

The view from the bridge

Robin Ramsay

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new

Russiagate (again)

John Durham, assistant U.S. Attorney in various positions in the District of Connecticut, was appointed by U.S. Attorney General William Barr in 2019 to investigate the origins of the FBI's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election. He was tasked to determine if intelligence collection involving the Trump campaign was 'lawful and appropriate'. The appointment was an expression of the suspicion of some – the certainty of others – within Trump's circle that the FBI was a part of a 'deep state' conspiracy to prevent his election. In October 2020 Durham was appointed a Special Counsel. His investigations have led to Igor Danchenko¹ and Michael Sussmann² being indicted for lying to the FBI – by not revealing their political ties to the Democratic Party when they were being interviewed by the Bureau investigating 'Russiagate'. These are relatively small players and I presume that they have been indicted following the standard procedure of working from the outside in, hoping that the threat of conviction will persuade the small fry to provide leads to bigger fish.

'Russiagate' is now a muddle, with several threads interwoven.³ On the alleged attempts by Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election, the evidence is clear that the Russians were engaged in all manner of influence

¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/n4782kzk>> or <<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/igor-danchenko-trump-steele-dossier-arrested-durham-probe/>>

² The indictment document is at <<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/21063861-sussmann>>. Two sceptical views on this are at <<https://tinyurl.com/8czbub39>> or <<https://www.businessinsider.com/durham-indictment-sussman-argues-fbi-lying-accusation-too-vague-2021-10?r=US&IR=T>> and <<https://www.lawfareblog.com/special-counsels-weird-prosecution-michael-sussmann>>.

³ Decent short summary at <<https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Russiagate>>.

operations on-line.⁴ On the other hand the so-called Steele dossier on Trump looks progressively more iffy (the indicted Igor Danchenko was apparently a major source for it). As for the Democratic National Committee emails to and from Hilary Clinton and others which ended up in the hands of Wikileaks, it is absurd that this is still being touted as part of 'Russiagate'. It is five years since Craig Murray stated on his blog that he knew the DNC material hadn't come from a Russian computer hack, because *he collected it for Wikileaks from an employee of the DNC*.⁵ It was a leak not a hack.⁶

Former CIA analyst Ray McGovern has been saying a similar thing. McGovern's had several conversations with senior people at the NSA. They assured him that, had the Russians been responsible for any such a hack the NSA would have detected it; but, as they didn't detect anything, it couldn't have happened. McGovern restated this again in a recent interview in *Covert Action*⁷ and offered this beguiling thesis.

'In early June of 2016—an election year—it became clear that WikiLeaks had, as Julian Assange said, emails relating to Hillary Clinton. Long story short, those emails were extremely damaging to Hillary Clinton because, in a word, it showed that she and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) had stolen the nomination from Bernie Sanders. Pure and simple.'

But is it that simple? Was the nomination process rigged? Did Clinton and the DNC steal the nomination from Bernie Sanders? Ezra Klein of the *New York Times* concluded:

'The 2016 Democratic primary wasn't rigged by the DNC, and it certainly

⁴ See, for a summary, <<https://tinyurl.com/ytw55ad9>> or <<https://theconversation.com/fact-check-us-what-is-the-impact-of-russian-interference-in-the-us-presidential-election-146711>>. For more details see <<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/08/russiagate-wasnt-a-hoax/615373/>>.

Attempts have been made to estimate the Russian influence operations on the election. For one such which thinks they were significant, see <<https://tinyurl.com/6k2x57z5>> or <<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/10/01/how-russia-helped-to-swing-the-election-for-trump>>.

⁵ This was carried by the *Daily Mail*. See <<https://tinyurl.com/td7x5e74>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4034038/Ex-British-ambassador-WikiLeaks-operative-claims-Russia-did-NOT-provide-Clinton-emails-handed-D-C-park-intermediary-disgusted-Democratic-insiders.html>>.

⁶ In another blog entry Murray tells how the *Guardian* carried his information about the DNC leak on its website for three hours, before taking it down and restating the Russians-dunnit line. <<https://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2016/12/cias-absence-conviction/>>

⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/9jd8kr7m>> or <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2021/11/05/ray-mcgovern-the-man-who-got-russiagate-right-and-tried-to-warn-the-public-to-no-avail/>

wasn't rigged against Sanders. But Democratic elites did try to make Clinton's nomination as inevitable, as preordained, as possible.'⁸

Which isn't a million miles from 'rigged'. However the only detailed analysis of that nomination process I have seen does *not* support the DNC 'theft' scenario.⁹

For those on the Republican side of the divide in the USA, the recent indictments by James Durham have been seized upon as proof that there was nothing to Russiagate, it was an invention. Here's the headline from the Murdoch-owned *New York Daily Post* after the indictment of Danchenko was announced: 'The real "collusion" was the creation of "RussiaGate" out of absolutely nothing'.¹⁰

When did *Covert Action* and Rupert Murdoch last agree on something?

new

Open conspiracy?

I've received comments about my use of the phrase 'open conspiracy' to describe the Israel lobby's activities in this country. Are conspiracies not secret by definition? Yes, in a sense they are. Hence the impact of the phrase 'open conspiracy'. I first came across it in *The Open Conspirator*, a book about pre-WW2 Labour Party activist and pacifist Clifford Allen.¹¹ But searching for that I noticed that H. G. Wells had written something called *The Open Conspiracy*¹² and Garrick Alder tells me it was used to describe the activities of the Fabian

⁸ Ezra Klein, 'Was the Democratic primary rigged?' <<https://tinyurl.com/5ykbk8jb>> or <<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/11/14/16640082/donna-brazile-warren-bernie-sanders-democratic-primary-rigged>>.

⁹ Anthony J. Gaughan, 'Was the Democratic Nomination Rigged? A Reexamination of the Clinton-Sanders Presidential Race' in *University of Florida Journal of Law & Public Policy* 309 (2019). Text on-line at <<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3443916>>.

¹⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/rumwbp4c>> or <<https://nypost.com/2021/11/04/the-real-collusion-was-the-creation-of-russiagate-out-of-absolutely-nothing/>>

¹¹ Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964. Copies are available via AbeBooks at <<https://tinyurl.com/ykbzdz9w>> or <<https://www.abebooks.co.uk/book-search/title/clifford-allen-the-open-conspirator/author/arthur-marwick/>>.

On Allen see <<https://spartacus-educational.com/TUallen.htm>>.

¹² Text at <http://www.acts1711.com/open_conspiracy.pdf> – although that site might not be active, in which case the Google cache is available at <<https://tinyurl.com/4pu3wpjd>> or <https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:zy_Qh_4EA_sJ:www.acts1711.com/open_conspiracy.pdf>.

Society. Calling the Israel lobby's activities an open conspiracy is meant to convey a sense that there is a conspiracy – but part of it is visible, not hidden. Some of the activities of the Labour and Conservative Friends of Israel, for example, are public.¹³ On the other hand, their liaison with the Israeli embassy in London is not.

new

'Blair and Brown'

Yes, I sat and watched all five episodes of the BBC programmes about the two Bs. Both men did one big thing. Blair supported the US invasion of Iraq. Twenty years and at least half million dead later, Blair did not apologise. Nor did he acknowledge that the intelligence he had been given was wrong. (It is to his credit that he did not take the obvious escape route and blame that faulty intelligence.) Brown, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, gave the City of London its head – 'light touch regulation' was the phrase he used¹⁴ – and ignored the domestic manufacturing economy. Instead of portraying Brown as one of the facilitators of the global banking crash of 2007/8 and the recession which followed it, Brown was presented as the man-with-the-plan who solved the crisis.

In the *Guardian* of 13 November this year, Pat McFadden, the shadow Economic Secretary, announced that a Labour government would take steps to end the UK's role as one of the world's money-laundering centres.¹⁵ This is first time that the idea of action against the interests of the City of London has been suggested by an official Labour spokesperson since 1989.¹⁶

After the 1987 general election loss the Labour Party set up a policy review. The section on economic policy was written by a committee chaired by Bryan Gould MP. They produced a radical set of proposals, centred round the conflict between the City of London and the domestic manufacturing economy. Just before this went to the printer, Gould met a deputation from leader Neil Kinnock. They wanted the economic policy section changed; and it was

¹³ They both have websites, for example. The Conservatives is at <<https://cfoi.co.uk>>.

¹⁴ In a speech in in the City in 2006. Text is at <<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2006/jun/22/politics.economicpolicy>>.

¹⁵ 'Labour will stop the UK being used as a haven for illicit money. Here's how' at <<https://tinyurl.com/3vhyaes>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/nov/13/labour-uk-haven-for-illicit-money>>

¹⁶ The City this is what McFadden is talking about even though the words 'city' let alone 'the City' do not appear in his text.

watered down prior to being included in the policy document *Meet the Challenge, Make the Change* in 1989. Not that this mattered. In the 18 month gap between the policy review beginning and eventual publication of *Meet the Challenge*, the Labour leadership – John Smith and Neil Kinnock – had decided the party could not oppose the City of London and also win an election and shortly after publication the entire document was consigned to the recycling bin.

The deputation which went to Gould to block his committee's report consisted of Neil Kinnock's personal economics advisor, John Eatwell,¹⁷ Gordon Brown and Tony Blair. We might say that *New Labour begins here* with Brown and Blair blocking suggestions that Labour should regard the City's influence on the British economy as malign.

new

. . . and fill it in again

The striking things to me about the account of U.S. activities in Afghanistan conveyed by John Newsinger's review in this issue¹⁸ are just how astoundingly bad, corrupt and futile it all was; just how much money was wasted; and that everybody and their cousin knew this to be the case and did nothing. (You might also conclude that the Afghanistan experience demonstrates that the purpose of American foreign policy is to use/waste/lose/abandon military equipment, thus enabling the – profitable – creation of replacements.)

