

**COSMOPOLITANISM IS THE KEY: HOW RIGHT-WING NATIONALISM
EXPLAINS EXCEPTIONS TO DEMOCRATIC PEACE**

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Abstract: Critics of democratic peace theory have identified several cases of clearly democratic states threatening or using force against each other. What they have failed to notice is that usually if not always, pressure to escalate came from the political right. Neither realism nor non-normative theories of democratic peace explain this. I argue that the key lies in conservative nationalism. Liberals respect the autonomy of fellow democracies. They also believe war is unjustified except for defensive or humanitarian reasons. Since democracies rarely commit large-scale human rights violations, at any rate at home, liberals see no grounds for attacking them. Right-wing nationalism, however, can short-circuit both normative mechanisms, even within democracies. I show the pattern and conduct a preliminary test of my arguments by examining the crises over Venezuela, Fashoda, South Africa and the Ruhr.

Since the early stages of the democratic peace research program, critics have pointed to cases in which liberal states have fought or threatened each other. Because there have been few liberal states until recent decades, the claim that democracies enjoy a separate peace is particularly vulnerable to this kind of critique. A few clear exceptions may call its validity into question (Elman 1997, 44). The critique is still more damaging if close examination of the exceptions shows that factors extraneous to the theory—such as realist power politics considerations—determined the outcome (Layne 1994, 1997).

The present paper reviews five of the best-known exceptions to the dyadic democratic peace claim: the Venezuela crisis of 1895-96, the Fashoda crisis of 1898, the South African War of 1899-1902, France's 1923 occupation of the Ruhr, and Great Britain's declaration of war on Finland in 1941. In contrast to most "exceptions" discussed in the literature, in these cases both states were clearly democratic by the standards of the day. They are thus a particularly troubling challenge to dyadic democratic peace theory. Azar Gat (2005, 75) notes that public opinion was belligerent in both the South African and Spanish-American Wars, and adds that "lest it be thought that the enemy in either of these cases failed to qualify as fully liberal/democratic, it should be noted that it was public opinion in both Britain and France that proved most bellicose, chauvinistic, and unsympathetic to the other during the Fashoda Crisis (1898). It was the politicians who climbed down from war."

Yet previous studies of these crises have treated public opinion as monolithic. They have thus failed to notice an important pattern: *When democracies fight or threaten each other, the pressure to do so comes from the political right.* In each of the foregoing cases the hardliners on at least one side came from the right wing of the political spectrum. In contrast, in *none* of the cases did the left on either side adopt a more belligerent stance. In some cases, sizable portions of the right did not accept democracy. But even democratic rightwing parties—such as the Liberal Unionists in Britain or French President Raymond Poincaré's governing coalition in 1923—were more inclined to coerce fellow democracies than were their leftwing counterparts. Moreover, the pattern appears to continue in more recent cases such as the U.S. subversion of democratic governments in Guatemala, Iran and Chile (all

under Republican administrations) and the Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1999 (under the rightwing Indian BJP). Structural realism cannot explain this pattern. If systemic pressures determine state policies, there is no reason to expect the positions of left- and right wing parties to differ. Nor do theories of democratic peace that privilege institutional over normative factors (e.g., Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999) predict a systematic difference between parties of the left and right. Only cultural-normative theories seem likely to explain the pattern—and if they can, they hold the promise of a more robust theory of democratic peace that accounts for these historical exceptions.

The following section outlines three theories of democratic peace that might explain the left-right pattern, and what we should expect to find if each theory is true. I then review the evidence from the Venezuelan, Fashoda, South African, and Ruhr crises. In each case I show that actions or pressure to escalate the conflict came predominantly from the political right, and review the evidence I have so far collected for and against each theory, while reserving more thorough testing for later drafts of the paper. I argue that *nationalism* is the key variable in explaining the willingness to coerce fellow liberal states. Since the late nineteenth century, in consolidated liberal democracies nationalism has been generally been strongest on the right. The democratic peace has strengthened in Europe with the disappearance of illiberal nationalists and the spread of social democracy.

Three Theories of Democratic Peace

Cases of liberal conflict before the late 19th-century may be explained by basic disagreements about the form a liberal state should take. During the Syrian crisis of 1840, for example, Englishmen and Frenchmen both considered France a democracy and Britain an aristocratic oligarchy. Not surprisingly, British conservatives despised France and were prepared to coerce it, while French radicals held that in a war “revolutionary France will aid the English people like all the others” (Rendall 2004, quotation from 600). This perception of Britain as fundamentally aristocratic persisted into at least the 1880s, though by the late 19th century many recognized the democratic reforms underway there, and French republicans admired them (Barblan 1974). By the late 19th century, a consensus had begun to form on

what a liberal state should look like.¹ The Venezuela, Fashoda, South African and Ruhr conflicts thus represent especially troubling anomalies for democratic peace theory. A robust theory should be able to explain these exceptions.

This paper argues that an important clue lies in the pattern that in all four cases pressure to escalate the conflict came from the political right. Liberals in consolidated democracies are more prone to resist war against fellow liberal states than are conservatives, and the more liberal they are, the stronger their resistance. Following previous scholarship (MacMillan 1998, 125; Owen 1997, 32), I define liberalism as an ideology promoting individual autonomy. Liberals favor civil liberties and representative government, and have often supported free enterprise and *laissez-faire* economics. When liberals have perceived a conflict between *laissez-faire* and maximizing individuals' ability to live as they wish, however, they have called for restrictions on the former (MacMillan 1988, 102-3, 113, 125). What distinguishes liberalism is thus not a commitment to *laissez-faire* on the one hand, or equality on the other, but to individual freedom.

Liberal peacefulness

One strain of democratic peace theory holds that democracies are more peaceful in general. Analogously, John MacMillan (1998, 2004a, 2004b) has argued that liberals *within* democracies have been reluctant to go to war. Nineteenth-century British liberals considered war and military spending wasteful, since they interfered with free trade and diverted resources needed at home (Flournoy 1946, 213; MacMillan 1998, 17; Taylor 1991, 1). They also believed that they subverted democratic processes and civil liberties, and strengthened conservatives (MacMillan 1998). Similarly, French socialists attacked military spending as a waste of needed resources, and war on the grounds that it strengthened the right (Winock 1973, 385-86, 395-96). Whereas the French left had long showed a tendency toward liberal crusading, by the turn of the century most held that only defensive wars could be justified, and a minority opposed any wars at all (Becker 2004, 530; Winock 1973, 380).

¹ A discussion with John MacMillan has influenced my thinking on this point.

If liberal states and liberals within states are *generally* opposed to war, this could explain why they resist going to war against fellow democracies. These cases would be merely a subset in a general pattern of liberal peacefulness. Many scholars argue, on the other hand, that the democratic peace is a *separate* peace among liberal states. Liberals within these states might also oppose war only against fellow democracies. If this should prove the case, what might explain the pattern?

Liberal cosmopolitanism

Liberalism's emphasis on "the moral primacy of the individual, the moral equality of persons and the belief in the moral unity of the human race" (MacMillan 1988, 137) renders its loyalties fundamentally cosmopolitan. Even liberal nationalists in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century saw themselves as being in a joint struggle against European reaction (Cunningham 1981, 19). In the second half of the century Gladstonian liberalism became the standard-bearer of this internationalist tradition. "By the early 1870s," writes Hugh Cunningham (1981, quotation from 22),

the Liberals were the party identified with internationalism and peace, the Conservatives with nationalism and Russophobia. But it was only at the end of that decade that patriotism and Conservatism became firmly linked....The decisive shift came suddenly in the space of a few months in late 1877 and early 1878. The occasion was the Eastern Question....At heart the debate was one with which we are familiar; the claims of internationalism and peace set against that of national interest.

When, following Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria, Russia marched on Constantinople, British liberals agitated for peace, whereas Disraeli's Conservatives saw the Russian advance as a threat to the Ottoman Empire. From this point on, Cunningham argues (24), British patriotism became "firmly identified with Conservatism, militarism, royalism and racialism."

Not only Gladstonian liberals, but turn of the century British trade union leaders and socialists "were firm believers in the gospel of internationalism shaped by both Cobdenite humanitarianism and socialist theory" (Semmel 1960, 10, 89, 230-31, quotation from 89; Summers 974-76). Whereas many British nationalists on both left and right embraced protectionism, most liberals remained true to the tradition of free trade, and rejected mercantilist beggar-thy-neighbor doctrines (Semmel 1960, 143). In the liberal tradition,

British trade unionists believed that free trade would lead to both prosperity and peace (Semmel 1960, 97). While some liberals remained true to the doctrine of *laissez-faire* while others abandoned it, all lacked “that semi-mystical reverence for authority, for the state and for its related institutions” common at the turn of the century (Flournoy 1946, 197). Part of the Liberal Party supported imperialism, but it too rejected both protectionism and any imperialism that relied on “aggression and greed and violence” (Semmel 1960, 52).

