

The view from the bridge

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Electromagnetic radiation causes autism?

In his column in *The Observer* on 30 July, John Naughton referred readers to a recent article about the rise of autism in the USA.¹ And yes, there is a rise: it's not a function of redefinition or better diagnosis. Many more children – maybe as many as 3% – are being born with autism; and not Asperger's, full-blown autism. No explanation of this is apparent to the author of the article, who herself has two autistic children. So what has happened in the USA (and India²) in the last 20 years or so which could affect unborn children? One possible answer is obvious, is it not? Yes, it's the spread of electro-magnetic radiation associated with computers and cell phones.³ So I googled 'autism and electromagnetic radiation' and the first hit was a 2004 paper, 'A possible association between fetal/neonatal exposure to radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation and the increased incidence of autism spectrum disorders'.⁴ The paper's abstract concludes:

It is generally accepted in the scientific community that radiofrequency (RF) radiation is a biologically active substance. It is also readily acknowledged that human exposures to RF radiation have become pervasive during the past 20 years, whereas such exposures were uncommon prior to that time. It is suggested that fetal or neo-natal

¹ Jill Escher, 'The Autism Surge: Lies, Conspiracies, and My Own Kids' at <<https://www.thefp.com/p/the-autism-surge-lies-conspiracies>>.

² See <<https://tinyurl.com/25bevfv5>> or <<https://medium.com/@brightsandz/emf-radiation-and-its-impact-on-autism-brightsandz-bdb3a6210f1f>>.

³ The other obvious candidate is air pollution. See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/ru423te2>> or <<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/air-pollution-linked-with-increased-risk-of-autism-in-children/>>.

⁴ <<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14962625/#:>>

exposures to RF radiation may be associated with an increased incidence of autism.

That was almost 20 years ago, doing which time RF radiation must have increased many times over for most Americans. Since 2004 there has been a steady trickle of papers on the issue,⁵ the commercial manufacture of devices to protect fetuses in the womb, but no substantial scientific investigation that I can find. And, given the importance of the Net and cell phones to the world economy, the chance of there being such an investigation in the foreseeable future must be close to zero.

UFOs and the USAF

So we now have a parade of former US Air Force (USAF) and US intelligence personnel telling the world that yes, the UFO thing is real – even commonplace – for the US military but it has all been covered-up for decades. That cover-up by state forces included elaborate operations in the 1980s – mostly by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) – to misdirect and disinform citizens trying to research UFOs.⁶

In the midst of this latest batch of UFOs-are-real stories, US attorney/activist Daniel Sheehan popped-up to tell the *Daily Mail* about UFO experiencers he had talked to.⁷ It was Sheehan in 2001 who recounted an extraordinary experience he had with the US state authorities and UFOs in 1977.⁸ This is worth a revisit in the current climate.

In 1977 Sheehan was General Counsel at the Jesuit National Headquarters in Washington and went to the same church as Rosemary Chalk, Secretary of

⁵ Some are discussed at <<https://tinyurl.com/32t9kxva>> or <<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/autism-awareness-month-could-linked-emf-exposure-during-pregnancy->>>.

⁶ The place to start on this is the extraordinary piece of research at <<https://tinyurl.com/vmjja6ka>> or <https://www.academia.edu/24214339/The_Secret_Pratt_Tapes_and_the_Origins_of_MJ_12_Brad_Sparks_and_Barry_Greenwood_>>.

⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/f2bujjdh>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12175195/Crashed-UFO-recovered-military-distorted-space-time.html>>

⁸ Sheehan's 2001 interview is at <<https://tinyurl.com/muvnwjc4>> or <http://silentenigma.com/Interview_with_Daniel_Sheehan_July_2001_-_UFO_Evidence.pdf>

There is an analysis and expansion of these events worth reading, 'The Marcia Smith Story – The President's UFO Study'. This details President Carter's failure to get access to the government's secret UFO materials. He was told he didn't need to know See <<https://www.scribd.com/document/141505629/The-Marcia-Smith-Story#>>>.

the National Academy of Science in Washington D.C.. On learning of Sheehan's interest in space exploration – he had tried to join an astronaut training programme when he was younger – Chalk told him he should meet a friend of hers, Marcia Smith, director of the Science and Technology Division of the Congressional Research Service.⁹ The Research Service was working on UFOs and extraterrestrial intelligence at the request of then President Jimmy Carter, whose interest was sparked when he saw a UFO in 1969.¹⁰ Marcia Smith asked Sheehan to use his Vatican connections to get her access to any information the Vatican had on UFOs. The Vatican refused to cooperate. Smith then appointed Sheehan as a kind of consultant to the work on UFOs she was doing for Congress.

