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The view from the bridge

Robin Ramsay

The Wilson 'mystery' again

The first section of this about The Times appeared in a slightly different form under my name in Fortean Times.

On 22 August *The Times* published the latest episode in the long-running saga of 'Why did Harold Wilson resign as prime minister in 1976?' The fascination this has for sections of the media is perverse as we have known for many years from his closest confidants that Wilson resigned because he was basically knackered; and specifically because his memory was deteriorating and he was afraid that he might have what we now call Alzheimer's disease (from which his father had suffered).¹ This is too prosaic for some and they keep looking for the secret scandal which they know must be the *real* explanation for Wilson's departure.

The Times gave us the reminiscences of a barrister, Sir Desmond de Silva, who, in 1976, was representing two men who were charged with the burglary of Wilson's house in 1974. Among the items stolen were some personal papers. Preparing for the trial, de Silva read these papers and found a 1974 letter from a businessman called Eric Miller advising Wilson to sell shares in his (Miller's) property company. De Silva comments:

'Before the committal proceedings, when I could have revealed [under the law of the time] the contents of that

¹ The latest of those confidants to explain all this is Bernard Donoughue in his *Downing Street Diary* (London 2005). Donoughue gives a very interesting short summary of his memories of life at No 10 with Wilson at www.labourhistory.org.uk/?p=21

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letter and other documents in the box of material recovered by the police, Wilson resigned.’²

And that’s it. There was a letter, which might have been embarrassing had it been made public, but Wilson resigned. *The Times* wants us to think there might be a connection but a clearer example of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy is hard to imagine.

The Times followed their tiny ‘scoop’ with a version of three other familiar ‘British conspiracy theories’, as they put it, about Wilson. *The Times* sections are italicised

A KGB plot

One conjecture connects Harold Wilson to the sudden death of Hugh Gaitskell, his predecessor as leader of the Labour Party. It claims that Gaitskell, a pro-American, had been assassinated by the KGB in order to install a communist sympathiser as probable future prime minister. Anatoly Golitsyn, a Soviet agent who had defected to the West, claimed that Wilson had been acting as a KGB informer after visiting Russia in the late 1940s as President of the Board of Trade.

Ah, Golitsyn! And if he did claim this, who would take it seriously? Some members of MI5 certainly *speculated* that Wilson might have been recruited by the Soviets on his trips behind the Iron Curtain – and had done so before Golitsyn’s defection – but they never found any evidence.

This Golitsyn story raises the interesting question about what counts as being an informer or an agent. Say that on one

² Miller was one of a number of dodgy businessmen who attached themselves to Wilson and gave him money to run his private office. (There was no state funding [‘Short’ money] in those days for politicians.) The other famous one was Joseph Kagan. For a time Miller was stepping-out with Wilson’s private secretary, Marcia Williams/Falkender. Miller committed suicide (or was ‘suicided’) and Kagan went to prison. No-one ever accused Harold Wilson of having good taste where his business friends were concerned.

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of his trips to the Soviet bloc during the Cold War Wilson did talk to someone who was a Soviet intelligence officer with some kind of cover – as a trade official, say. Perhaps Wilson had a few vodkas and talked about British politics. Our Soviet intelligence official would write it all up and file a report. Wilson might be given a code-name.³ But does this make Wilson an ‘agent’? Cecil King, the Rupert Murdoch of his day, spent the mid 1960s wining and dining with a large section of British political and economic life, at least part of the time searching for the heavyweight figure who would lead Britain out of its ‘crisis’ (only to come up with Lord Mountbatten). Peter Wright claimed in *Spycatcher* that King was one of the MI5’s agents. Which means what? King had a controller, a case-officer? Or merely that King chatted to senior MI5 people in the same way he talked to other senior civil servants?

The same issues arises in spades with the various claims made by ex-KGB officer Oleg Gordievsky to Christopher Andrew about ‘agents’ in the Labour Party and trade unions: KGB officer under cover talks to this or that MP/union official and claims them as ‘agents’. This makes him (or her but usually him) look good, justifies his/her overseas posting and enables him/her to claim some more expenses.

A right-wing coup

A meeting held between Lord Mountbatten of Burma, several senior journalists and government advisers has long been the foundation for claims that a plot existed in 1968 to depose Wilson and to replace him with an interim government led by Mountbatten.