In contrast to the socialist doctrine of international labor solidarity, social imperialists like Joseph Chamberlain argued that master and man should stand together against the foreigner (Semmel 1960, 85-90, 107-14). Sir Halford Mackinder later distinguished between the liberal cosmopolitan preoccupied with “the rights of man” and the patriotic imperialist whose concern was with “how to use men” within a disciplined and organized society (Semmel 1960, 166-67). Imperialists like Joseph Chamberlain and Alfred Milner fundamentally departed from liberalism in adopting “as their ideal not the ‘perfect’ state marked by justice and social development, but the ‘power’ state marked by the ability to compete with other states” (MacMillan 1998, 178). They were thus prepared to sacrifice traditional Liberal principles:

The curtailment of free trade in favour of autarkic political preparedness; the consolidation of exclusive imperial blocs as the bulwark of state power; the penchant for strong leadership over deliberation; the dispensability of liberal constitutional and institutional practices for the sake of military effectiveness; *the throng of patriotic sentiment at the expense of internationalism* were the collective traits of this new scheme of social reform (MacMillan 1998, 199-200, quotation from 200; emphasis added).

Similarly, socialists such as the leaders of the Fabian Society and Robert Blatchford were nationalists and imperialists, but they were not liberals. “We had little sympathy,” the Fabian leader Sidney Webb recalled in 1920, “with the ideal of a universal cosmopolitanism which some Socialists and many Liberals more or less consciously cherished” (quoted in Semmel 1960, 122). Blatchford, the editor of the most influential socialist magazine in Britain, was a strong nationalist who detested liberal cosmopolitanism (Semmel 1960, 214-16). “I have always opposed the Liberals,” Blatchford wrote in 1909. “I believe the nation should be a family” (quoted in Semmel 1960, 223).

In France as well, by the time of the Fashoda conflict nationalism was the preserve of the right. In the first half of the century French liberals had been patriotic, militarist and aggressive, and in the years after the Franco-Prussian war the left showed a strong current of revanchism and nationalism (Becker 2004, 526-27; Sabourin 2000). But in the 1890s the French right embraced nationalism as a defense “against proletarian internationalism and the *sans-patrie* of socialism.” At the same time anti-militarism spread to the bourgeois parties of the left after the rise and fall of General Boulanger showed them the threat that militarism could pose to the republic (Winock 1973, 377-99).² Some French socialists saw patriotism as a means for their opponents to undermine international labor solidarity. So long as the capitalist class ran the country, why should the working class offer them its allegiance? Some socialists rejected the very idea of the nation-state, but these were a minority. Most Radicals’ and socialists’ opposition to nationalism had more to do with its abuse by the right than with a principled hostility to the state (Becker 2004, 528-29; Winock 1973, 409-19). In particular, the standing army served to repress the working class, and “it was the patriotism maintained among the people by the ruling classes that rendered the army untouchable” (Winock 1973: 383-85, quotation from 385). This cosmopolitan orientation carried over into the postwar era. For European socialists at the time of the Ruhr crisis, one was first a member of the human race and only then the citizen of a particular state (Hagspiel 1987, 54).

Liberal solidarity

Strong nationalism could short-circuit some key mechanisms of democratic peace. One of the key arguments of cultural-normative theory is that democracies recognize the right of other liberal peoples to make their own decisions, and resist coercing them (Doyle 1986, 1181; Russett 1993, 31). Liberal ideology extends concern even to the welfare of enemy civilians, who are also considered “bearers of rights and dignity” (Müller 2004, 503, 506). But liberals must regard foreigners as moral equals for this mechanism to work (Doyle 2000, 40; Weart 1998, 111). Nationalism exalts the nation and privileges its interests over those of

² Barblan (1974, 16) places the shift a few years later, at the time of the Dreyfus Affair.

others, and empirical research indicates that it reduces the relevance of moral considerations in making foreign policy (Lieberman 2006, 694).

If nationalism trumps respect for moral considerations and the rights of other peoples, even liberal states may be more willing to impose solutions on each other by force. This may explain why three of the four exceptions to the democratic peace pattern considered in this paper occurred during the upsurge of nationalism of the late 1890s, “when the mania for racist imperialism briefly displaced ideas of republican solidarity” (Weart 1998, 234; cf. Flournoy 1946, 216). It also suggests why the political right was more willing to coerce foreign democracies. Preoccupied with national rather than cosmopolitan interests, conservatives in America, Britain and France had little time for the rights of foreigners.

Cosmopolitan humanitarianism

For liberals, *raison d'état* has never been a satisfactory justification for the use of force. Instead, they seek cosmopolitan moral justifications. “Since liberalism deprecates the moral validity of the interests of the state in security,” observes Samuel Huntington, “war must be either condemned as incompatible with liberal goals or justified as an ideological movement in support of those goals” (quoted in Daase 2006, 83). Moreover, contemporary liberal publics dislike war and are averse to casualties. To sell a war to liberal populations, leaders must be able to paint it as either defensive or humanitarian in character: “stopping—or more controversially, preventing—genocide, new Hitlers, evil, tyrants, outlaws, and so on serves to justify the waging of ‘just wars’” (Geis 2006, 158; cf. Daase 2006, 80; Schweller 1992).

Drawing on and appealing to Nonconformist religious moralism, Gladstonian liberalism in Britain emphasized ethics in public affairs (Flournoy 1946, 198). “...Gladstone's view that simple self-interest did not of itself justify recourse to war,” observes Michael Howard, (1981, 57) “that war needed to be justified by reference to a common interest of mankind over and above the maintenance of the security of the state or the maintenance of a stable balance of power, represented a significant development in liberal thinking about the morality of war”. While some liberals opposed military intervention in general, some believed

it was justified and even a duty in the face of human rights abuses. Thus while Gladstone opposed war for selfish ends, he was prepared to support wars of liberation (Flournoy 1946, 200-2, 213). Nonconformists' and liberals' humanitarianism and concern for "the independent individual" aroused their particular concern on behalf of Turkey's persecuted minorities, and led them to call for intervention. In contrast, Peter Marsh (1972, 63-65) notes of Lord Salisbury, the Conservative prime minister during three of the four crises examined in this paper, that while his "religious and, to a lesser extent, moral affinities lay with Gladstone" he "believed that simple moral judgments were out of place in international affairs," and "came down unequivocally on the side of national interests over ethics in international dealings."

Some liberals also supported imperial expansion on the assumption that it could benefit the subject peoples (MacMillan 2004a, 195). Liberal attacks on British imperialism at the turn of the century, including the South African War, had more to do with its greedy and domineering character than with an objection to colonies per se (Taylor 1991, 14-15). Similarly, French socialists "though deeply hostile to military and financial imperialism, were not altogether unsympathetic to the cause of French expansion. The argument of the *mission civilisatrice*...was an extension of the earlier revolutionary tradition of a French messianic mission to lead the oppressed peoples of Europe to liberty" (Andrew 1968, 54).

If war can be justified only on defensive or humanitarian grounds, liberal democracies will seldom if ever have reason to go to war with one another. If neither state has aggressive intentions, security motives for war largely disappear, since democracies' transparency reduces the security dilemma (Kydd 1997, 147). At the same time, since liberal democracies rarely commit egregious human rights violations—at any rate at home—it is hard to sell a war against them on humanitarian grounds. As Harald Müller (2004, 515) points, out, even "[m]ilitant democracies will never attack democracies because there is no one to liberate." This may explain, at least in part, Sobek, Abouharb and Ingram's (2006) finding that states with good human rights records were more likely to remain at peace with each other, even when they were not democracies. They argue that states that respect the rights of their

domestic populations appear more trustworthy to their foreign counterparts. An alternative explanation, however, would be that states with good human rights records are usually liberal even when they are not democratic. They find other such states neither threatening nor good candidates for humanitarian intervention.

Some survey research also suggests that conservatives *within* liberal states are more apt to support wars on strategic grounds, while liberals show a greater concern for human rights. Americans with authoritarian attitudes or a strong desire for group hierarchy—which have both been found to be correlated with conservatism (Pratto, Stallworth and Conway-Lanz 1998; Van Hiel and Mervielde 2002)—disproportionately supported the 1991 and 2003 wars against Iraq (Doty, Winter, Peterson and Kemmelmeier 1997, 1141; McFarland 2005, 365; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle 2004)—a war whose motives were predominantly strategic. Conversely, Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle (1994, 750) found that Social Dominance Orientation was *not* correlated with support for “humanitarian” wars, leading them to hypothesize that it “predisposes people to endorse group dominance ideologies, thus facilitating support for wars of dominance” but not for humanitarian intervention.

