

The View from the Bridge

Robin Ramsay

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RIP

William Blum has died aged 85.¹ We walk in the footsteps of this who precede us and Blum's were big prints. His books² were landmarks in the study of American imperialism and militarism.

Roderick Russell

Russell wrote to tell me that he has had to move the material on Zersetzen (or Zersetzung) – no touch torture – which was on Wikispaces, to a new location.³ Russell has the misfortune to be the best documented example of Zersetzen in action.

He added:

'I am just extraordinarily busy with my application to the (Canadian) Federal Court for a judicial review of the CSIS's decision not to provide me with the personal information that they have on me.'⁴

We have provided the Court with considerable sworn testimony by

¹ <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/index.php/2018/12/09/william-blum-dead-at-85/>>

² See <<https://williamblum.org>>.

³ <<https://www.scribd.com/document/392898522/Zersetzen-Site-Downloaded>>

⁴ Russell wrote about his dealings with Canada's CSIS in *Lobster* 65: 'Canada's spy agency gone rogue: Prime Minister Harper couldn't care less' at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster65/lob65-canadian-spy-agency.pdf>>. CSIS is Canada's Security and Intelligence Service.

affidavit, including detailed testimony on the Zersetzen crimes and their cover up. This sworn testimony also includes considerable 3rd part corroboration as to some of the crimes. There are about 150 sworn pages of testimony.

The push was on me to produce detailed sworn testimony, since I suspect the CSIS thought I couldn't. Now that I have they are trying to ignore all the sworn affidavits and are trying another tack

CSIS's lawyers are trying to persuade the Court to allow anonymous personal testimony (and affidavits) in secret. In other words secret testimony where I wouldn't know who had testified, or what their testimony was.

This is kangaroo court stuff. Apparently I will be allowed to cross examine. How can one cross examine a witness when one will never meet him, don't know who he is, and don't know what his testimony was? Its just ridiculous.

I am just going to cooperate with the process while it is going on. Hopefully I will be able to persuade the judge not to allow secret evidence since that would be grossly unjust. But if they do introduce anonymous "secret testimony", I will wait till the end, and then complain like bloody hell in public. I think this secret testimony process, if adopted, is outrageous.'

'Aggressively inadequate'

American banker/investor Bill Browder ⁵ in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.⁶

'The UK is actually worse than Europe. It is where most of the dirty money ends up, and law enforcement here is aggressively inadequate . . . I don't know what the motivation is, but I know what the result is – that law enforcement here is laughable in terms of money laundering.

The amount of dirty money coming through here compared to the amount of successful prosecutions is a clear message to bad guys around the world that you can get away with your crimes here in the UK. Based on what I know about this country, it's a major money-laundering centre,

⁵ For background on Browder, see his own website at <<http://www.billbrowder.com/>>

⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/y86yuml3>> or < <https://www.smh.com.au/business/markets/something-terrible-might-come-to-me-at-any-point-the-financier-who-became-russia-s-most-wanted-man-20181030-p50crg.html>>

which will be recognised and will end up with a very black mark if they don't do anything to fix it.'

The phrase 'aggressively inadequate' could intelligibly be applied to large swathes of British public life, could it not?

Broon

In his book on the financial crises of the last decade,⁷ Adam Tooze notes on pp. 191/2:

'Less charitably it might be said that since the 1990s, New Labour, like the Democrats in the United States, had entered into an enthusiastic partnership with the City of London.⁸ It was, therefore, no coincidence that it was now Labour in Britain and the Democrats in the United States who were showing such energy in the struggle to fix the banking crisis. It was a monster they had helped to create.'

Little sense of culpability for the monster is to be found in Gordon Brown's book, *Beyond The Crash* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2010), which I finally picked up off my shelves after ignoring it for years.

I looked at Brown to see if he had answered the question: having bailed-out the failed UK banks, adding £136 billion to the national debt in the process,⁹ why did the British state not acquire (part) ownership of them in return for its beneficence? Discussing Northern Rock, the first of the British financial institutions to go under, Brown answers that question:

'I was against nationalisation, especially of a failed bank, and at that stage I would not let it be considered. I favoured a private sector buy out of the bank, partly because I believed we could isolate Northern Rock's problems and partly because, ever since the 1970s, the Labour Party had been losing elections on the question of economic competence. Tony Blair and I had spent twenty years building New Labour on the foundation of market competition, private enterprise, and economic stability as the the path to

⁷ Adam Tooze, *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crisis Changed the World* (London: Allen Lane, 2018)

⁸ He means the Dems worked with Wall St. That clunky sentence is a rarity in the Tooze book which, for the most part, is nicely and clearly written.

⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/y7splfsv>> OR <<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-budget-banks/british-taxpayers-face-27-billion-pound-loss-from-bank-bailout-idUKKBN13I1FJ>>

growth, and I was not prepared to undermine that painstaking work with one instant decision.’ (p. 23)

His meaning is unclear to me. Is he saying state ownership was a no-no because of public perception of previous (failed) state ownership? Or is he saying that he didn’t want the stigma of having to buy a failed bank while in office?

I was a member of the Labour Party while NuLab was being created and am reasonably certain that Brown did not tell us members that his core values were ‘market competition, private enterprise and economic stability’. NuLab was a con-job on the members of the Labour Party. In economics they really were just Mrs Thatcher in light drag.

The price

I remember 9/11. When the second plane hit I said to my partner something like ‘Oh shit, we’re in for it now.’ Because two planes meant an attack and massive American retaliation against *somebody*. As it turned out, the Israeli/neo-con plan to smash-up the Arab world along ethnic-religious lines had been handed its pretext.¹⁰

In its annual ‘Costs of War’ report, Brown University’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs concludes:

‘The United States has spent nearly \$6 trillion on wars that directly contributed to the deaths of around 500,000 people since the 9/11 attacks of 2001.’¹¹

¹⁰ The best evidence for the existence of this plan is in an interview with General Wesley Clark, one time Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, who said in 2007:

‘So I came back to see him [a General] a few weeks later, and by that time we were bombing in Afghanistan. I said, “Are we still going to war with Iraq?” And he said, “Oh, it’s worse than that.” He reached over on his desk. He picked up a piece of paper. And he said, “I just got this down from upstairs” — meaning the Secretary of Defense’s office — “today.” And he said, “This is a memo that describes how we’re going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran.” I said, “Is it classified?” He said, “Yes, sir.” I said, “Well, don’t show it to me.” And I saw him a year or so ago, and I said, “You remember that?” He said, “Sir, I didn’t show you that memo! I didn’t show it to you!”’

See <https://www.democracynow.org/2007/3/2/gen_wesley_clark_weighs_presidential_bid>.

¹¹ <<https://www.newsweek.com/us-spent-six-trillion-wars-killed-half-million-1215588>> The report’s summary is at <<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/summary>>. Thanks to Robert Henderson for alerting me to the *Newsweek* story.

These policies, let us not forget, have been supported by all UK governments since then.¹² And these policies have created the migration/refugee problem which is transforming the politics of some of the EU countries to which the migrants/refugees have moved, or threaten to move.

A minor detail in those wars has been the role in Syria of the White Helmets. Over the past couple of years there has been a debate about the status of the White Helmets: were they humanitarian heroes, or a Western-funded psy-op? This debate seems to me to have been resolved in favour of their being a psy-op,¹³ a conclusion supported by the fact that they were evacuated from Syria to Israel.

