

The view from the bridge

Robin Ramsay

Thanks to Nick Must for proof-reading help with some of this edition of Lobster.

Grauniadia

I received this from a correspondent of mine.

A link I sent some of you yesterday morning was to a short *Guardian* beneath the line (BTL) comment I made in response to a piece by Labour MP Jess Phillips on the Livingstone business.

In it I suggested that Ken Livingstone might now choose to spend less time in the studios and more time with his newts.

I also suggested that John Mann MP should have better things to do than with cameras present noisily abuse a former London Labour mayor when the current Labour candidate was less than a week away from an election in which the Tories were playing the anti-Muslim card.

I added a link to Mann's *Daily Mail* piece attacking Jeremy Corbyn < <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3232215/More-positions-Kama-Sutra-not-job-Comment-JOHN-MANN-Labour-MP-Bassetlaw.html> > and also drew attention to the statement by the Jewish Socialists' Group <<http://www.jewishsocialist.org.uk/news/item/statement-on-labours-problem-with-antisemitism-from-the-jewish-socialists-g>>.

It ran all day and had collected more than 200 ticks and assorted replies when I checked late last night. Perhaps you were able to see it yourselves.

But not any more, because this morning it had

completely disappeared from the *Guardian* site with this statement entered in its place — ‘This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn’t abide by our community standards. Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see our FAQs.’

The Phillips piece < <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/29/ken-livingstone-labour-racism-london>> had drawn well over 1,000 BTL comments last night. Overnight culling had greatly reduced them: ‘community standards’ are clearly subject to time variation.

In contrast, this earlier opinion piece on the same subject <<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/28/antisemitism-rocked-labour-self-belief>> was never opened for comments at all.

Previous experience tells me there are lots of better ways to spend a spring morning than trying to get an explanation from the moderators.

Looking at the last few days, nearly all the pieces on anti-semitism and Labour — Freedland, Hinscliff, a Guardian editorial, Rawnsley and Cohen — denied readers the opportunity to reply and come out as sermons from a pulpit six foot above contradiction.

Comment Not Free apparently.

Pennies dropping

Chapeau to Peter Osborne for his piece in the *Daily Mail*, ‘Corruption, 27 years of lies and why Hillsborough has destroyed my faith in the police’.¹ It included these paragraphs:

‘But I had been brought up to support the police..... It was unthinkable to my generation that men and women of such moral stature should lie, cheat and fabricate evidence....

1 <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3560552/PETER-OBORNE-Corruption-27-years-lies-Hillsborough-destroyed-faith-police.html>>

The police were a vital arm of the British state in the Eighties as bloody battles were fought against criminals, football hooligans and trade unionists.

Mrs Thatcher needed the police to take on the miners. She was, and is, an icon to Tories like myself.

It pains me to write this, but we should ask ourselves whether she awarded the police a measure of impunity in return.

It is disturbing, too, to learn that investigators are now examining whether behind-the-scenes influence by Freemasons was a factor in the Hillsborough debacle and the alleged cover-up that followed....Let's remember, too, that five years before Hillsborough was the 'Battle of Orgreave' — when hundreds of officers clashed with protesters during the 1984 miners' strike.

At the time it was natural for middle-of-the-road conservative people to believe the police portrayal of those miners as thugs. Evidence has emerged that the South Yorkshire Police may, in the post-battle investigations, have perverted the course of justice by lying through their teeth about the threat of violence offered to them.'

For acknowledging that he was wrong and confessing his innocence Osborne deserves respect. If he carries on down this road he is going to make that most unusual of political journeys, moving from right in his youth to left in his maturity. This is the second occasion recently on which I have praised Osborne and he must now be on the shit-list of some in what we used to call the establishment and he may find hitherto open doors closing on him.

In or out?

Below, under the subheading 'Party politics', I quoted some of Jeremy Corbyn's explanation of why he now says the UK should remain in the EU: essentially, so it can be changed from within. Of course he doesn't believe this: this is party

management, the unenviable but necessary task of all leaders of the Labour Party. (And, arguably, the fact that he is willing to do this is a good thing, a sign of real, adult politics emerging.) But the 'stay in: we'll move it left from within' is not a coherent position; for the EU has been constructed precisely to stop that happening. Danny Nicol, Professor of Public Law at the University of Westminster, spelled this out recently.

'...the EU Treaties not only contain procedural protections for capitalism, as is the case in the US Constitution: they also entrench substantive policies which correspond to the basic tenets of neoliberalism.... Imagine that a national government sought to introduce EU legislation to allow all Member States a free choice over the public or private ownership of their energy, postal, telecommunications and rail sectors. It would have to rely on the Commission – the very architect of EU liberalisation – putting forward a proposal to the Council and Parliament. Furthermore the only legal base which is in any way credible would be Article 352 TFEU *which requires the Council to act unanimously*. We are back to square one: *a single national government can veto socialistic advance*..... As it presently stands, these requirements [of unanimity] make substantial socialistic advance virtually impossible to achieve. Unless those who seek such change face up to the constitutional obstacle that confronts them, the only progressive reforms to materialise will be confined to the realms of their own minds.'² (emphases added)

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For the second time Ambrose Evans-Pritchard had an article in the *Daily Telegraph* pointing out that the CIA was the initial promoter of the European Union.

'The European Union always was an American project. It was Washington that drove European integration in

² Danny Nicol, 'Is Another Europe possible?' at <<https://ukconstitutionallaw.org/2016/02/29/danny-nicol-is-another-europe-possible/>>.

the late 1940s, and funded it covertly under the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations.’³

And for the second time Evans-Pritchard failed to mention – perhaps he is simply unaware of it – that this has been known on the British left since the publication of Fred Hirsch and Richard Fletcher’s *CIA and the Labour Movement* (Spokesman Books) in 1977.

I sent the Evans-Pritchard article to Professor Scott Newton and he responded:

‘There’s quite a bit of literature on this subject. The argument is an accurate one as far as it goes. But it does ignore the European dimension, that is to say the acceptance by the governments of the six nations who formed the ECSC and then the EEC that political and economic integration was the best way to continue what the fine historian Alan Milward called ‘the European rescue of the nation-state’. This nation-state was the post-war model, committed to full employment, economic growth, modernization and social justice. It was not the liberal version (basically a customs union) favoured by the US Government, which viewed the 1951 Coal and Steel Treaty with a mixture of relief (because it brought together the French and the Germans) and suspicion (because it involved a large degree of planning).’

Kincora

Largely ignored by the major media, the British state continues to prevent a serious inquiry into the Kincora affair. This is being done by alloting its investigation not to the Goddard Inquiry, which has the power to compel testimony from witnesses, but to the Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA)

³ <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/04/27/the-european-union-always-was-a-cia-project-as-brexiters-discov/>>

The first one was in 2000 and is at <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/1356047/Euro-federalists-financed-by-US-spy-chiefs.html>>.

inquiry specific to Northern Ireland, which does not. A challenge to this, via a judicial inquiry, was refused recently in the High Court in Belfast.⁴

In response to this Colin Wallace issued a statement in which said that 'the Government has seen fit to provide the HIA with significantly less powers than the Goddard Inquiry – namely it does not have the power to compel disclosure',⁵ and consequently he would not be taking part in it.

Wallace also noted 'new revelations about Dr Maurice Fraser which shows strong links between child abuse in Ireland and England'. Fraser was a child psychiatrist, best known as the author of the 1973 book, *Children in Conflict*. He was also a paedophile, who was caught and convicted but whose career was not damaged by the conviction.⁶ The Needleblog said of the new report on Fraser:

'A remarkable new study, with implications for the UK Goddard Inquiry, has shown that the General Medical Council in Britain, the RUC and the Metropolitan Police withheld from the public important information about Morris Fraser, a doctor who was a serial paedophile. Fraser used his medical status to enable other paedophiles such as Peter Righton and Charles Napier to gain access to vulnerable children.'⁷

I think the British state's plan is to keep kicking Kincora into the long grass until all the witnesses from the intelligence world are dead.

Grauniadia

Off-guardian.org, the site which monitors the *Guardian*, has a splendid piece on the *Guardian's* initial handling of the Panama

4 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35997873>>

5 Goddard inquiry site is at <<https://www.iicsa.org.uk>>./

6 <http://powerbase.info/images/8/87/Morris_Fraser_investigation_SPINWATCH_31_March_2016_FINAL_smal.pdf> This is so odd, even for those times, that there may be a subtext we are not aware of. There are two obvious possibilities here: Fraser threatened to reveal other paedophiles; Fraser was a spook.

7 <<https://theneedleblog.wordpress.com/2016/03/31/dr-morris-fraser-abuse-cover-up-study/>>

offshore accounts story,⁸ pointing out its absurd anti-Putin bias. I've said before in these columns and it is worth restating: given what we know of the way the American state worked in the post-WW2 world, the *Guardian* is the British newspaper it would have wanted to get control of in the early post-war years.

Let's say the American state does *not* have its hands on it – and there is no evidence that it does – how else do we explain the way it almost always ends up supporting American interests at critical points?

Party politics

The media claims in the past couple of months that the Labour Party has a problem with anti-semitism among its members,⁹ is obviously essentially a smear from the right (routine party politics). But it is also an illustration of the central tactic in the pro-Israel media playbook: accuse anyone who criticises Israel of being an anti-semite.¹⁰

While the Labour Party's membership has ballooned since Corbyn became leader,¹¹ the Conservative Party is in what may be terminal decline: membership has fallen from 253,000 to 140,00 since Cameron was chosen; 290 of the Party's 650 associations have fewer than 100 members;¹² and the average age of the members is over 60 and may be

8 <<http://off-guardian.org/2016/04/03/panama-papers-cause-guardian-to-collapse-into-self-parody/>>

9 See for example <<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/18/labour-antisemitism-jews-jeremy-corbyn>> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/Jeremy_Corbyn/12193925/The-Labour-Party-is-increasingly-anti-Semitic.html>.

