The Role of the Venetian Oligarchy in the Reformation, Counter-Reformation, Enlightenment and the Thirty Years' War -- Part III



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The following speech, which is being presented in the New Federalist in three parts, was delivered on September 6, 1992 at a conference co-sponsored by the Schiller Institute and the International Caucus of Labor Committees in Northern Virginia.

Let us sample the epistemology of the *giovani*, using Sarpi and his precursor Paolo Paruta. The *giovani* were skeptics, full of contempt for man and for human reason. Sarpi admired the French essayist Michel de Montaigne, who had been educated by a father who had been in Italy as a soldier and probably imbibed Venetian teachings; Montaigne himself had made the pilgrimage to Venice. Sarpi agreed with Montaigne that man was the most imperfect of animals.

Sarpi was a precursor of Bentham's hedonistic calculus. Man was a creature of appetites, and these were insatiable, especially the *libido dominandi*.

> ``We are always acquiring happiness, we have never acquired it and never will,"

wrote Sarpi. [*Pensiero* 250]

Paruta had been an empiricist:

> ``Although our intellect may be divine from its birth, nevertheless here below it lives among these earthly members and cannot perform its operations without the help of bodily sensation. By their means, drawing into the mind the images of material things, it represents these things to itself and in this way forms its concepts of them. By the same token it customarily rises to spiritual contemplations not by itself but awakened by sense objects." [Bouwsma, p. 206]

Sarpi was an empiricist:

> ``There are four modes of philosophizing: the first with reason alone, the second with sense alone, the third with reason and then sense, and the fourth beginning with sense and ending with reason. The first is the worst, because from it we know what we would like to be, not what is. The third is bad because we many times distort what is into what we would like, rather than adjusting what we would like to what is. The second is true but crude, permitting us to know little and that rather of things than of their causes. The fourth is the best we can have in this miserable life. (*Scritti filosofici e teologici,* Bari: Laterza, 1951, Pensiero 146)

That is Francis Bacon's inductive method. Bacon's ideas about inductive method were taken from the *Arte di ben pensare* and other Sarpi writings.

For Sarpi, experience means the perception of physical objects by the senses. For Sarpi there are no true universals: ``Essence and universality are works of the mind," he wrote disparagingly. [*Pensiero* 371] Sarpi was brought up on Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.

Sarpi was also a pragmatist, arguing that ``we despise knowledge of things of which we have no need." [*Pensiero* 289]

Sarpi was also a cultural relativist, and a precursor of David Hume: Every culture has its own idea of order, he said, and ``therefore the

republics, the buildings, the politics of the Tartars and the Indians are different." [*Pensiero* 159].

With Paolo Paruta, we already have the economic man enshrined in the myths of Adam Smith:

> ``The desire to grow rich is as natural in us as the desire to live. Nature provides the brute animals with the things necessary for their lives; but in man, whom it makes poor, naked, and subject to many needs, it inserts this desire for riches and gives him intelligence and industry to acquire them." [Bouwsma, p. 211]

A speaker in Paruta's dialogues expresses the views of the Physiocrats, saying that wealth derived from farming and grazing is ``more true and natural" than other forms. [Bouwsma, p. 212]

Paruta's treatment of the fall of the Roman empire appears to be the starting point for Gibbon:

> ``This stupendous apparatus, constructed over a long course of years through the great virtue and the many exertions of so many valorous men, had finally run the course common to human things, that is to be dissolved and to fall to earth; and with its ruin it brought on the greatest revolution in things." [Bouwsma, p. 283]

In religion, Sarpi and his right-hand man, Fulgenzio Micanzio, were very much *Spirituali* on the *ex sola fede* line of justification. A papal nuncio assigned to surveil the two wrote that Fulgenzio ``greatly exalts faith in the blood of Christ and the grace of God for our salvation, and leaves out or rarely refers to works." [Bouwsma, p. 498]

Sarpi sounds very much like Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and Hume. This is no surprise, since Sarpi and Micanzio were in close contact with Hobbes and Bacon, sometimes directly, and sometimes through the intermediary of William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire, a friend of Francis Bacon and the employer of Thomas Hobbes. Bacon was of course a raving irrationalist, a Venetian-style Rosicrucian, and a bugger. Cavendish may have introduced Bacon to Hobbes, who soon became a couple. In Chatsworth House in Cornwall there is a manuscript entitled ``Hobbes' Translations of Italian Letters," containing 77 missives from Micanzio to the Earl (called ``Candiscio"). According to Dudley Carleton, Cavendish visited Venice and Padova in September 1614, accompanied by Hobbes. At that time meetings with Sarpi and Micanzio would have been on the agenda. [De Mas, p. 155]

