

The First World War, Cecile Rhodes and “Conspiracy Facts”

By [David William Pear](#)

Global Research, May 26, 2021

Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the “Translate Website” drop down menu on the top banner of our home page (Desktop version).

Visit and follow us on Instagram at [@crg_globalresearch](#).

“History is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books—books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, ‘What is history, but a fable agreed upon?’”—Professor Robert Langdon

The Decline of an Empire

Why did World War One happen? The conventional fable agreed upon begins on June 28, 1914 with the assassination of Austria’s Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo. The aftermath of the assassination spiraled out of control. It was like an unstoppable train speeding down the tracks. Suddenly all of the Western powers were at war. When the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918 forty million people lay dead. Exactly five years to the day after the assassination of the Archduke, the Treaty of Versailles was signed. Germany alone accepts all the guilt for the war. The end.

Well, it was not “The End”. The outcome of The First World War led to World War Two. The outcome of WW2 led to the Cold War. “Winning” the Cold War created the mujahideen; rebranded as Al Qaeda it led to the Global War On Terror, and never-ending wars.

In the 21st century the U.S. and its allies squandered their blood and treasure on never-ending criminal wars. Millions of people the U.S. slaughtered in West Asia are dismissed as “collateral damage”. Meanwhile, China has been using its resources for development, and lifting millions of people out of poverty.

The U.S. Empire has been in a long decline for decades. More Americans are falling into poverty, and the U.S. has been steadily falling in the United Nations [Index of Human Development](#). It currently ranks number 28th among developed countries. The index is a measure of infant mortality, healthcare, life expectancy, education, and per capita income. The U.S. [infrastructure](#), such as road, rail and airports, public utilities, and the internet are behind other developed countries, too.

China’s economy is expected to surpass the U.S. in [2028](#). Russia has also revitalized its

economy in the last 20 years. Every advance that China and Russia make is propagandized by the U.S. as “aggression”.

Instead of competing peacefully with China and Russia, the U.S. has engaged in a New Cold War. Each passing year the world grows closer to a Hot War. The [Doomsday Clock](#) of nuclear annihilations was at 14 minutes to midnight at the end of the Cold War. It is now at 100 seconds to Armageddon. That is the closest it has ever been. There is no effort in the U.S. to turn back the clock.

August 2014 was the centennial of The First World War. The year was a grim reminder, which momentarily gave people pause, and a slew of articles resulted. For instance, Graham Allison wrote an article that appeared in The Atlantic: [Just How Likely Is Another World War?](#) . Allison assessed the similarities and differences between 1914 and 2014. His conclusion was:

“For the ‘complacent’ who live in what Gore Vidal labeled the ‘United States of Amnesia’, the similarities should serve as a vivid reminder that many of the reasons currently given for discounting threats of war did not prevent World War I.”

Then Allison optimistically concluded that another world war is, “unlikely if statesmen in both the U.S. and China reflect on what happened a century ago.” Does anybody see “wise statesmen” reflecting, or see much concern in the United States of Amnesia? [The blindness, entrenched mediocrity and exceptionalist values of the US ruling cliques constitute also a central point of alarm in Russian geostrategic analyst Andrei Martyanov’s indispensable book trilogy on US decline.—Ed)

There is no viable anti-war liberal class in the U.S. demanding dialogue, diplomacy and compromise among nations. The U.S. has exited treaties, which were designed to prevent catastrophic wars. The U.S. has criminally abandoned international law and the United Nations Charter. Instead the U.S. has come up with its own “[rules-based international order](#)”. International law is based on treaties among nations. The “rules” are diktats made in Washington and Brussels, imposed on the rest of the world by U.S. militarism.

In the unipolar world after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. did as it pleased. It ruled the air, land and seas. With the rise of China and Russia the U.S. does not compete peacefully, nor does it show any desire to. Diplomacy, negotiation and compromise are dirty words to U.S. warmongers, of which there are many.

International capitalism is not based on peaceful competition. Instead it is based on military power, financial blockades, blackmail, and might makes right. International capitalism is a system of imperialism, monopoly, and war. When an empire is challenged, it lashes out. Empires try to destroy their competitors. Empires project their own lust for power and world domination onto all competitors.

In the early 20th century the sun never set on the British Empire. Metaphorically, the sun started to set with the rise of Germany. The British saw a rising Germany as a threat to its goal of world domination.

