

The Paris Peace Conference 1919 Remembered... 100 Years on

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The Education of Nations: An Indictment

Introduction

1. On the 100th anniversary of the month in which the League of Nations was formally established, this Bulletin provides an indictment of a book entitled The Future of War: A History written by Sir Lawrence Freedman, Emeritus Professor of War Studies at King's College London, England and published by Penguin Books in 2018. He is hereafter referred to as 'the author'.

The Facts

2. The focus of The Future of War ('this book') is on the risks and likely character of future war. The author states that the intent of writing on this subject '... has rarely been deliberately predictive' – since 'prediction is difficult and likely to be wrong' – rather, 'The aim was to prescribe courses of action that would improve security or avert catastrophe...' This literature, the author affirms, is valuable for what it brings to light about the assumptions of earlier eras, what people feared and why, and the remedies proposed. It helps us understand why events happened the way they did, how individuals were trapped by their own historical experiences and could not see what became glaringly obvious to later generations, and '... occasionally saw with Cassandra-like clarity what was coming, only to be ignored by their contemporaries.' The author adds that books about war were frequently books about peace, including plans to eliminate war. They also highlighted trends in society, politics, economics and technology.
3. The author refers to two larger themes in this literature:
 - i. An increasing recognition of the difficulties of containing war in terms of its destructiveness over time and space; and, linked to this,
 - ii. A search for a type of decisive 'knockout blow' on an enemy that would end a war quickly and successfully. Much less thought was given to the consequences of a failed first blow or to '... how a war's course might be increasingly determined by non-military factors,...

My Purpose:

To forewarn the public one more time that the world is heading for another Great Power war.

As in 1919, the reason is the failure of political institutions to apply 'an irenic perspective' even-handedly. Post-Cold War, the term was first defined in English charity law on 9 October 1998, drawing on a United States case of 1917, and affirmed by the Court of Appeal on 28 June 2000.

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4. The author makes two further observations of relevance to this indictment:

- i. Compared to the study of how a great power war might materialise and how it might develop, until the 1990s far less effort was put into the study of civil wars, despite their being much more frequent and often very destructive.
- ii. 'The reason that the future is difficult to predict is that it depends on choices that have yet to be made, including by our governments, in circumstances that remain uncertain.' This book, the author affirms, calls to mind that 'history is made by people who do not know what is going to happen next.'

5. The aim of this book '... is not just to assess how prescient different writers were, or whether they could have done better given what was known about new weaponry or the experience of recent wars, but to explore the prevailing understandings about the causes of war and their likely conduct and course.' The focus is mainly on the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA). This book is divided into three parts:

- i. The first examines the period from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the Cold War in 1990. It is noteworthy that in this, and succeeding parts of the book, the author compares writers' forecasts or precise predictions with what subsequently transpired.
- ii. The second deals with the period from the end of the Cold War in 1990, highlighting:
 - The surprising speed with which the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact alliance fell apart leading to a whole academic and policy effort grinding to a halt.
 - How attention switched to civil wars because they started to draw in Western powers.
 - The lack of any body of theory to understand civil wars and offer guidance on intervention. However, both academics and practitioners struggled to set the terms for future engagements.
 - The impact of the terrorist attacks on the USA of 11 September 2001 which provided the strategic rationales for Western intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. Those experiences, though, proved how difficult it was to find the right mix of armed force and social reform that could both defeat insurgencies and achieve stability in war-torn states. Escaping the trap of perpetual conflict required levels of external support that were difficult to supply as, frequently, political leadership in these states lacked credibility. The author affirms:

The quarter century after the end of the Cold War thus combined an improving academic appreciation of the sources of conflict in non-Western conflicts, deeper and more realistic than anything available in 1990, with an arc of Western engagement. The arc began tentatively, fuelled by greater commitment and ambition, until disillusion set in, confirming the early inclination to stay clear of these conflicts. There had been a search for a new type of future for war, but it had not been found.

- iii. The third notes that, as the appetite for foreign interventions waned '... great-power conflict made a comeback.' Prime examples given are those with Russia and China. Against idealised models of future war, based on technological advances in robotics and artificial intelligence, alongside persistent fears of a nuclear confrontation, there was the abiding reality of gruelling civil wars drawing in foreign powers '... whose interventions were as likely to keep them going as bring them to a conclusion. There is no longer a dominant model for future war, but instead a blurred concept and a range of speculative possibilities.'