Venice and England

The contacts between Venice and England during the period around 1600 were so dense as to constitute an ``Anglo-Venetian coalition," as Enrico De Mas asserts. The son of the Venetian agent William Cecil (Bacon's uncle) was Robert Cecil, who visited Venice shortly after 1600. Bacon himself was attorney general and lord chancellor for King James I. English ambassadors like Dudley Carleton and Sir Henry Wotton were also important intermediaries. Bacon was also in frequent contact by letter with the Venetian senator and patrician Domenico Molino. Bacon knew Italian because his mother had been active as the translator of the writings of Italian heretics. [De Mas, p. 156] Fulgenzio Micanzio was literary agent for Bacon in Venice, arranging for the translation and publication of his writings.

One letter in Latin from Bacon to Micanzio has been located; here Bacon discusses a plan for a Latin edition of his complete works. Another translator of Bacon was the Archbishop of Spalato and Venetian agent Marcantonio de Dominis, who turned against Rome and stayed for some time as an honored guest of the English court before returning to Rome. There was a Bacon cult among the Venetian nobility in those years, and Venice led all Italian cities in the number of editions of Bacon's works.

As for Sarpi, his *History of the Council of Trent* was first published in English in London in an edition dedicated to King James I, and translated by Nathaniel Brent.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Spain was showing signs of economic decline, and was attempting to retrench on her military commitments. Spain made peace with France in 1598, with England in 1604, and, after decades of warfare, began to negotiate with the Dutch. Spain also started peace talks with the Ottoman Empire. The Venice of the *giovani* was horrified by the apparent winding down of the wars of religion. Especially the Spanish truce with the Dutch was viewed with alarm by the Venetians, since this would free up veteran Spanish troops who could be used in a war against Venice. After taking over Venice in 1582, the *giovani* had favored a more aggressive policy against the papacy and the Hapsburgs. After 1600, Venice passed laws that made it harder for the church to own Venetian land and dispose of it; this was followed by the arrest of two priests by the civil authorities. Pope Paul V Borghese responded on profile by declaring Venice under the papal interdict, which remained in force for almost a year, well into 1607.

The use of the papal interdict against a nominally Catholic country caused a sensation in the Protestant world, where tremendous sympathy for Venice was generated by an avalanche of propaganda writings, above all those of Sarpi himself. The Jesuit Bellarmine and others wrote for the papacy in this pamphlet war. Bellarmine puffed the pope as the *arbiter mundi,* the court of last resort in world affairs. Sarpi, who was an official of the Venetian regime, soon became the idol of the libertines and freethinkers everywhere, and was soon one of the most famous and most controversial persons in Europe. In the end, the Vatican was obliged to remove the interdict without securing any expression of penitence or regret; the Venetian government released the two clerics to a French cardinal who had undertaken a mediation, and the French gave the clerics back to the pope.

Lutherans and Calvinists cheered Venice, which appeared to have checked the inexorable advance of the Counter-Reformation. Much

was made of national sovereignty, which the Venetians said they were defending against the pope in the name of all nations.

Venice and James I

French Gallicans and Huguenots, Swiss and Dutch Calvinists were for Venice, but none supported Venice more than the degenerate King of England, James I. James was the pedantic pederast who claimed that he got his divine right directly from God, and not by way of the pope. James was delighted with Sarpi's arguments, and with their seeming victory. Venice, by asserting an independent Catholic Church under state control during the interdict, also appeared to be following the example of Henry VIII and the Anglican (or Anglo-Catholic) Church.