10 This playbook has been published. See <<https://www.transcend.org/tms/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/sf-israel-projects-2009-global-language-dictionary.pdf>>. Tom Easton

11 The branch of which I was a member – by far the biggest branch in Hull – at its peak in the mid 80s had about 120 members. Now it has 300.

12 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/conservative/12200581/Half-of-Tory-party-associations-could-be-culled-despite-grassroots-rebellion-under-Lord-Feldman-reforms.html>>.

as high as 68.¹³ In short, the Conservative Party is moving towards the American model of a group of professional politicians, funded by sections of the 1% who buy the policies which benefit them. In the case of the Conservatives that group of the 1% is currently American hedge funds based in London.¹⁴

The sound of pennies dropping

Ah, yes, free trade.....

So the Saudis open the taps to bring down the price of oil, to make the US shale industry uneconomic; and the Chinese flood the world with steel, apparently trying to destroy the European steel industry.¹⁵ And how many of the major media economic commentators, wedded to the ideology of free trade, describe it this way? None I have noticed.

Why are the Saudis doing this? I don't know of course, but one explanation is that the Saudi regime feels threatened by the notion of US being independent of Saudi oil. It wouldn't then need to sell Saudi all those weapons to pay for it; and wouldn't need to be concerned about the survival of the obnoxious regime there which it has been propping-up since the 1960s. (Which would suit the Israeli lobby.)

Why is the British government so reluctant to say or do anything about Chinese economic warfare? They're afraid that any action against the Chinese steel offensive will have repercussions on the City's ability to attract Chinese wealth here, of course; but also they're about to get the Chinese to build nuclear power-stations here. We apparently need Chinese money to do this. We can create hundred of billions for the failing banks but we have to mortgage our energy future to the Chinese state? This makes so little sense that I

13 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-22607108>>

14 See for example <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/how-hedge-fund-super-rich-donated-19m-to-tory-party-10024548.html>>.

15 Chinese dumping is discussed here:

<<http://mainlymacro.blogspot.co.uk/2016/04/the-big-story-behind-port-talbot.html>>.

wonder if there isn't another explanation, such as the Chinese bribing the Tory Party.

Richard Littlejohn in the *Daily Mail* was honest enough to recognise some of what is happening in his column on 1 April, 'We've sold our soul in a desperate dash for foreigners' cash'.¹⁶

'Yet in the desperate dash to attract foreign cash, we as a nation have abandoned all vestige of decency and principle. Our policy is to prostrate ourselves before anyone with a big enough bank balance, no questions asked.'

And there was Peter Hitchens, also in the *Mail*, on a related but even more radical tack, two days later, in 'Privatisation! Free trade! Shares for all! The great con that ruined Britain'.¹⁷

'Sure, some things have got cheaper, and there are a lot more little treats and luxuries available.

The coffee and the restaurants are better – but the essentials of life are harder to find than ever: a good life and an honest place; a solid, modest home big enough to house a small family in a peaceful, orderly landscape; good local schools open to all who need them; reasonably paid secure work for this generation and the next; competent government and wise laws.

These have become luxuries, unattainable for millions who once took them for granted.'

And there was Paul Mason, no longer working for mainstream TV, going to back to his radical roots,¹⁸ in a piece, 'Smash the mafia elite: we should treat offshore wealth as terrorist finance'.¹⁹ Most strikingly Mason advocated *national* action to

16 <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3518400/We-ve-sold-soul-desperate-dash-foreigners-cash-writes-RICHARD-LITTLEJOHN.html#ixzz45eSCgT00>>

17 <<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2016/04/privatisation-free-trade-shares-for-all-the-great-con-that-ruined-britain.html>>

18 When he was young he was a member of the Workers' Party, a split from the International Socialists, with a membership estimated to be about 50.

19 <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/11/smash-uk-mafia-elite-treat-offshore-wealth-terrorist-finance-perugia>>

achieve this.

'Acting unilaterally goes against the DNA of the globalised elite. Their "nation" is the global system, and it's seen as heresy for one country to act without others. "If we do, money will simply move offshore," is the mantra. "Let it go," should be the response.'

All three columns are a reflection of the Europe-wide turn against globalisation in general and the EU in particular which are perceived by significant sections of the peoples of Europe to have failed, to be making things worse, to be producing chaos.

For most of its life the Labour Party has been the party of the state, the nation and the domestic economy; in effect the British national party. The leadership began moving away from this in the late 1980s when they decided that opposing the forces of globalisation and neo-conservatism meant they would never win a general election.²⁰ Changes begun under Neil Kinnock were continued by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown when they became more or less joint party leaders in 1994 and then took office in 1997. Several wars, the banking crisis (and the longest recession since WW2), and about four million immigrants later, the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader apparently marked the end of Labour as a neo-con party.

So the current crisis should be an opportunity for Corbyn: the lonely canoe he's been paddling for thirty years is now sitting on a great wave of opinion. Hasn't he always been anti-EU? Well, yes, he was – until he became party leader. Now he has changed his tune and is for remaining in it, despite its faults, as he made clear in his speech in a speech on 14 April, in which he said:

'We also need to make the case for reform in Europe – the reform David Cameron's government has no interest in, but plenty of others across Europe do. That means democratic reform to make the EU more accountable to its people. Economic reform to end self-defeating austerity and put jobs and sustainable growth at the

²⁰ The details of this are at <<http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster63/lob63-two-goulds.pdf>>.

centre of European policy; labour market reform to strengthen and extend workers' rights in a real social Europe. And new rights for governments and elected authorities to support public enterprise and halt the pressure to privatise services. So the case I'm making is for 'remain - and reform' in Europe.'

These remarks are what I think of as the Coates manoeuvre. I attended a meeting circa 1990 addressed by Ken Coates, then a newly-elected Member of the European Parliament. When questions were invited I asked him why he, a radical socialist hitherto (Institute for Workers Control etc.), had joined this big capitalist club. 'I'm working towards the united socialist states of Europe', he said. 'Good luck with that one,' I replied.

F....F....F....F branch?

The Labour Party is now stuffed with decent socialists/anarchists/Trot entryists/sandal-wearing pacifists/nutters – delete according to taste – many of whom are 'domestic extremists' by the criteria used by the Metropolitan Police in recent years. With this in mind is the new gay-friendly MI5²¹ going to reconstitute F branch (the watchers of subversives), which it apparently disbanded to concentrate on jihadis?

The innocents

Because it is such a depressing tale of stupidity and incompetence, I am able to read Tom Bower's new biography of Tony Blair only a few pages at a time. It *is* the massive hatchet job of which some mainstream media reviewers have complained and others have celebrated. And yet, in the introduction Bower writes:

'I voted for Tony Blair in 1997 and excitedly watched his drive from Islington to Downing Street. Like the majority of Britons, I did believe this was a new dawn.' (p. xxiv)

21 See <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35345515>>.

Another journalist, Peter Osborne, for whom I have much time, wrote of attending the 1994 Labour Party conference, at which Blair made his first appearance as party leader:

'Political journalists are supposed to be callous and cynical. We weren't on this occasion. Like almost everyone else present I felt uplifted and exhilarated.... We believed that we were in the presence of something marvellous, benign and entirely new.'²²

Neither Bower nor Osborne can have had many friends in the Labour Party. I was in the Party then and I don't remember anybody who ever believed any of it. As Bower now shows in great detail, beneath Blair's grinning vacuity was.....vacuity. But we knew that then.

Rough justice

In the many pages on the current migration crisis I have read I have not yet noticed any comment in the major media that, as the crisis is chiefly the result of US foreign policy,²³ the fact that the migrants are ending up on the doorsteps of countries which have supported/gone along with American foreign policy is a kind of rough justice.

Oswaldiana

Caro

In *Lobster* 65 I noted that the American historian Robert Caro had omitted Billie Sol Estes from the fourth volume of his biography of Lyndon Johnson; that this omission had to be

²² Peter Osborne, *The Rise of Political Lying* (London: Free Press, 2005) p. 26

²³ And partly the result of drought. NASA reported recently that the drought in the Eastern Med was the worst in 900 years. See <<http://www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2016/nasa-finds-drought-in-eastern-mediterranean-worst-of-past-900-years/>>.

Robert Kennedy Jnr., son of RFK, offers a decent summary of America's disastrous meddling in the area at <<http://ecowatch.com/2016/02/25/robert-kennedy-jr-syria-pipeline-war/2/>>.

deliberate (the Estes scandal was really big news at the time and made the cover of *Time* magazine);²⁴ and that I had e-mailed Mr Caro about this and did not receive a reply. I did so again recently – and again did not receive a reply.

Blevins

It may not matter greatly, this late in the day, but a man called Leroy Blevins Snr. appears to have found photographic images of three gunmen on Dealey Plaza, two of them in frames of the Zapruder film.²⁵

Holt

The world may be going to hell in a hand-cart, but I am still thinking about Chauncey Holt. In *Lobster* 69 I discussed Holt and his claim to have been one of the three ‘tramps’ photographed under police escort after the shooting.²⁶ I concluded there that Holt probably wasn’t the oldest of the ‘tramps’ and had inserted himself into the story. However, drawing that conclusion was a struggle on my part and I hedged my bets by putting a few paragraphs in ‘View from the bridge’ in that issue based on ‘What if it’s true?’. I recently rewatched the presentation by police artist Lois Taylor in which she claims to demonstrate that the three ‘tramps’ were not the three men whose arrest records were found in the Dallas Police archives and that the oldest of the ‘tramps’ was indeed Holt.²⁷ I have seen nothing which rebuts her analysis. So, once again: what if Holt’s story is true?

In the chapters in his memoir on his putative role in the assassination,²⁸ Holt describes being tasked by his CIA contacts to modify a rifle, giving it a smooth-bore barrel, so that it could fire rounds which had already been fired by a Mannlicher-Carcano without adding more rifling marks. He

24 <<http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster65/lob65-estes.pdf>>

25 See <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InR77zsXwjM>> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPkIqJml_uA>.

26 <<http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster69/lob69-chauncey-holt.pdf>>

27 Her presentation on this is at <<http://www.jfkmurdersolved.com/lois1.htm>>.

28 Chauncey Holt, *Self-portrait of a Scoundrel* (Waterville, OR: Trine Day, 2013)

comments that shots fired from such a rifle would be less accurate and have reduced power. He suggests that this rifle was used to fire the shot which made JFK's shallow back wound and that the infamous 'magic bullet', Commission Exhibit 399, supposed to have inflicted several wounds on the bodies of JFK and Governor Connally without damage to itself, was that round fired from the doctored rifle, which only hit JFK and simply fell out of his body when it was moved. The appeal of this is the way it cuts through a thicket of problems in the assassination, the shallow back wound, the mystery of CE399 and the framing of Oswald, the apparent owner of a Mannlicher-Carcano.²⁹

Exploring this further, this shot was perhaps fired from the Book Depository where the shooter made sure he was seen by poking the rifle out of the window before the motorcade passed by. The Mannlicher-Carcano which could be tied to Oswald and three spent rounds were left for the authorities to find.

But framing a live Oswald would have been impossible: he would have talked of his activities with the FBI and CIA and the plan must have included Oswald's murder. (The fact that Oswald went home after the shooting to pick up his revolver suggests that he had some inkling that he might be in danger.)

If Holt's account is true it could explain the apparent presence in Dallas that day of the Major General Edward Lansdale. It was Colonel Fletcher Prouty who identified Lansdale as being in one of the 'tramps' photographs taken after the shooting.³⁰ This identification was confirmed by another retired soldier, General Victor Krulak.³¹ But if that is

29 John Armstrong argues that Oswald didn't actually buy the rifle. See 'Oswald Never Purchased a Mail Order Rifle' at <<http://harveyandlee.net/index.html>>.

30 See <<https://riversong.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/maj-gen-ed-lansdale-according-to-l-fletcher-prouty.jpg>>. The putative Lansdale is arrowed there.

31 Krulak's letter to Prouty about this is at <<http://www.ratical.org/ratville/JFK/USO/appD.html>>.

Lansdale,³² as Krulak asked in a letter to Prouty: what was he doing there?

Holt says he himself was in Dallas delivering handguns and fake IDs for what he believed was some kind of CIA-organised stunt which was intended to kibosh JFK's desired *rapprochement* with Castro's Cuba. Who might organise such a thing? Edward Lansdale is one obvious candidate. In a letter to Jim Garrison, Fletcher Prouty wrote:

'Through 1962 and 1963, Mongoose and "Camelot" became strong and silent organizations dedicated to countering JFK. Mongoose had access to the CIA's best "hit men" in the business and a lot of "strike" capability. Lansdale had many old friends in the media business such as Joe Alsop, Henry Luce [publisher of Time, Life and Fortune magazines] among others. With this background and with his poisoned motivation, *I am positive that he got collateral orders to manage the Dallas event under the guise of "getting" Castro*. It is so simple at that level. A nod from the right place, source immaterial, and the job's done.'³³ (emphasis added)

Maybe so; but Prouty has no evidence for this. His comments are opinions, albeit those of a highly placed insider.

Other possibilities exist: for example that the real assassination conspiracy was piggy-backed on the CIA stunt, a fake assassination attempt to be blamed on apparent Castro-sympathiser Oswald, implicit in Holt's tale of the smooth-bore rifle firing Mannlicher-Carcano rounds.³⁴

If the LBJ-dunnit thesis is correct, this means either that, at some level CIA personnel co-operated with the Johnson people, or that the Johnson gang heard of the planned CIA operation and exploited it. The latter seems more likely

32 There is a long discussion of 'Was it Lansdale?' at <http://educationforum.ipbhost.com/index.php?showtopic=21791>.

33 <https://riversong.wordpress.com/l-fletcher-proutys-letter-to-jim-garrison/>

34 Possibly as part of an Operation Northwoods-style event. See <http://jfkfacts.org/assassination/experts/what-was-operation-northwoods-was-it-connected-to-jfks-assassination/> for a discussion of the possible links between Northwoods and Dallas.

because, had the CIA and Johnson gang collaborated in a real assassination attempt, what would have been the point of the smooth-bore rifle round? That only makes sense if a fake attempt was being planned.

PS Since this was written I have reexamined the 'tramps' question. See 'JFK, Chauncey Holt and the three 'tramps' redux' in this issue.

Dave saves the City

The opening sentence in the report on the website cityam.com on David Cameron's 'deal' with the EU was this:

'The City of London will be safeguarded under a new deal agreed between European leaders, after European Commission president Donald Tusk said there is "unanimous support" for a new settlement over the UK's position in the EU.'³⁵

Cameron was in an odd position: he had actually succeeded where it mattered to his financial backers – saving the City of London from EU regulation – but could not actually say so and had to pretend that the other minor concessions were the big items.

The relevant paragraph in the formal deal is this one, I think:

'The implementation of measures, including the supervision or resolution of financial institutions and markets, and macro-prudential responsibilities, to be taken in view of preserving the financial stability of Member States whose currency is not the euro is, subject to the requirements of group and consolidated supervision and resolution, a matter for their own authorities and own budgetary responsibility, unless such Member States wish to join common mechanisms

³⁵ <<http://www.cityam.com/234994/eu-referendum-prime-minister-david-cameron-says-he-will-do-everything-he-can-while-energy-secretary-amber-rudd-says-a-reform-deal-is-out-of-reach>>

open to their participation.’³⁶

Cameron’s pitch was essentially this: leave the City alone or the UK will leave. And it worked.

Weather wars

‘RAF stole our rain, says Cyprus as British military bizarrely accused of interfering with the weather so Tornado and Typhoon aircraft can fly’ was the headline in the *Mail on Sunday* on 21 February.³⁷ But if you have read T. J. Coles in these columns you will know that this is not such an outlandish claim.³⁸ ‘Owning the weather’ is the ambition of the modern military planner and what the Cypriots are reporting is precisely the kind of thing the US military have been researching for decades.

Cold War 3

The new Cold War is now established. And just as in the previous two there is a complete mismatch between the account of events presented by the opposing sides. And just as in the previous two there are people in the NATO countries trying to create an alternative narrative in which it’s not just good guys (NATO) and bad guys (Russia). Take Ukraine. Introducing an essay on Ukraine by Jonathan Marshall, Robert Parry at the Consortiumnews wrote:

‘Few Americans understand the ugly history behind the Nazi-affiliated movements that have gained substantial power in today’s U.S.-backed Ukrainian regime. Western propaganda has made these right-wing extremists the

³⁶ Section A paragraph 4 of the long document at <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2016/02/18-19/>>.

³⁷ <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3456522/RAF-stole-rain-says-Cyprus-British-military-bizarrely-accused-interfering-weather-Tornado-Typhoon-aircraft-fly.html#ixzz40q9pKure>>

³⁸ For example <<http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster62/lob62-weather-wars.pdf>>.

“good guys” versus the Russian “bad guys.””³⁹

None of this is mentioned in Elizabeth Pond’s ‘How Vladimir Putin lost Ukraine’, which appeared in the *New Statesman* recently. Pond’s essay is a good example of the sophisticated end of the good guys/bad guys position;⁴⁰ and she makes no reference to the coup run there by the Americans and their local allies.⁴¹

One minor difference between Cold War 2 and this one is the attitude of the *New Statesman*. In the early 1980s, with Bruce Page as editor, the *New Statesman* would not have opened its columns to so such an openly pro-American version of events. The neo-con delusions are alive and well there.

Telling it like it is

Yanis Varoufakis was briefly Greek Finance Minister in 2015. He was recently asked in an interview: ‘From your time as Greek Finance Minister, what did the experience reveal to you about the nature of democracy and power? Were there things that surprised you?’

Varoufakis replied:

‘In the very first Eurogroup meeting that I attended, when I tried to make a point that I didn’t think would be contested – that I was representing a freshly elected government whose mandate should be respected to some extent, that it should feed into a debate on what economic policies should be applied to Greece – I was astonished to hear the German finance minister say to

³⁹ <<https://consortiumnews.com/2016/01/28/nazi-roots-of-ukraines-conflict/>>

⁴⁰ In the *New Statesman* 5 February 2015 at <<http://www.newstatesman.com/world/2016/02/how-vladimir-putin-lost-ukraine>>. Pond is representative of the higher end – *Foreign Affairs*, Chatham House *et al* – of the wilfully and/or career-mindedly naive pro-American writing on the subject at present.

⁴¹ She listed as among those briefed by the MOD. See near the bottom of the list at <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/27239/snr_officers_mtgs_with_media_20111208.csv/preview>.

me, verbatim, that elections cannot be allowed to change established economic policy. In other words, that democracy is fine as long as it does not threaten to change anything! While I was expecting that to be the overall motif, I was not prepared to have it spelled out so bluntly.⁴²

Former City of London Police Fraud Squad officer, **Rowan Bosworth-Davis**:⁴³

'Your children cannot buy a house in London because the criminal banks prefer Russian dirty money.....
.....Property prices have escalated way beyond the hopes and ambitions of ordinary men and women, and London has quickly become the stamping ground for an army of foreign criminals, tax evaders, pimps, whores and assorted slimeballs, all of whom have found London to be a very welcoming home of choice.

We have sold our once-proud sense of independence and our strong degree of self-reliance to a bunch of Russian and Asian crooks whose money will not pass muster, but as no-one in the British financial Establishment is looking too closely, City practitioners have merely become highly paid prostitutes, working in the financial bordello of EC3.'

He is probably not going to be invited to the annual banquet of the City of London's Lord Mayor.

More Oswaldiana

Trying out the search engine Duckduckgo (as good as Google, I think), I found a 2014 lecture by Professor Joan Mellen on Malcolm Wallace and the LBJ-dunnit theory of the Kennedy assassination.⁴⁴ (She's writing a book about this, due in the Autumn.) I haven't read Mellen's books on the assassination.

42 <<http://spectrezine.org/democracy-power-and-sovereignty-today's-europe>>

43 Entry for 24 January at <<http://rowans-blog.blogspot.co.uk/>>.

44 <<http://joanmellen.com/wordpress/2014/04/30/lecture-two-lyndon-johnson-and-mac-wallace-sunday-april-2/>>

She's a fan of Jim Garrison, who I have never taken seriously. Mellen met Garrison at the time of his investigation. Her husband, Ralph Schoenman,⁴⁵ sent Garrison the material about Permindex, published in the Italian left-wing newspaper *il Paese Sera*, which mentioned the New Orleans resident Clay Shaw.⁴⁶ Seeing Shaw's name in an article about an alleged CIA front in Italy helped persuade New Orleans D.A. Garrison that the CIA was involved in the assassination (a claim for which he offered no evidence.)

Professor Mellen thinks Jim Garrison did important work and has carried on where he left off, widening and deepening some of the Garrison themes and defending his investigation. Like Anthony Summers (see the 'Oswaldiana' section below), she is dismissive of the LBJ-dunnit thesis. In the first paragraph of her lecture she writes this:

'According to the urban legend that grew up around Mac Wallace, and that was *based entirely upon the accusations of Estes*, Mac Wallace has come (sic) down in history, if he has, as a hit man in the pay and service of Lyndon Johnson.' (emphasis added)

The assertion I have italicised above simply isn't true. That

⁴⁵ At that time Schoenman was the secretary to Bertrand Russell, a member of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, and an international political activist. In a statement during a successful libel action he took against Bryan Magee (who wrote in a book that people suspected Schoenman of being CIA, planted on Russell), Schoenman wrote of himself:

'The Claimant initiated the Committee of One Hundred which organised civil disobedience against nuclear weapons and US bases in Great Britain. He was founder and director of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and Director of the Who Killed Kennedy Committee.' (See <<https://www.big-lies.org/bertrand-russell-peace-tribunal/bertrand-russell-9911-schoenman-v-magee.html>>.)

⁴⁶ Some of the CIA thought (a) that the Permindex material was KGB in origin, run through a Comm-symp newspaper and (b) that Schoenman had brought it to Garrison's attention on their behalf. So was he CIA or KGB? Schoenman is still alive and still, as far as I can judge, the independent lefty he appeared to be in the 1960s.

The status of *il Paese Sera* and the Permindex material remains unclear to me but my guess would be that they were what they seemed: Permindex was a CIA front and *il Paese Sera* was not a Communist front.

what we might call friends of Lyndon were murdering people in Texas was hinted at in 1964 by Texan politician J. Evetts Haley. He had noticed the potential witnesses in the Estes scandal who all apparently chose what became known as a 'Texas suicide' – asphyxiation by carbon monoxide – to end their difficulties.⁴⁷

Lawrence 'Loy' Factor talked of Wallace long before the Estes allegations surfaced but Factor gets short shrift from Mellen. This is her only reference to him:

'.... that fantasy called The Men On The Sixth Floor which features a Chickasaw Indian named Loy Factor.'

The striking thing about the Factor story to me was how little he claimed: having demonstrated his prowess with a rifle, he had been recruited and paid by a man called Wallace – first name unknown – to fire at someone in the future. That 'someone' turned out to be the president. Factor said he met 'Wallace' at the funeral of a Texas politician called Sam Rayburn; and there's a fuzzy picture, said to show Wallace at the funeral.⁴⁸ The two authors who pursued the Factor story eventually had this 'Wallace' identified for them by LBJ's former mistress, Madeleine Brown. Independently from Factor, she also thought Malcolm Wallace was involved. She does not appear to have had any direct evidence but, like others in Texas politics, believed that Wallace was LBJ's hit-man.

Texas Ranger Clint Peoples believed that Malcolm Wallace (who had a 1951 conviction for murder) had killed the Department of Agriculture official Henry Marshall when he refused to back-off an investigation of Billie Sol Estes' agricultural fraud. Marshall was partially asphyxiated with carbon monoxide before being shot repeatedly.⁴⁹ A witness who saw a man close to where Marshall was murdered around the time of the event worked with a police artist and produced

47 In his *A Texan Looks at Lyndon* (Canyon, Texas: Palo Duro Press, 1964).

48 <<http://home.earthlink.net/~sixthfloor/mac-rayb.htm>>

49 Absurdly, his death was ruled a suicide, which, with the *suspended sentence* for Malcolm Wallace's first degree murder conviction, suggests how corrupt the Texas criminal justice system was.

a close resemblance to Wallace.⁵⁰ (In her lecture Professor Mellen doesn't mention the Marshall killing.)

Ranger Peoples' suspicions aren't proof, of course, but they are suggestive; as are the suicided Estes witnesses. Who would murder Marshall but someone threatened by his inquiries? Who was most threatened? Estes himself and, if we believe Estes on this, LBJ whom Estes had been paying-off for years.

This is the central point of the LBJ-dunnit thesis: JFK's death was merely one in a series linked to the Estes scandal which threatened to reveal the payoffs to LBJ, and thus threatened his career. But Mellen has no need to consider this: after all Estes was a liar, wasn't he? He admitted so in court, she tells us; and nothing liars say can be believed.

But Mellen does consider the fingerprint of Wallace apparently found in the Book Depository, finds a print expert who tells her the match made in the late 1990s is wrong,⁵¹ and thus she can declare:

'If you don't have the fingerprint, you can't place Mac Wallace at Dealey Plaza, and if you can't place Mac Wallace at the scene of the assassination, your best piece of evidence that Lyndon Johnson was behind the assassination disappears.'

This is true. But as I have commented before, if the print match is mistaken we have the bizarre situation in which a print, close enough to Wallace's to fool two print examiners, just happened to turn up on the 6th floor of the Book Depository. In the circumstances, this is a preposterous coincidence; and given that print identification is more art than science, as Garrick Alder pointed out in *Lobster* 69,⁵² Occam's

⁵⁰ That witness sketch can be found part-way down in the biography of Mac Wallace at <<http://spartacus-educational.com/JFKwallaceM.htm>>. Peoples discusses this at <<http://lyndonjohnsonmurderedjfk.blogspot.co.uk/2015/01/1984-oral-history-of-texas-ranger-clint.html>>.

⁵¹ The match had already been disputed by another print expert. See <<http://www.clpex.com/images/Darby-Wallace-Analysis/Erroneous-Match.htm>>.

⁵² <<http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster69/lob69-jfk-assassination.pdf>>

razor tells us that the initial print match was correct.⁵³

Known unknowns

Musing on the comparison between the Labour Party of today, with talk of centre-right MPs leaving, and the early 1980s, when the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was formed by centre-right MPs leaving, here's former SDP parliamentary candidate Polly Toynbee in the *Guardian*:

'Despite a meteoric launch, failure was in the stars for the SDP. Did we help pull Labour towards electability, or did the split stop Labour winning? That's unknowable.'⁵⁴

This really will not do. The formation of the SDP ensured that Mrs Thatcher won the 1983 election: forming a new centre-left party in 1981 was bound to split the anti-Conservative vote at the general election which followed. The question is: was it formed with that purpose in mind? On this the evidence is mixed.

Three of the founders, the so-called Gang of Four – William Rogers, Shirley Williams and Roy Jenkins – had been around US interests and personnel since the 1950s. The US would have been routinely working to prevent its leading ally (and most important military base in Europe) being taken over by an anti-American government; and splitting the party was the most effective way of keeping Labour out of office. But there is no evidence of the Americans funding or directing the SDP's formation.

Evidence of other people's activities is clearer. Neville Sandelson, one of the MPs who left Labour for the SDP, told us that he was one of eight Labour MPs about to make that move who voted for the *left's* candidate, Michael Foot, in the 1980 leadership contest with Denis Healey, thus ensuring Foot's

⁵³ The excellent Larry Hancock wrote a long essay on Wallace in two parts: <<http://educationforum.ipbhost.com/index.php?showtopic=2321>> and <<http://educationforum.ipbhost.com/index.php?app=core&module=search&do=search&fromMainBar=1>>.

¹ 26 January at <<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/26/labour-party-split-sdp-candidate>>.

victory. Sandelson wanted to destroy Labour.⁵⁵

Mrs Thatcher's private secretary, Ian Gow MP, met Sandelson six months before he joined the SDP when that party went public. Gow's report includes this paragraph:

'Sandelson says that his remaining political purpose is to ensure the re-election of the Conservative Party at the next Election, because only by another Conservative victory will there come about that split in the Labour Party, which he considers to be an essential precondition for a real purge of the Labour Left.'⁵⁶

As for the notorious 'longest suicide note in history', the 1983 Labour manifesto, this was the result of the right and centre in the party declining to take part in the manifesto-writing process, leaving it to the left. The debacle of the 1983 general election was the work of the Labour centre and right as much as the left; and Mrs Thatcher's victory that year can be laid squarely at the door of the SDP. This is not unknowable, this is known.

Foot in mouth

As border controls are being strengthened all over Europe, Labour's shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, was recently quoted thus:

'What I was arguing then – it was a piece of research by Rahila Gupta who was looking at the long-term future of the globe basically – is that inevitably in this century we will have open borders. We're seeing it in Europe

⁵⁵ Quoted in Philip Whitehead, *The Writing on the Wall* (London:Michael Joseph, 1986) p. 359. Sandelson uses the word 'destroy' there. In the second round ballot of MPs Michael Foot received 139 votes and Healey 129. The votes of those eight MPs would have made Healey the winner. In the *Guardian* obituary of Sandelson by Andrew Roth, which tells this tale, the figure is given as seven Labour MPs. See <<http://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/jan/17/guardianobituaries.obituaries>>.

⁵⁶ The Gow memorandum can be read at <<http://fc95d419f4478b3b6e5f-3f71d0fe2b653c4f00f32175760e96e7.r87.cf1.rackcdn.com/018E0007890D439584493E3316B1682E.pdf>>

already. The movement of peoples across the globe will mean that borders are almost going to become irrelevant by the end of this century, so we should be preparing for that and explaining why people move.’⁵⁷

Even if he believes this, it is astonishing that he thought it was a *politically* sensible thing to say in the current climate. But as a recent portrait of McDonnell shows, he has never been interested in conventional politics.⁵⁸

Monetarism?

‘It finally became clear that the monetarists had lost their marbles when – quarter by quarter after 2012 – the Eurogroupe kept insisting that the more one starved the Greek consumer, the more easily a consumption-based economy could be kick-started back to health. Although a huge variation in degree is involved here, in terms of reality failure there is little to choose between the ideas of Wolfgang Schäuble [Federal Minister of Finance] and those of George Osborne: they are twins when it comes to amateur madness.’⁵⁹

Yes, but are they monetarists? I know what author John Ward means: Osborne and his ilk come from the pre-Keynesian tradition within the Tory Party which was reborn with Thatcher, Joseph, Howe and Lawson in the late 1970s as a response to the inflation of that decade. This group was then called ‘monetarists’. But Chancellor Osborne never talks about the money supply and money supply data is no longer considered newsworthy.

With Osborne it has less to do with economics than with

⁵⁷ <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/labour/12132785/John-McDonnell-Every-country-will-have-open-borders-by-the-end-of-the-century.html>>

⁵⁸ See the Dan Atkinson/Alwyn Turner site, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, at <<https://thelionandunicorn.wordpress.com/2015/09/26/lashing-out-like-a-dying-crocodile-a-press-portrait-of-john-mcdonnell/>>.

⁵⁹ The always to the point John Ward at <<https://hat4uk.wordpress.com/2016/02/01/the-new-strategy-kick-starving-your-citizens-into-consumption-recovery/>>.

politics. Looking around for an economic strategy which justified big cuts in government spending (required because they wouldn't put up taxes), Osborne and Cameron came across one example, in Canada, in the 1990s, which seemed to show that economic cuts lead to growth⁶⁰ – a bit like pruning a bush, perhaps. *Voila!* They had a rationale for the cuts they intended.

City first

Amidst the chorus of derision which greeted David Cameron's 'deal' with the EU in early February, few commentators noticed that amidst the fudges about immigration was a proposal, 'Measures, the purpose of which is to further deepen the economic and monetary union, will be voluntary for member states whose currency is not the euro'. This, *if adopted*, may protect the City of London from EU regulation in the future. Only the *Financial Times* seemed to notice the significance of this.⁶¹

As hedge funds, based in the UK or in UK-administered overseas tax havens, are now major funders of the Conservative Party, I presume that the really important item on the Tories' EU agenda is protecting the City from EU regulation.⁶²

Oswaldiana

In a 2013 piece for the *Fortean Times* about the lack of interest in the thesis that LBJ's people killed JFK, I wrote the

⁶⁰ See for example <<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jun/08/george-osborne-canada-cuts-model>>. This Canadian example may have had something to do with the choice of the Canadian, Mark Carney, as Governor of the Bank of England.

⁶¹ See <<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4fca91d2-c9a3-11e5-be0b-b7ece4e953a0.html#axzz3z4JH0nXH>> and <<http://video.ft.com/4734340623001/What-EU-plan-means-for-Cameron-and-City/world>>.

⁶² See '16 of top 50 European hedge funds donate more than £6.5m to Tories' at <<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/apr/16/european-hedge-funds-donate-tories-tax-havens-cayman-islands-jersey>>.

following:

'The assassination research now resembles an academic subject area, divided up into subsections: Oswald's intelligence links; ballistics; the autopsy; the cover-up; JFK's Vietnam policy; the role of the Secret Service; the anti-Castro Cubans and so on. Hardly any of the Kennedy researchers have been actually looking at who shot Kennedy: in part because most are working in specialist areas; and in part because they have abandoned any belief that we might find out what happened on Dealey Plaza. (And one or two have persuaded themselves that what happened there isn't so important anyway compared to the insights the event generates into the behaviour of the American state and secret state.)

Among the assassination researchers aware of the LBJ's-people-dunnit thesis there is general hostility because it doesn't focus on the secret state, especially the CIA. JFK researchers are like other people: they form theories and find it difficult to digest new information that undermines those theories; they are prone to "confirmation bias".⁶³

A good example of this hostility was the comment by Anthony Summers in a talk written for the 2013 COPA conference (which didn't get delivered in the end).

'There are the time-wasters and gossip merchants – I'm thinking of the "a-Secret-Service-agent-did-it" notion. Or: "It was LBJ."' ⁶⁴

Mr Summers has done great work in this field but the LBJ-dunnit case is neither gossip nor time-wasting and I wonder how much of the material he has read.⁶⁵

The most energetic of those pursuing the LBJ-dunnit

⁶³ FT 307, November 2013

⁶⁴ Intended talk to COPA by Anthony Summers: 'Where the JFK Case Sits 11/22/2013', at

<<https://anthonysummersandrobbynswan.wordpress.com/>>.

⁶⁵ I have written about the LBJ-dunnit thesis extensively in these columns. Entering 'Estes' in the search box on this site will bring up the relevant articles, most of which are on-line.

thesis is Robert Morrow and in the last few years he has posted a lot of material on the subject on his website,⁶⁶ including some FBI documents from the 1960s, reporting the Soviet view of the assassination.⁶⁷ One of them, in 1965, included this:

'On September 16, 1965, this same source reported that the KGB Residency in New York City received instructions approximately September 16, 1965, from KGB headquarters in Moscow to develop all possible information concerning President Lyndon B. Johnson's character, background, personal friends, family, and from which quarters he derives his support in his position as President of the United States. Our source added that in the instructions from Moscow, it was indicated that "now" *the KGB was in possession of data purporting to indicate President Johnson was responsible for the assassination of the late President John F. Kennedy.*'⁶⁸ (emphasis added)

Three years later the British publisher Peter Dawney put out Joachim Joesten's *The Dark Side of LBJ*, the initial book to articulate the LBJ-dunnit thesis.⁶⁹

Joesten's first book on the subject, *Oswald: Assassin or Fall Guy?*, in 1964, was done by a New York publisher who was being subsidized by the KGB.⁷⁰ This had another thesis, that JFK was killed by the Right, which was the Soviets' initial

66 <<http://lyndonjohnsonmurderedjfk.blogspot.co.uk/>>

67 The source of these reports is not known but my guess would be it was Morris Childs, who was an FBI agent in the CPUSA and that party's main link with the Soviets.

68 <<http://www.indiana.edu/~oah/nl/98feb/jfk.html>>

69 Oddly, this was the only book on the assassination I read in the 1960s and I remember nothing about it at all. It is now available on Kindle at <<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Dark-Side-Lyndon-Baines-Johnson/dp/1771520094>>.

The first allegations about LBJ were made in the 1966 play *Macbird!*. On which see <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MacBird!>>.

70 See for example <http://www.kenrahn.com/JFK/The_critics/Joesten/Joestenbio.html> and <<http://www.jfk-online.com/mitrokhin.html>>.

reaction.⁷¹ It may simply be a coincidence that Joesten's change of thesis mirrors that of the Soviets but perhaps he was being supplied with material by the KGB. If so, if this was a KGB 'active measure', like most of them it was strikingly ineffective: Joesten's book was read by hardly anyone and the LBJ-dunnit thesis disappeared for 30 years.

Deep state USA

I am grateful to Toby Sculthorp for bringing to my attention an essay on the United States' Deep State.⁷² Regardless of who wrote it, this is a very interesting piece of work; but because the author, Mike Lofgren, was a Congressional staffer for 28 years, it takes on extra significance.

In a footnote Lofgren defines the Deep State thus:

'I use the term to mean a hybrid association of elements of government and parts of top-level finance and industry that is effectively able to govern the United States without reference to the consent of the governed as expressed through the formal political process.'

In Lofgren's view it consists of:

'.....a hybrid of national security and law enforcement agencies: the Department of Defense, the Department

71 Specifically this piece of vintage 1963 Soviet boilerplate:

'The assassination of JFK on November 22 of this year in Dallas was organized by a circle of reactionary monopolists in league with pro-fascist groups of the US with the objective of strengthening the reactionary and aggressive aspects of US policy. The aforementioned circle was dissatisfied with the independent features of Kennedy's foreign and domestic policies, in particular, various measures to normalize US-Soviet relations, the broadening of civil rights of the Negro population, and also a significant limitation of the interests of a part of the American bourgeoisie, above all the oil and metallurgical monopolies.'

At <<http://www.jfk-online.com/fursenko.html>>, citing Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964*.

72 <<http://billmoyers.com/2014/02/21/anatomy-of-the-deep-state/>> I would not use caps here but the author does.

of State, the Department of Homeland Security, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Justice Department. I also include the Department of the Treasury because of its jurisdiction over financial flows, its enforcement of international sanctions and its organic symbiosis with Wall Street. All these agencies are coordinated by the Executive Office of the President via the National Security Council. Certain key areas of the judiciary belong to the Deep State, such as the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, whose actions are mysterious even to most members of Congress. Also included are a handful of vital federal trial courts, such as the Eastern District of Virginia and the Southern District of Manhattan, where sensitive proceedings in national security cases are conducted. The final government component (and possibly last in precedence among the formal branches of government established by the Constitution) is a kind of rump Congress consisting of the congressional leadership and some (but not all) of the members of the defense and intelligence committees.'

Further:

'What is euphemistically called "private enterprise" is an integral part of its operations.....There are now 854,000 contract personnel with top-secret clearances — a number greater than that of top-secret-cleared civilian employees of the government.....

