

The view from the bridge

Robin Ramsay

Meeja news

Udo Ulfkotte, a former editor of the German conservative newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, did an interview with *Russia Today*¹ in which, among other things, he said this.

'Germany is still a kind of a colony of the United States, you'll see that in many points; like for example, the majority of Germany do not want to have nukes in our country, but we still have American nukes; so, we are still a kind of an American colony, and, being a colony, it is very easy to approach young journalists through (and what is very important here is) transatlantic organizations. All journalists from respected and big German newspapers, magazines, radio stations, TV stations, they are all members or guests of those big transatlantic organizations, and in these transatlantic organizations you are approached to be pro-American, and.....they invite you for seeing the United States, they pay for that, they pay all your expenses and everything. So, you are bribed, you get more and more corrupt, because they make you good contacts.....So, you make friends, you think they are your friends and cooperate with them. They ask you, "will you do me this favor," "will you do me that favor," so your brain is more and more brainwashed, through these guys.....' ²

Which – apart from the desire to remove American nukes – would apply to this American colony, would it not?

Britain being essentially a colony of the US is why the

1 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Im4OUcfiM-8>>

2 This paragraph comes from the longer transcript of the interview at <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Leading-German-Journalist-by-Eric-Zuesse-Billionaires_Central-Intelligence-Agency_Energy_Oil-141007-640.html>. The whole thing is worth reading,

British mainstream media fails to report so much of what is going on within the American sphere of influence. At the upper levels of editors and managers of newspapers there are lines from the owners which cannot be crossed. All – including the trust which owns the *Guardian* – are pro-American, reluctant to acknowledge the reality of American politics and policies.³ (British TV news organisations share the same biases though they are not so obviously paraded.) But lower down the ladder the three 'C's, careerism, cowardice and conformism, are more significant. In my (limited) experience, most mainstream media journalists are just doing a job (pursuing a career); and their job is not perceived to be to report what is going on, or 'tell the truth', let alone higher aspirations such as holding the powerful to account or informing the public. Rather, it is more prosaic things such as getting a story; producing enough to keep their jobs or advance their careers; and competing with their rivals on other similar papers or TV programmes – none of which are enhanced by straying off the reservation.

Gary Webb and his stories about the CIA, the Contras and cocaine – the dark alliance as he called it – in the *San Jose Mercury News* in 1996, illustrated what can happen when you leave the reservation. Despite the fact that Webb's stories about the CIA allowing cocaine trafficking into the US in exchange for funding for the Contras *were true*, Webb and the paper were attacked by many other media organisations, the paper relegated Webb to a minor role in a distant office, he couldn't get another reporting job and eventually committed suicide.⁴ Robert Parry, of Consortiumnews.com, who has

³ There is a very long list of such subjects – I could fill every issue of *Lobster* with them – but two that have struck me recently are the effects in Iraq of the use of depleted uranium ammunition by the US (and UK?) forces and the health effects of Monsanto's popular weedkiller Roundup. For Depleted uranium see, for example, <<http://truth-out.org/news/item/26703-iraqi-doctors-call-depleted-uranium-use-genocide>>. For Roundup see, for example, <http://www.naturalnews.com/042553_roundup_glyphosate_breast_cancer.html>. Roundup has been linked to a great many conditions, most recently the apparent rise in the incidence of autism. See, for example, <<http://vaccine-injury.info/gmo-autism-link.cfm>>.

⁴ Basic details at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Webb>.

followed these events more carefully and more closely than anyone else, commented recently on a declassified CIA report on how the Agency handled the PR fallout from the Webb articles.

`The initial attacks on Webb's series came from the right-wing media, such as the *Washington Times* and the *Weekly Standard*, but the CIA's report identified the key turning point as coming when the *Washington Post* pummelled Webb in two influential articles.

The CIA's PR experts quickly exploited that opening. The CIA's internal report said: "Public Affairs made sure that reporters and news directors calling for information – as well as former Agency officials, who were themselves representing the Agency in interviews with the media – received copies of these more balanced stories. Because of the *Post's* national reputation, its articles especially were picked up by other papers, helping to create what the Associated Press called a 'firestorm of reaction' against the *San Jose Mercury-News*."

Rather than the CIA authorising cocaine trafficking being the story, 'Webb got it wrong' became the story.

Parry comments:

'The overall tone of the CIA's internal assessment is one of almost amazement at how its PR team could, with a deft touch, help convince mainstream U.S. journalists to trash a fellow reporter on a story that put the CIA in a negative light.' ⁵

UKraine and the major media

Recent events in Ukraine illustrate the gap between the mainstream media's version of events and what we can find out for ourselves. The American-EU attempt to detach the Ukraine from the Russia orbit is stupid and dangerous. A ⁵ <http://consortiumnews.com/2014/09/26/the-ciamsm-contra-cocaine-cover-up/> This essay by Parry is an exemplary piece of work.

comparison might be the Russians seeking to sign Mexico or Canada into an economic and military alliance. But the standard moves were made: the IMF offered a big loan to Ukraine with the usual conditions, 'restructuring' – i.e. unemployment and economic devastation. Unless the IMF analysts are incredibly stupid and completely misread the economic data on Ukraine, the *real* plan was that Ukraine would be unable to repay the loan and thus would have to repay in kind. This would entail giving large chunks of Ukraine to the American agri-chemical giant Monsanto,⁶ to seed the Ukrainian plains with its GM wheat; and so, when Ukraine eventually joined the EU, an end run would have been made around the widespread objection to GM crops within the union: GM wheat would already be growing there.

That was the plan but the Russians initially topped it with a better offer than the IMF/EU deal. So the Americans overthrew the Ukrainian government and installed one of their people.