Sir Henry Wotton advanced the idea of a Protestant alliance encompassing England, Venice, the Grisons (the Graubuenden or Gray league of the Valtellina region in the Swiss Alps, sought by Spain as a land route between Austria and Milan), Holland, and the Protestant princes of Germany. The former Calvinist King Henry IV of France might be won for such a league, some thought. The Doge Leonardo Dona' of the *giovani* group even threatened indirectly to lead Venice into apostasy and heresy. ``You must warn the Pope not to drive us into despair,'' he told the papal nuncio, ``because we would then act like desperate men!'' Sir Henry Wotton took this literally, and included in his alliance proposals plans to get Venice to go Protestant. He forwarded this to London where it was marked in the margin ``The Project of Venice, 1608'' by Robert Cecil. This was the Cecil who, as David Cherry has shown, staged Guy Fawkes' Gunpowder Plot, an alleged Catholic attempt to blow up the king and the Houses of Parliament, in order to guarantee that James would be suitably hostile to Rome and Spain. The project included a plan for James to become the supreme commander of the Protestant world in a war against the pope. This was clearly a line that Sarpi and company sought to feed to the megalomaniac James I. As part of the scheme, Charles Diodati, one of the Italian *Spirituali* who had fled to Geneva, was brought to Venice to preach. But later Sarpi and the Venetians found reason to be bitterly disappointed with the refusal of James I and Charles I massively to intervene on the European continent.

During this period, according to one account, an emissary of the Elector of the Palatinate reported that he had been taken by the English ambassador to Venice to visit a Calvinist Congregation of more than 1,000 people in Venice, including 300 of the top patricians, of which Sarpi was the leader. Sarpi invited the German Protestants to come to the aid of Venice in case of war, for in defending Venetian territory they would be helping the Protestant cause as well. [*Scelte Lettere Inedite di Fra Paolo Sarpi,* (Capolago, Canton Ticino: Tipografia e Libreria Elvetica, 1833, pp. cxi-cxii]

The Roots of War

In reality, the Venetians used the conflict around the Interdict to inflame the religious passions of Europe so as to set the stage for a revival of the wars of religion. The seventeenth century would thus repeat the hecatomb of the sixteenth on an even vaster scale. The Venetian gambit of a clash with the Vatican set the stage for the Thirty Years' War.

The grand design Sarpi peddled to Protestants called for an apocalyptic war between Catholics and Protestants with the latter led by James I and the Dutch United Provinces. In a battle between Venice and the papal states, foreign Protestant armies would fight on Venetian soil, making possible the religious conversion of the terra ferma (Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, etc.) to some sort of Calvinism. [Cozzi, pp. 265-68] At a deeper level, Venice wanted a catastrophic general war in Europe from which Venice could hold aloof, thus surviving at least until the process of the metastasis of the fondi into northern Europe could be completed--until the time, say, of the founding of the Bank of England at the end of the 1600s. Beyond that, the oligarchs would seek to preserve the Rialto as a cultural and ideological center. But the survival of the withered mummy of Venice for a century or two would be possible only if all the other European powers were throughly devastated.

It is remarkable to observe how many of the key protagonists who detonated the Thirty Years' War can be identified as Venetian agents.

During the Interdict battle, Sarpi's intelligence agencies went into action to create the preconditions for such a war, not in Italy, but beyond the Alps in Germany. The first step was to organize Germany into two armed camps, similar to the pre-1914 or post-1945 European military blocs. First came the creation of the Protestant Union of 1608, helped by the crushing of the free city of Donauwoerth by the Counter-Reformation under Maximilian I of Bavaria.

The Protestant Union was organized by Prince Christian of Anhalt, the senior adviser to the Elector Palatine. Christian of Anhalt was a vital node of Paolo Sarpi's network, and in the 1870s the Archives of the German city of Bernburg contained a correspondence between Christian and Sarpi. [Julius Krebs, p. 45]

When Christian von Anhalt created the Protestant Union, he sent one Christoph von Dona (or Dohna) to talk to Sarpi in Venice about the entry of Venice into this alliance. Christoph von Dona and his brother Achatius von Dona kept up a correspondence with Paolo Sarpi in their own right [Cozzi, p. 245, 258].

In August 1608, Christoph von Dona met with Sarpi in Venice, and Sarpi told Dona about the measures taken by the *giovani* in 1582 to ``correct'' the functions of the Council of Ten and its subcommittee of three (Zonta), which up until that time had constituted a factional stronghold of the adversaries of the *giovani*, who were called the *Vecchi* (old) and who favored a more conciliatory line towards Spain

and the papacy. The Ten had been accused, Sarpi told Christoph von Dona, of being arrogant, and of usurping the main functions of the government, including foreign policy, from the senate, or Pregadi.