Chips with everything¹⁴

In a review in *Lobster* 52 I wrote this about a then new book¹⁵ about the threat of RFID chips:

'RFIDs are radio frequency identification or identifiers, little chips which can be fixed to, implanted in, built into almost anything from paper money to human beings; and which can then be "read" or decoded to identify the chip. The whole world becomes an inventory for the corporations and the state. That is the fear of the authors; and, looking at the evidence they present, it may not be too far away. RFID applications are so plentiful, the danger is that concerns of privacy are going to be swept aside. There is already a large RFID lobby in the US and the politicians have started taking its money. The big corporations are preparing to introduce them across the board in products; and the military is getting interested on

¹² The details of what this has entailed for HMG are in an important piece by Mark Curtis at <<https://consortiumnews.com/2018/10/27/wikileaks-legacy-of-exposing-us-uk-complicity/>>

¹³ See ex-UN weapons inspector, Scott Ritter, at <<https://tinyurl.com/ycvw6qpr>> or <<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/ex-weapons-inspector-trumps-sarin-claims-built-on-lie/>>.

On the history of this war, RFK's son, RFK Jnr, wrote a very good piece in 2016, 'Why the Arabs don't want us in Syria', detailing the US's (covert) 50 year role in the region. See <<https://tinyurl.com/yb2md7a2>> or <<https://www.politico.eu/article/why-the-arabs-dont-want-us-in-syria-mideast-conflict-oil-intervention/>>.

¹⁴ Readers of a certain age may remember the 1962 Arnold Wesker play with this title. Using it as a subtitle is naff but irresistible.

¹⁵ The book is Katherine Albrecht and Liz McIntyre, *Spychips: How major corporations and government plan to track your every move with RFID* (Nashville [US]: Thomas Nelson, 2005)

both sides of the Atlantic. The British military are trying RFIDs in their warehouses. In an article written after the book was published, the authors report tell us that 'Cincinnati video surveillance company CityWatcher.com now requires employees to use VeriChip human implantable microchips to enter a secure data centre';¹⁶ and the US government has begun producing passports with RFID chips in them.

This book documents the authors' research into this field, the patents, the product trials and the campaigns against RFIDs in the US and Europe. This is important and scary stuff. Orwellian? Orwell wasn't even close.'

That was 12 years ago. This month it was reported¹⁷ that in Sweden people have begun voluntarily having themselves chipped – it saves them carrying other forms of ID. How long will it be before the media digs out the research which shows that a significant percentage of animals with RFID chips develop tumours around the chip site? ¹⁸

As others see us

'Though *Lobster* was and remains a very small publication, the articles published in its early years provide us with a clear sense of the marginal concerns that preoccupied conspiracy theorists' ¹⁹

A conspiracy theorist, *moi*?

It's all in the mind

There's a new book about Sweden by a Swede living in the US, Kajsa Norman:

¹⁶ <www.newswithviews.com/McIntyre/Liz.htm>

¹⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/yckus5x>> or <<http://uk.businessinsider.com/swedish-people-embed-microchips-under-skin-to-replace-id-cards-2018-5?r=US&IR=T>>

¹⁸ See, for example, from 2007 Todd Lewan's 'Chip Implants Linked to Animal Tumors' at <<https://tinyurl.com/2k2b47>> or <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/08/AR2007090800997_pf.html>

¹⁹ Paul S. Lynch, 'The Development of the British Conspiracy Thriller 1980-1990', p. 14 at <<https://tinyurl.com/y7ap2z3q>> or <<https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2299/18180/13068902%20Lynch%20Paul%20Final%20PhD%20Submission.pdf?sequence=1>>

Sweden's Dark Soul. The review in *The Times* ('Scandi-noir heart of Sweden', 17 November) refers to the Swedish state's use of involuntary sterilisation as late as 1975.²⁰ No wonder that state was willing to embark on mind control experiments. The best documented is the case of Robert Naeslund, who has still not persuaded the Swedish media or state to take him seriously, despite physical evidence: X-rays, photographs and the actual device planted in his skull.²¹

Naeslund's descendants, as it were, are a group of people – the most visible of whom are in the United States – who claim to be TIs, targeted individuals. Some of them say they are mind control victims. In the last six months *Wired* has published two long articles about this group,²² which, though sympathetic to their plight, assume all TIs are deluded. I wonder what it would take to persuade the authors of those pieces to consider that there might just be an element of truth in some of their claims.

Mint Murray

On Craig Murray's site there are some very interesting comments on MI6, the use of diplomacy as 'cover' and related areas by 'Mike Williamson', a serving British diplomat; or so he claims. I am unable to tell if he's a fake or not. I presume not, and last I looked no-one had offered anything to discredit him.²³

Strong stuff from Murray on Assange etc in his entry 'Assange Never Met Manafort. Luke Harding and the Guardian Publish Still More Blatant MI6 Lies' which opens thus:

'The right wing Ecuadorean government of President Moreno continues to churn out its production line of fake documents regarding Julian Assange, and channel them straight to MI6 mouthpiece Luke Harding of the

²⁰ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/ybvazo4p>> or <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1997/08/29/sweden-sterilized-thousands-of-useless-citizens-for-decades/3b9abaac-c2a6-4be9-9b77-a147f5dc841b/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.3393ba686d92>

²¹ See <https://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/sociopolitica/esp_sociopol_mindcon29.htm>.

²² <<https://tinyurl.com/y7fjrls6>> or <<https://www.wired.com/story/my-father-says-hes-a-targeted-individual-maybe-we-all-are/>> and <<https://www.wired.com/story/mind-games-the-tortured-lives-of-targeted-individuals/>>.

²³ At <<https://tinyurl.com/y72lunpf>> or <<https://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2018/11/officers-and-agents/comment-page-1/#comment-805023>>.

Guardian.

Amazingly, more Ecuadorean Government documents have just been discovered for the Guardian, this time spy agency reports detailing visits of Paul Manafort and unspecified "Russians" to the Embassy. By a wonderful coincidence of timing, this is the day after Mueller announced that Manafort's plea deal was over.' ²⁴

IRD reborn

The old adage that 'A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on' is generally (but apparently wrongly) attributed to Winston Churchill. It's contemporary update was offered recently by Carl Miller:

'It's far easier to put out lies than convince everyone that they're lies. Disinformation is cheap; debunking it is expensive and difficult.' ²⁵

Difficult? Maybe that should be virtually impossible. One of the central beliefs of the media war game is that no-one notices the denial or rebuttal.

The governments of many nations are putting out their views and some – notably Russia that we know of – are generating disinformation for political ends. But disinformation isn't only cheap, it's profitable. Because hits on a site with advertising generate income for the site owner in proportion to the number of visitors, some people now make a living creating fake news as 'click bait'.²⁶

Among the governments trying to operate in this chaos is that of the UK which now has the British Army's 77th Brigade conducting information operations ²⁷ and the Home Office department known as RICU. A recent story by former *Guardian* journalist Ian Cobain ²⁸ begins with a brief explanation of

²⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/ybqcyk1x>> or <<https://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2018/11/assange-never-met-manafort-luke-harding-and-the-guardian-publish-still-more-blatant-mi6-lies/>>

²⁵ Carl Miller, 'Inside the British Army's secret information warfare machine' <www.wired.co.uk/article/inside-the-77th-brigade-britains-information-warfare-military>.

²⁶ See, for example, 'The Godfather of fake news' at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/the_godfather_of_fake_news>.

²⁷ See note 29.