That's about it, isn't it?

And how much of this has made it into the British mainstream media?

The IMF loan has since been made but Ukrainian politics is so corrupt⁷ the loan is probably long gone into off-shore accounts,⁸ it won't be repaid and Monsanto will duly get their hands on what used to be known as 'the breadbasket of Europe'.

Despite the presence in Russia of a kleptocracy not dissimilar to that running the US, the American weapons lobby wants Russia as an enemy and Obama's people cannot think of a way to resist this.

More bollocks from Balls

⁶ On Monsanto's role in all this see <<http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/08/22/70838/>>. On Monsanto employees and their roles in the federal government see <<http://www.globalresearch.ca/monsanto-controls-both-the-white-house-and-the-us-congress/5336422>>.

⁷ See <<http://www.li.com/activities/publications/looting-ukraine-how-east-and-west-teamed-up-to-steal-a-country>>.

⁸ See <<http://johnhelmer.net/?p=11289>>.

As winter approaches some people suffer from seasonally affective disorder (SAD). I get CAD, conference affective disorder, a creeping gloom produced by reports from the Labour Party conference. It's not just that they're so obviously more concerned with careers than the national interest – that's a given these days – they're so incompetent. Take shadow chancellor Ed Balls' speech to conference on 22 September. The penny has dropped that some sort of apology needs to be made for the mess he and Gordon Brown created when they were last in office. This would play well with the electorate: a politician's admission of error is so rare that it would be headline news. Here's what we got.

'But where we made mistakes – like all governments do – we should be grown up about it.

We should put our hands up, learn from the past and explain how we will do things differently in the future.

So Conference, we should have had tougher rules on immigration from Eastern Europe – it was a mistake not to have transitional controls in 2004.....

And Conference, while it was the banks which caused the global recession, and it was the global recession which caused deficits to rise here in Britain and around the world, the truth is we should have regulated those banks in a tougher way.

It was a mistake. We should apologise for it. And I do.

And so as we get the deficit down, we must reform our banks for the future so that can never happen again.'

But this is evasion and deception. The mass immigration of the past decade wasn't caused just by the absence of transitional controls on new EU member states. It was the result of a policy of encouraging immigration to generate economic growth – a policy NuLab copied from Bill Clinton's America. In a speech about the policy, then Home Office minister Barbara Roche said:

'The evidence shows that economically driven migration

can bring substantial overall benefits both for growth and the economy. In the United States, as Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has commented, the huge recent inflow of migrants – 11 million in the 1990s – has been key to sustaining America’s longest-ever economic boom.’⁹

As for his promise to regulate the banks to prevent another crash, this won’t happen – even presuming Labour get back into office. At the first suggestion of any legislation likely to actually do this, the City would threaten to pack their tents and leave and the Labour government would take fright and abandon it. This being the case, such legislation simply will never be proposed. And everyone knows it.

Nor is it the case that it was the financial melt-down of 2008 which caused the deficit problem. The deficit – and he means the gap between government spending and government income, not the trade deficit or the total national debt – was rising before 2008 and is caused by UK taxes being too low. But no mainstream British politician will argue for raising taxes. While in office Blair, Brown and Balls encouraged the delusion that the UK could have American levels of taxation and EU levels of public services. Apologising for that and the NuLab abandonment of manufacturing in favour of ‘the knowledge economy’ would be the beginning of adult politics. This stuff Balls is giving us is just baby talk.

Addendum: open mouth, stick foot in

A classic case of the curse of the commentators has struck me. A week or so after I wrote in the paragraph above, ‘But no mainstream British politician will argue for raising taxes’, Nick Clegg and Vince Cable of Liberal Democrats did just that. Cable went so far as to actually spell out the truth:

‘The truth is more taxes will be needed – to contribute to deficit reduction and also to address unacceptable inequalities. Any politician who tells you that the next government can balance the budget and avoid tax

⁹ Text at <www.jobuk.narod.ru/11_september_20001.html>. The original text is no longer on the site of the IPPR at which it was delivered.

increases is lying to you.¹⁰

A couple of days later Nick Clegg proposed raising capital gains tax on the wealthy¹¹ and said:

'The difference between the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives is that we want to cut taxes for working people, paid for by the wealthiest; they want to cut taxes for the wealthiest, paid for by the working poor.'

Both statements were greeted with silence from the leadership of the Labour Party, I presume because a Labour-Liberal coalition of some kind is the most likely outcome of the next general election and the Labour leadership wouldn't want to be linked to anything as 'radical' as raising taxes.

Between these two statements I watched an episode of the American political series *Boss*¹² in which a character called Zajac, running in the primary election to be Democratic candidate for governor of Illinois, has his campaign derailed by a sex scandal. With nowhere else to go Zajac stumbles into a real issue – housing foreclosures – and accidentally finds a way to revive his dying campaign. The Liberal Democrats, facing big losses at the next general election because of their association with the Conservative Party, are having a Zajac moment.

Spooks, now and then

Cryptome is the Website of John Young, who has been publishing information about states and especially their

10 <<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/oct/06/vince-cable-tory-budget-taxes-lie>>

11 <<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/oct/07/nick-clegg-lib-dems-capital-gains-tax>>

12 See for example <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1833285/>>. *Boss* isn't *West Wing* but it is pretty good.

intelligence services for about 15 years.¹³ He recently published a list of putative MI6 officers¹⁴ and I was struck by how little it interested me. In 1989 I published *A Who's Who of the British Secret State*, over a thousand names and brief cvs of publicly identified or identifiable secret state employees.¹⁵ In 1989, publishing such a list seemed worth the (theoretical) risk of prosecution. Today it wouldn't. What has changed?