The following essay summarizes how the British Empire set out to destroy Germany in 1902. It led to The Great War. The similarities of that era are frighteningly similar to the U.S. paranoia and hostility to a rising China and Russia today.

Cecil Rhodes, Alfred Milner and The Society of the Elect

The authors of *The Hidden History, The Secret Origins of the First World War* claim that it was Great Britain that started World War One, and not Germany. It is a convincing story. The authors George Docherty and James MacGregor call their book a conspiracy fact.

The story begins in the late 1800s. The British Empire (aware that control of world trade was essential for supremacy) ruled the seas. In 1870 a young [Cecil John Rhodes](#) migrated to a British colony in southern Africa. After failing at farming he set out in pursuit of diamonds, which had been discovered in a region, which was later named [Rhodesia](#). With the financial backing of Nathan Mayer Rothschild, the young Rhodes monopolized the diamond trade. He became fantastically wealthy and founded the De Beers diamond company.

In 1895 gold was discovered in the [Transvaal Republic](#) controlled by Dutch settlers, known as Boers. Rhodes teamed up with [Sir Alfred Milner](#), who was the British commissioner for Southern Africa. Together with a small group of wealthy Britons they instigated the [Boer War](#) in order to grab the gold for themselves.

Rhodes and Milner went on to form a secret society. As [Rhodes had written](#) earlier:

"Why should we not form a secret society with but one object the furtherance of the British Empire, and the bringing of the whole uncivilised world under British rule, for the recovery of the United States, for the making of the Anglo-Saxon race but one Empire."

Rhodes' ambition was to control all of the world's wealth, for the benefit of the British Empire. He believed in the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race, and he believed that the British Empire should rule the world. After Rhodes' early death in 1902, Alfred Milner became the leader of the secret society. Milner was so admired by Rhodes that he is quoted as having said:

"If Milner says peace, I say peace. If Milner says war, I say war. Whatever Milner says, I say ditto."

Conspiracy Facts

The authors of the "Hidden History" uncovered many World War 1 documents, which lay the blame for WW1 on Rhodes's secret society. Authors George Docherty and James MacGregor built on the work of Georgetown University Professor Carroll Quigley's book [The Anglo-American Establishment](#). Quigley wrote:

"One wintery afternoon in February 1891, three men were engaged in an earnest conversation in London. From that conversation were to flow consequences of the greatest import to the British Empire and the world as a whole. For these men were organizing a secret society that was, for more than fifty years, to be one of the most important forces in the formulation of British imperialism and foreign policy."

"The three men thus engaged were already well known in England. The leader was Cecil Rhodes, fabulously wealth empire builder and the most important person in South Africa. The second was William T. Stead, the most famous, and probably the most sensational, journalist of the day. The third was Reginald Baliol Brett, later known as Lord Esher, friend and confidant to Queen Victoria, and later to be the most influential advisor to King Edward VII, and King George V."

The Boer War was a long and costly war for Britain. It marked the beginning of the decline of the British Empire. Rhodes established his secret society of elites to reverse the decline. He named it [The Society of the Elect](#).

By the turn of the 20th century, Germany was a rising power. It was outpacing Great Britain in industry, finance, science, technology, commerce and culture. Germany was acquiring colonies and expanding its navy. The Society of the Elect viewed every German advancement as an act of aggression. They conspired to start a war that would crush Germany, so that the British Empire would remain supreme.

Circles Within Circles

The Society of the Elect was organized with circles within circles. The inner circle was Cecil Rhodes, Alfred Milner, W. T. Stead, The Viscount Esher, the Marquess Salisbury, Lord Rosebery, and Nathaniel "Natty" Rothschild. King Edward VII was a central member, and after his death in 1910, King George V was too. According to "Hidden History":

"Stead was there to influence public opinion, and Esher acted as the voice of the King. Salisbury and Rosebery provided the political networks, while Rothschild represented the international money power. Milner was the master manipulator, the iron-willed, assertive intellectual who offered that one essential factor: strong leadership."

The Society of the Elect had an outer circle, which they named the "Association of Helpers". The Helpers were like-minded elites from the ruling class. They were royalty, imperialists, financiers, greedy profiteers, war mongers, and egotistical and corrupt politicians. The Helpers were willingly manipulated, often unknowingly, by the inner circle.

Some recruits to the Helpers were Jan Christian Smuts, Arthur Balfour, Edward Grey, Richard Haldane, H. H. Asquith, Lord Roberts, David Lloyd George, Sir Edward Carson, Frederick Sleigh Roberts, Alfred Harmsworth, and Winston Churchill.

