

MILESTONES



1999

Don Pearce

MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM

***A Review of the
World Events of
1999 in the Light
of Bible Prophecy***

Don Pearce

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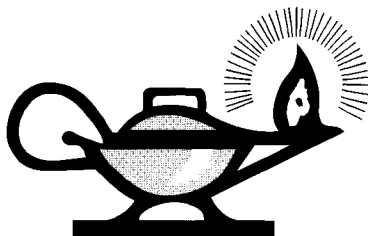
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Preface

To reach the year 2000 is a milestone indeed.

We have all felt a certain awe in drawing near to this date; a new year, a new century, a new Millennium, all in one! The great cities of the world have vied to outperform each other, from Washington to Sydney, London to Auckland, with vast firework displays exciting their fascinated public.

But 2000 years from what? So greatly has the mind of modern man degenerated that many have not perceived that they are celebrating the two thousandth anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem of Judah! There would be no 2000 year celebrations unless the Son of God had been born 2000 years ago. He is the point of reference, the dividing line that cuts across the road of history. The previous years were 'BC', before Christ, and those that came after were known as 'AD', the year of our Lord. Christ then is the fulcrum of history. Yet these most brilliant recent celebrations have not even mentioned his name.

Of course, we do not know the exact year in which Jesus was born. There is a reasonable number of historians who believe that Christ's birth was really in 4 BC. Yet to the saints, it is not the day or the hour that really matters, nor the year, but whether we are prepared for the Lord's arrival. We are certain that the world scene is rapidly developing to precisely the picture portrayed by the prophets, and known to us as a community for 150 years.

Milestones 1999 sets out a banquet of exciting morsels, providing comprehensive evidence that the angels are at work in all the main theatres of prophetic utterance.

The first eight chapters focus upon Europe, particularly the Papacy. Our expectation is that in the day of Christ's coming, in the day of Rome's judgement (Rev 17:1, 14), the Papacy would be riding the nations of Europe in full confidence of an expanding future role. "*I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow*" is the description (Rev 18:7).

In 2000, Italy is expecting over 70 million visitors. Virtually all of them will go to Rome and the vast majority will pass through the Vatican. More than any other city in the world, Rome will be in the spotlight of universal interest. She boasts that she is the custodian of the Christian movement; and if year 2000 celebrates the birth of Christ, then the Pope as his representative on earth is the master of ceremonies in this year of continuous celebration. Despite his 79 years, he has drawn up a program for the entire twelve months that features an amazing array of ambitious activities, all of which will be carried off with the usual Papal pomp to dazzle the eyes of an ignorant world.

The city of Rome is being spruced up to complement the Papal program. Throughout the last two years, there have been thousands of workers restoring significant churches and other prominent buildings. Seventy

percent of the world's best art treasures are said to be in Italy, many of which are undergoing careful treatment to return them to pristine condition. Significantly, the arch of Constantine is undergoing meticulous restoration after centuries of neglect. So also is the arch of Titus, who destroyed Judah and Jerusalem in AD70 and brought the seven-branched lampstand to Rome. Modern Rome is proud of her heathen and apostate emperors!

Even more amazing, is the opening of a new arched doorway in St Peter's Cathedral leading from the porch into the main body of the church. This immense building, without peer in the world for size and splendour, was built upon money extracted in the 16th Century from the German provinces for the sale of indulgences. For a specific sin, a prescribed indulgence could be paid; depending upon the personal wealth of the donor, absolute pardon could even be granted and the gates of heaven opened for immediate passage, bypassing the horrors of purgatory. This year visitors passing through the new, special archway will receive 'plenary indulgence', a special grant of heaven to celebrate the Holy Year 2000. This is the same evil institution that dominated the Medieval era and now boasts a new lease of power and prominence, just as the Revelation given by Christ prescribed. So the reader of *Milestones* will be intrigued to read all the details of Papal politics during 1999.

How much of this will Britain take? Once the proud bastion of protest, she sinks from this each year into the mire of Papal intrigue and European socialism. Brother Pearce provides evidence that the trend may be turning at last. Britain hesitated to adopt the Euro currency and now it is becoming obvious that the designers of currency unity had far more political unity in mind than Briton's envisaged.

Israel has forsaken God and now finds herself in desperate need to negotiate the lands once promised to her fathers. Hebron, where her fathers await the resurrection, is now lost, and more of Judea is on the way. Bashan (the Golan Heights) will follow in the negotiations with Syria. Mr Barak is a secular man and thinks only in human terms. Tragically the nation has become like all other nations, except for a virile number of religious Orthodox to whom the vision of Messiah is still a conviction.

We are again very grateful to Brother Pearce for this stimulating edition of *Milestones*. We are an exceedingly blessed people to see these things and know their meaning. Let us make sure that our younger people know them, and understand how they are intimately related to the words of the prophets. Our fathers have known them and remained steadfast through their years in the Truth. May it be that *"the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments"* (Psalm 78:6-7).

B. N. Luke
Secretary

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Abbreviations used

BIPAC	Britain Israel Public Affairs Centre. Sadly the Centre has run out of money and at present it is not available.
CH	Catholic Herald. Weekly. DT Daily Telegraph
EC	The Economist magazine, weekly. News-stand or subscription.
EJ	The European Journal, the journal of the European Foundation. Very valuable euro-sceptical journal. Minimum 10 issues a year. £25 UK. (£12.50 students & OAP's) The European Foundation, 61 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5HZ. Phone 0171 930 7319; Fax 9706
EJID	The fortnightly Intelligence Digest from EJ now available free via Internet, (Request from Euro.Foundation@E-F.org.uk) or £20 by post.
EU	European Union. Was the EEC , then the EC , now the EU
I.D.	Intelligence Digest, Intelligence International Ltd. Excellent background 01452 864764; fax 864848. 46 issues. £134 (but contact <i>Milestones</i> if interested)
IDBR	Intelligence Digest Background Report. As above.
Israel Line	A free e-mail service, giving 2 pages of news about Israel, 5 times a week. To subscribe to Israel Line, use the on-line subscription form at http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/listservform.asp
JP	Jerusalem Post International edition, published weekly.
LOR	L'Osservatore Romano. The official Vatican paper. English weekly edition.
ST	Sunday Telegraph, sister paper to Daily Telegraph.
Time	The Time magazine, published weekly
TR	The Reformer. Published bimonthly. "The Official organ of the Protestant Alliance". A valuable source of information on matters of concern to Protestants. Min. subscription £4. overseas £6. Tel/fax. 01525712348
TS	The Sunday Times. London. Weekly

TT The Times. London. Daily.

News on the internet – an amazing source of information. These are some we've found.

Russia: www.moscowtimes.ru www.russiatoday.com

www.Russia-Orthodox-church.org.ru

www.pravitelstvo.gov.ru Russian Gov. Web site

Israel: www3.haaretz.co.il/eng www.jpost.com For Israel Line see above

Vatican www.cathcom.net portal site for Roman Catholic news

www.TheTablet.co.uk www.vatican.va

World news: www.webwombat.com.au/intercom/newsprsr

[//wire.ap.org](http://wire.ap.org) [no www needed] Associated Press' newswire

www.the-times.co.uk www.washtimes.com www.int.com [Int. Herald Tribune]

news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world [no www.]

[] Author's notes.

\$1 million = £660,000, \$1 billion = £660,000,000 approx. \$ always US\$.

Many of the books referred to are available at special prices from **Milestones** - please ask for book list, address page 2.

Author's notes. I would like to thank my family for their help, also Bro. Alan Clarke for his helpful advice and comments.

I am grateful for items which readers have sent me. The sources above indicate the publications that I regularly see, so if an interesting item appears in some other magazine please let me see it, ensuring the date and source are indicated. Please let me know if you wish acknowledgement.

Conventional religious terminology is used, occasionally I put them within “ ”. Readers will appreciate my understanding on the falseness of many of these terms. Conventional names are also used to describe parts of Israel – i.e. West Bank.

Sources are given where appropriate. Dates on weekly publications are when they are published —the event could have taken place 7–10 days earlier.

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- “How the world backs Britain”, p. 44 © *Sunday Telegraph*
- The City and International Financial Markets both on p. 43, The King of the North p. 75 *The Bible Magazine, Daniel Billington.*
- *The European* for the map of The Regionalisation on page 47 and of Kosovo on page 50.

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

An outline of the year

1999 has been an eventful year. The euro came to birth—in a blaze of publicity and then slowly sank in value throughout the year, much to the consternation of those who had looked for it to eclipse the pound and challenge the mighty dollar. Coupled with the launch of this currency was a step-up in the drive for political union. Tony Blair's party had supported Britain joining the euro, but with the growing realisation as to just what giving up the £ would entail, public opinion swung away from joining. As the year progressed, Britain found herself thriving in the euro markets—as an outsider.

King Hussein of Jordan died, creating new threats and also opportunities for peace and stability in the Middle East. Israel saw the electing of Ehud Barak, and the peace talks, falteringly, got under way once more. At the year-end the peace talks with Syria recommenced, opening the prospect of peace on all sides for the first time in the State of Israel.

*Russia saw a bewildering succession of Prime Ministers. Mr Primakov had looked so promising from a prophetic viewpoint, but—for the time being at least—his work has finished. The latest appointee, Mr Putin, was a man about whom there was little information. The headline in late November in the *Intelligence Digest* was, however, arresting—**Russia ripe for “Bonepartist” dictatorship**. A check with the encyclopaedia, confirmed that this indeed was a ‘movement based on the principles of Napoleon Bonepart’. A strong leader who tries to lead his country out of difficulties.*

Another aspect that came to the fore this year was the prominent role that Britain was playing in Egypt. Targeted as a prime market for British exporters, trade has risen between the two countries. Put together with Britain's trade with Israel, the Palestinians, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, we see a building up of British—and American—influence in the region. A “King of the South” power.

*Meanwhile in the northern Middle East we see strands of influence growing to produce a “King of the North” power. Russia takes up her old mantle of the arms supplier to the Middle East. Prominent behind it is her desire to break the power—hegemony—of America in the region. She is not alone in this desire. France and to a lesser extent Germany also are actively seeking to lessen the power of America. The Vatican too as a political power, respected by most nations, has been working in this area. In a wonderful way we see the activities of **the dragon, the beast and the false prophet** at work in this region. They are recreating the King of the North power.*

Gathering pace during this past year has been the drive to turn Europe back to its “christian”—catholic—roots. New patron “saints” for Europe have been made to woo east and west together. The bishops of the Roman Church gathered in the Vatican last autumn for “The Synod of Europe”.

With the historic “reconciliation” between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church, Protestantism has virtually disappeared. Meanwhile our community faces fresh assaults on the “Things most surely believed amongst us”. Unscriptural ideas on Bible prophecy by prominent brethren lead the community to look in the wrong direction. The fundamental concept of the “Hope of Israel”—a physical Kingdom to come with the Jews restored to God’s favour and blessing is a picture that we hear about less and less. “Will he find the faith at his coming” was a question that Jesus posed.

Earthquakes, floods and storms struck in many places during 1999—a disastrous year for disasters! And the “experts” say they will only get worse.

Then on the last day of the year our attention swung back to Russia, with Yeltsin’s dramatic resignation! He handed over power to Prime Minister Putin, who became acting President until new elections could be held. This increases the chances of this younger, skilful man being elected. Is this the man to “turn Russia back” in the words of Ez. 38:4? How swiftly—and unexpectedly—things can change! How busy the angel hosts must be, working out God’s unfolding plan.

At the end of the year many were preparing to celebrate a new millennium. Yet the 20th century does not finish until December 2000. And 2000 years from the birth of the Lord Jesus was an unnoticed event some years ago. So the only “Millennium fever” in Milestones is our earnest expectation of the Kingdom to come which will be the Millennial reign of our Lord Jesus.

We shall be looking at developments in the European Beast, the Russian Dragon and the Papal False Prophet and Britain’s struggles with Europe. As the latter-day Tarshish power, we expect her role to be found outside Europe. Indeed her progress, along with America in being a force in the south of the Middle East enables us to discern a “King of the South” power. With mainland Europe striving to replace America’s influence in the Middle East, we can see a coming together of a “King of the North” power. We also look at the growing prosperity in Israel and steps to peace with her neighbours.

These are some of the matters for us to expound in our review of 1999 in relation to our expectations gleaned from the many Bible prophecies concerning these last days. It seems an appropriate way to open our review with a brief summary of the many strands of Bible prophecy. The reader is urged to read a fuller version in The Way to Jerusalem—how will Christ come? and Do you understand the New Covenant? (Obtainable from the distributors of Milestones).

Chapter 2:

WHAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN

Outline of the latter-day prophecies

We live in a unique time period—the ending of the times of the Gentiles, when Gentile domination of God’s people and land will come to an end and Gentile power will be replaced by the reign of the Divinely appointed King. The throne of David that has been empty for millennia is to be re-occupied by *he whose right it is* (Ez. 21:27).

But surely Jesus said that Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles should end? Is not the occupation of Jerusalem by Israel an indication that that time has come? No! The prophets make it clear that there is to be a great testing for Israel. The boot of the conqueror will once more be felt in the streets of Jerusalem, Israel is to be taken one last time into captivity, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. An arranging of the many prophecies that cover this period into a reasonable probability of sequence will help us to discern aright the signs of the times. It helps us, for instance, to put the Middle East peace talks into clearer perspective. The prophets foretell a time of peace and prosperity in the land. This is to be followed by the great invasion, which will cause many in Israel to cry out to God for salvation, and to be heard—and saved—by the dramatic intervention of the returned Lord Jesus and his newly formed bride of immortal followers.

It is not easy to fit all the events into a sequence—there are a huge number of prophecies to be fitted together. Many just add a snippet of information, almost in passing. Ezekiel 38 and 39 seem to form a good foundation for working out a possible order—it is clearly a prophecy appertaining to the time of the end.

And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the **latter days**, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. Ez. 38:16

The sequence given in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 is as follows:

- v8 in the “latter years,” Israel has returned to their long desolate land, dwelling safely,
- v11 dwelling without “bars and gates,”
- v12, 13 rich and prosperous.

While this is the situation in Israel, the power represented by Gog takes advantage of the situation:

- v14 Gog can see they dwell safely
- v10 and thinks an “evil thought”
- v11,12 and determines to conquer and plunder.

And so Gog and his associates come against Israel. The multitudes of peoples are detailed in the opening verses. They are:

- v2 Gog (of) the land of Magog, prince of Rosh (RV etc.), Meshech and Tubal.
- v3 God is against them.
- v4 Gog is to be turned back (about RV, round NKJ) and drawn by God with “hooks” and brought as a great army, well armoured.
- v5 Associated with Persia, Ethiopia and Libya, with their armour, and
- v6 Gomer and company, the house of Togarmah from the north and company, and many others.
- v7 Gog is to have a time of preparation and every one with him, and he acts as a guard to them.
- v8 They come into Israel
- v9,15,16 and cover the land like a storm cloud, with their vast army.
- v13 There is token opposition by Sheba, Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish “with all the young lions.”
- v19-23 God, in His fury, pours out His judgements, using the forces of nature including earthquake.
- v23 The nations brought to acknowledge Israel’s God.

Ezekiel chapter 39 then gives the detail of the destruction and burying of this immense multitude in Israel’s land. The chapter ends with the nations acknowledging God’s work in Israel, that Israel has been punished for their wrong doing, but now the time to restore and bless has come. They are His people for all to see.

This restoration of Israel is a matter that concerned the disciples at the time of Christ’s ascension (Acts 1:6,7) and formed the backbone of the apostles preaching—the Hope of Israel. They had many Old Testament passages to support this teaching. Ezekiel 34 – 36 are typical and repay our careful study. Israel will enter the New Covenant as Jeremiah describes in chapter 31. They then dwell at peace in the Land with Jesus sitting on David’s throne in fulfilment of the promises to Abraham and David.

Within the Ezekiel framework we can slot in so many other prophecies which speak of these same events but sometimes deal with a different aspect.

Daniel 11 indicates that some nations escape this invading army—Moab, Edom and Ammon—whereas Egypt does not. (v41-42). This invading power—described here as “the King of the North” establishes his throne in Jerusalem for a period, but then comes to his end. The next chapter makes it clear who is the destroyer of the enemy. Michael—*who is like God*—the great prince. This deliverance of Israel is linked to the time of resurrection and judgement.

Zechariah 12 makes it clear that Jerusalem is the centre of attention—a burdensome stone (v2,3). Israel is saved; the nations are destroyed (v9).

And verse 10 reveals that the saviour is none other than the once crucified Son of God. This causes the Jews in the land to repent and mourn.

Zechariah 13 then describes the washing away of Israel's sin, as they are baptised into Christ, as they enter the New Covenant. The end of this chapter goes back slightly in the sequence to show that the dreadful coming destruction at the hands of their enemies is a process of refining which, when they cry out to God for help, will be answered by their salvation.

Zechariah 14 shows the awful nature of the treatment at the enemies hands. After what we have witnessed in Bosnia, Timor, Rwanda, Kosovo, and now Chechnya, we can see that the prophet is not exaggerating. Man's bestiality hasn't altered in these so called enlightened times. This chapter also reveals that the destructive forces of nature, which are used to destroy Gog, are in the hands of the one who stands on the Mount of Olives. That is the Lord Jesus and his disciples—now a multitude of redeemed and immortalised ones. Other prophecies indicate that they have come up from the place of judgement, even Sinai. (Deut 33:1-3; Ps 68:17; Hab 3:3-6).

Joel 2 adds further details. Joel describes the invading army which comes from the North (v20) like a locust swarm, seemingly invincible, of such great numbers that the sun, moon and stars are darkened. (v1-10) In the hour of their triumph over Israel, God destroys them utterly (v20). Israel is saved and blessed (v21-32).

Joel 3 sees these same events from the viewpoint of a threshing of the nations. It is at a time of Israel's return to their land (v1), but they are invaded and many are taken away as slaves (prisoners of war?) northwards via Greece. (v5,6). It is God who draws the re-armed Gentile nations against Israel (v2, 9-10). It is in the land of Israel that they are destroyed, in the valley of threshing (v14). Although Israel's political sun, moon and stars are to be darkened (v15) for a brief period, this shaking of Israel's heaven and earth (v16) results in a new heaven and earth (Is 65:17), *wherein dwelleth righteousness* (2 Pet 3:13).

The Old Testament prophets see this invasion mainly as a coming to take a spoil and prey. There is another aspect to this, which the New Testament makes clear—a religious aspect. Yet even in the Old Testament we see that invasions of Israel had a religious element. They conquered in the name of their gods. They sought to show the superiority of their gods over the God of Israel. Goliath defied the *armies of the living God* (1 Sam 17:10,26,43). The Assyrian and the Babylonian leaders who acted as both kings and priests continued this challenge. Read Rabshakeh's words in Isaiah 36:13-20. Nebuchadnezzar changes the godly names of Daniel and his companions, in his challenge to Israel's God.

Daniel 2 makes it clear that when the Image stands in its completeness for the first and only time, it is a representation of the Kingdom of men in defiance to the God of Israel. It is the God of Daniel who reveals to the king that this power of men is destroyed by the stone power *cut out without*

hands—i.e. of divine origin. Although the place of the destruction is not given here, we know where the little stone power that destroys will have its centre when it fills the earth—Israel. So it is reasonable to see the image as standing up against the land of Israel and the God of Israel. It is clear that in the latter-days when the image stands, it has a golden head. There is a latter day power of Babylon. And just as in Daniel's day it was a political and religious power, so it will be again.