²⁸ <<https://www.theguardian.com/profile/iancobain>>

RICU:

'Founded in 2007, the Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU), which says privately that it aims to "effect attitudinal and behavioural change" through methods including the dissemination of messages on social media, leafleting homes and feeding stories to newspapers, was modelled on a secretive anti-communist body called the Information Research Department (IRD), set up in Britain in 1948.'²⁹

According to Cobain, we may have Gordon Brown to thank for this. Cobain was told that Brown was impressed by Frances Stonor Saunders' *Who Paid The Piper: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*; but took it not as a cautionary tale, rather as something that his government should emulate. I think it may be safe to say that Brown knew nothing about the IRD's activities, especially their role in the British state's disinformation operations – a.k.a. the 'Lisburn lie machine' – in Northern Ireland in the 1970s. This pioneered the business of putting out so much disinformation – fake news – that no-one knows what to believe.

What we we to make of all this information activity? Does any of it matter? I remain uncertain about this. For at the centre of it are questions about what 'believing' means. Take the so-called pizzagate conspiracy theory of 2016.³⁰ This alleged that there was a satanic child abuse ring, which involved Hilary Clinton and a shifting gallery of others, based at a Washington pizza restaurant – hence pizzagate. Millions of people clicked on this nonsense and one might therefore conclude that it may have had an effect on the presidential election. But how many people believed this theory? The only evidence that *anyone* did was the actions of one man who turned up at the restaurant at the centre of this, with an assault rifle, to investigate. He alone believed it enough to do something. So: how many other people who read the theory 'believed' it? And if there are others, how strongly did they believe it?

I would cheerfully bet all the possessions I own on the belief that the sun will rise tomorrow. I also believe that associates of LBJ organised the assassination of JFK; but on that proposition I would bet nothing at all. I might be wrong on this and have believed different theories about JFK's death before this one. This isn't the same kind of belief. People don't 'believe' conspiracy theories in the same way that they believe that the sun rises every morning.

²⁹ <<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/ricu-propaganda-cold-war-warning-433862376>> Thanks to Paul Lashmar for this link. More details on RICU's structure and operations can be found at <https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Research_Information_and_Communications_Unit>.

³⁰ <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-38156985>>

We have strongly held beliefs and weakly held beliefs; and conspiracy theories are mostly weakly held. For the most part conspiracy theories – or really ‘theories’, since most of them barely deserve the description of theory – function more like entertainment than anything else. If you were an American Clinton-hater in 2016 it would be rewarding and/or amusing to read that she was involved in Satanic child abuse. But would you believe it, really believe it? Probably not.

What governments know about us

There has been a fair bit of comment on the Chinese government’s use of digital ‘social credit’ to manipulate the population.³¹ But what about the data that is available to the powers-that-be in democratic governments? In 2007 the *Guardian* published an outline of what the UK government knows about us – or could assemble if it chose to.³² It was pretty extensive then. Open Democracy has been running articles about the current situation for a while.³³ The USA is much further down this road, with even fewer restrictions, and the end result – for both public and private data – in a recent study by Privacy.net is chilling.³⁴

The lobby wins

The ‘Corbyn-is-anti-Semitic’ trope reached some kind of low water mark in a *Times* editorial on 4 September – the day the Labour Party announced they would accept the new IHRA definition *and* its ‘examples’. The anonymous *Times* author wrote this:

‘In a 2009 column [Corbyn advisor] Seamus Milne described Israel as “built on the ethnic cleansing of the indigenous population”. The choice of words seeks to place Israel on the same side of history as Yugoslavian war criminals. There is always a place for historical debate, but this is antisemitic under the definition, and historically indefensible.’

³¹ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/y8ghnast>> or <<http://uk.businessinsider.com/china-social-credit-system-punishments-and-rewards-explained-2018-4>>.

³² <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2007/nov/24/economy.immigrationpolicy>>

³³ See, for example, Phil Booth, ‘What does the government know about you - and have they got it right?’ at <<https://tinyurl.com/ybkm64za>> or <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/phil-booth/what-does-government-know-about-you-and-has-it-got-it-right>>

³⁴ <<https://privacy.net/us-government-surveillance-spying-data-collection/>>

'The definition' to which the author refers is the IHRA definition of anti-semitism, which the Labour Party *had accepted two years ago*. The author appears to understand neither the definition nor Labour's response to it. Seamus Milne's comment was *not* anti-semitic by that definition – but it will be by one of the new IHRA 'examples' embraced by Labour. Which is precisely the point of them. Because they could not be included in any definition of anti-semitism, they have been tagged onto it as a kind of auxiliary definition. (This was not the intention of the definition's original author.³⁵)

According to the 'examples' attached to the IHRA definition, calling Israel 'racist' and talking of 'ethnic cleansing' is anti-semitic. It is, therefore, presumably not a coincidence that the pressure to get those 'examples' accepted was happening in the run-up to the Israeli state's adoption of its new racist self-definition and the continuing ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians.

The decision by the Labour Party's National Executive Committee to accept the definition and its 'examples' is a mistake. It won't stop the anti-semitism campaign against Jeremy Corby and others, as the reporting around the Labour Party conference showed. On 23 September, the *Daily Mail* had on its front page a picture of former Labour Friends of Israel Chair, Luciana Berger MP, and her two police escorts³⁶ arriving at a meeting the day before the conference opened.³⁷

Labour's capitulation is also a stunning victory for the Israeli lobby in the UK. Despite being exposed in action by the Al Jazeera documentaries³⁸ and widely discussed and analysed on the Internet, the lobby was still able to force Labour to capitulate – mainly because the major British media simply refuses to acknowledge its existence.

Simon says

Regular *Lobster* contributor Simon Matthews has a very interesting piece on the Lion and the Unicorn site about post-WW2 British art and the social/political conditions which made it possible.³⁹

³⁵ See <<https://tinyurl.com/y8pvkogf>> or <<https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/blog/why-the-man-who-drafted-the-ihra-definition-condemns-its-use/>>.

³⁶ Protecting her from what? Nasty tweets?

³⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/ybaq4xea>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6199395/Proud-Mr-Corbyn-Jewish-MP-given-police-escort-attend-Labours-party-conference.html>>

³⁸ The first of the four programmes is at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceCOhdgRBoc>>.

³⁹ <<https://thelionandunicorn.wordpress.com/2018/09/08/this-is-not-tomorrow/>>

Still thinking about Dallas and Holt

In 1985 Peter Dale Scott visited the UK and I had the pleasure of interviewing him. I had a look at the transcript of that interview recently⁴⁰ – for the first time in about 25 years – and found this at the end of the exchange.

RR ‘Do you actually expect there will be a solution to the case?’

PDS ‘You shouldn’t expect to find who was the gunman on the Grassy Knoll. But on the other hand that would be such a trivial piece of information, not what we really want to know at this stage. The things we do want to know are larger questions, and I think that someday they may be discovered. The small, immediate, Dealey Plaza questions may never be answered, but may also cease to interest the real student of the Kennedy assassination.’

Which is what has happened, more or less. Many of the ‘real students’ of the case have indeed walked away from Dealey Plaza and some of them are ploughing through the torrent of official paper that has been released in the last few years. In 1998 the US Defence Department described the JFK-related documents it was releasing as ‘good faith distraction material’, designed to keep people busy.⁴¹ I don’t know if the Agency has the same view of its recent documents but I suspect that nothing they release will lead to an explanation of the events of 22 November 1963.