Cutting a long story short, Sheehan told Smith that he wanted to see the classified sections of the US Air Force's investigations of UFOs, Project Blue Book.¹¹ To Smith's great surprise, the USAF supplied them and Sheehan was called to the Library of Congress where he was shown into a room in which there were filmstrips and slides. Sheehan says he briefly examined a few of these and saw photographs of UFOs, including one that had crashed and was being examined by USAF personnel.¹²

This is very curious. Was the material seen by Sheehan really the classified material from Project Blue Book? When I first wrote about this, over 20 years ago,¹³ I had *assumed* that Sheehan being allowed to see the documents was a preamble to the disinformation games that were played on UFO researchers by AFOSI in the 1980s. Now I have to question that assumption; perhaps they were genuine. If so, why did the USAF allow an outsider, even one from Congressional Research, to see them?

Garrick Alder to sue Bellingcat

Bellingcat began as quirky freelance operation but it has been co-opted by

⁹ Marcia Smith had written a report on UFOs the year before, in 1976. See <<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc993849/m1/1/>>.

¹⁰ An account of Carter and the sighting is at <<https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/jimmy-carter-ufo-sighting>>.

¹¹ On which see, for example, <<https://www.archives.gov/research/military/air-force/ufos>>.

¹² Sheehan's 2001 account of this is at <<https://tinyurl.com/muvnwjc4>> or <http://silentenigma.com/Interview_with_Daniel_Sheehan_July_2001_-_UFO_Evidence.pdf>

¹³ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/42/ufos-and-disinformation/>>

NATO.¹⁴ It may still do interesting work but I now wouldn't trust it any more than I would any other NATO/American intelligence operation.

It has substantial funding, employs numerous staff, the behaviour of some of whom is becoming that of any other psy-war outfit. Bellingcat staffer Christopher Grozev¹⁵ wrote of Seymour Hersh after his piece on the Nordstream bombing:

I hope I won't live to become as senile, as corrupt or as obsessively lying as Seymour Hersh whose irresponsible single-anonymous-source reporting by a name with legacy authority is among the worst damage to journalism anyone ever caused. Tldr: total fiction.¹⁶

Yes, there are criticisms to be made of Hersh's writing,¹⁷ and I think the Nordstream piece was inadequately sourced, but this is wildly OTT.

Garrick Alder published two articles in *Lobster* in 2022¹⁸ showing that Bellingcat's founder, Eliot Higgins, had been taken in by a hoax video that supposedly depicted the aftermath of the Mariupol Theatre bombing, during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. No big deal, you might think: we all make mistakes. But Bellingcat did not address Garrick's claims about the video, just smeared him instead. Immediately after publication of the first article, Bellingcat staff member 'Timmi Allen' – pseudonym of a former officer of the East German Stasi¹⁹ – accused him on Twitter of providing a purely pro-Russian point of view; that his story made him complicit in a war crime; that he was 'just as guilty as the murderer'.

'Timmi Allen's' claims are untrue and seriously defamatory. Bellingcat is registered as a corporate entity in the Netherlands where defamation is a criminal offence and Garrick will sue Bellingcat there. He has already retained

¹⁴ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/44arm86d>> or <<https://www.mintpressnews.com/bellingcat-intelligence-agencies-launders-talking-points-media/276603/>>.

¹⁵ Who is at the centre of the extraordinary film about Navalny. See <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navalny_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navalny_(film))>.

¹⁶ <<https://twitter.com/christogrozev/status/1623367944850837524?lang=en>> TLDR = too long, didn't read.

¹⁷ Some are discussed below under subhead **Seymour Hersh and the Nordstream bombing**.

¹⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/ysfnkasz>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/83/why-bellingcats-founder-promoted-a-ukrainian-hoax/>> and <<https://tinyurl.com/yn7jvhev>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/84/eliot-higgins-and-the-ukrainian-hoax-redux/>>

¹⁹ See <<https://tinyurl.com/hav56vjc>> or <<https://www.rferl.org/a/from-stasi-to-bellingcat-former-east-german-agent-turns-investigative-reporter/30240232.html>>.

the Amsterdam-based defamation specialists AMS Advocaten. (Neither *Lobster* nor its editor is involved in this.)

Bellingcat is generously funded by numerous high-profile people and organisations.²⁰ Garrick has no such resources and will begin a fundraising campaign shortly. Watch this space for details.