‘Senior journalists and government advisors?’ As far as we know the meeting in 1968 was actually between Mountbatten, *Daily Mirror* owner Cecil King and Sir Solly Zuckerman, the government’s chief scientist (as a minute or less on Google

³ Golitsyn’s Wiki entry claims that this is what happened.

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would show). King had been machinating against Wilson for years at this point.

A military take-over

A similar incident is said to have gone farther after Edward Heath, the Tory leader, narrowly lost the 1974 general election to Wilson. Conspiracy theorists say that the Army, mobilised at Heathrow apparently for anti-terrorism training, was preparing a military take-over under the command of Mountbatten and senior intelligence staff.

Wilson himself was suspicious of the Army display at Heathrow but to my knowledge no 'conspiracy theorists' have alleged that Mountbatten was involved in the events of that year. Us 'conspiracy theorists' know what Mountbatten's role was in 1968.

Missing, of course, from *The Times* piece was any mention of that newspaper's own role in all this. *Times* Home Affairs editor at the time, Peter Evans, tells us in his recent memoir that at least one senior *Times* executive was involved in the discussions in 1968 which centred round a regime headed by Lord Mountbatten and had used the paper to promote him.⁴ And *The Times* added to the paranoia of the period between the two general elections in 1974 by running articles discussing the conditions under which a military coup in Britain would be legitimate.⁵

As part of the marketing of his book *Strange Days Indeed*, about the 1970s, Francis Wheen was the subject of an interview by Ian Burrell in *The Independent* on 14 September. Wheen ran his usual – and now very tired – *Private Eye*, cynical hack *shtick*.

⁴ Peter Evans, *Within the Secret State* (Brighton, 2009) pp. 89-91. This was reviewed in *Lobster* 57.

⁵ For example Lord Chalfont, 'Could Britain be heading for military coup?' 5 August 1974 and editor Charles Douglas-Home, 'It would not take a coup to bring British troops onto the streets', 16 August 1974.

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At the centre was poor old Harold Wilson whose mind, according to When's diagnosis, was 'a simmering goulash of half-remembered incidents and unexplained mysteries'. With Wilson in a *folie à trois* were Penrose and Courtiour, 'poor old gumshoes [who] traipsed around the country and kept coming up with dead ends'.

When just hasn't kept up to date with the story and is apparently unaware that Wilson knew pretty well what was going on and gave Pencourt the lead to a press officer in Northern Ireland – this was Colin Wallace and Information Policy. (Who told Wilson?) Unfortunately Pencourt didn't recognise the significance of this at the time and didn't pursue the 'press officer' lead.⁶ When's book is reviewed below.

So why did they support the EU?

In *The Sunday Times* of 14 June 2009 Bojan Pancevski and Robert Watts had a story which began:

'Glenys Kinnock, the new minister for Europe, has amassed six publicly funded pensions worth £185,000 per year with her husband Neil, the former leader of the Labour party.

They have already received up to £8m of taxpayers' money in pay and allowances, he as a European commissioner and she as a member of the European parliament.'⁷

Greasing the wheels

A piece in the *Telegraph* on 22 August 2009, 'Millions spent on NHS management consultants with Labour links', began: 'The

⁶ 'Britain's own Watergate scandal (shurely shome mishtake? Ed)', *The Independent*, 14 September.

⁷ <www.openeurope.org.uk/media-centre/article.aspx?newsid=2485>

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Department of Health has spent almost £500 million on management consultants, including deals with firms which have hired senior Labour figures and high ranking civil servants'.

Not unrelated to which is the report of a study by Professor David Miller of the true extent of the 'old boys network' between the British government (or, more accurately, the British state) and banks.⁸

Cat and mice

While Gordon Brown was on holiday in the summer the shop was being minded first by Harriet Harman and then by Peter Mandelson. Mandy did his annual hanging-out in public with the seriously rich, which the *Telegraph* on 11 August celebrated with a piece wondering how he paid off the mortgage on his house on millionaires' row at Regent's Park.⁹

Harman did a little campaigning for the leadership of the Labour Party (the rump that will be left after the party is wiped out at the next election). Someone – I presume one of her rivals for that job – bothered to dig up some copy from the late 1970s when Harman was one of the leaders of the NCCL which showed off her then 'progressive' views on child sexuality, and fed it to *The Daily Telegraph*.¹⁰

