

Why Count Rumyantsev is turning over in his grave

by Rachel Douglas, Soviet Union Editor



“Will President Monroe Turn Over In His Grave?” asked Alexander Baryshev of Moscow’s weekly *New Times*. Having just read a *Pravda* spoof in which the irate ghost of George Washington chastized a *New York Post* reporter for holding forth on the Anglo-American “special relationship” although he, George Washington, had led a liberation war against England, I wondered if Baryshev was going to go a step further and treat the readers of *New Times*, in the 10 languages in which it appears, to a taste of the real history of conflict between the British and the American political systems in the Western Hemisphere.

Baryshev certainly milked for all it was worth “the crisis of the inter-American system,” the havoc wrought on the United States’ relations with the nations of Latin America, when we took Britain’s part in the South Atlantic.

“In the Monroe Doctrine,” Baryshev summarized the words of American politicians from the 1940s, “the U.S. had declared that any attack on any American state to the south of us would be regarded as a manifestation of an unfriendly attitude toward the United States. In the [1947] Rio de Janeiro pact this became the doctrine for the entire Western Hemisphere.” He continued, “Today a situation has emerged where it would seem that the pact essentially based on the Monroe Doctrine ought to be activated. . . . For one of its signatories is threatened with a massive armed attack by a non-American power, Britain. . . .”

“Why has Washington forgotten about the assurances given by Monroe and all succeeding presidents of America’s readiness to defend its southern brothers against any aggressor? Evidently because at the given moment this does not accord with the interests of the United States’ imperialist policy both on a global scale and in the South Atlantic.”

Baryshev teetered on the brink of his own question

and then plunged into historical error: “Yet it is precisely these interests that are expressed by the Monroe Doctrine, and its author is not likely to turn over in his grave because of such a violation of his doctrine. He knew for what purpose he had conceived it.”

And at that, I have no doubt that not only James Monroe, but also Count Nikolai P. Rumyantsev, Commerce Minister, Foreign Minister and Chancellor to His Imperial Majesty Alexander I of Russia, each completed one sepulchral rotation, and groaned across the centuries.

Rumyantsev and John Quincy Adams

The error was tiresomely predictable. If Karl Marx did not distinguish between the American system of political economy—with its republican institutions and doctrines of foreign policy—and the British imperial system of economic looting, who would Alexander Baryshev be to claim that the Monroe Doctrine was anything other than a new, Western Hemisphere brand of imperialism?

Yet sometimes, as in this case, the historical evidence is so crystalline that it should offer a Soviet writer the opportunity to shed those burdensome categories of analysis. Shall he read John Quincy Adams’ denunciation of “colonial establishments” and still insist on his “U.S. imperialist policy” of 1823? But perhaps it will be more fruitful for Mr. Baryshev to reflect on the thoughts of Count Rumyantsev, a Russian, about the young republics in North and South America.

Count Rumyantsev could understand what was at stake, although he was an old man, out of office for nearly a decade, when President Monroe proclaimed the doctrine in December 1823. Its main author, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, had been his frequent guest in earlier years, when Adams was U.S. Ambassador to St. Petersburg in 1809-12, and the prospects of

independent nations in South America often figured in their long, congenial conversations.

They came to discuss South America by way of issues of commerce, which were where Russia and America found common ground from the American Revolution on.

Despite having a monarch sympathetic to England, Catherine the Great, Russia in 1780 had been organized by the French and the Americans to head the League of Armed Neutrality that defended merchant vessels of neutral nations against British attack. The Armed Neutrality allowed vital supplies to reach the colonial forces; its survival as a principle of policy for several nations represented a serious challenge to the British, who meant by "free trade," trade free of any nation's protectionist impediments to total British domination.

In Russia, the security of neutral navigation had a champion in Count Rumyantsev, who became Minister of Commerce in 1802, soon after the accession of Alexander I. Son of one of Russia's greatest 18th-century military officers, Gen. P. A. Rumyantsev-Zadunaiskii, N. P. Rumyantsev was a scholar as well as a diplomat. His collection of books and manuscripts was turned during his lifetime into the Rumyantsev Museum, which later became the kernel of the huge V. I. Lenin State Library in Moscow.

Economic questions

Rumyantsev has often been glossed in history books as merely "pro-French" (and therefore anti-British), because he supported conclusion of the 1807 Treaty of Tilsit between Russia and Napoleonic France, after Alexander's humiliating early defeats by Napoleon. But his exchanges with Adams show that there was more to the Tsarist foreign minister than francophilia.

"I have American guts," he told Adams near the end of his career, when British and Venetian factions in Alexander's court had beaten him, "and were it not for my age and infirmities, I would go now to that country."

In 1811, Rumyantsev faulted Napoleon on the matter of trade. Adams recorded in his diary that Rumyantsev objected to Napoleon's failure to consider "that commerce was an interest in which all mankind was concerned; he saw in it nothing but the trade of a certain class of individuals. . . . But in truth, commerce is the concern of us all. The merchants are, indeed, only a class of individuals, bearing a small proportion to the mass of people, but commerce is the exchange of mutual superfluities for mutual wants—is the very chain of human association; it is the foundation of all the useful and pacific intercourse between nations; it is a primary necessity to all classes of people."

