It has already done so in Slovenia and Croatia. The resulting entry of the big corporations on to the scene will be eased by the need for reconstruction of the war-damaged infrastructures with its accompanying lucrative contracts - as happened in the Gulf War, for instance, when, even before war's end, corporations such as Bechtel were awarded lucrative contracts to rebuild Kuwait. George Schultz, ex-Executive President of Bechtel, was US Secretary of State at that time. While on this matter of reconstruction, the fact that an ostensibly military organisation such as NATO (in the form of IFOR) has, in the meanwhile, been given the responsibility of undertaking the reconstruction of the civilian infrastructure of war-damaged Bosnia is surely a pointer both to its inbred political nature and its corporate alliance - as previously stressed above.

To place the above events within a broader spectrum: since World War Two, the extraordinary growth of capital has reached global dimensions, as exemplified by the rapid spread of multinationals throughout the world. This has led to an understandable weakening of national sovereignty, and national statesmen/politicians are fast becoming posturers on the world stage while bankers and corporate executives call the tune backstage. Result: national boundaries are no longer sacrosanct.

In conclusion, it is interesting to wonder what some historian in the more objective future would make of the long-past dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Faced by the fact that the two main protagonists in the dispute had both been federal states, would he not ponder on the irony of it, and wonder what would have been the reaction of the federal United States government if the roles in the situation had been reversed in the dispute - and two of its States had decided to quit the Federation? Of one thing the historian would be in no doubt: peace counts for nowt when caught in the corporate spider's web of Profit!