TB's associates

Meanwhile Tony Blair's commercial activities are expanding rapidly. His 'consultancy', Tony Blair Associates, now employs 80 people, according to an article by Edward Heathcote-Amory

8 <<http://news.scotsman.com/scotland/Study-reveals-true-extent-of.5230278.jp>

9 *The Mail* spotted that Mandelson was wearing a watch which cost £20,000. <www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1217055/Mandelsons-21-500-watch-It-takes-year-make-drips-gold-diamonds-How-VERY-New-Labour.html>

10 <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/labour/4949555/Harriet-Harman-under-attack-over-bid-to-water-down-child-pornography-law.html>

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(familiar surname!) in the *Mail*.¹¹ Blair's support for the Israeli cause was recognised in his being awarded the \$1 million Dan David prize for 'leadership' at the University of Tel Aviv.¹²

Mind control

A neuroscientist, Rebecca Saxe, has talked about her experiments using electromagnetics to change moral thinking and reported that the Pentagon is interested in it.¹³ *The Times* (and many other places) reported, in the words of *The Times*, that 'Scientists have discovered how to "read" minds by scanning brain activity and reproducing images of what people are seeing — or even remembering. Researchers have been able to convert into crude video footage the brain activity stimulated by what a person is watching or recalling.'¹⁴

Which raises this issue: if the mind control victims are reporting reality accurately, the US/Russian military are decades beyond these kind of experiments. So why are they bothering with this low-level, preliminary stuff? For example, there is a big new pull-together of known and half-known American and Russian/Soviet experiments in this field, 'Means of information war threaten democracy and mankind' by Mojmir Babacek (edited by John Allman).¹⁵ If only a fraction of this is real, neither the Russian nor US military have any need to be ringing Ms Saxe for details of her (by their standards) piffling experiments.

Plus ça change

'Gordon Brown puts Israel lobbyist in charge of Britain's Middle

11 'Inside Blair Inc' , 30 October 2009.

12 *The Guardian* 18 May 2009

13 At <http://blog.ted.com/2009/07/rebecca_saxe_at.php>

14 'Psychic computer shows your thoughts on screen

<www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/science/living/article6898177.ece>

15 <<http://nwoconspiracy.org/2009/08/10/means-of-information-war-threaten-democracy-and-mankind/>>

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East policy' was the headline,¹⁶ in response to the news that appointed to be Britain's Minister at the FCO with responsibility for Israel and the Middle East was Ivan Lewis, vice chair of Labour Friends of Israel. Lewis's Wiki entry is worth a look.

Former *Private Eye* editor, Richard Ingrams, noted that of the five members of the Great and the Good who are going to inquire into the Anglo-American assault on Iraq, two of them, historians Professor Lawrence Freedman (whose salary comes, at least in part, from the Ministry of Defence via King's College, London) and Sir Martin Gilbert are 'committed Zionists'; and thus we are not likely to get an honest examination of the Israelis' role in the disinformation leading up to the invasion.¹⁷

Kevin Blowe noted on his blog that of the five, three are involved with the Ditchley Foundation.¹⁸

The least surprising news of the last few months was the decision taken by the US government not to prosecute for espionage Steven Rosen and Keith Weissman, who worked for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and were caught leaking classified information to the Israeli embassy. There cannot have been anyone with any knowledge of the role of the Israeli lobby in the US who believed this case would ever get to court.

The Israel lobby in Britain

And so Channel 4 finally broke one of the great taboos of British television with its documentary on the Israel lobby in Britain. I didn't watch the documentary (TV is too slow for me: an hour's documentary gives you about 6 paragraphs of information) but the accompanying booklet by the documentary's authors, which I assume is similar to the broadcast programme, is seriously good and contains enough on the record comments to

¹⁶ At <www.redress.cc/stooges/redress20090611>

¹⁷ *The Independent* 20 June 2009

¹⁸ <www.blowe.org.uk/2009/08/iraq-inquirys-ditchley-foundation.html>

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demonstrate to anyone that the British Israel lobby is real and rather significant.

There are downloadable versions of the booklet at <www.channel4.com/> and <www.opendemocracy.net/>.