I also saw this in my conversation with Scott.

RR ‘Given the role of Johnson as the incoming President, I was wondering what you thought of the recent news of Billy Sol Estes’ remark that LBJ ordered the murder of Henry Marshall. This, added, to the picture painted in Robert Caro’s recent biography of Johnson’s early years, suggests that LBJ was certainly capable of Kennedy’s murder. And the “Cui bono?” list has LBJ at the top, with a great many domestic scandals brewing in late ‘63 – TFX, Estes, Baker – all of which disappeared when Johnson became President.’

The vagaries of memory: I had no idea that I was even *aware* of Billy Sol Estes that long ago. My current interest in the LBJ-dunit story was triggered by The Men on the Sixth Floor website about 20 years later.⁴²

Scott replied to my query about Estes:

⁴⁰ It’s in *Lobster* 7.

⁴¹ See <<https://tinyurl.com/y8fgofk9>> or <<https://zcomm.org/zblogs/diversion-and-good-faith-distraction-on-the-use-value-of-conspiracy-data-for-the-power-elite-by-paul-street/>>.

⁴² <<http://home.earthlink.net/~sixthfloor/>>

PDS 'He [LBJ] was in great trouble, and every time he was in trouble it was never something personal, always the whole power nexus he represented. TFX, Baker, these were scandals about the administration of power and the exercise of power and that involved hundreds of people, not just Johnson personally.'

Yes, they were scandals about the administration of power, but it was also personal for LBJ: his political career was at stake – not to mention going to jail. I returned to this a little later.

RR 'That brings us to the question of whether we are dealing with a great big high-level conspiracy, or a small-time Texas bush-wacking conspiracy; whether it's Johnson cronies hiring a couple of Texas gunmen to try and solve Johnson's political problems.'

PDS 'Well I think it's certainly more than some kind of Texas bush-league conspiracy. The real answer to that is the cover-up. The people pushing hard on the cover-up from the very beginning are Kennedy people, people Kennedy appointed. The Deputy Attorney General, Katzenbach, who rushes in the next day, who says we need a commission to establish that Oswald was the lone assassin, is a Kennedy appointee. So I think more than personal politics were involved.'

RR 'Don't you think that those people would have responded like this whether they knew who had done it, no matter who had done it? To bury a conspiracy per se because that's not acceptable?'

Reading this 33 years later, I think I was right: the US political system could not handle Kennedy murdered as the result of a conspiracy by *anyone*; and the fact that Kennedy appointees took part in the cover-up tells us nothing.

As someone who is not a 'real student' of the case, I remain centrally interested in whodunit. And if we are going to stay on Dealey Plaza then the late Chauncey Holt should be central to our concerns. When he went public, 27 years ago, Holt claimed to have been one of the 'three tramps' photographed on Dealey Plaza that day. After initial interest from the research community,⁴³ Holt was abandoned when the records of three 'tramps' arrested on Dealey Plaza that afternoon – messers Doyle, Gedney and Abrams – were released⁴⁴ by the Dallas Police. But as has been shown,⁴⁵ two sets of 'tramps' were

⁴³ See for example

<<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=48769#relPageId=31>>.

⁴⁴ It is still unclear to me if the release of these arrest records was done to discredit Holt.

⁴⁵ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster71/lob71-jfk-three-tramps.pdf>>

detained that day. The first trio were Doyle, Gedney and Abrams, who were not photographed. Holt was in the second group that was photographed being escorted to the Dallas Police HQ more than an hour later.⁴⁶ Holt's claim to have been on Dealey Plaza that day remains unrefuted.

Among the mysteries of the Dallas shooting are: a shallow wound on JFK's back in which there was no bullet; and the notorious Commission Exhibit 399, the so-called 'magic bullet', which turned up, virtually undamaged. Holt claims he ran a weapons modification unit for the CIA and, in the months preceding Dallas, the unit had been experimenting with re-using an already fired bullet from a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle – firing it for the second time through a different make of rifle with a larger bore than the Mannlicher-Carcano and with its lands and grooves removed. This leaves the original Mannlicher-Carcano markings on the bullet; but being refired this way makes the round less accurate and under-powered.

Holt's hypothesis is that JFK's shallow back wound was caused by CE 399, fired from another rifle. Being under-powered, the round didn't penetrate very far and fell out of his body. Holt speculates that this was a phoney assassination attempt to be pinned on apparent Castro-supporting, lefty defector Oswald, and onto that the real assassination was piggy-backed.⁴⁷ If a good hypothesis is one that explains a lot, Holt's is a good hypothesis.

Dead men don't sue

And so, thanks to the new book on Gordiefsky by Ben Macintyre, the Murdoch empire got to run its Michael Foot-KGB-agent nonsense a second time.⁴⁸ When they first ran it Foot sued and won. On the appearance of this second bite at the cherry, Geoffrey Robertson QC wrote to *The Times* on 6 October. Noting that he had acted for Foot in the libel case, Robertson wrote:

'I had the heavy duty of advising Mr Foot which I undertook by pressing him (effectively cross-examining him) over several weeks about the allegations. For what it is worth, I was entirely satisfied that he was

⁴⁶ This is discussed at <<http://theoswaldcode.com/index2.htm>> where the author – yes, erstwhile Dylanologist A. J. Webberman – reproduces (about 8 screens down) the police radio traffic about the second report of people on a train at 1.56 pm – at least an hour after the first set of tramps had been arrested.

⁴⁷ Which is what I had guessed and speculated about in *Lobster 2*.

⁴⁸ *The Times*, 15 September 2018. There's a good account of this at <<http://zelo-street.blogspot.com/2018/09/michael-foot-dead-men-dont-sue.html>>.

speaking the truth in his avowals that he never knowingly met KGB agents, let alone took money from them in return for information. That embassy officials attended Tribune fundraisers was well known; this did not make him an "agent" or a "paid informant" of the Soviet Union.'

It doesn't take genius to see what transpired here. KGB officer under Soviet Embassy cover gives Foot money for *Tribune* – which was not reflexively pro-American and, so, worth a little funding. KGB officer bigs-up his report to his superiors and claims to have recruited Michael Foot.

Maybe Foot should have been sniffy about taking Soviet money but keeping a lefty magazine going is difficult. About 10 years ago a man knocked on my door, asked if I was Robin Ramsay, and then gave me £1,000 in cash. He said something like, 'I appreciate what you do in *Lobster*' and departed. I worried about the source for a few days – was I being set-up in some way? – then put the money in *Lobster's* account. Keeping a lefty magazine going was difficult

Among the 5 pages *The Times* devoted to extracts from the Gordiefsky material was G's opinion of the trade union leader, the late Jack Jones. Gordiefsky visited Jones' flat:

' . . . a typically Philistine environment, with few books, and everything in an exaggerated state of tidiness.'

Philistine? Too tidy? I visited Jack Jones once and sat in the same room that Gordiefsky did. Yes, it was a neat and tidy room. No books? I can't remember if there were books or not; but if not, I imagine they were in Jones' study. Evidently this thought didn't occur to Mr Gordiefsky because, as is well known, philistines don't have studies.

*

Macintyre also had a piece in *The Times* (6 October) in which he stated that everybody and their cousin in the Western intelligence services knew that Adolph Eichmann was in Argentina. But

' . . . neither the Germans nor the Americans wanted to see Eichmann brought to trial, for fear that it could draw attention to other Nazis recruited to Western intelligence to combat the threat of communism.'