Isaiah 34 confirms the religious nature of this future challenge. He too describes a gathering of all nations into Israel. Their destruction is described in terms of a sacrifice (v6, see also Ez. 39:17-20). Isaiah then declares

For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. v8

The controversy of Zion summaries the contest between the gods of the nations and the God of Israel. In this day—as the prophets so clearly show—the nations will be brought to realise there is a God in Israel.

When we come to the New Testament it is not surprising that this coming invasion of Israel is seen as a religious challenge. Rome, the successor of the Babylonian power had seemingly triumphed over the One True God. They had put His son to death, and trampled upon His city and people. The book of Revelation shows how this pagan power became “christian” and persecuting,

Revelation 16 indicates a latter day picture of a Dragon power, a Beast power and a False Prophet (v13). These *gather the nations to the battle [or war] of that great day of God Almighty* (v14). Before they actually come to fight, the Lord indicates he will return to his household, when their watchfulness will be examined, and unfaithful ones rejected. Clearly this is referring to the time of judgement. **Then** the nations are gathered into the land where Hebrew is spoken, to Armageddon. As this is a symbolic book we see the force of this word from its meaning, rather than a location. *Arma-ged[gai]-don a heap [of sheaves]—in a valley—for judgement*. In other words a direct link back to Joel 3:13,14. Now the book of Revelation does not give much further detail of the destruction of the enemy in the land of Israel. That detail had been given in the Old Testament. What was now revealed was the continuing contest, which would follow until the power of Europe is broken. The great city is divided into three parts. It is reasonable to link that back to the Dragon power, the Beast power and the False Prophet. The latter—the papal power—is to be utterly destroyed. The others, in phrase of Daniel 7:12, have their *dominion taken away*.

Revelation 17-19 describe the resistance of a Roman Catholic dominated Europe, which is eventually destroyed at the hands of the Lord Jesus and his followers (17:14; 18:1-24; 19:11-21).

Chapter 3:

"THE ROMAN EMPIRE MAY BE REBORN"

*This was part of the headline in The Australian Financial Review on 9th December 1999, just prior to the Helsinki Summit. It neatly summarised what Europe has been building up to—a political union. This is no longer a hidden agenda, but is now openly talked about. The many illusions the press and politicians make to the Roman Empire are exciting for Bible watchers. After all is to be a **Roman** beast that will be reshaped into its last phase. The beasts of Revelation have gone through several phases over the centuries. They have their origins in the beasts of Daniel chapter 7. What we are looking for is the final phase of Daniel's fourth dreadful beast, which comes to its end at the hands of God.*

The launch of the euro marked a big step forward towards a united Europe. Indeed, the euro was conceived precisely for that purpose - a fact openly acknowledged in continental Europe, but very much concealed in Britain. France and Germany want to build a European bloc to challenge the might of America and Japan. 1999 saw many declarations that continental Europe, at least, was moving quickly to establish a United States of Europe. Britain as we shall see later has resisted such moves, and at the Helsinki Summit in December she found herself very much isolated.

Let's begin our 4 chapters look at the beast and its rider by looking at the euro and some aspects of last year's progress towards a united Europe.

The euro - "flying like a brick"

With great fanfare the euro was launched on Jan 1st. One euro was worth \$1.17 or just under £0.71 at its launch. This was the wonderful new currency that would put an end to the supremacy of the American dollar!

From its birth, the euro has been viewed by the EU's leading politicians as an icon of the Continent's new found unity and ability to stand up to America. *Time* 13-12-99

It was indeed front-page news. *Le Monde* stated "The euro immediately contests the hegemony of the dollar." Today, according to a French correspondent, news of the euro is mainly to be found hidden on the inside pages of their newspapers. Its steady slide in value has been a source of embarrassment to the politicians. At the end of what the *Daily Telegraph* described as a "miserable year" for the euro, its value was just a shade above parity with the dollar. Its value had fallen almost 15% against the \$ and 13% against the £. Hence the headline **"Red faces all round as Europe's currency flies like a brick."** *Daily Telegraph* 29-11-99

Germany was especially alarmed; had they abandoned a strong mark for a weak euro? **"Bring back the mark' plea"** was the *Daily Telegraph*

headline in July, as Germans struggled to accept the falling value of their savings. When in early December it breached the psychological barrier of parity with the dollar, Britain was made the scapegoat. **"Schröder blames Blair for collapse of euro"** *DT* 4-12-99. He blamed Britain's vetoing of plans for an EU-wide tax on savings for undermining confidence in the euro. He declared his intention to draw closer to France and away from Britain.

Yet for businesses the steady fall in its value over the year has proved a boon and helped kick-start the sluggish European economy. It has made their exports cheaper by some 15%. True it has made imports correspondingly more expensive, but they can live with that. Germany has especially benefited from having cheaper exports—over half her exports go outside the EU. Although unemployment is still very high it has just begun to fall. However, for countries that were booming before joining the euro, such as Ireland, inflationary pressures are building up. Normally a government would raise interest rates to slow things down, but that is not possible within the euro zone. House prices are rocketing in Ireland.

Also, having a common denomination for all prices has highlighted price differences between countries. Prices are being driven down to a common level. Cross-border consolidation of companies has been booming—it is now much easier to compare company results when in a common denomination. Investors too have a much bigger market in which to invest their funds without any worries of exchange rate risks.

So although politically it has not been the success hoped for, yet economically it has suited the continent and is leading to fewer but bigger and more powerful firms—a good basis for a United States of Europe! Interestingly *Time* magazine saw this other side of the uniting power of the euro in its summing up paragraph on the euro.

Economic problems may well lie ahead. EMU's "one size fits all" monetary policy could result in lasting growth divergences within the euro zone, since real interest rates tend to be highest where growth is weakest, and vice versa. But the euro, like the Internet is an agent of radical change. Once unleashed, it sets its own agenda. It will bring Europe's fragmented capital markets together, trigger irreversible industrial consolidation, shake European companies out of a parochial mindset, and install a new readiness to compete with the world's best."

Time 22-11-99

Euroland enlargement

Of the 15 members of the EU, four countries are not in the euro zone—Britain, Denmark, Greece and Sweden. Greece was barred through failing to meet the set criteria. Since then, she has drastically cut inflation and is looking to join by 2001 or 2. Sweden's Prime Minister has ruled out joining for the next two years. Denmark is keen to join. Only in Britain is the opposition to the euro steadily growing, as we shall see in chapter 8.

The Roman Empire may be reborn at Helsinki

The word "historic" is bandied about so much these days that its currency has been long devalued. But tomorrow's summit of European Union leaders in Helsinki may well be able to lay claim to that description if it decides to embrace Muslim Turkey as a candidate for membership of the predominantly Christian European club.

The signs that Turkey will be allowed at least into the waiting room for EU membership - 40 years after it first knocked on Europe's door - have never looked so promising. [She was indeed told that she could join.]

Relations between Turkey and its main adversary, Greece, an EU member with veto rights, have warmed this year in the aftermath of a series of earthquakes.

What's more, EU leaders are already in an expansionary mood. They will almost certainly put their seal of approval to a plan that will double to 12 the number of countries negotiating membership.

It will probably take at least two decades to fully absorb them all—namely the former communist States of Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, plus Malta and Cyprus. But the frontrunners could be ready to join by 2003.

If this so-called "fully flexible, multi-speed, non stop accession process" is eventually completed, the 27-member EU would stretch from the Atlantic coast of Ireland to the Black Sea, and have a population of more than 500 million.

And why stop there? If Turkey does eventually gain membership, the EU will share a border with Syria, Iraq and Iran.

It also raises at least the theoretical prospect of even further-flung nations joining up, such as one time former Soviet republics of Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and, possibly, even Russia.

Certainly, the European Commission appears to aspire to such grandeur.

'For the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire, we are uniting Europe . . . not by force of arms, but on the basis of shared ideals and agreed common rules,' the European Commission president, Romano Prodi, declared in October when he called on EU leaders to speed up the accession process. *The Australian* 9-12-99

A United States of Europe

For the first time since the Roman Empire a large area of the European continent has a single currency. The launch of the euro gave considerable impetus towards the drive to a united Europe. To have pushed for political union, would not have gone down well with the peoples of Europe. The political leaders saw monetary union as an easier option to "sell". And so

they have put the "cart before the horse", but now are pushing for the logical next step—political union.

No sooner had the technicalities of the launch been completed than leader after leader vowed to go even further—forming a full political union "between countries of the euro-zone."

Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, said political union will inevitably follow. "It is now up to us to see that we embark on the next stage leading to political unity, which, I think is the consequence of economic unity, so that Europe can in the future also play a political role on the international stage, leading even as far as a common defence policy." *DT* 1-1-99

Gunther Verheugen, Germany's Foreign Minister, left no doubt that political union was his country's—and Europe's—next target. "Normally, a single currency is the final step in a process of political integration. This time the single currency isn't the final step but the beginning." *DT* 2-1-99

Indeed the new German government has been far more open about pushing for political union as rapidly as possible than was former Chancellor Kohl.

Under the headline **German leaders step up the drive for United States of Europe**, the *Sunday Telegraph* (17-01-99) commented:-

While former Chancellor Kohl made no secret of his dream of a united Europe, his sense of guilt for Germany's past meant that he shied away from throwing the country's weight around. His younger successors are free of the historical baggage and have no such qualms.

As holders of the EU presidency for the next six months, Germany wants to capitalise on the momentum of the euro's birth to set Europe firmly on the road to a federal future. The new administration has also made it clear that it will promote its own national financial interests more stridently than previous governments.

The fall of Jacques Santer and his fellow European Commissioners in March over corruption charges, diverted attention from this aim for a while. Eventually Romano Prodi, an Italian with several scandals to his name, was appointed as the President of the European Commission. He was appointed in April, but it took until July for a new team of Commissioners to be approved. He was no less enthusiastic than his predecessor was, as these headlines from the *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph* show.

Prodi pledges to speed up formation of EU superstate 14-4-99

Prodi lays foundations for 'United States of Europe' 11-7-99

Prodi unveils EU superstate 14-10-99

He has organised the commissioners on the basis of an eventual European State.

Romano Prodi, the European Commission president-elect, is planning the biggest centralisation of power in the history of Brussels politics, laying the foundation for a full-blown federalist super-state.

Having last week named the 19 commissioners who will be in his team, Mr Prodi is to model his administration on a national government, with cabinet style structure and individual accountability. The changes will give the former Italian premier an unprecedented prime ministerial role at the heart of Europe, making Brussels a power to rival London, Paris and Berlin.

Since the European Commission was established in 1967, it has functioned as a college of commissioners who enjoy equal status and whose loyalties have often been divided between Brussels and member states. But Mr Prodi, a convinced federalist, has abandoned the collegiate idea and aims to create a European government—giving himself the right to sack individual commissioners, change their briefs and dictate the Commission's "message". The new-style body is set to become an aggressive promoter of causes such as tax harmonisation and a European army." *ST* 11-7-99

He also now has sole control over the Press and Information Service, appointing a fellow Italian to be its chief, over the heads of more experienced staff.

One of his first acts was to appoint a commission to see what changes were needed to prepare for the enlargement of the EU to embrace other countries. A *Times* editorial had a scathing article about his choice of advisors and the report that they eventually presented.

Prodi revealed—a centraliser more dangerous than Delors

Romano Prodi's aides have advised him to stop referring to the New European Commission which he heads as the "government of Europe"—above all to the English language press. Whether he heeds this counsel or not, a government of Europe is what he wants: the publication yesterday of a report on *The Institutional Implications of Enlargement*, ordered by him, serves to confirm."

Having looked at the bias of the report's 3 authors, and the clever use of appealing words and phrases, the editor declared that "the broad thrust is to centralise more power in Brussels than Jacques Delors ever dreamt of acquiring." It seeks to take away the veto—Britain's "friend" in many battles—to be replaced with majority voting. It also seeks for the Commission to speak for Europe rather than individual countries.

France and Germany are furious that because Britain is not in the EMU, its central bank has a seat at the G7 table, whereas theirs, being now no more than branch banks, do not. This would not only squeeze Britain out but transfer authority to speak for the whole of the EU to the Euro-11 members of EMU. *Times* 19-10-99

Chapter 4:

THE EUROPEAN BEAST

*The picture that the Book of Revelation paints in chapter 17 is of the independent countries that make up Europe at the time of the end, pooling their power to give the “Beast” its power. A “Woman”—the Roman Church Rev. 12—rides this beast. As we shall see in the following two chapters, there has been a gathering momentum to bring Europe back to her religious roots. In a remarkably short space of time—though the results of many years of preparation—a European power is developing that fits the picture given in scripture. However we must realise that the Beast will enter its final phase **after** the battle of Armageddon has been fought in Israel. With the destruction of the military might of the many armies under Gog, Europe will regroup her forces as a Beast power, and put up a strong resistance to the new king who establishes his kingship in Israel. It is a sad prospect that the things that scripture tells us that Jesus will do, are just those things that christendom says **anti-Christ** will do. Hence they will reject the call to submit to Israel’s king.*

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. Rev. 17:14

We continue to look at areas where Europe is uniting.

Eastward expansion of the EU

The new European Commission President, Romano Prodi, is seeking to lay the foundation of a Europe that reaches out towards Russia, as this map shows.

Last week, in one of the most ambitious speeches ever made by a Commission president, Mr Prodi told the European Parliament that eastward expansion was a “historic challenge” to create “a new European soul”. In so doing he laid out a flexible entry plan in which candidate EU members could join the Brussels club as fast or as slowly as internal political reforms allowed. There could be 30 EU members within a decade, Mr Prodi said, creating a Union that would require a new and unprecedented centralisation of power in Brussels. Even Turkey was named by Mr Prodi as a possible future member, despite longstanding concern over its human rights record.

...“root and branch” reform of the existing EU treaty is required, shifting power away from member states and towards Mr Prodi’s commission. ...the influence of large western member states such as Britain would also be undermined by plans to allow bigger countries only one seat [Britain has 2 at the moment] on a drastically reduced commission, which could have as few as six members, resembling the board of the

European Central Bank. Countries such as Luxembourg and Ireland would lose their representation altogether. *Sunday Telegraph* 17-10-99



Harmonising the rules

Behind the drive to centralise so many matters lies the need to prepare the EU for enlargement. It is widely recognised that the adding of more members will multiply problems—unless there is a central power to handle many aspects of everyday life. A single currency demands harmonisation of taxes, to avoid the problem confronting the EU at the moment with Britain being a haven for savers as no taxes are levied on certain types of investments. VAT needs to be harmonised too, to ensure a “level playing field.” But there are other fields that Brussels is seeking to harmonise. A European justice system, with a European police force to fight cross-border crime. A European Defence Force to deal with matters that need not involve NATO. A common asylum policy to ensure an even-handed approach to the floods of refugees knocking at Europe’s doors. These are just some of the areas—which on the surface seem innocent enough—but are part of that unstoppable drive to having a central control over so many aspects of life in Europe.

Justice, freedom and security

The plans for an integrated policy covering these three areas have already been agreed, at a meeting in Finland in October. The EU will be regarded as a single justice area.

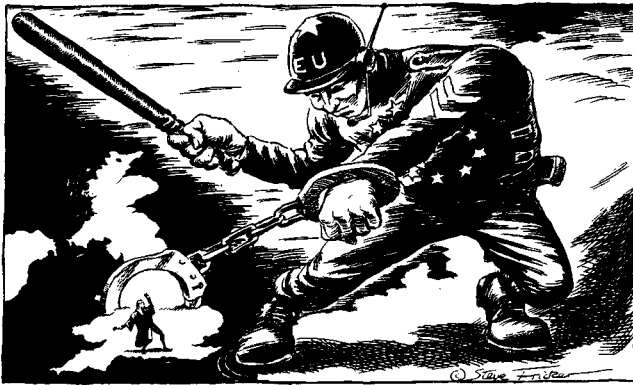
At the EU summit in Tampere, leaders made giant strides towards a common justice system. Member states also agreed to set up a task-force of international senior police officers, to plan actions against cross-border crime and create an international police college for the EU.

A network of national prosecutors to be called Eurojust, will be set up to co-ordinate action against organised crime. Britain fought off Commission pressure for a European Public Prosecutor to combat EU fraud. *Sunday Telegraph* 17-10-99

These plans are seen by many as a back-door approach to creating a superstate. The *Daily Telegraph* carried the headline

Stop the Euro superstate in the name of the law.

...would like to create a specifically European legal code, with its own public prosecutor. This idea, known as *corpus juris*, is intended in the first place to apply to the narrow field of fighting fraud; but, if it proves successful, it will gradually be extended to other areas of transnational crime.



Well what is wrong with that? Actually from a British point of view, a great deal . . . *corpus juris* means the creation of a superior EU code, with its own jurisdiction and

procedures. And such a code, naturally enough, would be based on the Napoleonic and inquisitorial systems of law prevalent on the Continent. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the Napoleonic Code. It is just that Britain, as so often, is Europe's odd man out . . . Adopting a European criminal code will mean violent and wrenching changes to our law, including the curtailment of trial by jury and *habeas corpus*. *DT* 11-10-99

Such matters seem innocent enough. However, Germany especially, regards certain non-mainstream sects as areas of criminal activity! Religious persecution is a fact in Germany and the main perpetrators are

the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches.¹ Our continental brethren and sisters may yet feel the hand of opposition.

The EU is also seeking a seat on the UN Security Council. Britain and France have seats, but not Germany, nor other EU members. Javier Saloon, who has been given the task of forging a common European foreign and security policy for the EU is strongly in favour. Britain and America are cool to this idea! *The Times* 18-11-99

A European Army?

This is another area where Europe is seeking to loosen its dependence on America. The NATO commanded forces against Serbia were dominated by American military might and painfully highlighted Europe's need for America.

Europe's defence capability is seriously inadequate, desperately dependent for effectiveness on US willingness to step in and provide technology and muscle. The inadequacy, and the dependence, was pitilessly exposed by the experience of Bosnia and Kosovo. Americans had to fly more than 80 per cent of the sorties against Serbia. European units could not get to the battlefields in their own back-yard without American planes to take them there. Even the British and French are increasingly just "niche" forces compared with the Americans. *DT* 29-10-99

This has accelerated the drive to setting up an independent European force.

There already exist two European forces—the Western European Union (WEU) with its HQ in London and the Eurocorp, based at Strasbourg.

Under the Maastricht Treaty of 1991 there was a commitment to a Common Foreign and Security Policy—CFSP. This has led to agreement at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999 to the absorption of the WEU into a European force under the direct control of the new proposed Political and Security Committee, which will meet in Brussels. It calls for a force of some 50,000-60,000 troops, to be ready by 2003. The present moves to get this under way have been spearheaded by France and Britain. Germany is strongly in favour of it.

The US is deeply suspicious of these moves. The fact the Britain and France have been at the forefront of its set up adds to their unease. They fear that France is trying to bring a wedge between Britain and America. NATO has, to a large extent, been successful in its 50-year life. This new force is perceived as a threat. The EU line is that it is not in rivalry with NATO, that it will be used where it is not appropriate for NATO forces to be used. After the Helsinki Summit in December where the details were ironed out, Tony Blair denied that it was to be thought of as "a European army."

¹ See *Milestones* 1997 ch. 14 and 1998 ch 14.

A big question remains over France's agenda. While there were soothing words for NATO at last week's summit, which in itself represents a gain for Britain, France's abiding anti-Americanism fuels the suspicion that its real motive is to build a European force separate from NATO, in order counter US influence and to check American power.



