

BOOKS

Britain's Brotherhood Exposed

At a time when a majority of Americans suffer from a form of historical attention deficit disorder, driven by the 24-hour news cycle of CNN and Fox News, author Robert Dreyfuss has contributed an important, highly readable piece of Twentieth-century historiography. *Devil's Game* tells the sordid tale of how Great Britain fostered the Twentieth-century rise of the "Islamist rightwing"—and how the United States, from the time of the death of Franklin Roosevelt, was sucked deeper and deeper into that British "Game," and has now become a prop in Imperial London's "Clash of Civilizations."

Dreyfuss uses a combination of scholarly sources and interviews with leading American Middle East diplomats and intelligence officers, to trace the history of the British-sponsored Muslim Brotherhood (MB), an organization that today stands, potentially, on the verge of taking political power in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and a number of Persian Gulf oil sheikhdoms. While the MB's political visibility is a known factor in the politics of the region, and some leading Middle Eastern scholars have even studied its role in al-Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks, the British intelligence roots of this secret organization, and the strategic implications of those longstanding ties, are rarely considered.

It is here that the Dreyfuss book represents an important new contribution to an understanding of the interaction between Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century European imperial politics, and the emerging forces shaping the affairs of the Arab and Islamic world today.

Nineteenth-Century Roots

Although the Muslim Brotherhood was formally founded in Egypt in 1928, the roots of the British-sponsored Freemasonic secret society date further back two generations, to the last quarter of the Nineteenth-century. At that time, British intelligence sponsored the career of a Persian-born Shi'ite named Jamal Eddine,

later known as Jamal Eddine al-Afghani (1838-1897). A British (and French) Freemason and professed atheist, al-Afghani spent his entire adult life as an agent of British intelligence, fomenting "Islamist" insurrections where they suited British imperial goals. At points in his fascinating career, he served as Minister of War and Prime Minister of Iran, before leading an insurrection against the Shah. He was a founder of the Young Egypt movement, which was part of a worldwide network of British Jacobin fronts that waged war against Britain's imperial rivals during the second half of the Nineteenth century. In Sudan, following the Mahdi-led nationalist revolt and the murder of Britain's Lord Gordon, al-Afghani organized an "Islamist" counterrevolution in support of a restoration of British colonial control.

Al-Afghani was backed by one of Britain's leading Orientalists, Edward Granville Browne, and whenever he ran out of cash, he made a beeline for London, where he was always provided with funding, a publishing house, and other amenities.

Young Egypt

Al-Afghani's leading disciple and fellow British agent was Mohammed Abduh (1849-1905). The Egyptian-born Abduh founded the Salafiyya movement, under the patronage of the British proconsul of Egypt, Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer). In the 1870's, al-Afghani and Abduh founded the Young Egypt movement, which battled against secular Egyptian nationalists. In the mid-1880's, the two men moved to Paris, where they launched a magazine under British and French Freemasonic sponsorship, called *Indissoluble Bond*.

In 1899, two years after al-Afghani died, Lord Cromer made Abduh the Grand Mufti of Egypt. Abduh, in turn, begat Mohammed Rashid Rida (1865-1935), a Syrian who migrated to Egypt to become Abduh's leading disciple. Rida founded the organization that would be



**Devil's Game:
How the United States
Helped Unleash
Fundamentalist Islam**
by Robert Dreyfuss
New York, Henry Holt, 2005
388 pages, hardcover, \$27.50

the immediate precursor to the Muslim Brotherhood, the Society of Propaganda and Guidance. That Freemasonic organization published a journal, *The Light-house*, which provided "Islamist" backing to the British colonial rule over Egypt, by attacking Egyptian nationalists as "atheists and infidels." In Cairo, under British patronage, Rida launched the Institute of Propaganda and Guidance, which brought in Islamists from every part of the Muslim world to be trained in political agitation. Rida and other disciples of Abduh founded the People's Party, which openly agitated in support of British colonial rule.

Brotherhood vs. Nation-State

One graduate of the Institute for Propaganda and Guidance, who also was a central figure in the People's Party, was Hassan al-Banna (1906-49). Al-Banna would found the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. The original Muslim Brotherhood was an unabashed British intelligence front. The mosque in Ismailia, Egypt, which was the first headquarters of the Brotherhood, was built by the (British) Suez Canal Company, near to a British World War I military base. During World War II, the Muslim Brotherhood functioned as a *de facto* branch of the British military. In 1942, the Brotherhood created the "Secret Apparatus,"

an underground paramilitary organization that specialized in assassinations and espionage.

