

The View from the Bridge

(a kind of blog)

Robin Ramsay

Big Cyril

How do we interpret the Cyril Smith story to date? We know that allegations about Smith were given by MI5 officers to Colin Wallace in the British Army's Information Policy Unit in Northern Ireland in 1974 for use in psy-ops projects. Yet we have recently learned that the police file on Smith was marked 'No further action, not in the public interest. DPP'¹ and that in 1977 that file was acquired – impounded might be appropriate – by MI5.²

In this period MI5 contained a faction which believed that Harold Wilson was, or might be, a Soviet agent, and that the Labour Party was influenced, if not controlled by, the KGB. This faction had allies within the Army, among former intelligence officers, the police and CIA assets, notably the Institute for the Study of Conflict. I presume that this MI5 faction was feeding the derogatory material to Information Policy. There is no information on how high within MI5 knowledge or approval of this disinformation operation went.

Why did MI5 want the file in 1977? My guess would be that it was not, as some are fantasising, that there was a paedophile network in Whitehall. More likely they were simply trying to suppress potential sources of trouble. There was then a widespread fear within 'the establishment' that Britain was on the verge of collapse after six years of industrial conflict, roaring inflation, a militant labour movement and the reaction to all this by way of civilian 'militias' such as GB75 and

¹ DPP is Director of Public Prosecutions.

² See <<http://tinyurl.com/qfbrqmp>> (Daily Mail) and <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/9678697/Sir-Cyril-Smith-sex-abuse-dossier-seized-by-MI5.html>>

the Unison Committee for Action (with the threat of 'the Chile option' in the background).³ In such a climate what 'the establishment' did not need was a parliamentary paedophile scandal. It was 'not in the public interest' to prosecute Cyril Smith because, in the language of an earlier period, it might 'inflame the masses' and further diminish the populace's faith in the parliamentary system.

David Aaronovitch

I was contacted by BBC's 'The Daily Politics': would I like to appear with David Aaronovitch? Why me? I would be defending conspiracy theories, the researcher suggested. *Ah-hah*. I said, 'No thanks: I do not want to appear with Aaronovitch. He doesn't deserve the attention he gets.' The researcher said 'Oh', and hung up.

A few people really irritate me: David Aaronovitch is one of them. It's partly that he's another former lefty who discovered life was more profitable moving right; but defining it any more precisely I cannot do. He just gives me the pip. Tom Easton pointed me at Craig Murray's blog where Murray comments on Aaronovitch's admission that he got friends to write five star reviews of his *Voodoo Histories* for Amazon.⁴ You couldn't make this up: as Easton noted, to promote his book pooh-poohing conspiracies, Aaronovitch conspired to fake reviews.

It's still Uncle Sam's Labour Party

It must have been a slow news day when the newspapers

³ This period is described in great detail in Stephen Dorril and Robin Ramsay, *Smear! Wilson and the Secret State* (London: Fourth Estate, 1990).

⁴ <<http://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2014/04/david-aaronovitch-posts-fake-book-reviews-and-lies-about-why/#comments>>

I reviewed *Voodoo Histories* in *Lobster* 57 and that review was reposted at Aaronovitch Watch at <<http://aaronovitch.blogspot.co.uk/2009/06/guest-post-review-of-voodoo-histories.html>>.

put on their front pages the fact that the Labour Party had hired a former Obama strategist to mastermind their forthcoming election campaign. Of course they looked to America. Where else? As these columns have reported *ad nauseam* for nearly twenty years, the Labour Party was entirely captured by the Americans. Ed Miliband, Ed Balls and Yvette Cooper – Labour’s shadow PM, Chancellor and Home Secretary – were educated (and ‘educated’) in America on their way into the parliamentary Labour Party.⁵ When Ed Miliband delivered his big policy speech in February the only current book he namechecked and the policy initiatives he mentioned with approval were American. Not one word did he say about anything happening elsewhere in Europe.⁶

The next crash

The next banking crisis is cooking nicely and so obviously that even the *Telegraph* has taken to warning of it.⁷ And how will the approaching crash be prevented when most of the activities which caused the last crash have not been prohibited? Former head of the Financial Services Authority (FSA), Lord Adair Turner – wise after the events he oversaw at the FSA – has grasped some of this and has called for a return to controls on credit creation and lending.⁸ Pigs flying through a blue snowstorm is more likely. But excessive personal borrowing did not cause the crash; the global gambling

5 Details at <<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2002/07/35593.html>>.

Giles Scott-Smith’s study of the US government’s programme to neutralise the Labour Party in the 1980s, ‘Searching for the Successor Generation: Public Diplomacy, the US Embassy’s International Visitor Program and the Labour Party in the 1980s’, is at <<http://www.libertas.bham.ac.uk/publications/reviews/Successor%20Generation%5B1%5D.pdf>>.

6 The text is at <<http://labourlist.org/2014/02/ed-milibands-hugo-young-lecture-ful>>.

7 See their ‘Is the banking system now even more dangerous? Central banks fear so.’ <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/banksandfinance/10726860/Is-the-banking-system-now-even-more-dangerous-Central-banks-fear-so.html>> 27 March

8 <<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/feb/10/lord-turner-mortgage-curbs-payday-loans>>

caused the crash and that goes on.

I look at the mainstream parties for signs that they grasp any of this. Michael Meacher does, but his voice has no weight.⁹ Vince Cable does, but mostly stays *schtum*. Career first, eh Vince? (But he's a politician: that's a given.) Occasionally Labour's Shadow Business Secretary Chukka Umanna shows signs of intelligence; but Ian Fraser in his very good blog on things to do with the City, noted – citing a piece in *Private Eye* – that the global accountancy firm Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC)

'provides Umanna with the free services of PWC staff on secondment to his office, worth £90,000 a year.....Like KPMG, PWC is up to its neck in the whole RBS/NatWest global restructuring group scandal, having handled some of the more controversial administrations of companies that were "purposefully distressed".

One might have thought the notion that a senior Labour figure such as Umunna would defend the likes of PWC and RBS against the small and medium sized firms that they are believed to have raped and pillaged would be unthinkable in the wake of the demise of former prime minister and City cheerleader, Gordon Brown. Especially given that Umunna, 35, purports to support small businesses and even sent a volley of tweets to support small businesses in the Streatham area of south London during 'Small Business Saturday' events last December.....

Sadly, it seems Umunna, a former solicitor with RBS's lawyers Herbert Smith, who is today only too happy to take free "research" support and advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers, seems to be very much on the side of big banks and the "Big Four" accountancy firms.¹⁰

9 See <<http://www.michaelmeacher.info/weblog/>>. Meacher's credibility collapsed when it was reported that his wife owned nine properties in London. See <<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/jan/20/politics.labour>>

10 <<http://www.ianfraser.org/chuka-umunna-pwcs-useful-idiot>>

Snowdenia and Labour

In the wake of the Snowden/NSA/GCHQ revelations, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, dipped her toes into the water with a speech to Demos.¹¹ *Inter alia*, amidst all the usual forelock-tugging about how wonderful our security and intelligence services are, she quoted with approval Andrew Parker, head of MI5, who said:

'the reason why things are secret is not because..... we want to keep them from the public. It is because we need to keep them from the people that we are investigating.....the terrorists, spies and proliferators.'

