

The View from the Bridge

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Big stuff or disinformation?

The most interesting and important collection of new information that I have seen this year is at <<http://www.jancom.org/>>. The jancom bit of the URL refers to the Justice for Asil Nadir Committee and there is pretty convincing evidence there that he got screwed. But I was most struck by a document which claims to be pages from a CIA analysis of the so-called Supergun affair – that bizarre project to build for Iraq a ‘gun’ with a 750 kilometre range, which ended with the murder of the ‘gun’s’ designer, Gerald Bull. A declassified but redacted version of this report is on the Web.¹ At jancom.org is what is said to be three pages of the redacted material from that report. And this is explosive stuff. In recounting the US-UK (but apparently mostly UK in this account) covert operations to arm Iraq and the subsequent events, it describes four assassinations – Bull, journalist Jonathan Moyle, Belgian politician André Cools, and one Lionel Jones² – commissioned by the late Stephan Kock, allegedly of MI6, and carried out by British (SAS) personnel.³ This was followed by a vast judicial-state conspiracy to cover it up.

But is the document genuine? We will probably never know: the CIA certainly won’t confirm it. My guess is that it isn’t, that it is disinformation; that someone spotted the redacted section in the original report and realised they could use it.

This is what makes me doubt it.

- * Would a CIA report name UK assassins? How would the CIA know who had done the killings?
- * The jancom sites says ‘All the expert evidence indicates that the CIA report is genuine. It matches the highly redacted copy released under the US

¹ At <http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0001469609.pdf>

² His death is discussed by journalist David Hellier at <<https://deeppoliticsforum.com/forums/showthread.php?3063-Stephan-Adolphus-Koch>>. Hellier’s account there of researching some of this conveys a sense of the anxiety it generated.

³ They are named in the document but I have no idea if the IDs are correct and won’t publish the names here

Freedom of Information Act. (FOIA)'. But the front covers of the two documents, the official declassified version on the Web (see note 1) and the version offered by the jancom site are different. And even if they were identical, things can be copied.

* In the opening paragraph the author – purportedly a CIA officer of some stripe, writing for other CIA officers – refers to the 'Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)'. Would s/he need to put MI6 in brackets for a CIA audience?

* Brian Crozier is described as a 'UK Security Service (MI5) agent'. Not according to Crozier's memoir, *Free Agent*, he wasn't; and Crozier wasn't shy about boasting of his connections to the intelligence world.

On the Web is a 2012 account of these pages, in an English-language Turkish paper, which says the document was then in the hands of 'an experienced intelligence expert [presumably Turkish], who spoke to the newspaper and did not deny the fact that he/she had worked closely with the CIA for 20 years.'⁴

So: in so far as we can trace the document's origins at this stage, it goes back to someone in Turkish intelligence. Asil Nadir was a Turkish-Cypriot.

But read it for yourself. Some of it will be familiar if you have read Gerald James' 1995 *In The Public Interest*, and James is quoted on the site. Andrew Rosthorn has pointed out that some of it appeared in 'Thatcher, Astra, Iraq & murder of Gerald Bull' in *Intelligence* 81, 8 June 1998, p. 1.

Bilderberg comes to Watford

Watford? Strange choice of venue: close enough to London to invite the demonstrators and the major media to turn up. Peter Mandelson – now a senior adviser to the bank Lazard; long way from Hartlepool, Peter! – said the abuse he received passing the demo was 'terrible'. He should get out more. So hats off to those – in the UK notably Tony Gosling (Bilderberg.org) – who have been working for years to expose the Bilderbergers.

Two recent events have encouraged Gosling in his belief that Bilderberg is some kind of central committee of globalisation. The first was reports in Italy about a book by Honorary President of the Supreme Court of Italy, Judge Ferdinando Imposimato. He was quoted thus:

'In this document, which I have quoted literally, it is mentioned that the Bilderberg Group is one of the biggest promoters of the strategy of tension, and therefore also behind the massacres. Here's what Bilderberg does: It rules the world and democracies in an invisible way,

⁴ <<http://en.cumhuriyet.com/?hn=312960>>

influencing the democratic development of these countries.'

The document, though not yet available in English, was written in 1967 by an Italian magistrate, Emilio Alessandrini, who was later murdered while investigating the Calvi affair. But since the 'strategy of tension' did not occur until the 1970s, whatever Alessandrini wrote in 1967 can hardly show that Bilderberg was 'one of the biggest promoters of the strategy of tension'.

The second event encouraging Gosling was information he received from HM Treasury when it refused his FOI request for material the Treasury holds on Bilderberg. The Treasury stated:

'Some of the information in the readout from the Chancellor's discussions also contains elements which are intended to inform future Government policy. . . .'

And in response to Gosling's appeal against the refusal, the Information Commissioner:

' . . . has recognized that policy development needs a degree of freedom to enable the process to work effectively, and that there is public interest in protecting information where release would be likely to have a detrimental impact on the ongoing formulation of policy.'

Gosling comments:

'Hold on a second. Doesn't the Bilderberg official website (www.bilderbergmeetings.org) state: '. . . no detailed agenda, no resolutions are proposed, no votes are taken, and no policy statements are issued'?

Gosling has interpreted the references to 'future Government policy' and 'policy development' as an admission that Bilderberg makes policy, when it is UK government policy-making which the Treasury official is invoking to refuse the information.

The NSA/GCHQ flap

Welcome though all the information was, I found it hard to get excited about it, mainly because we know in advance that there is zero chance of the politicians on either side of the Atlantic actually doing something about it. Personally, I have assumed for about twenty-five years that all electronic communications are, in effect, public.

There were, however, two interesting little snippets in Foreign Secretary William Hague's speech to the House of Commons. He didn't actually deny the central allegations: he said they were 'baseless', which, to the legal mind – and

clever lawyers will have been over his text – is not the same thing as ‘false’. It was a classic non-denial denial. Secondly, he said, ‘There is no danger of a deep state out of control in some way.’ Which must be the first time a British minister has used the expression ‘deep state’ in the House of Commons.

War is peace

Douglas Valentine⁵ e-mailed a long list of quotations from some of America’s senior spooks, generals, diplomats and policy-makers, all pointing out that the US policy of assassination by drones from the air and on the ground by secret military operations, was strengthening not weakening its Jihadist opponents in Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan and Somalia. His final rhetorical question was this:

‘Consider in particular the final statement: “A decade of disastrous US policy, which had strengthened the very threat it was intended to crush.” And ask, is that really so? Is it really intended to crush it?’

