

Burn What You Worshipped

“Partial firing continued until 4:30, when a victory having been reported to the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Nelson, KB and commander in chief, he then died of his wound.”

So reads the simple entry in the log of HMS Victory for Oct. 21, 1805, the day of Trafalgar, one of the greatest sea battles of history, in which Admiral Horatio Nelson, architect of the Royal Navy victory over the French and Spanish fleets, lost his life.

On this month’s 200th anniversary of that battle that ended Napoleon’s threat of invasion, a battle is being fought over London’s Trafalgar Square, where a 185-foot victory column stands, atop which is a statue of the great Sea Lord who had led British fleets to triumph at Copenhagen and the Battle of the Nile.

London Mayor Ken Livingstone, dubbed “Red Ken” by the press for his hard-left views, wants to plant, in the heart of Trafalgar Square, a 9-foot statue of another Nelson—Nelson Mandela.

The Westminster Council vehemently objects. They say the Mandela statue, which shows him in a loose-fitting shirt, hands uplifted as though in animated conversation, should be placed in front of the South African embassy.

Paul Drury, a consultant for the conservation group English Heritage, argues that putting an “informal, small-scale statue” of Mandela alongside the warrior heroes whose statues now stand there “would be a major and awkward change in the narrative of the square.”

To which Livingstone snaps, “I have not a clue who two of the generals there are or what they did.”

Those two generals are Sir Charles James Napier and Sir Henry Havelock. Napier besieged and captured Sindh,

sending back the famous one-word Latin message: *Peccavi*. “I have sinned.” Havelock led the suppression of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Both military heroes helped secure the crown jewel of the British Empire for the future empress of India, Victoria.

One imagines Red Ken knows exactly who they are and what they did, and this is why he wants them out of Trafalgar Square—and his hero Mandela, the former ANC train-bomber who spent 27 years in prison and emerged to become president of South Africa, in.

Red Ken is not an empire man. But Trafalgar Square is the grand plaza that honors British military heroes. And as Mandela is neither British nor a military hero, what would he be doing in Trafalgar Square? His statue no more belongs there than on the Washington Mall.

But Livingstone and Rev. Jesse Jackson, who has entered the fray in support of the Mandela statue, “to bring this internationally important public space into the 21st century,” are after other game.

That is to rub the noses of the British in the reality that their empire is dead and gone and the heroes they were raised to revere are to be displaced by the gods of globalism. Hereafter, instead of statues of European conquerors gracing the capitals of the Asian and African colonies they subdued, the statues of Third World rulers will rise in the capitals of the old mother countries.

“Burn what you worshipped, worship what you burned!” Clovis was told by the bishop as he led his armies to be baptized,

when pagan Europe converted to Christianity. That is what this is all about—the transition to a new dispensation.

“[I]t is what he represents they don’t want to see depicted,” says Livingstone, “because in that square, one Nelson signifies the birth of the British Empire and 100 years of global dominance. ... Nelson Mandela would signify the peaceful transition to a multiracial and multicultural world, and I would be proud to have that in London.”

But whose square is it, anyway? Red Ken’s or the people’s square? Whom do the British people wish to honor?

Who we honor tells us who we are. The Battle of Trafalgar Square is a battle Red Ken instinctively understands, but many of his countrymen do not. For it is about what Thomas Sowell calls “visions in conflict.”

Red Ken wants Mandela’s statue to celebrate the end of an era and coming of a new world where London is no longer the capital of a mighty empire upon which the sun never sets but rather has become a polyglot cosmopolitan city where everyone’s heroes can be equally honored and any idea that the British are or were a superior people, culture, or civilization has become repellent.

In this new age, the West’s assigned role is to repent endlessly of its shameful centuries of racism, imperialism, and colonialism.

“If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever,” O’Brien told Winston in 1984. In the hard Left’s picture of the future, Western man endlessly does penance and pays tribute for the sins of his fathers. That is what Nelson v. Nelson in Trafalgar Square is all about. ■

[happy third]

Superpower Showdown

America needs a new strategy for dealing with China, a country we can't contain and can't afford to fight

By James P. Pinkerton

THE HISTORY of the United States is the history of confrontation, even conflict, with the other great powers of the earth.

At the dawn of the 19th century, the young Republic found itself confronted with the two great powers of that world, Britain and France. We fought them both. Everyone knows about the War of 1812, but perhaps we've forgotten the quasi-war with France from 1798 to 1800; during those years the U.S. Navy seized some 80 French vessels.

By the beginning of the 20th century, America had made its peace with Britain and France—although many in London, as late as the 1860s, would have been delighted to see Washington lose the Civil War—but the U.S. soon found itself in wars hot and cold, against Germany, then Japan, then Russia.

Now, in the 21st century, the looming great powers are China and India. So if history is our guide—and it should be—we can expect forthcoming collisions with those countries as well. Of course, most Americans today are preoccupied with the Muslim Middle East, but our fight with Islam does not alter the challenges posed by the “twin pillars” of Asia—nations that might well possess economic outputs equivalent or even superior to the U.S. by mid-century. Yet at the same time, those two pillars will no doubt contend with each other, as

well as with secondary nuclear powers such as Pakistan.

So America's grand strategy for the next century should be twofold. First, we must recognize that rising powers inherently bring rising threats. Second, such rising powers should be balanced, played off each other, and not directly confronted. Why? Because the cost of American participation in nuclear-era world war, for any reason less than national survival, is simply too great. America would be wise to accept a reduced role in Asia in exchange for a reduced responsibility for participating in the inevitable future regional conflicts.

We should remember the Latin term *tertium gaudens*—the happy third. That is, there's no law saying we have to be in the middle of every fight; it's better sometimes to hold the coats of those who do. Yet our current policy presumes that we should be involved in all potential combats—although, for America's national interest, a better Asia would be one in which China, India, Japan, and possibly another “tiger” or two contend with each other for power while we enjoy the happy luxury of third-party by-standing.

Today, U.S. policy has put the nation in perilously close proximity to two separate flashpoints with China: North Korea and Taiwan. And China is surely

the angriest rising power in Asia today; Americans should understand that if we want a war with the People's Republic, Beijing will happily give us one. Yet if we continue to drain away resources fighting in the Middle East—thus revealing our overall weaknesses, as well as our military tactics—it is no sure bet that we will win. For all the errors China has made, it wouldn't have earned its status as the oldest continuous civilization on earth unless it had been able to learn from its mistakes.

The U.S., by contrast, acts more like a teenager, convinced of its own immortality—although in this particular instance, the older China is not necessarily wiser. Yes, the Chinese are proud of their ancient and patient civilization; yet at the same time, most observers agree that they burn with resentment over the colonial exploitation they suffered during their long half-millennium slide that began in the 15th century, a slide that reversed itself only in the last three decades. And the U.S.—as the leader against North Korean nukes, as the chief defender of Taiwan, as Japan's best friend in Asia—has now assumed the role of “heavy” in the minds of the Chinese, a role held formerly by the British and other colonizers.

Meanwhile, it's understandable that Americans, sitting on top of the world