Studies have yielded conflicting evidence as to whether liberals show a greater concern for human rights (Harff 1987, 18; McFarland 2005; Moghaddam and Vuksanovic 1990) or humanitarian intervention. Since the end of the cold war, support for military intervention for humanitarian ends has risen among American liberals (Ullrich 2003, 55-56). Democrats were 8 to 10 percent more likely than Republicans to favor American intervention in Kosovo (McFarland and Mathews 2005, 368). French socialists and Greens were at first supportive of intervention in Somalia and Bosnia (Cohen 1996, 23-24). German supporters of the Social Democrats and the Greens, however, disproportionately opposed intervention in Bosnia. German students with authoritarian attitudes were more likely to support NATO’s 1999 war in Kosovo, while French students with cosmopolitan attitudes were more likely to oppose it (Bègue and Apostolidis 2000; Cohrs and Moschner 2002; Gauzy 1996, 94).

On balance the evidence does suggest that conservatives are more likely to favor wars for strategic aims, whereas liberals are more likely to be won for humanitarian intervention.

Since humanitarian intervention is seldom required against liberal democracies, liberals should disproportionately oppose threats or wars against them.

Testing the three explanations

The following case studies examine four cases of conflict between liberal states—Venezuela, Fashoda, South Africa and the Ruhr, plus one instance of conflict between a liberal and an *illiberal* state—Britain’s efforts to end Turkey’s massacres of Armenians in the 1890s. If liberals favor peace in general, we should find them more reluctant in all five cases to go to war than their conservative counterparts. They should argue that war will waste valuable resources, lead to restriction of civil liberties and strengthen the political right. If the norm of respecting foreign democracies’ autonomy weighs heavier with liberals, we should expect them to invoke it more often than conservatives. Finally, if liberals oppose wars that cannot be justified on cosmopolitan grounds, they should denounce attacks on liberal democracies as greedy and immoral, but support humanitarian intervention.

The Anglo-American Crisis Over Venezuela, 1895-96

When the Venezuelan crisis broke out in 1895, British conservatism was concentrated in the Conservative Party, and British liberalism with the Liberals. The Tories’ coalition partners, the Liberal Unionists, were breakaway Liberals who supported social reform, but opposed home rule for Ireland and advocated protectionism. Who the right and left were in the United States is harder to determine. The Republican party represented primarily the interests of Northern manufacturers (**ADD CITATION**), while Democratic President Grover Cleveland “remains the most conservative Democrat to have occupied the White House since the Civil War.” As U.S. Attorney General, Cleveland’s Secretary of State, Richard Olney, had led a harsh crackdown on striking railroad workers (“Cleveland, Grover,” and “Olney, Richard,” *Encyclopedia Britannica 2003, Deluxe Edition CD-ROM*). The Progressive movement seems the clearest embodiment of contemporary liberalism. However, as we shall see, American trade unions also expressed liberal sentiments during the crisis.

For some time London and Caracas had disagreed over the border between Venezuela and British Guiana. In 1895, at Venezuelan urging, the United States demanded that it be allowed to arbitrate the dispute. When Britain refused, Cleveland sent a message to the U.S. Congress on 17 December that implied the threat of war (Owen 1997, 163-65). American businessmen initially supported the president, but pressed for restraint once British investors began selling American securities, causing the value of shares on Wall Street to tumble (May 1961, 57-58). Theodore Roosevelt, a leading Progressive, supported the president's tough line (May 1961, 58), but American labor unions spoke out against war with Britain (Dement'ev 1969, 31-32; Foner 1947-94 2:405-6).

British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, a Conservative, immediately perceived that the president's special message did not contain any actual threats, but its belligerent language aroused widespread alarm in Britain (Boyle 1978, D1191). Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain was reassured by the knowledge that the United States could not go to war at once: "First they have to get the assent of the Senate—then appoint a Commission—then make enquiry—and then?" (Quoted in May 1961, 48.) Salisbury favored a harder line than other members of the Cabinet, who feared to alienate the United States at a time when Britain faced other adversaries. Under pressure led by Chamberlain, however, Salisbury agreed in January to negotiate over Venezuela (Boyle 1978, D1194-99; Grenville 1964, 68; Layne 1994, 25-26; Owen 1997, 169).

Until Cleveland's special message, Liberals in Parliament were oblivious to the looming conflict (Boyle 1978, D1191). The Liberal press was divided in its reaction. While some Liberal leaders were at first disposed to defy the Americans, most came around to favoring arbitration or concessions to the United States, with the leader of the party's Gladstonian wing, Sir William Harcourt, being the most active and outspoken. Liberals throughout Britain began to press for arbitration of the conflict (Boyle 1978; May 1961, 49). Conservative and Unionist papers backed a firm line, but some also showed signs of conciliation. Following the Kruger telegram, "conservative journals moved the Venezuelan question down to the bottom of their editorial columns. The result was that no demand for

defiance of the United States materialized to offset the Liberal and nonconformist demand for conciliation” (May 1961, 48-50). Once the British reaction was clear, Olney became flexible in negotiations and eager to reach a settlement (May 1961, 59).

In this crisis, then, the left-right split is much clearer on the British side than the American. In part this may reflect the absence of a well-defined left-right axis in U.S. politics during this period. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that labor unions were among the most outspoken advocates of peace on the US side, a point to which I return below.

Liberal peacefulness

Few Britons or Americans seem to have argued against escalating the crisis on the grounds that war would waste resources, distort democracy at home or strengthen the right. Resolutions passed by American unions, however, emphasized that the workers would pay the costs of any war with Britain (Dement’ev 1969, 31-2). “Who would be compelled to bear the burden of a war?” demanded American Federation of Labor head Samuel Gompers. “The working people. They would pay the taxes, and their blood would flow like water” (quoted in Foner 1947-94, 406). I am still in the process of researching this case, and more such arguments may emerge as I consult a broader range of sources.

Liberal solidarity

British liberals held that they should support other liberal states in order to promote freedom both at home and abroad. First and foremost they gave preference to the United States, but sympathy for liberal France was also strong among liberals such as Gladstone, Morley and Lloyd George (Flournoy 1946). The belief in Anglo-American solidarity was shared by Conservatives such as Chamberlain and Balfour as well as Liberals and “cut across party affiliations” (Grenville 1964, 215). By the 1890s British Tories were beginning to view American society as more stable and conservative than they had in the past. Nevertheless, “most Conservatives still regarded America as *parvenu* whereas the Liberal Party continued to be the main fount of pro-Americanism in Britain... For Liberals Britain, her self-governing colonies, France and America were the main societies inspired by the kind of representative

government, respect for law and democratic freedoms, which were the foundations of Liberal ideology” (Boyle 1978, D1186-D1187; also May 1961, 47; cf. Owen 1997, 161-62).

There is little evidence that the Conservative-Liberal Unionist government was influenced during the crisis by considerations of liberal solidarity. Skeptical of mass democracy, Salisbury was unlikely to feel any ideological affinity with the United States. In any case he believed that relations with other states should be based on interests rather than supposed affinities (Grenville 1964, 9, 16). While Chamberlain felt a strong sense of solidarity with the United States and pushed for conciliation, this appears to have derived more from Anglo-Saxon racial solidarity (Grenville 1964, 54, 170) than shared liberal ideology. Gompers’ argument that American and British workers were “citizens of the world” facing a common class enemy (Foner 1947-94, 2:406) stressed socialist rather than liberal solidarity.

Cosmopolitan humanitarianism

Neither British nor American hawks in this crisis seem to have been motivated by considerations of narrow national interest, since “[t]he tract of disputed wilderness in South America was of no real importance to Great Britain or to the United States” (Grenville 1964, 55). For Salisbury, it was a question of protecting the rights of British subjects. “We are contending for men not for land”, he observed in a letter to Chamberlain, “for the rights of settlers whom we had encouraged to invest in such property...not for mere extension of territory” (quoted in Grenville 1964, **PAGE**). While Olney was a strong supporter of imperialist expansion (Cooper 1969, 268), Cleveland was critical of imperialism, and in 1893 had opposed annexing Hawaii (Nouailhat 1988, 61, 65).

Moreover, a leading Progressive, Theodore Roosevelt, was one of Olney’s strongest backers (May 1961, 58). Roosevelt’s views on war and foreign policy, were, however, atypical for the Progressive movement (Cooper 1969, 276-77; Markowitz 1975, 271). For Roosevelt and Albert J. Beveridge, observes **NAME** Cooper (1969, 261), the

fundamental concern was national power. Their progressivism stemmed primarily neither from sympathy for the disadvantaged nor from a sense of personal identification with the downtrodden. Roosevelt and Beveridge

embraced progressivism because they feared that unrest caused by social and economic inequities would impair the nation's strength and efficiency. Their views represented a rare position in American politics, a decidedly non-liberal approach to reform.