"The US is not amused by our redundant military gestures"

That goal is far removed from Britain's instinctive Atlanticism. If the French really want to underline their commitment to NATO—as their leader insists he does—the solution is in their own hands: they can rejoin the Alliances integrated military structure. But President Chirac made clear in London that this will not happen. It serves to reinforce the suspicion that France has its own, anti-American, agenda.

Meanwhile most other European governments are more interested in the "European" than the "defence" aspects of the

European defence initiative, seeing it primarily as a further step in Europe's institution-building programme, which adds a military force to the single currency as yet another attribute of a single European state.
DT 29-11-99

A common currency, a common defence force, a common judiciary (for certain aspects) together with the open borders policy all pushes a fragmented Europe towards a superstate.

Chapter 5:

"POPE DECLARES THE EC HEAVEN SENT"

Our great interest lies in the identity of the rider of the European Beast. Our community has historically seen this to be the Roman Catholic Church, specifically the Papacy, which is the hierarchy of that world-wide organisation. The passing of time only strengthens the correctness of that interpretation. Towards the end of the 19th century one would have needed faith to believe that the Roman Church could ever be strong again. She had been savaged by her flock—as detailed in Revelation chapter 16 under the symbols of vials, or bowls, of wrath being poured out upon her. Or in the words of Rev.17:16

And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

This is far from the case today. In the language of Revelation 18:7

How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

*These words echo those of Isaiah 47:8, and this is the situation we see today. With a tremendous world wide following and immense respectability, the Pope is looked up to by many. The Roman church has become respectable; her views are aired frequently in the media. Many leading figures are loyal to her or have leanings that way. As Europe pools resources and centralises, so the Church's influence grows. Any who know the past history of the papacy, know that power is at the heart of its actions. To many, the present Pope is an old benign man, a man of prayer and respectability. But a correct understanding of the Book of Revelation clearly warns us that this is **a false system that is in opposition to the things of Truth**. She has persecuted in the past and—if we look carefully—even today we can discern her hand in the struggle for power and influence. For the Roman Church the ultimate "right" is her teaching. If other views have to be tolerated it is only for so long as they can't be suppressed.*

This is the power that will unite the nations in opposition to the Lord Jesus, seeking to destroy that which we are longing and praying for. Yea, in the mercy of God we hope to be defending the Truth in that day against the opposition of all that is false. The previous verses to that already quoted are:

For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. *Rev 18:5,6*

We do well to be guided by the word of God.

We have split our look at these matters over three chapters. In the first two we concentrate on the aspect of the papacy and Europe, and in the third on reconciliation between Rome and her many daughters.

"Pope declares the EC heaven sent"

This was the heading to a short piece in the *Daily Telegraph* "Peterborough" column.

The Roman Catholic Church has set the founding fathers of the European Community on the road to sainthood.

Roman Catholic bishops have started the canonisation process for Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi and Robert Schuman, who are credited with devising the EC.

The news follows the recent Synod for Europe in Rome.

"The Vatican press office confirmed that the canonisation process is in its early stages," I am told by Margaret Hebblethwaite of the *Tablet*. "It's extraordinary for a politician to get canonised, but the Pope is rather churning out the saints at the moment. The reason given was that these men founded the EC on Roman Catholic principles."

Chiara Lubich, a lay auditor at the Synod says: "The European Union is a design not only of human beings but of God." The canonisation of the politicians, he said, would show that Europe was "built on a rock." *DT* 4-12-99

These three people were used to promote "the new Europe" in a speech to the Italian bishops in 1994:

...it seems to me more important and urgent than ever courageously to pursue the endeavour of *building the new Europe*, adhering steadfastly to those ideals which, in the recent past, have inspired and guided statesmen of great stature such as Alcide De Gasperi in Italy, Konrad Adenauer in Germany, Robert Schuman in France, making them the *fathers of contemporary Europe*. Is it not a telling fact that, among the principal champions of the unification of the continent, there were *men motivated by deep Christian faith*? Was it not from the Gospel values of freedom and solidarity that these men drew the inspiration for their courageous plan? This plan, among other things, rightly seemed to them to be realistic, despite the foreseeable difficulties, because of the keen awareness they had of the role played by Christianity in the formation and development of the cultures present in the different countries of the continent.

Modern Europe is firmly based upon the Roman Church's social teaching. With the recent changes of government in Britain and last year in Germany, the majority of EU countries have socialist governments.

When Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's Red-Green coalition took office it meant not simply that the EU's most powerful economy fell under the control of a left-of-centre administration but that Europe's Big Four economies—those of Germany, France, Italy, and the UK—were all being run by socialist or social-democrat governments. It also meant that 11 of the EU's 15 member states had left-wing administrations. The only exceptions were Belgium, Spain, Ireland, and Luxembourg.

Europe's socialists are clearly in the ascendancy. They are setting the EU's political agenda, and they are shaping the Union along socialist lines even more strongly than has been the case in the past. But it is one thing to have a vision of a socialist United States of Europe; it is quite another to convert that vision into a successful practical reality. *IDBR* 4-99

What has been fascinating to see is how the Church's social teaching has developed ahead of its take up by politicians. For the Roman Church to have a social doctrine is a remarkable evidence for the accuracy of the description in Revelation ch 16, that the "frog spirit" proceeds not only from the Dragon and the Beat but also from the False Prophet. It is only in the last 100 years that we have seen this situation.

We would refer the reader to chapter 5 of *Milestones* 1998. We quote just a short section.

A book was published at the end of 1998 entitled "**The New Politics—Catholic Social Teaching for the 21st century**". Editor Paul Valley. In this book seven Roman Catholic writers show the transition in the Roman Church's teaching in the wake of the French Revolution. Quoting from its cover:

For more than a century the Catholic Church has closely scrutinised the economic certainties of capitalism and communism. As a result, it has slowly developed an entirely new position from which today to survey the capitalist leviathan. What this book sets out to do is to chronicle that development and highlight the insights it has formed which have a particular resonance for the world as it enters the twenty-first century.

It has been a fascinating transition in outlook. The very thinking that led to the Church's punishment, in the French Revolution, has been turned around and taken on board. The French Revolution gave rise to both Capitalism and Communism. Looking at Europe and Russia today we can see that both systems have been abandoned to some lesser or greater degree. The talk is of a **Third Way**. A way where religion is allowed to

influence political thought. The power behind this Third Way is the Roman Catholic Church. *Milestones* 1998

And so, according to the *Daily Telegraph* report quoted earlier, the Pope is contemplating adding to the long list of "saints" the names of some of the founding fathers of what has today become the EU.

Bringing Europe to her Roman Catholic roots

The Synod emphasised the need for an evangelical drive to make Europe Catholic again. It called upon the laity to use their efforts to work for the furtherance of their church. On the back of the interest in the "Millennium," efforts are being made throughout Europe, including Britain, to bring back the lapsed. **Catholicising England** was the heading to a book review (*Christendom Awake*), whose author has issued a "call to arms" to make Britain a Catholic country again. In the Westminster diocese in the London area, visits are being made to the lapsed, with startlingly encouraging results—from their viewpoint. With the funeral of Cardinal Hume, there was a widespread public following of events. This caused Neil Reading to protest in the *Daily Telegraph* that "a visitor from say, Poland might be forgiven for thinking he was in another Roman Catholic country" (quoted in the *CH* 26-11-99). Any conversion to Rome is made much of; any returning back to the Church of England are largely ignored. The Roman Churches policy over the past 40 or so years of encouraging the laity to rise to positions of influence is bringing its rewards. It is now a socially accepted thing to be a Roman Catholic.

Co-patronesses for Europe

To help in bringing Europe back to its roots and especially to unite Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, the Pope has appointed more "patron saints" for Europe. Benedict, Cyril and Methodius are being joined by Bridget of Sweden—1303-1373; Catherine of Sienna—1347-1380; and Edith Stein 1891-1942, a Jewish convert who perished in Auschwitz. When the Pope's letter announcing these "heavenly co-patronesses of all of Europe" was read at the opening of the Synod of Europe, there was sustained applause. Bridget appeals to those in the north—Sweden is 95% Lutheran. Catherine worked among the rulers of France, Hungary and Poland to bring reconciliation. Edith worked amongst the Jewish people of Europe. The Pope hopes that their examples will appeal to women especially, and help to unite Christendom together. *L'Osservatore Romano* 6-10-99

The hidden Agenda of the European Union

This was the heading to a fascinating article in *The Reformer* 11-99. It is taken from material in the *English Churchman*, and mainly concerns the Church of England. The *italics* were in the article.

There is a religious side to the promotion of the EU, according to an article in the *English Churchman*. The Church of England, individual

Anglican Churches and their ministers are actively promoting the creation of an EU super-state through a project called the "Soul of Europe" which is part of the "Forward Studies Movement" which in turn is part of the European Commission. It is funded at taxpayers' expense and reports directly to the President of the European Commission, thereby avoiding coming under the scrutiny of the other Commissioners.

The Forward Studies Unit *"keeps a watching brief on movements in European societies"* with the express mission to *"secure consensus over and above particular national interests."* The 'problem' that *"national identities are of such long standing that the more recent 'European awareness' will tend to be more fragile."* The core of its work is *"legitimising and constitutionalising the 'European Project', finding a new institutional basis for sharing 'sovereignty'."*

Jacques Santer, in an address to EECCS [European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society] on 14th September 1998 stated, *"At a time when the Union is becoming an ever more tangible reality for Europe's citizens ... it is good that the relationship between their religious and ideological communities are becoming ever more visible; perhaps they should be organised more systematically."*

Although the programme has never been authorised by the European Parliament, its activities have progressed by stealth and deception. Jacques Santer admitted in a Soul for Europe discussion document that *"the dialogue between the churches and the Commission is one of the most positive achievements of the past decade. By which I mean the dialogue did not happen all by itself: There is no reference to it in the founding texts of the European Union. Neither the Council nor the European Parliament has ever asked the Commission to enter into dialogue with the churches. We should therefore refer to it as an 'informal dialogue', but this does not make it any less regular."*

The EU maintains ecumenical dialogue with *"European umbrella organisations representing the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches."* Many non-Christian organisations participate in this dialogue.

Under this scheme a project only receives a grant if it *"is organised specifically to further the cause of European integration and raises public commitment to the objectives pursued by the EU"*.

Pope "blesses" the euro

In the Pope's New Year speech to the 171 diplomats to the Holy See, speaking in French, he gave his blessing to the euro, which he called the first step towards building a "true European Community" and which now had to expand eastward. He added that the introduction of a single currency was "one of the causes of joy". It was now up to Brussels to "push Europe to the East." CH 16-1-99

Chapter 6:

THE SYNOD OF EUROPE

An important part of Rome's drive for spiritual leadership in the "new house of Europe" was to hold a Synod for Europe, which we consider in this chapter.

The Synod for Europe

This is the last in a series of Synods held in the last few years. There have been Synods ("walk together") of America, Oceania (Australia etc), Asia and now Europe. From the 1st to the 23rd October, some 200 Roman Catholic Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops and other "experts" from Europe met in Rome to discuss the role of the Church in Europe. Under the theme of *Jesus Christ, Alive in His Church, the Source of Hope for Europe* they looked at the changes in Europe and how they could put "Christianity" back into the heart of Europe. The quotations that follow are taken from the "working papers" (*Instrumentum Laboris*) issued beforehand and reproduced in the *L'Osservatore Romano*—the Vatican newspaper 11/18 August 1999. These papers can also be downloaded from the Internet.¹ The actual proceedings were reported in the *L'Osservatore Romano* from 13-10 to 17-11-99. Any *italicised emphasis* is in the original.

It was the second such Synod for Europe, the first was held in 1991 at a time when the Berlin Wall had just come down, and many parts of Europe were experiencing freedom for the first time for many years. That freedom brought in its wake many problems, and this 2nd synod was aware that "the goal of the authentic unity of the European continent is still distant". By 'authentic unity' was meant the uniting of Europe under the spiritual leadership of the Roman Church. Here are some extracts of interest concerning the role of the Roman Church in the politics of Europe.

What do we mean exactly when we say Europe? Europe, the first continent to be evangelised, more than a mere geographical location is a cultural and historical concept. It was born from the Christianization of the Germanic and Slav peoples and their fusion with the Mediterranean peoples.

Once again, the challenge is to *return to the Gospel*; in the conviction that "there will be no European unity until it is based on unity of the spirit. This most profound basis of unity was brought to Europe and consolidated down the centuries by Christianity with its Gospel, with its understanding of man and with its contribution to the development of the

¹ www.vatican.va/roman_curia [search under synod/documents for 2nd special assembly for Europe.]

history of the peoples and nations. What was taught in the past is also true today—that the “wall” which today is raised in people’s hearts, the wall that divides Europe, will not be torn down without a return to the Gospel.

In more recent years, the phenomenon [of globalisation] is causing acceleration *in the unification and integration of member-countries into the European Union* to the point of establishing a single currency. Participation in this process has allowed many peoples in Europe, perhaps for the first time, to experience in concrete terms on the national level the effects of an increase of institutions particularly European, thus replacing a simply rhetorical and distant vision of Europe as a continent. In this regard, further developments have taken place in relations, dialogue and consultations between European institutions and the Catholic Church (through the Commission of the Episcopates of the European Community) and among the local Churches on the entire continent (by means of the Council of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe), structures which appear fundamental to the participation of the Church in the construction of a New Europe.

With the fall of barriers, Church academic institutions in Western Europe have seen a rise in the number of seminarians, priests, religious, women religious and laity from ex-Communist countries and have facilitated the loan of teachers and experts to the local Churches of the East as professors and advisors.

Finally, in the construction of Europe, monetary union has taken on an importance and significance which can serve as a major opportunity, it can give major stability to Europe and its economic development.

These extracts were from the working papers looking at the past, and were headed *Europe Towards the Third Millennium*. In the section on *Jesus Christ Alive in His Church* were the following points:

It can be said that Europe and European culture might have common roots. No one can doubt that the Christian faith is fundamentally and decisively a part of Europe’s identity. Christianity has certainly given form to Europe...

It quoted from the 1st synod:

The process of unification for Europe and in particular the European Institutions as well as the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe point to a great responsibility for the Churches. For the common house of Europe will be built on strong foundations, if it is based on more than merely economic considerations. Rather, the new Europe always presupposes consensus and recognition of basic values in its construction and requires a fraternal exchange of ideas. From this point of view, the Church’s contribution to a new Europe is certainly not something secondary and it must accompany the efforts of those lay faithful who are active in society and politics.

It then reaffirmed the role that lay members of the Church could play to bring Europe back to its Christian roots. It then speaks of the place that must be found for *the social doctrine of the Church*.

The assembly of some 200 bishops and others duly considered these working papers. Here are a few interesting extracts from the many speeches made.

“New Europe needs the Church”

This was from a speech by a French bishop:

The building of the community of European peoples is without a doubt the greatest success of political action of the 20th century.

With some French Bishops, we met one of the commissioners and several senior officials of Europe in Brussels. We spoke of the institutions of social Europe, the Euro, the economy, defence: they told us “We need you”.

When the bishop asked;

“What areas of our experience of life in the Church may contribute to the building of Europe?”

He was told:

“In the area of the division of the sovereignty among regions, nations, Europe. In the area of opening Europe to the east and to help underdeveloped countries. In the area of defence of the dignity of all life. In the area of social doctrine”.

“Holy See’s contribution to a New Europe”

This was a speech by the Vatican Secretary of State.

Up to 1989 there were only 16 pontifical representations in Europe. In the past 10 years Pope John Paul has set up a further 16, of which six were established in the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Recently the supreme Pontiff also set up an Apostolic Nunciature¹ at the European Community in Brussels, to complement what is already being done in Strasbourg by the Pontifical Mission at the council of Europe and in Vienna, by the Mission at the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe). They are the modern forms of Christian presence amidst builders of society in view of bringing the leaven of truth also to their environments.

¹ Represents the Holy See at the highest level. The nuncio is always given precedence over every foreign representative, regardless of rank.
The Church Visible by J. Noonan

Towards the end of the synod, a message from Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission was read out. Here are extracts:

Ten years have elapsed since the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe—after a long period of darkness in totalitarianism—achieved the freedom to determine their societies according to their own principles and convictions.

In that choice of freedom, the Christian Churches and religious faiths made an irreplaceable contribution.

Thanks to that choice and their suffering, the whole face of the continent changed.

...Our next steps may be briefly outlined as a “Europeanization” of Europe, the end of political nationalisms, and the deepening of community integration.

The expansion of Europe is an urgent task. I can recall the request which the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, made to Europe in his second call at Gniezno on 3 June 1997. Praying at the tomb of St Adalbert, he asked Europeans to “strongly commit themselves in constructive co-operation, to consolidate peace among them and around them”, without excluding anybody, “without leaving out any nation, not even the less powerful ones, outside the whole which they are building”. I share those words.

The expansion of Europe represents an extraordinary opportunity to respond positively to a historical phase characterised by gradual integration. In Europe this phenomenon is not restricted to seeking complementarity of markets and to the creation of areas of free exchange.

Europe cannot be conceived without its memory. And in its memory there is the permanent mark of Christianity. In the different cultures of the European nations, in the arts, in literature and in the hermeneutics of thought there is the lifeblood of Christianity, which nourishes both those who believe and those who do not believe.

For this reason in the great project of united Europe there must be harmony between a great political design and the general principles of man and society. You Fathers and your Churches continue to make an irreplaceable contribution to those principles. Europe now asks you for those signs of hope.

With gratitude.

Romano Prodi

Chapter 7:

I SIT A QUEEN – THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS

This title is taken from two verses in Revelation—18:7 and 17:5. The 1st phrase conveys a position of power and wealth; the 2nd summarises the situation that the Roman Church is the mother church. We look at the Papal visits during the past year, especially those in Europe. These have been used to promote the Pope's vision for a united Europe, not just politically, but religiously. "Europe breathing with her two lungs". It is with great courage that this 79-year-old man is prepared to ceaselessly travel to fulfil his dream. We look at the relations between Rome and the Orthodox Church and the reconciliation between Rome and the Lutherans.

Criss-crossing the world

In January it was Mexico and the United States. Romania in May, Poland in June, Slovenia in September, India and Georgia in November. There was to be a trip to Iraq in the autumn, but it was postponed to early 2000. In December, Saddam Hussein called it off. Next year he has planned trips to Israel, Damascus and Syria. His European trips were particularly significant in his efforts to bring unity between the churches.

The Pope in Romania

In early May he visited Romania—situated on the western side of the Black Sea, the meeting point of East and West. This was the Pope's first visit to a country which has a majority of Orthodox believers.

"The Vatican also sees the visit as a chance to promote the Pope's dictum that the Church 'must learn to breathe again with its two lungs—the Eastern one and the Western one'..." "The overused word historic certainly applies", said the papal spokesman." *DT* 07-05-99

He said in French to the "Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church".

I come to meet a people who welcomed the Gospel, assimilated it, defended it against repeated attacks and now considers it an integral part of their cultural heritage. It is a culture inherited from ancient Rome ...

The Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church have come a long way on the road to reconciliation... Your land of Romania, between *Latinias* and Byzantium, can become the land of encounter and communion. It is crossed by the majestic Danube, which bathes the regions of the East and West: may Romania, like this river, know how to build relations of understanding and communion between different peoples, thus helping to strengthen the civilisation of love in Europe and the world! *LOR* 19-5-99

His visit was hailed as a great success in bringing together these two main branches of "Christendom". The headline in the *Catholic Herald* read:

Pope ‘sets course’ for Moscow—Romanian visit ‘opens gateway’ to the East

The Pope’s visit to Romania at the weekend has paved the way for a trip to Moscow. Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls called the visit an event that had “changed history” and “set a new course”. He added: “Rather than opening a door, it has opened a gateway to Moscow.”