Then it seemed worthwhile to stick two fingers up to the British state, headed by Margaret Thatcher, by revealing (minor) state secrets. Today we have Cameron and Clegg, imitations of Tony Blair, Thatcher's successor, who hardly matter.

Then, influenced by research on the 'Wilson plots', the secret state seemed important and powerful. These days it doesn't seem so significant. Would the average MP today be more afraid of the *Daily Mail* or MI5? How powerful can MI6 be if it is unable to withstand being co-opted by the prime minister's chief press officer (Alastair Campbell) during the assault on Iraq?

Of course a lot has *not* changed since 1989. The intelligence and security services remain entirely unaccountable. Then there seemed some slight chance that, via the Labour Party, something might be done about that. I even got a resolution through the Labour Party conference on the issue (1989? 90? I don't remember), though I suspect it was forgotten about before that day's conference session ended. For as we know now the Kinnock team had already decided to capitulate and 'Thatcherise' the Labour Party in the

13 <<http://cryptome.org>> Its 'mission statement' includes this: 'Cryptome welcomes documents for publication that are prohibited by governments worldwide, in particular material on freedom of expression, privacy, cryptology, dual-use technologies, national security, intelligence, and secret governance—open, secret and classified documents—but not limited to those.'

14 <<http://cryptome.org/mi6-list-276.htm>>

15 This list was mostly the work of my then colleague Stephen Dorril; and because it was mostly his work I did not include it when *Lobster* was digitised.

pursuit of office¹⁶ – a process completed by Brown and Blair. These days no-one within hailing distance of the Labour leader's team is interested in challenging the power of the spooks – or any other substantial entity, for that matter.

The unspoken

On the interesting American economics/financial site *Zero Hedge* this appeared recently:

'Time and again, we've been told that the Great Crisis of 2008 has ended and that we're in a recovery.

Indeed, earlier this year, we were even told by Fed [Federal Reserve] Chair Janet Yellen that the Fed may in fact raise interest rates as early as next year.

If this is in fact true, how does one explain the following statement made by the Fed's favorite *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Jon Hilsenrath?

"One worry: As they move toward a new system, trading in the fed funds market could dry up and make the fed funds rate unstable. *That could unsettle \$12 trillion worth of derivatives contracts called interest rate swaps that are linked to the fed funds rate, posing problems for people and institutions using these instruments to hedge or trade.*" (emphasis in the original)

So.....the Fed may not be able to raise interest rates because Wall Street has \$12 trillion in derivatives that could be affected?

Weren't derivatives the very items that caused the 2008 Crisis? And wasn't the problem with derivatives that they were totally unregulated and out of control?

And yet, here we find, that in point of fact, all of us must continue to earn next to nothing on our savings because if the Fed were to raise rates, it might blow up

¹⁶ Discussed in detail in my 'The two Goulds' in *Lobster* 63 at <<http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster63/lob63-two-goulds.pdf>>

Wall Street again.....¹⁷

Sid's tell

Sidney Blumenthal is an interesting figure. One time lefty journalist and author,¹⁸ he became one of President Bill Clinton's advisers in the White House. He was there during the years when the Republicans – who controlled Congress – and other groups on the right were trying to force Clinton out of office with a torrent of allegations, most of them simply invented.¹⁹ He describes this at enormous and occasionally tedious length in his 800 page *The Clinton Wars* (2003). In an autobiographical chapter, 'A political education', he tells us, *inter alia*, that he had been a member of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) while at university. What he does not mention in that chapter is that between SDS and becoming a professional journalist he had been interested in the assassinations of JFK, RFK and MLK. On p. 207 he writes of 'my first book, *The Permanent Campaign*, published in 1980' – omitting his 1976 book on those assassinations, *Government by Gunplay*, co-edited with Harvey Yazijian, to which he contributed a chapter.²⁰

Other people remember his interest in the assassinations. A review of another of his books in *Commentary* mentioned the book;²¹ and his one-time friend, the late Christopher Hitchens (they fell out over the Monica

¹⁷ <<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2014-08-16/fed-has-set-stage-another-2008-style-disaster>>

¹⁸ Notably the 1986 *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, a study of the Republican right which formed in the aftermath of Nixon's downfall. It was knowledge of this network and its methods which enabled Blumenthal to identify what Hilary Clinton eventually called the 'vast right-wing conspiracy' against her husband.

¹⁹ If you think the British libel laws are too restrictive, Blumenthal's account of the extraordinary fictions about Clinton which the American right were able to publish and broadcast under the much looser American system might make you wonder how far we should liberalise the British laws.

²⁰ And still available, though expensive, from Amazon.com.

²¹ A review by Michael Novak of Blumenthal's *Pledging Allegiance*, in December 1990.

Lewinsky affair), in his review of *The Clinton Wars*, noted that Blumenthal had 'spent some time with Carl Oglesby and the Assassination Information Bureau.'²²

Why would Blumenthal want to conceal his interest in those assassinations? The answer, I think, is that the assassinations are part of a narrative about American politics which is simply forbidden to mainstream politicians. Its elements include: the post-Vietnam revisionist historians' version of the Cold War; the rise of the military-industrial (more accurately, perhaps, the military-industrial-intelligence) complex and outgoing President Eisenhower's warning about it in his farewell speech; the Kennedy/Krushchev attempts to wind down the Cold War; and the assassinations in the sixties. As one of what we might call the paranoid or spook-wise left, Blumenthal understood that narrative in the 1970s. But after the brief Congressional flurry of activity in the middle of that decade – the Pike and Church committees (which led to the appearance of accountability for the CIA) and the House Select Committee on Assassinations (which pretended to investigate the assassinations) – no-one with any weight in American politics has challenged the military-industrial-intelligence complex and its enormous slice of the American tax take. The subject has disappeared from the mainstream political agenda; it is almost literally unspeakable. And as journalism and political careers in America are rarely to be had articulating that narrative, Blumenthal ditched it.