Garrick commented:

Bellingcat has acquired an international reputation that gives it great power to affect public opinion. Those with power must wield it responsibly.

The British Gladio

I have had a flicker of interest from the major media about 'The British Gladio and the Murder of Sgt. Speed'²¹ and have thus revisited the material. What stands out politically is that the formation of the Civil Contingencies Cadre (CCC) at the centre of those events was the product of a *conspiracy theory*, propagated by members of MI5 among others – that there was a serious risk from the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) to what, for want of a better cliché, we might call the British way of life.

The survival of the CPGB as any kind of force in UK politics and industrial relations at the time was facilitated by MI5. For not only did they have the Party bugged and penetrated, they knew about the money from the Soviet embassy which was keeping it going.²² I have suggested before in these columns that had MI5 exposed the Soviet funding after the Red Army rolled its tanks into Hungary in 1956, the CPGB would have been reduced to a tiny rump. Why they did not do so is not known. My guess would be that they were told not to by the FBI, which was letting Soviet money into the CPUSA.

In the early 1970s, what we might call anxious patriots believed the conspiracy theory of 'the enemy within'. This said that the Soviet Union ran the CPGB, which ran the unions, which ran the Labour Party. Mrs Thatcher was one such patriot. When leader of the Opposition, she took the various allegations

²⁰ Details at <<https://www.bellingcat.com/about/funding-and-how-to-support-bellingcat/>>.

²¹ In *Lobster* 81 at <<https://tinyurl.com/5dpxemhe>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/81/the-british-gladio-and-the-murder-of-sergeant-speed/>>.

²² Precisely when they discovered this isn't clear. In his *Spycatcher*, Peter Wright dates it to 1956 or 7, after the Soviet invasion of Hungary which led to a big fall in the CPGB's membership. Professor Christopher Andrew, in his quasi-official history of MI5, *The Defence of the Realm* (London: Allen Lane, 2009) writes about it on p. 403 without dating it. From the context it is the early 1950s.

about Harold Wilson seriously enough to try to get the Cabinet Secretary to investigate him. And so we had the whole 'private armies' episode in 1973-5 – militias being formed to resist and frustrate industrial action by the (allegedly communist-dominated) unions – and eventually the creation of CCC, to literally fight 'the threat from the left'. All of which could have been avoided had MI5 exposed Soviet funding of the CPGB.

Ally, Ally Ally

Alastair Campbell now has a popular podcast, 'The Rest is Politics', with Rory Stewart. My problem with Campbell has always been that the man has no discernible politics. I have no idea what he believes, or wants to see happen in this country; and his website tells us almost nothing – except perhaps that Campbell is light on self-awareness and irony. For example, on his website he writes: 'Our politics is a mess. We have leaders who can't or shouldn't be allowed to lead. *We endure governments that lie*, and seek to undermine our democratic values.' (emphasis added)²³

This from the man who helped compile the 'dodgy dossier' on Iraq?

John Booth writes about Campbell elsewhere in this issue and he pointed me towards a 2012 essay on him, 'Britain loves a war criminal'.²⁴ In that, author Tim Holmes makes the detailed but straightforward case that for his work in the illegal invasion of Iraq and the disastrous consequences which ensued, Campbell should be regarded as a war criminal. Amen to that

Dallas again

One of the features of the Kennedy assassination research is the absence of the opinions on whodunnit from those who were close to JFK. Until recently the only one I had come across is a third-hand account, via the then boyfriend of Jackie Kennedy's press secretary, that Jackie had told her 'Lyndon Johnson did it'.²⁵ Given that we now know that the Kennedys were trying to get enough dirt on Johnson to enable them to dump him as vice-president before the 1964 election, Jackie can't have been the only one who saw JFK shot on LBJ's patch

²³ <<https://alastaircampbell.org/>>

²⁴ <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/britain-loves-war-criminal/>>

²⁵ Quoted in this column in *Lobster* 72 under subhead **The LBJ-dunnit thesis**.

and concluded that it was his doing.²⁶ And now we have a second opinion – also third-hand. On his blog, Robert Morrow writes the following:

[In November, 2022] I – Robert Morrow – interviewed a man (who lives in California), who had a very successful business career, and who met the longtime hairdresser of Ethel Kennedy on a cruise in January, 2015. This female hairdresser told him that Ethel Kennedy told her, circa 2010, when asked who killed JFK, 'We all thought it was Lyndon Johnson.'²⁷

If 'they' did indeed think this, why the silence? Banal though this sounds, the answer, I would guess, is party loyalty. As Democrats they could not do anything which would benefit their Republican rivals. If the public knew that Democrat LBJ had killed Democrat JFK, it would have done serious damage to that party.