One of the features of the reporting of U.S. politics in this country is that our major media are so unselfconsciously pro-American that they rarely convey just how bad things are there. And when it goes wrong in the U.S. it *really* goes wrong. For example, currently homelessness is enormous. Several estimates put it at half a million.¹⁹ Three million Americans are now addicted to opioids (or, as the current euphemism has it, suffer from 'opioid use disorder').²⁰ The relationship between business and the politicians is rarely

¹⁷ Eatwell had also abandoned his earlier thought of challenging the City, as expressed in his 1982 *Whatever Happened to Britain?*. I emailed him many years ago about this change of thinking and did not get a reply.

¹⁸ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster82/lob82-afghanistan-papers.pdf>>

¹⁹ See, for example, <<https://blog.acton.org/archives/111777-10-facts-about-homelessness-in-america.html>> and <<https://tinyurl.com/4rpxmv2v>> or <<https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-2021/>>.

²⁰ <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK448203/>>

presented. There is an astonishing account on Salon.com of big pharma lobbying Congress, their agents being allowed onto the floor of the House to bully Representatives and the television cameras – which normally broadcast proceedings – being switched off to conceal what was happening.²¹

new

On the Morrow

Robert Morrow is a Texas-based researcher on the JFK assassination and, in particular, the role of LBJ in it. He has done some impressive detective work and his blog is interesting. Verbatim, here is part of his latest email on these subjects.

'The Kennedys were not merely going to drop Lyndon Johnson from the 1964 Democratic ticket, they were in the process of utterly destroying LBJ with both coordinated media exposes and also a Senate Rules Committee investigation into LBJ's corruption. Robert Kennedy, the arm of JFK, was leading both efforts by supplying information on LBJ's epic corruption to both the media and the Senate Rules Committee.

Web Link: <http://robertmorrowpoliticalresearchblog.blogspot.com/2021/08/senate-counsel-burkett-van-kirk-and.html>

Not only was LBJ acutely aware of these efforts to destroy him, he was in a state of high anxiety and completely obsessed with the Kennedys' destroy LBJ campaign. Both Horace Busby and George Reedy, two top LBJ aides, have confirmed this.²²

Horace Busby web link: <https://robertmorrowpoliticalresearchblog.blogspot.com/2020/07/lyndon-johnson-was-acutely-aware-by-nov.html>

Sadly, however, Mr Morrow – who evidently feels unrecognised; or doesn't find the recognition of people like me sufficient – puts this at the end of his emails these days:

Robert Morrow

The World's Foremost Authority on the JFK Assassination

The Top Historian in the World on Lyndon Johnson

²¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/47enct37>> or <<https://www.salon.com/2021/10/29/pro-pharma-democrats-bill-to-lower-costs--advocates-ask-what-did-they-get-for-that/>>

²² <<https://tinyurl.com/pbhemrxn>> or <<https://robertmorrowpoliticalresearchblog.blogspot.com/2020/07/lyndon-johnson-was-acutely-aware-by-nov.html>>

***The Greatest Presidential Historian in American History
Nation's #1 Opposition Researcher on the Clintons***

If you read this Mr Morrow, please drop all this self-promotion. Nobody in the major media or academia, whose attention you seek, is going to take seriously someone who does this.

new

The Hitch

Christopher Hitchens died in 2011. I have a couple of collections of his essays. Without checking, all I remembered about him was . . . he had been a lefty (SWP?) in his youth, shifted to the right and moved to America in the late 1980s or early 1990s, where he was a prominent public atheist and a cheerleader for the American-British invasion of Iraq . . . And that's about all I had. So it was with some interest that I picked up a copy of his memoir *Hitch-22* (Atlantic Books, 2011) which he wrote while he was terminally ill.

In this there is a section in which he describes meeting Mrs Thatcher for the first time while she was leader of the Opposition. At the end of this very odd encounter, Thatcher whacks him on his arse with a roll of papers and calls him a naughty boy. Hitchens continues:

'Even at the time, as I left the party, I knew I had meet someone rather impressive. And the worst of "Thatcherism", as I was beginning by degrees to discover, was the rodent slowly stirring in my viscera: the uneasy but unbanishable feeling that on some essential matters she might be right.' (p. 178)

There is no date on this but she is described as being the Conservative Party's 'new leader', therefore it's 1975-7. But on which 'essential matters' did he – still a public figure on the British left then – think she might be right in the mid-1970s? Union-bashing? Anti-communism? Because, in so far as 'Thatcherism' existed in the mid-1970s, that's about all there was to it.

new

Dallas again

So: another JFK assassination anniversary comes and goes. There were two pieces acknowledging the event in the mainstream media that I noticed. The first was an email from the *London Review of Books* on 22 November to its

subscribers with a piece of Christopher Hitchens copy from 1991 which contained this:

'If one exempts things like anti-semitism or fear of Freemasons, which belong more properly to the world of post-Salem paranoia and have been ably dealt with by Professor Richard Hofstadter in his study *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, then modern American conspiracy theory begins with the Warren Commission. . . . The events in Dealey Plaza and the Dallas Police Department in November 1963 were at once impressed on every American. And the Warren Commission of Inquiry came up with an explanation which, it is pretty safe to say, nobody really believes. Conspiracy theory thus becomes an ailment of democracy. It is the white noise which moves in to fill the vacuity of the official version. To blame the theorists is therefore to look at only half the story, and sometimes even less.'²³

Which is close to what I wrote – less elegantly and 30 years behind him – under subheading **20 Years on** below: 'If we are going to blame somebody for today's conspiracy theory-laden world, its ultimate progenitors were the *authors* of the Warren Commission whose hurriedly cobbled together fictions fell apart as soon as they were examined.'

This idea did not occur to Tim Weiner author of the second piece, on the *Rolling Stone* website.²⁴ He concluded thus:

'I've spent half my life reporting, writing, and reading about the CIA and American intelligence. I remember the Kennedy assassination; I've studied the evidence. And I can't tell you that there *wasn't* a conspiracy. Maybe it was the Russians. Could have been the Cubans. Might have been the Mafia. Maybe there's a mind-blowing bombshell in the still-classified archives of the government. But I seriously doubt it.

I can tell you for a fact that our democracy is suffocating under an avalanche of disinformation. Trump won the 2020 election! Covid vaccines are seeded with microchips! Democrats are blood-sucking pedophile communists! 9/11 was an inside job! Our body politic is being poisoned by lies. They stalk the land like brain-eating zombies. And we can't seem to kill them.

We have a moral obligation to call bullshit when we see it. Especially

²³ <<https://tinyurl.com/2kffave9>> or <<https://lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v13/n21/christopher-hitchens/on-the-imagining-of-conspiracy>>

²⁴ 'This Is Where Oliver Stone Got His Loony JFK Conspiracies From' at <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/jfk-oliver-stone-conspiracy-theory-russian-disinformation-1260223/>

when public figures promote lies for profit. Stone's *JFK* films are fantasies. Conspiracy theories are not facts. They're a kind of collective psychosis. And they're driving our country down the road to hell.'

How much 'studying the evidence' on Dealey Plaza has been done by Weiner can be gauged by this comment of his:

'But what you believe about it boils down to this: Either Lee Harvey Oswald, trained by the United States Marines as a sharpshooter before he defected to the Soviet Union, got off a million-to-one shot in Dallas. He acted alone. Or he was an instrument of a conspiracy so immense that it staggers the mind.'

In the first place Oswald wasn't 'trained as a sharpshooter' by the Marines. Like all Marines, he *was* trained to fire a rifle. But had Mr Weiner bothered to check, he would have learned that Oswald was a distinctly average shot.²⁵ Secondly, he is offering an entirely false binary: the choices are not limited to Oswald acted alone or 'a conspiracy so immense that it staggers the mind'. For example, it might have been a local Texas-based conspiracy – the LBJ-dunnit theme – which was covered-up by all and sundry for a variety of reasons.

Mr Weiner tells *Rolling Stone* readers that the CIA-dunnit thesis picked up by Jim Garrison in New Orleans came from a Soviet disinformation operation.²⁶ This is true. But others suspected the Agency. Robert Kennedy did, and asked then CIA Director John McCone about its possible role. The CIA recorded on 25 November that the 'chargé of the Cuban embassy in Chile says there is no doubt that the CIA or "other Yankees" assassinated the president'.²⁷ The late Anthony Cavendish, the former SIS officer and friend of SIS Chief Maurice Oldfield, told me that when they heard of the assassination, his circle assumed it had been done by the CIA. In other words, the KGB didn't manufacture this thread and Garrison's investigation was merely the beginning of it. There is a vast amount of research on the CIA-dunnit thesis of which Weiner appears to be unaware. Weiner is good on US intelligence; his *Legacy of Ashes* is worth the attention of anyone interested in the subject.²⁸ He just doesn't know much about the JFK research.

²⁵ See, for example – the first one I looked at – <http://22november1963.org.uk/lee-harvey-oswald-marksman-sharpshooter>.

²⁶ This is the Perminindex story, discussed by Steve Dorril in *Lobster 2* in 1983.

²⁷ <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/jfk/releases/docid-32401329.pdf>

²⁸ It was briefly reviewed in *Lobster 54*. The review is anonymous but was by me. In it I expressed my surprise that a *New York Times* journalist could write such a critical book about the CIA.

Moi?

It had to happen, I suppose. My comment in this column (below under subhead **The Unsayable**) that the actions of the Israel lobby in this country mean that 'We now have not the *secret* Jewish conspiracy of anti-semitic theories but an *open* Jewish conspiracy' led the person(s) on Twitter who use the name 'Anti-Fascism & Far Right' to comment:

'It's been depressing seeing @LobsterMagazine which once published important research on parapolitics descend into a platform for obsessive conspiratorial antisemitism. And it's about time it was called out on this by anti-racists.'²⁹

Well now. First, I didn't respond; I don't use Twitter. Second, the comment does not respond to the substance of what I wrote, merely the fact that I had written it. Third, since I began writing about this subject 20 years ago in a chapter of *The Rise of New Labour*, this has been a long, slow descent. Fourth, since Anti-Fascism & Far Right apparently 20,000 followers on Twitter, my thanks to her/him/them for the publicity.