Which reminded me of Bob Hope's quip when the Soviets got into space with Sputnik before the Americans:

'Their German rocket scientists are better than our German rocket scientists.'

Thirty-one years later. . . .

After the publication of *Lobster* 11, I tried to persuade the British media that they should take seriously the allegations of Fred Holroyd and Colin Wallace. For months I got nowhere: some guy from *Hull*, with a complicated story about covert ops in the UK? . . . Then copies of Peter Wright's *Spycatcher* began filtering into the country and there were two former secret state sources – Wallace and Wright – talking about plots against the Labour government of Harold Wilson; and my phone began to ring.

In parallel with my attempts to get the story out, the British state was trying to discredit Holroyd and Wallace. Step forward David McKittrick, the *Independent's* Northern Ireland correspondent, and John Ware, then with the BBC's *Panorama*. Ware and McKittrick authored a collection of articles, an entire broadsheet⁴⁹ page's worth, mostly devoted to attacking Wallace, in the *Independent* on 2 September 1987.⁵⁰ Looking back at that now, it is a striking event: two senior journalists put their names to articles in which many of their assertions about Wallace were simply false – and could have been shown to be false by Wallace, had they asked.

It was obvious, back in 1987, that Ware and McKittrick had been briefed by state sources. There was no evidence at the time but there is a hint now. Two documents have surfaced, letters from a B. A. (Brian) Blackwell, a sometime member of the Northern Ireland office.⁵¹ One is difficult to read and not worth reproducing. In it, having had lunch with McKittrick, Blackwell reports that McKittrick viewed Wallace as 'a Walter Mitty fantasist' and Fred Holroyd as 'almost certainly a clinical paranoiac'.

The second document is reproduced below.

⁴⁹ The broadsheet page was approximately 2 feet (60 cm) long and 18 inches (40 cm) wide.

⁵⁰ This episode and its aftermath are described in Paul Foot's *Who Framed Colin Wallace?* (Macmillan, 1989) pp. 262-70. Despite the efforts of Foot and Wallace himself (and me) to show Ware he had got it wrong, he rehashed his nonsense from the *Independent* three years later in a piece for *The Spectator*, 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty' (24 March 1990). See <<http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/24th-march-1990/19/the-secret-life-of-walter-mitty>>.

⁵¹ He was Lt-Col Brian Blackwell, some time commander of 11 Signal Regiment. In 1979 he resigned his commission and joined the civil service. See <<https://www.arrse.co.uk/community/threads/lt-col-brian-blackwell-rip.272076/>> which, a couple of screens down, reproduces Blackwell's obituary from *The Wire*, the journal of the signals intelligence community in the UK.

E. R.

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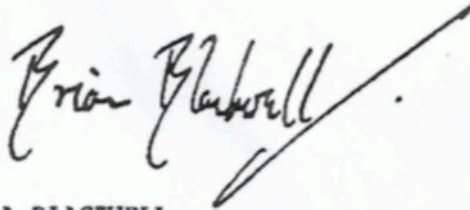
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DAVID MCKITTRICK: ARTICLE ON WALLACE AND HOLROYD

1. You and copy recipients will be interested to know that I had one of my regular meetings yesterday with David McKittrick. He tells me that he has written a major piece rubbishing the revelations of Wallace and Holroyd. He hopes that it will be published in the Independent on Wednesday 12 August.



B A BLACKWELL
Law and Order Division
4 August 1987

John Ware

Writing that piece above I was prompted to go into *Lobster's* archives and look for Ware. I found this which appeared in this column in *Lobster* 48.

Ware's world

In the wake of the death of Paul Foot in July, Simon Hoggart commented in his column in *The Guardian* 24 July that the BBC's John Ware had never believed Colin Wallace, the subject of Foot's book *Who Framed Colin Wallace?* Hoggart quoted Ware as saying: 'He [Foot] bought into all Wallace's fantasies.'

I e-mailed Ware and the following exchange took place.

RR: I was curious to know what were Colin Wallace's 'fantasies' in your view. (Cf Hoggart in *Guardian*, Saturday).

John Ware: Too numerous to mention.

RR: Not good enough, John.

John Ware: It is for people who understand what evidence is.

RR: Ah, yes: that old cop out. Truly, this is pathetic from someone of your status but it will make a nice little feature in the next issue of *Lobster*.

John Ware: I'm quaking! Ever heard of Dave Spart? ⁵²

RR: You keep trying to patronise me and it always misses. The reference to Dave Spart simply tells me you have never read *Lobster*.

The AFL–CIA

I received an email from Athabasca University Press⁵³ informing me that they were publishing a new book by Anthony Carew, *American Labour's Cold War Abroad: From Deep Freeze to Détente, 1945–1970*. Mr Carew is the leading historian of the role of labour unions in the Cold War. This is the description of the book supplied by the publisher:

'During the Cold War, when trade unions were a substantial force in both American and European politics, the fiercely anti-communist American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO) set a strong example for labour organizations overseas. The AFL–CIO cooperated closely with the US government on foreign policy and enjoyed an intimate, if sometimes strained, relationship with the CIA. The activities of its international staff, and especially the often secretive work of Jay Lovestone and Irving Brown—whose biographies read like characters plucked from a Le Carré novel—exerted a major influence on relationships in Europe and beyond.

In impressive detail, Carew maps the international programs of the AFL–CIO during the Cold War and its relations with labour organizations abroad, in addition to providing a summary of the labour situation of a dozen or more countries including Finland, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Greece, and India. *American Labour's Cold War Abroad* reveals how the Cold War compelled trade unionists to reflect on the role of unions in a free society. Yet there was to be no meeting of minds on this, and at the end of the 1960s the AFL–CIO broke with the mainstream of the international labour movement to pursue its own crusade against

⁵² A cartoon lefty revolutionary figure in *Private Eye*, invented by editor Richard Ingrams and inspired by *Eye* contributor Paul Foot.

⁵³ See <<http://www.aupress.ca/index.php/about/>>.

communism.'

You can buy this from the publisher or – remarkably – *download the book as a free pdf* at the publisher's website.⁵⁴

Policing dissent

Meanwhile, back at the Undercover Policing Inquiry, a list of some of the cover names used by officers from the Metropolitan Police's Special Demonstration Squad has been published.⁵⁵ A few more cover names will be added as the Inquiry proceeds but a significant number will remain 'restricted' or are, bizarrely, 'unknown'. It remains unclear how many (probably very few) of the real names of these SDS officers will be made public by the inquiry, but it has ruled that there are cases where the SDS officer is now deceased and yet both their cover name and real name will remain secret.

This isn't quite Stasi-like but it was a very large covert operation; and one that was initiated in 1968 under a Labour Home Secretary, James Callaghan. I wonder if it had his approval?

Some parts of the Special Demonstration Squad's Tradecraft Manual – heavily redacted, of course, and hard to read in places – have been reproduced on the site.⁵⁶

Dag Hammerskjold's death

Torben Gülstorff is too careful a researcher to do anything as rash as draw inferences from his essay on the death of Dag Hammerskjold in this edition of *Lobster*. But it is hard to read it and not conclude that a plane was smuggled into Katanga, with the aim of killing the UN Secretary General when he arrived and wrecking the proposed peace talks. All the signs are there: the disinformation planted in the *Daily Express*; the pilot who 'left' his employer and went freelance just before the event; the confusing paperwork; the disinformation about the capabilities of the plane; the faulty memories of other

⁵⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/y83btrb2>> or <http://aupress.ca/books/120277/ebook/99Z_Carew_2018-American_Labours_Cold_War_Abroad.pdf>.