Cooper – following Parker – is dodging the central issue here: *why do they need to be kept secret from politicians who are not terrorists, spies and proliferators?* Oversight and accountability are meaningless unless the politicians know what is being done. And the security and intelligence agencies – and the police – will resist, to their last breath, politicians knowing. In the US, as those with oversight began overstepping the mark – as the CIA saw it – by preparing a report on the Agency's use of torture post-9/11, the Agency hacked into the computers of the House Intelligence Committee (and who knows what else we haven't found out yet).¹² Twenty five years ago it was possible to talk about 'accountability and oversight' as if they meant something straightforward. Now we know it's much more complex than it once looked. If politicians are denied access to operations, are they not being offered oversight without sight, responsibility without power?

Quantifying the banksters

11 <<http://press.labour.org.uk/post/78448368189/the-challenges-of-a-digital-world-to-our-security-and>>

12 <<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2014/03/04/220161/cia-monitoring-of-senate-computers.html>>

How important the financial services sector is to the British economy is something returned to frequently in these columns. Nobody really knows for sure, but some guesses are more educated than others. Andrew Haldane, Executive Director, Financial Stability, of the Bank of England, had a go recently in an essay 'The contribution of the financial sector – miracle or mirage?'.¹³ In that he says the 'official statistics' show that 'the direct contribution of the UK financial sector rose to 9% in the last quarter of 2008' – i.e. at the last bubble's absolute peak.¹⁴ Haldane doesn't discuss the domestic/overseas distinction but most commentators think that the split is roughly 50-50; which means that at its peak 'the City' as we think of it, the global financial centre, was somewhere between 4% and 5% of the economy. Which is slightly smaller than tourism on some calculations.¹⁵

Boom boom!

'**W**histling in the dark to keep up the nation's economic spirits by promising hi-tech export-led growth in an era of rising Asian dominance is the last colonial delusion.'¹⁶

Lockerbie again

On 11 March John Davidson reported on Exaro¹⁷ that a new report on the Lockerbie bombing by a former New York chief

¹³ <<http://www.bis.org/review/>>

¹⁴ Haldane is talking about GVA, gross value added, not GDP, gross domestic product, but they come to roughly the same thing.

Relationship between GVA and GDP explained at <<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/economy/national-accounts/gva/relationship-gva-and-gdp/gross-value-added-and-gross-domestic-product.html>>

¹⁵ See <<http://www.wttc.org/news-media/news-archive/2012/tourism-uk-contributes-more-gdp-automotive-manufacturing/>>.

¹⁶ Colin Hines at <<http://progressiveprotectionism.com/>>.

¹⁷ <http://www.exaronews.com/articles/5163/lockerbie-probe-was-directed-off-course-say-top-investigators?utm_source=newsletter-news&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter-13-12-23>

assistant district attorney and Philip Corbett, ex Metropolitan Police, has found that the Palestinians who organised the bombing met in Malta and planned to 'divert the blame' to Libya. According to their source, 'Ivan':

'they would place [the bomb] in a suitcase that could be identified to Malta through its contents in the event that the bomb was discovered before it exploded....they knew Abdelbaset al-Megrahi was a member of the Libyan intelligence service and a manager at Libyan Airways and therefore a likely suspect.'

One of the Palestinians, who resembled al-Megrahi, bought the clothes in Malta.

This might all be kosher but it is a striking coincidence that this report has appeared just when the Libya-dunnit story is slowly being officially revised to an Iran-dunnit version, and shows the Libya solution being the result of a cunning disinformation plot by the 'terrorists', and not the result of bribery and evidence fabrication by the CIA.

Reporting the Ukraine

The major Anglo-American media are not giving us much information about the back story of EU and US machinations in Ukraine prior to recent events. Such information is available elsewhere.¹⁸ How not to write about the Ukraine is illustrated by F. William Engdahl's 'Ukraine: Secretive Neo-Nazi Military Organization Involved in Euromaidan Sniper Shootings'.¹⁹ Engdahl discusses the snipers who opened fire on the crowd in Independence Square on 22 February, scuppering the diplomatic deal which had been arranged and says they were members of an 'ultra-right-wing military organization known as

18 One very good piece is by Steve Weissman at <<http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/277-75/22758-meet-the-americans-who-put-together-the-coup-in-kiev>>. The name might be familiar: Weissman first appeared in the early 1970s when he wrote for *Ramparts*.

19 <<http://www.globalresearch.ca/ukraine-secretive-neo-nazi-military-organization-involved-in-euromaidan-snyper-shootings/5371611>>

Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian People’s Self-Defense (UNA-UNSO)’, which is ‘part of a secret NATO “GLADIO” organization, and not a Ukraine nationalist group as portrayed in western media’. As the Gladio network was officially wound-up after being exposed in the late 1980s, these striking claims need some documentation. But Engdahl offers us as his sources: ‘veteran US intelligence sources’ and ‘Source report, *Who Has Ukraine Weapons*, February 27, 2014, private to author.’ Big claims backed by anonymous and private sources? This isn’t good enough.²⁰

Hanky-panky

Roderick Russell, author the paper on *Zersetzen* discussed below, reported that the link to that paper I had given was incorrect. Indeed it was: as

<http://zersetzen.wikispaces.com/file/view/Zersetzen+25+Precedents+%283%29.pdf/491580646/Zersetzen%2025%20Precedents%20%283%29.pdfg>

it had a ‘g’ on the end which made it invalid: the file wouldn’t open. This wasn’t a typo on my part; I lifted that URL from an e-mail from Russell as this:

<http://zersetzen.wikispaces.com/file/view/Zersetzen+25+Precedents+%283%29.pdf/491580646/Zersetzen%2025%20Precedents%20%283%29.pdf>

No ‘g’ at the end. The ‘g’ has been added to disable the link. Russell commented:

‘I get hacked into all the time and I have come to expect it. Indeed I had a discussion about this with Microsoft on the internet a couple of months ago. These professional hackers are very sophisticated with lots of money to spend – firewalls, anti-virus programs mean nothing to them. The key is to be watchful and very well backed up.’

²⁰ I have been sceptical about Engdahl ever since I discovered that he had been a member of Lyndon Larouche’s org.

Thatcherism: a complete failure?

I was thinking one morning recently that it must now be easy to *demonstrate* that Thatcherism has been a complete failure, in its own terms: it didn't produce more growth, or the dynamic industrial revival the free market was supposed to bring. Serendipitously, that same day I received a very good Canadian piece from Robert Henderson, comparing the use made of North Sea oil by Norway and the UK.²¹ In summary: Norway's oil revenue account is now worth over \$800 billion; the UK state has debts greater than that. The Canadian essay concludes:

Thirty-five years later, Thatcherism is not merely a failure. It has become a well-funded construct of those very outside interests seeking to access public resources around the world at rock-bottom prices. And by that yardstick, it has been wildly successful.