After Tilsit, Russia was party to Napoleon's continental blockade against English shipping. But Rum-

yantsev contested, in his diplomacy and then with a formal Statement on Neutral Trade issued by the Russian government in December 1810, the French classification of United States vessels as "English" and therefore subject to the ban. Rumyantsev wanted to protect Russian commerce with the United States and also trafficking with the Spanish colonies in South America, some of which were just becoming independent. The French ambassador reported of Rumyantsev in a January 1811 dispatch, "He reminded me that he had told me many times that while still a Minister of Commerce he did everything possible to establish trade connections with the Americans, whom he views as natural rivals of the English. It would be a political shortsightedness, he said, to allow relations with the Americans to deteriorate at the moment when they are so openly opposed to the English."

Both John Quincy Adams and Rumyantsev, as Adams's record of their conversations shows, hoped that the South American lands, free of Spain, would assert independent policies in trade, making them free of England as well. Rumyantsev drafted a proclamation on allowing Latin American ships to enter Russian ports; it said that since American ports had been opened to all seagoing nations for commerce, "we hold that, whatever mode of government be established there, it would not create an obstacle to commercial connections between their inhabitants and our subjects, so long as our enemies have no influence there." Adams surmised that Rumyantsev wanted a policy "to favor the independence of the provinces of South America which belonged to Spain" and attributed the Russian State Council's rejection of the plan to "a lurking English influence."

Nation-building faction

Adams wrote in his diary that Rumyantsev's opinions on South American independence were close to American views, and he elaborated that this meant anti-Jacobin. Rumyantsev feared the outbreak of "examples of that sort of violence and those scenes of cruelty which experience had proved to be too common in such revolutions," but he would welcome new governments on the American model.

With these remarks, Adams suggested that Rumyantsev's interest in the American system went beyond the opportunities presented for Russian trade, that he had an idea of the virtue of those republics the later Monroe Doctrine would seek to foster and protect.

In this, Count Rumyantsev was not alone in Russia. The American Revolution, which Russia assisted by leading the Armed Neutrality, had heartened the Russian faction that was heir to the great nation-building effort of Tsar Peter the Great (who ruled from 1682 to 1725), acting on Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's proposal

to found a Russian Academy of Sciences. Russians in the Academy, in the government, and among publicists, were studying how science and industry developed in the young United States of America.

In 1807, Rumyantsev's colleague Finance Minister D. A. Guryev sponsored the publication in Russian of a seminal document on the American science of promoting industry, Alexander Hamilton's 1791 *Report on Manufactures*. It was translated by V. F. Malinovskii, who as first headmaster (1811-14) of the Tsarskoye Selo school for boys would be the teacher of Russia's greatest poet, Alexander Pushkin, and of M. A. Gorchakov, the Russian Foreign Minister who negotiated Tsar Alexander II's alliance with Abraham Lincoln. In his introduction to Hamilton's document, Malinovskii held that "all the rules, remarks and means proposed here" were "suitable" for Russia as well as they were for the United States.

Russian republicanism

Malinovskii's impulse to seize the best of America's republican, industry-building principles was no mere footnote to Russian history. Russia's own nation-building faction grew continuously, especially from the time of Peter the Great, always in contact with the republicans of Europe and America who were also responsible for the great republican project, the United States of America.

The history of Russia as a contest between *oligarchical* and *republican* policies is the subject of a Russian history project commissioned by American economist and Democratic Party figure Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. Since Soviet and United States policies toward each other "are more governed by impassioned mythologies than realities," LaRouche has written, it is vital for world security to provide a higher point from which to see each nation's interests.

Both for American patriots and for Soviet Russians, the LaRouche survey of Russian history, from the rise of the city-state of Kiev a thousand years ago to the shift of power into the hands of Lenin, is designed to give such a perspective. By looking at Russian history through the eyes of the American patriotic Whig tradition, a team of LaRouche's collaborators will vault over the prevailing mythologies of socialism and capitalism to reach the true principles of national interest. For Alexander Baryshev, and many others, it will be an eye-opener.

*Rumyantsev's views and his discussions with Adams are covered in Adams' diaries; they are also carefully documented in Soviet Russian historian N. N. Bolkhovitinov's *The Beginnings of Russian-American Relations, 1775-1815*, published in English by Harvard University Press, 1975; several of the quotations in this article are from Bolkhovitinov's compilation.

Investigative Leads

Did central banks silence P-2's Calvi?

by Umberto Pascali in Rome

On the morning of June 18, a London worker found, hanging on a scaffolding under the Blackfriars Bridge, two steps away from the City of London, the dead body of Roberto Calvi, the president of Italy's biggest private bank and a key figure in the P-2 scandal that has rocked Italy for the past year. In Calvi's pockets, Scotland Yard reported, were 10 kilos of stones—put there as a Mafioso "message": This is what happens to those who betray their "friends."

So ended the career of the powerful head of Banco Ambrosiano, whose name was associated with convicted Mafia financier Michele Sindona. As a member of the Propaganda-2 (P-2) masonic lodge which ran Italy's drug-and-dirty-money networks, and which mounted coup plots against the Italian government, Calvi took with him to the grave some of the best-kept secrets of Rome, Geneva, and London.

London authorities are now trying to sell the idea that Calvi killed himself. But on the front pages here is the story that Calvi "had to die" because he was about to reveal what he knew about the Grand Mother Lodge of London, of which he was a member, and its relationship to P-2.

Members of the Grand Mother include the most important bankers in the City and top aristocrats; the Grand Mother is probably the most important single lodge of the Scottish Rite Freemasons (headed by the British Royal Family) and is believed to be the center of a central bankers' network, encompassing the Bank of England, U.S. Federal Reserve, Bank of Italy and others.

The Italian police have asked British authorities to start an investigation of whether the City harbors a center for the recycling of money coming from Italy, and perhaps other countries—money collected through kidnappings and drug traffic.

This information was revealed in the Communist