In desiring reform for the sake of increasing national power, Roosevelt thus resembled the British social imperialists whom MacMillan (1998) calls “apostate liberals,” and who were the prime movers in the South African War.

In contrast, the views of American labor unions during the crisis reflected a liberal humanitarian outlook. In 1895 the American Federation of Labor was still firmly opposed to imperialism (Collomp 1987, 182). While on one occasion *The American Federationist* accused Senate hawks of pursuing a war designed to distract workers from problems at home, “such statements [were] relatively rare, and the AFL's arguments against war were primarily of a moral-humanitarian nature, based on democratic traditions of opposition to militarism” (Dement’ev 1969, 32). At the same time there was strong support at this time within the AFL for helping Cuban rebels against Spain. “Humanitarian arguments calling for “bringing an end to the bloodbath” and above all republican sentiment [*l’esprit républicaine*]...had largely won its case” (Collomp 1987, 183). While the unions rejected a war against Britain as aggressive imperialism, they looked more kindly on humanitarian intervention.

Summary

British liberals seem to have called for conciliation largely out of a sense of liberal solidarity. In the American case it is harder to determine who the liberals were or whether their position differed from that of the right. American labor unions seem, however, to have opposed fighting Britain both out of a general aversion to the costs of war and out of a conviction that it would be a war of imperialist self-aggrandizement.

Fashoda

The Fashoda crisis arose out of a territorial dispute in Africa between France and Britain. Britain in this period was still under the Conservative leadership of Lord Salisbury. The dominant actor on the French side, Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé, had made his career on the left, By the time of the Fashoda crisis, however,

Delcassé “was radical in little more than name”. He believed France needed a strong executive that could put an end to its political instability, and in 1903 may have even hoped for a coup d’état would do so. Delcassé set little store by ideological solidarity, and was a strong supporter of the Franco-Russian alliance (Andrew 1968).

Already under Lord Rosebery’s preceding Liberal government London had made clear that it would consider a French expedition to the Upper Nile a hostile action (Brown 1969, 35). On learning of a French mission to the Nile, initially Salisbury reacted with less hostility than Rosebery’s government had shown toward the prospect of such a mission (Grenville 1964, 113-14). But when General Jean-Baptiste Marchand reached Fashoda in the Sudan, it provoked a crisis by challenging British supremacy in the region. The British press and politicians reacted sharply and called for a hard line, with the exception of the Liberal *Manchester Guardian* (Arié 1954, 348), “which early sought to show that the government's Egyptian policy was nothing but hypocrisy, and pleaded consistently for some recognition of French claims in the Bahr-el-Ghazal” (Riker 1929, 69).³

In the following month the press, particularly on the political right, continued to threaten and bluster (Hugodot 1957, 128-29; Riker 1929, 66). “It is quite clear that Fashoda must be retained, even at the cost of war,” wrote the conservative *Spectator* (quoted in Riker 1929, 66). The Liberal *Spectator* wrote that if necessary the French must “be bundled out of Fashoda without further ceremony, and France must decide whether she cares to fight the matter out in the Channel” (Postgate and Vallance 1937, 190). **[CHECK ON SPECTATOR’S POLITICAL AFFILIATION.]** For the most part even leftwing Liberals did not speak out in favor of conciliating France. Press and public figures alike, including the leaders of the Liberal Party such as Rosebery and Harcourt, rallied behind the government (Hugodot 1957, 124-29).

³ Along with the *Manchester Guardian*, J. A. S. Grenville (1964, 227) cites *The Times* as more conciliatory than the rest of the British press.

Salisbury's government thus faced little pressure to accommodate the French, and indeed the conservative press sought to stiffen his back (Hugodot 1957, 126; Riker 1929, 66-67, 77). According to the German ambassador, Chamberlain and other Cabinet members were prepared to fight rather than make the slightest concession (Riker 1969, 64). On 19 October the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, announced that notwithstanding his hopes for peace, "this country has put its foot down. If, unhappily, another view should be taken elsewhere," he added, "we, the ministers of the queen, know what our duty demands" (quoted in Riker 1929, 70). Salisbury himself was prepared to make territorial concessions to France as a face-saver, but faced pressure at home to remain firm, and could not bring round the cabinet (Andrew 1968, 101; Brown 1969, 93, 112-13, 128; Riker 1929, 67, 70; Hugodot 1957, 126-27). At a Cabinet meeting of 28 October

Minister of Colonies Chamberlain and First Lord of the Admiralty Goschen, both of whom were apprehensive about Salisbury's determination to stand firm, went even further and probably pressed for an immediate preventive war against France. At a minimum, most members of the cabinet seem to have favored an ultimatum to France coupled with a military show of force. Salisbury...managed to block effectively the sending of an explicit ultimatum, but nonetheless accommodated himself to the spirit of the meeting and reluctantly allowed the Admiralty to put the navy on a war footing (Brown 1969, 113).

Salisbury seems to have believed war possible (Brown 1969, 73; Riker 1929, 73), and by the end of October the British government was seriously concerned that the conflict could escalate to war (Brown 1969, 111-12). The *Daily Mail* and the *Evening News* spoke of expelling the French by force if necessary (Riker 1929, 66). On the French side, Delcassé and Faure believed that France would lose a naval conflict with Britain, and this was the decisive factor that led the government to back down (Andrew 1968, 102-3; Arié 1954, 364-65, n. 3; Brown 1969, 116, 130-31). As T. W. Riker (1929, 54) observes, "[I]t was clearly due to no recognition of a moral solution that the dispute failed to provoke a war."

Yet while many Britons would rather fight than compromise, they universally hoped that war could be averted (Hugodot 1957, 128, 130, 137). "Salisbury may well have thought," notes Riker (1929, 64), "that even an inflexible attitude would not necessarily mean war, so

long as he refrained from pushing his case to the point of an ultimatum.” The *Daily Telegraph* and the *Spectator* wrote that if war came, it would be best if France struck the first blow (Hugodot 1957, 133; Riker 1929, 73). Salisbury authorized a Foreign Office official to confirm for the French that Britain had never formally demanded Marchand’s departure from Fashoda (Brown 1969, 129-30).

Moreover, it was the liberal left on both sides that pushed for restraint. In France, from the outset of the crisis leftwing papers such as Jaurès’s *La Petite République* and Clemenceau’s *L’Aurore* advocated conciliating Britain, whereas the nationalist right, in contrast, demanded that the government hold firm (Brown 1969, 107-9, 114). In Britain, there were many fewer critics of government policy, but those that there were, were liberals. Lord Spencer deplored the prospect of war “between these two great civilized nations, perhaps the most civilized in the world” (quoted in Hugodot 1957, 130; my translation). The Radical Sir Wilfred Lawson accused those who favored war of betraying the country (Hugodot 1957, 131). The Social Democratic Federation and the Liberal Forwards called on Britain and France to avoid war (Arié 1954, 355; Hugodot 1957, 130), though the Yeoville Workingmen’s Liberal Association offered the government its support (Riker 1929, 67).

Some of the Liberal papers argued that the conflict could be settled peacefully, and the *Manchester Guardian* noted that whether France kept Fashoda did not depend on immediately pushing it out (Riker 1929, 65-66, 69). The Radical *Westminster Gazette* proposed that France be offered other territory (Hugodot 1957, 127). In November, the Liberal leader Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman criticized Hicks-Beach’s “swashbuckling” (Riker 1929, 75 n. 4), and the Liberal *Daily Chronicle* argued that Britain must be prepared to compromise (Riker 1929, 75). However, the tension between the two countries did not disappear when Marchand was recalled in November, and Britain continued to make military preparations into early 1899 (Grenville 1964, 230-31; Riker 1929, 74-75).

Liberal solidarity

During the Fashoda crisis, the executive committee of the Liberal Forwards issued a statement calling on “all Liberals to do all in their power to avert the inconceivable iniquity and horrors of a war between the two principal liberal nations of Europe” (Hugodot 1957, 130; my translation). David Lloyd George, while arguing that Britain must retain the Nile even at the cost of war, deplored Hicks-Beach’s belligerent rhetoric and urged that the two countries negotiate for France to be given access to the river. Britain would win a war, but at the cost of defeating the only other democratic great power in Europe. “Like the *Manchester Guardian* and Morley, Lloyd George deplored a breach with Britain's ideological counterpart in Europe” (Fry 1977, 34). Such explicit references to liberal solidarity were, however, unusual during the crisis (Weart 1998, 232). Nevertheless, broader evidence suggests that liberal solidarity probably predisposed the French left toward conciliation.