MH17

Amidst the usual flurry of junk conspiracy theories on the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight 17, NATO released satellite images showing the scorch marks on fields left by rockets fired – NATO alleges – from inside Russia into Eastern Ukraine.²³ Yet neither NATO nor US intelligence has released any images of the anti-aircraft missile system – what, a hundred? two

²² <<https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/2003/07/hitchens.htm>>

²³ <<http://www.aco.nato.int/us-state-department-releases-satellite-imagery-from-russianukraine-border.aspx>>

hundred? times as big as one of those scorch marks – which it is claimed was used to shoot down Flight 17. The American journalist Robert Parry has been very carefully picking his way through all this with tips from ex American intelligence officers who know serving officers and concludes that such images are *not* being withheld: they do not exist. The Americans have no photographic evidence that the pro-Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine have or ever had the Russian BuK anti-aircraft system alleged to have downed flight 17.

In three days recently we had three conflicting explanations of MH17's downing. On 7 August it was reported that on Ukrainian TV:

'Valentyn Nalyvaychenko, head of Ukraine's Security Service (SBU), today stated that the 17 July shootdown of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 near Donetsk by Russian-backed separatists represented a terrible case of a Kremlin provocation gone horribly wrong. According to Nalyvaychenko, the SBU has evidence that what happened was the outcome of a diabolical Moscow plot to create a pretext for war, meaning Russian invasion, by shooting down an Aeroflot airline and killing its (mostly Russian) passengers, then placing blame on Ukrainian forces.'²⁴

On the same day, 7 August, the *New Straits Times* in Malaysia reported:

'Intelligence analysts in the United States have already concluded that Malaysia flight MH17 was shot down by an air-to-air missile, and that the Ukrainian government had something to do with it. This corroborates an emerging theory postulated by local investigators that the Boeing 777-200 was crippled by an air-to-air missile and finished off with cannon fire from a jet that had been shadowing it as it plummeted to earth.'

It cited

'experts who had said that the photographs of the blast

²⁴ <<http://20committee.com/2014/08/07/latest-ukrainian-intelligence-news/>>

fragmentation patterns on the fuselage of the airliner showed two distinct shapes – the shredding pattern associated with a warhead packed with “flechettes”, and the more uniform, round-type penetration holes consistent with that of cannon rounds.’²⁵

The next day, 8 August, Robert Parry of the Consortium reported:

‘U.S. intelligence analysts are weighing the possibility that the shoot-down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was a botched attempt by extremists in the Ukrainian government to assassinate Russian President Vladimir Putin whose aircraft was returning from South America the same day, according to a source briefed on the U.S. investigation.’²⁶

We shall see; but, given his track record of careful investigation and his Washington sources, my money would be on Parry getting to the bottom of this.

Meanwhile the Obama administration and the nodding dogs in the NATO countries and the major media who echoed the administration’s verdict that the Russian-backed Ukrainians did it, despite an almost complete lack of evidence, are stuck with their initial decision. And great powers do not admit their errors: think of Lockerbie, or the downing of the Iranian airliner by the USS Vincennes in 1988.²⁷ Which means that if the US intelligence community does finally conclude that the Russian-backed Ukrainians didn’t do it, on past performance it will leak that fact to the media (which may be happening already with the fragments Robert Parry is picking up).²⁸

25 <<http://4bitnews.com/world-at-war/malaysia-accuses-us-eu-backed-ukraine-regime-mh17-shoot/>>

26 <<http://consortiumnews.com/2014/08/08/was-putin-targeted-for-mid-air-assassination/>>

27 See the very detailed Wiki entry on this at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran_Air_Flight_655>.

28 On which since I wrote that paragraph see <<http://tinyurl.com/oldutg5>>.

Can he really believe this?

1. 'One of the many merits of a free Press — which is what they have in the U.S. — is that it makes it almost impossible for the government to pull the wool over its own public's eyes, or at least not for long.'

Thus Dominic Lawson (son of Nigel) in the *Mail on Sunday* on 12 July. Lawson was editor of the *Spectator*, where he let MI6 use it as journalistic cover,²⁹ and the *Sunday Telegraph*, where he regularly ran pieces by Con Coughlin, an MI6 asset.³⁰ Can he really believe that the US government cannot deceive its citizens?

When I first began reading Coughlin's writing in the *Telegraph* his MI6 affiliation was concealed – at any rate not admitted. These days it's almost trumpeted. A puff piece by him on the 27 June was headed 'MI6 experts can stop politicians dragging us into war: Sage advice from the likes of Sir John Sawers at MI6 may prevent foreign policy disaster'. It included this striking paragraph:

'Sir John is the first "outsider" to head the intelligence service since John Rennie, who was appointed in 1968 to overhaul the service in the wake of the chaos caused by George Blake's defection to Moscow. Sir John has taken a similarly robust approach to "cleaning out the stables", as one former senior officer put it – *40 per cent of MI6's senior officers have taken early retirement during the past four years*. After the ignominy the service suffered from its association with Alastair Campbell's over-hyped treatment of the Iraq dossier, Sir John has worked hard to rehabilitate MI6 and put it at the heart of Whitehall's decision-making process' (emphasis added).

2. The Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, was questioned by the House of Commons Treasury Committee about the foreign exchange market in March and he said this:

²⁹ <<http://www.theguardian.com/media/2001/jan/26/sundaytelegraph.pressandpublishing>>

³⁰ To demonstrate this you need look no further than his Wiki entry, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Con_Coughlin>.