⁵⁵ <<https://www.ucpi.org.uk/cover-names/>>

⁵⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/y7xr42jg>> or <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/20180319-TC-Documents_Final_Version.pdf>

Dornier employees about the pilot; and the unusual method of delivery (parts and reassembly). And who planned all this? The government of Katanga? Their Belgian allies? A. n. other?

This theory – the first occasion on which a ‘black’ plane was used as an assassination weapon? – will initially stand or fall on how much public notice there was of Hammerskjold’s intention to go to Katanga.

9/11

As I have said before in these columns, while I think the WTC buildings appear to have been demolished, I don’t believe the ‘inside job’ theories of the 9/11 plane-bombings. I don’t believe that any of the US military or intelligence agencies were ambitious enough, or thought themselves good enough, to try and pull off something so complicated. Nor would they have chosen Manhattan and the Pentagon – where friends and colleagues worked – when an attack on other, lesser targets would have achieved the same end. Which leaves us with Bin Laden and fifteen other citizens of Saudi Arabia, the USA’s most important customer for weapons systems.

In this context two little items in August were of some interest. The first was the photograph below,⁵⁷ issued by a Saudi government agency. Apparently



⁵⁷ Published in the *Daily Mail* at <<https://tinyurl.com/y7wzl2ha>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6032419/Saudi-Arabia-appears-threaten-Canada-9-11-style-attack.html>>. After this was spotted and publicised the original Twitter was rapidly deleted.

threatening another 9/11-style plane-bombing, this was aimed at the Canadian government which had the temerity to criticise Saudi human rights policies.

The second was the report that Osama Bin Laden's son had married the daughter of 9/11 hi-jacker Mohammed Atta.⁵⁸

The new JFK documents

Some of the serious JFK researchers are now ploughing through the great piles of official CIA papers that have been declassified. Reports of what they have found so far make interesting, but not illuminating, reading.⁵⁹ There is nothing so far about what happened on Dealey Plaza. In his essay in this issue of *Lobster* ⁶⁰ William Kelly argues that with all this available official paper the JFK researchers will be able to do a counter-intelligence operation – walking back the cat – on the assassination. I doubt this. After all this time there will be *zero* official CIA paper which says *anything* about Dealey Plaza (if there ever was any in the first place).

The 'anti-semitism in Labour' psy-op continues

And so the campaign against Jeremy Corbyn by the Israeli lobby in the UK kicked off again in the middle of July. For the government of Israel and its supporters world-wide this is serious stuff. There has never been a prime minister/president of a major Western democracy who was not (publicly) pro-Israel. The prospect of Prime Minister Corbyn – unlikely though that may be – is anathema to Tel Aviv. I suspect the heads of state of Europe mostly detest their Israeli counterparts but are afraid of the power of the Israeli lobby. Were one of their number to show it is possible to achieve power without kow-towing to the lobby, others might follow. Thus far the Israeli lobby in this country is satisfied with trying to portray Corbyn (and the Labour Party generally) as anti-semitic. But if this proves insufficient who knows what they will do next? Were I Jeremy Corbyn I would be very careful about cycling round

⁵⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/ya9m6p5u>> or <www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/05/hamza-bin-laden-marries-daughter-of-911-hijacker-mohammed-atta>.

⁵⁹ For example Bill Simpwich at <<https://whowhatwhy.org/2018/07/26/analyzing-the-new-jfk-revelations/>>.

⁶⁰ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster76/lob76-powers.pdf>>

London. The Israelis are quite capable of organising 'an accident' for him.⁶¹

Two contributors to these columns, Colin Challen and Bernard Porter, have responded elsewhere to this latest episode.⁶²

As others see us

In *Disrupt and Deny* (reviewed in this issue) Rory Cormac includes in his final chapter a conventional account of the current Russian 'threat': bots, Facebook and fakes news etc. On this account Western Democracy is in danger of being torn to shreds by Russian internet psy-ops projects. This I kind of doubt. But we are in a Cold War again and any stick is a good stick with which to beat the Russians. What people like Cormac rarely if ever do is refer to the Russians' perception of the threat they face from NATO. I noticed a quotation from Putin in *The Spokesman*.⁶³ The Kremlin website hosts a transcript of that statement of Putin's⁶⁴ and the specific quoted paragraph runs as follows:

'Despite our numerous protests and pleas, the American machine has been set into motion, the conveyer belt is moving forward. There are new missile defence systems installed in Alaska and California; as a result of NATO's expansion to the east, two new missile defence areas were created in Western Europe: one has already been created in Romania, while the deployment of the system in Poland is now almost complete. Their range will keep increasing; new launching areas are to be created in Japan and South Korea. The US global missile defence system also includes five cruisers and 30 destroyers, which, as far as we know, have been deployed to regions in close proximity to Russia's borders.'

Keyholes

I am not a fan of the *roman à clef*. To 'get' one, you have to know the

⁶¹ The *Daily Mail* reported in late July that 'Mossad's secret agents killed more people than the agents of any other state since World War II, with some 800 operations in the last ten years alone'. See <<https://tinyurl.com/ya9s9she>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6001335/How-Israelis-secret-service-world-leader-assassins.html>>.

⁶² Challen at <<http://www.colinchallen.org/blog/a-defining-moment>>; Porter at <<https://bernardjporter.com/2018/07/18/the-new-anti-semitism/>>.

⁶³ *The Spokesman* no. 136, p. 62.

⁶⁴ <<http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/56957>> Thanks to Nick Must for suggesting this source.

material already. And if I know the material already, why do I want a fictionalised version? A rather well received *roman à clef* is Edward Wilson's *A Very British Ending*.⁶⁵ In that book the theme is the life of Harold Wilson. It's rather as if Edmund Wilson wrote a fictionalised version of *Smear!*⁶⁶ I lightly skimmed it. It was quite well done, and accurate, but I wondered, What was the point? You, however, may not have this prejudice about the genre and I bring to your attention a new addition to it, Aly Renwick's *Gangrene* (Merlin Press, 2017). A sense of it is nicely conveyed by Dave Douglas' review in *Weekly Worker*.⁶⁷ (Dave Douglas is a member of the IWW, a.k.a. 'the wobblies'.⁶⁸)

Need to know?

This striking little piece appears on Bernard Porter's blog.⁶⁹

'Porkies

But he *assured* us, faithfully, cross-his-heart-and-hope-to-die, that the British Secret Services had no part in or knowledge of American torture of prisoners during the Iraq War. Only "conspiracy theorists" thought otherwise.

"He" was the Director-General of MI5, speaking at a meeting of "intelligence" historians in Cambridge a few years ago, held under "Chatham House Rules" (look it up): which means that I shouldn't really be telling you this.

And now we learn *this*, officially: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jun/28/uk-role-torture-kidnap-terror-suspects-after-911-revealed>.'

⁶⁵ Reviewed briefly at <http://www.culturematters.org.uk/index.php/arts/fiction/item/2160-book-review>.

⁶⁶ Still available. See for example <https://tinyurl.com/y7c8eutf> or https://www.amazon.co.uk/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=smear+wilson+and+the+secret+state&index=stripbooks&tag=googhydr-21&ref=pd_sl_93yl7pm7lh_e&adgrpid=52760290723&hvppone=&hvptwo=&hvadid=259091546632&hvpos=1t1&hvnetw=g&hvrand=6787608509873794611&hvqmt=e&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=1006576&hvtargid=kwd-315577586849

⁶⁷ <https://weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/1196/truth-in-fiction/>

⁶⁸ <https://iww.org.uk>

⁶⁹ <https://bernardjporter.com>

But was the head of MI5 lying or merely out of the loop on these MI6 operations?