French republicans perceived Britain as an attractively modern society. They saw London as a rival but not an enemy, and for them “to go to war with Britain would be to burn what they adored.” A number of leading liberals had taken refuge in Britain when the Paris Commune was crushed and later returned to France full of enthusiasm for the democratic reforms underway in British society. The Catholic right, on the other hand, saw Britain as the embodiment of the secular, industrialized future that threatened France. One writer linked the British with French Jews and Freemasons, and denounced them for their love of the novels of Émile Zola, who had supported Alfred Dreyfus (Barblan 1974, 191-93, 217-18, quotation from 218)! “[I]n France, the Dreyfusards were also Anglophiles, and the anti-Dreyfusards were all Anglophobes” (Hugodot 1957, 135). At the same time, some writers argued that the democratization of Britain was leading to jingoism (Barblan 1974, 180-81, 201).

After Fashoda French republicans favored a rapprochement with Britain, “the great democratic country which could serve as a model in their fight to the death with the partisans of order.” The right, on the other hand, pushed for a rapprochement with Germany, even at the cost of surrendering Alsace and Lorraine (Arié 1954, 362; Barblan 1974, 16-17, 218, quotation from 17).

Liberals on both sides of the Channel held that Fashoda was not worth a war. The Socialist *Petite République* wrote that the Fashoda crisis was a quarrel between “two capitalist minorities” (quoted in Brown 1969, 107). The people had only suffered from France’s imperial conquests, and that it was pointless to risk war over a desert that belonged neither to Britain nor France, but to its inhabitants (Arié 1954, 347, 355). Clemenceau argued that it was senseless to fight over African marshes when Germany retained Alsace and Lorraine (Arié 1954, 354). This could, to be sure, reflect a cost-benefit calculation: Even some papers on the right [CHECK FOR PETIT JOURNAL] argued that Fashoda was not worth fighting over (Barblan 1974, 15). On the other side of the Channel, the *Manchester Guardian*’s objection was clearly on moral grounds: “The immorality of the expedition consists of this, that we have used Egypt in this matter merely as a stalking-horse of our own ambitions in the Upper Nile” (quoted in Riker 1929, 69).

Summary

Little evidence from the Fashoda crisis indicates that British or French liberals were opposed to war *per se*. Rather, considerations of liberal solidarity and distaste for fighting over a chunk of African territory explains their desire for conciliation, though this desire was much more widespread among French liberals than their British counterparts.

The South African War

The South African War arose out of a dispute between Britain and the Transvaal and the Orange Free state about the voting rights of English-speakers in the Transvaal and, more broadly, about British suzerainty in South Africa. When negotiations broke down in 1899, the Boer republics launched a preemptive attack on British South Africa. It was Britain, however, that had really provoked the war. The driving figures were Chamberlain and Alfred Milner, British High Commissioner in South Africa (ADD CITATION). Not all the members of the British cabinet had wanted to fight; some, such as Hicks-Beach and Balfour, questioned the guilt of the Boers (Grenville 1964, 235-36). The chief opposition to the war, however, came from the Liberal Party. While the party was badly split in its reaction to the war, most of its members were critical, as was the Independent Labor Party and most of organized labor. Of

the twelve trade-union members serving as Liberal members of Parliament at its outbreak, all but one opposed the war. The Liberal Imperialists, in contrast, supported it (Auld 1975, 79-82; MacMillan 1998, 254; Pelling 1979, 82-83, 86; Semmel 1960, 49-50, 56-57).

British liberalism had fragmented in the late 19th century. In the 1880s Chamberlain had led opponents of Home Rule for Ireland out of the Liberal Party. At the turn of the century the party was split between Gladstonian Radicals loyal to the party's traditions of small government and anti-imperialism, "Lib-Lab" socialists who opposed imperialism but favored government intervention, and Liberal Imperialists who supported both. The Fabian Society, while socialist, shared the Limps' enthusiasm both for top-down social engineering and for supposedly enlightened imperialism. Its leaders Sidney and Beatrice Webb, "looking to a national and militarist state to realize their program of moderate collectivism...had never felt anything but contempt for every formula of Liberalism and free trade" (Halévy 1949, quoted in Semmel 1960, 55). Milner also desired radical social reform, but was still more skeptical about democracy and enthusiastic about imperialism (Semmel 1960).

It is thus misleading to speak of the Radicals as the left wing of the Liberal Party, or the Liberal Imperialists as the right. Drawing on an older liberal tradition, most Radicals who rallied behind the Boers supported charitable and humanitarian efforts while remaining skeptical of government intervention (Auld 1975, 97-98). The pro-Boer League of Liberals Against Aggression and Militarism, formed in early 1900, "was formed to give 'a clear lead to the Liberal party' on foreign and imperial policy and to uphold the great Liberal traditions of Cobden, Bright, and Gladstone against the inroads of big government, imperialism, and socialism" (Auld 1975, 86). Whereas the Liberal Imperialists and Fabians stressed modern efficiency, "[t]he pro-Boers and the [Independent Labor Party]...represented the somewhat faded Nonconformist conscience of the provinces, the distaste for finance capitalism and Whitehall, and the moralistic approach to public affairs" (Auld 1975, quotation from 97).

It is unclear from the sources I have consulted whether there was any opposition at all in the Orange Free State to the decision to go to war, let alone whether it was concentrated on the left. A contemporary account claims that the legislature of the Orange Free State

unanimously backed the decision to support the Transvaal (Rompel 1902, 41-42). The author is clearly sympathetic to the Boer cause, however, and does not identify his sources.

Liberal peacefulness

Radical and socialist criticism of the war reflected traditional Liberal doubts about imperialism. Radicals such as John Morley and Lloyd George, and Socialists like Keir Hardie, S. G. Hobson and Ramsay MacDonald considered the war a waste of resources and a distraction from domestic concerns (Brown 1992, 163; Fry 1977; Grigg 1974, 15; Morgan 1999, 300-3; Wrigley 1978, 66-69). "If they [the British government] go on the war will be so costly in blood and treasure as to sicken the land. If they withdraw they will be laughed out of power," Lloyd George predicted (quoted in Fry 1977, 40). The trade unions suspected that the war was being fought in the interests of British capitalists (Galbraith 1952, 120; Pelling 1979, 83-84). The *Manchester Guardian* worried that the war made it easier for the government to invoke a spurious patriotism, intimidating critics and limiting dissent (Hampton 2001).

As the war went on, Liberal criticism intensified, focusing on the "methods of barbarism" with which the government was waging it, which the *Guardian* argued were not only wrong in themselves, but by embittering the Boers could force Britain to maintain a large and expensive presence in South Africa after the war (Auld 1975, 93-94; Brown 1992; Hampton 2001, 194; Morgan 1999, 297). The high cost of the war in both blood and treasure eroded support among both Liberals and the public at large (Brown 1992).

Liberal solidarity

Whereas the traditionalist wing of the Labor party aimed at the further democratization of British society (**ADD CITATION**), the leaders of both the Liberal Imperialists and the Fabian Party believed that decision making should be largely technocratic and in the hands of experts. In part this was because the Libs believed more efficient governance was essential in order to survive in a competitive international system ((Brown 1992; Semmel 1960), but both they and the Fabians also "shared a liking for "modernism," represented by a fondness for bigness and efficiency" (Auld 1975, 97). The leading socialist editor Robert Blatchford rejected parliamentary democracy altogether in favor of popular

referendums on the one hand and strong leaders on the other. “In France... he would probably have been an anti-capitalist monarchist and undoubtedly an anti-Dreyfusard” (Semmel 1960, quotation from 216). It was no coincidence that while most socialists denounced the war, the Fabians and Blatchford supported it.

Even liberals disagreed, to be sure, as to whether Britain was fighting fellow liberals. The party’s Gladstonian wing tended to see the Orange Free State as a fellow liberal state despite its oppression of the native population (MacMillan 1998, 248). The liberal *Manchester Guardian* “constantly present[ed] the enemy as freedom-loving Europeans who, backed into a corner, were prepared to fight for their freedoms just as the English themselves would in a similar position” (Hampton 2001, 193). Lloyd George argued that it was a fraud to go to war on behalf of the Uitlanders’ voting rights when British subjects lacked similar freedoms at home (Fry 1977, 40-41). “If I have the courage,” he wrote to his brother as war approached, “I shall protest with all the vehemence at my command against the outrage which is perpetrated in the name of freedom” (quoted in Grigg 1974, 14). When Britain had attacked a country of farmers seeking only their own freedom, led by liberal and progressive statesmen,⁴ small wonder only Turkey had come to Britain’s defense. Even as he came to accept that Britain would annex the two republics, he argued for according them autonomy along Australian and Canadian lines (Fry 1977, 42-43; Grigg 1974, 22; Morgan 1999, 294). Like Lloyd George, the socialist leader Keir Hardie saw the war as an unprovoked attack on a small free people. “[A]s Socialists,” he declared, “our sympathies are bound to be with the Boers. Their Republican form of government bespeaks freedom, and is thus hateful to tyrants, whilst their methods of production for use are much nearer our ideal than any form of exploitation for profit” (Morgan 1999, 299).