But let us not forget: the initial decisions about what to do with the North Sea oil were taken by the Labour government of James Callaghan. In the Cabinet Tony Benn wanted to create a Norwegian-style oil fund – what would now be called a sovereign wealth fund – to be used for industrial investment. But after a debate in Cabinet, the fund idea was rejected. Benn noted in his diary:

'So that is the end of the saga of oil revenues. They are now a part of general public expenditure.....we are going to give it away in tax cuts.'²²

Craig Murray on Lockerbie

Former British ambassador Craig Murray commented on Lockerbie on his blog on 11 March.²³

The information on Lockerbie published in today's *Daily*

21 <<http://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2014/03/10/Thatcherism-Verdict/>>

22 Tony Benn, *Conflicts of Interest: Diaries 1977-80* (London: Hutchinson, 1990) pp. 280/1.

23 <<http://www.craigmurray.org.uk/>>

Mail from an Iranian defector,²⁴ matches precisely what I was shown in a secret intelligence report in the FCO just around the time of the first Iraq war – that a Syrian terrorist group was responsible acting on behalf of Iran. It was decided that this would be kept under wraps because the West needed Iran and Syria's quiescence in the attack on Iraq.

I was at the time Head of Maritime Section in the FCO's Aviation and Maritime Department. I was shown the report by the Head of the Aviation Section, who was deeply troubled by it.

The UK authorities have known for over 20 years that Megrahi was innocent. The key witness, a Maltese shopkeeper named Tony Gauci, was paid a total of US \$7 million for his evidence by the CIA, and was able to adopt a life of luxury that continues to this day. The initial \$2 million payment has become public knowledge but that was only the first instalment. This was not an over-eagerness to convict the man the CIA believed responsible; this was a deliberate perversion of justice to move the spotlight from Iran and Syria to clear the way diplomatically for war in Iraq.

It will of course be argued, probably correctly, that now Syria and Iran are the western targets, it is in the interests of the CIA for the true story to come out, (minus of course their involvement in perverting the course of justice). That is why we now hear it was Syria and Iran. But it so happens that is in fact the truth. Even the security services and government can tell the truth, when the moment comes that the truth rather than a deceit happens to be a tactical advantage to them.

Evidence supporting Murray's view in the last sentence above

24 <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2577930/Iran-blew-Lockerbie-jet-Ayatollah-used-Syrian-based-terror-group-bomb-Pan-Am-108-revenge-attack-airliner.html>> See also <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10688067/Lockerbie-bombing-was-work-of-Iran-not-Libya-says-former-spy.html>>.

is provided by the SIS/FCO's man on the *Telegraph*, Con Coughlin, in his piece on 11 March.²⁵

Many of the comments beneath Murray's item are interesting and illustrate the 'quagmire' I referred to below in an earlier item.

Tony Benn RIP

I met Tony Benn once at his house. I remember two things about the encounter. Benn was famous for drinking gallons tea and, indeed, offered me a cup. I like tea but Benn's idea of tea was a large mug, one dirt cheap teabag and some milk – builders' tea to the max. The man was living on Holland Park Avenue in a house worth a fortune and using the cheapest teabags on the planet. Prolier than thou? Mugs in hand we then had a conversation – and an argument. The Labour Party was then infested with the Militant Tendency – 'nationalise the top 100 monopolies' is the asinine slogan I remember – whom I opposed in the Hull North constituency. I cannot remember how they came up but Benn said of the Millies, 'They're good socialists'. To which I replied, 'But not good democrats'. The rest of the argument I have forgotten. Not that he was bothered: he enjoyed a political row.

Benn was a great man in many ways but a pretty poor politician. Aligning himself with the Militant Tendency was an idiotic mistake. I still am unable to decide whether he just was as naive as he sounded, or thought he could use them in his bid to become leader of the party.

Corinne Souza RIP

Frequent contributor to *Lobster*, Corinne Souza died on 13

²⁵ 'Was there a deal with Iran over Lockerbie bombing? The West should come clean about who really bombed Pan Am flight 103 in 1988 – we owe it to the victims' families' at <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/10690189/Was-there-a-deal-with-Iran-over-Lockerbie-bombing.html>. Calling this shameless doesn't quite do it justice.

March of lung cancer, caused by smoking cigarettes. Or so she she believed. (Her father also smoked and died of lung cancer.) Corinne declined to undergo the chemotherapy options offered her and managed her last few months on painkillers. The piece she wrote for this issue was written while taking morphine and she wondered how it appeared to me. 'Bog-standard Corinne' I e-mailed her back. The way she handled her own decline and death was admirably cool and rational. I hope I manage it even half as well when my time comes.

The JFK autopsy scam

Douglas Horne was on the staff of the Assassination Records Review Board (ARRB) August 1995-September 1998, first as Senior Analyst on the Military Records Team, and then as Chief Analyst for Military Records. He is one of a tiny handful of people employed by the American state who did not accept the official verdict that Oswald dunnit alone. In a recent essay on fraud in the medical evidence he wrote this:

The brain images in the official collection show damage that appears generally consistent with a shot from behind, and yet are entirely at odds with both the Parkland Hospital observations, and with the JFK skull x-rays! Autopsy photographer John Stringer disowned the brain photos at his 1996 ARRB deposition because the photos in the Archives are NOT on the type of film he used at the autopsy, and also because the many photos he shot of the serially sectioned brain (coronal sections) are not present in the Archives. Furthermore, he shot NO basilar views (from underneath – the underside of the brain), yet half of the Archives brain photos ARE basilar views. But it gets worse. Former FBI agent Francis O'Neill (who was at the JFK autopsy) testified during his 1997 ARRB deposition that more than one half of JFK's brain was missing when he saw the brain removed during the autopsy on the body, and yet in his opinion the brain photos in the Archives show 'almost a complete brain',

with way too much mass present. O'Neill recalled significant damage and missing tissue in the right rear of the brain (as did mortician Tom Robinson), and yet the brain photos in the Archives unaccountably show the right cerebellum to be completely intact.....I consider the suppression of the true photos of JFK's brain, and the dishonest substitution of false images (of a substitute brain), to be the most significant evidence of a U.S. government cover-up in the Kennedy assassination. Only the U.S. government had access to the body; had custody of the brain, which was examined following the autopsy on the body; created the autopsy images; and decided which brain photos made it into the official collection, and which brain photos did not. Neither Khrushchev's Soviet Union, nor Castro's Cuba, nor the Mafia had access to any of this evidence.²⁶

An explanation of all this was given by the late Billie Sol Estes. In his memoir he tell us that

'a second body was prepared as a rear head shot. I do not know all the details except I know there were two bodies at Bethesda and at least ten pictures were taken of each body. The pictures were then mixed, creating the effect of a third body. The grand conspiracy theory of controlling the autopsy and making changes at Bethesda Naval Hospital was not necessary. You simply needed the right mix of autopsy photographs. The autopsy report and photographs were immediately sent to the White House. The White House controlled the evidence sent to the Warren Commission and the National Archives.'²⁷

To date none of what we might call the 'respectable' JFK researchers, like Douglas Horne, have commented on Estes'

6 <<https://www.hubub.com/topic.php?id=128154>> Horne has elaborated all this in his five volume study. See <<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Inside-Assassination-Records-Review-Board/dp/0984314431>>.