The answer, obviously, is ‘No, it isn’t.’ William Blum put this as succinctly as I could in a piece of his, ‘Another Peace Scare’:

‘We have to keep this in mind – America, like Israel, cherishes its enemies. Without enemies, the United States appears to be a nation without moral purpose and direction. The various managers of the National Security State need enemies to protect their jobs, to justify their swollen budgets, to aggrandize their work, to give themselves a mission, to send truckloads of taxpayer money to the corporations for whom the managers will go to work after leaving government service.’⁶

Surprised?

Peter Doggett’s *There’s A Riot Going On: revolutionaries, rock stars and the rise and fall of ‘60s counter-culture* (Edinburgh: Cannongate, 2007/8) recounts how the Black Panthers received their first guns from a student radical, Richard Aoki. A few days after reading that I noticed in a review of Seth Rosenfeld’s *Subversives: The FBI’s War on Student Radicals, and Reagan’s Rise to Power*⁷ that Aoki had been working for the FBI at the time. What would the American left have looked like without the federal government’s involvement?

⁵ <www.douglasvalentine.com>

⁶ <<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article18879.htm>>

⁷ <www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/may/23/berkeley-what-we-didnt-know/?pagination=false>

Brain waves

Three significant pieces warning us about the dangers of electromagnetic radiation emitted by mobile phones, their towers and wi-fi systems. 'What the Cellphone Industry Doesn't Want You to Know About Radiation Concerns: A leading expert on health effects from cellphone radiation goes to battle against a multi-trillion-dollar industry',⁸ is an interview with Dr. Devra Davis,⁹ and contains some fascinating and alarming material about the cellphone industry's campaign, as they put it in a memo, to 'game the science'.¹⁰ And they have a budget of \$250 million with which to do it. (If there was no problem, they wouldn't need the budget, would they?)

As well as describing the science, Davis talks about the fate of various scientists who dared to question the mobile phone industry's assurances about the safety of its products. In an earlier article Davis goes into more detail about the science. The third piece is Marko Markov and Yuri G. Grigoriev, 'Wi-Fi technology – an uncontrolled global experiment on the health of mankind', whose content you can infer from the title.¹¹

Plus ça change?

Looking at *Lobster's* website recently it struck me how far from the original conception of *Lobster* it has travelled. Yes, some themes remain from the early years: the interest in the elites, conspiracy theories and JFK's assassination. But what has diminished enormously is the attention paid to the intelligence and security services; and what is relatively recent is the coverage of political economy.

I have stopped reporting much on the spooks simply because it no longer interests me greatly (and, apart from Corinne Souza, no-one else has offered me any material on the subject). When this venture began in 1983 there was hardly any reporting on the British secret state and it seemed worthwhile to collect what fragments we could. Three things have changed. There are now mountains of information in the major media; there is no point in pushing this material at the Labour Party in the hope of getting political action because they

⁸ <www.alternet.org/personal-health/radiation-concerns-about-cellphones?page=0%2C0>

⁹ <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/devra-davis-phd/cell-phones-brain-cancer_b_3232534>

¹⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devra_Davis>

¹¹ <<http://www.viewdocsonline.com/document/6kn1ey>>

will do nothing;¹² and the secret state no longer seems as important as it did in the 1980s.

As for the recent interest in political economy, I was always interested in this but before 2008 didn't feel it appropriate to use *Lobster* for it.¹³ But with the big crash my perception changed. The Labour left's critique in the early 1980s of the malign influence on the British economy of the City, with which I agreed, suddenly became extremely relevant and I was glad that I still had, *inter alia*, my copy of the Labour Party's 1982 publication, *The City: A Socialist Approach*.¹⁴

And so, on with the political economy.

What do Osborne and Cameron think they are doing?

When Cameron and Osborne took office I used to speculate with a couple of correspondents about what they thought they were doing. It was obvious that they had one eye on the first Thatcher government which raised interest rates (and so reduced demand in the economy) in 1981 while in a recession of their own making. This was the incident which provoked the letter signed by 364 economists, who wrote, *inter alia*:

'There is no basis in economic theory or supporting evidence for the Government's belief that by deflating demand they will bring inflation permanently under control and thereby induce an automatic recovery in output and employment . . . [P]resent politics will deepen the depression, erode the industrial base of our economy and threaten its social and political stability.'

It doesn't take a whole lot of knowledge to recognise that the economists were right. Yes, inflation fell from a monthly average of 12% in 1981 to a monthly low of 3.7% in May 1983.¹⁵ But any fool can bring down inflation by causing mass unemployment. The free marketeers who are impressed by this fall in inflation ignore the fact that it rose again in the later 1980s and was

¹² In 1989 or 1990 a resolution of mine on making the intelligence and security services accountable went to the Labour Party conference and was passed without opposition. Formally, the absence of opposition meant that my resolution automatically became Labour Party policy. It has never been mentioned since.

¹³ It was present in my booklet *The Rise of New Labour*.

¹⁴ The key article for me had been Frank Longstreth, 'The City, Industry and the State' in Colin Crouch (ed.) *State and Economy in Contemporary Capitalism* (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

¹⁵ Inflation figures from
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2009/mar/09/inflation-economics>>.

averaging about 8% in 1989; and they ignore the fact that the Thatcher government's economic policies did precisely 'erode the industrial base of our economy and threaten its social and political stability'.

Osborne and Cameron had also been much impressed by the experience of Canada where large cuts in state expenditure had been followed by economic revival. In 2010 *The Telegraph* ran a report, 'Coalition government: the Canadian cuts model that the Tories wish to emulate' on the Canadian government's experience in the early 1990s of cutting state spending by 20% more or less across the board in response to a large state deficit.¹⁶

In his Mais Lecture in 2010 Osborne referred to Canada – and also to the experience of Sweden and said:

'As Goran Persson, the Social Democrat Prime Minister of Sweden who eliminated a huge budget deficit following a financial crisis and a deep recession in the early 1990s, used to say, "a country in debt is not free".'

He also gave prominence to the research by Rogoff and Reinhart and said of them:

'The[ir] latest research suggests that once debt reaches more than about 90% of GDP the risks of a large negative impact on long term growth become highly significant.'