The visit was the first by a pope to a predominantly Eastern Orthodox country since the Great Schism in 1054.

With its 18 million followers, Romania is the largest Orthodox country in the world after Russia. Although national Orthodox churches are autonomous, the visit will have been watched closely by Russian Orthodox leaders. The trip was also perceived as a political success for Romania. As one commentator said: “If Romania represents a window to the East for the Vatican, the Pope offers a window to the West for Bucharest.”

“Until a very short time ago it was unthinkable that the Bishop of Rome could visit his brothers and sisters in the faith living in Romania,” the Pope told the enthusiastic crowd. *Catholic Herald* 14-5-99

After his speech there were chants of “Unity, unity, unity” from the crowds. As the chants grew louder, the Pope turned to the Patriarch and extended an unscripted invitation for him to visit Rome.

The Romanian government had spent about £2.5 million to ensure that this visit went without a hitch. The Pope and the Patriarch signed a joint declaration for peace in Kosovo. Romania has been keen to join NATO and ultimately the EU. Interestingly they have condemned President Milosevic for his actions in Kosovo and have allowed NATO planes to use their airspace in the conflict. *DT* 8-5-99

The Pope’s visit to Poland

In June he paid his 7th visit to his native Poland.

The Pope is using the trip to mend fences with the Jewish community, and to reach out to the Orthodox Church, he is also keen to stem a general drift away from the church that has taken place in other Catholic countries.

Kicking off in Gdansk was particularly significant, not only because of Solidarity’s origins. It was here at the close of the last millennium that Aldebert gave a mass baptism that laid the foundations of the church in Poland. *The Economist* 12-6-99

Poland claims 95% of its population are Roman Catholics. It was here that his political power was revealed as he worked—with American help—to bring down the communist regime in Poland. (See *Time* magazine 24-02-

92; quoted in *Milestones* 1992 ch 3). From Poland the ripples are still working outwards.

“It was in this city [Gdansk]” the Pope recalled, that Solidarity “opened its doors of freedom to the countries that were enslaved by totalitarian governments”.

“It brought the Berlin Wall down and contributed to the unity of Europe, which had been divided since World War Two.” *CH* 11-06-99

It was just 10 years since the fall of communism in Poland. The Pope addressed the Polish parliament.

Old Communists even knelt and made the sign of the Cross as the 79-year-old Pope walked slowly towards a throne-like chair, decorated with flowers, that had been set up for him.”

During he speech he said that:

“The events of 10 years ago in Poland created an historic opportunity for the continent of Europe, having abandoned ideological barriers once and for all, to find again the path to unity. I have spoken of this on a number of occasions, using the metaphor of the “two lungs”, with which Europe should breathe, bringing together the traditions of East and West.”

He lamented the present divisions and conflicts. He set out the Roman Church’s role in the past as the unifying force of Europe, and urged that “Europe—open the doors to Christ!” He spoke of the support, which the Holy See had given for Poland’s integration in to the EU.

At the end of his speech he used a phrase which roughly translates to “We’ve done it, boys!” *DT* 12-6-99. *L’Osservatore Romano* 23-6-99

In Drohiczyn, he presided over an Ecumenical Service with representatives of the Orthodox, Lutheran and many other communities. He appealed to them to build bridges between them, and to open the doors of their minds and hearts.

The worship of Mary is the strong link that the Orthodox and Roman churches share. The Pope has entrusted the conversion of Europe to her care! In another speech he entrusted the destiny of Poland to Mary. Likewise earlier, when in Romania, he “invoked the protection of Mary, the glorious Mother of God, upon all the citizens of beloved Romania.” This false worship of the Mother and Child takes its roots from the worship of ancient Babylon. There are many shrines to Mary throughout Poland, at Lichen, he blessed a Marian shrine, calling upon Mary to defend Poland and ending with the words:

Hail, Daughter of God the Father, Hail, O Mother of the Son of God
Hail, O Bride of the Holy Spirit, Temple of the Most Holy Trinity.

Visit to Slovenia

This is the northernmost part of the former Yugoslav federation. It is regarded as a key gateway from the Balkans to central and western Europe. It is mainly a Roman Catholic country. His visit was to “beatify” a 17th century bishop, who had been a great preacher and had been entrusted by Pope Pius IX to bring about a religious revival in Central Europe. Again this fitted in with the Pope’s aim to bring Europe, East and West, back to their roots. His effort was again entrusted to Mary.

May Blessed Mary, Mother and Queen of Slovenia, whom your people venerate with the title *Marija Pomagaj*, watch over you and all your endeavours. *L'Osservatore Romano* 28-9-99

India and Georgia

His previous visit to India had been some 13 years ago. The Roman Catholics are a small minority and regularly face persecution from the Hindu majority. His visit was primarily to unveil his final document on the Synod of Bishops for Asia, but it also was an effort to promote the conversion of Hindus. He called upon the church to redouble their efforts. Once again it was to Mary that he entrusted the work in Asia.

The visit to the former Soviet Republic of Georgia—and like Romania predominantly Eastern Orthodox—was to promote unity between the two churches. He met with the Orthodox Patriarch Ilya II. The President, Eduard Shevardnadze, attended the arrival ceremony. The Pope sought for help from “Mary the Holy Mother of God, the guardian of Georgia”.

Relations with the Russian church

These are still frosty—a source of sorrow to the Pope as he had hoped that there would be reconciliation between their two churches. The prophetic picture is of christendom united at the time of the invasion of Israel. It will need events to have reached a point where it is in the interests of the Russian church to recognise the headship of the Roman church and unite their efforts against the Jewish people. This may well be at the time when Israel begins to reform under an Elijah work of turning the hearts of Israel back to their God—as indicated in Malachi ch 4. Such a revival could well trigger the powers of Europe to unite in action against it.

Behind the scenes efforts are being made. There was a report from Russia in mid-December when the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano paid a 4-day visit to Russia. He was there to “perform a ceremony of sanctification” on a church once confiscated, but returned 4 years ago. He had talks with Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin and also the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov who said:

“Our talks, meetings and contacts confirm that we are close on conceptual points and assessments of key current problems and of the new risks and challenges in the 21st century for Russia and the Vatican”.

Sodano said:

“As regards a meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch, then there is a desire, it is possible. But we need to prepare for this. We need to find the right moment for the meeting between the heads of the churches.”

Orthodox leaders—and others—gather to Bethlehem

Patriarch Alexy II is due to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas at Bethlehem on January 2nd – 7th with 14 other Orthodox patriarchs. The *Catholic Herald's* headline (1-1-2000) was **Moscow paves way to summit**. The article indicated that if the Pope received a unanimous invitation to join them, he would go. It is unlikely, but indicates a movement in the “right” direction. Mr Yeltsin is still due to attend (and possibly Mr Putin), together with the leaders of Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Greece, Romania, and Bulgaria. They, together with dignitaries from the EU, Ethiopia, Holland and Armenia, are due to dine with Mr and Mrs Arafat before attending “Midnight Mass.” *AP* 3-1-2000

Patriarch Alexy II holds regular meetings with Mr Putin. He expressed his thanks to Yeltsin “for everything he had done over the eight years. Whenever we turn to Yeltsin for help, he always supported us.” *AP* 3-1-2000

Reconciliation with the Lutherans

The Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches signed a declaration yesterday ending the five-century old dispute that launched the Protestant Reformation and led to the Thirty Years War. On the same day that, 482 ago, Martin Luther is believed to have posted his 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg protesting against the granting of indulgences, leaders from both groups signed a declaration acknowledging that “in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit”. *The Times* 1-11-99

The Pope described this as a “milestone along a difficult path full of joy, union and communion among Christians.” Many Lutherans oppose this joint declaration. It is not easy to see where this will lead. The Roman Church has added its “fine print” to the document. There is no expectation that the sale of indulgences and masses for the dead are to end—they are too “profitable”! It could lead to a greater co-operation between the two churches. As was noted in *Milestones* 1998 (ch 14.) religious persecution in Germany is practised by both churches.

Chapter 8:

BRITAIN — HAS THE TIDE TURNED?

As we briefly saw in chapter 3, Britain has prospered outside the euro-zone. In this chapter we look in more detail at the growing disquiet against the flood of bureaucratic rules emanating from Brussels. Fewer people think that it would be a good thing to join the euro, now that it is appreciated that it would entail the loss of control and sovereignty. The matter hasn't been helped by the anti-French feeling engendered by the "beef war" or by the falling value of the euro.

Bible prophecy has led us to look for a role for Britain outside the main stream of Europe. There is to be a later-day Tyre/Tarshish power. Ezekiel describes the power of Tyre in his day in chapter 27. It is a picture of a multitude of nations having their trading headquarters in the country, and working with Tyre, making it the centre of world trade. One of the merchant powers mentioned is Tarshish—the supplier of silver, iron, tin and lead—minerals found and supplied from Britain since ancient times.

*The situation in Britain today closely mirrors that of ancient Tyre. Firms from many countries have their trading offices in Britain. In addition Ezekiel 38:13 sees "young lions" working with the merchants of Tarshish. The Commonwealth countries fit this description, though not exclusively so, and continue to show their willingness to work with Britain, in spite of their independence. America, though not in the Commonwealth, still regards Britain as the "mother country". Readers are urged to read *The Cry of the Prophets* by Paul Billington that examines the evidence for Britain's position as the latter-day Tyre/Tarshish power.*

We also look at the moves to change Britain. On the religious side is the growing respectability of the Roman Church, and with it the demise of the concept that this is a Protestant country. Many voices are calling for the legislation to be changed that bans the monarch from marrying a Roman Catholic.

Bruising battles

Britain has had to fight several bruising battles with her fellow European members. The launch of the euro was quickly followed by the need to harmonise taxes across the community. Britain has been a haven for investors, as she has not taxed the interest earned on these accounts if the investor lived outside Britain. The EU proposed that a "withholding tax" of 20% should be levied on any interest payments. Britain strongly resisted this move—all it would do would be to switch investors to Switzerland or America. Europe would not gain anything, and Britain would lose the trillions of dollars invested, and thousands of City jobs. The Eurobond market alone, which is the most popular investment, is worth \$3 trillion.

Tony Blair stood alone at the summit in Helsinki, but stood his ground. Other members were deeply irritated by Britain's stand and are seeing if a way to remove Britain's veto can be found, so that it could be passed on a majority vote.

The London Art market—by far the largest in Europe—was also threatened by the imposition of a royalty fee of up to 4%, payable to the authors of the works sold. Once again its effect would be to drive this lucrative trade to a non-EU country, and some 8,500 British jobs would be lost. Faced with Britain's opposition the EU has postponed its vote on the matter.

The EU is pressing hard that company taxes and VAT rates should be harmonised. Unfortunately for Britain, they have no interest in bringing the rates down to those in Britain! British taxes would have to rise by 20-25% to match European levels.

Another area is British beef. Although many countries around the world still refuse to import it, the EU after many months of deliberations, pronounced it safe. The French refused to lift the ban, and are currently facing prosecution under EU rules. The ban has badly affected Britain's beef farmers. British fishermen, who have suffered much at the hands of the EU quota system, have again had their quotas cut, some by up to 70%.

Britain pays far more into the EU than she receives back. Mrs Thatcher negotiated a £2 billion annual rebate in 1984. Earlier in the year, Germany had pressed hard for this rebate to end, but Britain, isolated once more, refused to yield more than a token amount. However Mr Prodi the new EU Commissioner has raised the matter the matter again and has made clear that it must be scrapped by 2002 at the latest.

Joining the euro?

The latest polls in December showed that support for joining the euro had dramatically slumped to just 19%. With the Government's campaign to increase support for the euro running only at tick-over, and the inability of supporters for joining to come up with just one sound reason to abandon the pound, British membership seems very unlikely. *TT* 29-12-99

City wins the euro war

It spite of initial nervousness at the start of the year when France and Germany made it clear that they were going to knock London from its dominant position in share and money trading, they had no need to worry. London has revelled in the euro market, both for money and bonds. France and Germany have found themselves exposed to the greater competition from having to deal in euros rather than in their own currencies. For London, it is but just another currency. London's share of the derivatives market for euros is a near-monopoly 94%. The low interest rate on the euro has attracted widespread business—business that has been channelled through London!

Leaving the EU?

MORI regularly carry out a poll which asks the direct question, “If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the European Union, how would you vote?” In the June poll, 41% said they would vote to remain in, 37% favoured pulling out, with 26% “don’t knows.” Another poll in December put showed 46% in favour of leaving. What seemed a few years ago as an extremist position—leaving the EU - now is seen by many as a sensible move. In preparation for the Conservative Party annual conference, William Hague, their leader, set up a *Commission of the £ sterling* to investigate the economic prospects for Britain and the pound. This 35 page report was published 23rd Sept 1999 and can be downloaded (http://www.connect.co.uk/nott_commission/). It makes fascinating reading. Here are some extracts.

“Only in the U.K. is euro membership debated in economic terms. Elsewhere in the EU it is seen in political terms, as the means of increasing political integration. The euro, as part of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), is unequivocally seen by our EU partners as a step towards the explicitly stated goal of political union.”

Over a page is devoted to **The politics of the EMU**. It pulls together many quotes, such as:

“The single currency is the greatest abandonment of sovereignty since the foundation of the European Community. It is a decision of an essentially political nature. We need this United Europe... we must never forget that the Euro is an instrument for this project” (Felipe Gonzalez, Former PM of Spain, 1998);

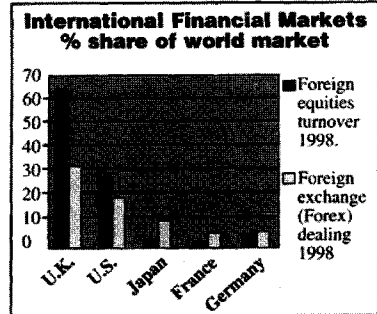
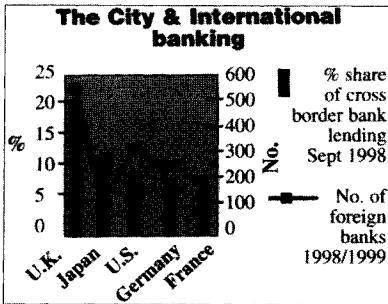
“The process of monetary union goes hand in hand, must go hand in hand, with political integration and ultimately political union. EMU is, and always was meant to be, a stepping stone on the way to a united Europe” (Wim Duisenberg, president of the European Central Bank);

“Monetary union is the motor of European integration” (Jean-Luc Dehaene, PM Belgium);

“Economic and monetary union is the central part of the project for European Unification. It is, of course, the highest and purest form of integration” (Karl Lamers, spokesman for former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl).

Ten pages are devoted to Britain’s strong trading position, and how Britain is prospering outside the euro. The financial dealings of her two rivals in the foreign exchanges, New York and Tokyo, are largely for their domestic markets. Britain’s trade is mainly international. She handles many currencies; indeed most of her business is not done in sterling. It is not necessary to actually use the currency to trade in it.

Many charts demonstrate her position in the world markets. Here are two.



Britain's influence in the EU

An interesting section deals with how Britain can be influential without being in the EMU. It made this perceptive point:

We said above that we would be just as influential on non-euro issues whether we were out of the euro or in. This is not to say we are—or are likely to be—one of the true leaders of Europe at the real “heart of Europe”. The Franco-German axis, the predominance of Rhineland Social Market thinking (based on Roman Catholic social philosophy), the codified nature of continental law, continental Europe’s very different history and geography all lead to the conclusion that we will always be different. British politicians should accept this with grace and acknowledge that when it comes to the UK, on the one hand, and continental Europe, on the other, it is a matter of “chacun a son gout”¹ and respecting national differences—“vive la difference!”

We deceive the British people and we deceive ourselves if we claim we are winning the argument in Europe... There is no argument in Europe. There is Britain’s point of view, and there is the rest of Europe. The only question at Maastricht was how much Britain could swallow and what special arrangements could be made for us. There is not a shred of evidence at Maastricht or since that anyone accepts our view of Europe... The plain fact acknowledged by every continental politician—except those on the fringes of power—is that the other members want a European State, whether they express it in these precise terms or not.” Lord Lamont of Lerwick (*Sovereign Britain*, Duckworth, 1995)

Britain's world influence

We are warned that the UK will cease to be influential in the world beyond the EU if we keep the pound. For Sir John Coles (former Head of the Diplomatic Service) just the opposite is true. In his article “Our

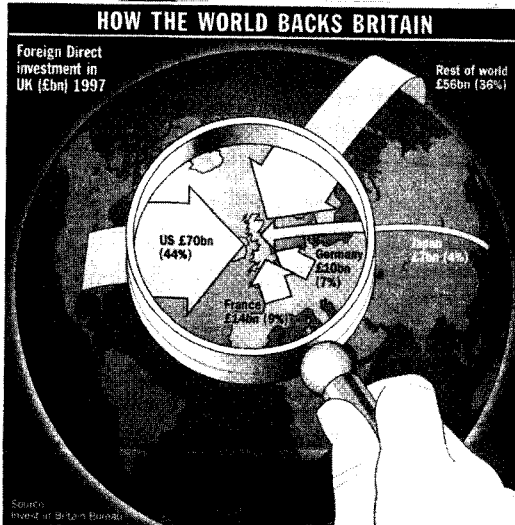
¹ Each to his own taste.

influence will be greater outside the euro” (quoting *ST* 27 June 1999) he states:

“I see no reason why, for many decades ahead, Britain should not remain a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a leading member of Nato, a member of the G8, a power with interests and assets all over the globe, one of the few countries with an active foreign policy the world over. No reason except one. If Europe continues on its path towards a central government, then I believe British influence will be seriously harmed. It is because the euro is, and all that is likely to accompany it, the biggest step yet towards a central government that I believe Britain should stay out of it. That way we limit the impetus towards centralisation, retain our influence and, most importantly, keep our powers of national decision-making and, at root, our sense of belonging”.

This report is still advocating that Britain should retain membership of the EU but not join the EMU. Bible prophecy however indicates a future role for Britain that is independent of Europe. A pull back from the government’s earlier position of wishing to join the EMU at the earliest opportunity is now clearly being seen. And this paper shows the Opposition party’s commitment to distancing themselves from further integration. It has been a long process to awaken the British people to what the EMU is really about. There are many leading Conservatives who would like to see Britain out of the EU. Articles urging Britain to join America and Canada in NAFTA (North American Free Trade Association) continue to appear in the press. It has taken much longer than expected, but we see the tide beginning to turn against the integrated Europe that is now emerging.

UK ‘number one’ for investment



Britain has consolidated her position as the number one place for inward investment in Europe. Since the launch of the euro she has risen to third place as the most attractive investment country in the world, behind the US and China. In contrast, Germany has slipped from fifth to eighth place. *DT* 1-7-99

British manufacturers outpace rivals

After several years in the doldrums, the British manufacturing industries are seeing the benefits of their efficiency drives. Nissan's car plant in Sunderland for the 3rd year emerged as the most productive car plant in Europe—by a wide margin. The manufacturing industry productivity in general rose by over 5% in the 12 months to September, contrasting with Germany's 1%.

Since 1992 the US had created 12.8m new jobs, Britain a more modest 2.5m, whereas in the same period the eurozone had lost 699,000 jobs.