'What we saw in LIBOR, and what the FCA and other authorities around the world are investigating in the FX markets around fixes, are symptomatic of a group of individuals in markets who clearly — in the case of LIBOR, because there have been prosecutions, and it would appear to be the case in FX — have lost sight of what a real market is.'³¹

Can he really believe that the world's foreign exchange dealers and the banks for whom they work give a dull fuck about what a 'real market' is? Inside Carney's head there appears to be an idealised world in which there will be 'real markets' in this field. We're long past that.

Kincora

And so, on the back of the Jimmy Savile affair, calls are now being made for the the Kincora Boys' Home affair in Northern Ireland to be included in forthcoming inquiry into historical child sex abuse and how state institutions handled their duty of care to protect children from paedophiles.³² We may presume that this is one area in which the state does not want such an inquiry to go as it will show that MI5 tolerated the sexual abuse of teenage boys at the home.

It will be interesting to see how they prevent this: claim that an inquiry into Kincora has already been held?³³ Cite national security? The Home Secretary, Theresa May, has been quoted as saying she would 'have to consider the restrictions of the Official Secrets Act in some cases'.³⁴

³¹ <<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/WrittenEvidence.svc/EvidencePdf/7434>> p. 35. Thanks to HP who spotted this.

³² Those are the BBC's words: I haven't seen the official terms of reference yet.

³³ Basic details at

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kincora_Boys'_Home>

³⁴ The best piece I have seen on this recently is by journalist/author Ed Maloney on his blog at <<http://tinyurl.com/kkcyfhl>> (Thanks to Patrick McNamee for this.) There is a collection of recent articles on this subject from the *Belfast Telegraph* beneath the main story at <<http://tinyurl.com/ogle7z6>>.

Colin Wallace – who would be subject to the strictures of the Official Secrets Act – has once again expressed his willingness to testify about his knowledge of those events in the mid 1970s. It is not beyond the British secret state, its deep state, to be planning on keeping the lid on until he dies. Wallace is now in his early seventies. Last time we spoke on the phone he sounded pretty chipper. This game might go on for quite a while yet.

Boris and the City

If you wondered what the subtext was to Mayor of London Boris Johnson's announcement in early August that he would be trying to return to the House of Commons, the answer lay in a story in the *Daily Telegraph* on 8 August headed 'Brussels plots fresh City of London power grab: European Commission calls for greater powers for Brussels regulators in move likely to inflame tensions between City and Europe'. Reading (just) between the lines of his speech it is obvious that Boris is offering himself as the leader of the Conservative Party who will take the UK out of the EU to preserve the City of London as the financial crime centre of the world economy.³⁵

Huh?

Elsewhere in this issue I have written about the Conspiracy and Democracy project. One of the posts on the project's website is 'Coincidences and Conspiracy Theories', by Dr Rachel Hoffman (Brown University, Cambridge, Yale).³⁶ Hoffman notes that some conspiracy theories are triggered by events,

`.....frequently physically violent in nature – such as assassination attempts, terrorist attacks, armed

³⁵ Or England and Wales, if the Scots vote for independence in the September referendum.

³⁶ <<http://www.conspiracyanddemocracy.org/blog/author/rachel/>> She states that conspiracy theorists believe there is no such thing as a coincidence. No, they don't. Even the dottiest conspiracy theorist wouldn't say that.

uprisings.'

She offers as an example the two attempts on the life of Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm the First in 1878, which

'....provided the political pretext for the dissolution of Parliament and the eventual passing of the anti-socialist laws supported by the Iron Chancellor [Bismarck].'

After which

'.....the suspicion spread that perhaps the assassins had been instigated by Bismarck.'

I don't know if there is anything to that 'suspicion' but given what we know now of false flag operations in history, this is an interesting hypothesis, worth a bit of research. She continues:

'Similarly (sic), in the 1960s and 1970s conspiracy theories that surfaced in the immediate aftermath of US President John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination appeared increasingly plausible in the light of the subsequent murder of Malcolm X, and later the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and then Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. Against the conflict-ridden backdrop of the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War and the Cold War, *paranoia about a government plot* grew culminating in 1975 with the US Senate Select Committee's uncovering of evidence of CIA involvement in state-sponsored assassination plots abroad.'

(emphasis added)

What she intends to say here is unclear but I think she means 'paranoia about a government plot' *to kill JFK*. But this is not only a strange way to express it – nobody, in fact, was blaming 'the government' but some were blaming a state agency, the CIA – it is simply wrong to say that it was theories about 'a government plot' to kill JFK which led to the 1975 Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (better known as the Church Committee). It was revelations about the CIA's activities which had been reported in the media. For the first

time, between 1964 and 1975 the nature and to some extent the scope of the American national security state was revealed, along with details of some of the operations, e.g. Cointelpro by the FBI and the CIA's Operation Chaos.³⁷

These details are of no interest to her and she continues with other conspiracy theories which are the result of acts which

'...violate existing knowledge and trust – such as the public revelation of information that was formerly concealed, and which by its uncovering threatens to harm the relationship between groups, notably state and society. An example of the latter can be found in the public disclosures of WikiLeaks and, most recently, Edward Snowden's divulgements about the US National Security Agency's mass surveillance programmes. *Coincidences* such as these are regularly seen by conspiracy theorists as irrefutable evidence of a malign plot.' (emphasis added)

This is even less clear than her first conclusion. *Coincidences*? What is she talking about? Which *coincidences* are involved in the revelations of Wikileaks and Snowden? And is she trying to deny that Wikileaks and Snowden have provided evidence of real, actual 'malign plots'?