So in 2010 Osborne and Cameron believed the Rogoff and Reinhart research was true; and that Sweden and Canada in the 1990s showed that large scale government cuts were followed by economic growth in the wider economy. So no wonder they are in deep shit! First, Rogoff and Reinhart's conclusions have been shown to be false, based on errors by the authors.¹⁷ (And are, in any case, refuted by the experience of – for example – the UK economy after WW2, which, with debts of over 200% of GDP at war's end, experienced low inflation and decent economic growth for the next 25 years.) And second, the Swedish and Canadian economies in the 1990s were not in a global recession and thus their experience then is not relevant now.¹⁸ What no-one on the

¹⁶ <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/canada/7807047/Coalition-government-the-Canadian-cuts-model-that-the-Tories-wish-to-emulate.html>>

¹⁷ See, for example, <<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/public-debt-gdp-growth-and-austerity-why-reinhart-and-rogooff-are-wrong/>>.

¹⁸ The free marketeer Centre for Policy Studies published a pamphlet in January 2012, *How to Cut Government Spending: lessons from Canada*. Even they noted that 'Canada's economic crisis happened when the global economy was reasonably healthy.' <[http://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/120111114741-2012Howtocutgovernment spending.pdf](http://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/120111114741-2012Howtocutgovernment%20spending.pdf)>

austerity side of the argument has offered is an example of an economy growing after large public sector cuts while in a global recession.¹⁹

Citythink

I like many of Simon Jenkins' columns in the *Guardian* and often agree with him. On 7 May 2013, he wrote this:

'Meanwhile, Britain's one world-class industry, financial services, is in the sights of every jealous EU regulator.'²⁰

Is the City the UK's only 'world-class industry'? No, it's not. And even if it was, at what cost to the rest of the British economy did it achieve this prominence? This is the bit of the story the City's boosters never think about.²¹ One of those is Dan McCurry, author of 'The case for the City' in *Labour Uncut*.²² McCurry wrote:

'The towers that I see when I look from my kitchen windows contain the industry that pays for our schools and hospitals. We should appreciate that industry not run it down. If we are to have an industrial policy then it should include financial services. . .

Although we do need to create space for other sectors to flourish, it doesn't follow that we have to destroy finance in order to achieve that. . . .'

Two obvious points: first, no-one is talking about 'destroying finance'. Regulating it, yes; reducing its influence, yes. Second, while it is true that being highly paid the financial sector contributed significantly to the state's tax income, at its peak that contribution was only 12%; and some of that, perhaps half, is the domestic financial sector, located on Britain's high streets, not in the gleaming towers of Canary Wharf. That 12% didn't 'pay for our schools and hospitals': it paid for some of them. And some of those paying that 12% also organised the tax evasion and avoidance of the global companies trading here which, I would guess, was significantly more than they paid in taxes.

¹⁹ See Paul Krugman on the failure of austerity <<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/jun/06/how-case-austerity-has-crumbled/?pagination=false>> and <www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/johncassidy/2013/05/austerity-an-irreverent-and-timely-history.html>.

²⁰ <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/may/07/david-cameron-eu-referendum-now>>

²¹ For a short introduction to this see Longstreth in note 14 above.

²² <<http://labour-uncut.co.uk/2013/05/15/the-case-for-the-city/#more-16374>>

Eurobollocks?

For Simon Jenkins, 'financial services, is in the sights of every jealous EU regulator.' Whatever the motivation of the EU's regulators, it is clear that as the present UK government and any foreseeable future UK government is not going to get to grips with the City and its global gambling, the best bet for nailing the banksters' feet to the floor lies with the EU. Which creates a curious dilemma for me. I think the EU is absurd, a menace in many ways, and I would vote for UK withdrawal – were it not for the fact that the threat posed by the banksters is greater than that posed by the Eurocrats' delusory dreams. So, come on, Brussels! Bring on the regulations!

It is perhaps not a coincidence that opposition to EU membership in this country appears to be rising in step with the threat to the City's independence.

Let me recommend Neil Barofsky's *Bailout: How Washington Abandoned Main Street While Rescuing Wall Street* (London: Simon and Shuster/Free Press, 2012). Barofsky was a prosecutor who was recruited to oversee the financial bail-out in the TARP funds; and, as the subtitle suggests, discovered that while it was sold to Congress as a means of preventing mass defaulting on domestic mortgages, it was mostly grabbed by the banks. This is an entertaining and illuminating 'outsider-joins-Washington' tale. Barofsky, on the inside, shows the reader that it was just as bad as it looked from the outside.

Two pieces of mine, on politicians' ignorance of economics and Labour's capitulation to the City of London – largely recycled from material in recent *Lobsters* – are at <<http://taxjustice.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/tax-justice-focus-volume-8-number-1.html>> and <http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/how_labour_embraced_the_city>.

Clean hands?

When *Lobster* began, back in the early 1980s, co-founder Steve Dorril and I we spent a lot of time collecting little snippets of information, especially about the intelligence and security services (little snippets was all there was then). One such snippet has appeared in a letter to the *London Review of Books*. In a response to a review by Bernard Porter of Calder Walton's *Empire of Secrets: British Intelligence, the Cold War and the Twilight of Empire*,²³ David Lea, former TUC official, now in the House of Lords, wrote in the next issue:

'Referring to the controversy surrounding the death of Patrice Lumumba in 1960, Bernard Porter quotes Calder Walton's conclusion: "The question remains whether British plots to assassinate Lumumba . . .

²³ Vol. 35, No. 6, 21 March 2013.

ever amounted to anything. At present, we do not know" (LRB, 21 March). Actually, in this particular case, I can report that we do. It so happens that I was having a cup of tea with Daphne Park – we were colleagues from opposite sides of the Lords – a few months before she died in March 2010. She had been consul and first secretary in Leopoldville, now Kinshasa, from 1959 to 1961, which in practice (this was subsequently acknowledged) meant head of MI6 there. I mentioned the uproar surrounding Lumumba's abduction and murder, and recalled the theory that MI6 might have had something to do with it. "We did," she replied, "I organised it."

The sources on my shelves and on the Net do not stand this up. Nonetheless, it is a noteworthy comment because if there has been a single theme running through commentary from MI6 and its media assets in the past 30 years it is that MI6 does not do assassination. Now, apparently, it is OK to boast that it certainly used to do so.

DiEugenio on Parry

Jim DiEugenio took slight umbrage at my review of his book on the Kennedy assassination in this issue. In that review I said that he was very good indeed; and if further evidence is needed to support that claim, it is supplied by his long review essay on Robert Parry's new book, *America's Stolen Narrative*.²⁴ Parry's book looks important. I will review it further down the road.