During WW1 Churchill was among the most ruthless imperialists and warmongers. He is quoted as having said:

"I think a curse should rest on me, because I love this war. I know it's smashing and shattering the lives of thousands every moment - and yet I can't help it - I enjoy every second of it."

The Propaganda Machine

The Boer War was an important prelude to World War 1. It started off badly in 1899. It was unpopular at home, and a drain on the British Empire. In 1902 it ended badly too, with the ethnic cleansing and genocide of Boers.

Tens-of-thousands of men, women and children died of disease and starvation in [British concentration camps](#). This would prove to be an important event in the early development of propaganda.

It was the British who began perfecting propaganda to promote the Boer War and to cover up its ugly aftermath. Newspapers had become an affordable mass medium of influence. The Society of the Elect had Helpers who owned the newspapers and published war

propaganda eagerly. Rhodes had written of his planned secret society that it “*should inspire and even own portions of the press for the press rules the mind of the people*”.

Winston Churchill was a self-promoting war correspondent sent to South Africa during the Boer War. He returned home as a self-aggrandizing hero. His wild story of being captured by the Boers, and his harrowing escape made him a national celebrity. In 1900 he was elected to Parliament, and remained there until his death in 1964.

Even as a declining empire, the British navy was supreme in the early 20th century. The British naval policy was to keep its navy as large as the next two naval powers combined. When Kaiser Wilhelm II started expanding Germany’s navy the British propaganda called it “German aggression” and interfering with “freedom of the seas”. Haven’t we heard similar cries of alarm in recent times?



Like many contemporary cartoons and posters, the plucky Boers were depicted as the underdogs taking on the overwhelming might of the British Empire, the undisputed superpower of the era. Here the cartoon depicts them as the diminutive Lilliputians from Gulliver’s Travels. As in the classic book, they have subdued and tied up the giant Gulliver. ([Boer War Archive](#))

Yet, [Kaiser Wilhelm’s policy](#) was to keep his navy at less than two-thirds the size of the British navy. The German threat to the British Empire was invented propaganda, and the hype of a German invasion was ludicrous propaganda to frighten the public.

The Triple Entente

The Society of the Elect made ententes with France and Russia for a war on Germany. The alliances were secret, unknown to the public, Parliament and most of the Cabinet.

The British had secret military “[non-binding military staff conversations](#)” with Belgium going back to 1906. In 1911 Belgium [collaborated](#) with France and Great Britain on how to defend Belgium’s “neutrality” from a German invasion. Both offensive and defensive alliances are a violation of [neutrality](#).

Belgium had instituted [military conscription](#) in 1913, and began making plans for a war with Germany. As “Hidden History” reports:

“Documents found in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Brussels shortly after the war began proved Anglo-Belgian collusion at the highest levels, including the direct involvement of the Belgian foreign secretary, had been going on for years.”

The Society of the Elect needed ententes with France and Russia because of their large land armies and strategic locations. The Society secretly promised Russia the prize of Constantinople and the Dardanelles, after the planned breakup of the Ottoman Empire. Russia had long-coveted a warm-water port. The Society promised France the return of Alsace-Lorraine, which the French had lost to Germany in 1871. The secret triple entente planned to divvy up German overseas colonies among themselves.

Germany knew that it had two hostile empires on its borders. The German army was confident that it could defend against either one. But a simultaneous invasion by both Russia and France could be fatal. A large and speedy German army was maintained for defense. Military thinking at the time was that the [best defense](#) is a speedy offense.

In 1905 General Count van Schlieffen presented a defensive plan. It became known as the Schlieffen Plan. If both Russia and France attacked, then the German army would go through Belgium to attack the French from behind their lines. After the German army quickly defeated France, the plan was to rush to the eastern front to defend against the slower moving Russians. Time was of the essence. One day’s delay could result in disaster.

From military intelligence and leaked information, the Society of the Elect learned of the Schlieffen plan. In 1904 a spy in the German army known only as [Le vengeur](#) (The Avenger) sold the entire Schlieffen plan to the French. [Also](#) a general on the German staff was the brother-in-law of the King of Belgium, and could have revealed the Schlieffen Plan. The Society of the Elect used the Schlieffen Plan to set a trap. They had to make it appear that Germany was the aggressor. Otherwise, the British Parliament and the public would not support a war in Europe.