Gog/Magog

'Incredibly, President George W. Bush told French President Jacques Chirac in early 2003 that Iraq must be invaded to thwart Gog and Magog, the Bible's satanic agents of the Apocalypse. Honest. This isn't a joke. The president of the United States, in a top-secret phone call to a major European ally, asked for French troops to join American soldiers in attacking Iraq as a mission from God.'¹⁹

This is startling not so much because Bush believes this nonsense – we knew he believed similar nonsense – but because he and/or his advisors thought it a sensible approach to take with the president of France.

Political cross-dressing?

Who wrote this?

'Readers may recall my previous tirades against the private finance initiative (PFI). Expensive and inefficient, PFI means taxpayers often shell out ridiculous amounts for substandard schools, hospitals and other public infrastructure.

'Having been paid over the odds for the building, the private sector then adds insult to injury by providing sloppy, overpriced services, under 25-year contracts allowing them to do as little as possible while extracting

¹⁹ So begins James A. Haught's 'A French Revelation, or The Burning Bush' at <www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=library&page=haught_29_5>

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maximum public cash.'

'Why have Labour, and the Tories before them, signed PFI contracts worth hundreds of billions when the private sector could have been engaged on more flexible terms, providing far better taxpayer value?'

'Because a succession of clever-clever civil servants, supposedly negotiating on our behalf, have cut deals stacked in the private sector's favour. It is a complete coincidence some then went to work for the PFI industry.'

'The main attraction, though, is that PFI allows ministers to park billions of pounds of debt off-balance-sheet – a public-sector Enron.'

No, not some lefty, but Liam Halligan in *The Sunday Telegraph* of 17 May 2009.

And who wrote this?

'Amidst this worsening economic crisis, the House of Representatives just passed a \$636 billion "defense" bill. Who is the United States defending against? Americans have no enemies except those that the US government goes out of its way to create by bombing and invading countries that comprise no threat whatsoever to the US and by encircling others – Russia for example – with threatening military bases.'

' America's wars are contrived affairs to serve the money laundering machine: from the taxpayers and money borrowed from foreign creditors to the armaments industry to the political contributions that ensure \$636 billion "defense" bills.'

Not Greg Palast or John Pilger, but Paul Craig Roberts, briefly Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the first Reagan Administration.²⁰

²⁰ <www.opednews.com/articles/The-Expiring-Economy-by-Paul-Craig-Roberts-090805-492.html> 5 August 2009

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And who wrote this?

'DECLASSIFIED American government documents show that the US intelligence community ran a campaign in the Fifties and Sixties to build momentum for a united Europe. It funded and directed the European federalist move on firm suspicions voiced at the time that America was working aggressively behind the scenes to push Britain into a European state. One memorandum, dated July 26, 1950, gives instructions for a campaign to promote a fully fledged European parliament. It is signed by Gen William J Donovan, head of the American wartime Office of Strategic Services, precursor of the CIA.'

'The documents were found by Joshua Paul, a researcher at Georgetown University in Washington. They include files released by the US National Archives. Washington's main tool for shaping the European agenda was the American Committee for a United Europe, created in 1948. The chairman was Donovan, ostensibly a private lawyer by then.'

'The vice-chairman was Allen Dulles, the CIA director in the Fifties. The board included Walter Bedell Smith, the CIA's first director, and a roster of ex-OSS figures and officials who moved in and out of the CIA. The documents show that ACUE financed the European Movement, the most important federalist organisation in the post-war years. In 1958, for example, it provided 53.5 per cent of the movement's funds.'

'The European Youth Campaign, an arm of the European Movement, was wholly funded and controlled by Washington. The Belgian director, Baron Boel, received monthly payments into a special account. When the head of the European Movement, Polish-born Joseph Retinger, bridled at this degree of American control and tried to raise money in Europe, he was quickly reprimanded.'

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'The leaders of the European Movement - Retinger, the visionary Robert Schuman and the former Belgian prime minister Paul-Henri Spaak – were all treated as hired hands by their American sponsors. The US role was handled as a covert operation. ACUE's funding came from the Ford and Rockefeller foundations as well as business groups with close ties to the US government.'

'The head of the Ford Foundation, ex-OSS officer Paul Hoffman, doubled as head of ACUE in the late Fifties. The State Department also played a role. A memo from the European section, dated June 11, 1965, advises the vice-president of the European Economic Community, Robert Marjolin, to pursue monetary union by stealth. It recommends suppressing debate until the point at which "adoption of such proposals would become virtually inescapable." '

Not Richard Fletcher, the late Philip Agee, Phil Kelly or Tom Easton, but Ambrose Evans-Pritchard in his 'Euro-federalists financed by US spy chiefs' in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 19 September 2009. I wonder if Evans-Pritchard is aware that this has been known by the spook-wise Anglo-American left for over 30 years?