Pass the tinfoil

In 1989 I met Harlan Girard who gave me a pile of photocopied articles, among which were accounts of the dangers of electromagnetic radiation (EMR). He also told me a strange story about being monitored and directed by the CIA using microwaves. I now have an entire filing cabinet drawer of material on these subjects, which we might loosely call EMR and its uses. Which explains why I still do not have a mobile phone. (I should put an EMR-emitting device next to my brain?) The evidence is pretty clear that they are bad for us.

But I do have a router. When I had a techie round to install a second Internet connection for my partner, I was talking about putting in a second landline to avoid the EMR from a router. My techie showed me that I was already in the EMR fields of four of my immediate neighbours' computers. In an urban environment it is impossible to avoid this stuff. So I went for a router. And the slow demise of the public landline system means that I will have to get

²⁴ <<http://consortiumnews.com/2013/03/30/dieugenio-on-parrys-new-book/>>

a mobile phone any minute now.

Happily I am not electrosensitive and do not have to go to the lengths of some of those described in Nicholas Blincoe's sympathetic account of electrosensitives and the hazards of EMR in the *Guardian* Weekend at the end of March.²⁵

Killing Olof Palme

At <www.oledammegard.com/StatskuppISlowmotion.pdf> you can download a 1000 plus PDF pages on the assassination of Olof Palme. I have only lightly skimmed through this so far and as far as I can see there is a lot of interesting information here – for example about the Swedish Masons – as well as a lot of speculation. The author's analysis of the shooting and its immediate aftermath is hard to follow and it made me realise how difficult the JFK assassination material must be for those coming to it for the first time.

Another Met spook outed

Mark Metcalf has written an interesting piece on his identification of the Metropolitan Police agent who infiltrated the Colin Roach Centre (CRC) in Hackney when Metcalf was working there.²⁶ This is of particular significance to *Lobster* because this agent, Mark Jenner of the Met's Special Demonstration Squad, was there while the CRC was helping Malcolm Kennedy, who was framed for murder by members of the Met, about whose case Jane Affleck has written at length in these columns.²⁷

Undermining Chavez

In issue 115 of his *Anti-Empire Report*, William Blum has a detailed account, from official documentation published by Wikileaks, of one of the American campaigns to destabilise the regime of the late Hugo Chavez.²⁸ When Chavez died there was a deal of discussion of the proposition that maybe the US had

²⁵ <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2013/mar/29/electrosensitivity-is-technology-killing-us>> A recent interesting and intelligible account of the physiology of electrosensitivity is at <<http://www.electrosmogprevention.org/public-health-alert/wifi-dangers/wifi-emfs-electrosensitivity-es-ehs-physiologically-explained-at-last/>>.

²⁶ <<http://www.bigissueinthenorth.com/2013/03/there-is-no-way-of-knowing-how-much-damage-jenner-caused/7622>>

²⁷ In issues 39, 41 and 51, for example. An introduction to the Kennedy case is at <www.red-star-research.org.uk/>.

²⁸ <www.killinghope.org/bblum6/aer115.html>

induced Chavez's cancer. Much derision was pored on the idea. Of course it is possible, not using chemicals or drugs, which were discussed, but electromagnetic radiation (EMR). (Was anyone monitoring EMR around Chavez?) The US embassy in Moscow was irradiated in the 1960s by the Soviet regime, resulting in the death of at least one member of the staff, and kicking-off the US military's intensive study of the military applications of EMR.²⁹

Stoned again

The new 12 part revisionist history of America by Oliver Stone and Peter Kuznik is being broadcast in the UK by Murdoch's Sky Atlantic – a further demonstration (if one were needed) that Murdoch generally puts profit before ideology. *The New York Review of Books* got the Princeton historian Sean Wilentz to review it and he devoted almost all of his three page review to the Stone-Kuznik account of why vice president Henry Wallace was dumped by Roosevelt during WW2 – obviously the most important part of the series, right? For what it's worth, I think Wilentz makes a pretty good case against Stone-Kuznik on this issue, but that hardly matters. The irony (to which he and his editors are oblivious) is that Wilentz accuses Stone-Kuznik of 'cherry-picking'³⁰

Inside Wall St

Nick Chirba was a young Yale graduate who, like 40% of his Yale year (his figure), went into finance. He joined Lehman Brothers just before /the crash – and hated it. Chirba has written a very interesting, short account of life at Lehman Brothers before it went down the pan. It contains a number of quotable sections. Here's the most striking.

'Unfortunately, what I eventually came to learn, and this took time, was that what was really happening was a simple transfer of wealth, more often than not from the less intelligent and informed to the more so. I worked in a highly opaque market. There was no price ticker scrolling across our screens telling us what these bonds and derivatives we traded were worth. In fact, no one really knew what any of this stuff was worth. Which, it turns out, is a trader's field day. What this meant, in its simplest form, is that these traders (or salespeople) could buy

²⁹ See <<http://www.emfacts.com/2012/06/john-goldsmith-on-scientific-misconduct-and-the-lilienfeld-study-an-oldie-but-still-relevant-today/>>.

³⁰ <<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/feb/21/oliver-stone-cherry-picking-our-history/?pagination=false>>

bonds at the “market” price from intelligent hedge fund managers in NYC and sell this same crap at much higher levels to unsophisticated (but legally considered “sophisticated”) pension funds and insurance companies in middle America. What I discovered, quite starkly, is that the part of Wall Street that I worked in was simply transferring wealth from the less sophisticated investors, often teachers’ pension funds and factory workers’ retirement accounts, to the more sophisticated investors that call themselves proprietary trading desks and hedge funds. Of course, the traders had all sorts of excuses and jargon to deal with this truth. “Oh no,” they would say, “We are important providers of liquidity that create stable financial markets. We’re a crucial part of a system. And besides, if we don’t do it, someone else will.” These are the lies that people tell themselves so that they can buy larger homes.’³¹

Iraq invasion: tenth anniversary

Monday 18 March was quite a day for those of us against the invasion of Iraq. On the BBC News Website, Peter Taylor conveyed the central gist of his programme later that night on Panorama about the intelligence failures which led the leadership of the US and UK to believe – or pretend to believe – that the Iraq regime had WMDs. Essentially: US politicians chose to believe fabricators and ignored intelligence which said there were no WMDs. In the case of the Americans, this is hardly surprising: they were bent on the invasion and nothing short of Saddam Hussein’s dismantling of his regime – and maybe not even that – would have prevented the assault. Apparently unable just to say publicly that ‘We have to support the Americans’, it was Tony Blair who needed to persuade himself that the cause was justified by the ‘intelligence’ on WMDs.

The 18 March also saw striking quotations in an article in the *Guardian* from the heads of British armed forces at the time, condemning the invasion as incompetent, ill-thought out etc.³² Good to read, chaps, but I remember that nobody said anything when it might have mattered. And nobody resigned. Careers apparently come before the national interest – and the interests of the armed forces.

Also reflecting on Iraq ten years on was erstwhile MI6 officer and now Conservative MP Rory Stewart, who took part in the invasion/occupation. Stewart concluded:

³¹ <<http://nickchirls.com/my-time-at-lehman>>

³² Richard Norton-Taylor, ‘Iraq war planning wholly irresponsible, say senior UK military figures’, <www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/mar/17/iraq-war-planning-wholly-irresponsible>.

'The question for Britain is what aspect of our culture, our government, and our national psychology, allowed us to get mired in such catastrophe? Everyone – including Cumbrians – should try to understand what happened. We need to reform the army, the Foreign Office, our intelligence agency, and the way parliament debates war, to make us more knowledgeable, more prudent, and more willing to speak truth to power. We must expose not only the politicians but also the generals and civil servants who failed to challenge the system, emphasise the disaster, or press hard enough for withdrawal. We must recognise how easily we exaggerate our fears ('terrorism' and 'weapons of mass destruction') and how easily we hypnotise ourselves with theories ('state-building' and 'counter-insurgency'). We must acknowledge the limits of our knowledge, power, and legitimacy.'³³

Cold War origins

In the previous issue of *Lobster* I referred to the US 'faking' the Cold War. That was glib and overstated. The US pursuit of armed confrontation with the Soviet Union arose from the interaction of several factors in a very complicated period in world history.

The first was the plans of America's ruling elite. Shoup and Minter's study of US wartime planning for the post-WW2 world, shows that the dominant role in that planning was played by the Council on Foreign Relations, the CFR of a thousand conspiracy theories.³⁴ Those plans were that, led by the East Coast internationalist elite – bankers and their banks' lawyers for the most part – America would dominate much of the world when WW2 ended and open it up to American capital. Parallel to this the US government would lend dollars to the world – especially war-ravaged Europe – with which those countries could buy American goods. One of the key figures in the process wrote in 1942 that the problem for the US economy was:

'how to create purchasing power outside of our country which could be converted into domestic purchasing power through exportation. In practical terms, this matter comes down to the problem of devising appropriate institutions to perform after the war the function that Lend-Lease is now performing.'³⁵

³³ <www.rorystewart.co.uk/looking-back-on-iraq/>

³⁴ Laurence H. Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977)

³⁵ Shoup and Minter p. 165

The CFR people thought this could be achieved by economic muscle but underestimated the resistance the US would meet from other nation states (who recognised American imperialism when they saw it) and the resistance their faction would meet within domestic politics. Although the isolationists had been defeated during the early years of the war, isolationist sentiment had not been extinguished; the mass demobilisation of US forces at war's end supplied millions of men and women who had no sympathy for continued foreign adventures; and there was a considerable body of fiscal conservatives in Congress who wanted to see the state shrunk back to its pre-war size.

The second factor was the fear of a return to pre-war economic depression which was felt by everyone.

The third factor was pork barrel politics: by war's end there were many members of congress with military plant and bases or military-linked manufacturing in their districts, who made common cause with local business in seeking to maintain spending (and thus employment) in their areas. We might say that the war economy had created the military-industrial complex and it was keen to ensure its survival. For example, during the war the US aircraft industry had been transformed by the production of 300,000 military aircraft. At war's end most of those orders stopped. Lockheed's President, Robert Goss, was testifying before Congress a couple of months after the war finished that the aircraft industry had answered the nation's call during the war and it now needed the state to provide it with new orders.³⁶ A couple of years later the aircraft industry persuaded President Truman to create a commission to look at the problem. Which commission, after taking testimony from the aircraft industry and the US Air Force, duly recommended increased military spending to prepare the US for the next world war.³⁷

All these interests needed a new 'threat' to continue with military spending; and all found it congenial to interpret Soviet diplomatic behaviour after the war as threatening.³⁸ A crusade against communism could be sold more easily than reshaping the world to benefit American capital. It was a familiar theme: at the end of the first World War the US had a domestic crusade against communism. Happily for all concerned, the US had a

³⁶ William D Hartung, *Prophets of War: Lockheed Martin and the making of the military-industrial complex* (New York: Nation Books, 2011) pp. 52-3

³⁷ See Hartung (note 35) pp. 55/6. On the commission's chief, Thomas Finletter, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_K._Finletter>.

³⁸ A recent interpretation of Soviet post-war behaviour as not threatening, and the Cold War as essentially bogus, is Andrew Alexander, *America and the imperialism of ignorance* (London: Biteback, 2011). Alexander is a columnist for the *Daily Mail*.

president, Harry Truman, who, as vice president had been excluded from the major war decision-making, and was a believer in the threat posed by international communism.

The crusade against the communist threat was irresistible and those who opposed it were ignored or crushed as com-sympy, fellow-travellers, naifs. George Kennan, deputy head of the U.S. mission in Moscow until April 1946, the author of the famous 'long telegram' from Moscow, had the galling experience of seeing his advice about 'containing' the Soviet Union by political and economic means, presented as advocacy of military confrontation. And so the Cold War began, driven by the domestic economic needs of America.

Wag the dog 2

The basic mechanism of the American military-industrial complex is simple: find or create a threat then provide a defence against it. In the 1997 film satire *Wag the Dog*, a 'threat' from Albania is created. In the satire-proof America of 2013 the threat is North Korea. The *Washington Post* reported on 15 March:

'The Pentagon announced Friday that it would strengthen the country's defenses against a possible attack by nuclear-equipped North Korea, fielding additional missile systems to protect the West Coast at a time of growing concern about the Stalinist regime.'³⁹

Even though North Korea does not have a missile which can reach America, or a warhead to mount on it, it is a 'threat' nonetheless. Or, a more accurately, a potential threat. The article reported Under-secretary of Defense James Miller as saying:

'Our policy is to stay ahead of the threat — and to continue to ensure that we are ahead of any potential future Iranian or North Korean ICBM capability.'