Again, according to “Hidden History”, Belgian neutrality was a sham:

“Belgium was involved in secret military plans for a possible war of aggression against an unsuspecting Germany but almost a decade later would be presented as the innocent victim of German aggression.”

The Kaiser knew that the Schlieffen plan would likely fail if the British declared war too. The British could send its army across the English Channel to slow the German army in France, while Russia invaded from the east. The British navy could attack and blockade Germany from the North Sea, and it could protect France’s coast. The French navy could then be dispersed to the Mediterranean to deal with the German navy based in Pula, Austria on the Adriatic Sea.

Mobilization is an Act of War

It was understood in 1914 that the mobilization of an army was a de facto declaration of war. If Russia and France mobilized their armies, then Germany was confronted with a fatal disaster, unless they moved quickly. When Germany invaded Belgium, the Society of the Elect got their excuse to go to war. The trap was sprung.

Here is what the “Hidden History” says about mobilization:

“The Franco-Russian Military Convention [of 1892] was very specific in declaring that the first to mobilise must be held the aggressor, and that general mobilization ‘is war’”.

The “Hidden History” documents the sequence of events that occurred after the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand.

The Balkans had been a [hotbed](#) of conflict for years. Serbia was aggressively seeking a “Greater Serbia” of Slavic people. Nationalism was running high, and there was deep hostility towards Austria, because of its [1908 annexation](#) of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Ottoman Empire.

Serbia reacted with jubilation at the assassination of the Archduke in Sarajevo. Austria was outraged at the assassination of their future king. According to “Hidden History”, Austria had solid evidence that Serbia was behind the assassination. Austria then spent three weeks contemplating a response. On July 23rd Austria sent Serbia a list of 10 demands, and gave them 48 hours to reply.

On July 25th Serbia’s answer was to mobilize its army, which was a *de facto* act of war. Later the same day Austria began mobilizing. On July 28th Austria declared war on Serbia, and on July 29th Austria bombarded Belgrade. On July 30th Kaiser Wilhelm still hoped to placate Austria and Serbia.

According to “Hidden History”, the Kaiser did not give Austria a “blank cheque” of military support, as stated in so many history books:

“It is claimed that, in a deliberate attempt to force a war on Europe, the Kaiser gave an unconditional assurance to Austria by a so-called blank cheque. In fact, Austria-Hungary’s need to respond to Serbian aggression was endorsed by others including Britain and the British press. The Kaiser and his advisors supported a local solution to a local problem and made absolutely no special preparation for war.”

As “Hidden History” says, Germany showed no intention of attacking Russia. Nor did Russia have any obligation to defend Serbia militarily. So, the fable that the assassination of the Archduke triggered a chain reaction of opposing alliances is just that, a fable.

The only “blank cheque” to go to war was the secret entente between Britain, France and Russia. On July 24th the Russians and the French secretly agreed to mobilize their armies. The British soon followed.



German trench, 1916. Some get a rest while others stand guard.

Winston Churchill was the First Lord of the Admiralty, and on July 29th he ordered the British navy to its war station in the North Sea. This put the British navy in position to attack and blockade Germany. Society of the Elect member [Richard Haldane](#) gave the order to mobilize the British army. The Society of the Elect took Great Britain to war even before the parliament authorized it.

On July 26th Russia began mobilizing. Russia was mobilized by July 30th. The Kaiser sent a telegram to his cousin Czar Nicholas asking him to halt mobilization. The Kaiser waited in vain for 24 hours for an answer. Then Kaiser Wilhelm had his ambassador in St. Petersburg ask Russia's minister of foreign affairs to halt Russia's mobilization. On August 1st the Russian minister said that the Russian mobilization would continue. Later that day Germany declared war on Russia.

Kaiser Wilhelm II Tried to Avoid War

According to "Hidden History", Kaiser Wilhelm II did everything he could to avoid war. The Kaiser did not threaten to attack or declare war on France. He repeatedly asked his British cousin King George V if he could guarantee French neutrality. He pledged that if France would remain neutral, then Germany would not attack it.

King George V never gave a straight answer. Instead he deceived his cousin, telling him that Britain would stay out of a "ruinous" war. It was a stall for time that Germany did not have. Belgium began mobilizing on July 31st. When the Kaiser could wait no longer he mobilized the German army on August 1, 1914. Germany was the last country to mobilize.