NuLab

The BBC TV documentary series on Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in October began with the received view that the loony left got control of Labour in the early 1980s, and were massively rejected at the 1983 general election. This led the 'sensible' people in the Party to begin the journey back to the (electable) centre. This was begun by Neil Kinnock, followed by John Smith and then the New Labour duo of Brown and Blair. As you might expect, the received view is incomplete.

In 1983 the leader of the Labour Party was Michael Foot. He had become leader in November 1980 after an election contest among MPs, in which he defeated Denis Healey. Foot won by 139 to 129 because 8 Labour MPs, who were planning to 'defect' to the Social Democratic Party, voted for him. One of that eight was Neville Sandelson, whose obituary in the *Guardian* by Andrew Roth began thus:

'The historic "achievement" of Neville Sandelson, who has died aged 78, and was MP for Hayes and Harlington from 1971-83, was to organise, in 1981 [sic], seven right-wing Labour MPs – all planning to defect to the

²⁹ <<https://twitter.com/FFRAFAAction/status/144910809636682137>>

new Social Democratic Party – into voting for Michael Foot instead of Denis Healey in the Labour leadership elections. This was in the hope of making Labour unelectable.’³⁰

In 1981 the Social Democratic Party (SDP), fronted by the ‘Gang of Four’ – Roy Jenkins, David Owen, William Rodgers and Shirley Williams – was formally launched.

In 1983 the Labour Party began the process of writing a manifesto for the election which was coming that year. In those days normally the manifesto was usually a compromise between the policies sought by right and left of the party. In 1983, however, this changed.

‘At the 1983 meeting between the Shadow Cabinet and Labour’s National Executive Committee to finalise the manifesto for the forthcoming election, trade union leader John Golding, from what Roy Hattersley called “the hard right”, proposed adopting all the policies being suggested by the left. This was carried with virtually no discussion: the usual left/right struggle over the manifesto, which Roy Hattersley had been anticipating, did not materialise. The right had decided that since they were going to lose the election anyway (the “Falklands factor” and the formation of the SDP had ensured that) they would see that it was lost with all the left’s policies attached to it.’³¹

Thus the ‘take-over’ of the Labour Party by the loony left – the anti-nuclear

³⁰ See <<http://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/jan/17/guardianobituaries.obituaries>>. The figure of eight Labour MPs who were about to become founder members of the SDP voting for Foot rather than Denis Healey is also given in Philip Whitehead’s *The Writing on the Wall* (London: Michael Joseph, 1985) p. 359.

In August 1982 Mrs Thatcher’s private secretary, Ian Gow MP, met with Sandelson. Gow’s report to Thatcher included 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 pre-condition for a real purge of the Labour Left.’

The Gow memorandum of 12/8/82 can be read at <<https://tinyurl.com/4bznxzzt>> or <<https://c59574e9047e61130f13-3f71d0fe2b653c4f00f32175760e96e7.ssl.cf1.rackcdn.com/018E0007890D439584493E3316B1682E.pdf>>.

³¹ This quotation is from p. 36 of my *The Rise of New Labour* (Harpندن: Pocket Essentials, 2002) – which is still available through abebooks.co.uk.

The part of the quote that refers to Roy Hattersley is something that Hattersley mentioned in ‘Comrades At War’, part 2 of the series ‘The Wilderness Years’, broadcast on BBC2 in December of 1995. He was told of the strategy by John Golding after the meeting. This episode is on-line at <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00z9myf>>.

leader Michael Foot with a left-wing election manifesto³² – was in large part the creation of the Labour right. And Labour's election loss in 1983 was the result of the SDP's formation: they received 25% of the votes cast, most of which came from people who were previously Labour voters. The Conservative vote stayed much as it had been in 1979. There was a 'Falklands bounce' for the Conservatives in the 1983 election but recent analysis suggests that this was no more than 3%.³³

Back to the SDP. If we ask the question 'What would the Americans do to prevent its most important ally and its "unsinkable aircraft carrier" from engaging in unilateral nuclear disarmament?', the answer is *almost anything*.³⁴ Would they organise a new political party on the British centre-left to prevent anti-nuclear Labour winning a general election? London CIA station chief in the 1970s, Cord Meyer, boasted to Ray Fitzwalter of World in Action that this is what the CIA did with the SDP. But, striking though Meyer's comment is, he might simply have been bullshitting – success having a thousand fathers and all that.³⁵

Nonetheless, the creation of the SDP did indeed ensure that the Labour Party lost the 1983 election. After which the SDP slowly faded away (as did Labour's desire for the UK to go non-nuclear). In a sense the CIA's role (or non-role) is of marginal significance. The 'Gang of Four' were in 'the American tendency' in Labour³⁶ and MPs in that tendency had been trying to get Jenkins to leave Labour and start a new centre party since 1970. If the CIA had a role in the creation of the SDP, the Agency was pushing at an almost open door.

³² What Gerald Kaufman MP called the 'longest suicide note in history'.

³³ See David Sanders *et al*, 'Government Popularity and the Falklands War: A Reassessment', which suggests the government's popularity had begun rising before the Falklands. A summary of the paper is at <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/193822>>.

³⁴ *Covert Action* has recently posted an essay by Murray Horton on the CIA operations in Australia and New Zealand against politicians who dared to question the Americans' policies. <<https://tinyurl.com/3zj88z54>> or <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2021/09/24/how-the-cia-tried-to-overthrow-new-zealands-progressive-labor-government-by-stoking-white-racial-rage-against-the-indigenous-maori-population/>>

³⁵ I was told this story circa 1989 and I recorded the information without putting a name or date on it – presumably at the source's request. But I recorded that the person I spoke to told me he had put several of his best people on the story and they found nothing. The only person I knew then who had 'people' was Fitzwalter at World in Action. Therefore, while I do not recall the event, my note was about a conversation with Fitzwalter.

³⁶ On which the best account is still Tom Easton's 'Who were *they* travelling with?' in *Lobster* 31, on-line at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/articles/l31whowh.htm>>.

A new film about that man Wallace

There is a new film about Colin Wallace, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, made by Michael Oswald.³⁷ It is on YouTube at <<https://youtu.be/z8FDPU-tDBU>>. This is by some distance the best account of Wallace, and the events in which he was involved, since Paul Foot's *Who Framed Colin Wallace?*. It includes all the significant photographs of Wallace from his period in Northern Ireland, plus a good deal of Wallace and Fred Holroyd speaking recently. Highly recommended.³⁸

Woke corps?

Towards the end of a double-page spread in *The Times* (18 September hard copy; 17 digital), Gerard Baker quoted this by Vivek Ramaswamy, author of the new book *Woke Inc.*:³⁹

'After the 2008 financial crisis, corporations feared the wrath of the old "Occupy Wall Street" left, so they got in bed with the newly ascendent woke left instead. According to the new woke left, the real sources of disempowerment weren't economic in justice or poverty. Rather, they were racial injustice, misogyny, bigotry and so forth. Corporate America agreed to lend its money and legitimacy to that new woke movement as a way of defanging Occupy Wall Street and related movements. It worked.'

I did a search for Vivek Ramaswamy and there he was, quoted in the *Daily Mail*.

'Here's how it works: pretend like you care about something other than profit and power, precisely to gain more of each,' Ramaswamy writes. 'Corporations win. Woke activists win. Celebrities win. But the losers of this game are the American people, including both sincere progressives who are used as pawns and everyday Conservatives who are silenced, our hollowed-out institutions, and American democracy itself.'

The subversion of America by this new form of capitalism isn't just a

³⁷ On Oswald see <<https://tinyurl.com/4v5d4x2y>> or <<https://taxjustice.net/2018/11/30/the-spiders-web-documentary-viewed-over-one-million-times-on-youtube/>>.

³⁸ The film's Twitter handle is @Wallace_Film and its website is <<https://colinwallacefilm.com/>>

³⁹ Full title *Woke Inc.: Inside Corporate America's Social Justice Scam* (New York: Center Street, 2021)

bug, as they say in Silicon Valley, it's a feature.⁴⁰

Is there, as the book's UK publisher has it, a 'modern woke-industrial complex'? ⁴¹ As evidence of this, the piece written in the *Mail* reproduced a Nike ad headed 'Our black commitment' which claimed:

'In 2020, Nike, Converse, Jordan Brand and Michael Jordan committed a combined \$140 million over 10 years too invest in and support organizations focused on economic empowerment, education and social justice to address racial inequality for Black Americans'.

Elsewhere there are lists of other companies who have made similar donations. Google has committed \$12 million, Facebook and Amazon \$10 million each to various groups.⁴² But these sums are chickenfeed compared to the companies' advertising budgets, let alone their profits and turnover.⁴³ Mr Ramaswamy may offer more compelling evidence in his book, but to me this looks less like a 'modern woke-industrial complex' than PR, or corporate social responsibility (CSR) as it used to be known. What has not yet been demonstrated is that this funding of elements of the 'woke' by US corporations is a *witting* policy of divide and rule.

*

When I first read Mr Ramaswamy a faint bell rang: hadn't Daniel Brandt written something similar about the 1970s feminists? Yes, there it was in his essay in *Lobster* 24.

'In 1975 I transferred to a Ph.D. program in Berkeley and took a part-time

⁴⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/5dsrpajz>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9905339/How-companies-profiting-woke-ism.html>>

Proof-reading this, Nick Must commented:

'Strangely, the article managed to seriously mangle at least one of the quotes it gave, even going as far as to insert several words into a sentence that are not even in Mr Ramaswamy's book. You may well agree that that is slightly weird but the *Daily Mail* has suffered a bonfire of the sub-editors in the last couple of years.