Tam and Cav

There is a very interesting obituary by Tam Dalyell of Anthony Cavendish, the MI6 officer turned banker, friend of MI6 chief Maurice Oldfield.⁴⁰ Dalyell reports

³⁹ <www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-to-strengthen-missile-defense-system-on-west-coast/2013/03/15/c5b70170-8d9a-11e2->

⁴⁰ <www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/anthony-cavendish-intrepid-intelligence-officer-who-fought-terrorism-in-the-middle-east-8531488.html>

I met Dalyell a couple of times. At our first meeting, in the House of Commons, I think, Dalyell put his hand in his jacket pocket and took out some rather tired-looking lettuce and offered it to me. As you do . . . Politely, I hope, I declined.

in his usual guileless fashion that he and Cavendish were chums and Cavendish would give him material with which to ask parliamentary questions. He also tells us that Cavendish, though formally not with MI6 in the last 40 years, informally was. Would it be overstating it to say that Cavendish was running Dalyell? I'll bet Cavendish saw it that way.

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'

Mickey Huff, Andy Lee Roth and Project Censored's *Censored 2013: dispatches from the media revolution* (New York: Seven Stories, 2012) contains an anthology of stories the American major media 'censored' in 2011/12. Except, not really: the stories written about here have all been reported by the American media somewhere. The book should have been called Neglected 2013, or Underreported 2013. But 'neglected' and 'underreported' don't quite have the drama of 'censored', do they? No matter: our editors have found a way round this: they have changed the meaning of censored. They are using a 'broader definition of censorship':

'censorship includes stories that were never published, but also those that get such restricted distribution that few in the public are likely to know about them. In sum, censorship [is] . . . anything that interferes with the free flow of information in a society that purports to have a free press system.' (p. 30)

This strikes me as nonsense. We know what censored means: it means suppressed, deliberately spiked (these days, deleted). You can't seriously claim that 'censorship [is] . . . anything that interferes with the free flow of information in a society', if only because it is impossible to define 'the free flow of information in a society'.

However it is not the first time those on the left have tried to modify the term 'censored' for their own ends. This item below appeared in 'View from the Bridge' in *Lobster* 36.

Lost plot

After *Lobster* 35 I received a long letter from John Pilger, followed by a revised version of it, complaining about my review of his recent book, *Hidden Agendas* in 35. With the second version came a note asking me to publish his letter without comment. I replied that I was happy to publish his 1500 word letter but not without comment. Back came the reply that

my review 'was not merely mean-minded in the extreme, it was a gross misrepresentation, and with an agenda' (I confess that I am still in the dark about this 'agenda'); that by refusing to publish his letter without comment 'I was imposing a form of censorship'; and I was now forbidden to publish his letter.

By agreeing to publish his letter uncut I am censoring him?

Action this day (not)

Boy, the headline was sexy: 'Tax avoidance firms will be banned from major government contracts'. Danny Alexander, chief secretary to the Treasury, described the changes as 'another significant tool which will provide a framework to enable government departments to say no to firms bidding for government contracts where they have been involved in failed tax avoidance'.

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Was something serious actually being done by the coalition? Alas, no. The next day Professor Prem Sikka noted:

'The proposed policy only applies to bidders for central government contracts. Thus tax avoiders can continue to make profits from local government, government agencies and other government-funded organisations – including universities, hospitals, schools and public bodies. Banks, railway companies, gas, electricity, water, steel, biotechnology, motor vehicle and arms companies receive taxpayer-funded loans, guarantees and subsidies, but their addiction to tax avoidance will not be touched by the proposed policy.

The policy will apply to one bidder, or a company, at a time and not to all members of a group of companies even though they will share the profits. Thus, one subsidiary in a group can secure a government contract by claiming to be clean, while other affiliates and subsidiaries can continue to rob the public purse through tax avoidance. There is nothing to prevent a company from forming another subsidiary for the sole purpose of bidding for a contract while continuing with nefarious practices elsewhere

The policy will not apply to the tax avoidance industry, consisting of accountants, lawyers and finance experts devising new dodges

The proposed government policy will not work. It expects corporations who can construct opaque corporate structures and sham transactions to come clean. That will not happen. In addition, a

⁴¹ <www.guardian.co.uk/business/2013/feb/14/tax-avoidance-firms-banned-contracts>

government loth to invest in public regulation will not have the sufficient manpower to police any self-certifications by big business.’⁴²

The old lady’s best guess

Since NuLab began worshipping at the feet of the City of London in the mid 1990s, I have been collecting and publishing information on the City’s contribution to the UK economy. Except ‘information’ would be overstating it: I have been collecting guesses or estimates; there is no ‘information’. In the *Bank of England Quarterly Review*, Q3, 2011, there is an essay ‘Measuring of financial sector output and its contribution to UK GDP’, the first table of which gives us the Bank’s best guess: that at its peak the financial sector was about 9% of UK GDP.⁴³ It is widely assumed that of the financial sector about half is domestic – our banks, building societies etc. – and thus that the international, ‘world financial hub’ financial sector was about 4.5% of GDP, at its peak. Which is not insignificant but does not compensate for the loss of about 15% of GDP which was manufacturing, which successive governments, starting in 1980, destroyed by pursuing the economic agenda of the financial sector – the single biggest mistake made by governments since WW2 and the major cause of our current economic predicament.

The murder of Pat Finucane

I wonder if anyone outside the state has actually read all 800 pages of *The Report of the Patrick Finucane Review* by the Rt Hon Sir Desmond de Silva QC.⁴⁴ So far I have only read the summary, in which these seemed to me to be the key sections.

‘In my view, the running of effective agents in Northern Ireland was such a fraught and difficult task that it manifestly required the support of a clear legal and policy framework. I have established, though, that there was no adequate framework in Northern Ireland in the late 1980s. Accordingly, each of the three agencies running agents – the RUC SB, the Army’s Force Research Unit (FRU) and the Security Service – operated under their own separate regimes. The result was that: the RUC SB had no workable guidelines; the FRU were subject to Directives

⁴² <www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/feb/15/uk-tax-avoiders-wont-stop-new-policy?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487>

⁴³ <www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/quarterlybulletin/qb110304.pdf>

⁴⁴ <www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc1213/hc08/0802/0802.pdf>

and Instructions that were contradictory; and the Security Service received no effective external guidance to make clear the extent to which their agents could be permitted to engage in criminality in order to gather intelligence.