27 Billie Sol Estes, *A Texas Legend* (2005) p. 156, available on-line at <<https://app.box.com/s/8b408e6999f8799dfd0a/1/251450825/1960277221/1>>.

version of these events.

The thin white ghost

Julian Assange fell out with the major media partly because of a culture clash between the radical hacker movement and liberal journalists; but mostly because he wanted to control how they handled the material. As everyone discovers eventually, you can't do that: you give it to them or you don't; those are the only choices. Assange was also afraid that they would do a hatchet job on him; and they have. The climax of those hatchet jobs is Andrew O'Hagan's 'Ghosting' in the *London Review of Books*, 6 March 2014, all thirteen pages of it. Why on earth would the *LRB* devote all that space to something of so little consequence? Assange isn't the story: what Wikileaks revealed is the story; and that didn't receive thirteen pages of coverage in the *LRB*.

Lockerbie

All the great parapolitical *causes célèbres* turn into quagmires and Lockerbie is no exception. The quagmire is created by the complexity of the material – which facilitates varying interpretations – the role of state agencies in muddying the water, and the incompetence of some of those who engage with the subject. One of the competents engaged with Lockerbie is the journalist and author John Ashton, whose site on the subject²⁸ would be the place to start if exploring the quagmire is of interest. One of those making waves in the quagmire is a former diplomat, Patrick Haseldine. Ashton has written a couple of critiques of Haseldine.²⁹

28 <www.megrahiyouaremyjury.net/>

29 <http://wikispooks.com/wiki/Patrick_Haseldine#Critique_by_John_Ashton> and
<http://wikispooks.com/wiki/John_Ashton#Ashton.27s_critique_of_Patrick_Haseldine>

Disinfo

There is a very striking interview with the former CIA officer, Robert Baer on 'the British Serb magazine'.³⁰ In this Baer apparently blows the gaff on a wide range of American and NATO operations in the former Yugoslavia. As I read it my brain was going, 'Doesn't feel right. Baer wouldn't talk like this.' This alarm bell was triggered in the third of Baer's 'answers' when he was quoted as saying '.....we had been tricked by our central command'. No CIA officer would refer to 'central command'. This interview is a fabrication. Not that this matters: the way the Net works, quotes from Baer's 'interview' will be circulating for the next ten years. For the real Robert Baer, see the profile/interview by the very good Christopher Ketcham.³¹

Commander Robert Green's famous aunty

I reviewed Robert Green's book about the death of his aunt, Hilda Murrell, in *Lobster* 62.³² I recently received an e-mail from him about the new edition of his book which included this:

...the new UK edition has a new penultimate chapter on developments since the NZ edition appeared in 2011, plus a new Foreword by Michael Mansfield QC and colour illustrations. You can get one from Waterstones, or Amazon UK.....Since the new UK edition appeared last August, almost every box of stock couriered down here in four separate deliveries over several months has been cut open. We suspect the spooks are desperate to stop someone sending us sensitive documents. The courier companies in UK and here, and Christchurch police are dumbfounded. Also, nearly every complimentary copy posted to reviewers never arrived; so, apart from my op-ed in the *Mail on Sunday* – see www.hildamurrell.org under 'News/Reviews' – there have been few reviews.

30 <www.ebritic.com/?p=213256>

31 <www.counterpunch.org/2009/10/23/unlearning-the-cia/>

32 <www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster62/lob62-murrell-murder.pdf>

With the 30 year rule on release of UK government papers kicking in later this month around the case, I've put ferrets in to ask for specific information. The government's over a barrel, because if nothing is released then the suspicion will grow that it has something to hide which is still too sensitive.

Meanwhile, Austin Mitchell MP, our UK political champion, has tabled a new Early Day Motion 433 calling for the case to be re-opened and a Commission of Inquiry into its handling; and after we testified to the Intelligence & Security Committee on 3 July last year (see website) about our communications interference, almost half the NZ Parliament now supports this. Edward Snowden's revelations have caused many people to believe that such outrageous, unlawful behaviour by MI5 is happening to us.

Two and two equals?

On 4 March the *Daily Telegraph* carried 'Can we all stop calling child abuse "child porn"'? by Dr Brooke Magnanti, formerly known as Belle de Jour. This was a comment based round the news that Patrick Rock, one of the prime minister's policy people, had been charged with possession of images of children. This was displayed on Google News and, for a time, so was this comment:

Guy Bailey

Shared publicly - Yesterday 11:29 PM

[#DavidCameron](#)

For the benefit of my non-media savvy friends - this is why the Daily Mail went after Harriet Harman & co.

To provide cover for a genuine Paedophile and close advisor of David Cameron?

Money talking

Back to the Atlantic Council. I noted in an earlier *Lobster* that it

was running a 'Captains of Industry' series of meetings in Washington about the 'threat' faced by the military industrial complex in an age of shrinking government budgets. In February it advertised an address by Mariana Mazzucato from the University of Sussex on 'the entrepreneurial state' with this as the opening paragraph of its pitch:

In a world of accelerating technological change, the United States is seeking to maintain its competitive edge. Past US government-funded research and public/private partnerships have been critical to the development of numerous key technologies, such as the Internet, that have powered tremendous US economic growth and technological prowess.

No nonsense about the magic of the free market here!

Beyond hypocrisy

In his always interesting e-mail newsletter, Bill Blum commented on US attitude to events in the Ukraine.³³

On March 2 US Secretary of State John Kerry condemned Russia's "incredible act of aggression" in Ukraine (Crimea) and threatened economic sanctions. "You just don't in the 21st century behave in 19th century fashion by invading another country on completely trumped up pre-text."

Iraq was in the 21st century. Senator John Kerry voted for it. Hypocrisy of this magnitude has to be respected.

True enough. But the comments of US secretaries of state are intended for domestic consumption, not other states – or the history books.

If only

I discovered that an acquaintance of mine had been involved with the National Union of Students in the early 1980s. He

33 <<http://williamblum.org/aer/read/126>>

recalled the libertarian right which was then a force in the Federation of Conservative Students – all that macho posturing in support of the Cold War, the Contras in Nicaragua and the South African government against the ANC. How many of them knew they were part of psy-ops operations being run by South African intelligence and the CIA? I don't know; and my guess is they would not have cared greatly if they had.

The libertarian right and the Marxist left share the belief that inside every ordinary citizen there is something else, a greater self waiting to be released, to stand on his or her own two feet without the state (the right), or to form organisations to take over the state and the economy (the left). Alas it isn't true. Or, if it is, releasing that greater self is too complicated and difficult for it to be practicable. Because we are repressed (Reich, Fromm), or because we suffer from false consciousness (Marx), or because we have been enfeebled by the welfare state (the libertarian right), most of us want an easy life in which lots of the difficult stuff is done by others.

Snowdenia

The fact that less than 1% of Edward Snowden's NSA documents have been made public creates an opportunity for disinformation: 'Snowden's hitherto unseen documents reveal.....'. One prankster/disinformationist claimed that Snowden's documents prove an extra-terrestrial-US government link,³⁴ confirming the Majestic (MJ) 12 documents cooked-up by the US Air Force.

That MJ12 material might rank as one of the most successful disinformation operations of recent times – *that we have identified* – were it not for the fact that the second stage of the operation, popping the bubble in the 'double bubble', as Colin Wallace described it, didn't really work. Many of the UFO buffs who believed the MJ12 material were not persuaded that it had all been a hoax even when the perpetrators of the hoax told them so.

³⁴ <www.whatdoesitmean.com/index1730.htm> Other people on the Net are sure this is merely a prankster.

Another wacky bunch at <http://www.chronicle.su/> claim that Snowden had released to them documents revealing a classified project to alter the world's climate. Snowden's reported view was that 'chemtrails are part of a benevolent program aimed at countering global warming. By cooperating in secret with jet fuel manufacturers, government agents have carefully kept the massive chemtrail efforts completely under wraps.' At this point Snowden is quoted as saying:

'I am only revealing this program because there is no oversight in the scientific community, no public discussion, and little concern for the side-effects which are well known only to a few privileged people interested in continuing the decades-long chemtrail program in secret.'

This isn't *that* implausible (though it doesn't sound like Snowden) and this 'Snowden quote' has been re-posted all over the place as evidence of chemtrails.

The .su bit in the Web address www.chronicle.su means it's hosted in Russia; and so this website might be Russian state disinformation. If so, on a very brief skim, it's not a bad facsimile of wacko American right-wingers.

The story isn't *that* implausible because the chemtrails thing is real. Have a look at the minute-long clip at www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2z2ZzXFeKo. This is film made in a plane's cockpit at altitude. In front of and slightly below them is a twin-engined jet. Civilian? Military? We cannot tell. And it is spraying. Towards the end of the minute, on the soundtrack of cockpit noise, you hear one of the pilots saying very faintly, 'I'm going to put this on Youtube.'³⁵

Zersetzen

Roderick Russell has written a very good 25 page paper,

³⁵ I was pointed at this by T.J. Coles who wrote on chemtrails in *Lobster* 64 at <http://lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster64/lob64-chemtrails.pdf>.

'Zersetzen: Some Precedents'.³⁶ Of this paper Russell writes:

'Zersetzen is a process of character assassination and threats developed by the former communist East German secret police, the "STASI", to persecute dissidents. Shockingly, as our spy agencies morph into a secret police, they are using Zersetzen today to persecute whistle blowers and enemies of power elites. Zersetzen is the biggest threat to democracy since the cold war. The purpose of this paper is to provide examples – precedents – of where Zersetzen/Cointelpro has happened to others, and to do so in a way that you can check the facts out on the Internet for yourself. Some 25 cases of Zersetzen in the UK, Canada and USA are reviewed.'³⁷

Ukrainia

I hadn't been paying much attention to events in the Ukraine and when the government fell I was struck by comments from sources sympathetic to the Yanukovych regime which referred to the insurgents as 'pogromists' and 'Banderists'. Why were the regime's supporters referring back to the events of WW2? Bandera, I remembered, had been the leader of the group within Ukraine which had collaborated with the invading German army, and whose members had taken part in the massacre of Ukrainian Jews.³⁸ I did a quick Google. Only one piece, on Global Research,³⁹ was required to explain the Bandera/pogromist comments: as the photographs there show, the Ukrainian nazis never went away.

US Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Victoria

³⁶ < <http://zersetzen.wikispaces.com/file/view/Zersetzen+25+Precedents+%283%29.pdf/491580646/Zersetzen%2025%20Precedents%20%283%29.pdf>>

³⁷ Russell touched on this subject in his essay at <<http://lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster65/lob65-canadian-spy-agency.pdf>>.

³⁸ On which see <http://hnn.us/article/122778>>.

³⁹ <<http://www.globalresearch.ca/there-are-no-neo-nazis-in-the-ukraine-and-the-obama-administration-does-not-support-fascists/5370269>>

Nuland said on 13 December 2013:

'Since the declaration of Ukrainian independence in 1991, the United States supported the Ukrainians in the development of democratic institutions and skills in promoting civil society and a good form of government - all that is necessary to achieve the objectives of Ukraine's European. [*Something missing here? - RR*] We have invested more than 5 billion dollars to help Ukraine to achieve these and other goals.'⁴⁰

Some of those \$5 billion dollars, no doubt, went to Canvas, which used to be known as Otpor, formed during the first of the so-called 'colour revolutions' sponsored by the US, and which has been operating in Ukraine.⁴¹ Depending on your political perspective, Otpor/Canvas is a grass roots democracy-building group or a destabilising tool of the Americans.

A version of this appeared in *Fortean Times* 311, February 2014.

9/11

A legal decision in New York may open the big can of worms which is 9/11. No, I don't mean the stranger theories: no beam weapons⁴² or remotely controlled aircraft; not even an 'inside job'. Just before Christmas a New York appeals court restored Saudi Arabia as a defendant in a lawsuit brought by some of the relatives of those who died. In 2005 Saudi Arabia had been taken off the lawsuit on grounds of 'sovereign

40 <www.informationclearinghouse.info/article37599.htm>

41 <www.globalresearch.ca/ukraine-protests-carefully-orchestrated-the-role-of-canvas-us-financed-color-revolution-training-group/5369906>

On the American promotion of the so-called 'colour revolutions' in the former Soviet empire see John Laughland at

42 See, for example <<http://www.drjudywood.co.uk/articles/DEW/>>. Dr Wood is a structural engineer and at <http://www.drjudywood.co.uk/articles/a/bio/Wood_Bio.html> she shows a picture of a vast fountain of pulverised debris erupting out the top of one of the Twin Towers buildings and comments: 'My intellectual integrity prevents me from calling this a collapse.' She has a point.

immunity': in other words, you cannot sue other states in American civil courts. This has been reversed; and though lawyers for the Saudi state are going to appeal this, the US opinion I have looked at on the Net suggests that the Saudi links will be aired in court. (Whether or not they do may ultimately be a political not legal decision.)