As far as I can see the Conspiracy and Democracy project will not be looking at the political uses of the terms conspiracy theory and conspiracy theorist. James F. Tracey looks at one such use in his 'Media Disinformation and the Conspiracy Panic Phenomenon'.³⁸

'In the American mass mind, government intelligence and military operations are largely seen as being directed almost solely toward manipulation or coercion of unfortunate souls in foreign lands. To suggest otherwise, as independent researchers and commentators have done with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the CIA-Contra-crack cocaine

37 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_CHAOS>

38 <<http://www.globalresearch.ca/media-disinformation-and-the-conspiracy-panic-phenomenon/5336221>>

connection, and 9/11, has been cause for sustained conspiracy panics that act to suppress inquiry into such events by professional and credentialed opinion leaders, particularly journalists and academics.'

True enough. But.....'credentialed opinion leaders'?

Bull's-eye

Rowan Bosworth-Davies, former member of the Metropolitan Police Fraud Squad:

'In August 2012, I wrote a response to a British Parliamentary Commission public request for evidence concerning the state of the British Banking Industry. In that document I made the following assertions:

"The British banking sector has become an organised criminal enterprise which has been allowed to develop because of the criminogenic environment in which it functions, which has resulted from the absence of any meaningful regulation which those who control and manage the banks would fear.'" ³⁹

Oh, really?

On 19 June the Atlantic Council sent out an e-mail headed 'New Report: US Risks Losing Iraq and Syria to ISIS'. The US owns Iraq and Syria?

Beam me up

It's almost 25 years since I met the first person to tell me that he was a mind-control victim, getting microwave assaults from the CIA. Given what we knew then about what the CIA had done in the 1950s and 60s with projects like MK-Ultra, this could not be dismissed as nonsense and I have been keeping half an eye open on the subject ever since.

I have been getting e-mails from a Todd Giffin who is apparently embarking on a lawsuit in America about mind-

³⁹ <<http://www.daftblogger.com/global-banks-have-become-an-enterprise-criminal-mafia/>>

control devices (though who is going to be the target of said lawsuit is not clear to me).⁴⁰ I was quite interested until I got an e-mail in which he stated:

'Built into a massive array of global satellites and phased array antenna systems (basically just high tech radar), they possess a system to beam complex waveforms and high frequency directed energy at any object. Humans can be targets as can electronics and aircraft, buildings and even the atmosphere. There are many purposes of these weapons ranging from heating, chilling, disruption of circuits, and even manipulation of brainwaves and dustification (sic) and destroying targets as massive as the World Trade Center (<http://www.drjudywood.com/>).'

Well I don't see any evidence for this yet (and he offered none); and the link is to Dr Judy Wood, a professor of engineering, who believes that the Twin Towers were destroyed on 9/11 by beam weapons.

The author then referred me to a site <obamasweapon.com> which automatically redirects to <www.oregonstatehospital.net/> at which the author writes, *inter alia*:

'These people, including all of the Oregon State Hospital staff, Oregon, Governor John Kitzhaber, ex-Oregon Governor Theodore (sic) Kulongoski, the Oregon State Police, the Oregon Sheriff Association, the Oregon Police Union, the City of Springfield and the Springfield Police, the City of Eugene and the Eugene Police, Lane County and the Lane County Sheriffs, Disability Rights Oregon, Eugene Public Defenders, Oregon FBI and US Attorney's Office (including FBI Agent Roberts, and US Attorney Amanda Marshall), the CIA, and ultimately, President Obama himself, are murders and rapists with no soul or ethics and they couldn't care less if they tortured a person to death, or what rights an individual in this country has.'⁴¹

Giffin may be a genuine mind-control victim but this is not the

40 See <<http://lawsuittoendelectronicharassment.weebly.com/>>.

41 <<http://www.oregonstatehospital.net/d/story.html>>

voice of someone who is going to successfully sue some branch of the American state, is it?

The annals of stupidity

I am just old enough to remember the world of economics before the arrival of what used to be called monetarism. Economics was a subsidiary part of the course I did at university in the early 1970s and I remember our lecturer – who would now be called a dyed-in-the-wool Keynesian – giving us the quantity theory of money⁴²(as monetarism was then known) to kick around. The point being that the quantity theory of money was so easily refutable that even undergraduates who were not specialising in economics could be expected to demolish it. Less than a decade (and with inflation peaking at 25%) later Milton Friedman, one of that theory's leading advocates, was on BBC television promoting his book and TV series *Free to Choose*.⁴³ The quantity theory of money was becoming the new orthodoxy, capturing the Conservative Party *en route*. Not that its appeal to the Tory right was terribly surprising; for what the theory said was that to reduce inflation politicians should cause a big recession and make lots of the working class unemployed. Which Thatcher and the Treasury team of Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson duly did.

Around then I met a young Oxford graduate with a first in PPE, who was doing accountancy training on his way into what was then still called merchant banking, in the pre 'Big Bang' City of London. In the course of our conversation I discovered that what he had been taught at Oxford as economics was the free market–rational consumer–perfect competition paradigm which has dominated the Western world for the last 30 plus years. When I offered the standard rebuttals of this I discovered that he had never met the arguments before. And this matters, for Oxford produces a

42 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantity_theory_of_money>

43 I remember part of Friedman's film accompanying his book being shown on BBC2. It offered Japan – Japan! – as an exemplar of a free market society. A panel of guests in the studio, of whom I remember only Denis Healey, fell over themselves in the rush to rubbish this.

considerable proportion of those in the knowledge industries (media, universities) who determine what counts as 'sensible' – and common sense – in this society; and generations of them have been fed this nonsense.