Oil

At the start of the year oil prices were at their lowest level for a long time, falling at one time below \$10 a barrel. Within a few months it has rocketed to over \$25 a barrel. This has not caused the collapse of industry as happened in the price rises in the 70's following the 6-day war. Industry is far more efficient and alternative sources—such as gas—have come along. This rise in prices gives the UK government a handsome bonus in tax revenues from the producers. Britain is a net exporter of oil, and therefore benefits. The eurozone is an importer and is therefore hit by rising prices. Sterling is strengthened and the euro is weakened, when oil prices rise. Oil is priced in dollars, and so a weakening euro against the dollar, pushes prices up. Interestingly, reserves of UK oil in the North Sea stand virtually at the same level as when the first oil came on stream some 25 years ago. In other words fresh fields have been found to keep pace with its extraction. Gas reserves are steadily increasing—they are now greater than has been extracted to date. *EJ* 3-99

Town twinning—a hidden agenda

An interesting aside to this was the disclosure of the words recommended when British towns or cities "twin" with a continental town. Rugby, for example, is twinned with Russelheim in Germany. Behind the twinning concept is the aim to promote European unification.

We the Mayors of...on this day, give a solemn pledge to maintain permanent ties between the two councils of our two communities, to foster exchanges between their inhabitants in every area of life so as to develop a living sense of European kinship through better mutual understanding, and to join forces to help secure, to the utmost of our abilities, a successful outcome to this vital venture of peace and prosperity: European Union. *TR* Sept 99

"Catholics 'are no longer a group apart'"

Roman Catholics in England and Wales have become so assimilated in society that there is little to distinguish them from anyone else, research has shown. *TT* 13-12-99

The efforts over many years to use the laity to promote “the Church” as best they can, are now showing results. Many newspaper owners or editors are practising Roman Catholics. Even TV plays subtly convey that the Roman Church is respectable, and authoritative, whereas the Church of England normally is seen as having little authority. The Roman Church has invested time and money in media training for its spokesmen, so they tend to interview well, and are therefore in demand for comments on the news. Much is made of any public figure “converting.” The spirit of Protestantism is virtually dead. It is not a politically correct thing to speak out against perceived error. The ecumenical movement has blurred differences.

Obviously, from a scriptural point of view, the Protestant movement is but a daughter of the “mother church” (Rev. 17:5), and is far away from scriptural truth. However, there surely must come some event which will shake this nation away from its godless behaviour and begin to prepare her for her future role of bringing *my sons and daughters from afar* Is. 43:6; 49:22 etc.

Prince Charles in his first New Year talk which was broadcast on Jan 1st 2000 made an appeal against the irrationality of evolution and acknowledged God as the creator and appealed for people to “rediscover the sense of the sacred in all that surrounds us.” A start may-be!

The Queen and the Act of Settlement

There is growing pressure for the 1701 Act of Settlement to be changed to allow a British ruler to marry a Roman Catholic without forfeiting the throne. It was drawn up to meet a specific crisis. With the death of Queen Anne’s heir in 1700, there were several claimants to the throne, including the exiled Stuarts, who were Roman Catholic. This Act ensured the throne passed to the house of Hanover¹.

Most see this as an outdated law that is well past its “sell by date.” The greatest pressure is coming from the new Scottish parliament, which is surprising, as this was the heartland of Protestantism. Tony Blair has indicated that he does not support the change because of the complexity of the law. With British elections due before middle of 2001, it is not an issue that he wants to see raised.

Linked with this matter is the linkage between church and state. The British monarch is automatically Supreme Governor of the Church of England. At her coronation the Queen vows “to the utmost of her power to maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant reform religion established by law.” Any move to change this Act is likely to see the Church of England dis-established as the state church—something that Roman Catholics would welcome for it conflicts with their beliefs regarding the Pope. At his

¹ The House of Hanover lasted until the death of Queen Victoria, when it was succeeded by the present House of Windsor.

coronation these words are used. “Receive the Tiara adorned with three crowns, and know that thou art Father of Kings and Princes, Ruler of the World, and Vicar on Earth of Jesus Christ.”

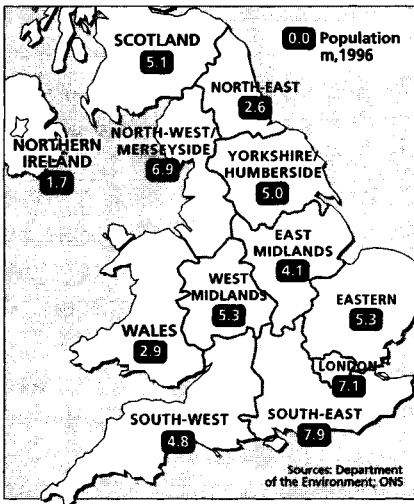
For over a 100 years the Roman Church has been working on the basis that the only way to “conquer” England would be to destroy the power of the Church of England.¹ When the Archbishop of York called for the Act to be changed, a Roman Catholic historian said:

On the threshold of the new millennium, the archbishop is to be congratulated on disowning the Protestant identity of this country.

We now see the second most senior figure in the Church of England laying a time bomb at the foundation of the establishment of the Church of England. *DT* 27-12-99

The Queen is scheduled to visit the Pope during a state visit to Italy during October 2000, their third meeting.

The regionalisation of the UK



Divide and conquer has been a long-held maxim. It seems an anachronism that at a time when Europe is giving up national powers to Brussels, there is a strong movement to regionalise Europe. This involves—in the main—non-national boundaries. The United Kingdom, for instance, has now been divided up into 12 regions. Two do follow national boundaries—Wales and Scotland. England is divided up into London plus 8 regional areas, plus Northern Ireland. Each region has a Development Agency.

These, the government says, are the forerunners of the kind of regional government that is familiar to the Germans, but alien to the English for whom government is either local or national. Indeed, the fact that English regions fit so neatly into the European Union’s concept of a “Europe of regions” only increases suspicion. Some Eurosceptics see regionalism,

¹ See *The Foundations Under Attack – the roots of apostasy* by Michel de Semlyen. This is a reprint of his talk to the United Protestant Council on 1-11-97.

along with devolution for Scotland and Wales, as a way of helping the EU to chop Britain up into small bits, the better to devour it. *EC 27-3-99*

The Roman Church has been a strong upholder of this drive to regionalisation. It was the Church's backing for a YES vote for the Assemblies that is said to have carried the day both in Scotland and Wales.

The New Commonwealth at 50

Just 50 years ago the rules of the Commonwealth were changed. The word "British" was dropped, as was the need to "have a common allegiance to the Crown", thus opening it up to countries which did not have close ties to Britain. It has steadily grown to now "encompass 54 countries from all continents and 1.7 billion people of every region, religion and race". The Queen is the appointed head of the Commonwealth—it is not a hereditary position.

Already over a quarter of the world's nations are members and there is a growing list of countries that wish to join. Some years ago Israel and the PLO applied. Yemen wants to join. It has been reported that Eire, too, has also been holding secret talks with the Commonwealth secretariat.

To Bible students the Commonwealth indicates countries that look to Britain for leadership, and as such are part of the "young lions" who are standing with the "Tarshish" power in opposition to the "King of the North" powers who invade Israel. (Ez. 38:13). Canada, Australia, South Africa and India are leading Commonwealth members.

Chapter 9:

KOSOVO – WHAT WERE THE FACTS?

Early in 1999, the Balkans tinderbox was ignited once more. This area saw the events which led to the first World War, saw much trouble in the second, and has been bubbling up every few years ever since. It is on the dividing line between the Eastern and the Western Roman empires in the past. It is the battleground between Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Moslem religions. In the West we are given a one-sided view of the situation, a European viewpoint with little favour being shown to the Greek Orthodox side. Not that there weren't great atrocities against the Moslem inhabitants of Kosovo by the Serbs. But it is emerging that these were exaggerated to support a US/Nato show of strength. White hats and Black Hats in the Balkans is the, at first, rather strange title of an article by Bob Allen, Professor of Economics at the University of British Columbia.¹

White hats and black hats in the Balkans

To tell the “good guys” from “the bad guys”, Hollywood apparently used the simple rule of white hats for the good and black for the bad! What this article endeavours to show is that in the confused issues of the Balkans, who we are told are the “good guys” aren't necessarily so! The Serbs, and especially Milosevic were cast in the role of the “bad guys”, and as such were to be bombed into submission. Much was made of the atrocities by the Serbs against the Moslem Albanians. It was on the basis of these killings that the NATO led bombing was justified. In the 78 days it lasted, a total of 34,000 sorties were flown, mainly by America, with a smaller contribution from Britain, Canada and France. The total bill has been put at £61 billion—the equivalent of £32,000 for every man, woman and child in Kosovo. Yet at the end of it, it was concluded that very little of the Serbian armour had been disabled, and the strategic bombings of targets such as bridges and factories were poorly planned and executed. Milosevic's defeat was caused by withdrawal of Russian backing, rather than western military might.

The large numbers of inspectors from the International War crimes tribunal, who were drafted in to find evidence of atrocities had to conclude that Nato had exaggerated numbers of Albanians who had been killed. The mass graves were found, largely, to contain only small numbers of bodies. Not that there weren't terrible killings, but both sides were guilty—the KLA forces as well as the Serbian. Their conclusion was that there never had been genocide in Kosovo. *Sunday Times* 31-10-99

The peacekeeping forces

KFOR troops drawn from Nato have been given areas of responsibility. At Russia's insistence she was included as a reward for her role in ending the



conflict. Russia also sent troops in very rapidly, who managed to seize control of the Pristina Airport. It took Nato some time to regain control. Eventually it was agreed that Russia could patrol sub-areas within the British, French, German and American sectors. However through using an out-of-date map, Russia found herself allocated an area of extreme sensitivity, a Serbian stronghold. "The one place they never should be, they have gotten," said a UN official. Nato

was initially unaware of its mistake, but appears the Russian's weren't—they rapidly established themselves in the area. *The Economist* 26-6-99; *Time* 26-7-99

The latest head count

Kosovo's ethnic breakdown

Ethnic group	Current population	%	1998 population	%	Current pop. as % of 1998
Albanian	1,394,200	93	1,829,119	84	76
Serb	70,000	5	190,669	9	37
Other	42,000	3	169,946	8	25

Sources: UNHCR; previous Yugoslav census

What is evident that after the hostilities ceased and the peacekeeping troops took up their role, that in many areas the remaining Serbs have been driven out and some 35 Serbian Orthodox churches have been damaged or destroyed. (*The Times* 2-8; 4-8-99) Many are

having to be guarded by the KFOR troops and a spokesman for the Orthodox church in Kosovo said that were it not for these 50,000 troops there would be no Serbs left in Kosovo and the monastery where he lives would be in ruins. *Time* 13-12-99

So now Kosovo is under the control of peace-keeping troops, with little indication that they will rapidly be withdrawn.

Holy war in the Balkans

Why was America so keen to intervene in the dispute between Serb and Moslem? It was said that Mrs Madeleine Albright, the American Secretary of State, was instrumental in US involvement. Her family being Jewish had suffered in 2nd WW, many members perishing in the Holocaust. She is determined that the world should never again turn a blind eye to atrocities. Kofi Anan, the UN Secretary-General was also in full support. The battles in this region have as their background a religious basis. The split between Eastern and Western Rome was a split between the Roman Catholic west and the Greek Orthodox east. Subsequent Moslem penetrations, in

fulfilment of the Trumpets of judgement as recorded in Revelation 9, added a third religious dimension.

Germany's efforts in the 2nd WW in this region to champion the Roman Catholic cause against the Orthodox and the Moslem have been well chronicled.¹ At least 350,000 Serb Orthodox men, women and children were massacred. Many thousands were expelled and many thousands forcibly converted. The stated policy was "convert a third, expel a third, kill a third". This naturally colours to this day Serbian suspicions of western action in their region. The *Daily Telegraph* ran an article 11-8-91 outlining these matters. The reporter commented:

In present Mostar, where I am writing this, the events of 50 years ago are recalled with unabated horror. An elderly Muslim, who broke down while recounting how the Ustasha Franciscans had hurled small children screaming into a deep ravine, said: "Do you know the worst thing? That the Catholic Church has never even apologised."

Last Sunday the Serbian Orthodox Patriarch held a burial service for 3,000 victims of this Franciscan atrocity. One of the few survivors from the village, in his address, blamed the crime of 50 years ago partly on the Croatia separatists wanting to break away from their brother Yugoslavs, and partly on "a large and universal Church that wants to further spread its power, the number of its believers and the territory it controls".

To quote from *Holy War in the Balkans* by Paul Billington, whose booklet, although written in 1995, gives a valuable overview of the continuing conflict in the region:

When one considers, and then reconsiders the facts in this situation, it is not all that surprising if Orthodox Serbs—and probably Russian Orthodox quarters too—see in these events an attempt by the Catholic West to continue where Hitler, Mussolini and Ante Pavelic left off.

Will Nato strike again?

The Nato air war against Yugoslavia was illegal, unnecessary and a failure, according to a pamphlet published yesterday by the Centre for Policy Studies.

Referring to the Charter of the United Nations, its author, Mark Littman, says it is generally agreed that the use of force is prohibited unless in self-defence or under the authority of the UN Security Council.

Neither reason was cited by the alliance: military action was justified on humanitarian grounds. *DT* 13-11-99

¹ *Holy War in the Balkans* Paul Billington. *The Vatican's Holocaust* Avro Manhattan.

It has cast NATO in a much more aggressive role than in the past. This bodes ill for the future. This year in Kosovo, next year ...? Israel springs to mind. Not with America being the leading power of Nato, but the moves underfoot to develop a European force, might present a different picture, especially at a time when Britain may have broken away.

Israel is all too aware of the undercurrents within the Palestinian movement who are saying:

There are other peoples suffering from oppression—such as the Palestinians—and they would like to see the international community apply economic and diplomatic pressure on Israel to stop the occupation and to fulfil its agreements with the Palestinians”. *BIPAC* 14-04-99

Serbia's Orthodox leaders rebel

The formidable force that the Pope wields is recognised by friend and foe alike. Is it better to co-operate or resist? For the Orthodox leaders in Serbia who have been on the receiving end of NATO's bombardments, it would seem they have chosen co-operation. They are keen to overthrow their president, Slobodan Milosevic. They see no future in his stand against the West. They want to see his government replaced by a “government of national salvation”. The leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church firmly blamed Milosevic for their plight, and called on Nato to increase their protection for the Serbs left in Kosovo. In defiance of the government ban on demonstrations and calls for the government's resignation, the Church instructed its priests to tell the people of the terrible atrocities committed in their name and from which they had been shielded by the official media coverage. This intervention in state affairs by the Church was seen as a potentially critical moment for the government. *DT* 28 & 29-06-99 However as the year wore on, in spite of many rallies backed by the Serbian Orthodox church, Milosevic remains in power. The economy of Serbia has reached a new low and public servants and the elderly were reported not to have had their salaries or pensions for several months. *DT* 22-9-99

At the same time the exiled king—Crown Prince Alexander of Yugoslavia paid a visit to his homeland from his exile in London and backed the Patriarch's calls for reforms. He and his wife stayed in the Cetinje Monastery of the Orthodox Church where the 14th century crown used at the 1910 coronation of his great-grandfather is kept. The likelihood of it being used again seems remote at the moment. *DT* 01-07-99

Chapter 10:

ISRAEL – PEACE: STEP BY PAINFUL STEP

The previous year saw the signing of the Wye Accord, which had raised expectations that at last things were moving forwards. However things soon went wrong and following a disastrous visit by President Clinton to Israel, things ground to a halt once more. Then Mr Netanyahu lost a no confidence vote, and so fresh elections were called.

Little happened on the peace talks front in the first half of the year. In the May 1999 elections, Mr Barak swept to power with a convincing majority. However in Israel there is a delay until the new government takes over, so it was not until July that Mr Barak officially took office. He immediately embarked on a whirlwind tour to get the peace talks moving again. As the year ends not only are things moving—albeit slowly—on the Palestinian front, but also on the Syrian. As we comment every year, we look for peace, because this is what the prophet Ezekiel has shown. But he also indicated that it was not a peace that was blessed by God. (Ez. 39:26). It will be a peace by an Israel trusting in her own strength, rather than relying on God. The time of peace will reach its climax during the time the saints are at Sinai and when Elijah is preparing the nation for its Messiah, just prior to the invasion by Gog. Surely the return of the Master must be near!

Prime Minister Ehud Barak

What a combination of names from the time of the Judges! Ehud Barak was born in Israel on a Kibbutz. He was a military man—in fact Israel's most decorated soldier with 5 citations for bravery. Most of the time he was a commando. He retired in 1995 and six months later he entered politics as Mr Rabin's Interior Minister. Following the death of Mr Rabin, Simon Peres took over as Prime Minister and chose this former Chief of Staff to be his Secretary of State, even though he had virtually no previous political experience. At the time we quoted from the DT 22-11-95

Mr Barak's elevation may create something of the successful Peres-Rabin 'dream team' with Mr Peres the chief visionary of the peace and Mr Barak taking on Mr Rabin's mantle as the cautious military tactician.

They had little time to make this partnership grow; in the elections that followed in May 1996 Mr Peres' Labour party was defeated and Mr Netanyahu's Likud party came to power. As a business graduate his forte was in modernising the Israeli economy, rather than driving peace forwards. At the end of 1998, he lost a vote of confidence in the Knesset, and called for new elections. It was a critical time in the Peace Talks. Whoever was to lead Israel needed a mandate from the people to make the big changes that were being called for—the giving up of more land and facing the "problem" of the conflicting claims on Jerusalem.

Mr Arafat was also threatening to proclaim a Palestinian State on May 4th, but was persuaded not to as it would only inflame the situation and might lead to the Israelis voting for a government who would refuse to go any further with the peace talks.

The hand of Britain

In the event, Mr Barak won the election by a clear majority of votes. His Labour Party had remodelled itself along the lines of the British “New” Labour Party of Tony Blair. He had met British advisers to help him in the quest to win over support.

At Mr Blair’s request, Peter Mandelson—whose father was once the advertising manager for the *Jewish Chronicle*—is believed to have advised Israeli Labour Party campaign strategists how the job is best done.

Mr Barak met Labour election strategists in London last November, and at least one of them, Matthew Taylor, was sent to Tel Aviv to provide follow-up assistance. As a result, Mr Barak is to rename his Labour Party list for the May 17 election “One Israel” and will present a revamped modernising manifesto. Candidates will be drafted in from outside the party, much to the chagrin of the old guard.

The initiative is believed to have been organised by Mr Blair’s friend, fundraiser and tennis partner, Michael Levy, a millionaire pop music promoter who was elevated to the peerage by Mr Blair shortly after his 1997 election victory. Lord Levy’s son, Daniel, lives in Tel Aviv, where he works as an assistant to Yossi Beilin, a senior Israeli Labour Party figure.

Mr Barak, a former army chief of staff and once Netanyahu’s commander, is also relying on support from the American Democrats to help to oust his former colleague. To the fury of the Israeli Right, President Clinton is suspected of giving the go-ahead to his most ferocious strategist, James Carville, to help Mr Barak’s campaign. *ST* 17-1-99

The election took place with 33 parties competing for 120 seats. Two votes are cast, one for the party and one for the Prime Minister. Barak won the Prime Minister vote by a clear majority, helped by the support of the Arab vote in Israel. He then had to piece together a coalition from the many parties. He had a 45 day period in which to do this.