Those Saudi links are substantial enough for 28 pages dealing with 'specific sources of foreign support' for the official terrorists in the 2002 congressional inquiry into 9/11 to have been suppressed on grounds of 'national security' by President George W. Bush.⁴³ Those still classified pages were recently read by two Congressmen who subsequently hinted that they described Saudi involvement. Even if these pages are not declassified before the lawsuit reaches court, there is enough evidence on the Saudi links to the official 9/11 conspirators – 15 of whom were Saudi citizens – to get this issue onto the agenda. If the political will is there.

Some of this has been described by the lawyer Gerald Posner, famous for writing *Case Closed*, one of only two books arguing that Lee Harvey Oswald shot JFK. In his subsequent book, on 9/11, Posner recounted how he was told by two American 'intelligence sources' about Abu Zubaydah. A member of bin Laden's network, captured by the Americans in 2003, Zubaydah was conned by his American captors into thinking he had been handed over to the Saudis and volunteered to his (presumed Saudi) interrogators the names of three members of the Saudi royal family and the then chief of the Pakistani air force as the 9/11 plot's supporters. Coincidentally or not, Posner tells us all four men died in accidents (or 'accidents') shortly thereafter.⁴⁴

The speculation is that the Saudis supported the plane-bomb assault on America in exchange for bin Laden *not* trying to overthrow the Saudi regime which he thought corrupt; and

⁴³ *Joint Inquiry Into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001* at <www.intelligence.senate.gov/pdfs/1071086v2.pdf>. On this see <<http://911blogger.com/news/2013-12-15/inside-saudi-911-coverup-new-york-post>>.

⁴⁴ <www.huffingtonpost.com/gerald-posner/the-cias-destroyedinterr_b_75850.html> A general summary of Saudi involvement in terrorism is at <www.asecondlookatthesaudis.com/>.

there are a number of documented early warnings from Middle Eastern sources of *something* about to happen among the dozens of other tip-offs, which suggest that, supporting bin Laden on one hand, the Saudis leaked information about the planned attacks in the expectation that they would thus be frustrated.⁴⁵ These warnings, for whatever reason, were not heeded. From the official record it seems clear that the national security people around Bush were obsessed with Iraq and could not be persuaded to take bin Laden seriously.⁴⁶

This Saudi theory has been dismissed as an extension of the cover-up by those who believe that 9/11 was an 'inside job'; and it does not explain the apparent demolition of the three WTC buildings. But as an hypothesis it explains a great deal. But will it get aired? As America heads towards energy self-sufficiency through shale oil and gas,⁴⁷ its need to support the Saudi regime diminishes. There is another American presidential election on the distant horizon; and since the 9/11 events happened under a Republican president, any political fallout from the exposure of Saudi state involvement will not damage the Democrats. This one looks like a runner to me.

The South Atlantic flash

In issue 123 of *The Spokesman*, the publication of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation in Nottingham, there is a really interesting piece by Leonard Weiss about the suspected Israeli nuclear test in the Atlantic in 1979, 'the South Atlantic flash', the title of his essay.⁴⁸ This event was loaded with complications because (a) it was the official policy of the US to deny that Israel had nuclear weapons and (b) the Israelis and

45 Known advance warnings of 9/11 are listed at <<http://globalresearch.ca/articles/SMI402A.html>>

46 This is expressed very clearly by Richard A. Clarke, who was Bush's chief counter-terrorism adviser on the National Security Council at the time. See his *Against All Enemies* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2004).

47 Just Google <American energy self-sufficiency>.

48 A similar piece by Weiss is at <http://www.npolicy.org/article_file/The_1979_South_Atlantic_Flash__The_Case_for_an_Israeli_Nuclear_Test.pdf>

South African were engaged in various military collaborations – the two pariah states were working together.⁴⁹ Weiss was then Staff Director of the Senate Subcommittee on Energy and Nuclear Proliferation and discovered that his interest in the suspected test was entirely unwelcome, right up to White House level.

The political problem was that the US government had recently ‘punished’ Pakistan for its nuclear enrichment program and thus:

‘Under the circumstances, the US government would be hard pressed to ignore an evident Israeli test, especially since Israel had signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty. To do so would have negative repercussions in the Arab world and possibly blunt progress towards peace in the Middle East, but to take any punitive action against Israel would upset the Jewish Diaspora in the US, an important constituency for Carter and the Democratic Part.’

To ‘solve’ this problem the Carter administration fudged the intelligence reports, leaned on people like Weiss and were able to avoid having to acknowledge that an Israeli test had taken place. Weiss’ essay reviews the event and the evidence available then and subsequently and concludes that, yes, there was an Israeli nuclear test in the Atlantic with South African assistance.

Psi wars

The 1970 publication of Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder’s *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* kicked off the current Western fascination with psychic powers – E.S.P., remote viewing, psychokinesis etc.. Now we have an English-language study of Soviet research in the field from 1920 onwards, Serge Kernbach’s ‘Unconventional research in

⁴⁹ Related to which see Barbara Rogers and Zdenek Cervenka *The Nuclear Axis: Secret Collaboration Between West Germany and South Africa* (New York, 1978) still available for not very much at <ABEbooks.co.uk> or <<http://www.alibris.co.uk/>>.

USSR and Russia: short overview'.⁵⁰ Lots of names first encountered in the pages of *Psychic Discoveries* are here: Pavlita and his generators (still unexplained), Kirlian photography and Nina Kulagina (whose apparent psychokinetic abilities can be seen on YouTube). This report includes the following striking claim:

'The [Soviet] Minister of Defence received documents in 1960 about U.S. attempts to use telepathy in military purposes. Although these publications appeared later as unserious, they triggered the USSR and in turn the USA to new military programs.'

So: the so-called psi arms race began in 1960. I wondered what these 'documents' were. Of course Google knows:

'Soviet interest in psi was reawakened in February 1960 by a story which appeared in French magazine *Science et Vie* (Science and Life). The story was entitled "The Secrets of the Nautilus" and it claimed that the US government had secretly used telepaths to communicate with the first nuclear submarine ever constructed, the Nautilus, while it was under the Arctic ice pack. This telepathy project involved, according to the article, President Eisenhower, the Navy, the Air Force, Westinghouse, General Electric, Bell Laboratories and the Rand Corporation. Communicating with submarines is difficult as radio waves do not penetrate to the depths of the ocean.'⁵¹

Guide to NSA's known capabilities thus far⁵²

It can track the numbers of both parties on a phone call, as well location, time and duration.

It can hack Chinese phones and text messages.

It can set up fake internet cafes.

⁵⁰ <<http://arxiv.org/abs/1312.1148>>

⁵¹ <http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/vision_remota/esp_visionremota_9a.htm>

⁵² From <<http://www.wnyc.org/story/running-list-what-we-know-nsa-can-do-so-far/>>

It can spy on foreign leaders' cell phones.

It can tap underwater fiber-optic cables.

It can track communication within media organizations like Al Jazeera.

It can hack into the UN video conferencing system.

It can track bank transactions.

It can monitor text messages.

It can access your email, chat, and web browsing history.

It can map your social networks.

It can access your smartphone app data.