They are deeply dyed in the hue of the official ideology of the governing class, an ideology that is neither specifically Democrat nor Republican. Domestically, whatever they might privately believe about essentially diversionary social issues such as abortion or gay marriage, they almost invariably believe in the "Washington Consensus": financialization, outsourcing, privatization, deregulation and the commodifying of labor. Internationally, they espouse 21st-century "American Exceptionalism": the right and duty of the United States to meddle in every region of

the world with coercive diplomacy and boots on the ground and to ignore painfully won international norms of civilized behavior. To paraphrase what Sir John Harrington said more than 400 years ago about treason, now that the ideology of the Deep State has prospered, none dare call it ideology.....

That the secret and unaccountable Deep State floats freely above the gridlock between both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue is the paradox of American government in the 21st century: drone strikes, data mining, secret prisons and Panopticon-like control on the one hand; and on the other, the ordinary, visible parliamentary institutions of self-government declining to the status of a banana republic amid the gradual collapse of public infrastructure.....

The Deep State is the big story of our time. It is the red thread that runs through the war on terrorism, the financialization and deindustrialization of the American economy, the rise of a plutocratic social structure and political dysfunction.'

This deep state has straightforward aims: control of the tax revenues it consumes. It is now entirely about careers and profits. 'National security' and 'threats' of one kind or another are the flimsiest of pretexts for the biggest heist in world history.

Lofgren makes some relatively optimistic noises at the end of his essay about the formal democratic process regaining control of it which are not remotely justified by the by material he has presented.

If you read nothing else mentioned in these columns, read this.

Cruising

The report by Sir Richard Henriques, 'An independent inquiry

into allegations made against Lord Greville Janner⁷³ contains a striking portrait of Janner more or less openly cruising children's homes and then carrying on his normal life with one particular boy attached to it. It's as if he wanted to get caught (or, as Anthony Frewin suggested to me, was a psychopath, unable to assess risk). Reading this chronology of complaints to the police not acted upon, prosecutions not begun, it is hard not to conclude that the fix was in. If so, why was Janner being protected?

The Atlantic semantic ⁷⁴

The exchanges between President Clinton and Tony Blair,⁷⁵ much trumpeted by the major media, contain almost nothing of interest because most of what Blair said has been redacted. But there was a telling moment at the beginning of a meeting with Gordon Brown, Blair and Clinton on 29 May 1997, just after NuLab won the election.

Mr. Brown: There is a need for a flexible labor market, which you faced up to in the United States. You have 50 percent more consumption per head than France and Germany because they have not liberalized shopping hours, and 50 percent more computer work. If possible, we should make the G-7 the forum for discussion of flexible labor forces so others can learn from the U.S. experience. The debate needs to go forward in Europe.

Prime Minister Blair: It doesn't mean giving up the social compact but it is a new world. The role of government is not about hostilities with business but to equip people with the skills and technology they need and help families.

Mr. Brown: In Great Britain, the long-term unemployed

⁷³ <http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/reports/henriques_report_190116.pdf>

⁷⁴ This is the subtitle of William Clark's site Pink Industry at <<https://pinkindustry.wordpress.com/>>.

⁷⁵ At <<http://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/files/original/5aa4876f138a60330e869d23b372880d.pdf>>.

make up 40 percent of our unemployed, compared with 10 percent in the United States. We have no way to get them back to work. There will have to be huge changes; France is the best example because their public sector is huge. We need to demonstrate that growth and social programs can work together – you do not have to sacrifice one for the other.'

'Let's copy America', chorus Brown and Blair – flexible labour markets! liberalised shopping hours! – showing Clinton that, like him, they had internalised the neo-con viewpoint and that the Americans state's interest in, and support for, Blair and Brown had paid off.

Masters of war

President Obama spoke well about gun control in his White House speech on 5 January and the tears were a nice touch. Happy as I am to hear a US president encouraging citizens and legislators to defy the NRA, I would have been more impressed if he'd used his freedom from having to face re-election to make a stand about something more important to the rest of the world: the proliferation of US drone bases. Bits of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and, increasingly, Africa are becoming part of the Pentagon's network of such bases.⁷⁶ These drones will have little impact on the conflicts into which they are inserted⁷⁷ but will increase anti-American feeling and thus – and this is the only point of them – will generate new 'enemies' for the Pentagon to fight; with expensive ordnance⁷⁸ provided by the arms manufacturers; a small fraction of whose profits will be used to bribe Congress. This is the really significant 'gun lobby'.

Rogue Agents

76 On which see for example

<<http://inthesetimes.com/article/18708/drones-isis-africa-military->

77 Drones are merely remotely controlled, lightweight fighter-bombers, carrying small payloads.

78 A Hellfire missile costs upwards of \$100,000.

There is a new edition – the fourth – of David Teacher’s *Rogue Agents: The Cercle and the 6I in the Private Cold War 1951 - 1991*. I haven’t read much of this yet and am not going to try and review it. This summary is from the introduction.

‘This study is an attempt at a preliminary transnational investigation of the Paneuropean Right and particularly of the covert forum, the Cercle Pinay and its complex of groups. Amongst Cercle intelligence contacts are former operatives from the American CIA, DIA and INR, Britain’s MI5, MI6 and IRD, France’s SDECE, Germany’s BND, BfV and MAD, Holland’s BVD, Belgium’s Sûreté de l’Etat, SDRA and PIO, apartheid South Africa’s BOSS, and the Swiss and Saudi intelligence services.

Politically, the Cercle complex has interlocked with the whole panoply of international right-wing groups: the Paneuropean Union, the European Movement, CEDI, the Bilderberg Group, WACL, Opus Dei, the Moonies, Western Goals and the Heritage Foundation. Amongst the prominent politicians associated with the Cercle Pinay were Antoine Pinay, Konrad Adenauer, Archduke Otto von Habsburg, Franz Josef Strauss, Giulio Andreotti, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Paul Vanden Boeynants, John Vorster, General Antonio de Spínola, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.’

Teacher began this in an essay in *Lobster* 17 (‘Brian Crozier, the Pinay Circle and James Goldsmith’) and he just kept pursuing it, expanding it. This (final?) version is 564 pages, including 603 endnotes, bibliography and appendices. A monumental piece of work.

This is a free download at

https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Rogue_Agents

or

<https://cryptome.org/2015/12/Rogue-Agents-4th-edition.pdf>

or

<http://www.mediafire.com/?4pq91px3iya284d>.

Another Banksy

Occasional contributor to these columns, Roger Cottrell, has secured something of a coup by getting John Banks, the British mercenary, to talk at length on camera about his life and activities.⁷⁹ Part of that footage can be found on Cottrell's website <www.cottrellsdarkworld.com> as a kind of trailer for a forthcoming joint Cottrell/Banks book.

Worse than you could possibly imagine

The sole review of Ian Cutler's *Camera Assassin* on Amazon is this:

Poorly written (semi illiterate) tabloid trash. About a tenth of the way into the book I gave up and deleted it from my kindle.

Poorly written tabloid trash it certainly is. Also barely proof-read. Nonetheless as an exposé of the Murdoch press this is important. For what the author, a former photographer for Murdoch, tells us – and, more importantly, shows us – is that Murdoch's tabloids, especially the *News of the World*, were (still are) not only biased against the left and the poor – scroungers and strikers being favourite targets – but that in pursuit of their proprietor's agenda they simply fabricated stories and faked the photographs which accompanied them.

This is a free download at
<<http://www.cameraassassin.co.uk/>>.

Global Research

If you're reading this there's a good chance you have also looked at the site Global Research. Lots of good people have essays on that site and I agree with most of its positions. And yet I never quite trust it. There is so much material on it, unless there is an army of people working for it – of which there is no evidence – there is no way most of it can be edited or checked. There's not enough quality control. Its motto, if it had one, would be something like that of *Rolling Stone* in its

⁷⁹ A partial biography is at <<http://www.mercenary-wars.net/biography/john-banks.html>>.

first incarnation: *all the news that fits*.

I look at it pretty regularly and every once in a while see something really striking. Recently that was a purported interview with the former CIA officer, Robert Baer, 'Confession of a CIA Agent: They Gave Us Millions to Dismember Yugoslavia'.⁸⁰ I read only a few lines before becoming suspicious, did a little checking and, of course, it's a fake; it took just one Google search for the 'new book' by Baer upon which the 'interview' is based to discover there is no such book.

Not only is it a fabrication, it was put out before, by the same author, under a different heading, on a different pretext; and it's a fake I spotted at the time but had forgotten about.⁸¹

Evidently no-one at Global Research thought it surprising that Baer was talking in this startling way, nor thought it worth a Google search before posting it. As I said: not enough quality control.

More on the banksters

Robert Jenkins was a member of the Bank of England's Financial Policy Committee from 2011-13. In a talk recently he gave a 'partial list' of the charges, 'acknowledged and alleged', made against the banksters.⁸² It's quite a list.

- * Mis-selling of payment protection insurance
- * Mis-selling interest rate swaps
- * Mis-selling credit card theft insurance
- * Mis-selling of mortgage-backed securities

⁸⁰ <<http://www.globalresearch.ca/confession-of-a-cia-agent-they-gave-us-millions-to-dismember-yugoslavia/5492008>>. By the time this appears it will probably have been taken down but I noticed it on 30 November and it was still there on 5 January 2016.

⁸¹ It first appeared in 2012 at <<http://www.ebritic.com/?p=213256>> and was commented on at <<http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster67/lob67-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>> under subhead 'Disinfo'.