On which see <<https://tinyurl.com/8w63e43k>> or <<https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/after-39-years-fighting-boffins-toffs-and-cads-daily-mail-style-guide-writer-reveals-all-including/>>.'

⁴¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/reckk9vd>> or <<https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/books/general-books/business-management/Woke-Inc-Vivek-Ramaswamy-9781800750784>> Vivek Ramaswamy refers to 'the modern woke-industrial complex' in a piece he wrote for the *New York Post* at <<https://tinyurl.com/5h994tcu>> or <<https://nypost.com/2021/06/21/woke-inc-why-im-blowing-whistle-on-how-corporate-america-is-poisoning-society/>>

⁴² <<https://www.cnet.com/how-to/companies-donating-black-lives-matter/>>

⁴³ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/ypr87ke4>> or <<https://medium.com/seedx-digital-marketing-guru/why-apple-spends-1-8-billion-on-advertising-38d3940270bf>>.

handyman job to support myself. I found myself carrying heavy boxes of copying paper up the stairs to the Women's Affairs Office, and being told to change their light bulbs. These feminists were all cruising comfortably on a huge Ford Foundation grant, spinning out analyses based on sex divisions while playing their neo-Marxist cards whenever it was in their interests. I was a theoretical Marxist by then (in the sixties I never needed it), and felt I knew a thing or two. I pointed out the obvious, namely that sex divisions cut the class divisions in half again.⁴⁴

The unsayable

So the University of Bristol has sacked Professor David Miller for . . . well, according to their statement, Miller 'did not meet the standards of behaviour we expect from our staff'.⁴⁵ Miller is appealing and this may not be the end of it. He was actually sacked, of course, for not toeing the line on Israel and Zionism.

We now have not the *secret* Jewish conspiracy of anti-semitic theories but an *open* Jewish conspiracy. And despite the fact that this conspiracy has been discussed in some detail by former Conservative Cabinet Minister Alan Duncan in his recently published diaries⁴⁶ and allowed itself to be filmed (*inter alia* discussing how to fuck over then Foreign Office minister Duncan),⁴⁷ the mass media in this country is unwilling – afraid, apparently – to acknowledge its existence.

Not a million miles from which is the news that the BBC's John Ware will not, after all, be suing Jeremy Corbyn for his comments on Ware's programme

⁴⁴ I long since lost touch with Brandt. Searching for him I came across two extremely detailed accounts of his disputes with Wikipedia and Google nearly twenty years ago. See, for example, <https://conservapedia.com/Wikipedia:The_Daniel_Brandt_controversy> and <<https://tinyurl.com/32w64bmu>> or <<https://tomjefferson1976.wordpress.com/2018/11/12/daniel-brandts-namebase-a-one-of-a-kind-treasure-trove-of-cfr-intelligence-information-disappears-from-the-internet/>>.

In the second of those citations, I learned that Brandt's pioneering spook-watch database, Namebase, is still on-line at <<http://www.namebase.net:82>>. Though it is apparently no longer being updated, it is still a great resource.

⁴⁵ <<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2021/october/prof-miller-statement.html>>

⁴⁶ *In the Thick of It* (London: William Collins, 2021). The Conservative Friends of Israel are mentioned on the first page.

⁴⁷ The first of the three parts of Al Jazeera's The Lobby is at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceCOhdgRBoc>>.

about anti-semitism and Labour.⁴⁸ This is a pity – it would have been good to get Ware into court to face libel lawyers – but hardly a surprise. It was always possible that Corbyn’s crowd-funding of over £300,000 to fight Ware would scare him off.⁴⁹ In the event, Ware’s lawyers didn’t file the papers in time and the action fell.

The CFR as ‘deep state’?

A new two part essay has appeared from the excellent Will Banyan,⁵⁰ ‘Vanguard of the “Deep State”? The Council on Foreign Relations Centennial & the Future of the New World Order’.⁵¹ As well as documenting the organisation’s formation and history, he includes much of the critical comment on it – by right and left but mostly right – from the 1930s onwards. For example, Dan Smoot called the CFR ‘the invisible government’ in 1962. If you needed one, this is a useful reminder that the populist, conspiracy-minded elements among Trump’s constituency have a long history in American politics.

It is unfortunate that Banyan’s entirely non-conspiratorial research appears so regularly on a site called conspiracyarchive.com.

Following the money

You might have thought that the report in Open Democracy that the Conservative Party had received about 40% of its funding – something like £11 million – from hedge funds and other financiers would be considered worthy of coverage by the media.⁵² But as far as I can see only one obscure website

⁴⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/35dp3xzy>> or <<https://skwawkbox.org/2021/10/05/breaking-panoramas-ware-drops-lawsuit-vs-corbyn-says-crowdfund-page/>>

⁴⁹ I noted in this column in *Lobster* 80:

‘My guess is that, faced with the prospect of being examined under oath, Ware will find some way of backing out and the case against Corbyn will not proceed.’

<<https://tinyurl.com/2u4xwp56>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster80/lob80-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>> under subhead **Ware’s comeuppance?**

⁵⁰ See him at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster63/lob63-rothschild.pdf>>.

⁵¹ Part 1 at <<https://tinyurl.com/mdhdh4ek>> or <<https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2021/09/24/vanguard-of-the-deep-state-the-council-on-foreign-relations-centennial-the-future-of-the-new-world-order-part-1/>> and part 2 at <<https://tinyurl.com/hf7dmrky>> or <<https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2021/10/11/vanguard-of-the-deep-state-the-council-on-foreign-relations-centennial-the-future-of-the-new-world-order-part-2/>>

⁵² <<https://tinyurl.com/ecfu2amn>> or <<https://beta.opendemocracy.net/en/dark-money-investigations/tories-rake-in-11m-from-hedge-funds-and-finance-tycoons/>>

thought it worth a mention.⁵³ The author of the report, Dr. Seth Thévoz, refers to the desire of the London-based hedge funds – and other parts of the financial sector – to see Britain become ‘a Singapore-on-Thames-style model of light-touch regulation and low business taxes’. In the initial period after Brexit ‘Singapore-on-Thames’ was widely used by some of the Brexiteers in the Conservative Party as their vision of the way forward. (The expression is now a Wikipedia entry.⁵⁴) But there is more to the Singapore model than the absence of business regulation. As a glance at any short account of its political system shows, Singapore is a democracy in name only.⁵⁵ Noting that the Conservative Party seems bent on pursuing something like the Singapore model, Richard Murphy wrote recently:

‘ . . . in the process he [Johnson] seeks to do what all proponents of tax havens seek to achieve, which is to undermine the power of the democratically elected state in pursuit of the goals of the unelected financial elite.’⁵⁶

The steps that this government is preparing to convert Britain into a Singapore-style (or Turkey-style) state were recently detailed by Jonathan Freedland.⁵⁷ Senior Labour Party figures seem oblivious to what is coming down the track.

Dishy Rishi

In his speech to the Conservative Party conference this year, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak told conference how inspired he had been by his time in California.

‘The years I spent in California left a lasting mark on me, working with

⁵³ The World News at <<https://tinyurl.com/uku9wyzk>> or <<https://twnews.co.uk/gb-news/tories-rake-in-ps11m-from-hedge-funds-and-finance-tycoons>>.

⁵⁴ <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore-on-Thames>>

⁵⁵ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/3rwt9vaf>> or <<https://www.newstatesman.com/world/asia/2021/10/jeevan-vasagar-why-replicating-the-singapore-model-is-impossible>>.

⁵⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/2fwumsen>> or <<https://www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/2021/01/18/now-it-is-official-we-are-to-become-singapore-on-thames/>>

⁵⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/3dawb585>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/01/boris-johnson-rigging-the-system-power-courts-protest-elections>> Freedland doesn’t mention Singapore; Orban’s Hungary is the model he uses. But both are what we might call managed democracies.

some of the most innovative and exciting people in finance and technology. Watching ideas becoming a reality. Seeing entrepreneurs build new teams. It's not just about money.

I saw a culture, a mindset, which was unafraid to challenge itself, reward hard work and was open to all those with the talent to achieve.⁵⁸

Mr Sunak clearly hasn't been paying much attention to the sunshine state in the time since he lived there 15 years or so ago. CNN reported recently that 'On any given night in California, the governor's office estimates that there are about 170,000 homeless people on the street'.⁵⁹

Pandora's box

The exposé of the money laundering and sanitising schemes centred on the City of London in the so-called Pandora Papers was welcome, of course. This was the first take of consortiumnews.com on the story.

Pandora Papers Show True Face of Global Britain

October 5, 2021

Through its network of tax havens, the U.K. is the fulcrum of a system that benefits the rich and powerful writes Adam Ramsay.⁶⁰

All true. However, the exposé also serves as a wonderful showcase for the City's services. If there are rich people out there still wondering where the money-laundering and sanitising experts are, they certainly know now. This was global advertising for the City, at no cost and with no downside. For since the City contributes about 10% of the government's tax revenue and about 40% of the Conservative Party's income there is zero chance of the present government, or a government lead by Sir Keir Starmer, doing anything about this.

⁵⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/67f6ywn7>> or <<https://www.conservativehome.com/parliament/2021/10/sunak-declares-brexite-will-bring-a-renewed-culture-of-enterprise-conference-speech-in-full.html>>

⁵⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/2ucxn9v5>> or <<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/09/08/politics/california-recall-homelessness-crisis/index.html>>

⁶⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/yjkd6n2t>> or <<https://consortiumnews.com/2021/10/05/pandora-papers-show-true-face-of-global-britain/>>

9/11

So: 20 years since 9/11. 2001 was obviously pre-Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc., but there was an established online community of those who watched and analysed world events. Later that day, I went on-line and began reading and saving the torrent of comment which had immediately followed the attacks in Manhattan. Within just a few days this became so massive that was impossible to save even just the best of it. So I gave up. I still have all that material on a disk somewhere, though I no longer have a machine which could read it.