From these roots, Dreyfuss traces the Cold War era British exploitation of the MB, against Egyptian nationalist Nasser, Iranian nationalist Mossadegh, and other movements in the Arab world, seeking to create modern, sovereign nation-states.

Fast-forward to the 1970's, and the British formulation of the "Arc of Crisis" strategy, of pitting "rightwing political Islam"—in the form of the Khomeini Islamic Republic in Iran and the

Mujahideen in Afghanistan—against the Soviet Union's "soft Muslim underbelly," and you have the recipe for the disaster now unfolding. By the time that Zbigniew Brzezinski came in as President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor in 1977, British Arab Bureau figure Dr. Bernard Lewis had become a fixture in Washington (based at Princeton University), and the United States had been hooked on the British "Game."

Despite the fact that 9/11 altered the rules, and the MB-spawned radical Islamist groups, from al-Qaeda to Hamas and Hezbollah, became the most

embittered "enemies" of Washington in the Bush Administration's so-called "Global War on Terrorism," the shift was, in reality, cosmetic.

Until and unless American policy-makers wake up to the fact that Washington has been played for a fool by British masters of imperial divide-and-conquer politics, American standing in the world will never recover. Dreyfuss provides a vital road map of how American policy went disastrously wrong, and that is the starting point for any successful correction.

—Jeffrey Steinberg

Gödel, Einstein, LaRouche

Rebecca Goldstein's remarkable book on the life and work of Kurt Gödel is a very useful contribution to a very old debate, and is even a call to arms, in some respects, for the world to re-engage in that debate. Drawing on her experiences as a graduate student in the philosophy of science and mathematics at Princeton University in the 1970's, while Gödel was still at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Studies, and on her extensive personal contact with several of Gödel's associates, the book presents Gödel, together with his closest friend, Albert Einstein, engaged in a life-long battle against the increasingly predominant ideology in American and European academia and scientific community: that of empiricism, positivism, and related reductionist notions.

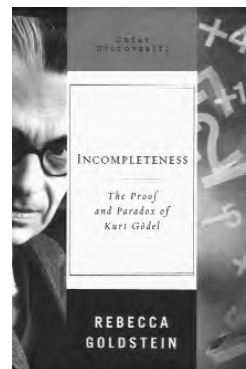
Gödel and Einstein defended and advanced the Platonic scientific tradition, insisting on a commitment to the search for truth and universal principles, rejecting the degenerate existential notions of randomness peddled by the positivists. This battle engaged the creative passions of both Einstein and Gödel, but it is a battle which has been nearly lost today. Lyndon LaRouche and those associated with him long ago joined that fight, placing it at the forefront of the political campaign to pull the nation and the world away from its current path toward economic collapse and global war.

While Einstein's concept of relativity

is well known (although often, even usually, misunderstood—see article by Bruce Director in this issue, page 98), Gödel's work is less widely known. The famous Incompleteness Theorem, often called Gödel's Theorem, released in 1931, intersected an intellectual climate in Europe increasingly dominated by the logical positivism of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Popper, and the so-called Vienna Circle (in which Gödel himself had participated, while rejecting its conclusions, in the 1930's), and by Wittgenstein's leading supporter, Bertrand Russell.

Russell and his collaborator Alfred North Whitehead were engaged in an effort to reduce all mathematical knowledge to a precise set of axioms, which they published as the *Principia Mathematica*. Russell and his positivist circle rejected as essentially meaningless any concept which could not be demonstrated to be true by purely mechanical means, based on nothing but sense perception—the "shadows on the wall" of Plato's famous cave—and logical deductions derived from them. In other words, they rejected reason altogether, or simply defined reason to be nothing more than a logical/mechanical process which could just as easily be performed by a computer as by a human mind.

Gödel's discovery of 1931 proved by mathematical means that the entire enterprise undertaken by the logical positivists in Vienna, and by Russell and



**Incompleteness:
The Proof and Paradox of
Kurt Gödel**
by Rebecca Goldstein
New York, W.W. Norton, 2006
224 pages, paperbound, \$13.95;
hardcover, \$22.95

Whitehead in London, was an exercise in futility. Gödel developed an ingenious method to demonstrate that any formal system of axioms and rules of proof which is strong enough to include basic arithmetic, has at least one (and in fact, an infinite number) of theorems which can be shown to be legitimate theorems, but can neither be proven nor disproven—and yet it is clear to the human mind observing the system that the theorem is in fact true. Any such formal system, therefore, if it is not inconsistent and altogether useless, is incomplete—incapable of proving the truths of the system.

Thus, Russell's efforts to show that all mathematics can be reduced to a formal, axiomatic system were demolished.