It is trying to get into secret networks like Tor, diverting users to less secure channels.

It can go undercover within embassies to have closer access to foreign networks.

It can set up listening posts on the roofs of buildings to monitor communications in a city.

It can set up a fake LinkedIn.

It can track the reservations at upscale hotels.

It can intercept the talking points for Ban Ki-moon's meeting with Obama.

It can crack cellphone encryption codes.

It can hack computers that aren't connected to the internet using radio waves. (Update: Clarification -- the NSA can access offline computers through radio waves on which it has already installed hidden devices.)

It can intercept phone calls by setting up fake base stations.

It can remotely access a computer by setting up a fake wireless connection.

It can install fake SIM cards to then control a cell phone.

It can fake a USB thumb drive that's actually a monitoring device.

It can crack all types of sophisticated computer encryption. (Update: It is trying to build this capability.)

It can go into online games and monitor communication.

It can intercept communications between aircraft and airports.

(Update) It can physically intercept deliveries, open packages, and make changes to devices.

(Update) It can tap into the links between Google and Yahoo data centers to collect email and other data.

Disappearing act

For years I had a file on my computer by Frank Ahearn on 'how to disappear'.⁵³ The idea was interesting. And 'disappearing' became a central feature of the closing episodes of 'Breaking Bad'. Recently I got an e-mail from Mr Ahearn about his forthcoming book, *How to Disappear From BIG BROTHER*. I e-mailed him:

Q. Do all these NSA revelations make any difference to your central thesis?

A. They do in the sense that I believe society must become aware of what is happening in the dark side of technology. Most important how users contribute to the bag of gold known as personal data. I offer a realistic solutions that can remove oneself from the chain of digital footprints. However, we cannot disappear without a trace any longer, those days are far gone. I teach people how to disappear and CONTROL their digital footprints. My philosophy is to embrace technology but have other people or services press, enter, send and download to remove you from the connection

Mobile phones and health

Yes, I know: I've been muttering about this subject for years.

⁵³ See, for example, <<http://www.escapeartist.com/efam/45/Disappearing.html>>. The file I had has been deleted.

Still.....one of the few sites which carries current research on the subject is In These New Times and they now have a collection of material which might make a sceptic wonder. Some of it is too technical for me, but in recent papers they carry it does seem that the scientists in the field are getting close to working out the actual causes of the damage at cellular level, as it were.⁵⁴ Not that it would make any difference if this research is eventually accepted: the world isn't going to give up on mobile devices, even if they are unequivocally found to cause cancer.

As for In These New Times, there are no names attached to the site and I don't know who is running it. Neither do I understand the 'new paradigm' in the site's subheading 'A new paradigm for a post-imperial world'. Try it for yourself.⁵⁵

The Red scare

If being interested in JFK is kind of old-fashioned, how about pursuing the cases of Alger Hiss and Harry Dexter White,⁵⁶ two of the prominent 'new dealers' who were accused of being Soviet agents in the great red scare of post-WW2 America? These are still live issues in part of American politics, touchstones sometimes for right and left. I have no great knowledge of or interest in these but, for what its worth, never thought Hiss guilty because (1) the guilty tend not to spend their entire lives protesting their innocence, as Hiss did; and (2) Hiss's accusers included the FBI and Richard Nixon, and nothing either of those asserted in the 1950s should be believed without a ton of evidence. Such evidence may exist; I haven't read much of the vast literature on the case.

I recently discovered <http://www.documentstalk.com/> at which some patient people are doing detailed research

⁵⁴ <http://inthesenewtimes.com/category/ecological-and-public-health-crisis/studies-and-statements-showing-mobile-phone-health-risk/>

⁵⁵ <http://inthesenewtimes.com/new-paradigm/>

⁵⁶ On White, for the prosecution, see <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2288294/The-banker-shaped-modern-world-WWII-Soviet-spy-wanted-America-communist.html>.

through Soviet intelligence archives from the period as they become available. One of the files at the site seems to me to show that the key plank in the case against White is probably false;⁵⁷ and another describes in some detail the story of Noel Field, the American Quaker turned Communist, who was used in a big disinformation operation against the Soviet bloc in the early 1950s by the CIA.⁵⁸ This is fascinating and intricate stuff, in places as hard to follow for a virtual beginner like me as some of the more complex JFK forensic analyses.

Friends of the Friends

The emasculation of the Labour Party is generally attributed to Blair and Brown in the 1990s; but it began much earlier, with the 1988/9 policy review which started the process of accommodating the City and the Americans. Leading that review was party leader Neil Kinnock, now Lord Kinnock. Adrian Gatton, via Tony Frewin, pointed me at a collection of conversations with former US diplomats.⁵⁹ This is in an interview with Carl Dillery, Political/Military Officer, at the U.S. embassy in London, 1973-1976.

'DILLERY: Take an important case. Thatcher's current head of loyal opposition, Neil Kinnock, was a junior MP when I was there. Our Labor Party reporting officer, Jack Binns, was a real friend of his. He was a great party guy and would come to all of our parties and talk to all of us. He and Jack were on a first name basis. So Jack became the political counselor when Kinnock got to be the leader of the Labor (sic) Party. Literally, Binns could call up and have access to him at any time.'

Let me unpack this for those unfamiliar with Labour Party history. Neil Kinnock became an MP in 1970 and while in his

57 See <<http://www.documentstalk.com/wp/harry-dexter-white-in-alexander-vassilievs-notes-on-kgb-foreign-intelligence-files>>.

58 Former *Daily Mail* editor Stewart Steven described the Field story in his *Operation Splinter Factor* (UK 1974 h/b and 1976 p/b) which was discussed in *Lobster* 6. For another view of the Splinter Factor story see <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/ops/splinter-factor.htm>>.

59 <<http://www.adst.org/Readers/United%20Kingdom.pdf>>

first parliament became friends with the American diplomat whose job it was to keep an eye on/befriend/penetrate the Labour Party. He went to the parties at the American embassy, chatted to the staff there and became a US embassy source – perhaps *the* source – on the Labour Party. All this while he was presenting himself to the Party membership as a left-winger.⁶⁰ Not that this shmoozing with the Americans did him much good when he became leader of the party: he was still ridiculed and humiliated on his first trip to Washington in that role.⁶¹

Ike was right

Salon.com carried a very good piece by Tom Englehard⁶² on the American national security state (NSS – which is a better term than the military-industrial-intelligence complex).⁶³ The figures are astounding: the U.S. national defense budget is 39% of world military spending, more than the next six countries combined.⁶⁴ Englehard thinks the US now has ‘a warrior religion dedicated to perpetual conflict’. Though such attitudes may be present in some of the military-intelligence people, others are simply people doing jobs, pursuing careers, doing their unthinking best to follow orders – misguided patriots perhaps, rather than warrior priests. But such a gargantuan system has its own requirements independent of those of its operators: it requires justification; and thus it has to generate enemies. Few in the US NSS consciously wanted to turn the Middle East into an Islamist enemy. The politicians and the diplomats – and perhaps even the military, looking over their shoulders at China – would love peace in the Middle East. But the system needed an enemy; and there are no

60 He did this so convincingly that the Social Democratic Alliance, led by Dr Stephen Haseler, included Kinnock on a 1976 list of dangerous subversives in the Labour Party.