There were three main initial threads that I recall. The first was 'Don't believe it. This is just too convenient for the Bush administration.' This had force at the time – the Republicans had stolen the election at the Florida count and protests about that had continued – and was strengthened when the 1962 Pentagon proposals, Operation Northwoods, were noticed.⁶¹ The second theme was 'It must be a state/deep state conspiracy because there was no air defence.' (I don't know what happened to that line of thought.⁶²) And the third was claims that it was impossible to fly a passenger jet into the Pentagon in the way had apparently had been done. (This was rebutted fairly quickly by eyewitness testimony and evidence of plane pieces inside and outside the Pentagon.)

By the second day a number of correspondents were expressing doubt about the fall of towers. Then someone saw that in the New Mexico *Albuquerque Journal* three days after the attacks an article had appeared quoting a demolition expert, Van Romero, which began thus: 'Televised images of the attacks on the World Trade Center suggest that explosive devices caused the collapse of both towers, a New Mexico Tech explosion expert said Tuesday.' Three weeks later it was noticed that not only had a piece been published noting that Van Romero had changed his mind, the *Albuquerque Journal* had altered their web page for 9/11, removing their original story and putting Romero's recantation in its place.

I have read little of the false flag literature on 9/11. I cannot persuade

⁶¹ Northwoods was a proposal to run 'false flag' operations to provide a pretext for invading Cuba. The original documents are at
<<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/news/20010430/northwoods.pdf>>.

⁶² Nick Must commented: This petered out when it became clear that NORAD, the U.S. air defence radar system, had scrambled five fighter jets to intercept. However, because NORAD had been expecting threats from only outside the U.S., the process for air traffic control to initially alert NORAD was slow and none of the hijacked planes was intercepted. NORAD's somewhat startling admission of how they had seriously dropped a bollock is mentioned in the *Popular Mechanics* article at
<<https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/a5654/debunking-911-myths-planes/>>.

myself that elements within the US (or Israeli) military and/or intelligence would attempt such a vast false flag operation. I said this in 2002:

'I never took the US-did-it thesis seriously, even after [James] Bamford's documents [on Operation Northwoods] became available, because of the targets: Manhattan and the Pentagon. I just can't imagine them deciding to attack those. Had it been Disneyland, or some provincial city, I might have considered it. But not those towers of capital and their protector, the Pentagon. Too many friends and relatives might be involved; and why targets so big when the same effect on public opinion could have been generated by something less extravagant and less damaging to the US?'

However, none of this says anything about the way the buildings – especially WTC7 – collapsed. I remain where I was almost 20 years ago: the plane-bomb attacks and the collapsing buildings should be separated. The obvious analogy with the Kennedy assassination would be separating the killing from the cover-up. For decades some of the JFK buffs chiseled away at the Dallas cover-up, thinking that would lead to whodunit. But as we have learned, the first response of bureaucracies, especially state, police and intelligence bureaucracies, is to cover-up everything, in every situation. This behaviour *per se* tells us nothing about any role in the event.

Thus it seems to me that the official version of the event is true and what was being suppressed was the Saudi funding of the attack. But a mystery remains about the collapse of the buildings. If they were demolished, the demolition charges were there before the attacks. Why were they there? If the argument is made that they were placed there by the conspirators to be detonated when the planes struck, the question then arises: why did they install them in WTC7? As a back-up plan lest the plane-bombs miss their main targets? If they did install them in WTC7, in the absence of a plane crashing into it, why were they used? And if they were in WTC7, where else were they placed? None of the scenarios I have read along these lines makes much sense.

Nearly 20 years ago it was reported that a senior engineer in the Otis elevator company had said that American skyscrapers are wired for demolition while being built, so they can be brought down vertically if they threaten to fall onto neighbouring buildings.⁶³ It isn't difficult to imagine why insurance companies would not want the building whose insurance they are carrying damaged by the building next door falling on it. Nor, if this is true, is it difficult to imagine why this has been kept secret: who would want to work in a building wired for demolition?

⁶³ See <www.rense.com/general48/chargesplacedinWTC.htm>.

Against this appealing notion is the simple fact that there has been no support for this claim. Not a whisper. As one of the responders to the original Otis piece wrote, explosives deteriorate and they would have to be regularly checked and/or replaced. Given the number of skyscrapers in America's cities, this would entail a considerable industry. Of whose existence not a word has leaked. The mystery remains.

Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth seems to be the leading organisation of the 9/11 sceptics. I looked at the proceedings of a 2016 conference of theirs and noticed that one of the speakers was Jeffrey Steinberg, senior editor of the late Lyndon LaRouche's *Executive Intelligence Review*. This version of the false flag thesis was in that conference report:

' . . . according to [Barbara] Honegger, Steve Pieczenik said that he knows, "and is willing to name, under oath, through the proper legal venue, the military General on then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz's military staff, who confirmed to him, Pieczenik, that September 11 was a false flag attack and a homeland Gladio operation. 'They ran the attacks,' Wolfowitz's General told Pieczenik of Wolfowitz himself, Vice President Cheney, Cheney's top national security aide Steven Hadley, Elliott Abrams, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, all named by name, and he says just get in touch with him when there is the appropriate legal forum.'"⁶⁴

This looks significant on first reading but amounts to little. Pieczenik is willing to swear that X said that Y said Honegger is a former Reagan era Washington insider, best known for revealing the existence of the so-called 'October Surprise', the deal between the Reagan election campaign and the Iranians to prevent the release of the American hostages being held in Tehran.⁶⁵ She apparently does not believe that the Pentagon was struck by a passenger jet alone and thinks there was an explosion there before it arrived; and maybe it wasn't the Boeing 757 which struck it. (I don't know her material well enough to say which of these she currently believes.⁶⁶) Either way this has been thoroughly rebutted.⁶⁷ If you read one of the critiques of her by Frank

⁶⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/4t6tra24>> or <<https://www.ae911truth.org/news/322-news-media-events-wrap-up-of-justice-in-focus-symposium-9-11-and-the-path-forward>>

⁶⁵ See <<https://spartacus-educational.com/JFKhonegger.htm>>.

⁶⁶ There is a 2013 audio-visual presentation by Honegger on-line at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fvJ8nFa5Qk>>. It is over 3 hours long and I confess I don't have the patience to sit through it.

⁶⁷ See <<https://tinyurl.com/4mte7emr>> or <<http://scienceof911.com.au/pentagon/critique-of-barbara-honegger/comments-on-honeggers-talk/>>.

Legge – himself a 9/11 sceptic – there is the presentation of radar data on the plane’s flight which shows it hit the Pentagon at the place and time the official version says it did.⁶⁸ And there are nearly 100 eyewitness statements on the plane’s impact.⁶⁹ A biographical sketch of Steve Pieczenik, the man Honegger was quoting in 2016, shows someone with a distinguished career who latterly has been infected by conspiracy theories and now appears on the Alex Jones show.⁷⁰

Steinberg, Honegger and Pieczenik *are* conspiracy theorists and I am a little puzzled by their presence among Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth.

Penkovsky

Thanks to Roger Steer for bringing to my attention an interesting piece in the *London Review of Books*, a review of two new books about the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.⁷¹ The books show in some detail that much of the received version of that event in the West – brave JFK stood up to the Soviets, defied his own military and saved the world – is incomplete at best. I had actually skimmed the LRB essay before Steer’s nudge and, on reading it more carefully, I was struck by the omission from this account of the role played by Oleg Penkovsky, the GRU colonel who was providing SIS (MI6) – and thus the Americans – with detailed information on Soviet nuclear weaponry. Crucially, Penkovsky told SIS how few missiles the Soviets actually had and that they were having problems with their guidance systems.⁷² The US then had about 5000 nuclear warheads which could strike the Soviet Union. The Soviets had about 30 ICBMs which might reach America.⁷³

⁶⁸ <<https://scienceof911.com.au/pentagon/critique-of-barbara-honegger/>>

⁶⁹ <<https://ratical.org/ratville/CAH/F77pentagon.html>>

⁷⁰ The sketch is at <<https://tinyurl.com/km8uxkea>> or <https://innfa.org/en/Steve_Pieczenik-8440068662>. See the man’s own website for Alex Jones appearance: <<https://stevepieczenik.com>>.

⁷¹ <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v43/n17/andrew-cockburn/defensive-not-aggressive>>

⁷² A study in *Foreign Policy* states that the US had 203 ICBMs capable of reaching the Soviet Union. The Soviets had 36. But the US had shorter range missiles all over Europe. <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/07/10/what-was-at-stake-in-1962/>>

⁷³ Robert S. Norris, ‘The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Nuclear Order of Battle October/November 1962’ at <<https://tinyurl.com/xvxe4xzs>> or <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/event/2012_10_24_Norris_Cuban_Missile_Crisis_Nuclear_Order_of_Battle.pdf>.

This nuclear disparity is both the reason the Soviets tried to install short-range missiles on Cuba and why they were bound to back down when push came to shove. (Could the Soviets have really believed they could mount such an enormous covert logistical operation 90 miles off the Florida coast and not be spotted by the Americans? Apparently so.)

Penkovsky's information is one of the few instances in the Cold War I can think of where what a spy did really mattered.⁷⁴ Most of the time the so-called 'intelligence war' was more akin to *Mad Magazine's* Spy-vs-Spy.⁷⁵

Who's beaming who?