On August 1st the German ambassador to London, Prince Karl Max Lichnowsky, met with [Sir Edward Grey](#). While speaking with Lichnowsky, Grey allegedly offered that if Germany

pledged not to attack France, then England would remain neutral and guarantee France's "passivity". Kaiser Wilhelm II accepted immediately; only to be told later by King George that "there must be some misunderstanding". Lichnowsky then advised that if Great Britain would remain neutral, Germany would respect Belgium neutrality. Sir Edward Grey replied that he could not give this assurance since "[England must have its hands free](#)". It had all been a stall for time, which Germany did not have.

Babies On Bayonets

On August 2nd the Kaiser asked Belgium for "[permission](#)" to pass his army through. On August 3rd Belgium declined, and Germany declared war on France. On August 4th Germany invaded Belgium. The Germans were met with stiff resistance from Belgium's 234,000-man army.



The British propaganda machine went to work. They feigned outrage at the violation of Belgium neutrality. There were horrifying stories in the press about German atrocities, executions, rapes, and "babies on bayonets". The British propaganda machine called it "The Rape of Belgium".

The British dredged up the 1839 Treaty of London. It supposedly obligated the British to defend Belgium's neutrality. To "protect" Belgium, the British sent an expeditionary force to France on August 9th, as was secretly planned since 1906 and 1911 with French and Belgium military planners.

The public was told that defending Belgium was a matter of honor for the British. The

propaganda was that there would be a domino effect if the British Empire failed to act. Supposedly, Germany would conquer all of Europe; even the world. None of it was true, and Belgium neutrality was a sham.

On August 4th King George declared war on Germany. The British parliament did not vote on the war until August 6th, and then it was to fund the war. The Society of the Elect got their war. Instead of reversing the decline of the British Empire though, the Great War accelerated it. The British came out of the war exhausted and deeply in debt to the U.S. They would have to cut spending, and reduce the size of their navy. The British Empire would never rule the seas again.

The U.S. is Now Facing its “World War 1” Moment

So, why did the First World War happen? The authors of *The Hidden History, The Secret Origins of the First World War* say that based on documentary evidence, a small group of wealthy British elites took the world to war to preserve the supremacy of the British Empire. It was a war the Society of the Elect chose.

As Edward Bernays said:

“There are invisible rulers who control the destinies of millions. It is not generally realized to what extent the words and actions of our most influential public men are dictated by shrewd persons operating behind the scenes.”

Bernays was the “father of propaganda”, a dishonor usually reserved for Joseph Goebbels. During the First World War Bernays was developing war propaganda for the Allies. It was the British and the U.S. that began perfecting war propaganda.

It takes war propaganda to stampede the public to war. Propaganda is how the British got the public to support the Boer War in 1899. Having used propaganda successfully for that war, they began using propaganda in the early 1900s to prime the British people for a war with Germany. Fear is the most effective weapon of war propaganda.

As [Henry Kissinger](#) infamously said in 2002:

“The one thing every man fears is the unknown. When presented with this scenario, individual rights will be willingly relinquished for the guarantee of their well-being.”

And as H. L. Mencken said of democracy:

“The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by an endless series of hobgoblins, most of them imaginary.”

The U.S. is now facing its “World War 1” moment. For several decades the public has been feed constant fear mongering towards Iran, Russia and China. The public is easily frightened into giving up their liberties for the promise of protection from “hobgoblins”. Those who profit from war are not the ones who fight and die in them. With every new hobgoblin the war profiteers invent they line their pockets with money and feed their insatiable ego with power.

Another world war could come at any time. The weapons of mass destruction are locked, loaded and ready to go in a matter of seconds. The next world war will be The Last World War.

*

Note to readers: Please click the share buttons above or below. Follow us on Instagram, @crg_globalresearch. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

This article was originally published on [The Greenville Post](#).

David William Pear is a journalist, columnist, editor, and commentator. His articles, essays and interviews have an emphasis on U.S. foreign policy, history, and economic and social issues. He is an advocate for peace, ending US wars of aggression, and promoting economic, political and social justice. An Associate Editor with The Greenville Post, he has been writing also for The Real News Network, OpEdNews, American Herald Tribune, and other publications since 2009. He is a member of Veterans for Peace, Saint Pete (Florida) for Peace, CodePink and the Palestinian-led non-violent organization International Solidarity Movement.

All images in this article are taken from The Greenville Post

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [David William Pear](#), Global Research, 2021

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [David William Pear](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca