

foment race war is said to be “trying to whip up anti-British sentiment” about “alleged British atrocities,” leading to the War of 1812.

A British poster-cartoon purports to show Queen Victoria “rebuffing the Confederacy.” An American cartoon, with British symbol John Bull standing behind Confederate president Jefferson Davis, is the only hint in the whole exhibit of a British political role as America’s adversary—and that cartoon is not explained.

Of course, they couldn’t very well explain Britain’s sponsorship of Southern secession and get away with presenting Imperial Britain, mother of the world slave plantation system, as the civil rights champion against American racism. Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass is quoted only praising England. We are not permitted to see Douglass’s break with the anti-Union, British-led Boston abolitionists, or his reverence for republican Scots poet Robert Burns. The exhibit lies that in our era, the “British civil rights movement galvanized opponents [the British skinheads] who took their cue from racist groups in the United States.”

The final section of the show, entitled “Popular Culture, from Baseball to Rock ‘n’ Roll,” applauds as British gifts the trashing of the American mind in the 1960s, and Americans’ soap-opera adulation of the British monarchy. Sadly, this manages to obscure the real English gift, the heritage of Renaissance science and art, which has always been attacked as the enemy by the London imperial crew.

A deal set in stone

It appears that the American officials who were involved with the British Library in concocting this deceitful stew are not very proud of what they have done. This reporter talked with a Library of Congress executive who helped oversee the selection of exhibited items, who claimed that “we didn’t have time” to present any political conflict between America and the Empire. Yet he readily acknowledged that showing Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill only as smiling allies is blatantly contrary to Roosevelt’s well-known hatred of imperialism, which he constantly expressed to Churchill.



An illustration from the “John Bull and Uncle Sam” exhibit at the Library of Congress, in which the United States has pocketed the Declaration of Independence in favor of a U.S.-British “special relationship.”

The request that perhaps a bit of American sentiment—or perhaps Irish—be permitted a place in the exhibit, was met with the grim assertion that the deal was done with the British government, and was set in stone.

Thus, the entire panorama of American public life, from the colonial-era idealism of Massachusetts Bay Company Governor John Winthrop and Virginia’s Gov. Alexander Spotswood, to the nationalist anti-British economics and foreign policies of

Franklin, Hamilton, Clay, Lincoln, FDR, and Kennedy, America’s sponsorship of Irish revolution and opposition to British enslavement of Asia; all of this will make for exciting and educational exhibits when our national Library recovers its citizenship.

Anglophiles revise U.S. history at LOC exhibit

by Suzanne Rose

Since Nov. 18, 1999, the Library of Congress has featured a joint exhibition with the British library, entitled “John Bull and Uncle Sam,” purporting to portray the history of U.S.-British relations. The exhibit appears to be part of a renewed effort to forge a special relationship, based on denying the differences between the U.S. republic and the British oligarchical system. To underline the point, a new nine-volume Oxford History of the British Empire was released simultaneously, and in collaboration with the exhibit, which portrays the British Empire, particularly during the 19th century, as the vehicle for transmitting civilization throughout the world, instead of what it was: an obstacle to progress and economic development to be defeated by aspiring republicans.

A forum highlighting the exhibition took place at the Mad-

ison Building of the Library of Congress on Jan. 10. Speakers presented a shamelessly treasonous portrayal of the U.S.-British relationship, denying that any axiomatic difference in outlook between American republicans and British imperialists exists.

The first speaker on a panel entitled “The Eighteenth Century,” was James Hutson, Chief of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. His subject was the cross-fertilization of culture between England and the United States. He presented the warped view that the Anglicizing impulse, or the “slavish imitation” of the British before the Revolution by the colonists, didn’t end after the Revolution, ludicrously equating the cultural values embedded in the Constitution to modern pop culture. He said that the Americans took technology, such as railroad development, from Britain; “even the abolitionists copied from Britain.” After 1783, he said, the United States absorbed the “mother country’s culture,” while imitating its legal system, adopting common law wholesale into the United States. He claimed that this changed only after the 1840s when the British began to import “some American culture,” namely, the “minstrel shows.” After World War II, he said, American music, beer cans, and laundromats flooded into Britain.

An anti-oligarchical outlook

Where it wasn’t trivial, Hutson’s argument was a historical fraud. In fact, the scientific breakthroughs that made possible the economic development of the United States were the product of collaboration between Benjamin Franklin and scientific networks in Britain and on the European continent. Franklin himself was instrumental in promoting the industrial revolution in Britain during his years living there. His circle of collaborators, including in Britain, shared the anti-oligarchical outlook which was to characterize the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, and exemplify the cultural differences between the new republic and the British imperialists.

P.J. Marshall, president of the Royal Historical Society, spoke next. His explanation for America’s “separation” from Britain, was that the British cared for the colonies “too much.” He said that the separation came as a complete surprise to the British, because of the bonds of loyalty and blood. The fact that they fought a “global war” to maintain the colonies was proof of how much they cared. He claimed that there was a “common inheritance of liberty,” but that it was just interpreted in different ways by colonists and the mother country. In the colonies, republicanism replaced the British idea of law developed by an elite in the interest of all.

Prof. Jack Greene from Johns Hopkins University was perhaps the most revisionist speaker of all. He said that it was the American settlers who built an “American empire,” as part of the British Empire. He asserted that the colonial populations had extraordinary agency and power in the operation of the British Empire itself. That the Empire was not held

together by force, but by affection, and that the settlers thought of themselves as agents of English civilization. The American Revolution occurred, in his view, because after 1750, a negative image of Americans developed in Britain resulting from scandals surrounding East India Company employees, and the proliferation of slavery, which caused the Empire to use force to put down colonial resistance to tighter controls.

A member of the audience put the theories of the panelists to the test when she said she had understood that the conflict which led to the Revolution was based on colonists’ animosity toward Britain for prohibiting manufactures, and their view of the equality of the common man in the sight of God. Greene answered that the colonists were no different than the people they left behind. They came to America to get status as English landowners. There was not a widespread belief in equality or difference from Britain. They wanted a revolution to protect their new social status, and they rationalized it with the ideology of egalitarianism. Marshall concurred, saying that the proof of this was the fact that the British straitjacket on the American economy, by which America was confined to exporting raw materials to Britain, was voluntarily accepted after 1783.

American economic development

The panel on the “Nineteenth Century” was led off by Prof. John W. Cell of Duke University. He said that the ties between Britain and America continued into the 19th century, with the United States playing a satellite role—a relationship of the leading imperial power to one of the “neo-Europes.” He claimed that British imperialism in the 19th century was the assertion and transmission of European powers and peoples all over the world, and America developed as part of that process. “All of the societies of the world were hooked into the expanding capitalist economy and transformed,” he said. He described American economic development in the 19th century as a product of this process, caused by British capital and British engineering. “British imperialism was the dominant force in the development and export of technology.” The 19th-century investment of British capital in North America caused a massive expansion—the building of railways and canals, he claimed.

In reality, to the contrary, it was the opposition of leading Americans to the British doctrine of free trade, and the boost given to the alternative “American System of Economics,” by the Abraham Lincoln- and Henry Carey-led Civil War against the British-backed Confederacy, which caused the blossoming of the American economy in the late 19th century, to the benefit of all the world’s people. Cell, however, chose to wax euphorically about how the net outcome of the continued interchange between Britain and the United States—the continuation and intensification of the English-speaking world that Winston Churchill speaks of—led to the development of the British-U.S. “special relationship.”