His “Basic Guidelines of the 28th Government of Israel” commenced:

The main objectives of the Government are: national and personal security by way of a determined struggle against terrorism: an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict by achieving genuine peace; the prevention of war and bloodshed; ... *BIPAC* 14-7-99

The Middle East peace talks

The peace talks had all but ended with the run up to the Israeli elections in May. Within a week of taking office in July, Prime Minister Barak had visited President Mubarak in Egypt, Yasser Arafat at the Gaza border, King Abdullah II in Jordan and seen President Suliman of Turkey. After that he went to America and Britain. Everywhere he went he was well received. Mr Mubarak called him “a friend”; Yasser Arafat talked about “partnership”; Madeleine Albright talked of “a new phase”. President Clinton found a partner he could work well with, and a British official present at the meeting with Mr Blair said:

“It was wonderfully refreshing. He has brought a commitment to peace which, after three years of a government doing everything in its power to make it not work, makes one feel like a man emerging from the darkness and blinking in the sunlight.” *DT* 22-7-99

This new momentum eventually succeeded in bringing the talks to life. After several months of negotiations, there was signed on September 4th what is known as “The Sharm Accord” (it was signed at Sharm el-Sheika) or “Wye-2”. Flanked by Abdullah—the new Jordanian King, Madeleine Albright and President Mubarak of Egypt, Mr Barak and Mr Arafat put their signatures to the document and exchanged handshakes. It is a very ambitious programme, which aims to resolve all outstanding issues—including Jerusalem, the position of the refugees, water and sovereignty for the emergent Palestinian entity—by Sept 13th, 2000.

There were to be three staged hand-overs of land—the first of which was carried out immediately on September 5th. The 2nd should have been in November, but was delayed because the particular areas Israel were proposing were not to Mr Arafat’s liking. Israel says the 2nd stage areas are not for negotiation, and they await Mr Arafat’s signature on the maps. (This took place early Jan. 2000). They have entered discussions on the 3rd pullback, which is scheduled for late January 2000.

On Sept. 13th—the sixth anniversary of the handshake on the White House lawn that launched the current peace process—Final Status talks began on schedule. There were to be two stages to the release of prisoners. Some 200 prisoners were released immediately, with the 2nd group of 150 scheduled for 8th October, but delayed a week while the names were haggled over. The PLO on their part has submitted a list of its police officers. There have been many meetings since the agreement was signed in September. *The Jerusalem Post* reported that Arafat and Barak had met secretly at Barak’s house at night—only the 3rd time Arafat has set foot on Israeli soil. *DT* 18-09-99. Later Barak met Arafat in Ramallah—the first meeting between the two leaders on Palestinian-controlled territory. *Israel Line* 22-12-99

Another important matter has been the opening of a safe passage to link Gaza with the West Bank. The Palestinians are evenly divided, population wise, between the two areas, yet there was no safe passage between them.

A Gaza-Hebron route was opened in October, although a northern extension to Ramallah remains to be agreed. Those wishing to travel have to obtain a special identity card called a smart card which, as well as containing details of their fingerprints and facial appearance, can be tracked along the route, by sophisticated computers. It is also intended to issue these cards to all foreign workers arriving in Israel. Some \$10m has been invested on this project in the past two years. *Israel Line* 16 & 25-10-99

In early November, President Clinton convened a meeting between Barak and Arafat at Oslo—the place where the two sides reached an initial peace deal in 1993. Its intention was to build on progress so far and to strengthen the two leaders as they entered the crucial stages in the final status talks.

The refugee problem

The two biggest problems will be Jerusalem and the right of return for those who were persuaded by Arab governments to leave in 1948 and 1967. There are now some 600,000 refugees who have been living in wretched conditions in the Arab countries they fled to, being kept as political pawns. Unlike Israel, which took active steps to absorb all who came to live there, the Arab nations have done little to help their refugees, in spite of many offers of financial help. Israel is insistent that there is no possibility for these refugees to return after 50 years to Israeli held territory. They would either have to be settled in the Palestinian area or in other countries.

There does seem to be signs that their host countries are taking the first tentative steps towards recognising that they will have to be absorbed. Jordan has a budget of \$350 million to aid the needy, and half of this is to be targeted at improving the living standards for the Palestinian refugees there. Syria and Lebanon are reported now to be more receptive to pressure to do something for those in their countries. *BIPAC* 25-08-99. France was reported to have been putting pressure on Lebanon to accept that the 400,000 refugees there would have to be absorbed. This does present problems, not the least that this represents 10% of her population and that the refugees are mainly Sunni Moslems, whereas the Lebanese Moslems are mainly Shi'ite. *BIPAC* 6-10-99. There has even been speculation that America has been negotiating with Iraq to lift sanctions in return for agreeing to absorb between 1m and 2m refugees. *ID* 10-9-99

A report in the *Jerusalem Post* 5-11-99, suggested that in the negotiations with the Palestinians the idea had been put that Israel might be willing to hand over certain areas in exchange for the Palestinians giving up their insistence of the “Right of Return” for all refugees. These areas could be used by the Palestinians to settle refugees in.

Jerusalem—the stone of stumbling

Jerusalem seems a more insoluble problem. The Arabs are determined to claim it for themselves, whilst Israel is determined to retain control.

We know from Zech. 12 that this indeed is to be the big issue that brings the nations down to Jerusalem. The final solution will rest in God's hands.

Israel has for a long time been waging a diplomatic offensive against visiting foreign ministers meeting with Palestinian leaders at the Orient House in East Jerusalem. The Oslo and Wye agreements forbid this being used as a Palestinian political headquarters, but few countries take any notice of this. Because the Palestinian people do not have a State, they can't have a capital city. Their aim is that people regard East Jerusalem as if it was their capital.

In February, the Israeli foreign ministry sent a letter to all diplomatic missions, asking that they neither "encourage nor hold meetings with the Palestinian Authority officials in East Jerusalem." The German Ambassador replied that the EU deems Jerusalem a separate entity from Israel, and that the European diplomats were not constrained by Israeli political directives. They called for Jerusalem to be internationalised. This is the first time that the concept of Jerusalem being a separate entity—*corpus separatum*—has been explicitly raised since the phrase was used way back in 1947 when the UN drew up its partition plans for the whole area. Interestingly too, there have been reports from the Palestinians, that they are looking for Israeli withdrawals not to the pre 1967 boundaries, but to the borders in this 1947 UN plan.

Israel launched a major diplomatic campaign to put its case for Jerusalem to be recognised as Israel's capital and to squash any ideas on it being a separate entity from Israel. Because the Arabs rejected the 1947 plans, Israel argues that this plan is dead.

It is fascinating to see the hand of Europe and the Vatican pressurising Israel over Jerusalem. The *BIPAC* report (17-3-99) on this argument over Jerusalem, added a significant little item—"The future status of Jerusalem is expected to be raised when Vatican Secretary of State Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran meets US Secretary of State Madeline Albright in the coming weeks." This visit was part of the Vatican's Middle East peace-keeping mission. When they met in mid March they discussed the Middle East peace process and the Iraqi situation. Tauran stressed the Vatican's opposition to America's use of force in Iraq. A commentator on this meeting speculated that it was also to clear the way for a possible visit to Ur of the Chaldees by the Pope.

In November the *Catholic Herald* 6-11-99, reported that Archbishop Tauran had participated in a two-day symposium in Jerusalem. It was called for by Roman Catholic leaders to discuss "the Church's hopes and concerns about the future of the Holy City." The delegates also visited President Weizman and Mr Arafat.

Once more the Americans postponed the moving of their embassy to Jerusalem. President Clinton said that he did not want to pre-judge the outcome of the final-status negotiations. *JP* 9-7-99

The Syrian – Israeli peace talks

For some time there had been hints that Syria was wishing to resume peace talks with Israel. Secret contacts confirmed that the talks that ended in 1996 were ready to restart.

Lord Levy, a Jew and Tony Blair's special envoy, visited Syria in early December and reported that President Assad was ready to compromise on one of the key security issues, that Israel retain control of a strategic post on Mount Hermon, even if she withdraws generally from the Golan. In return, Israel is prepared to share the precious water resources.

Israeli sources say several world leaders have tried to mediate between Syria and Israel, but Britain has come to play an important role thanks in a large part to Levy, who had already undertaken two missions to Damascus before last week's visit. *Sunday Times* 5-12-99

Madeleine Albright was visiting the area the following week and made arrangements for the talks to commence in America in mid-December. Mr Barak and his team met with Farouk al-Sharaa, the Syrian foreign minister. The talks went well, although the two men refused to shake hands in public when they stood on either side of President Clinton, who declared:

"The road to peace is no easier...than the road to war. There will be challenges along the way, but we have never had such an extraordinary opportunity to reach a comprehensive settlement." *DT* 16-12-99.

The talks are due to resume in early January. For Mr Barak and the nation of Israel, the prospect of peace with all their neighbours—something that has never happened in the 51 years of Israel's statehood—is now more than just a dream.

Central to the Syrian talks will be the giving up of the Golan, in the past a strategic buffer against surprise attacks. That land separation is less needed in this sophisticated electronic age. Missiles have taken over from foot soldiers—as witness the Kosovo war. The military are prepared to give the area up provided there are at least unmanned early warning devices stationed there and an international monitoring force is stationed in the area. Even these are being replaced by spy satellites. Also the Golan has not been heavily populated—some 17,000 Jews have settled there. The majority would—reluctantly—give up land in exchange for peace, according to some opinion polls, though others show a small majority against.

Peace with Syria would come at a cost, and Israel is expecting substantial American help to pick up the bill. Sums of \$100b spread over several years are being floated for the costs of a comprehensive peace involving Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians. Just on the Syrian front, the cost of moving the settlers would be some \$10b with \$8b to relocate Israeli military bases. *Washington Times* 14-12-99. With a new American President due at the end of 2000, Israel is reassured to know that

if Mr Bush wins, he has stated that peace in the Middle East needed to start with Israel's security, and cited American alliances in the Middle East as crucial for furthering US goals in Europe and Asia. *JP* 10-12-99

Assad's calculations

French intelligence sources revealed that President Assad is a sick man, only working about 3 hours a day. Aged 69 he is ailing with heart disease, diabetes and prostate problems. He is busy grooming his 34 year-old son Bashar to take over, after his eldest son was killed in a car-crash in 1994, and also his son-in-law Asef Shawkat aged 40. He works in the intelligence field, while Bashar focuses on the political arena. These and other younger officials have had a Western education, studying in the US, Britain and France. *BIPAC* 17-3-99

President Assad feels that under President Clinton he is more likely to get what he wants out of a deal with Israel. After the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979, America wrote off many Egyptian debts, and financed the creating of an Egyptian tank manufacturing industry. American and European arms were also sold at favourable prices.

Against this background, and reinforced by the still persisting belief in Damascus that the Barak coalition in Israel has a built-in majority for peace at almost any price, Assad's "strategic decision for peace" is easily explained. He will opt for "peace" for as long as it gives him not only the Golan Heights, thus depriving Israel of its main deterrent against Syria, but also US and European loans to buy Western arms with which he can successfully attack a demoralised Israel afterwards.

Assad also has every reason to believe that Western economic interests, which have never permitted intervention on the part of Israel in the past, will act similarly in the future, thus rendering any US guarantees to Israel worthless. Therefore an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights greatly increases the medium-term likelihood of war. *I.D.* 3-9-99

Chapter 11:

ISRAEL: THE ECONOMIC ENGINE OF THE NEW MIDDLE EAST

We briefly look at some of the changes and challenges facing Israel's economy. We will look in chapter 14 at her trade with Britain, India and Turkey.

The economy

Israel does a lot of trade with the Far East, and was substantially affected by the downturn there. With things turning for the better more rapidly than expected, Israel's economy began to grow again in the last quarter of the year. So much so, that over the year industrial exports have grown 8.2% to \$21.5 billion. This has been helped by a huge increase in software exports—they have jumped 40%, and are expected to have reached \$2b.

Israel's "black gold" is grey

"We no longer need oil. Technological brainpower is our black, white and grey gold. It is the new Israeli essence." *JP* 22-10-99

Computers and software are the latest valuable resource to come out of Israel. Many of the latest developments originate here. American firms are buying up Israeli products and expertise. The computer giant Intel in the biggest buyout in Israel's high-tech industry paid \$1.6b for an Israeli computer firm. Intel's plant at Kiryat Gat—its only non-American plant producing the latest design in chips—opened in July. It is expected to export \$1b of chips a year. Intel is also developing here the next generation of computer, which will reduce costs dramatically. The "miracle millennium computer" is being coded in Hebrew to help keep it secret. Designed and developed exclusively in Israel, it is expected to be made only here. *BIPAC* 28-4-99 *Israel line* 16-10-99 *JP* 22-10-99

Another American giant, National Semiconductors launched "a computer on a chip". This single chip contains all the components of a personal computer, except a disk and memory. A world first and developed in Israel. *JP* 30-7-99

Over the last 20 years Israel has created the most dynamic high-tech industry in the world. Recognising that the most abundant natural resource of the nation is the intellect of its people and recognising the huge global growth in high-tech, Israel put in place education, technology development and business-support mechanisms to move from textiles to high-tech. Israel has succeeded. Last year 43% of Israeli exports were in the high-tech sector. *BIPAC* 10-2-99

Ezekiel 38 speaks of Gog coming to take a spoil and a prey.

Israel, the economic engine of the New Middle East

This was the challenging headline in a special advertising section in the *Jerusalem Post* on Industrial Parks and commercial real estate.

In the past ten years Israel has become a world leader in high-tech research industries. According to the experts, high-tech industries will be the economic engine of the 21st century, and Israel is expected to become a regional economic powerhouse.

The proliferation of high-tech industries and the concentration of a large amount of research power will generate economic activity in other areas as well, such as services, finance, real estate, and conventional industries.

Israel may well become one of the most prosperous countries of the world, awash with interesting and lucrative business opportunities.

Small wonder that many foreign investors are evaluating the profitability of investing in Israel, more so since the new government is set to renew the peace process, which will ostensibly enhance business opportunities even more.

Economic experts believe that the fruitful completion of the peace process will gradually convey Israel into one of the economic hubs of the Middle East. This country has the technology and the infrastructure, as well as the financial muscle to achieve it.

Furthermore, Israel's geographic position at the crossroads of the Middle East, the seaboard of the Fertile Crescent area, may well transform this country into the maritime gateway to a large area of vast economic potential. *Jerusalem Post* 6-8-99

Well, yes, it was an advertising feature, but it does express the great change in Israel's economy and the prospects that peace would hold out. Direct foreign investment was reported to have been up 40% in 1998 over the previous year. Figures for 1999 were expected to be similar.

The decline in agriculture

In the past Israel had built herself up on her agricultural and horticultural exports. These now account for a very modest 3% of GDP, yet they use 57% of the available water. Following last winter's drought, the Sea of Galilee has dropped below its critical "red line" level for the first time. At the northern end the water has receded almost a kilometre from its normal position. Water has had to be severely rationed, and many farmers have had to watch their crops wilt, as there was no more water available to irrigate and no rain fell. The water allocated for agriculture was cut by 40% and then a further 15%. It makes little sense to grow crops that need a lot of water. It is very hurtful to the Zionist dream of "making the desert bloom through high-tech agriculture". The deserts will indeed bloom, but that will

be under the hand of the Lord Jesus when the nation is dwelling in righteousness, and God's Blessings will be poured out.

Oil and gas

Normally there is little to report—in the last two years it has been a matter that has appeared in the final issue of the year in the Israeli press! This year there have been several interesting items. The find at Rosh Ha'ayin in northern Israel announced at the end of 1998, which claimed to have a billion barrels of high quality oil, is estimated by other geologists as being only a tenth the size, but as one said "It would make it the richest lode in the country's history". A Texas oil tycoon is drilling in the Dead Sea area, confident that he will find large reserves.

British Gas which has discovered considerable supplies of oil and gas off Egypt, has won a government tender to drill off the coast of Israel, as well as buying up a 50% stake in 4 of the existing drilling licenses held by Israeli companies. Soon afterwards a commercially viable find of natural gas was reported from one of the drillings off Askelon. It is thought that it could yield as much as 21 million cubic feet a day—worth \$70,000! It would meet all Israel Electric Corp.'s needs for 10 years. Whilst looking for shipwrecks, the Titanic discoverer found natural gas bubbling up from the ocean floor off Ashdod—indicating a supply that could produce 30 million cubic feet a day. *Israel Line* 1-11-99; *JP* 24-9; 12-11-99.

Following years of negotiations, Egypt has agreed to sell gas to Israel. The Project known as 'pipeline of peace' entails building a gas pipeline from Egypt to Israel and to the Palestinians. It should be completed in two years. It is hoped to extend this line to Syria and Turkey. *Israel Line* 23-12-99 Although Israel has little problems obtaining oil from her Arab neighbours, the government will be relieved to reduce their dependence upon supplies from more militant states. As Israel's own supplies come on stream this will diminish even further. Rising oil prices also cost Israel dear—every \$1 rise in price costs the economy \$55m

Immigration and Population

Israel's population had climbed to 6,169,000 according to figures released early November, an increase of 154,000 over the 12 months. Of these about 4.8m are Jews, representing about 36% of the world's estimated Jewish population. This contrasts with a Jewish population of 650,000 in 1948, about 6% of the world's Jews. *Israel Line* 9-11-99

The biggest source by far of immigrants is Russia. 46,000 came in 1998, with an estimate of about 64,000 in 1999, and a similar figure is expected in 2000. Most gave the reason for coming as "worry for the future of my children", and 31% listed anti-Semitism as their key reason. *JP* 1-10-99

Chapter 12:

RUSSIA: YELTSIN RESIGNS

There almost had to be some big story that breaks at the end of the year and here it was! It was the culmination of a very interesting year for watchers of Russia. Political events here are of great interest, for this is the “Dragon” power of Revelation ch. 16 and the latter-day military might of the little horn of the goat in Daniel’s vision in ch 8, and the land from which Gog comes forth in Ezekiel 38. (See Milestones 1997 ch 2).

A younger, stronger man at the head of Russia really could move things along. We can’t know all the future and Putin, like Mr Primakov, may suddenly disappear. Never-the-less it is an exciting change!

What does Ezekiel 38 tell us?

And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:

*Before being led forth, they are turned back or turned about RV. An interesting word in the Hebrew, which can mean retreat or restore! In v. 8 it is used of the land of Israel which is brought back or restored, RV mg., from the sword. With either meaning it indicates a change in circumstances. It would be reasonable to see this nation as strong to be a guard **unto** (v7) the many other forces. Not a guard over—these other nations are working with Gog. They have been turned back, or retreated, over the past few years. They have had to retreat back to base, their Middle East influence was great, but is now much weaker. Their global challenge to the power of America was great, but not now. But are we arriving at the end of that retreating, moving now to a time of restoration, so that they are strong to do the work?*

The Duma elections

Elections were held on December 19th. 28 parties and blocs contested 450 seats. Half the seats are contested on a constituency-by-constituency basis, the other half on the party vote. Only parties receiving 5% or more of the votes gain an allocation of seats. The Unity (Yedinstvo) Party was set up less than two months before the election. It brought together a wide variety of popular people and regional leaders. It had the backing of the Kremlin. In accordance with Russian political practice, Mr Putin, as Prime Minister, did not stand for election, nor did he formally lead any of the political parties. However, he made it clear that he would be voting for Unity. It came from nothing to receive a quarter of the votes. Under the Russian arrangements of the 225 party seats, the Communists have the largest number—67. Unity will have 64, Fatherland-All Russia 37 and the Union

of Right Forces, which is also broadly supported by the Kremlin 24 seats. The extremist Zhirinovskiy has 17 seats and the liberal Yabloko party, 16. The remaining 225 seats are held by individually elected candidates. Mr Putin should have little trouble pushing through his reforms.