61 See <<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/aug/04/uk.freedomofinformation>>.

62 <<http://www.tomdispatch.com/authors/tom>>

63 <http://www.salon.com/2014/01/06/the_shadow_governments_secret_religion_partner/>

64 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_military_expenditures>

other plausible 'enemies' around just yet, though China is on its way, if the 'Islamic threat' begins to fade.

Here go again

Strikingly little attention was paid in this country to Gordon Brown's *New York Times* piece warning of another financial crash coming, a repeat of the events of 2007/8. Brown began by telling us how he had been ignored last time round:

'In early October 2008, three weeks after the Lehman Brothers collapse, I met in Paris with leaders of the countries in the euro zone. Oblivious to the global dimension of the financial crisis, they took the view that if there was fallout for Europe, America would be to blame, so it would be for America to fix. I was unable to convince them that half of the bundled subprime-mortgage securities that were about to blow up had landed in Europe and that euro-area banks were, in fact, more highly leveraged than America's.'⁶⁵

Perhaps it is because Brown never finds it necessary to acknowledge his role in the creation of this mess that no-one takes any notice of him.

As to his solution, it's the usual delusion: we need a global financial system. As if a global financial regulatory system could be created! They cannot even get a Euro-wide system with any teeth. Appealing for a global financial system is ducking the issue while sounding plausible to yourself. If anything is going to get to grips with the bankers it will be a national government/state, willing to risk the bankers' threat that they will go and gamble elsewhere.

News values

Half the front page of the *Guardian* on 7 January was devoted to the death of its columnist Simon Hoggart. On page 20 was

⁶⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/19/opinion/gordon-brown-stumbling-toward-the-next-crash.html?_r=0>

a single column report of a British Chambers of Commerce warning that restrictions on lending to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) were still in place and hampering the growth of the economy.

Details of this were provided in an e-mail from rebuildingociety.com, whose research revealed that 21% – equivalent to around a million – of the UK's SMEs have seen the lending terms from their bank worsen in the past five years.

* More than two fifths of those SMEs affected have had the interest rate on their overdraft facility increased while a third have had their access to additional finance restricted and a quarter have had their lending restructured.

* In the last five years, more than one in six SMEs have approached their bank to arrange or increase their company's lending facilities

* However more than one in ten didn't approach their bank at all because they did not believe they would succeed in getting a loan

* Of those SMEs that did apply for a loan, nearly a third (31%) were refused. The main reason for the refusal was that the bank would not agree to the amount requested (21%).

On average the SMEs tried to borrow £26,000 – about the cost of a decent conservatory on the back of a house in the south of England. Chances are they would have got the money if they'd said it was for a conservatory.....

War criminals news

The sight of Tony Blair speaking at the burial of Ariel Sharon was fairly nauseating. Noam Chomsky said on his death that Sharon was 'a brutal killer. He had one fixed idea in mind, which drove him all his life: a greater Israel, as powerful as possible, as few Palestinians as possible.'⁶⁶

Bryan Gould again

66 <<http://www.democraticunderground.com/101682631>>

The *Guardian's* 'comment is free' carried another piece by former Labour MP, Bryan Gould, now a university vice-chancellor in New Zealand (whence he came). Gould expressed the view of the economic nationalist and wrote this:

'Above all, we need to restore full employment as the central goal of policy. An economy that offered productive work to everyone able to work, that provided ample finance for those ready to invest in new and competitive businesses, that found ready markets around the world for all it could produce, would not only restore faith in the value of government and democracy; the Labour party should note that putting such proposals forward might get it elected as well.'⁶⁷

One 'ridiculousrichie' commented:

'So given that 300 million people have free access to the UK job market, good luck with that.'

Indeed: that free access has to end. Richie may not remember that Gould was one of the leading anti-EEC figures in the Labour Party of the 1980s and never believed in the free movement of people or the rest of the EEC/EU package.

Milton Friedman said over twenty years ago that you could have open borders or a welfare state, but not both.⁶⁸ Reason? A welfare state is organised for the benefit of its citizens: open borders gives you a mix of citizens and residents, legal and illegal. This generates conflict, for example when social housing is allocated on grounds of need rather than need *and* citizenship. The Labour Party in particular and British politics in general has not dealt with this issue.

JFK's embrace of Third World nationalists

A significant chunk of the Anglo-American left has never

⁶⁷ <<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/06/cure-voter-disenchantment-democracy-politicians-economic-policy>>

I wrote about Bryan Gould at <<http://lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster63/lob63-two-goulds.pdf>>.

⁶⁸ <<http://openborders.info/friedman-immigration-welfare-state/>>

grasped that JFK wasn't just your run-of-the-mill corporate shill and thus has never understood the shift in US foreign policies which took place when LBJ became president. The excellent Jim DiEugenio spelled this out yet again at Consortium News.com.⁶⁹

Plain as day?

Sometimes B does appear to simply follow A. The *Telegraph* reported that the British military is thinking of a return to 'East of Suez', with plans to set up bases in the Gulf.⁷⁰ Three quarters of the way through the article its author notes: 'Qatar is now Britain's biggest source of liquefied natural gas.'

He might also have added that as the United States heads towards energy self-sufficiency (with shale oil and gas) its interest in the Middle East will diminish and the industrialised West will no longer be able to rely on the US military to keep the energy heading in its direction.

Remember the knowlege economy?

Tristram Hunt, the recently appointed Labour shadow education secretary, is one of the brighter sparks in the parliamentary Labour Party. He is MP for Stoke-on-Trent, areas of which are in an advanced state of disintegration, and he recently identified one of the central issues of the NuLab years:

'We all thought the knowledge economy was the answer and that financial services would keep going for ever...⁷¹We got into this myth of being a post-industrial

69 <<http://consortiumnews.com/2013/11/25/jfks-embrace-of-third-world-nationalists/>> A quick squint at the Wiki entry on the Alliance for Progress which JFK instituted gives a flavour of this:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alliance_for_Progress>.

70 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/unitedarabemirates/10024002/Britain-may-reverse-East-of-Suez-policy-with-return-to-military-bases-in-Gulf.html>>

71 <<http://www.fabians.org.uk/class-wars/>>

nation.⁷²

Well, bits of Stoke certainly are post-industrial; charity shops, bookies and moneylenders looked like the main activities in Stoke town centre when I was there in December. In the end, after all the other factors are taken into consideration, lots of our problems arise from the rubbish in the minds of politicians. How were the 'knowledge economy' or financial services ever going to replace the industrial base destroyed by the Thatcher years?

72 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/10539284/Tristram-Hunt-White-British-boys-are-not-getting-the-education-they-want.html>>