The so-called 'Havana syndrome' is the apparent attack on US diplomats with some kind of sonic/electronic device, causing a wide variety of symptoms from the unpleasant to life-changing.⁷⁶ It is suspected that said diplomats are being 'assaulted' in this way as persons unknown – but presumed to be Russians – try to remotely 'read' the data their cellphones contain. Yet it is curious that so far no signs of these devices have been spotted – and they are apparently going to be rather large; certainly not hand-held – and such incidents are now appearing all over the world.

'The phenomenon that began in Havana has been reported by officials and their families stationed in Russia, Poland, Austria, Georgia, Taiwan, Colombia, China, Kyrgyzstan, the United Kingdom, and Uzbekistan. "It is global," one government official told NBC News in mid-July, "but there seems to be an awful lot going on in Europe." Vienna, a global capital of spycraft since the early days of the Cold War, has emerged as a recent epicenter: Since President Biden took office, close to two dozen American officials in the Austrian capital have had symptoms.'⁷⁷

⁷⁴ The best – certainly the most elegant – account I remember of the Penkovsky affair is in chapter 6 of Anthony Verrier's *Through the Looking Glass* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983). This is the view from SIS, as Verrier makes explicit by beginning the chapter with a quote from a speech made by 'C', the head of SIS, to his staff either during or just after the Missile Crisis.

⁷⁵ See, for example, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spy_vs._Spy>.

Nick Must commented: Coincidentally, the creator of Spy Vs. Spy, Antonio Prohías, was Cuban and the website thecubanhistory.com has an excellent example of his work at <<https://tinyurl.com/993z7k6>> or <<https://www.thecubanhistory.com/2020/03/antonio-prohias-famous-cartoonist-creator-of-spy-vs-spy-for-mad-magazine-antonio-prohias-famoso-dibujante-creador-de-los-cartones-satiricos-spy-vs-spy-de-la-revista-mad/>>.

⁷⁶ <<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/05/31/are-us-officials-under-silent-attack>>

⁷⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/afnk5cwn>> or <<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/what-is-havana-syndrome-symptoms-causes.html>>

We seem to have two choices here: either it's a really big operation, on the ground, in many places, which has yet to be detected; or it's something else. One alternative, not yet discussed that I have seen, is that the effects are not being caused deliberately but accidentally. There was this in an account of one such 'attack':

'The official shook his head. He was led to an examination room. Hospital staff found his White House identification card in his pocket, and three cell phones, one of which they used to call his wife.'⁷⁸

*Three cell phones? Three sources of electro-magnetic (e-m) energy close to his body? Many of the symptoms being reported are those experienced by the tiny minority of us who are e-m sensitive and whose bodies simply cannot cope with the e-m soup we live in today.*⁷⁹ It may be that the diplomats are indeed suffering from what one recent study identified as a 'directed, pulsed radio frequency (RF) energy'.⁸⁰ But I would like to know how many of those affected have been carrying multiple e-m devices.

Off-line

A big 'Amen' to Dan Atkinson who, in his blog, agrees with me that the sensible response to the cyber-warfare/ransom threat is – go off-line.

'Defence Ministers, officials and think-tankers love to big up the "threat" of cyber attacks on our "critical infrastructure" from, oh, the Russians, the Chinese, little green men, you name it. Rather than assemble a costly boffin squad, would it not simply be easier to move said infrastructure off-line, which is where it was until fairly recently?'⁸¹

Twenty years on . . .

As the 20th anniversary of 9/11 approached, the Western media produced a predictable slew of articles about the propensity of Americans to believe

⁷⁸ See note 41 above.

⁷⁹ E-m sensitivity has recently been recognised by the US government as a genuine physical rather than psychosomatic condition. See <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7139347/>.

⁸⁰ <https://tinyurl.com/56vvut6n> or https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-diplomats-illnesses-likely-linked-to-pulsed-energy-attack-11607278210?mod=article_inline

⁸¹ <https://blogs.thisismoney.co.uk/author-dan-atkinson/> Entry for 21 August.

conspiracy theories, with the particular emphasis that 9/11 'paved the way' for QAnon and the anti-vaxxers. For example:

'9/11 trutherism *paved the way* for the massive spread of QAnon's outlandish pedophilia cabal theories, which have culminated in death and an insurrection, as well as anti-vaccine conspiracy theories that have contributed to the spread of COVID variants across the country.'⁸²
(emphasis added)

For example:

'To write about 9/11 is to gain some insight into how far such thinking has reached into the minds of some Americans. Long before conspiracists began insisting that children weren't really gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, or that a child sex ring with ties to Hillary Clinton was being run out of an innocuous pizza restaurant in Washington, D.C., or that the death tolls of the Covid-19 pandemic were somehow being intentionally inflated, the self-styled "9/11 Truthers" were the first major American conspiracy theory of the digital age. Their durability, nearly 20 years after the attack, suggests that we are likely to be stuck for a long time with more recent conspiracist movements such as QAnon.'

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But does this make sense? Are the 9/11 'truthers' the same people who believe in QAnon? I have seen no evidence comparing the two sets of adherents, but it is my distinct impression that there is a left-right split here. 9/11 'truthers' are largely on the left. The initial scepticism about 9/11 was fuelled by the sense on some of the American left that this was just too convenient for the administration of Bush Jnr.. At the time of the plane-bombs, the Republicans were still being accused of stealing the election at the Florida count and were known to be bent on attacking the Middle East. QAnoners, on the other hand, are on the right; in its initial incarnation QAnon was aimed at Hilary Clinton and the Democratic Party establishment.

There is no comparison between the two sets of claims. The QAnon material that I have glanced at⁸⁴ contains no facts and no research. The

⁸² 'Spike Lee scrambles to reedit 9/11 documentary after backlash for featuring conspiracy theories' at <<https://tinyurl.com/3pzs7ce2>> or <<https://www.salon.com/2021/08/25/spike-lee-9-11-documentary-conspiracy-theory-reedit-hbo/>>

⁸³ Garrett M. Graff at <<https://tinyurl.com/frk6ytss>> or <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/9-11-and-the-rise-of-the-new-conspiracy-theorists-11599768458>>.

⁸⁴ It is unreadable rubbish. QAnon's initial creators must be gobsmacked at the success of their wacky fiction.

'movement' has produced no literature, no reading lists. It is merely assertion. On examination, the average QAnoner doesn't know much about the cluster of claims under that heading and only believes bits and pieces of them.⁸⁵ The 9/11 'truthers', on the other hand, are laden to the gunnels with research. The 9/11 literature is enormous and much of it is intimidating to a non-scientist like me. Most of the so-called 'truthers' are not 'truthers' at all but sceptics: and many are scientists, architects and engineers.

In short, the American media has got this wrong. The appropriate comparison for 9/11 'truthers' is with JFK 'truthers' not QAnon. It was the Kennedy assassination researchers who paved the way for the 9/11 sceptics. It was the early Kennedy assassination sceptics who questioned the official version of that event and showed that while official Washington tells lies, its false version of history can be challenged. If we are going to blame somebody for today's conspiracy theory-laden world, its ultimate progenitors were the *authors* of the Warren Commission whose hurriedly cobbled together fictions fell apart as soon as they were examined.

The CIA and the Labour Party

In Susan Williams' majestic *White Malice*⁸⁶ there is a little snippet about Rita Hinden, founder of the Fabian Society's Colonial Bureau in 1940 and later editor of the Gaitskellite magazine *Socialist Commentary*.

'Criticism of [George] Padmore had appeared in *Encounter* long before his death. A scathing review of his 1956 book *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* described it as "infuriating"; it classified Padmore among those "who have revolted against Communist conduct and cynicism, but can never free themselves from Communist ideology". The review was written by Rita Hinden, who was carefully selected for the task. Michael Josselson, the CIA agent who had set up the Congress for Cultural Freedom, had told Irving Kristol, the coeditor of *Encounter*, that he should run a review "by one of 'our' people"; elsewhere, Josselson described Hinden as "one of us".' (Williams, p. 147)

Which looks awfully like Hinden was CIA and is another little piece of support for the thesis that the Gaitskellites were, in effect, a CIA operation within the Labour Party.

⁸⁵ See 'QAnon Supporters Aren't Quite Who You Think They Are' at <<https://www.wired.com/story/qanon-supporters-arent-quite-who-you-think-they-are/>>.

⁸⁶ London: C. Hurst & Co., 2021; reviewed in this issue of *Lobster*.

Covidia

As many others have noticed, it is striking that just before the Covid outbreak there was a Global Vaccination Summit (12 September 2019) organised by the European Commission, closely followed by a coronavirus outbreak simulation exercise (18 October 2019) organised by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Economic Forum, and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Neither was exactly a secret: the European Commission event was live streamed⁸⁷ and the extracts from the Gates-sponsored event are available online.⁸⁸ Even so a Google search for coronavirus + Gates + conspiracy will bring up a rich stew of conspiratorial nonsense.

One strand of the coronavirus conspiracy theories concerns ID2020, which says of itself:

'Alliance partners share the belief that identity is a human right and that individuals must have "ownership" over their own identity.

In 2018, ID2020 Alliance Partners, working in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), drafted a formal articulation of our perspective on ethical approaches to digital identity. The landmark ID2020 Alliance Manifesto below lays out these shared principles and forms a starting point to guide the future of digital identity globally.'⁸⁹

Their website notes:

'The Need for Good Digital ID is Universal.

The ability to prove who you are is a fundamental and universal human right. Because we live in a digital era, we need a trusted and reliable way to do that both in the physical world and online.'

It would make more sense to claim that 'The ability to prove who you are *should be* a fundamental and universal human right' – it surely isn't one now. The project's aim, while utopian, seems inoffensive, even positive. Not for the conspiracy nutters. ID2020 became a feature of theories claiming . . . well precisely what isn't clear to me but something along the lines of Gates-microchips-in-vaccines-population-control. For example:

'The time has come for the New World Order advocates to take advantage of a major crisis. The COVID-19 epidemic provides the perfect opportunity

⁸⁷ At <<https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/global-vaccination-summit-12-09-19/>>.