And which British newspaper ran an article questioning the belief that Osama Bin Laden is still alive and speculating that his death was being kept from the British and American publics to keep the 'War on Terror' going? The *Socialist Worker*? *Morning Star*? No: the *Daily Mail*.²¹

9/11

A number of major stories have been illuminated by the events

²¹ <www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1212851/Has-Osama-Bin-Laden-dead-seven-years-U-S-Britain-covering-continue-war-terror.html>

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of 9/11. One of the big ones is the story of rival/competing intelligence and law enforcement agencies and the role of knowledge as scarce resource. This first long item is from *Secrecy News*, bulletin of the Federation of American Scientists Project on Government Secrecy, volume 2009, no. 53, June 17, 2009.

9/11, info sharing and "the wall"

'The rise of "the wall" between intelligence and law enforcement personnel that impeded the sharing of information within the U.S. government prior to September 11, 2001 was critically examined in a detailed monograph that was prepared in 2004 for the 9/11 Commission. It is the only one of four staff monographs that had not previously been released. It was finally declassified and disclosed earlier this month.'

'In April 2004, Attorney General John Ashcroft testified that the failure to properly share threat information in the summer of 2001 could be attributed to Justice Department policy memoranda that were issued in 1995 by the Clinton Administration. That is an erroneous oversimplification, the staff monograph contends: 'A review of the facts..... demonstrates that the Attorney General's testimony did not fairly and accurately reflect' the meaning or relevance of those 1995 policy documents. For one thing, those policies did not even apply to CIA and NSA information, which could have been shared with law enforcement without any procedural obstacles.'

'But if Attorney General Ashcroft was misinformed, he was not alone. The 1995 procedures governing information sharing between law enforcement and intelligence "were widely misunderstood and misapplied" resulting in "far less information sharing and coordination.....than was allowed." In fact, "everyone was confused about the rules governing the sharing and use of information gathered in

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intelligence channels.”

“The information sharing failures in the summer of 2001 were not the result of legal barriers but of the failure of individuals to understand that the barriers did not apply to the facts at hand,” the 35-page monograph concludes. “Simply put, there was no legal reason why the information could not have been shared.”

‘The prevailing confusion was exacerbated by numerous complicating circumstances, the monograph explains. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court was growing impatient with the FBI because of repeated errors in applications for surveillance. Justice Department officials were uncomfortable requesting intelligence surveillance of persons and facilities related to Osama bin Laden since there was already a criminal investigation against bin Laden underway, which normally would have preempted FISA surveillance. Officials were reluctant to turn to the FISA Court of Review for clarification of their concerns since one of the judges on the court had expressed doubts about the constitutionality of FISA in the first place. And so on. Although not mentioned in the monograph, it probably didn’t help that public interest critics in the 1990s (myself included) were accusing the FISA Court of serving as a “rubber stamp” and indiscriminately approving requests for intelligence surveillance.’

‘In the end, the monograph implicitly suggests that if the law was not the problem, then changing the law may not be the solution. The document, which had been classified Secret, was released with some small though questionable redactions.’²²

In ‘Explosive Theory’, a long and detailed piece about the group,

²² See *Legal Barriers to Information Sharing: The Wall Between Intelligence and Law Enforcement Investigations*, 9/11 Commission Staff Monograph by Barbara A. Grewe, Senior Counsel for Special Projects, August 20, 2004 at <www.fas.org/irp/eprint/wall.pdf>

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Architects and Engineers for 911 Truth, Jay Levin and Tom McKenzie present the case that the WTC buildings were demolished.²³ We're back where I was in the previous issue of *Lobster*. If they were demolished, the buildings had to be wired in advance; and if we are going to argue that they were wired by the same group flying the planes, why did they wire WTC 7, which wasn't a target of the planes and wasn't hit by them? It is infinitely more likely that the explosives were there independent of the plane bombings. And if so, why and at the behest of whom?