It was apparent that successive Governments knew that agents were being run by the intelligence agencies in Northern Ireland without recourse to any effective guidance or a proper legal framework. (p. 11)

In 1985 the Security Service assessed that 85% of the UDA's "intelligence" originated from sources within the security forces. (p. 16)

My Review of the evidence relating to Patrick Finucane's case has left me in no doubt that agents of the State were involved in carrying out serious violations of human rights up to and including murder. However, despite the different strands of involvement by elements of the State, I am satisfied that they were not linked to an over-arching State conspiracy to murder Patrick Finucane. Nevertheless, each of the facets of the collusion that were manifest in his case – the passage of information from members of the security forces to the UDA, the failure to act on threat intelligence, the participation of State agents in the murder and the subsequent failure to investigate and arrest key members of the West Belfast UDA – can each be explained by the wider thematic issues which I have examined.' (pp. 23/4)

It was this summary which gave the major media the phrase 'no over-arching State conspiracy' used in most mainstream reporting. On the other hand, even those quotes I chose from his summary show that this was not a case of state 'collusion' with the Loyalist terrorists. If 85% of the UDA's 'intelligence' came from the British state's agencies, with a British agent (Brian Nelson) using it to target Republicans, the UDA was being run by the state.

Dealing with the bog-wogs⁴⁵

On the Spinwatch site there is an interesting study of the British Army's use of undercover military units in Northern Ireland in the first half of the 1970s: essentially Brigadier Frank Kitson's attempt to use the methods developed in Kenya and Malaya – pseudogangs, assassination and false flag attacks – against the IRA. What comes through most strikingly in this account are: the sheer incompetence of it all – again and again these units shot the wrong people and the rest of the state had to cover-up the mess they'd made; and

⁴⁵ 'Bog-wogs' was the term used by one of Colin Wallace's English CO's in Northern Ireland in the 1970s.

the almost complete absence of curiosity about these events shown by the major media in Britain at the time.⁴⁶

What is to be done?

There is a very acute analysis of the Newsnight special 'Iraq - 10 years on' by Nafeez Ahmed which concluded thus:

'Ten years on, we need to be thinking about how British democratic institutions were hijacked for a self-serving geopolitical strategy invented by a tiny group of American neoconservative politicians; and how, therefore, we might ensure that appropriate reforms of our political, parliamentary and intelligence processes can prevent such a situation from re-occurring.'⁴⁷

Ahmed has misread this, I think. It isn't that our democratic institutions were 'hi-jacked'. The House of Commons could have stopped the Blair government's move to war; there were no structural obstacles. But doing so would have involved middle of the road Labour and Conservative MPs opposing the leadership of their parties (which is bad for careers); which would have led the Labour Party – the government – to be portrayed as 'split' by the major media and the Conservative opposition (which is universally believed to be electoral poison).

To prevent this sort of thing happening again would involve two main things: electing MPs who are not afraid to challenge the defence-intelligence establishment in this country, and who are less concerned about their careers and their party's fortunes than they are about the national interest (and good luck with that project!). Most importantly it would involve changing the automatic support for America embedded in this country's political system and major media. This would mean educating said system and media about the nature of American foreign policy since WW2, which thus far the Anglo-American left have failed to do.

How difficult this would be is suggested by the comments of then Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in 2005 when responding to the charge that the UK was involved in extraordinary rendition.

'Unless we all start to believe in conspiracy theories and that the officials are lying, that I am lying, that behind this 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 Secretary Rice is lying,

⁴⁶ <www.spinwatch.org/images/Countergangs1971-76.pdf>

⁴⁷ <<http://nafeez.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/seven-myths-about-iraq-war-how-bbc.html>>

there is simply no truth that the United Kingdom has been involved in rendition, full stop.⁴⁸

Is Straw a fool or a knave? I can't tell. The 'conspiracy theories' in this instance – 'some kind of secret state which is in league with some dark forces in the United States', and 'officials are lying' – are true, of course. Is it possible that after a life in politics, in which Uncle Sam must have loomed large on many occasions, Straw simply doesn't know this? Or, curiosity about those areas not being good for political careers, did he chose mostly to avert his eyes?

Money, money, money

It was always clear that the government/Bank of England's policies since the great crash of 2008 in part entailed those who were not in debt (savers) paying the bills of those who were (borrowers). At its most obvious, interest rates paid on savers' deposits being less than inflation means the effective devaluation of those deposits. As far as I can see this was done to prevent widespread mortgage defaults. In testimony to a committee of MPs, the director general of Saga – described the policies as a 'monumental mistake':

'Quantitative easing and ultra-low interest rates have hampered the spending power of those in the economy who were not over-indebted and who would otherwise have spent money.'⁴⁹

What I had not grasped is that these policies have forced 'companies to divert cash into pension funds rather than investing'. It works like this. Under Quantitative Easing (QE) the Bank of England has 'bought' £375bn of UK government bonds, or gilts, with newly created electronic money. It now owns almost a third of all gilts in the market. This huge expansion of demand has driven gilt prices higher but has enabled the government to reduce the interest rate paid on them to record low levels.

'That has the unintended consequence of pummelling pension funds, which use gilt yields to calculate their future liabilities. When gilt yields plummet, pension fund deficits effectively balloon. The National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF) estimated last year that QE had increased pension deficits by at least £90bn over the past three years.

⁴⁸ Straw's comment was exhumed by Peter Osborne in a splendid attack on the 'secret justice' proposals. See <www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/9837251/We-must-shine-a-light-into-the-dark-corners-of-our-secret-state.html>

⁴⁹ Social Amenities for the Golden Age, SAGA is a British company catering to those aged 50 and over (who have money).

Current regulations mean companies must plug those holes. Mark Hyde Harrison, the chairman of NAPF, said businesses are now having to contribute to their pension schemes instead of investing for the future, which negates any positive impact of QE.⁵⁰

Fluoridation

Given that a section of the population in Western societies is concerned enough about what they are eating to support the 'health food' and organic sectors, it is curious that so little attention has been paid to the case against fluoride. That case is restated in a shortish but thoroughly documented account on the interesting Washington's Blog.⁵¹ As Christopher Bryson did in his book *The Fluoride Deception* (New York: Seven Stories, 2004) the author there shows that a false consensus about the efficacy of fluoride has been created which survives because the evidence which refutes is never looked at by the public health officials and the dentistry industry which promote the use of fluoride.

