

Pirate Island Nations Must Yield to Continent Civilization

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Count Ernst zu Reventlow's extraordinarily lucid and cogent work on historic English policy has one fault from the point of view of the philosopher — he does not begin his history early enough, or derive the piracy of England from necessity. Will the distinguished publicist pardon us if we attempt to fill the gap?

It is notorious that mountaineers are necessarily brigands. In their rocky fastnesses wheat will not grow, sheep will not grow fat. They are condemned to rough cereals like oats, to small and stringy sheep and goats. The dwellers of the plain care nothing for the products of the mountain, and will not surrender their goods except by force. The highlander consequently becomes a cateran or brigand. The mountain districts of every country in the world — Scotland, Spain, India, China, or America — prove the correctness of the theory.

A similar proposition may be made with regard to islanders, as opposed to continental powers. The natural first industry of islands is fishing, in itself a piratical occupation. Just as mountaineers become hardy and desperate through the necessity of battling with the elemental forces of nature, so do fishermen. And when continental settlements begin to ship their merchandise by sea, they soon excite the envy of the fishermen, whose hardihood and desperate poverty emboldens them to become pirates.

In course of time the continental powers find it necessary to build a navy, to wreck these nests of pirates in self-protection, and the usual result is, that the island is annexed to the continent, and its people properly po-

liced, become tranquil, they may even be turned into excellent citizens, since they possess the material of courage and energy in that degree which originally started them on their piratical career.

But where the island, while retaining in the full its insular characteristics, is large enough and strong enough to develop into a sovereign state, the sporadic piracies of its aborigines become incorporated in the policy of the nation. A nucleus is formed, usually upon the banks of some great river, and the central authority is not slow to perceive that the welfare of its increasing population depends upon sea-power. The history of all island nations illustrates this view. Islands form the natural stronghold of every lawless race. However extended a sea coast may be, it may yet be turned; if a hinterland exists, the pirates can be suppressed by overland attack. Thus we see that the Vikings soon lost their power, the Danish ships of war were ultimately conquered, not upon the sea, but by attacks upon their base. Venice was destroyed from the rear. The sea power of Holland fell, not so much because of British victories on the North Sea, but because the country itself was unable to resist internal pressure. We know how easily England herself was turned out of France; and to this day she has never been able to make good her footing in any country requiring an army to defend it. India is practically an island, owing to the impossibility of invasion from the north. Yet India has always been understood by England as her weak point. Egypt, by reason of deserts, is almost an island, yet there again is a weak point. Canada is politically an island, owing to the inveterate pacificism of the inhabitants of the United States. Gibraltar is only joined to the main land by a bare and narrow neck, which can easily be swept by the gunfire from the rocks. But since the range of modern artillery has increased so greatly that Gibraltar can be shelled from the hills beyond Algeciras, it has been recognized by military authorities that the fortress is inde-

fensible, and proposals have actually been made to abandon it. We can see England's new fear of Spain in her policy towards that country, in her haste to place an English princess in the arms of the successor of Charles V. Further east we find Malta, an island — Aden, insulated by many miles of the most inhospitable desert in the world — Ceylon, the navel base of India, an island — Penang, an island — Singapore, an island — Hongkong, an island. When England obtained possession of Wei-hai-wei she was compelled to abandon it without a struggle after a few years. Similarly the English outposts in the Pacific and in the West Indies are all islands. British Honduras can hardly be called a British colony at all, the conditions there are very exceptional.

To turn to other island powers, history shows us the same picture. All successful Corsairs have been invulnerable by land. The islands of the Mediterranean have always been strongholds of pirates. The situation of Japan in the east is singularly like that of England in the west. Rome only beat Carthage after the destruction of her sea-power, by dint of using her command of the Mediterranean to land an army in Africa and attack Carthage by land. The power of Spain was not destroyed by the dispersion of the Armada, but by her disasters in the Netherlands.