The Venetian diplomatic corps was mobilized to exploit the Interdict to create the Protestant Union. The papal nuncio in Paris reported on March 3, 1609 to Pope Paul V on the activities of the Venetian ambassador, Antonio Foscarini, a close associate of Sarpi: ``From the first day that he came here, he has always comported himself in the same way: His most confidential dealings are with the agents of various German Protestants, with the Dutch, with the English ambassador and with two or three French Huguenots, who can be considered his houseguests. His business has been to attempt to impede in any way possible any peace or truce in Flanders.... In addition to these fine projects, he has been in a big rush to set up this league of Protestants in Germany, and although he has not been able to do much in this direction, in any case I am sure that if he can contribute to this, he'll do it." [Federico Seneca, *La Politica Veneziana Dopo L'Interdetto,* Padova, 1957., pp. 21-22]

Within a year of the creation of the Protestant Union in 1608, a Catholic League was formed under the aegis of Maximilian of Bavaria with Spanish support. The conflagration was set.

Academic accounts of the Thirty Years' War often stress the conflict over the succession in Juelich-Cleves (around Duesseldorf) after 1609, which embroiled the Dutch and the Protestants against the imperial Catholics. Some accounts portray Henry IV of France as eager to attack the Hapsburgs in Milan and on the Rhine during 1610, just before Henry IV was assassinated by the alleged Catholic fanatic Ravaillac, who accused Henry IV of being a threat to the Catholic Church. According to other accounts, Henry IV ``had decided to reveal to the pope and to the Venetian Republic what was being plotted in Venice by Sarpi, or at least by those who were moving around him." [Cozzi, p. 257]

From Venice, Giovanni Diodati wrote to his friend Philippe Duplessis Mornay telling him of the ``petite eglise reformee" (small reformed church) there. Diodati added that ``the English minister and ambassador [William Bedell, Wotton's secretary] has been very helpful." This letter was intercepted by Henry IV of France, who passed it to the papal nuncio, who sent it on to Rome and to the Venetian government. Sarpi was soon aware of what had happened. Writing to Christoph von Dohna on 29 September 1608, Sarpi complained, ``The King of France has written that Venice is in favor of religion, and he has played a very bad role." ``How did it happen that that great principle was put to sleep?" he wrote to another correspondent that summer, referring to the French mediation of the Interdict crisis; ``that is also the reason why it is impossible to incite others." [Cozzi, p. 259] Sarpi's animus against Henry IV suggests that the superficial explanation of Henry's assassination in 1610 may not be the correct one. In any case, Henry's death increased the tensions among the German Protestant leaders, since they had now been deprived of their protector. Henry's death meant that France, a power Venice ultimately hated and feared just as much as Spain, would be plunged again into the internal conflicts epitomized by the St. Bartholomew's massacre of 20,000 Huguenots in 1572; Pope Gregory XIII had called those killings ``more agreeable than fifty Lepantos." [R.R. Palmer, p. 106] In the 1600s this civil strife was called the Fronde, and it would be decades before the Fronde was suppressed to the point that France was capable of international action once again.

The Thirty Years' War

In 1615, the Venetians started a border war with Austria, called the *Guerra Arciducale*. This was the signal that something big was coming. The Austrian Hapsburgs, in order to defend their frontier with the Ottoman Empire, employed a force of refugees from the Balkans called *uzkoks* (``uzkok" is the Serbian word for refugees). Uzkoks settled in Segna and some other ports of the eastern Adriatic where they operated as corsairs against Turkish shipping, and also against the Venetians. The uzkoks, through their depradations and through the cost of measures undertaken against them, were depleting the Venetian treasury. So in December 1615, Venetian land forces crossed the Isonzo River and laid siege to Gradisca. Count John Ernest of Nassau-Siegen raised forces totaling 5,000 men in the Dutch Republic to assist the Venetians; ten English and twelve Dutch warships maintained a blockade of the Adriatic against any ships from Spain or Naples which might have sought to aid their Austrian Hapsburg allies. But Spanish forces did reach the front, forcing the Venetians to accept a negotiated peace. A recent study highlights the significance of this Venetian-staged conflict in the runup to the general conflagration:

> ``The uzkok war was one of the more bizarre episodes of the earlier seventeenth century, yet it offered an alarming example of how a minor political conflict in a remote corner of Europe could threaten to engulf the whole continent with war.... The uzkok war, although apparently minor, was important because it brought a general European conflict perceptibly nearer. On the diplomatic plane, it cemented or occasioned alliances that favored aggression." [Parker, pp. 40, 42]