Armen Victorian

Victorian wrote a number of very good essays for *Lobster*; his first appeared in number 23 and the final one in 36. I lost touch with him and have had no contact for well over a decade. I recently noticed a 1996 essay of his I hadn't seen before, 'United States, Canada, Britain: partners in mind control operations', which reminded me of what good work he had done.⁵²

Compassionate Conservatism

The always interesting William Clark has an analysis of so-called 'progressive Conservatism' on his site.⁵³

'Progressive Conservatism, as a propaganda project, has two strands: the first is to capture the language of other parties to make the party seem progressive (this functions almost solely through repetition); secondly it seeks the obliteration of the distinction between elite direction and democratic initiative — to continue business as

⁵⁰ <www.guardian.co.uk/business/2013/jan/29/qe-monumental-mistake-pensions-experts>

⁵¹ <www.washingtonsblog.com/2013/02/government-and-top-university-studies-fluoride-lowers-iq-and-causes-other-health-problems.html>

⁵² <<http://valtinsblog.blogspot.co.uk/2009/08/following-is-reprint-of-famous-article.html>>

⁵³ <<http://pinkindustry.wordpress.com/max-wind-cowie-progressive-conservatism/>>

usual . . . The Progressive Conservatives (a very small group) have taken this on as some kind of further emulation of 'New Labour', using Demos and other think tanks to fill the media with various vested-interest-funded psychological arguments.'

Clark's site, Pink Industry, subtitled 'The Atlantic Semantic', is a treasure trove of information on the political and parapolitical world we live in. He has done so much research, he makes me feel lazy.

The banking crisis

The splendid Matt Taibbi has another piece on the financial crisis, 'Secrets and Lies of the Bailout' in *Rolling Stone* 17 January 2013. Taibbi concludes:

'So what exactly did the bailout accomplish? It built a banking system that discriminates against community banks, makes Too Big to Fail banks even Too Bigger to Failier, increases risk, discourages sound business lending and punishes savings by making it even easier and more profitable to chase high-yield investments than to compete for small depositors. The bailout has also made lying on behalf of our biggest and most corrupt banks the official policy of the United States government. And if any one of those banks fails, it will cause another financial crisis, meaning we're essentially wedded to that policy for the rest of eternity – or at least until the markets call our bluff, which could happen any minute now.

Other than that, the bailout was a smashing success.

Although stated in quite different language, the Bank of England's Andrew Haldane, Executive Director, Financial Stability, came to similar conclusions in a speech given in early 2013.⁵⁴

Uncle Sam talent-spotting

An interesting straw in the wind which I missed when it first appeared was Jon Kelly's 'How do you spot a future world leader'? on the BBC website in March 2011, in which Kelly discussed the International Visitor Leader Program (IVLP), the latest name for the sponsor of freebie trips to America for people identified as potential political allies of Uncle Sam. The article quotes Giles Scott-Smith, the leading researcher in this field (whose book on this subject was reviewed in *Lobster* 43), and me (though I am dubious about the words attributed to me:

⁵⁴ <www.voxeu.org/article/have-we-solved-too-big-fail>

they don't sound like mine).⁵⁵ But no matter. The fact that this appeared anywhere on the BBC is, like the Charlie Skelton blogs on Bilderberg,⁵⁶ a striking change of emphasis for the Corporation.

Hail to The Slog

The most consistently interesting blog I look at is The Slog (<http://hat4uk.wordpress.com/>). Tom Easton pointed me at this recent item on it.

Who is Cristine Lagarde really working for?

'Over many months during 2011-12, The Slog painstakingly put together a massive body of evidence pointing clearly to the fact that the US weren't comfortable with Dominique Strauss-Kahn either as head of the IMF, or potential President of France. Equally, I spent many hours talking to those involved, and tracing career progressions, in a bid to establish that Christine Lagarde was being groomed as the head of the IMF to replace DSK once he'd been framed and that she herself was probably fully aware of this.

She was the perfect choice for the US Fed and State because she looked and sounded French, but was emotionally wedded to America. She was and is (as Tim Geithner remarked in private) "Our gal".

Unknown to many of those involved, while former lawyer Cristine Lagarde became the Foreign Trade Minister of the government of Dominique de Villepin, a few years previously she'd been defending the interests of US multinationals to the detriment of French companies. She was, in fact, a member of the CSIS – the think tank of the oil lobby in the United States . . . the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS).⁵⁷ She co-presided over the Action USA/UE/Poland commission

⁵⁵ <www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-12880901> On Giles Scott-Smith see <www.hum.leiden.edu/history/staff/scott-smith.html>.

⁵⁶ <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/series/charlie-skeltons-bilderberg-files+bilderberg>>

⁵⁷ CSIS has featured in *Lobster* before. In the late 1970s it became a kind of refuge for CIA officers who had lost their jobs in the detente-era pruning of the Agency. Fred Landis' 1979 article on CSIS, 'Georgetown's Ivory Tower for Old Spooks', is on the Net at <www.unz.org/Pub/Inquiry-1979sep30-00007>. For more recent accounts see <www.voltairenet.org/article30064.html>and <www.powerbase.info/index.php/Center_for_Strategic_and_International_Studies>.

Tom Easton reminded me that Michael Ledeen edited its journal for a while and former Gaitskell era US labor attaché in the UK, Joe Godson, operated from there with his European Working Group – Peter Shore MP, Eric Hammond, Peter Robinson (of the NUT), Ray Whitney MP *et al.*

There is no obvious evidence that CSIS is, as The Slog has it, the think tank of the oil lobby.

of this think tank along with Zbigniew Brzezinski and was in charge of the USA-Poland Defense Industries working group (1995-2002).'

But if this can be detected by a British outsider (albeit one with some interesting contacts within the EU) all this – and more – was known by the French state and its secret agencies. So why was it allowed to take place?

Keeping on keeping on (all we can do)

Kees van der Pijl is the author of *The Making of a Transatlantic Ruling Class* (London: Verso, 1984), written while he was at the University of Amsterdam. Over twenty five years later a distinctive piece of his, 'State Capture and the Democratic Movement', on the economic crisis, has appeared on the newleftproject website.⁵⁸ Verso published a new edition of *The Making of a Transatlantic Ruling Class* in 2012.

⁵⁸ <www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/state_capture_and_the_democratic_movement>. I also have a piece on that site – who could resist being asked to write for something called New Left? – <www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/how_labour_embraced_the_city>.