From all this we perceive easily that England is not at all to be blamed for her piracies. Her situation compelled it. We must further remember that not only were the original inhabitants of Great Britain of a predatory disposition, but the invaders who conquered England in part and mingled with the inhabitants were all sea-rovers: the Norsemen, the Danes, the so-called Saxons, and the Normans, were all brigands who were being pushed off the continent because their ravages had become intolerable to civilized people. It is therefore criminally unthinking in us to blame England for her policy of piracy. She is of necessity a pirate, by situation and by heredity. It would be equally absurd to blame

the crocodile or the tiger. Even England's hypocrisy must not shock us. It must be regarded in the light of a tribute paid to continental virtue. . . . Perhaps we might even be optimistic enough to suggest that it represents the beginning of a conscience. This much being conceded, we must no longer regard England with detestation and contempt. To do so is unreasonable, and therefore immoral. We must not shed crocodile tears over the crocodile. But on the other hand, we cannot tolerate the crocodile. We need to cross the river, in the pursuit of our peaceful avocations, and we must find the weak spot in the armor of the crocodile and give him to our handmaidens for a play! This weak spot is evidently to be found in Ireland. When Ireland becomes a sovereign, independent state, a good deal will have been done. But this is not nearly enough.

Those politicians who are so soft-hearted, or soft-headed, that they talk of peace with England must be utterly blind to the lessons of history and geography. "Britannia est delenda" should be the one motto of every continental politician. Does not France understand that the strangle hold of 1814 has only become the embrace of 1914 that it may turn again into a strangle hold in 2014? Count zu Reventlow is admirable beyond words in his demonstration that England has never been bound by blood or sentiment or honor, but only by business considerations. England is already considering at this moment whether it would not be better to throw over France and come to an agreement with Germany. The only thing that restrains her is her fear of the German fleet. Such political insight as I am proud to share with Count zu Reventlow declares that any peace concluded between England and any other nation is a Judas kiss.

There is only one solution to the problem of English piracy: the sovereignty of England must be destroyed once and for all. England herself has understood this with admirable, if devilish, clarity. It is for this reason that she has not only destroyed the sovereignty of Ire-

land, but deliberately ravaged and depopulated it. She must be made to swallow a dose of her own medicine. England must be divided up between the continental powers. She must be a mere province, or, better still, colony of her neighbors, France and Germany.

Peace with England, at this time would be a crime against humanity. The British fleet is unassailable; in spite of German valor it has remained practically intact. While this is so, England, at any moment, without giving any other reason but moral indignation (which is her principal industry and never likely to run short), can throttle the whole world. Those who talk of peace at this time must therefore be unhesitatingly suppressed. No matter what may be our sufferings and sacrifices, we must go on to the end. We must die, that humanity may live.

Now, there is only one way to destroy the power of England: the country must be conquered. And before it is conquered it must be invaded, or starved into surrender, such surrender to involve the destruction, or handing over, of her whole fleet. Now, before England can either be starved or invaded, her fleet must be either destroyed or rendered impotent. There is only one way to do this: it is by ruthless prosecution of submarine warfare. While England's fleet exists, trade with America could always be stopped, when it suited British policy to do so. The only thing for Germany to do is to concentrate the whole of her intelligence and power upon the building and manning of submarines, in such numbers, and of such excellence, that England is starved, and her fleet destroyed. If it takes ten years — or a hundred years — it must be done. From the broadest standpoint of humanity, nothing else is really worth doing.

Let Germany make peace with France and Russia — if we *must* talk peace. Let her give up, if necessary, the territory which it has cost so much blood and treasure to

take and hold. Let her do this, that she may be able to concentrate her whole power against the vampire.

Count zu Reventlow has found the word of the situation: that word "vampire." Let him look therefore to tradition. It is not enough to kill a vampire in the ordinary way. Holy water must be used, and holy herbs. It must be severed, limb from limb, its heart torn out, and a charred stake thrust through it. If one precaution is omitted, the vampire lives again, to prey upon the innocent and the just. *Britannia est delenda.*