Dean Farmer, Senior Counsel and Team Leader to the 9/11 Commission, Dean of Rutgers School of Law–Newark, and one of the principal authors of the 9/11 Commission Report, has a book out, *The Ground Truth: The Untold Story of America Under Attack on 9/11*. I haven't read this yet but among the press releases promoting it in October was this: 'At some level of government,' says Dean Farmer, 'at some point in time, a decision was made not to tell the truth about the national response to the attacks on the morning of 9/11.'

For someone my age there are tempting analogies between the 9/11 events and those of 22 November 1963. But while we eventually learned decades later from third parties that most members of the Warren Commission didn't believe the report to which they had appended their names, no member of Warren, let alone a senior counsel, published something less than a decade after the event saying the report was false.

As if!

There appears to be little that you can't persuade some journalists to write. Take *The Independent's* David Usborne. On June 20 he wrote 'US readies defences for North Korean missile

²³ At <www.metroactive.com/metro/09.09.09/cover-0936.html> the Website of the *Metro* newspaper in Silicone Valley in California. The group's website is <www.ae911truth.org/>.

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attack on Hawaii' which began:

'The United States military was yesterday reinforcing the defences of Hawaii in response to increasing concern that North Korea, stung by new United Nations sanctions against it, may be preparing to launch a long-range ballistic missile in the direction of the Pacific archipelago.'

Yes, it's those well known suicides in North Korea, planning to lob a missile at Pearl Harbour! Except that the headline and the text don't quite agree: 'in the direction of the Pacific archipelago' isn't quite a 'missile attack on Hawaii', is it? And there's the universal qualifier beloved of journalists and politicians, 'may be'. Still, it's all grist to the mill for the US military-industrial complex in its constant search for new 'threats'.²⁴

Same old same old

Simon Matthews spotted this in the reviews section of *The Sunday Telegraph* 18 June 2009 under the subhead 'Four books about Islamist terrorism':²⁵

'Meanwhile, the founder of modern political Zionism, the Austrian journalist Theodor Herzl, had earmarked a site for the Jewish state. In June 1895, he wrote in his diary: "We must expropriate gently the private property" and "spirit the penniless population across the border".'

Ethnic cleansing, in other words. Which is what the Israeli state has been doing since it was founded; but doing it piecemeal, slowly enough to avoid making too many waves in America.

²⁴ Similar nonsense appeared in the *Mail* the day before. See 'Japan warns that North Korea may fire missile at U.S. on Independence Day', 19 June 2009.

²⁵ <www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/5568411/Four-books-about-Islamist-terrorism-review.html>

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Its oor oil!

Way back in *Lobster 9* in 1985 Steve Dorril and I wrote a piece on conspiracy theories about the Falklands War, some of which were speculating that the underlying reason for it was the prospect of oil around the Malvinas. And well, well, a piece in *The Telegraph* on 10 September 2009 under the subhead 'Desire Petroleum tows rig to oil-rich Falklands' began:

'A British oil explorer is raising £20m-£30m from shareholders as it prepares to start drilling in the Falkland Islands, where it believes up to 3bn barrels of oil and gas may be recoverable.'

UFO tourists?

In 1993, an RAF Wing Commander lobbied MoD officials about the need for a properly funded study of UFOs. He told them:

'The national security implications [of UFOs] are considerable. We have many reports of strange objects in the skies and have never investigated them.' He added: 'If the sightings are of devices not of earth then their purpose needs to be established as a matter of priority. There has been no apparently hostile intent and other possibilities are: (1) military reconnaissance, (2) scientific, (3) *tourism.*'²⁶ (emphasis added)

About 20 years ago I remember reading (but now cannot locate) an analysis of UFO incidents by Martin Kottmeyer, one of the most interesting and amusing of the writers on UFOs, who concluded (semi-seriously) that the best explanation of the behaviour of UFOs (presuming that they really did exist) was that they were engaged in tourism.

RIP

²⁶ 'Britain's X Files: RAF suspected aliens of "tourist" visits to Earth' <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/howaboutthat/ufo/6209684/Britains-X-Files-RAF-suspected-aliens-of-tourist-visits-to-Earth.html>

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There was a long obituary of Lord Peter Blaker in *The Daily Telegraph* on 7 July 2009. It detailed his long career as a professional anti-communist and listed some of his better known attempts to make trouble for Labour governments with information given him by the security and intelligence services. Somewhat to my surprise the obit also included this paragraph:

'In March 1992 Granada TV claimed Blaker had paid a private detective £5,000 to investigate Owen Oyston, the Lancashire Labour millionaire, over links with a model agency and prostitution. Blaker admitted paying the money, but denied any political motivation. Oyston was subsequently tried, and jailed, for the rape of an 18-year-old model.'