⁸² <<http://www.ianfraser.org/why-well-all-end-up-paying-for-the-feeble-response-to-the-banking-crisis/>>

- * Mis-selling of municipal bond investment strategies
- * Mis-selling of structured deposit investments
- * Mis-selling of foreign exchange products
- * Fraud related to the packaging and selling of mortgage-backed securities that institutions knew to be “toxic waste”
- * Misleading statements to investors involving capital raising rights issue
- * Misleading investors in the sale of collateralised debt obligations
- * Abusive small business lending practices
- * Predatory mortgage practices
- * Abusive or in inappropriate foreclosure practices
- * Aiding and abetting tax evasion
- * Aiding and abetting money laundering for violent drug cartels
- * Violations of rogue-regime sanctions
- * Manipulation of Euribor
- * Manipulation of FX markets
- * Manipulation of gold fixing (London)
- * Manipulation of commodity markets via metals warehousing practices
- * Manipulation of electricity markets (California/JPMorgan)
- * Manipulation of the swaps market benchmark index (ISDAfix)
- * Collusion relating to credit default swap market dealing in violation of US anti-trust laws
- * Filing false statements with the SEC (“London Whale”, JPMorgan)
- * Keeping false books and records (“London Whale”, JP Morgan and others)
- * Reporting failures relating to Madoff
- * Withholding of critical information from Italian regulators
- * Bribing civil service employees in Japan

- * Mis-reporting related to Barclays emergency capital raising
- * Stealing confidential regulatory information by a banker
- * Collusion with Greek authorities to mislead EU policy makers on meeting Euro criteria (Goldman Sachs)
- * Financial engineering with the aim of moving Italian debt off-balance sheet
- * Manipulation of risk models with the aim of minimizing reported RWA/capital requirements
- * Manipulation of precious metals markets (gold/silver/platinum/palladium – Switzerland)
- * Manipulation/collusion of the US Treasury Market auction/client sales
- * Manipulation of energy markets
- * Short changing clients a second time in not paying settlements in full
- * Violations connected with emergency fund raisings
- * Electronic FX trading related market manipulation (NY DFS investigation)
- * Falsifying customer data and records (RBS and others)
- * Misleading clients over dark pools (Barclays and others)
- * Misleading shareholders ahead of RBS rights issue
- * Misleading shareholder information with respect to Lloyds takeover of HBOS and RBS's rights issues
- * Conspiracy to force small businesses into bankruptcy to the benefit of the lender (RBS, Lloyds and others)
- * Insertion of illegal rate floors in Spanish mortgage lending
- * Faking customer files to justify predatory foreclosure practices
- * Misleading profit and capital statements based on questionable accounting practices.'

A few days after I saw this it was announced in *The Times* (8 December) and the *Guardian* that Gordon Brown was joining a

large global investment company called Pimco⁸³ as a 'wealth creation adviser' (I kid you not). One of Pimco's Chief Investment Officers is Andrew Balls, brother of Ed, Brown's long-serving adviser and a minister in Brown's government.

A day later it was reported that Alistair Darling, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer under Brown, was joining the board of the American bank Morgan Stanley. On the day of the announcement a spoof Lord Darling said on Twitter: 'I saved the banks in 2008, quite frankly.'⁸⁴ Indeed he did: he was one of those who enabled them to become the criminals they are and then bailed them out with public money, with no strings attached, when they got into trouble.

More on the banksters: the creation of money

The item below (under subhead 'On the money') on Barclays Bank provoked an anonymous reader to send me the following:

'Since banks invent money as fictitious deposits, it can be readily shown that *capital adequacy based bank regulation does not have to restrict bank activity*: banks can create money and hence can arrange for money to be made available to purchase newly issued shares that increase their bank capital. In other words, *banks could simply invent the money that is then used to increase their capital*. This is what Barclays Bank did in 2008, in order to avoid the use of tax money to shore up the bank's capital: Barclays "raised" £5.8 bn in new equity from Gulf sovereign wealth investors — by, it has transpired, lending them the money! As is explained in Werner (2014a), Barclays implemented a standard loan operation, thus inventing the £5.8 bn deposit "lent" to the investor. This deposit was then used to "purchase" the newly issued Barclays shares. Thus in this case the bank liability originating from the bank loan to the Gulf investor transmuted from (1) an accounts payable

83 See <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PIMCO>>.

84 This fooled me initially but not Garrick Alder.

liability to (2) a customer deposit liability, to finally end up as (3) equity — another category on the liability side of the bank's balance sheet. *Effectively, Barclays invented its own capital.* This certainly was cheaper for the UK tax payer than using tax money. As publicly listed companies in general are not allowed to lend money to firms for the purpose of buying their stocks, it was not in conformity with the Companies Act 2006 (Section 678, Prohibition of assistance for acquisition of shares in public company). But regulators were willing to overlook this.'⁸⁵
(emphases added)

Conscious cruelty?

The British film director, Ken Loach, was recently on the front page of the *Guardian* denouncing government policy towards the poor and unemployed as 'one of conscious cruelty. It bears down on those least able to bear it. The bureaucratic inefficiency is vindictive and hunger is being used as a weapon. People are being forced to look for work that doesn't exist.'⁸⁶

Actually it's worse and more interesting than that.

For a believer in the free market such as George Osborne, there are always jobs to be had. In that world view unemployment is caused by labour being too expensive or workers being lazy. Hence the hostility to trade unions – as devices which prevent the proper functioning of the free market by keeping wages artificially high – and welfare payments which enable the unemployed to resist the market's demands that they lower their wage expectations.

These views are rarely if ever articulated by practising

⁸⁵ Richard A. Werner, 'How do banks create money, and why can other firms not do the same? An explanation for the coexistence of lending and deposit-taking', *International Review of Financial Analysis* Volume 36, December 2014, at <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1057521914001434>>.

⁸⁶ < <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/nov/23/ken-loach-benefit-sanctions-jeremy-corbyn-food-banks>>

politicians⁸⁷ but they are there among the taken for granted, never examined assumptions which make up the political viewpoint, the ideology if you will, of many Conservatives.

But politics is politics and, according to the *Telegraph* columnist and editor of the *Spectator*, Fraser Nelson, George Osborne's election pledge to cut £12 billion from welfare spending

'...was created by a pile-up of accidents. Its origins were during the election campaign, when Mr Osborne said he'd find £12 billion of welfare cuts and, as a result, run a budget surplus. As an election ploy, it worked perfectly; Ed Miliband could not match it and Labour was portrayed as the party of fiscal recklessness. The Chancellor never said where he would find such extraordinary savings, because he didn't know. It was a ruse, a figure designed to be bargained down by Liberal Democrats in coalition talks that, then, seemed inevitable.'⁸⁸

It's one thing to clobber the poor in pursuit of – let's be generous – well-intentioned if misguided ideology. It's another and infinitely worse thing to create widespread misery (not to mention the hundreds of suicides which will follow the cuts)⁸⁹ simply to avoid political embarrassment.

And then there is the case of the Prime Minister's correspondence with the (Conservative) leader of Oxfordshire County Council, Ian Hudspeth, which was leaked to the *Oxford Mail*.⁹⁰ Prime Minister Cameron, an Oxfordshire MP, complained to Mr Hudspeth about the cuts the

87 Health minister Jeremy Hunt came closest recently when he said that cutting tax credits would force people to work as hard as the Chinese. See <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tax-credit-cuts-will-make-people-work-as-hard-as-the-chinese-says-jeremy-hunt-a6680836.html>>.

88 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/georgeosborne/11978065/Why-does-George-Osborne-have-it-in-for-the-workers.html>>

89 See, for example, <<https://welfaretales.wordpress.com/category/suicide/>>.

90 <http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/13948252.David_Cameron_clashes_with_council_over_cuts_to_frontline_services/>

Council was proposing to make to its services.

'I was disappointed at the long list of suggestions floated in the briefing note to make significant cuts to frontline services – from elderly day centres, to libraries, to museums. This is in addition to the unwelcome and counter-productive proposals to close children's centres across the county.

I would have hoped that Oxfordshire would instead be following the best practice of Conservative councils from across the country in making back-office savings and protecting the frontline.'

Notice the phrase 'back-office savings'. This comes from the City where the dealers – gamblers and speculators – are the front office and all the rest of it, handling all the paperwork generated, is the boring but necessary 'back-office'. Nick Leeson, the dealer/gambler who infamously destroyed Baring's bank in 1995, began in the 'back office'.

The complete exchange between Cameron and Ian Hudspeth revealed that Cameron simply has no idea of the scale of the cuts the government had imposed, even on Tory-voting shires like Oxford.

One of the things people say about politicians is that they don't know what they're doing. In this instance that is literally true.

Our man in Barnsley?

The former MI5 officer and whistle-blower David Shayler went from being a hero to many to a figure of fun when he changed his name, began wearing women's clothes and talking new age nonsense.⁹¹ In a 2014 interview with the Voice of Russia,⁹² along with his advocacy of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, there were these paragraphs:

91 See for example <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/what-renegade-mi5-officer-david-shayler-did-next-1763246.html>>.

92 <http://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/2014_03_04/Ukraine-was-coup-d-tat-by-the-CIA-David-Shayler-7088/> Spotted by Scott Newton.

'There was a man called Roger Windsor, who worked for the National Union of Mineworkers, who basically to try and avoid sequestrations, just sent money out of the accounts abroad, but that could obviously be easily traced. And he'd actually cut his teeth in an organization, which I can't quite remember the name of,⁹³ but was known to be a CIA-front organization. Now this man was alleged to be an MI-5 agent and he approached me after I had blown the whistle. He came to me and said "Do you think I am MI-5 agent?" and I said, "No, I don't, I think your profile was not right to be an MI-5 agent, but let me have a look at your case".

I looked at his case and the conclusion I came to was that he was an MI-6 agent. Well the next time he phoned me up, he says "Do you think I am an MI-5 agent?" – I said no, it's no good. "But were you are an MI-6 agent?" At which point he went "bu..., bu ..., but " and put the phone down and wouldn't receive my calls.'

Given the Anglo-American intelligence services' interest at that time in the Soviet bloc's international trade union activities, the use made of them as intelligence cover by the KGB, and the NUM's links with those organisations, Windsor as an MI6 (or CIA) agent or informant makes immediate sense and it is striking that no-one thought of this before.