Yeltsin resigns

Elections for a new President were due in any case in June 2000, and Mr Yeltsin could not stand for another term, even if his health had been up to it. His decision to stand down early and hand over control to the Prime Minister, Mr Putin, was probably a carefully planned step. Mr Putin was riding high. The Duma elections early in December had given the Kremlin party—"Unity"—strong support. To wait until June for elections could weaken that support. There were various scandals about mis-appropriation of money that would break out once Mr Yeltsin was out of power, so he needed his man to win to protect him. Also the Chechen war, which had received public support, might prove to be a noose in the months ahead. And so mid-day on the 31st December was chosen by him to announce to the nation that he was stepping down and handing over power.

Within a few hours Mr Putin had announced that Mr Yeltsin had been given immunity from prosecution! The decree stated:

"The President, who has ceased carrying out his duties, enjoys immunity. He cannot be liable to legal or administrative responsibility, detained or arrested" *The Times* 1-1-2000.

March 26th has been pencilled in for the new elections.

The spy who came into the fold

Mr Putin's rise to power has been meteoric, even by Kremlin standards. When, in August, Mr Yeltsin sacked his 4th Prime Minister in 18 months and replaced him by Vladimir Putin and announced that he was to be heir-apparent, few, even in Russia, had heard of him. Yet now, with his strong handling of the Chechen war, his popularity is enormous. Recent polls gave him a 75% job approval rating,

Despite mounting Russian losses, the campaign is still popular at home. It has also made Mr Putin the army's man, admired by an officer corps that considers itself the country's last hope for stability and has threatened to resign en masse if restrained. But the Putin phenomenon is already bigger than the war.

He has impressed Moscow's elite with his mastery of detail, foreign leaders with his languages (English and fluent German), and foreign bankers with his businesslike tone on finance and corruption. For the first time since *perestroika* in the 1980s, one man has the overwhelming backing of the media, the Duma's disparate blocs and even of the truculent intelligentsia.

“It turns out that the intelligentsia no longer needs freedom,” a leading Moscow pollster said recently. “It wants a tough hand. Everyone is simply fed up with the sense of defeat and disorder, and supporting Putin is a direct answer to this sense of loss.”

Mr Putin has no experience of the hustings and little obvious talent for oratory. Precision, not passion, is the hallmark of his public speaking.

But analysts agree that, after a decade of rash promises from politicians, this could turn out to be a plus. *The Times* 1-1-2000

A military man, he spent 15 years as a spy, mainly in the former East Germany. He then worked for the St Petersburg city council where he earned the nickname “the Grey Cardinal” for his dour behind-the-scenes style. In July 1998 he became head of the Federal Security Service, the FSB—the successor to the KGB. He is only 46, and must be the youngest Russian president. An American commentator described him as “Primakov Plus”. “He is a man of stability and all those things that people identify with Primakov, but he is also the person doing things.” *Russia Today* 12-12-99

His many backers see Putin as a leader with a calling—a man who will lead Russia’s revival after almost 15 years of self-abasement and failure, a leader who will preside over a strong state and a new, more powerful army, a future President with zero tolerance for separatism—or for Western interference in Russia’s affairs. *Time* 29-11-99

The Dragon speaks with a “frog-like” voice

Within hours of taking over from Mr Yeltsin he delivered the Presidential New Year talk to the nation.

“Freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of the mass media, the right to private property—all these basic freedoms of a civilised society will be reliably protected by the State.”

In lines that appeared to have been designed to reassure Western leaders as much as the home audience, Putin said he did not intend to stray from the reformist course of which Yeltsin was originally a staunch defender.

“We will only be able to assess how much that person [Yeltsin] has done for Russia after some time has passed. However, it is already clear today that Russia has taken the path of democratic reforms, has not turned away from this path and has managed to emerge as a strong, independent state.” *The Times* 1-1-2000

Freedom of speech, etc.—here was a “frog-like unclean spirit coming out of the mouth of the Dragon.” Rev. 16:13. And there was more!

“Derzhavnost”—Tsarist greatness

His first major political policy statement had been released two days earlier. In it, Mr Putin announced his vision for Russia. He called for a

“new national idea” based upon “Patriotism, Belief in Russia’s greatness, Statism and Social Solidarity.”

He then plucked out for praise the rather archaic and imperial term “*derzhavnost*”, or belief in the state’s greatness. The word is derived from “*derzhava*”, the orb that was part of the tsarist regalia and which **signified the imperial global reach**. [My emphasis. An orb is an ornamental sphere surmounted by a cross.]

Under “*gosudarstvenmchesvto*,” or statism, Putin wrote: “Russia will not soon become, if it ever becomes, a second copy of, say, the U.S. or England, where liberal values have deep historical traditions. Among us the state, its institutions [i.e. church] and structures, have always played an exclusively important role in the life of the country and the people. A strong state is for Russians not an anomaly, not something that must be fought against, but on the contrary is the source and guarantor of order, the initiator and main driving force of all change.”

Some political observers have argued that Russia’s Constitution with its tsar-like presidency, is also a danger to democracy. Putin wrote that he opposes any constitutional reform.

Russia needs a strong state power and must have it. I am not calling for totalitarianism. History proves all dictatorships, all authoritarian forms of government are transient. Only democratic systems are intransient. Whatever the shortcomings, mankind has not devised anything superior. A strong state power in Russia is a democratic, law-based, workable federal state.

He recognised that they had to concentrate on high-tech businesses.

The future of the country, the quality of the Russian economy in the 21st century will depend above all on progress in the spheres that are based on high technologies and produce science-intensive commodities, For 90% of economic growth is ensured today by the introduction of new achievements and technologies. *Moscow Times* 30-12-99 and *The Government of the Russian Federation Website*. 1-1-2000

Now which country has just those kinds of skills? Israel! A very, very desirable spoil and prey awaits, just as Ezekiel foretold 2,600 years ago!

Mr Putin has regular meetings with the Russian Patriarch, and on TV footage at the resignation of Yeltsin, Alexis was standing with the two men. The orb surmounted with a cross takes deeper meaning. The Patriarch Alexis II was himself a KGB informer, with the codename “thrush”. He has been close to Yeltsin, and will no doubt be close to Putin. Earlier in the year he added his weight behind moving the embalmed body of Lenin from view and burying him. It will be interesting to see if this now happens—an act of putting the past behind them.

Russia ripe for “Bonapartist” dictatorship

This was the headline to an intriguing article in the *Intelligence Digest* 26-11-99. [My **emphasis** added. Bonapartist = a movement based on Napoleon Bonapart. A strong leader who tries to lead his country out of difficulties.]

The Russian newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* believes that Russia is ripe for a “Bonapartist” dictatorship—and that Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has been chosen to fulfil this role by the Russian generals. It could be right on both counts, but with what consequences for the West?

That Russia is fertile ground for a nationalist backlash cannot be doubted. A country which was, less than half a generation ago, the second most powerful country in the world has, in just 10 years, lost control over its vassal states in Eastern Europe; lost its non-Russian Soviet empire; seen its annual economic output (on a purchasing-power-parity basis) drop to below that of Spain (\$593.4bn against \$645.6bn); failed to stop Nato and the European Union moving into territory it has vacated in the west; failed to stop the US pushing ahead with a missile-defence programme which it cannot possibly match; and been forced through weakness into a strategic alliance with China (selling Beijing virtually any weapons system it wants) which it knows will at some stage backfire. And now it is even finding it difficult to keep control over significant parts of its own territory.

All this and more (like the fact that male life expectancy in Russia is now below 59 years) has produced a surge in anti-Western feeling in Russia, with one recent opinion poll recording that only 3.7% of Russians believe the West is trying to help it become a civilised and developed nation.

This is exactly the right climate for the adoption of *Sovetskaya Rossiya*’s “Bonapartist” option.

In its 16 November edition, the paper described this as being a “counter-revolutionary dictatorship of the grande bourgeoisie underpinned by the military and petite bourgeoisie”.

It added: “Bonapartism combines social demagoguery with active chauvinist propaganda and aggression, a policy of stifling democratic freedoms and a policy of making extensive use of the military police and bureaucratic apparatus **and the church.**”

There is every chance that this is the direction in which Russia is moving. It is likely to be so for all the reasons stated above but also because Russia might think that its room for manoeuvre is at last opening up with the new strength in world oil and commodity prices. For instance, with oil prices surging towards \$26 a barrel, Russia could even do without the next tranche of IMF money (a second dollop of \$640m out of a total loan of \$4.5bn is currently held up over Russia failing to satisfy the loan’s

conditions). In other words, the West's leverage over Moscow is declining as oil and commodity prices recover.

A resurgent Russia, on the other hand, whilst it could never again pose a *global* challenge to the West, would seek to push out its defensive perimeter.

For instance, we would expect to see it make much more vigorous attempts to prevent Western political, economic, and military encroachments into the non-Russian republics of the former Soviet Union and to protect its southern flank. In Central Asia, it might encourage separatist sentiment among the Russian-speakers of northern Kazakhstan.

Under the latter scenario, however, our standing fear that Russia might, at some stage, attempt a major anti-American strategic play in the Middle East is greatly heightened.

A Bonapartist Russia might well conclude that backing the anti-US forces in the Middle East offered the best—and only—hope of re-establishing itself as a major power. Such a move would relieve the pressure on Russia's southern flank, ameliorate Chechen-induced difficulties with the Islamic world, and cause huge difficulties for—and divisions within—NATO.

Anti-American feeling in Russia

Another source explained the way in which the December 1998 bombings of Iraq had united the whole of Russia against America in an amazing way. This was in the *Global Intelligence Update* 21-12-98

What must be understood is that a firestorm swept Moscow last week. It was not only the government that was shocked by the air strikes on Iraq. The rhetoric from across the Russian political spectrum was startling. The lower-house of the Duma passed a resolution that resolutely condemned "the barbaric bombing of the Republic of Iraq," and said that it was an act of international terrorism that posed a direct threat to international peace and security. The resolution passed 394-2. Yuri Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow who is leading polls to succeed Yeltsin as President, said, "In these conditions, we have to develop our defence industry," "Russia must be a great military and sea power." "We need a modern army, a reliable nuclear deterrence system. The international community needs a strong Russia as a great power that respects itself and other powers." Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov summed it up. "We condemn the United States, and nobody should doubt our negative attitude."

There is a real parallel here between Russia today and Weimar Germany. . . .Russia is in precisely the same position today. Liberalisation had created economic disarray: poverty, inequality, and hopelessness. But what is going to galvanise the Russians psychologically is their loss of international standing. Bill Clinton rubbed their faces in the fact that it really doesn't much matter what Russia thinks. Focused on his own

problems, he failed to calculate the impact of his actions on Russia. Clinton's action produced a galvanic revelation. It drove home American contempt for Russia's views and brought together the entire Russian polity around a single issue: the return of Russian greatness.

The reconstruction of Russia's military is inevitable. Economic dislocation does not block this. Remember that Germany revitalised its economy with a rearmament program. In only five years Germany went from being essentially disarmed to being able to overawe its enemies. Russia's armed forces are in far better shape today than Germany's were in 1933. Revitalising those forces and increasing defence production could be precisely what is needed to kick-start the Russian economy. It worked for Germany.

So it may be that we shall see the re-growth of Russian nationalism, not working in isolation as in the past, but as we see in the next chapter, in co-operation with France and Germany. Mr Putin in his policy statement at the year-end spoke of the great need Russia had for foreign investment—and that it would be greatly welcomed.

The economy

In 1998 the rouble was tumbling—from a 6 per \$ to around 22 at the end of the year. This year it has fallen again—but no-where near as dramatically. At the year-end it stood at 26.9 per \$.

Russian figures—not a very reliable source—indicated a 20% year-on-year rise in industrial output. Productivity is way below that of the US—it averages only 19% of American levels. *The Economist* 23-10-99.

Rising oil prices have been a boon, the extra revenue that these generate surpasses the value of the IMF loans that had been promised but withheld because of irregularities with previous payments. It's the world's 3rd largest oil producer; the 6m barrels a day earn over 40% of its hard currency.

An end-of-the-year summary in *The Times* 1-1-2000 said:

A visitor to Russia today will find a country with enormous energy, huge resources and great talents. Despite official figures to the contrary, there is widespread, circumstantial evidence of wealth trickling down to an embryonic middle class.

Chapter 13:

THE MIDDLE EAST – THE KING OF THE NORTH

In these next two chapters we tie together some of the recent happenings that involve many countries. The description in Daniel ch. 11 is of two opposing powers in the latter-days—the King of the North and the King of the South. They take their meanings from the situation close to Daniel's day and described in ch. 11, but based on the events described in ch. 8. There is described a he-goat with a great horn, [Alexander the Great of Greece]. Having destroyed a two horned ram, [Medo-Persia], that great horn was broken, [Alexander died aged 33]. The one horn was replaced by four, [his power was divided between his four generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy]. The rest of Daniel chapter 8 is concerned with a little horn that developed on one of the horns, [Seleucus's] which was very strong towards the south, the east and the Holy Land, [the military power of Rome, which grew out of this Greek horn and eventually conquered all].

Daniel ch. 11 amplifies the history at the time of the four Greek horns. It is only concerned with two of them, [Seleucus in the north and Ptolemy in the south. It was these two horns which were constantly striving against each other, with Israel the battleground between them!] Then the Roman power assimilated all four horns. The middle section of Daniel ch. 11, tells of this Roman power becoming "christian". From history we know the centre of the Roman Empire moved to Constantinople under Constantine—the "second Rome." In 1453 with the fall of Constantinople, Moscow took over the role and was known as "the third Rome."

However, at the time of the end, we are re-introduced to a "King of the North" and a "King of the South" conflict, with Israel once more the battleground. So Daniel presents a latter-day conflict between a northern, military power and a southern. In this chapter we look at the evidence for a coming together of this northern power. Bible students have seen Russia and Europe as the north power and America and Britain in co-operation with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and others, as the south power.

We expect to see church and state working together. We have seen that in Western Europe this is the case. We have seen hints in the previous chapter that the Orthodox Church works just as closely, and more openly in Russia. What we look for is a reconciliation between the divided religions—that is coming as we saw in chapter 7, and reconciliation between Russia and Europe. What we read in the press might not be a true reflection of how Russia and Europe are working together.

France, Germany and Russia

France and Russia. In a remarkable unfolding of news we are see the close working together of France and Russia, to increase their power and influence in the Middle East to the detriment of America. Both countries have been working in the Middle East, but now we are seeing them co-operate together. This comes at a time of weakness for American power: President Clinton's misdemeanours left him weakened, and Presidential elections mean that he has not much longer in office.

It was back in 1997 when President Chirac visited Boris Yeltsin that they committed themselves to a "grand partnership" dedicated to reducing American influence in the Middle East. President Chirac said:-

Like you, we want a grand partnership between Russia and France, Russia and Europe, and a leading place for a strong and peaceful Russia in tomorrow's multipolar world. *Intelligence Digest* 11-98

Things have moved on apace since then; France and Russia have worked together on many matters. Both countries are opposed to American sanctions against Iran and Iraq and very much opposed to the December '98 bombing of Iraq over Saddam Hussein's opposition to the weapons inspectors.

President Yeltsin was to visit Paris on 28-29 January 1999. Although ill health caused this to be abandoned, some interesting words were spoken! When French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine held talks in Moscow on 12 January to prepare for the visit, he and his Russian counterpart declared almost total diplomatic harmony, particularly on Iraq and Kosovo where both Russia and France have been irked by American unilateralism. Russia's Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov welcomed Vedrine to Moscow saying:

"It is deeply symbolic that this new political year has begun with an official visit by the French foreign minister. On all international problems our positions are close if not identical." Vedrine reciprocated, saying: "On Iraq, as on Kosovo, our positions are very close, our aims convergent, and our approaches complementary."

In early May, Jacques Chirac visited Moscow. This was in the middle of the Nato bombing campaign against Serbia. President Chirac's office put out a statement prior to the visit, saying, "France has long wanted Russia to fully participate in the search for peace and security in Europe". The news report added, "Chirac has good personal relations with Yeltsin." France frequently opposed Nato action against Serbia, and insisted that Russia should be involved in talks. The press reported that France had been cut out of top-secret meetings because Washington feared Paris would betray the alliance's military plans. The Serbs often seemed to know in advance where they were going to be struck. *DT* 15-4-99.

Germany and Russia. Germany has had many links with Russia—she

receives 40% of her energy from Russia and is owed much money by Russia, so it is in her best interests to work with Russia.

Russia, and Syria, Iran, Iraq

For the past few years Russia has been re-building up her influence in the Middle East—mainly in the field of arms supplies and technical know-how. It all came to a halt with the fall of communism, but she has steadily been taking up the reins again.

Syria. President Assad made his 1st trip to Moscow since the fall of the Soviet Union, on 5th July, just a few hours after the arrival of the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz. A few days earlier the Iranian Interior Minister was in Moscow! Assad was seeking Russia's support for peace talks with Israel. They discussed how to limit US domination of the area.

“[Yeltsin and Assad] spoke out decisively for the creation of a multi-polar world which would not permit any one power to dictate events.”

At the top of Assad's agenda was the sale of \$2bn worth of Russian arms to Syria. Iran and the United Arab Emirates are said to have helped finance the deal. *Intelligence Digest* 9-7-99; *The Times* 29-7-99. Iran and Saudi Arabia are said to have underwritten the £7.5b outstanding debt from deals done with the Soviet. *BIPAC* 3-3-99

Iran. An *I.D. Report* 15-01-99 gave details of the links with Iran.

Moscow and Tehran have a very clear understanding over what really matters and what does not matter. To Iran, what matters is Russian help to build up its military—including non-conventional—power so that it can better resist American/Saudi hegemony in the Persian Gulf. To Moscow what matters is the need to prevent (as far as possible) the spread of Islamist fundamentalism in the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as a desire to make life difficult for America in the Middle East.

Evidence of the deepening Russian-Iranian alliance came only last week when the report from the Interfax news agency on 9 January quoted Russian Atomic Energy Minister Yevgeny Adamov as saying that Moscow was pushing forward with the construction of the controversial Iranian nuclear reactor at Bushehr. He said that more Russian specialists would be sent to Iran this year to join the 1,000 already there. The first reactor is said to be between 30% and 40% complete. Work on this reactor should be finished by May 2003.

The Iran's Interior Minister's Moscow visit in July was “to curtail the alien [US] presence in the Caspian.” Putin promised to continue help with the nuclear plant “despite all external [US] pressures, which are aimed at limiting such co-operation.” *Intelligence Digest* 9-7-99

Iraq. Mossad estimates that there are 10,000 Russian experts in Iraq, helping with their chemical and nuclear weapons programmes. *JP* 29-1-99

Under the headline **Russia and Iraq—the deadly friends**, a *Sunday Telegraph* report indicated that Russia had signed a £100m arms deal with Iraq, involving re-equipping Iraqi fighter plans, and improving air defences. Russia denied this report, but Russian military experts confirmed that they “enjoy a close and lucrative friendship with Baghdad!” 21–2-99

During the Kosovo conflict, Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic signed a secret military pact to help each other. Russia is alleged to have supplied weapons to Iraq, to be sent on to Serbia. *BIPAC* 14-4-99.