I was reminded of all this by a very interesting essay on the rise of Friedman and his ilk, Michael Collins, 'Mr Anonymous and the Not-So-Spontaneous Birth of the Libertarian Movement'⁴⁴ which shows in some detail the role played by American foundations – in this instance notably the Volker Fund – financed by rich American businessmen, which paid salaries, published books and magazines, supported students, created and financed university chairs, and supported dozens of other so-called 'think tanks' – in the UK notably the Institute for Economic Affairs – which advocated a particular anti-collective, anti-state, individualistic vision of capitalist society. Collins' essay includes this devastating paragraph:

'Tens, perhaps hundreds of billions of dollars, hundreds of millions of books, hundreds of journals, dozens of universities, tens of thousands of people and thousands of professorships, and so on in a network touching virtually everyone in the "Western Democracies" – all of it centrally planned, all of it subsidized, none of it capable of existing by itself in the commercial marketplace or in the "marketplace of ideas" and all of it failing dozens of times until hooked into the river of cash produced by the simple subsidies of the rich designed to derail the "free" evolution of ideas as they were actually proceeding.....is there any such example in all of human history of a "movement" so far at odds with its own self-proclaimed "principles"?'

The Collins essay should be read with Mark Ames, 'The True History of Libertarianism in America: A Phony Ideology to Promote a Corporate Agenda'⁴⁵ which discusses in detail the early career of Milton Friedman and shows:

'Milton Friedman and his U[niversity of] Chicago cohort

44 <<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0812/S00378/mr-anonymous-the-libertarian-movement.htm>>.

45 <<http://tinyurl.com/qg65alu>>

George Stigler arranged an under-the-table deal with a Washington lobbying executive to pump out covert propaganda for the national real estate lobby in exchange for a hefty payout, the terms of which were never meant to be released to the public.'

So why has this rubbish been so dominant for so long? Why are we seeing 'the strange non-death of neoliberalism?'⁴⁶ In an essay for *Open Democracy*, Japhy Wilson argues that:

'neoliberalism should be interpreted as an anxiety-ridden form of crisis management that is constantly attempting to cover over the gaps and ruptures in its own ideological fabric caused by the contradictions that it is structured to conceal.'⁴⁷

Wilson makes quite a pretty convincing argument for this in the case of Jeffrey Sachs, the subject of the book on which the article is based; but do we need to bring Lacanian psychoanalytical concepts into it as he does? I would rather ask: why would those who have embraced it change their minds? Those who are using the paradigm to enrich themselves have no reason to. But why do intellectuals continue to believe something which is not only nonsense but has had disastrous consequences? In general people find it hard to change their minds about their core beliefs; and intellectuals, like everyone else, know that you get along by going along. The three Cs, cowardice, conformism and careerism, are a formidable obstacle to intellectual change. There is also simple denial; only looking at evidence which supports the belief (confirmation bias); and the 'Well, it's never been done properly yet' move. These strategies are used by all political positions.

Neo-liberal economics – like socialism and anarchism – depicts an ideal state towards which its advocates think we should travel.⁴⁸ Some people are attracted to this kind of

46 Colin Crouch, *The strange non-death of neoliberalism* (London: Polity, 2011)

47 <<http://opendemocracy.net/openeconomy/japhy-wilson/economics-of-anxiety-neoliberalism-as-obsessional-neurosis>>

48 Not one I find appealing. A 'Wayside Pulpit' outside a church near me recently proclaimed: *The best things in life aren't things.*

thinking. Others are not. It may come down to brain development in the end. The psychologists busy MRI-scanning the brain may one day be able to point to some little feature on the scan as the place which determines why some of us do and some of us don't respond to ideal types.

'Quite accessible to the embassy'

More quotes from the interviews with staff at the US embassy in London.⁴⁹

ROBERT HOPPER, Political Officer, London (1982-1986)

George Robertson was one of my closest contacts and he was just a junior MP from a pretty safe district who was not taken seriously by many people in his party because he was sort of a defense intellectual. I had him meet with many people and I sent him to the U.S. and I worked with him and talked with him a lot, and considered him a good friend. Tony Blair I picked for an international visitor's program, and sent him to the U.S. I worked with Gordon Brown, who is the chancellor of the exchequer, was from Scotland. It was clear that he had a seat he could keep for a long time, but he was also a pretty undisciplined young fellow. I had him go to the democratic convention in San Francisco, kept using him a lot. I was very close to a wonderful, wonderful fellow in Scotland who for a while was the deputy leader of the Labour Party, then was the head after Neil Kinnock for a little bit, and then had a heart attack and died. It's so awful I can't remember his name right now [John Smith]. But he was wonderful and I worked with his staff and I stayed very close to him.

LYNNE LAMBERT, Trade Policy Officer, London (1987-1990)

Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were in Parliament when I lived in London. Both were fairly young, and they were considered Labour's comers. They were not in the

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

leadership of the Labour Party, but they were in Parliament. Mrs. Thatcher was so dominant that people like Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were quite accessible to the embassy.

After Nigel Farage

'If globalisation has failed, then we return to the nation state. Do you see anyone on the left thinking about this? I don't. And no wonder: nation segues into nationalism, and this is the territory of the right and far right. So there's the big necessary project: how to detoxify the notion of the nation state and make it acceptable to the left.'

That was me in March 2012 in an e-mail Q and A with *Occupied Times*.⁵⁰ I came across it recently and thought: quoting yourself is naff but this is still apposite. So little thought about this is there on the left, the BBC turns to Billy Bragg⁵¹ for leftish views on nationalism.

Still a non-no

I don't read enough books any more: the Net takes up so much of my time. But, on holiday, without computer, I finally got round to Keith Jeffrey's *MI6: the history of the Secret Intelligence Service, 1909 to 1949*, an official history of MI6. I began determined not to cherry-pick my way through the index and to read the whole thing; but after forty pages on the organisation's foundation and earliest days I got bored and turned to the index: let's see what it says about British Security Co-ordination (BSC).