Forger's Gazette news

The estimable John Simkin reports on his blog that a story about an anti-Nazi German tennis player being banned from Wimbledon in the 1930s was spiked recently by the *Daily Mail*.⁷⁰ Simkins' essay begins:

'On 13th April, *The New European*, revealed that that *Daily Mail* had dropped a story about a German tennis player, Gottfried von Cramm, who was expected to win the 1939 Wimbledon's male-single championship, but was prevented from competing because of pressure from Adolf Hitler on the All England Lawn Tennis Club. The reason for this is that they discovered that the newspaper's then owner, Harold Harmsworth, the 1st Lord Rothermere, had used his influence to push for von Cramm's ban.'

Kincora

In the Irish magazine *Village*⁷¹ there is an on-going series of articles about child abuse, politicians and 'the Troubles', centred round Kincora. Some of it is familiar, some of it isn't. In one of the articles,⁷² the author quotes former Kincora resident Richard Kerr's claim of being trafficked around the UK to be abused by the Great and the Good – including the late Enoch Powell. At time of writing, this rather startling allegation has not been picked up by the major media in this country.⁷³ Kerr has been talking about Kincora since the 80s – we briefly corresponded circa 1988 – and he has only now mentioned Powell. A 2017 article about Kerr in the same magazine by the same author did not mention Powell.⁷⁴ With whistle-blowers and defectors, the early pressings are generally the most reliable.

⁷⁰ <<http://spartacus-educational.com/spartacus-blogURL112.htm>>

⁷¹ See <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village_\(magazine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village_(magazine))>.

⁷² <<https://villagemagazine.ie/index.php/2018/06/suffer-little-children/>>

⁷³ The most *reliable* single source on the recent events in the Kincora issue I have seen is the Channel 4 News website. See, for example, <<https://www.channel4.com/news/mi5-kincora-richard-kerr-brian-gemmell-child-abuse>>.

⁷⁴ <<https://villagemagazine.ie/index.php/2017/11/kincora-survivor/>>

The problem with these articles is sloppy editing and the author's mixing of solid, well documented material with speculation. For example Lord Mountbatten is mentioned as a possible visitor to Kincora – without any evidence. Former MI6 chief Maurice Oldfield is described as 'a notorious abuser of rent boys' – also without any evidence.

And there is this confusing couple of sentences:

'It is now being reported in the UK media that Heath was responsible for nominating Jimmy Savile for an OBE in 1972. This was just two years after Harold Wilson had a [sic] warned the Queen of England against making such an award; worse still, that Heath attended meeting of the Paedophile Information Network [sic] (PIE).' ⁷⁵

Is the author saying that Harold Wilson warned the Queen that Heath attended a PIE meeting? There is no evidence for this claim, if that is what he intended. In any case – and the PIE is the Paedophile Information *Exchange*, not Network – the attempt to link Heath to it has been thoroughly debunked.⁷⁶

Trump-wise

If you haven't had your fill of all things Trump, a six-part series of thoroughly documented articles about him, his politics and his relationship to the US establishment has been written by Will Banyan.⁷⁷

One of Trump's early backers and allies, Roger Stone, wrote this about himself in his newsletter on 28 June:

'Life as a highly-prized, ruthlessly-hunted target of a rage-driven leftist Democratic/corporate media/deep state lynch mob is no picnic.'⁷⁸

⁷⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/yd6hy563>> or <<https://villagemagazine.ie/index.php/2017/10/not-just-ted-heath-british-establishment-paedophilia-and-its-links-to-ireland/>>

⁷⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/y9ldzkgz>> or <<http://barthnotes.com/2017/10/10/the-canary-attempts-inept-edward-heath-paedophile-information-exchange-smear/>>

⁷⁷ The series starts here: <<https://tinyurl.com/jsx52na>> or <<http://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2017/01/13/president-trump-the-establishment-part-1/>>.

Banyan wrote 'The "Rothschild connection": the House of Rothschild and the invasion of Iraq' in *Lobster* 63 and 'Bilderberg Myths: Were the Bilderbergers behind the 1973 oil shock?' in this issue.

⁷⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/ybuc2m42>> or <<https://stonecoldtruth.com/fake-news-for-a-fake-scandal-the-definitive-guide-to-the-russian-collusion-hoax/>>

Somehow, despite being 'hunted' by this 'lynch mob', Mr Stone finds the time and has the *sang froid* to continue his other duties as an arbiter of world fashion.⁷⁹

Trilateralism

You don't hear much about the Trilateral Commission these days. For reasons unknown, the conspiracy buffs aren't greatly interested in it – despite the presence of a stellar cast of globalists, bankers and other black-hatted figures. What it has done, and what its leaders believe or believed (some are dead), is discussed in considerable detail in an on-line set of essays commenting on Dino Knudsen's *The Trilateral Commission and Global Governance: Informal Elite Diplomacy, 1972-82* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016). Knudsen had access to the Trilateral archives.⁸⁰

With Bilderberg meetings reported by the *Daily Mail*,⁸¹ the Trilateral archives opened to a researcher, and even le Cercle (the Pinay Circle as was) the subject of academic inquiry,⁸² are there still *secret* gatherings of the global elite?

The Met's spooks

The single most striking claim I read recently was in a report in the *Guardian* about covert operations by the Metropolitan Police. Since 1968, we were told, the Met had 'spied on more than 1,000 political groups'.⁸³ This was so startling – and the *Guardian* is so unreliable these days – I went to the site of the

⁷⁹ See <<https://tinyurl.com/ybdrb46b>> or <<http://dailycaller.com/2017/12/31/mr-roger-stones-2017-international-best-and-worst-dressed-list/>>.

⁸⁰ The essays are at <<https://tinyurl.com/yb6oujy8>> or <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/1712549/h-diplo-roundtable-xix-30-trilateral-commission-and-global#_Toc511425727>.

⁸¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/y8cmkku3>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5815011/Secretive-group-global-elite-gather-Turin-latest-Bilderberg-Group-meeting.html>>

⁸² It is briefly discussed in Rory Cormac's *Disrupt and Deny: spies, special forces and the secret pursuit of British foreign policy* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), which is reviewed in this issue.

⁸³ <<https://tinyurl.com/yc8zy7wh>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jul/27/undercover-police-spied-on-more-than-1000-political-groups-in-uk>>

Undercover Police Inquiry to check. What it actually said was:

'Since June 2017 the Inquiry has . . . Referenced that over 1,000 groups or organisations are referred to in Special Demonstration Squad documentation.' ⁸⁴

Which isn't quite the same thing, is it? That a group or organisation was 'referenced' might mean it merely received a passing mention in a report from one of the undercover police officers, whose main focus was elsewhere. Even so: 1,000 groups? Let's think: the CPGB and the Trot groups, plus trade unions, plus far right is what, a hundred max? (And aren't they the responsibility of MI5?) So who were all the rest worth the Met's attention? Of course we will never know: the list won't be released. The Inquiry expects to send its report to the Home Secretary in 2023. Some lawyers are going to make a nice living for the next five years.