In July, Tareq Aziz was in Moscow to enlist Russia’s help in the lifting of sanctions, and gained a pledge of co-operation on diplomacy and oil. In August Iraq was believed to have signed a \$450m contract for Russian advanced Sam missiles.

Russia supplied satellite intelligence photographs to Iraq, which covered Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Syria. Iraq is in negotiations to purchase from Russia an advanced computer system that would enable it to hit targets with accuracy. *ST* 1-10-99

France and Syria, Iran, Iraq

Now France is operating in these same three areas—Syria, Iraq and Iran. Many details were given in *Milestones* 1998. We add some more.

Syria. Trade between the two countries is sharply up from last year. French exports to Syria from Jan. to Sept. are estimated to have risen from FF1.7bn to FF2.8bn, and imports run at about FF2.1bn. *Jerusalem Post* 22-10-99

Iran. In March, a Franco-Italian consortium signed a deal to invest nearly \$1bn in Iran’s oil industry, in defiance of US threats of sanctions. A month later a French-Canadian consortium signed a \$300m deal to exploit an Iranian oil deposit. *Daily Telegraph* 4-3; 3-4-99.

Iraq. France strongly opposed plans by its Western allies to get the weapon’s inspectors back in Iraq, siding with Russia and China. President Chirac is anxious to gain the lucrative contracts that will be placed once sanctions are lifted.

“To find a permanent member of the Security Council going around trying to undermine the authority of the Security Council is really quite extraordinary,” said one source. *Daily Telegraph* 18-12-99

So fascinatingly we have these axes of influence, emanating both from Europe—France especially—and from Russia.

The Vatican and Libya, Iran, Iraq, PLO, Israel

The Vatican is also a key political player.

The Vatican’s “soft” diplomatic policy regarding countries such as Iraq and Libya has begun to acquire new credibility and a stronger voice in recent years—often in open contrast and even defiance of US policy.

Such an original approach has caused perplexity and fits of pique in Washington in the past, although in the case of Cuba the US has now had to re-align its own policy to the Vatican wavelength.

Vatican policy has now begun also to have a noticeable influence on Italy's own foreign policy, which is still struggling for greater international visibility and credibility. *Catholic Herald* 25-12-98

Through the Vatican's (or strictly the Holy See's) network of diplomats—the Nuncios, together with the hierarchy of priests, bishops, archbishops and cardinals—the Roman Church is uniquely placed to assert her influence. The Vatican's viewpoint is looked up to and sought. Also, like the Queen, the Pope gives audiences to visiting dignitaries. In mid-May he saw Gerhard Schröder, Chancellor of Germany. A week later it was the turn of Yuri Luzhkov, the influential Mayor of Moscow. Nine days later, on June 3rd, significantly just before the Kosovo conflict ended, Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the UN, had an audience.

Libya. In 1997 the Vatican forged diplomatic links with Col. Gadaffi.

Iran. The first visit to the Vatican by an Iranian president was on March 11th. President Khatami was in Italy on a State visit—the first to the West in recent times. He had deliberately chosen to come to Rome. He stated:

Given the special importance I place on Irano-Italian ties and in view of Italy's status as the bridge between Islam and Christianity as well as the major role played by Italy in the European Union, I have chosen Italy for my first European tour because of its importance and beauty. Ties and co-operation between the two countries can serve as a symbol and model for the proximity between East and West and Islam and Christianity." (BBC Monitoring Service 11-03-99)

This was the highest level encounter between the Pope and a post-revolutionary leader from the Islamic State. The Iranian president is a moderate Moslem Shi'ite cleric and so was Iran's most senior religious leader to visit the Pope.

Iraq. The Pope has been a strong advocate of lifting the UN sanctions against Iraq. He sent a message of congratulation to Saddam to mark 21 years in power. The Vatican has full diplomatic ties with Baghdad, with whose regime the papal nuncio is said to be on excellent terms! The Pope's visit was called off at the last moment, by Saddam Hussein.

PLO. Yassar Arafat made his 7th and 8th visits to the Pope in 1999. The 7th was particularly long—about 3 times the normal. They discussed the talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis over Jerusalem. Mr Arafat also invited the Pope to visit Bethlehem and Jerusalem next year. I am not aware of any other leader having such frequent audiences, especially as he is a Moslem.

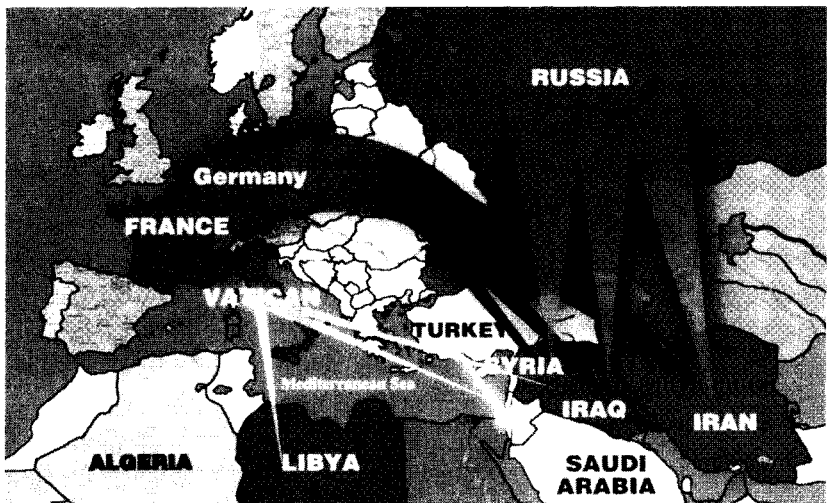
The Vatican founded the Bethlehem University in 1973, and is naming a chair of religious studies after the late Archbishop, Cardinal Hume.

Israel. There is great concern about the falling numbers of Christians in Israel and the Palestinian areas—to around 3%, compared with 25% in 1948. The Franciscans, once described by a journalist as “holy property millionaires”, own around 74 sites in Israel. One of these is in Nazareth, opposite which the Moslems proposed to erect a huge £12m new mosque, funded by the Gulf States. The Vatican sent “the sharpest message since diplomatic relations were established in 1994,” pressurising Israel to prevent this going ahead. By giving permission, Israel was accused of trying to ferment troubles between Christian and Moslem, and the Churches held a 2-day shutdown in protest. The government only stepped in after 2 years of wrangling by the Nazareth council. Israel decided part of the disputed land should be given to the Moslems and the rest to the Christians. Interestingly Yasser Arafat has called on the Moslems not to go ahead with the building.

Israel’s bilateral relations with the Vatican are at an all-time low. An article in the *Jerusalem Post* 11-1-99 queried whether the Vatican had really changed in its attitude to Israel. The Vatican only recognised Israel in 1994, and is perceived to be very one-sided in her criticisms of Israel’s talks with the Palestinians. “The gap between formal statements and policies remains very wide.”

The Secretary General of the Arab League had a private audience with the Pope on December 17th to “discuss the situation in Jerusalem” ahead of the continuing peace talks.

King of the North—a summary picture of the Axes of influence



Chapter 14:

THE MIDDLE EAST – THE KING OF THE SOUTH

*In the previous chapter we looked at the King of the North grouping. We saw Western Europe—the **Beast**, Eastern Europe—the **Dragon**, and the Vatican—the **False Prophet**, (Rev 16: 13,14) all working to the same end – to reduce America's influence in the Middle East. And who is America's friend in the Middle East? Israel! Syria, Iraq and Iran are being re-armed for a purpose. Their common foe is Israel!*

So having considered the King of the North grouping, let's consider its counter-balance—the King of the South. We look at the opposing axes—that of Israel and Jordan, and Israel with India to the East and Britain and America to the West. Coupled with this is American and British influence in Egypt and the southern Arab states.

Jordan

In early February the well loved King Hussein of Jordan died of cancer. A short time earlier he had appointed his eldest son, Prince Abdullah as his successor in place of his brother Prince Hassan. After his father's death, the new King moved swiftly to make his mark, sacking the existing government and making his own appointments. He has had many contacts with Israel in the past and has taken steps to maintain and strengthen those links. Yasser Arafat proposed that he should throw his hand in with the Palestinians, but he refused, sensing that Arafat's power is declining and by biding his time he may be able to increase his influence over the Palestinians.

With the re-opening of the Israeli Mossad station in Amman and the renewed co-operation between the two intelligence services, King Abdullah cracked down on the Hamas terrorist group which has long used Jordan as its main base outside the Palestinian territories. He shut down the Hamas offices in Jordan in August and when four Hamas leaders were released from prison, they were immediately expelled to Qatar. Abdullah is keen to see the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks proceed, and Hamas represented a threat to its success. *Time* 6-12-99 *BIPAC* 6-10-99

He visited the Pope in September, and made his first official visit to Israel in October. Joint exercises involving Jordanian commandos and Israeli paratroopers were planned for November.

At the end of his first 6 months, the *Economist* commented:

The past six months have witnessed a minor political revolution. [He] has engineered a system of party politics that his father strove for but never achieved. *The Economist* 16-10-99

Abdullah's mother is British, his wife Palestinian, so we have an interesting combination! He was educated in Britain and is a career soldier, training at Sandhurst and in America, and was commander of Jordan's commando unit. John Thomas wrote in *Elpis Israel*—now 150 years ago—of his understanding that Britain would be the latter-day occupier of the land of Edom, Moab, and Ammon (Jordan of today) which would be a protector of the displaced Jews at the time of the invasion of Israel. It is therefore interesting to see a half-British King on the throne of Jordan.

Israel—"Tarshish" axes

In last year's *Milestones* we looked at the Israel-Turkey axis. Jordan has joined in, and her troops and airforce, like the Israelis, hold joint exercises. What has been interesting is the growth in the "Tarshish" axes. We have recognised two Tarshish powers. One in the east—India, and one in the west – Britain. Israel has strong links with both.

India. Much to the alarm of the Arabs, India, which was staunch friend of the Arabs in the 70's and 80's, has now become Israel's friend. Relations between the two countries are described as very warm and special. India needs to update her weaponry and armed forces—Israel is supplying that need! Israel has been training Indian commandos. They are sharing intelligence information about the Kashmiri separatists. Israel also has the equipment and skills to help India feed her expanding population.

Israel is keen to develop strategic links between the two countries on similar lines to those with Turkey. The resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism is of concern to the two countries. Both are placed either side of the central Arab/Islamic block. The report commented:

For those that believe in the importance of the balance of power, the formation of an Israel-India-Turkey political/military triangle poses deep problems for the rejectionist Islamic states. *Intelligence Digest* 22-10-99

Britain. Much of the showy elements of the peace talks are American. The British contribution, as always, is diplomatic and behind the scenes. This was what a correspondent of the Israeli Ha'aretz paper had to say:

The resumption of talks between Israel and Syria is being interpreted as an American achievement while the role played by Britain in reviving these negotiations is being overlooked.

Tony Blair has emerged as the most Israel-friendly Prime Minister to serve in 10 Downing Street for years. Before the Blair era, British policy makers had adopted a preachy, cold tone in relations with Israel. This harsh attitude disappeared under Blair. The new, friendlier policy allowed Britain to enjoy the best of all worlds. While it signed a military memorandum pledging co-operation with Israel, Britain also managed to renew relations with Iran and Libya, and complete arms deals with Arab countries.

While the Likud-led Netanyahu Government was still in power, Blair strengthened ties with Israel's Labour Party. He sent one of his own aides to act as a consultant for the Barak campaign. Barak paid Blair back through a number of gestures.

Blair dispatched his main fundraiser and special confidant, Michael Levy, to handle British diplomacy on the bumpy Israel-Syria track. Levy capitalised on direct access both to Barak's office, and also to the Assad regime in Damascus. *The Times* 16-12-99

Earlier *The Times* had spoken of the "not insignificant role for London as the natural back-channel for Israeli-Palestinian deliberations, a place for private discussion. Mr Blair enjoys excellent personal relations with both Mr Barak and Mr Arafat." 25-10-99.

Egypt was also urging Britain to use her influence:

Amr Moussa, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, began three days of talks in Britain yesterday to bolster London's role in the peace process and in the economic and political development of the Middle East.

His visit comes hard on the heels of the Downing Street talks on Tuesday with Ehud Barak, the Israeli Prime Minister, a visit by the Foreign Minister of Bahrain yesterday and one recently by Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Authority. It underlines London's growing importance as a centre of Middle East media and diplomacy.

During his three-day stay he will also give interviews to the influential Arabic newspapers and television stations based in London which increasingly are seen as the most authoritative in the Arab world.

Mr Moussa called on Britain to play a bigger role in the peace process, saying that it had influence that it should use in the area. *TT* 25-11-99

Britain is also playing an increasingly influential role in forging new ideas on arms control and non-proliferation in the Middle East in separate discussions with the Israelis and the Iranians. British and Israeli officials meet twice a year to discuss strategic issues. *TT* 30-9-99

Britain and America in Egypt and the Gulf

Egypt. Readers of *Milestones* will know of the growing trade between Britain and Israel, and the important trade links she has with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf States. What has recently emerged is her blossoming trade with Egypt. The British Department of Trade and Industry has targeted Egypt as a growth market and is actively promoting trade there. British businesses are subsidised to go on government organised trade visits

Egypt is in the midst of its greatest change since the time of the Pharaohs. Recent years have seen structural reforms of historic proportions, thus validating the new government's ability to lead the country into the 21st Century as a promising market economy.

The UK has recognised the value of Egypt as an emerging country and as such has identified it as one of its top ten target markets. The DTI has recently launched a three-year Connect Egypt campaign to help position UK plc and participating companies in the forefront of Egyptian buyers.

As stated by James Capel of Emerging Markets Research *'Egypt represents a giant consumer market that could become one of the biggest markets in the region.'*

Egypt is one of the most pro-British countries in the World and has been recognised by the world economic forum as number one for equal treatment of foreign business and near top on its openness to foreign culture. Recently *The Economist* stated that Egypt has the second fastest growing economy in the world. *DTI 2-99*

British Gas has exclusive drilling and exploration rights over many of the Egyptian gas fields off the coast of Egypt and has already made significant finds. It also has an exclusive 25-year franchise to develop the gas market in Upper Egypt, involving gas transmission and distribution systems. This should help to transform Egypt's economy in the region. *DT 12-11-99*

The UK Blue Circle Cement group has acquired a controlling stake in Egypt's state owned Alexandria Portland Cement. *DT 28-11-99*. British firms are busy building hotels, supplying water and dealing with wastewater, and in irrigation schemes. About 190 UK firms have invested here and Britain is the 2nd largest non-Arab investor in Egypt. *Export Times 3-99*

The Americans are also heavily involved in Egypt. After Israel, Egypt is America's largest beneficiary of aid. Running at \$2.1 billion a year, it covers economic and military aid. Mr Mubarak's personal standing in America is high. He has so successfully turned the Egyptian economy round with IMF help that Egypt is regarded as its star pupil! *EC 20-03-99*

Operation Bright Star

This annual event was hosted by Egypt this year. It was billed as the world's biggest military exercise. 73,000 troops from 11 nations—US, Egypt, Britain, Jordan, Kuwait, Italy, Greece, the UAE, France, Germany and the Netherlands combined under US Central Command. They had 53 warships and 543 aircraft. The aim—to show that the mobilisation of Western and Arab states in the 1991 Gulf War could be repeated.

The Gulf. Both Britain and America enjoy good relations with the southern Arab states. Many troops are stationed in these countries and the American Navy has ships permanently located in this area. Britain and America supply much of the weaponry. In Kuwait, the US has agreed to upgrade three of her military bases at a cost of \$193m.

With Saudi Arabia last year asking the US oil giants to return, they are tendering for many schemes.

Chapter 15:

SHALL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?

We close our Milestones review with sobering words of exhortation. We have seen so many signs of our times to tell us of the nearness of the Lord's return, but are we ready for that return? Well, no, we can never be really ready. His return will be thief-like and contain an element of surprise. What we need to have done is to have built our reserves of precious oil, that in that day our lamps may be able to burn brightly.

Jesus spake a parable about an unjust judge. In it, a poor widow constantly went to the judge, asking him to consider her case and act to help her. In the parable he did act, but only to save being troubled. Our Judge is not like that, He hears. Yes indeed, God will avenge his saints. Jesus expressly spoke this parable in order that **men ought always to pray and not to faint** and promised that God **would avenge his own elect speedily**.

But Jesus added: "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find (the) faith on the earth?" What did he mean by this cryptic remark? Whether we apply these words to the time of the hidden return of Jesus in vengeance in AD 70 or to his return in our own days, it surely indicates the same thing. That there will be little evidence of persistent prayers like those made by the widow woman to the judge in the parable. She knew that he was the only person who could resolve her dispute. We know that the ending of this time of sin and trouble can only come through the return of the Master. Our prayers should likewise be earnest for that day to come.

There is also an implication of difficulties for the ecclesias. We usually think of times of trouble as being times of persecution. Such a time may indeed come. But is not the present time of peace and freedom and prosperity a much more subtle time of testing? The words of Paul to Timothy's generation to strengthen them for the troublous times they were entering have a very apposite ring for us today.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 2 Tim. 3:1-5

Let us watch and pray earnestly for our Lord's speedy return, and in his great mercies, may we be granted an entrance into that Kingdom to come.

An unusual announcement but what students of Bible prophecy might expect!

It appeared in *The Economist* 31-12-99

A Plan for Reconciliation International Competition

The Richard C. Welden Foundation invites proposals for Reconciliation between Christian Orthodox Churches and the Vatican in the New Millennium.

In 1054 a split in the Christian Church divided the Christians into Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. The effects of this schism are still felt in Europe not least because of the need for integration of the Eastern and, especially, Balkan countries into the European Union.

Economic and political integration will be smoother if the spiritual pillar of society evolves in line with the new realities. A Reconciliation may give the peoples of the Balkans the sense of belonging to the European family that other former Communist countries, like Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic have.

It took 50 years to end the Cold War but it is 1000 years since the feud between the Eastern and Western Churches began. What will it take to end it?

The prize: \$5,000 First Prize

Deadline: June 30th 2000

The Foundation reserves the right to reject any entry for any purpose whatsoever.

Forward all entries to:

Trustees

The Richard C. Welden Foundation

30 Rockefeller Plaza, Suite 4340, New York, NY 10112, USA

Milestones 1999

As the world celebrated the start of the year 2000 with firecrackers and alcohol, surely we as Christadelphians must realise that the return of our Saviour is very close. 1999 has been another year of action, ending with the dramatic resignation of Mr Yeltsin! In so many ways our traditional understanding of Bible prophecy has been reinforced by these events.

Milestones pulls together many strands: the drive to political union, now that the euro has been launched; Mr Putin and events in Russia; the Peace Talks with Syria; and the Pope's travels to promote unity.

This year our review starts with a brief overview of the prophecies that concern these latter-days. We then look at:

- The euro "flying like a brick", and the drive to a United States of Europe.
- Britain's resistance to the euro and political union.
- The Vatican and Europe, and the Synod for Europe.
- Yeltsin's resignation and the prospects for Russia to re-emerge as a mighty power.
- The growing formation of the King of the North and the King of the South in opposition to each other.

On our cover we see the ominous sign of the power of Orthodox Catholicism and inside we see the power of the Vatican increasing.

Let us be warned by this invaluable review of current events that herald the nearness of the Master's return. This is the 23rd issue of **Milestones**. There may not be another!

Are we ready for our Messiah?