6. The author's sources are contained in his list of references running to 44 pages and a bibliography of 29 pages. However, there is no reference to the four (out of six) Briefings of the Project on Demilitarisation (Prodem) that constituted a 245-page editorial by the writer of this Bulletin, which were published between March 1993 and October 1995, the relevance and timing of which will become apparent shortly. Nor is there any reference by the author in The Future of War to his own analysis of Western management of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia which was compared side-by-side with this writer's in Prodem Briefing A/3. Nor did the author make any reference to Briefing no. 1 of the International Peace Project (IPP) on The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict published on their website in January 2006 as its trial 'Peace Games'. Full details of all these references are given below in the notes to this Bulletin.

7. The direct relevance and timing of the Prodem Briefings of this writer may be illustrated by:

i. The '**Statement of Purpose**' of Briefing no. 1 (March 1993) which reads:

We are on the road to war. After the Cold War and Gulf War [of 1991] the next war is just waiting to happen... wherever it may be. The facts of recent history lead inexorably to this conclusion. Yet only three short years ago, when the Berlin Wall came down, the prospects for peace had never looked brighter. What went wrong? And why? And how can we be on the road to war when we could and should be on the road to peace? [Emphasis in the original.]

ii. The '**Statement of Purpose**' of Briefing A/3 (October 1995) which reads:

Unless humanity can end Great Power wars, they will abolish civilisation. The dismantling of the Soviet Empire broke the historic tradition of Great Power rivalry leading to war. Yet the post-Cold War peace settlement, after initial enthusiasm, has fuelled resentment and hostility in Russia against the West. Are we returning to the era of Great Power politics and, if so, can anything be done to avoid future military disaster? [Emphasis in the original.]

iii. The '**Summary**' of Briefing A/3 which begins:

The prospects for war or peace at the end of the twentieth century are assessed according to historical trends and theories of peace. A specific focus is military adventurism, resulting from a tendency to take risks in foreign policy....

... and summarises the conclusion to Part 2, 'Looking to the Future', as follows:

... a new framework is proposed [now called 'Peace Games' by IPP] to foresee the dangers of military adventurism, based on a critique of realism and Great Power politics.

The Law

8. The flaw in the author's approach – shared by many others in academia, politics and journalism – is to assume that the criterion for judging the success of academic or policymakers' foresight on the future of war in a specific region is how far it was precisely fulfilled. The Prodem legal case in the High Court in 1998 and the Court of Appeal in 2000 set out the law authoritatively in England and Wales, relating to education in peace and war, contra Her Majesty's Attorney General and the Charity Commissioners. It was common ground that the promotion of a particular political policy (e.g. disarmament) is not legally charitable. These cases are readily available and have been extensively analysed as part of the Paris Peace Conference Remembered series, especially in Article no. 2. The author and other academics cannot be ignorant of this directly relevant case and, if any claimed to be, that would be no defence in law.

9. The *de facto* Law Officer for Public Benefit (Law PB), as writer of this Bulletin, has only to explain here how, consistent with this law on charity in relation to the Prodem case, a genuinely educational framework for conflict prevention and resolution (outlined in Briefing A/3) works:
- i. A climate for peace or war is predicted by competing analysts based on an 'irenical perspective', i.e. whether each party to a specific conflict is placing a similar emphasis on peaceful, rather than military, means of resolving an international dispute across each relevant dimension of security.
 - ii. This 'climate' inexorably produces factors that favour peace or war as each analysis may claim, i.e. as in weather forecasting storms come from rain clouds not from a bright blue sky.
 - iii. The 'Peace Games' played out before the Court of history (i.e. how events in the area of conflict unfold over time) reveal which analyst's understanding is right, or closer to the truth, when judged on irenical (or other objective) criteria.
10. The crucial principle to be upheld by academic and educational institutions in their work is public benefit, as defined in law. (This is analogous to the process for determining the charitable status of a body with educational purposes.) Two questions must be asked in the author's case:
- i. Was his work self-evidently for the public benefit? If not,
 - ii. Was the public benefit of his work capable of proof?

This will uphold academic freedom under the law to question received wisdom objectively.

The Indictment

11. The indictment of the book entitled The Future of War consists of three parts:

- (i) That the author's lack of reference to this writer's four Prodem Briefings and IPP Briefing no. 1 was either deliberate or the result of wilful (and inexcusable) ignorance. Thus, this decision or failure to act was a political one without academic excuse or justification.