Andrew Rosthorn commented to me that Blaker stated in a long letter to the private detective Michael Murrin and a taped telephone conversation that his payment to Murrin was for information for commercial rather than political ends. That was a rivalry over the Lancashire cable television franchise. Lord Blaker's payment to Murrin was made in July 1986. The rape charges against Oyston were not laid until 1995.

For more details of the political conspiracy to destroy Owen Oyston, one of the great neglected scandals of British politics, see Andrew Rosthorn's 'Our friends in the North West' in *Lobster 34*.

Leggwork

And so it was that the role of Sir Thomas Legg in further contributing to the misery of MPs by trimming their expenses provoked a *Mail on Sunday* journalist to contact me about the piece I had published by John Burnes, 'Joseph K and the Spooky launderette' in *Lobster 36*, which contained a good deal about Legg. Which I duly e-mailed to him. But where was Burnes? His phone and computer were not responding. Well, that's nothing new: Burnes has had endless phone and computer problems,

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presumably (but not provably) courtesy of the British secret state. Undeterred by their inability to talk to Burnes, the *Mail* wallahs filleted the Burnes' piece for an article, 'Revealed: How Sir Thomas Legg the exes axeman lost his wife to a guitar-playing "KGB suspect." ' 27

Amen to this

Chris Floyd on the news that President Obama had been awarded the Nobel peace prize.

'To give a peace prize to the commander-in-chief of a war machine now churning its way through the populations of three countries (Iraq/Af-Pak), with innumerable black ops, lightning raids and drone shots on the side.....to a man who even as we speak is deciding just how he wants to kill even more civilians in Afghanistan and Pakistan..... a man who has enthusiastically embraced as "an extraordinary achievement" one of the most heinous and barbaric acts of military aggression since Hitler rolled across the border into Poland..... a man who blusters about leaving "all options on the table," including the use of mass-murdering nuclear weapons, to bully other nations into compliance with American wishes..... to give a peace prize to such a man, while all over the world, there are men and women who have devoted their entire lives to non-violence and reconciliation, many of them suffering imprisonment, torture and ruin for their efforts ... well, like I said, it's beyond words.'

From Floyd's excellent *Empire Burlesque* at <<http://chris-floyd.com/>>

27 <www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1221145/Revealed-How-Sir-Thomas-exes-axeman-lost-wife-guitar-playing-KGB-suspect.html>

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Roderick Russell

Russell, whose persecution at the hands of agents apparently working for Grosvenor International was described in *Lobster* 57, has updated the Wiki entry describing these events.²⁸

In September I received this e-mail, apparently from Russell:

'Hope you get this on time? Sorry I did not inform you about my trip to the UK for a program, I'm presently in COVENTRY CITY and am experiencing some difficulties because i lost my wallet on my way to the hotel where other valuable things were kept. presently my passport and other things are been held by the hotel management pending payment are being made. I will really appreciate if you can assist me with a loan of (4,550 USD) to sort-out my hotel bills and to get myself back home. I will be happy with whatever you can afford to loan me with, I'll make arrangements for refunds as soon i as i'm home,let me know if you can be of any help. Please this is very confidential,i'm urging you to let this be between us as it's a big shame to my personality.'

This is an obvious phoney and a few days later Russell's daughter Amy sent this e-mail.

'Please see the message below that my father sent on Saturday after I contacted him about this email that had been sent. His entire email account has been obliterated with 80% of his address book deleted as well. Everyone on his address list was sent the ridiculous email you received.'

This was Russell's message:

'Alert - At 3:25 AM on 9/12/09 all archived messages on my email account rtmrussell_ba_ca@yahoo.ca <mailto:rtmrussell_ba_ca@yahoo.ca> were obliterated and a completely false message sent to some of my contacts on my address list. I won't repeat the message

²⁸ <<http://zerzetzen.wikispaces.com>>

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except to say that it was sent under the title "I'm screwed, please do something". This is just another example of the extent to which the MI5, MI6, intelligence services in the UK and CSIS in Canada will go to muddy the waters and try and stop this story from being honestly investigated. The purpose of the intelligence services in sending these messages is to try and confuse the issue.'