⁸⁸ <<https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/event201/videos.html>> or <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AoLw-Q8X174&t=4s>>

⁸⁹ <<https://id2020.org/manifesto>>

to execute the first large scale implementation of the digital identity platform. Big Pharma is now officially partnering up with hi-tech industries to pair “immunization” with “digital biometrics” by implementing mandatory vaccinations with implantable microchips. This means humans will soon be microchipped, tracked, and controlled, before commanded to the slaughterhouse, through the global identification matrix called ID2020.⁹⁰

While the origins of most of this guff is frequently impossible to identify, in the case of ID2020 it has apparently been traced back to – guess who? – yes, it’s Alex Jones.⁹¹ But this particular bit of nonsense has spread far beyond the Alex Jones audience. A version of it appeared in essays written by Peter Koenig on Global Research. He wrote, for example:

‘Is it just a coincidence that ID2020 is being rolled out at the onset of what WHO calls a Pandemic? – Or is a pandemic needed to “roll out” the multiple devastating programs of ID2020?’⁹²

I hadn’t read much of Koenig before this – glanced at it occasionally on Global Research. Surprised by this particular bend in the road, I had a look at Koenig’s recent writing for that site and noticed that prior to 1 August this year he described himself as ‘a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization’. But on that day this changed and he is now also ‘non-resident Sr. Fellow of the Chongyang Institute of Renmin University, Beijing’.⁹³ No doubt this position has nothing at all to do with Koenig’s pro-China writing on Global Research⁹⁴ and in particular, his recent interpretation of the Covid pandemic – which would have us look for its origins anywhere but in that lab in Wuhan.

*

On 4 June the *Daily Mail* ran a story with the following headline:

‘British doctor and his secret campaign to gag the Covid lab leak theory: He worked in Wuhan and manipulated coronaviruses – yet

⁹⁰ <<https://noonegetsoutalive.com/news/id2020-the-mark-of-the-beast>>

⁹¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/emj4rujc>> or <<https://web.archive.org/web/20200416001202/https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/04/15/id2020-coronavirus-vaccine-misinformation>>

⁹² <<https://tinyurl.com/5mkxz5xk>> or <<https://www.globalresearch.ca/coronavirus-causes-effects-real-danger-agenda-id2020/5706153>>

⁹³ See <<https://tinyurl.com/ywa4xb78>> or <<https://www.globalresearch.ca/china-post-pandemic-growth-reaching-out-developing-internal-markets-wellbeing/5751653>>.

⁹⁴ See, for example, <<https://www.globalresearch.ca/hong-kong-pure-western-insanity/5696615>>.

orchestrated a campaign to clear it of blame and tried to hide his tracks. Now we publish the evidence, writes SIAN BOYLE ⁹⁵

The story went on to state:

And, in a further twist, **we can reveal** that EcoHealth Alliance received funding for biosecurity research, into weapons of mass destruction, from the Pentagon — which is now under investigation for inadvertently funding the WIV [Wuhan Institute of Virology].⁹⁶

Good to see the major media trying to keep up. I published that story in this column in the previous issue of *Lobster*.⁹⁷

*

Much derision in the US media about anti-vaxxers taking the animal drug Ivermectin.⁹⁸ But elsewhere in the world Ivermectin seems to be strikingly effective. For example, a piece in the *India Express*,⁹⁹ begins with this:

'Uttar Pradesh government says early use of Ivermectin helped to keep positivity, deaths low

Claiming that timely introduction of Ivermectin since the first wave has helped the state maintain a relatively low positivity rate despite its high population density.'

This report tells us that, rather than waiting for full-scale trials and testing, as would happen in the UK or the EU, Ivermectin was given to a group of volunteers who were dealing with Covid patients and none of them caught the virus. So they rolled it out across the state. In view of the declining efficacy of the vaccinations we have had, this looks promising to my (ignorant) eye.

Down the memory hole it goes

So the 24-hour news cycle trundles on and most of its practitioners will have forgotten that only a few weeks ago the *Guardian* claimed to have access to

⁹⁵ Author Siân Boyle is a Feature Writer at the *Mail*.

⁹⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/pt2s8wkj>> <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9653613/British-doctor-Peter-Daszak-worked-Wuhan-scientists-secret-plan-stop-lab-leak-theory.html>>

⁹⁷ In this column under subhead **Follow the cover-up**.

⁹⁸ For example 'What the ivermectin debacle reveals about the hypocrisy of the anti-vaxxer crowd' at <<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/25/politics/ivermectin-covid-19-fox-news/index.html>>.

⁹⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/8sne3s85>> or <<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/lucknow/uttar-pradesh-government-says-ivermectin-helped-to-keep-deaths-low-7311786/>>

documents leaked from a meeting at the Kremlin which discussed President Putin's plan to help elect Donald Trump.¹⁰⁰ The report by Luke Harding, Julian Borger and Dan Sabbagh said that 'The *Guardian* has shown the documents to independent experts who say they appear to be genuine.' Which, as endorsements go, is decidedly lukewarm. Since when, apart from a chorus of raspberries from those on the American left who regard the Trump-Putin claims as anti-Russian smears,¹⁰¹ there has been nothing, no follow-up, not a word.

Labour and anti-semitism (Or: you couldn't make this up)

I don't have a problem with political parties policing their membership. In the 1980s I was a member of the Labour Party and was entirely happy to see it trying to purge members of the Militant Tendency. After all, Militant was a classic party-within-a-party. The current Labour Party purge is weirder than that. It is a purge of people with the wrong attitude towards Israel. This may have something to do with the current leader, Keir Starmer, having a Jewish wife. It certainly has something to do with fear that the Israeli operation to remove Jeremy Corbyn as leader might be cranked up again against the current leadership. Whatever the motivation, today's purge, though formally of members accused of being anti-semites, is also of members who are not enthusiastic enough in their support of Israel – or who express support for other expellees.

One of the people so accused sent me what we might call the charge sheet from Labour's Complaints Team. (Amidst the many screens of quasi-legal guff is the contact details for the Samaritans, no less.) Eventually we get to the meat.

1. (the Respondent) has engaged in conduct prejudicial and / or grossly detrimental to the Party in breach of Chapter 2, Clause I.8 of the Labour Party Rule Book by engaging in conduct which:
 - may reasonably be seen to demonstrate hostility or prejudice based on religion or belief;
 - may reasonably be seen to involve antisemitic actions, stereotypes and sentiments;
 - Engages in stereotypical allegations of Jewish control in the media, economy, government or other societal institutions;

¹⁰⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/hyjf9ptk>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/15/kremlin-papers-appear-to-show-putins-plot-to-put-trump-in-white-house>>

¹⁰¹ See, for example, <<https://consortiumnews.com/2021/07/17/luke-hardings-hard-sell/>>.

Accuses the Jews as people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust;

Repeats stereotypical and negative physical descriptions/descriptions or character traits of Jewish people, such as references to wealth or avarice and equating Jews with capitalists or the ruling class;

i.1 Shows [name removed] posted the following quotes on this blog on December 5, 2020 at 9:19 pm;

“I’m not surprised that the Blairites and ultra-Zionist fanatics wanted to purge Tony Greenstein from the Labour party, as they have done with so many other entirely decent people.”

“Or rather more narrowly, support for the current viciously racist Israeli administration”

“believe that the Palestinians should be treated decently and with dignity, have also suffered anti-Semitic vilification and abuse if they dare to protest against Netanyahu’s government.”

“Zionism was until recent decades very much a minority position among European Jews.”

“it is an internalisation of gentile anti-Semitism, with which it has collaborated, including in the mass murder of Jews, such as in the Holocaust, by real anti-Semites.”

“far from being a pro-Jewish stance, Zionism in the 19th and early 20th centuries was associated with anti-Semitism.”

“he had previously not come forward to add his support because he didn’t want people to think that he was a Jew-hater.”

“These quotes clearly show that the criticisms of Israel and the Zionist movement by people like Tony Greenstein and the others are historically justified,”

“My own preferred view is that anti-Semitism is simply hatred of Jews as Jews, and that no state or ideology should be beyond debate and criticism. This includes Israel and Zionism.”

“I’ve come across the adage, ‘Two Jews, three opinions’.

“people, who hold entirely reasonable opinions critical of Israel are being vilified, harassed and purged as the very things they are not, racists and anti-Semites.””

As you can see, the evidence does not support the charges. The key factor here appears to be that my correspondent expresses support for Tony Greenstein, a prominent critic of Israel, who is Jewish, and who was expelled from the Labour Party in 2018. Yes, the Labour Party is not only purging Jews

from its ranks in the name of opposing anti-semitism, it is purging those who support them.

I presume that the Israeli spook hired by Labour, Assaf Kaplan, is involved in this particular operation, bringing his skills from his previous work, hunting down Palestinians on social media.¹⁰² Hunting down Labour Party members who sympathise with Palestinians is but a small sideways step.

National security droppings

Immediately below, under subhead **The secrets at the bus stop**, I speculated that the MoD files that were dropped at a bus stop in Kent were 'lost' deliberately, that it was a psy-op. At the time we didn't know who the klutz-who-drops-papers-at-bus-stops was. Now we do: no less a figure than Angus Lapsley, one of the real big-wigs in the UK's foreign policy establishment. As the commentator at Brexit Watch put it:

' . . . as security experts have said on social media, printing and taking secret documents out of a secure location should be the primary focus of an investigation. Why was this man travelling on public transport with the papers? Why did he bunch so many disparate and highly sensitive papers in one pile? Whether or not he then dumped them is almost irrelevant as the key breaches had already taken place.'¹⁰³

Lapsley, it has been widely reported, was about to become the UK's ambassador to NATO.¹⁰⁴ If it was a deliberate leak, he will get the post. If he was just being sloppy, he won't. We shall see.