Blog-watching

The end is nigh

'Yes, yes, yes hand-wringers.....but apart from the addiction to credit, reappearance of subprime, collapse in commodities, manipulation of gold prices and slumping trade measures, why are you so pessimistic about the global economy?'

The droll John Ward recently on his excellent blog *The Slog*.⁹⁴

⁹³ This was the Public Services International. It, and Windsor's role within it, are discussed in chapter 4 of Seamus Milne's *The Enemy Within* (London: Verso, 1994)

⁹⁴ <<https://hat4uk.wordpress.com/>>

Dodgy dossier 2

Well, here we are in the blood and chaos caused by the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, 'justified' by the 'dodgy dossier' prepared for Mr Blair by his allies within the UK intelligence agencies, and what has Whitehall done? Created another 'dodgy dossier' to justify UK involvement in air attacks on ISIS.⁹⁵ On his blog, Craig Murray demolishes in a few hundred words the central claim of this 'dossier', that there are 70,000 Syrians available to fight ISIS.⁹⁶ Indeed, this 'dossier' is such a stupid move I wonder if Whitehall hasn't done it on purpose, knowing the 'dossier' will be demolished, hoping to sabotage the planned air campaign, while doing the prime minister's bidding and apparently supporting it.

On the money

'The Financial Conduct Authority says that Barclays bank "cut corners" on financial crime checks and did not properly monitor a £1.9bn transaction carried out on behalf "politically exposed" ultra-rich clients.

Well, in the Alice in Wonderland World inhabited by the "Financial Complacency Administration", they may very well think that this is what happened, and by such a finding, they identify themselves as being part of the bigger problem in the perpetuation of the criminal sink which is the City of London, and proving that they are frankly "captured" by the very bank they are required to supervise and regulate.

By adopting this view, they manage to underplay the seriousness of the conduct engaged in by this Organised Criminal bank, relegating its effects to being little more than a series of understandable oversight.'

'Criminal sink which is the City of London'? 'Organised Criminal bank'? Who is this? Some wild lefty? No: a former detective

95 Text at <<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/nov/26/full-text-of-david-camerons-memorandum-on-syria-airstrikes>>.

96 At <<https://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2015/11/cameron-overreaches-with-70000-claim-nobody-believes/>>.

with the City of London police, Rowan Bosworth-Davies, on his blog, where there is a great deal more in the same vein.⁹⁷

Shrinking 'invisibles'

Tom Easton spotted a very interesting and depressing piece by senior financial/economics journalist Anthony Hilton⁹⁸ in the *Evening Standard* on 3 November, 'Britain's trade deficit is a disaster waiting to happen'.⁹⁹ Essentially: the British economy doesn't produce enough – goods or services – to sustain current living standards. It hasn't done so since the early 1980s when the Thatcher-Howe economic policies destroyed about a quarter of manufacturing. Since then the visible trade gap between outgoings and incomings has been filled by overseas investment income returning to UK shareholders, so-called 'invisibles'. This has now changed. These were Hilton's concluding paragraphs.

'The amount of credit generated by our overseas investments fell 31% between 2011 and 2014 to £73 billion. At the same time, the amount sent to overseas owners of British-based assets went exactly the opposite way.

It rose 31% to £71 billion. The overall effect of the plunge in money coming in and the surge in money going out was to *cut out FDI* [foreign direct investment] *surplus from £54 billion in 2011 to £2 billion in 2014.* (emphasis added)

"This is the lowest level on record," the ONS [Office of National Statistics] reported.

Two things seem to be going on. First, we are making less money on our overseas assets while foreign owners here seems to be making more.

Second, the total value of our overseas assets has slipped fractionally in the four years to just over £1200 billion while the value of UK assets held by foreigners

97 <<http://rowans-blog.blogspot.co.uk/>>

98 CV at <<http://www.specialistspeakers.com/?p=1160>>.

99 <<http://www.standard.co.uk/business/anthony-hilton-britains-trade-deficit-is-a-disaster-waiting-to-happen-a3105766.html>>

has soared from £1000 billion to very nearly £1400 billion.

The surge in the value of assets held here is a direct reflection on the willingness of the UK to sell anything that moves to a foreign buyer with a big chequebook and the ability of foreign buyers to run the assets well after buying them.

The UK benefits, of course, from the influx of capital and skills but there is also a downside and we may be about to discover what it is.

The value of our assets in the rest of the world is now less than what the world owns here — and that would seem to limit the possibility for net investment income to recover to past levels.

But if it is not going to recover, there is nothing to fill the trade gap and finance our current standard of living. So clearly the situation is unsustainable in the long term.

We can hold the line for a while by borrowing the money needed to fill the gap and by selling even more of our British businesses but that merely prolongs, rather than halts, the slow slide to disaster. Something more needs to be done, but what?'

Are any of our politicians focused on this? To my knowledge, not one. Do any of our politicians understand this? Maybe a handful on the Conservative side. Among the Corbynistas? No-one, would be my guess.

In this situation the City doesn't have to work too hard to persuade the government that the financial services sector is the one success story in the British economy and the last thing it needs is all this regulation proposed since the crash of 2008. And so it turns out that Chancellor George Osborne's 'new settlement' with the City¹⁰⁰ amounts to backtracking on those regulations. The new 'line' can be seen for example in the comments of the Financial Conduct Authority acting chief executive Tracey McDermott (her predecessor was sacked for

100 See for example <<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/61f867fa-2c76-11e5-86e3-e7aedbb7bdb7.html#axzz3i0K9RHjD>>.

being too radical¹⁰¹), who said recently that the pace of new regulations was 'unsustainable' and:

'We are often told that boards are now spending the majority of their time on regulatory matters. This cannot be in anyone's interests. If that continues indefinitely we will crowd out the creativity, innovation and competition which should present the opportunities for growth in the future.'¹⁰²

Ms McDermott has evidently forgotten what happened the last time we had lots of 'creativity, innovation and competition' in the global banking business.

The central plank in the raft of regulations proposed to stop the bankers fucking things up again was to 'ring-fence' banks' traditional banking activities – i.e. their customers' savings and loans – from their gambling activities so that in the event of another crash (all but guaranteed) the 'ordinary' bank would survive if the 'investment' (i.e. gambling) bank failed. Barclays, Lloyds, Santander and Royal Bank of Scotland are now seeking exemption from the ring-fencing proposals.¹⁰³ In the new climate why would these requests be refused?¹⁰⁴

The sound of returning chickens

Bill Blum issued issue 139 of his *Anti-Empire Report* in May. He then announced he was burned-out and needed a break.

101 <<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/61f867fa-2c76-11e5-8613-e7aedbb7bdb7.html#axzz3i0K9RHjD>>

102 <<https://www.mortgagestrategy.co.uk/fca-chief-pace-of-regulatory-change-unsustainable/>>

103 <<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ce119f7a-775c-11e5-a95a-27d368e1ddf7.html#axzz3pAoLVi1g>>

104 The author and financial journalist Dan Atkinson starts with the current politicking around regulation and then discusses the much less dangerous world that the City had before 'Big Bang' in 1986 which opened the door for the present world financial chaos. This is on his new and very interesting blog with historian Alwyn Turner. See <<https://thelionandunicorn.wordpress.com/2015/11/06/tears-of-autumn-big-bang-and-beyond/>>.

Happily for us, he is back.¹⁰⁵ His latest edition includes a splendid rant by a former German Christian Democrat MP, Jürgen Todenhöfer, who points out that the current migrant crisis in Europe is the direct result of the foreign policies of the United States, supported actively (in the UK case) or passively by the other EU and NATO members.

On 5 November I turned on Radio 4 in the morning to hear an urbane Irishman explaining to John Humphrys and the listeners how it was the duty of EU citizens to accommodate the refugees/migrants fleeing the consequences of.....well, since the Irishman was Peter Sutherland, at various times an alumnus of Goldman Sachs, Bilderberg, the Trilateral Commission, the European Round Table of Industrialists and the EU Commission,¹⁰⁶ fleeing the consequences of the policies he's been promoting for the last forty years. I didn't hear the entire interview but I suspect Humphrys didn't make this point to him.

Sutherland was given the columns of *The Observer* to make the same case. There he was described as 'migration expert, a former attorney general of Ireland, and chairman of the London School of Economics'.¹⁰⁷ Which is akin to describing Adolf Hitler as a 'minor Austrian painter'.

Pentagonism

What is it with the American state and Saudi Arabia? Bin Laden is a Saudi, the 9/11 gang were almost all Saudis, the operation was funded by Saudi money and Saudi money is spreading their particular version of fundamentalist Islam around the world.¹⁰⁸ And if that wasn't enough, just when the US was on the way to becoming self-sufficient in oil through

105 Issue 140 is at <<http://williamblum.org/aer/read/140>>.

106 See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Sutherland>

107 <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/07/europe-refugees-david-cameron-united-nations-warning>>

108 This was suppressed in the official 9/11 report. See <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/september-11-attacks/11653706/US-report-claiming-Saudi-Arabia-financed-911-attack-redacted-by-Bush.html>>.

domestic shale, the Saudis deliberately increased oil production, halving the world price of crude, making many of the American shale operations uneconomic. About half of all the US shale operations are now idle.¹⁰⁹ Is the Saudi regime now on the US shit-list for this act of economic warfare? Apparently not. Why? The answer, I have to assume, is arms sales. Saudi Arabia has been the number one purchaser of US arms for the last half century.¹¹⁰ (The thought does occur that since this Saudi connection is the aspect of 9/11 the deep and surface US states have suppressed, all the '9-11 truther' activities will be rather welcome distractions to them.)

109 See for example <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2015-05-26/us-shale-boom-takes-break>>.

110 <<http://middleeast.about.com/od/saudi-arabia/a/saudi-arabia-military-aid.htm>>