Evidence

The notes to this Bulletin summarise the main evidence for this charge. There being no real academic or technical reason for this omission due to the obvious relevance of the content and timing of these works, compared to the author's, and that their findings and conclusions centrally challenge his own, viz. in 'The Future of the Future of War':

Even academics find it hard to look forward without offering some recommendations about how the future might be improved. The aim is to identify strategies, investments and actions to enable us to retain a degree of control over our destinies.... When governments are caught by surprise, as with the collapse of the Soviet Union or mass-casualty terrorism, or engage in activities for which they were poorly of [sic] prepared, such as the interventions of the 1990s and 2000s, this was often not because they were unthinkable but because *there had been no prior reason to push them to the top of the security agenda...* [Emphasis added.]

There may have been no prior political reason but the warnings in this writer's Prodem Briefings (except A/3) were summarised in the Court of Appeal judgment of 28 June 2000 so there was every legal and educational reason to take them seriously before 9/11 and the return to global conflict ('the war on terrorism') and the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Furthermore, the omission of the author's own article 'Why the West Failed' in Foreign Policy (Winter 1994-95) in relation to the breakup of Yugoslavia, is an exacerbating factor in this charge especially when taken with this writer's comparative analysis in A/3.

- (ii) That the underlying reason for the behaviour in (i) is a sycophantic relationship with the UK Government, which the author shares with many other academics in the fields of war studies, peace studies, international politics and related subjects.

Evidence

The notes to this Bulletin summarise the main evidence for this charge. By a 'sycophantic relationship' is meant a parasitic, servile or dependent state which does not involve direct control by Government or financial inducements but self-censorship, varying only in degree, that ensures the evaluation of political policies cannot involve competing analyses and the exercise of foresight, rather than hindsight (as in the author's book), to produce results to be judged on irenic or other objective criteria. These results may falsify the views and convictions of governments.

This charge amounts to a culture of widespread and rampant corruption of academic standards not in the research itself – for example, much in the author's book objectively reports on research findings – but in the application of those findings to the direction of a specific conflict and the implicit rejection of IPP's 'Peace Games' concept emerging out of the Prodem case and Briefing A/3 in particular – as illustrated by the author's book where he promotes, rather than tests, his own views.

- (iii) That the major academic centres of War Studies in King's College London, Peace Studies in the University of Bradford and International Politics in the University of Aberystwyth are so infected by politics in the application of genuine research findings to the problems of war or peace that the public benefit has been subordinated to the benefit of individual academics who prefer to promote than test their own views on conflict areas.

Evidence

Although the author's department is War Studies in King's College the charge applies to all three academic centres equally and this writer is most familiar with Peace Studies. Hence this is the centre at Bradford University which will illustrate the general charge.

The Inaugural Lecture of Adam Curle, first holder of the Chair in Peace Studies, was entitled 'The Scope and Dilemmas of Peace Studies' and delivered on 4 February 1975. (This writer was one of only the second intake of students on the undergraduate course in September 1977.) The core ideas of the late Professor Curle focused not on the concept of peace which he found too vague, emotive and manipulable, but on an approach based on:

... peaceful and unpeaceful relations – between individuals, groups or nations. This concept enables us to analyse our interaction in a number of dimensions – psychological, economic, political and indeed human – in terms of which individuals are adversely affected....

... The first task of Peace Studies in my opinion is, then, to identify and analyse these relationships...

... This leads directly to the next function of Peace Studies, which is to use this information in order to devise means of changing unpeaceful into peaceful relationships.

This writer's evidence is that he has, in effect, operationalised Professor Curle's conceptual framework (using the terms power of cooperation and power of coercion to reflect the essence of peaceful and unpeaceful relationships respectively) that has been applied at intra-national and international levels to predict the direction of conflicts.

Interestingly Professor Curle's lecture did not deal with the relationship between education and politics which this writer helped to resolve through the English Courts. He did, though, cite the University Charter on the application of knowledge to 'human welfare' (cf. public benefit). The Department of Peace Studies (as it previously existed) was supportive of the Prodem initiative in the 1990s but has expressed no interest in IPP or its conceptual framework. This writer submits that the reason is entirely political.

Recommendations

12. The *de facto* Law PB's proposals are split between academics who retire and those who don't:

- i. It is respectfully suggested that the author makes good on the apology to his wife in the acknowledgments in The Future of War: A History and desists from writing any more works as plainly deficient in educational terms as this one and now enters fully into retirement. Likewise, other academics in this or related fields should also consider retirement (or early retirement) if they cannot stop using their academic positions to promote their own untestable political opinions whose public benefit cannot be proven.
- ii. For those who do not, or cannot, retire or emigrate to jurisdictions (like the USA) which have a more tolerant attitude to academic abuses of power, a way of peace or a way of war is offered to them, metaphorically. Either
 - Support or join the Peace Games 2020, as trialled by IPP in 2005/06, in order that the public have a choice of life in peace or death in global war, literally;+
 - or
 - Face the prospect of further indictments from the *de facto* LawPB, like this one, that may be issued from time to time against those senior academics who wilfully choose to forget that their work exists to serve the public benefit, as defined in the Prodem case, and not their private, academic interest.