Milner, in contrast, considered the larger of the two Boer states, the Transvaal, a backward and racist oligarchy (Grenville 1964, 242). Supporters of the war took a similar view of the Afrikaner states. When war broke out, the *Daily Mail* crowed that it would bring “the doom of oligarchy” and promised that the Boers would “receive the punishment which

their insane attempt to perpetuate an almost barbaric system of Government in the 19th century most thoroughly deserves.” Likewise, the *Times* proclaimed Britain’s readiness to fight “the corrupt and tyrannical oligarchy” that was denying the Uitlanders their rights (Postgate and Vallance 1937, 195-96). In the 1900 election

[t]he Uitlander's lack of franchise rights especially made it possible for candidates to speak of the plight of "our oppressed fellow subjects" in a country ruled by a "corrupt oligarchy" where "freedom was only for a privileged minority.... That the two South African republics lacked such essentially British freedoms was used extensively as justification for a war that—it was now declared—‘had been waged to relieve tyranny and oppression.’ Far from being motivated by ‘any base desire for revenge,’ the Unionist party merely sought the adoption in all South Africa of "the same civil and religious liberty as that existing" elsewhere in the colonies. It was therefore simply wrongheaded of their opponents to go on about how hateful it was to "liberty-loving Britons to deprive free people of their liberty," as the two republics were illiberal regimes in the first place (Readman 2001, 120-21).

Like Milner, the Liberal Imperialists (Brown 1992, 164) and the Fabian George Bernard Shaw argued that Britain was fighting for freedom and democracy in South Africa. Characteristically, however, their complaint was not so much that the Boer states were undemocratic as that they were *backward*. Shaw maintained that small countries and “individualist republicanism” had become anachronistic, and that resources such as the South African goldfields should belong to great powers like Britain who would use them for “the interests of civilization as a whole” rather than being “wielded irresponsibly by small communities of frontiersmen” (Semmel 1960, **PAGE**; Wrigley 1978, 68, 75). The Boers’ right to self-determination counted less than social progress and strengthening the empire.

Cosmopolitan humanitarianism

The South African War was not the capitalist land grab that critics have long portrayed it as being (**ADD CITATION**). Salisbury wrote shortly before the war that Milner had dragged Britain into a struggle against “people whom we despise, and for territory which will bring no profit and no power to England” (Grenville 1964, 269). In going to war the government was responding chiefly to strategic considerations. In a cabinet memorandum written a month before the war, Chamberlain argued that the crucial issue was not the franchise—which was not worth fighting over in itself—but British supremacy in South

⁴ Elsewhere Lloyd George referred to Kruger as a Tory (Fry 1977, 47; Grigg 1974, 13).

Africa (Grenville 1964, 257-58). Where imperialists and Gladstonians differed is that the imperialists thought that supremacy was worth fighting for.

Many Liberals believed the Boers had started the war and that Britain was acting in its own defense (Brown 1992, 163). But others were more skeptical. The *Manchester Guardian* argued that “true patriotism...required concern not merely with national glory, but with true national greatness—a quality that included morality and honor.” The Radical conception of patriotism “often took the opposition to wars that could be perceived as wars of conquest or wars on behalf of sectional interests, as had the Crimean War of 1854-6, and it could be argued that the Boer War met both of these conditions” (Hampton 2001, 189, 191). While only a minority of British liberals explicitly called the war unjust, the party’s longstanding stress on moral considerations in public policy found expression in their indignation (Auld 1975, 81-82, 96).

Robert Blatchford found such moralizing infuriating.. “It was a repetition of the old hostility between the Roundheads and the Cavaliers,” he recalled thirty years later. “The Labour Leader people were Puritans; narrow, bigoted, puffed up with sour cant.... We loved the humour and colour of the old English tradition.” The pro-Boers, he wrote in November 1899, were “smug, self-righteous prigs” (quoted in Semmel 1960, 216 n. 14, 217). Not only were they moralists; they were internationalists. When the war broke out Blatchford denounced liberals “who are so cosmopolitan that they can admire every country but their own, and love all men except Englishmen” (quoted in Semmel 1960, 217).

Blatchford was on to something. In the middle of the war, Rosebery delivered a ringing defense of imperialism as good for both Britain and the world, which nevertheless “the Liberal *Dundee Advertiser* criticized [for lacking the] humanitarian and cosmopolitan spirit” (Brown 1992, 174). For Lloyd George, one of the war’s most outspoken and visible critics, it and the imperialism it represented were part and parcel of the spirit of rotten plutocracy reasserting itself in Britain (Morgan 1999, 296-97). Lloyd George saw international relations primarily in moral terms. Wars should be fought only for great moral and humanitarian causes, such as defending oppressed nations, rather than for sordid national interests (Fry

1977, 23-26). Britain should fight only to defend its vital interests, not for the sake of hegemony over South Africa (Grigg 1974, 15). In the older Radical tradition, he sympathized with the patriotism of national liberation struggles; but imperialism could only be justified if it served to promote human freedom (Fry 1974, 24, 31). “There may be something to be said for a war so long as it is entered upon for an unselfish purpose,” he declared. “...But when you enter upon a war purely and simply for the purposes of plunder, I know of nothing which is more degrading to the country or more hideous in its effects on the mind and character of the people engaged in it” (quoted in Fry 1977, 42).

When the Fabian Society debated how to respond to the war, S. G. Hobson proposed a resolution denouncing “the Imperialism of Capitalism and vain-glorious Nationalism” (Semmel 1960, 58). Yet while Hobson argued that imperialism would hinder reform at home, he acknowledged that if it *had* benefited the British population, he would have supported it (Wrigley 1978, 68). Conversely, Shaw held that it would be wrong to fight the war for any other reason than democracy, equal rights and improved conditions for South Africans (Semmel 1960, 58; Wrigley 1978, 68). For the Fabians, imperialism was justified if it served the interests of mankind by spreading progress and socialism (Wrigley 1978, 76-77). Despite the leadership’s hostility to Liberal doctrines, they retained a residual cosmopolitanism.

Summary

A general hatred of war and militarism, liberal solidarity, and opposition to aggressive imperialism all help to explain the strong Liberal criticism of the war in Britain. Britons however, held different views of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The Gladstonian wing of the Liberal Party sympathized with them as fellow republics, whereas conservatives described them as oligarchic, and the Fabians as backward. To consider the Transvaal oligarchic was a reasonable judgment. The Orange Free State *was* a liberal republic by the standards of 1899, but it was so small and entered the conflict so late that neither hawks nor doves seem to have distinguished between it and its larger ally.

It is tempting to suspect that both pro-Boers and conservatives tailored their views of the Boers to suit policies they supported for other reasons, reflecting either conscious

manipulation of the adversary's image, or an unconscious need to justify their actions to themselves (cf. Jervis 1976). Traditionalist Liberals, however, placed greater weight on the Boer right to self-determination. As small autonomous republics, the Boer states naturally appealed to them, whereas they offended the technocratic sensibilities of Milner and the Fabians. Gladstonian Liberals also criticized the war as aggressive and self-aggrandizing. Nationalists on both right and left were less troubled by such moral considerations, though the Fabians insisted that the war would be justified only if fought for unselfish ends.

The Armenian massacres

Did liberals oppose war in general, or only against democracies and/or for selfish ends? The British reaction to the Armenian crisis of the 1890s suggests the latter. For many years, strife between the Turkish government and the Christian minorities of the Ottoman empire had aroused concern and indignation in Europe. In 1894 an Armenian attack on Kurdish tribesmen in the Ottoman empire provoked murderous retaliation by the latter. By the spring of 1895 more than 30,000 Armenians had been killed (Grenville 1964, 45; Marsh 1972, 73-74). In the British cabinet, "Harcourt and Bryce voiced a Gladstonian cry for vigorous action," and Lord Kimberley, the foreign secretary, proposed that the British fleet force the Straits, but Rosebery insisted that Britain could not intervene without Russia's consent. On coming to office, Salisbury sought to pursue a more energetic policy than had the Liberals (Douglas 1976, 121-22; Marsh 1972, quotation from 74). Salisbury favored a joint European intervention against Turkey. If Russia balked he was even prepared to intervene unilaterally, but the Admiralty insisted that this was impossible and the Cabinet opposed it (Grenville 1964, 29, 47, 77; Kirakossian 2003, 251; Marsh 1972, 76-80).⁵

Thereafter Salisbury did not see separate action as feasible and warned that it could bring "appalling dangers" (Douglas 1976, 123; Grenville 1964, 48, 82-86; Kirakossian 2003, 256-58, 276-77; Marsh 1972, 80-82). Chamberlain suggested an Anglo-American naval demonstration to coerce the Turks (Douglas 1976, 126). Russia, however, opposed an

⁵ Marsh (1972) indicates that the Admiralty was prepared to support occupying Jeddah to put pressure on the Turks. Why was this not carried out?

intervention. Salisbury's government held that Britain must not risk war with the other powers over Armenia—a view shared by Rosebery and other Liberal leaders. Rosebery held that Britain had no great stake in whether Armenians were exterminated or not (Arutiunian 1959, 91; Douglas 1976, 130-31; Grenville 1964, 53; Kirakossian 2003, 195, 258, 276).