Straw man

Peter Osborne recently reminded his readers at the *Daily Mail* of then Foreign Secretary Jack Straw's comments to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee in 2005. When asked about UK involvement in torture during the 'War on Terror', Straw said:

'Unless we all start to believe in conspiracy theories and that the officials are lying, that I am lying, that behind this there is some kind of secret state which is in league with some dark forces in the United States, and also let me say, we believe that [U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice] is lying, there simply is no truth in the claims that the United Kingdom has been involved in rendition full stop.' ⁸⁵

Fast forward to 2018, and the UK Government has now apologised to Abdul Hakim Belhaj for his being handed over to be tortured by the Libyan government during the brief rapprochement between the Blair government and Colonel Gaddafi. Straw's claim from 2005 is, therefore, comprehensively proven to have been false. So what did Straw know and when did he know it?

In 2011 the story surfaced and:

' . . . Mr Straw appeared to deny any knowledge of the operation, saying:

⁸⁴ <<https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/20171103-sixth-update-note.pdf>>

⁸⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/yb89ht6j>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-5716149/PETER-OBORNE-Former-foreign-secretary-Jack-Straw-men-shamed-UK.html#ixzz5GJiaH8c4>>

"The position of successive foreign secretaries, including me, is that we were opposed to unlawful rendition, opposed to torture or similar methods, and not only did we not agree with it, we were not complicit in it, nor did we turn a blind eye to it."

After his remarks, he was confronted by MI6 officials who showed him documents relating to the case, the *Sunday Times* reported.⁸⁶

Mark this one as a briefing by MI6: *we had told him*.

In 2012 the story resurfaced and the *Daily Mail* reported:

'Former foreign secretary Jack Straw has admitted he approved the decision to capture a terror suspect and hand him to Colonel Gaddafi, it was reported yesterday.

The admission apparently came after Foreign Office officials showed Mr Straw evidence he had "signed off" the operation, in which a leading Libyan opponent of Gaddafi was flown to Tripoli in 2004.'⁸⁷

Mark this one as a briefing by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office: *we had told him*.

But in a statement to the *Telegraph* at that time Straw had included the significant conditional: 'No Foreign Secretary can know all the details of what intelligence services are doing at any one time.'⁸⁸

In 2018, the *Guardian* tells us:

'Following a Scotland Yard investigation, the Crown Prosecution Service concluded that the main suspect – known to be Sir Mark Allen, then head of counter-terrorism at MI6 – had sought political authority for some but not all of his actions. Friends of Straw say that the authorisation that he gave was subsequently "twisted and expanded" by MI6.'⁸⁹

Mark this one as a briefing by Jack Straw: *I was conned by the spooks*.

⁸⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/ycpoa8e6>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2130299/Straw-admitted-agreeing-send-suspect-Libya-sees-evidence-showing-signed-operation.html#ixzz5G7raJAtN>>

⁸⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/y9ye9axo>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2130299/Straw-admitted-agreeing-send-suspect-Libya-sees-evidence-showing-signed-operation.html#ixzz5GJRUh8Ro>>

⁸⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/yd6qqq93>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/9406936/Libyan-rendered-on-Jack-Straws-orders-interviewed-by-British-police.html>>

⁸⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/yabufry5>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/may/11/jack-straw-give-evidence-role-libyan-rendition-abdel-hakim-belhaj-fatima-boudchar>>

The Queen's men

Reminiscing about 1968 with David Edgar in the *London Review of Books*, Tariq Ali gave us a significant little snippet about the background to the 'private armies' episode in 1973/74. Ali describes how during the miners' strike – so this is late 1973/early 1974 – at a meeting of the International Marxist Group (IMG), one Mary Furness told the comrades she'd been at a dinner party the previous evening at which were, *inter alia*, the Queen and Prince Phillip. Furness said (Ali recalled 50 years later):

'The whole evening was spent – you're not going to believe this, but you'll all be quite flattered – discussing the miners' strike. Philip was abusive, wanting Scargill's head to roll. But it was the queen who surprised me: "I think things have got really out of control, and this is the end," she said. "These workers are getting too much power, they're running the country – they're holding the country to ransom." All the tabloid clichés were being repeated. There was a general sense of panic.'⁹⁰

The message that Her Majesty was perturbed must have been rolling out across the Home Counties and, among its recipients, would have been members of the intelligence services and armed forces – who swear allegiance not to democracy or the British state but to the Crown. HRH's message wasn't quite 'Who will rid of me of this troublesome priest?' but it wasn't that far off. Hence, perhaps, the willingness of General Sir Walter Walker, George Kennedy Young (ex MI6), Colonel David Stirling and others of their ilk to begin machinating against the unions and the Labour Party. The latter, let us not forget, was then very much the party of the unions. In addition, those same circles were hearing from a section of MI5 (which was getting its information from the CIA's loopy James Angleton), that Labour PM Harold Wilson was a KGB agent.

Something not too dissimilar happened in 1968, events which were revisited in May in the *Telegraph* in Paul Carter's 'Could an Army coup remove Jeremy Corbyn – just as it almost toppled Harold Wilson?'⁹¹

Strange brew

An interesting brouhaha involving David Aaronovitch, Peter Osborne and Miles

⁹⁰ <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/v40/n10/tariq-ali/that-was-the-year-that-was>>

⁹¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/yay5c8uh>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/05/09/could-army-coup-remove-jeremy-corbyn-just-almost-toppled-harold/>>

Goslett over Goslett's book about the death of David Kelly has taken place. It began with Aaronovitch doing his now standard 'no conspiracy' shtick on Goslett's book.⁹² Peter Osborne replied, pointing out in some detail that Aaronovitch simply hadn't dealt with Goslett's arguments.⁹³ Miles Goslett made similar points and noted that Aaronovitch had written in regard to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq:

'If nothing is eventually found, I – as a supporter of the war – will never believe another thing that I am told by our government, or that of the US ever again. And, more to the point, neither will anyone else. Those weapons had better be there somewhere.'⁹⁴

A fine sentiment which seems to have had zero impact on his subsequent thinking and writing.

As I noted in a review of his book on conspiracy theories,⁹⁵ the basic problem is that he simply doesn't know the material well enough. This may not matter to the readers of *The Times*, who probably know it even less well, but it means that when he engages with people better informed than he is, he gets his butt kicked – as he has done in this latest instance.

The lobby

After the Al Jazeera films, the existence of the Israel lobby in this country can no longer be called into question. As the machinations of its Parliamentary Labour Party members against Jeremy Corbyn are almost *en clair*, I wonder when the British major media are going to acknowledge this fact.⁹⁶

⁹² <<https://tinyurl.com/ya3bun2k>> or <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/review-an-inconvenient-death-how-the-establishment-covered-up-the-david-kelly-affair-by-miles-goslett-a-conspiracists-dodgy-dossier-mc2wh65lq>>

⁹³ <<https://tinyurl.com/y8rbzmrz>> or <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/peter-osborne/inconvenient-book-miles-goslett-david-kelly-aaronovitch>>

⁹⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/y794ek94>> or <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/miles-goslett/no-monopoly-on-david-kelly-s-death-miles-goslett-responds-to-david-aaronovitch-s-criti>>

⁹⁵ <<http://aaronovitch.blogspot.co.uk/2009/06/guest-post-review-of-vooodoo-histories.html>>

⁹⁶ The first of the three Al Jazeera films is at <<https://tinyurl.com/y9lxa3sc>> or <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/lobby-episode-1-young-friends-israel-170115035405450.html>>.