BSC was the most extraordinary operation in British intelligence history: an MI6 operation, in America, with the approval of the White House (which could thus keep its hands

50 <<http://theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=3444>>

51 For non-UK readers: a leftish British singer-songwriter. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Bragg> and watch <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-R73tNgEUg>>.

clean), the key part of which entailed the discrediting of the opponents of American entry into WW2. British psy-ops and 'dirty tricks' against American politicians, in America, with presidential approval. This is still sensitive and thus far it has produced only what is presented as BSC's in-house history, *British Security Co-ordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas 1940-1945*⁵² (though we cannot be quite sure of that book's status because BSC's files were destroyed after it was written) and one study of consequence, Thomas Mahl's *Desperate Deception* (based on his PhD thesis).⁵³

On the key ops to discredit the so-called 'isolationists' and change American public opinion Jeffrey says almost nothing. The closest we get is this:

'...American journalists, newspapers and news agencies were targeted with pro-British material; an ostensibly independent radio station (WURL), "with an unsullied reputation for impartiality" as virtually taken over'....(p. 441)

Though Jeffrey cites many books, as well as the official MI6 files to which he was given access, Mahl's thesis and book is not mentioned. From which you can draw your own conclusion.

Same old same old

I had another rummage through the collection of interviews with American diplomats based in London and found this in the recollections of Thomas Hughes, Deputy Chief of Mission London (1969-1970).

'The Wilson Government's policy toward Iain Smith and his unilateral declaration of independence was bitterly contested by the Tory opposition. The result was that we witnessed a replay of Anna Chennault's Vietnam caper in Washington a year earlier. Once again an

⁵² Discussed at <<http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3623>>.

⁵³ This is reviewed and critiqued - quite reasonably - at <www.independent.org/publications/tir/article.asp?a=285>.

opposition party undercut an elected government's diplomatic position by intriguing directly with a foreign leader.

In this case it was Edward Heath, leader of the opposition in the UK, using a back channel to Kissinger and Nixon to undermine official British policy. This gambit of Heath's complicated our chain of command in the embassy. While the ambassador formally, and I more practically, were working with the Labor Government, Bill Galloway, a foreign service officer who headed the political section, was assigned to work with the Conservatives. He got to know them very well, perhaps too well. Through Galloway's good offices as intermediary, Heath set up a back channel communication to Nixon. Galloway facilitated the delivery of secret messages from Her Majesties "Loyal Opposition," urging the President of the United States to ignore the British Prime Minister of the day on Rhodesia. The Tory leader in effect told the US president that the conservatives were going to be in office the following year, and that they had their own plans for Rhodesia. They didn't want the U.S. to help Wilson muck it up in the meantime.

Q: Was there any disquiet on the part of the Labor government over this Tory relationship with the Nixon administration?

Hughes: There certainly would have been if they had known about it.' ⁵⁴

US embassy and opposition leader conspiring against the prime minister? Some disquiet, I think.

Biter bit

An e-mail on 4 April from the Atlantic Council, one of the lobbying groups for the US munitions industry, announced a 'A Live Conversation with Deputy Secretary of Ukraine's National

⁵⁴ Page 421 at <<http://www.adst.org/Readers/United%20Kingdom.pdf>>.

Security Council Viktoria Siumar' on the subject of 'Combating Russian Propaganda and Disinformation on Ukraine'. The *spiel* went thus:

'Since the Maidan protests began in November of last year, Russia has released a barrage of disinformation against Ukraine. The Kremlin's most important instruments in the battle for Ukraine are the Internet, newspapers and television, including an arsenal of pundits and journalists around the world intent on creating an alternative discourse to the truth. Can Ukraine tell its story in the face of such an overwhelming assault?'

Oh, really? 'An arsenal of pundits and journalists around the world'? And where is this army? I am aware of the Russian digital TV channel, *Russia Today* (and it's not bad, either) but where is the rest of this arsenal? What I hear in this message is: this time the world isn't buying the Washington line on this event; *Uncle Sam's* 'arsenal of pundits and journalists' is no longer having its own way.⁵⁵ And if this is the case, the American military-intelligence establishment's desire to nobble the Internet – which is what the complaint is really about – will intensify.

The sewer not the sewage

Chapman Pincher is probably now best remembered for his versions of Peter Wright's theory about MI5 director, Roger Hollis, being a Soviet agent, notably *Their Trade is Treachery*. He has an autobiography out. Ian Jack's review of it in the *London Review of Books* (5 June 2014) contains two interesting anecdotes from it. Pincher made his early name by receiving leaks – secrets – from within Whitehall. This involved much lunching at L'Ecu de France restaurant. Later in life Pincher learned that MI5 had bugged the restaurant, including the table he used. MI5 had thus heard the details and learned the

⁵⁵ Most strikingly demonstrated by Christopher Booker's <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/10853278/The-EUs-to-blame-for-the-crisis-in-Ukraine.html>.

perpetrators of many major breaches of the Official Secrets Act, few if any of which were apparently acted on.

The second recounts Pincher asking retired PM Harold Macmillan if his government had realised that seeking labour in the Caribbean in the 1950s would lead to mass immigration. Macmillan is reported to have said, 'We just never imagined that they would want to come here in such numbers.' Asked why his government didn't raise the wages on London Transport, whose labour shortage had been one of the reasons for the imported workers, Macmillan said, 'ah but that would have meant putting up bus fares "which would have made us very unpopular and cost us votes that could have been crucial in marginal seats."'