In contrast to the government and the Liberal Imperialists, Gladstone argued that Britain should not give up on coercing Turkey until it was clear that it *would* mean war with the other powers (Douglas 1976, 128). In 1895 and 1896, Gladstone mounted a public campaign for unilateral intervention on behalf of the Armenians (Kirakossian 2003, 206, 274-75). Already in 1894 it had been particularly Liberal papers that encouraged Russian intervention in Armenia (Arutiunian 1959, 84). Despite the opposition of Lord Rosebery, the majority of the Liberal Party now sided with Gladstone in favor of unilateral British intervention (Kirakossian 2003, 206, 275-76). Harcourt also called for a tougher line against Turkey (Douglas 1976, 117-18). Both Liberal and Conservative pressure groups lobbied for intervention (Kirakossian 2003, 281). Some Tories, concerned to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, were forthrightly pro-Turk (Arutiunian 1959, 91-92).

Some authors doubt that there was a real difference between the Conservatives and Liberals. Noting that Gladstone was also unwilling to intervene at the price of a European war, Arman Kirakossian (2003, 173-75, 187) notes that in office, he did not aggressively defend the rights of the Armenians. "The reality," he observes "is that Gladstone certainly espoused these causes when he was in the Loyal Opposition but was constrained in his actions while in power (Kirakossian 2003, 173). The Liberal government of his successor, Lord Rosebery, government was no more disposed to favor unilateral intervention (Kirakossian 2003, 188, 194-95). Once Salisbury took office, "[t]he speeches of the Liberal opposition were remarkably restrained," J. A. S. Grenville (1964, 76) remarks. "...In practice there was no real opposition to Salisbury." At least to judge by his public statements, however, Gladstone would have *tried* to intervene and pulled back if Europe reacted badly. Salisbury's government did not try.

On balance, it appears that British Liberals were at least as willing to support intervention to save the Armenians as were the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists, and that this support was strongest on the party's Gladstonian wing. Thus Lloyd George, so vehemently opposed to war in South Africa, looked back on the British government's failure to halt the Armenian massacres with indignation and demanded that the Turks be driven from Europe (Fry 1977, 26). Similarly, in France, Jean Jaurès—a leading dove during the Fashoda crisis—demanded European intervention on the Armenians' behalf (Réberieux 1991). This stands in contrast to the other crises in the same decade, and suggests that these liberals were not simply peacefully inclined, but had different criteria for going to war.

The Ruhr Crisis

France occupied the Ruhr in January 1923 when Germany fell behind on the reparations payments mandated by the Treaty of Versailles. At this time it was governed by a right-wing coalition under the leadership of President Raymond Poincaré. Socialists and Communists formed the main opposition, while the Radicals, a loose center-left grouping, subscribed to the French revolutionary ideals of “democracy, freedom, secularism and social progress—combined with a fiery patriotism,” and voted sometimes for and sometimes against the government (Hagspiel 1987, 114-15, quotation from 115; Jeannesson 1997, 132). The Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) was predominantly social-democratic [CHECK], particularly after expelling its radical wing in 1921 (“General Confederation of Labor,” *Encyclopedia Britannica 2003, Deluxe Edition CD-ROM*).

Already in 1921 the preceding government, under President Aristide Briand, had occupied Düsseldorf, Duisburg and Ruhrort, and threatened to occupy the whole Ruhr region (Lauter 2004, 86). Nevertheless, Briand's relatively forthcoming policy toward Germany became increasingly unpopular among the French public, contributing to his downfall in January 1922. When Germany fell behind in its reparation payments at the beginning of 1923, Poincaré, under strong public pressure, sent troops into the Ruhr (Guillen 1984, 46; Hagspiel 1987, 141-42; Menges 1976, 630-31). The French right firmly supported Poincaré's refusal to accept a delay in German reparation payments and his decision to occupy the Ruhr (Hagspiel

1987, 172, 177). The Radical leadership recommended abstention from a vote on the occupation, but most voted in support of the government, and while troubled by the brutality of the occupation and the fear that France was isolating itself internationally, reluctantly continued to do so until they left the coalition in July (Hagspiel 1987, 196-98).

Only the left wing parties firmly opposed the occupation,. Already in 1921 French communists and trade unions agitated against the mobilization of troops to occupy the Ruhr (Lauter 2004, 96). Now the socialist leader Léon Blum was the only deputy in the Chamber to speak out on 11 January against the French invasion. The government carried the day with a huge majority (Lauter 2004, 93; Menges 1976, 625, 632-33). The occupation enjoyed strong public support (Hagspiel 1987, 194; Merlio 2004, 119). While a Socialist-sponsored demonstration in February 1923 drew unexpectedly large numbers, public opinion continued to run in favor of the occupation (Menges 1976, 633). In 1924 a coalition of Radicals and Socialists swept Poincaré's government from power, opening the door to a more flexible policy which led to French withdrawal from the Ruhr later that year. Whether opposition to the occupation helped to bring about the political realignment is controversial, but recent accounts take the view that it was not decisive (Hagspiel 1987, 188; Jeannesson 1997, 210-11; cf. Guillen 1984, 46).

Liberal peacefulness

Postwar European socialists embraced a Wilsonian view of international relations. Rejecting the notion of a fundamental distinction between internal and international politics, they held that relations between states should be democratized just as relations within them, and the rule of law extended to the international level. This would inevitably require the limitation of state sovereignty, and eventually the establishment of an international body that could impose binding resolution of disputes on states. French socialists believed Germany must take its rightful place in the League of Nations, which would in turn require the consolidation of German parliamentary democracy. The right, in contrast, was hostile to any scheme for international organization that could impinge on the prerogatives of the state (Hagspiel 1987, 51-56, 92, 100). The Radicals were opposed to the use of force, whether

internally or internationally, and shared the socialists' internationalist outlook, but with a strong current of French patriotism (Hagspiel 1987, 115-16). As the occupation continued, their fundamentally pacific attitude toward international relations reasserted itself and Radical support for the occupation eroded (Hagspiel 1987, 118, 198).

The French left accused the occupation of harming both the French economy and innocent German civilians (Hagspiel 1987, 194-95). Much of the French left saw an occupation of the Ruhr as benefiting predominantly the capitalist class (Lauter 2004, 94-95). Trade unions argued that it not only risked a war but would harm the working conditions and living standards of French workers (Lauter 2004, 95). The communists portrayed the reparations issue as a pretext for French aggression (Lauter 2004, 96), and Blum charged that the occupation was a violation of international law (Menges 1976, 637-38). The far right *Action française*, in contrast, saw it as a welcome chance to clamp down on Jews and leftists at home (Merlio 2004, 121).

Liberal solidarity

“[W]hat leaps out from histories of the period between 1915...and 1923,” observes Christopher Layne (1994, 36) “is the repeated French rejection of “second image” arguments that France’s postwar security position would be enhanced if Germany were transformed into a democracy.” While this may have been true of French officials, it was by no means true of all Frenchmen. Following the war, the democratic French left, like European socialists generally, placed considerable hope in the consolidation of German democracy as a force for peace. Distinguishing between the aggressive nationalists that still remained strong in Germany and their “democratic and socialist” opponents, the French left argued that the mass of the German people wanted peace. France should support these peaceful forces. “In the end, for the French socialists, democracy and peace were one and the same thing” (Hagspiel 1987, 42-43, 95-96, 100, quotations from 100.)

Once the occupation began, the left charged that it had strengthened the German right while undermining democrats (Hagspiel 1987, 189, 194). “By its policy, M. Poincaré’s government...has weakened democratic elements in Germany,” charged a November 1923

Socialist resolution, “strengthened the position of the nationalists, whose progress threatens the German Republic—an essential guarantee of the peace and future collaboration between France and Germany” (quoted in Menges 1976, 636).⁶ As the crisis dragged on, Radicals began to argue that France should seek out Germans with whom it could cooperate to overcome the crisis—Germans representing the humanist traditions of the pre-Wilhelmine era (Hagspiel 1987, 118-19). The Radicals also worried increasingly that the occupation was isolating France internationally from the liberal Western powers (Hagspiel 1987, 118). After coming to power in coalition with the Socialists, the Radicals argued that the goodwill of German democrats made a conciliatory policy possible (Hagspiel 1987, 119).