Well, Russell might be right, and this is the work of some intelligence agency. But the message is so illiterate, so unlike Russell's own writing, I do wonder about that. Would a state body not have managed a better fake? Or is it simply that the spooks (like other public bodies) are also now getting younger personnel, educated since the 1970s, many of whom cannot spell, punctuate or write coherently?

Cometh the hour cometh the man?

As a quick Google will show, there is quite a media band-wagon rolling now for Rory Stewart, prospective Conservative parliamentary candidate for the safe Tory seat of Penrith. By any standards Stewart is a striking man but to date none of the major media portraits have seen fit to include the interesting information that Stewart is not, as they all report, a former diplomat, but a former member of MI6. (Is the bandwagon the MI6 media unit at work?) Former diplomat Craig Murray named Stewart as a former MI6 officer in his 'Iain Dale's Bracknell Campaign' on his website.²⁹ Stewart has subsequently denied this to which Murray responded: 'Let me be plain. Rory Stewart was an officer for Torturers'R'Us (formerly trading as MI6).'

Murray there described Stewart as a 'crusading neo-conservative.' I don't know what Murray means by 'neo-conservative' but none of the senses of the term are obvious from Stewart's piece in the *London Review of Books on Afghanistan* on 28 July which shows a seriously intelligent mind

²⁹ <www.craigmurray.org.uk>.

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at work.²⁸ He now has a safe Tory seat, will be in parliament at the next election and, I would guess, in the Tory cabinet immediately afterwards. Could it be that MI6 are using Stewart as part of a plan to extricate this country from the Af-Pak quagmire?

JFK

Douglas Horne, formerly chief military analyst with the Assassination Archives Review Board:

'A former editor of *LIFE* magazine has just provided explosive information, in November of 2009, that indicates the Attorney General of the United States, Robert F. Kennedy, was working with *LIFE* in November of 1963 to bring down Vice President Lyndon Johnson and ruin his political career, so that his brother, President Kennedy, could replace LBJ as his running mate in 1964. I include this information in my blog because it confirms a central thesis of my book, which is that LBJ willingly participated in a large domestic conspiracy to assassinate JFK *in order to avoid his own political ruin.*'³⁰ (author's emphasis)

That LBJ was involved I believe to true. But this information hardly *confirms* that hypothesis, does it? It adds another piece to the fragments we knew already about the moves to oust LBJ from the presidential ticket. At least as significant to LBJ's political career were congressional inquiries into the Bobby Baker affair which were proceeding when JFK was shot (and which LBJ ended as soon as he become president). And where is the evidence of the 'large domestic conspiracy'?

Defending whose realm?

Jane Kelsey, author of *Economic Fundamentalism* (reviewed in

³⁰ On a blog, basically advertising Horne's forthcoming book (or books: five volumes, apparently) on the assassination, due out in December 2009. <<http://insidethearrb.livejournal.com/>>

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Lobster 31), a New Zealand academic critic of neo-liberalism, put out a press release in August on her discovery that New Zealand's Security Intelligence Service (SIS) had a file on her. Professor of Law at the University of Auckland, Kelsey noted:

'When the SIS got new powers in the 1990s I warned that they would be used against critics of the free market policies and free trade agreements. This has now proved true.' ³¹

In his review of Christopher Andrew's *In Defence of the Realm* in *The London Review of Books* (19 November 2009) Bernard Porter commented that he had information (whose source he couldn't reveal) that MI5 saw part of their role as defending the Anglo-American version of capitalism – i.e. the City and its largely American banks. Is MI5 keeping files on those of us who oppose Anglo-American capitalism?

Mythologies

Regular contributor to this journal, John Newsinger, has had a pamphlet, *American Right Or Wrong: New Labour and Uncle Sam's Wars* (London: Bookmarks, £1.50) published by the SWP, of which he is a member. Very good it is, too. But in it Newsinger claims (p. 14) that the reason the Attlee Labour government was defeated in 1951 was the cuts in welfare spending made to pay for increased military expenditure. Not true. In 1951 the total Labour vote actually *increased*, Labour losing only because of the eccentricities of the first-past-the-post electoral system.

³¹ <www.indymedia.org.nz/article/77545/privacy-commission-fails-stem-sis-attack>