In the spring of 1618, executions in Venice were attributed to the discovery by the Council of Ten of an alleged Spanish plot to overthrow the Venetian regime. Some skeptical historians consider that this was a cover story for a Venetian intrigue in which the Spanish governor of Naples, Osuna, was to declare himself independent under Venetian auspices. [Carl J. Friedrichs, p. 151]

The immediate detonator for the Thirty Years' War is usually considered to be the revolt of the Bohemian nobles against the new Hapsburg Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, who was also the King of Bohemia. Under Rudolph II, the previous emperor, the Bohemian nobles had been granted the Letter of Majesty of 1609 which guaranteed them their religious self-determination (ignoring the *cuius regio eius religio*) and the right to elect their own king. The Bohemians, many of whom were Calvinists, Hussites, and Utraquists, feared that Ferdinand would introduce the militant Counter-Reformation into Bohemia. There followed the celebrated defenestration of Prague of

1618, in which two representatives of Ferdinand were thrown out of the window by a group of Bohemian nobles organized by the Count of Thurn. When Ferdinand sent troops to restore his authority, the Bohemian nobles deposed him and decided to elect a new king. They chose Frederick V, the Elector Palatine, who had his court in Heidelberg, and who, as we have seen, counted Christian von Anhalt and Christoph von Dona among his most trusted advisers. When the Electoral Palatine, now styling himself King Frederick of Bohemia, was routed at the battle of the White Mountain in 1620, he went into the history books as the ``unlucky Winter King.'' Let us attempt further to reveal the fine Venetian hand behind these events, which are the opening rounds of the Thirty Years' War.

The key figure among the Bohemians is the Count Heinrich Mathias of Thurn-Valsassina (1567-1633). This is the senior branch of the family, originally from Venetian territory, which is otherwise known as della Torre, Torre e Tasso, and later as Thurn und Taxis. Thurn's parents had become Protestants, but he entered the imperial army and fought during a campaign against the Ottoman Empire. As a reward he had gotten the important post of Burggraf of Marlstein in Bohemia. Here Thurn built a base among the local nobility, including especially the branch of the Hussites known as the Utraquists. His announced program was the maintenance of Bohemian liberties for these nobles. Heinrich Mathias von Thurn demanded and got the Letter of Majesty, which soon turned into the apple of Bohemian discord. He was named to a special committee of 30 Defenders of the Faith in Prague. He was vehemently opposed to the election of Ferdinand as Holy Roman Emperor, and Ferdinand responded by attempting to oust Thurn as Burggraf, within the framework of other anti-Protestant measures. Thurn then incited the Bohemians to rebel, and this led directly to the defenestration of Prague of May 23, 1618. In the face of Ferdinand's military response, Thurn was made the commander of the Bohemian armed forces. He had captured some of the suburbs of Vienna when he was forced to retreat. During the campaign leading up to the rout at the White Mountain, Thurn was constantly disputing with the Palatine Elector's generals about who was in command. After the rout, he made his career as a general in later phases of the war. [*Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, XLV, pp. 104-06]

Finally, let us look at Frederick V the Elector Palatine himself. The future Winter King, a Calvinist, had married Elizabeth, the daughter of King James I of England, and the English presence at the Palatine court in Heidelberg was associated with the same sorts of cultist kookery we have observed in the cases of Zorzi and Bacon. Rosicrucians in particular were heavily present at the electoral Palatine court. One of them was the English irrationalist and freemason Robert Fludd, whose lengthy treatise on universal harmony, the *Utriusque cosmi historia* was published on the Palatine city of Oppenheim in 1617-19. During the course of the Thirty Years' War, after Frederick had been deposed by the Catholic forces, parts of the Heidelberg library, the Bibliotheca Palatina, were confiscated by the Inquisition and moved to Rome. [Yates, pp. 169-171] Frederick was not the only one infected by the Rosicrucian bacillus in these years in which the saga of ``Christian *Rosenkreuz* first appeared in Germany. One of Fludd's friends was a certain German Rosicrucian alchemist named Michael Maier, who was reputed to be close to the Hapsburg Emperor Rudolph II. [See Serge Hutin, *Histoire des Rose-Croix,* p. 125]

Such Venetian-Rosicrucian irrationalism may provide the key to the Winter King's legendary mental lability and failures of strategic planning. We must also remember that the Elector was constantly controlled and advised by Sarpi's friends Christian von Anhalt and Christoph von Dona. Christian was notorious for his adventurism and brinksmanship; one German account of these events speaks of ``Anhalt's crazy plans''; these included the ambitious project of wiping out the House of Hapsburg and making Frederick Holy Roman Emperor, a thoroughly utopian undertaking. Frederick V was encouraged to believe that with the aid of a few troops from Venetian-allied Savoy, plus the Bohemians, and support from a few other German states, he could break the Spanish-Austrian-Catholic hold on central Europe.