To the right of the Radicals, the center parties were willing to make concessions if these would strengthen German democrats, but first they wanted to see evidence of German willingness to pay its reparations, and that democracy was actually being consolidated (Hagspiel 1987, 122). The French right understood the recent war as a struggle between “republican freedom and imperial tyranny,” but in contrast to the left it held that the tiger had not changed his stripes. Not just the Kaiser but the whole German people bore responsibility for the war, and German society remained infected with a cult of violence and a belief in its racial superiority. While the right sympathized with German democrats, they were too weak to restrain German militarism, and political instability raised the question of how long German cooperation would last. Only coercion would induce Germany to pay its reparations, and only military strength and alliances could secure France against German revanchism. To stand up to Germany was in the interest of all democratic nations. Concessions would only encourage German nationalists (Hagspiel 1987, 122-27, 131, 174; Lauter 2004, 89).

Pace Layne, both the left and right appealed to liberal second-image arguments, but assessed German politics and society very differently. On the one hand, this might reflect the basic philosophical disagreement between liberals and conservatives as to whether societies can change and improve. Liberals are far more optimistic about the transformational potential

⁶ French communists, while also opposing coercion, believed that only revolution could render Germany entirely safe (Hagspiel 1987, 114).

of political reform, whereas conservatives emphasize continuity in national traditions and culture. As in the case of the Boer War, however, liberals' and conservatives' diverging perceptions could also reflect the desire to justify policies they favored for other reasons.

Cosmopolitan humanitarianism

The Radicals' enthusiasm for German democracy was largely based on their expectation that it would ensure full payment of reparations. French socialists agreed that Germany had an obligation to pay reparations, but held that the Versailles settlement had set them unreasonably high (Hagspiel 1987, 99, 117, 187-88; Menges 1976, 627-28, 657-58). Blum argued that the occupation, by destroying Germany's economy, would render it unable to make the payments and accused Poincaré's government of expansionist objectives (Jeannesson 1997, 136). In contrast, the French right held that France had every right to compensation in full, and that France's economy, its international status and its security all depended on reparations (Hagspiel 1987, 89, 173-75). Parts also hoped that the occupation could lead to Germany's fragmentation, though with the exception of the Saarland it did not hope to make annexations for France [**confirm that Merlio is talking about the right on pp. 124-25**]. The *Action française* was quite prepared to defend the occupation as a chance to expropriate German industrialists, and, if the Germans resisted, to march all the way to Berlin (Hagspiel 1987, 175, 178; Merlio 2004, 121-25). The right was thus much more willing to squeeze as much as possible out of Germany in pursuit of France's narrow interests.

Summary

A general aversion to war and conflict, liberal solidarity with the Weimar Republic, and the reluctance to drive Germans into poverty for the sake of maximum reparations all explain French liberals' opposition to the occupation of the Ruhr. This opposition was most pronounced among Socialists (and Communists, partly for other reasons), but grew among Radicals as the crisis dragged on. As in the case of the South African War, hawks and doves disagreed as to the character of the adversary regime. Whereas Socialists and Radicals saw the Weimar Republic as a friendly fledgling republic, the French right was convinced that Germany remained militarist and revanchist. Here again, both sides may have tailored their

views to support policies they favored on other grounds. The left's optimism, however, probably also reflected the liberal belief that a state's regime type, rather than its national traditions, is the chief determinant of its foreign policy.

Social Democratic Peace?

In two of the four conflicts examined here, there is some reason to doubt that war was ever a serious danger. J. A. S. Grenville (1964, 55) argues that neither Britain nor the United States had significant interests in the Venezuelan dispute, and that "there never was any real possibility of war....[T]he whole crisis appears somewhat synthetic."⁷ Similarly, it is hard to see how Britain and France could have come to blows over Fashoda (Russett 1993, 8). Gat's (2005, 75) characterization of French public opinion as "bellicose" is wrong: "the French press and people remained, on the whole, extraordinarily pacific throughout the crisis" (Grenville 1964, 227). A contemporary observer recalled the "profound indifference of the French public. Almost nobody knew where Fashoda was, or what our interests in the region of the Upper Nile could even be" (Barblan 1974, 12; see also Arié 1954, 363-64). While British public opinion was far more belligerent, nobody *wanted* war, and Salisbury's government appears to have had no intention of using force to push Marchand out. The South African War and the French occupation of the Ruhr are, on the other hand, clear instances of one liberal state using force against another.⁸ How can we explain this?

In each case, powerful actors in one or both states were not liberal enough. Pressure to escalate the conflict came from the political right. Realism and structural-institutionalist theories of democratic peace cannot explain this pattern. Particularly in the crises over South Africa and the Ruhr, the left's more conciliatory stance reflected a general dislike of war and militarism. More importantly, however, war against fellow liberals was the *wrong kind* of war. These states were friends and ideological allies; they were also democracies whose right to self-determination ought to be respected. Nor could war be justified in the absence of

⁷ See, however, Layne 1994, 24 n. 60 for sources rendering a different judgment.

⁸ Russett (1993, 17) argues that the Orange Free State was not democratic because it excluded nonwhites and women from the franchise, but by late nineteenth century standards this was the

serious human rights violations on the other side. In contrast, during the Armenian massacres British Liberals led the pressure for intervention, while conservatives—less influenced by cosmopolitan sympathies—favored caution or were even pro-Turk. This goes a long way toward explaining why “[s]trangely, the very men who demurred at coercion of Turkey because of the imagined risks involved were the men who, a few years later, supported the war in South Africa where the danger of conflict with the European Powers as well was far greater” (Douglas 1976, 133).

Realists might argue that the Cleveland, Salisbury and Poincaré governments took a hard line toward their liberal counterparts not because they were conservative or nationalist, but because they were *governments*. Opposition politicians, they might say, can act on ideological whims, because there is no risk of their being realized. Responsible statesmen, on the other hand, must adapt their policies to the imperatives of the international system. Had liberal politicians had to govern during the crises in question, they would have followed the same line as their conservative counterparts. In the case of British and American policy, it is hard to rule this explanation out. It fails, however, to explain why French opposition nationalists to the *right* of Delcassé favored a tough line during Fashoda, or why Socialists and Radicals followed a more flexible policy toward Germany after taking office in 1924.

Moreover, in mature democracies, a sufficiently liberal public should restrain even realist leaders from attacking fellow liberal states (Owen 1997). Such leaders will try to demonize the adversary, and may succeed against imperfectly liberal states such as Milosevic’s Serbia. But with a well-functioning marketplace of ideas (Snyder and Ballentine 1996), such efforts will fail against established liberal democracies. Iran can be sold as a despotism, but not Italy. The Transvaal’s liberal credentials in 1899 were dubious, while the Orange Free State was too small for most Britons to notice it. The Weimar Republic *was* a democracy, but the French doubted—not without reason—that its citizenry was reliably liberal (Owen 1994, 96) or its democratic government sufficiently consolidated. It is hard to

democratic norm (Ray 1995, 117-18). Britons in 1899 would not have perceived the Orange Free State as illiberal because they denied votes to these groups.

determine whether these doubts caused or merely reflected policy preferences. In both cases, however, they were concentrated on the right.

It must be stressed that while historically it has been the right that has escalated conflict between liberal states, left-wing parties favored conciliation not because they were left-wing, but because they were liberal. The Fabians, Robert Blatchford and even Alfred Milner favored more redistributive social policies than did most pro-Boers. It was the Gladstonians' moralism and cosmopolitanism that made them support war against Turkey and oppose it in South Africa. Some liberals see *laissez-faire* policies as the way to maximize individual autonomy; others favor aggressive government intervention. *Laissez-faire* liberals can be as cosmopolitan in sympathies as any socialist (e.g., Weede 1999).

Over the last century, however, nationalism has generally found its home on the right.⁹ While neoconservatives in the Bush administration used liberal-humanitarian rhetoric (Ullrich 2003, 56), overall the administration has been both conservative and nationalist. It is thus ironic that it embraced the democratic peace finding to justify its war in the Middle East: Over the past century, Bush's ideological counterparts have caused the major exceptions to the theory. The spread of embedded liberalism and social democracy, in contrast, may not only have reduced hypernationalism (Van Evera 1993), but in so doing consolidated peace among liberal states. As the experience of postwar Europe suggests, the strongest liberal peace may be a social-democratic one.

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⁹ Hampton (2001, 196) maintains, however, that in Britain "if the political right succeeded in the late Victorian years in monopolizing the discourse of patriotism, by the end of the Boer War this concept was once again a widely contested one. Among the war's other effects, it destroyed the automatic association of patriotism with imperial expansionism."

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