The Education of Nations will thereby be a barometer of the prospects for peace or war.

+ To adapt the words of the UK Supreme Court in the recent case concerning the prorogation of Parliament, no political or social scientist has yet given any reason – let alone a good reason – for declining to support, or participate in, the Peace Games. See Closing Bulletin no. 1.

Acknowledgements

The impartial reader may wonder why such a gulf over so long a period has developed between the writer of this Closing Bulletin no. 3 and political and social scientists especially in the fields of war studies, peace studies and international politics? Their work assumes the dominance of politics. And it may be readily agreed that virtually, if not, every war is the result of a clash of political cultures. Law PB's work, though, assumes that no state of peace has ever been secured indefinitely, or could be achieved in the future, primarily or solely by political and military means. Rather it is education and religion in the legally charitable sense which in time assume primacy. See Closing Bulletin no. 2.

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Notes and References

Para. 2 Quotations from Lawrence Freedman, The Future of War: A History (Penguin Books, 2018), pp. xvi – xvii.

Para. 3 Quotations from The Future of War, pp. xvii – xviii.

Para. 4 Quotations from The Future of War, pp. xviii – xix.

Para. 5 Quotations from The Future of War, pp. xix - xxi.

Para. 6 Notes and Bibliography in The Future of War, pp. 289-361.

Peter Southwood, General Editor and Editor Series A, Project on Demilitarisation (Prodem):

The Triumph of Unilateralism: The Failure of Western Militarism, Briefing No. 1 (Prodem, March 1993), 69pp ISBN 1-898079-00-5; NATO's Military Supremacy: What is It For? Briefing A/1 (Prodem, September 1993), 44pp ISBN 1-898079-10-2; Western Generals: The Dangers from British and American Military Success, Briefing A/2 (Prodem, School of Business and Economic Studies, University of Leeds, April 1994), 53pp ISBN 1-898079-20-X; Military Adventurism: Learning From the Past – Looking to the Future, Briefing A/3 (SBES, University of Leeds, October 1995), 79pp ISBN 1-898079-25-0. All available through Legal Deposit libraries in the UK and Ireland. (Details of the Series B and C Prodem Briefings, edited by Steve Schofield, are omitted here but available on the back cover of the Series A Briefings.)

On the breakup of Yugoslavia, see Lawrence Freedman, 'Why the West Failed', Foreign Policy, no. 97 (Winter 1994-95), pp 53-69; and Southwood, Prodem Briefing A/3, pp. 30-34.

Peter Southwood (ed.) The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Briefing No. 1 (International Peace Project, January 2006), 125pp at: <http://www.ipp2000.org/> (bottom of home page).

Para. 7 Details of Prodem Briefings no. 1 and A/3 in para. 6 above. See, especially, Appendix E 'A Framework for Conflict Prevention and Resolution' of A/3, pp 74-79.

Para. 8 For copies of the Prodem judgments, see: <http://www.ipp2000.org/ipplaw.html>

For an analysis of these judgments, see Peter M. Southwood, 'A Bleak House Today: How English Charity Regulators Missed the Mark in 2000 and Beyond', Article no. 2 (6 March 2019) at <https://www.directionofconflict.org/what-we-do>

Para. 10 The principle of public benefit is derived from Slade J. in McGovern v Attorney General [1982] Ch 321 at 333G-334B.

Para. 11 (i) Quotation from The Future of War, p. 286.

(i) and (ii) Professor Freedman was a member of the 'New Security Challenges' Research Programme Commissioning Panel of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in 2003 when its Research Director allowed an appeal on the facts to the full Panel arising from the rejection of Peter Southwood et al's small grant application. This appeal made explicit reference to the Prodem legal case and Peace Games concept. Professor Freedman was also on the distribution list of open letters from Peter Southwood on 15 May 2005 and 24 December 2007 criticising the ESRC Commissioning Panel's handling of that small grant application and neglect of public benefit. (iii) Adam Curle, The Scope and Dilemmas of Peace Studies, An inaugural lecture (University of Bradford, 4 February 1975), especially pp. 8-9.