The secrets at the bus stop

I am surely not alone in finding this whole MOD-documents-left-by-accident-at-a-bus-stop story seriously improbable. It is a very striking coincidence that

¹⁰² <<https://tinyurl.com/9dcaj7ws>> or <<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/labour-ex-israel-military-intelligence-officer-role-anger-grows>>

¹⁰³ This is from a discussion of his career at <<https://tinyurl.com/6z3nw6bj>> or <<https://www.brexit-watch.org/the-angus-lapsley-scandal-will-tell-us-if-ministers-are-really-in-charge>>.

¹⁰⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/yh23btbx>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/aug/03/civil-servant-who-lost-mod-files-at-a-bus-stop-was-to-be-uks-ambassador-to-nato>>

the documents happened to get 'lost' the day before HMS Defender did its provocative sail close the shore of the Crimea. Then the anonymous 'member of the public' who found the documents chose to give them to the BBC rather than handing them to the police – the obvious and easiest thing to do; and the BBC chose to report on them on its website in great detail before handing them back to the MoD.¹⁰⁵ Given its current precarious position vis-a-vis this government, would the BBC have done this without checking with the MoD? And finally there was the total lack of outrage expressed by the government. I heard one Minister on the radio describe the BBC in publishing the documents as 'only doing its job'. Yeah, right!

I don't believe any of this. Much more likely the MoD leaked it as a way of getting the details of its operation into the public domain. All this may become clear when we learn who it was 'lost' the documents and the manner of punishment s/he receives.

Netanyahu

The demise of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's PM sent me back to old issues of *Lobster*. I remembered something that had been published about him and the Jonathan Institute he had created – Jonathan had been his brother who was killed in the Israeli raid on Entebbe Airport. And there it was in *Lobster* 13, a review of a collection of essays, *Terrorism: how the West can win*, with Netanyahu as editor, published after a 1984 conference at the Jonathan Institute.¹⁰⁶ My review noted:

'The major themes here are: The Soviet Union is behind world terrorism; the PLO is a major Soviet agent in funding and encouraging world terrorism. The minor theme is, of course, that the Soviet Union was behind the attempted assassination of the Pope.

But covertly the important theme – and presumably the point of the exercise for the Israeli state – is that the PLO is simply a terrorist organisation, the Israeli state is justified in its war against the PLO (*qua* Soviet terror front), and Israel, fighting Soviet-sponsored terror, is thus

¹⁰⁵ At <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-57624942>>. The *Daily Mail* copied the BBC story and added a few quotes of their own at <<https://tinyurl.com/4nfj57np>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9732355/Top-secret-dossier-reveals-defence-chiefs-knew-sending-Navy-warship-past-Crimea-provoke-Russia.html>>.

¹⁰⁶ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/online/issue13/lob13-11.htm>>

part of “the West”, despite being in the Middle East.’¹⁰⁷

Call the lawyers

And then there was John Ware in *The Observer* on 30 May, defending the BBC against its critics over the Martin Bashir affair. ‘We jump through hoops to make BBC programmes fair. Don’t let critics claim otherwise’ was the article’s headline. We have to be careful with Mr Ware who is already suing Jeremy Corbyn and the website Press Gang¹⁰⁸ for comments relating to anti-semitism. All very striking from a man who was once a leading figure with the investigative TV programme *World in Action*. Evidently Mr Ware has very deep pockets (or financial backing) for the legal actions, one of which is against a fellow journalist, Paddy French. Was a time when journalists would never have sued each other.¹⁰⁹

Covidia

On June 20 BBC News included this section in a piece about the delta or Indian variant of Covid.¹¹⁰

Could it have been prevented?

According to the Civil Aviation Authority, 42,406 people travelled in both directions between India and the UK in April.

Less travel would have meant fewer opportunities for the variant to enter.

Indeed.

¹⁰⁷ The entry on the Jonathan Institute at Powerbase says pretty much the same. See <<https://tinyurl.com/rcjb33s>> or <https://powerbase.info/index.php/Jonathan_Institute,_extract_from_The_%22Terrorism%22_Industry>.

¹⁰⁸ <<https://press-gang.org>>

¹⁰⁹ Readers of this column may recall that Ware ran the Ministry of Defence disinformation about Colin Wallace circa 1987 and to my knowledge has never acknowledged he was conned.

On this and Simon Matthews’ view of Ware’s reporting on London local government, see ‘Where’s Ware?’ in *Lobster* 39 at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/online/issue39/lob39-13.htm>>.

¹¹⁰ <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-57489740>>

Guccifer, Russiagate and all that

I have never attempted to cover the Russiagate story in detail. I just don't know enough about computer hacking to do so. However I was sent the URL for the 2018 *indictment* by Robert Mueller against Russians for the hacking circa 2015/6 of the Democratic National Committee (and other Democratic Party bodies) and the use of social media to try and help the Trump campaign for the presidency.¹¹¹ To my (ignorant) eye its looks pretty substantial. Section 41 contains this.

41. On or about June 15, 2016, the Conspirators logged into a Moscow-based server used and managed by Unit 74455 and, between 4:19 PM and 4:56 PM Moscow Standard Time, searched for certain words and phrases, including:

Search Term(s)
“some hundred sheets”
“some hundreds of sheets”
dcleaks
illuminati

Why would the Russian hackers be searching for 'illuminati'?

Here we go again

Corporate Europe Observatory is a very interesting group which monitors the relationship between multinational corporations and the EU – lobbying by the corps, in short. Their site is always worth a look. This was their opening paragraph recently:

'The European Commission is currently preparing a proposal to protect cross-border investments in the EU, to be published in autumn 2021. There are worrying signs that the new proposal could include vast new legal privileges for corporations – exactly what large banks, law firms and big business lobby groups have been pushing for. As a result, a new EU court exclusively for corporations could make European governments pay huge sums of money to big business as compensation for regulations brought in to protect workers, consumers, and the environment. The serious financial risk such a court would create, of having to pay

¹¹¹ <<https://www.justice.gov/file/1080281/downloadhhh>> Not to be confused with the Mueller report, which is at <<https://www.justice.gov/archives/sco/file/1373816/download>>.

significant damages, could ultimately put governments off regulating in the public interest.’¹¹²

This proposal appears to be very similar to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) proposals of 2013 which were seen off.¹¹³ I guess we all knew they would reappear somewhere.

King’s spooks

Thanks to WM for pointing me towards a very interesting essay on the links between King’s College, London and the British and NATO security and intelligence establishments.¹¹⁴ This is too complex and detailed to summarise here. This is a ‘must read’.

I spoke at King’s College’s then International Centre for Security Analysis about 20 years ago. It was the only time I have been in a building – let alone a university – with an armed guard in the foyer. I had – and have – no idea why I was invited but I duly turned up and delivered my talk to about 25 people. When I finished I asked for comments and questions but no-one said anything. I was surprised and disappointed; I was looking forward to some serious argy-bargy. But as we left the room, one of the audience, John Morrison, at that time the only full-time official working for the House of Commons Intelligence and Security Committee, stopped me to correct something I had said. Morrison was later sacked for expressing inadequate enthusiasm for the Anglo-American assault on Iraq.¹¹⁵

Back to the future

Another big ransomware attack by REvil , this time of a managed service

¹¹² <<https://tinyurl.com/xrs64dzp>> or <<https://corporateeurope.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Executive%20summary%20Conquering%20EU%20courts.pdf>>

¹¹³ See <<https://tinyurl.com/e6spvjph>> or <https://www.tni.org/en/collection/ttip?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI1dzVxdXG8QIVU4BQBh0yBgXmEAAAYAAEgIcIfD_BwE>

¹¹⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/uyrk495r>> or <<https://www.mintpressnews.com/spy-school-kings-college-london-churning-out-journalists/277582/>>

¹¹⁵ See <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Morrison_\(intelligence_officer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Morrison_(intelligence_officer))>.

The talk I gave, ‘Getting it right: the security agencies in modern society’, is on-line at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/articles/security.htm>>. The person who invited me, Dr Kevin O’Brien, is still at King’s, now ‘a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in Digital Intelligence and Cyber Security at King’s College London, as well as a consultant on security matters to governments and the private sector’. <<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/dr-kevin-a.-obrien>>.

provider (MSP) company – i.e. a company which provides IT systems for companies who don't want or need to do it for themselves. By hacking onesuch MSP, the hackers spread their software through all the companies using it.

'MSPs have long been a popular target, particularly of nation-state hackers. Hitting them is a terrifically efficient way to spy, if you can manage it. As a Justice Department indictment showed in 2018, China's elite APT10 spies used MSP compromises to steal hundreds of gigabytes of data from dozens of companies. REvil has targeted MSPs before, too, using its foothold into a third-party IT company to hijack 22 Texas municipalities at once in 2019.'¹¹⁶

And amidst all this talk of hackers and ransomware one thing is still conspicuously missing: any talk of going off-line. Let's say it again: it's time to get important activities off-line.

Put it on speaker!

Every couple of years someone in the major media notices that there is a considerable body of scientific work which shows that mobile phones are carcinogenic. It happened recently when the *Daily Mail* reported at some length on a new report which has looked at over 40 studies of the mobile phone-cancer relationship. The *Mail's* headline was 'Do smartphones increase your risk of CANCER? Spending just 17 minutes a day on your device over a ten year period increases the risk of tumours by 60%, controversial study claims'.¹¹⁷

Basic message? Keep your phone away from your brain; put it on speaker!

¹¹⁶ <https://www.wired.com/story/kaseya-supply-chain-ransomware-attack-msps/>

¹¹⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/n5ey5cy6>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-9768315/Spending-17-minutes-day-mobile-phone-increases-cancer-risk-study-claims.html>>