In August-September 1619, Frederick vacillated over whether or not to accept the Bohemian crown offered to him by Thurn and his cohorts. Bohemia was prime Hapsburg territory, and it was clear that Frederick could not keep Prague without some serious fighting. Some advisers wrote position papers for Frederick warning him not to take the crown, saying that ``acceptance would begin a general religious war.'' [Parker, p. 55] But Christian von Anhalt and his friend Camerarius answered that such a war was inevitable anyway as soon as the twelve years' truce between the Spanish and the Dutch ran out. The Sarpi networks were fully mobilized; Dudley Carleton, the Anglo-Venetian representative of James I in the Hague, wrote in September 1619 that ``this business in Bohemia is like to put all Christendom into combustion.''

Frederick accepted the Bohemian crown, rushed to Prague, and then found himself in a hopelessly exposed position. After the White Mountain, he never stopped retreating; he failed to rally the Palatinate for a war of self-defense, and was permanently ousted. The death of Gustavus Adolphus some years later closed the books on Frederick V's hopes of being restored in the Palatinate.

The Thirty Years' War, which extirpated about half of the population of Germany between 1618 and 1648, is thus exposed as a piece of utopian-geopolitical tinkering from the satanic cell around Fra Paolo Sarpi.

More on Bacon

Even after he was ousted from all his court posts in the wake of confessed bribery and corruption, Francis Bacon remained a loyal Venetian agent. In about 1624, Bacon addressed a memorandum to the new King Charles I in which he urged that England declare war on Spain in order to help restore the Elector Palatine (and Charles's sister) in Heidelberg. The alliance proposed by Bacon was to include new variations on the usual Paoli Sarpi constellation: France, Navarre, Naples, Milan, Grisons, Savoy, Bavaria, the Protestant leader Gabor of Transylvania, and now even Persia, which was attempting to seize the straits of Hormuz. Bacon stressed the Venetian contribution:

> ``It is within every man's observation also that Venice doth think their state almost unfixed if the Spaniards hold the

Valtoline." [Bacon, *Considerations Touching a War...*]

Sarpi had many English admirers; one was Izaak Walton, the author of the famous *Compleat Angler.* Another was John Milton, who had repeated praise for Fra Paolo. Milton called Sarpi ``Padre Paolo the great unmasker of the Tridentine Council,'' ``Padre Paolo the great Venetian antagonist of the Pope,'' and ``the great and learned Padre Paolo.'' Indeed, a whole passage in Milton's famous ``Areopagitica,'' the one dealing with the Council of Trent, closely follows Sarpi's account.

Ludwig Dehio and other historians have pointed out that the characteristic Venetian methods of strategy were also typical of the later English and British colonialism. It was the Venetian asset and architect of the English religious schism, Thomas Cromwell, who wrote, ``this realm of England is an empire.'' Gaining strength under James I, the Venetian party acted out its imperialist impulse during the Stuart and Cromwell periods, and most obviously under the post-1688 oligarchical system. [See Graham Lowry, *How the Nation was Won*] Thus it is that the Venetian methods that were used deliberately to provoke the wars of religion of the sixteenth century, and later the Thirty Years' War itself, can be discerned in the global strategic commitments of today's British oligarchy tending to unleash a global cataclysm, a *bellum omnium contra omnes* (war of each against all) which no nation and no people could seriously hope to survive.

The ascendancy of Venice after 1200 was instrumental in precipitating the near-collapse of European civilization between about 1250 and 1400. Later, the combined effect of the Venice-sponsored Protestant Reformation and the Venice-sponsored Counter-Reformation was to visit upon Europe the renewed horrors of 1520-1648, to which the British historian Trevor-Roper has referred under the heading of the ``little Dark Age.'' Today the shadows of another such nightmare epoch lengthen over the ruined economies, gutted cities and ethnic conflicts of the late twentieth century. Those wishing to survive must learn to defend themselves from the Anglo-Venetian hecatomb now looming.

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