Pennies dropping

It is finally beginning to be acknowledged that Broken-down Britain is in deep economic shtook.

Item: William Davis in 'Pain: no gain' in the *London Review of Books*:

'Real-term wages in Britain today are no higher than they were in 2005. Since the global financial crisis of 2008, a succession of mostly Conservative politicians has sought to assure the British people that once the difficult bit (first austerity, then Brexit, then Covid) is behind us, the good times will roll. But the difficult bit never seems to be over.'²⁸

Item: Associate Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, Camilla Tominey: 'Britain is now a poor country pretending to be rich. We remain addicted to huge loans and state support, while our leaders pretend that money grows on trees. It's led to an economic calamity'.²⁹

²⁶ For example there were the people in RFK's Justice Department who were beating the bushes in Texas for dirt on LBJ's role in the Estes scandal.

²⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/3p9n5xx4>> or <<https://robertmorrowpoliticalresearchblog.blogspot.com/2023/07/ethel-kennedy-age-82-circa-2010-on-who.html>>.

²⁸ <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v45/n14/william-davies/pain-no-gain?>> posted on 3 July.

²⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/yc49fykw>> or <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/06/23/britain-is-now-a-poor-country-pretending-to-be-rich/?li_source=LI&li_medium=liftniter-rhr>

Item: 'From Tony Blair to George Osborne, our rulers painted false pictures of success while real wealth and wages withered away' – the subhead to Aditya Chakraborty's 'Britain is the Dorian Gray economy, hiding its ugly truths from the world. Now they are exposed.'³⁰

Item: 'Rising interest rates may be worsening Britain's inflationary problem
Outlier Britain is in peak panic – and the Tories are part of the problem' – title and subheading for Jeremy Warner in the *Telegraph*.³¹

Item: 'In a world where trust between major nations is quickly eroding, we cannot maintain our security while presiding over an excessively shrivelled industrial base.' – Juliet Samuel in *The Times*, 20 July 2023.³²

On the other hand, these are great days to be a money-lender in Broken-down Britain. Lend as much as you can get the shmucks to borrow, and wait for the government to decide there's too much spending in the economy and raise interest rates (and your profits). Take Capital One, a subdivision of Mastercard, whose ads are on YouTube. Its APR (annual percentage rate) was 34.9% when I saw their ad in mid July. Sainsbury's Bank was 22%. In a striking expression of the dominance of the financial sector, amidst this obsession with inflation there is not a single politician in the UK – nor, indeed, a single financial journalist that I have come across – talking about state control of credit creation, instead of simply making borrowing expensive. Apparently it is literally unthinkable.

So that's how it works . . .

Karen Ward is managing director at JP Morgan and a member of the economic advisory council of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In late June she offered this view of why the government needs to create a recession to reduce inflation.

They [the government] have to create uncertainty and frailty, because it's only when companies feel nervous about the future that they will

³⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/57k8a8m6>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jun/23/britain-dorian-gray-economy-tony-blair-george-osborne>>

³¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/tcjvttm3>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2023/06/27/rising-interest-rates-worsening-britains-inflation-problem/>> posted 27 June.

³² Worth reading is this, if you can get past the paywall. The author has been briefed by someone – I would guess not a million miles from outgoing Defence Secretary Wallace – knowledgeable about the bizarre goings-on at MOD procurement and gives a couple of barely believable examples.

think 'Well, maybe I won't put through that price rise', or workers, when they're a little bit less confident about their job, think 'Oh, I won't push my boss for that higher pay'.

It's that weakness in activity which eventually gets rid of inflation.³³

Bilderberg

Does Bilderberg still matter, now that it has been so thoroughly exposed by people like Tony Gosling?³⁴ I don't know. If you are interested in a Who's Who of the group, one Aleksander Zielinski has produced an enormous directory of who attended which meetings.³⁵

Russiagate – again

On the American left it is almost universally believed that the claim that Russians tried to interfere in the US presidential election of 2016 is a hoax. As I have tried to show, while the Russian ops may have had little impact, they were real.³⁶ I have just noticed that Wagner Group chief, Yevgeny Prigozhin, acknowledged this in a message to the American website The Intercept late last year.³⁷ In that was these paragraphs.

It is true that some 50 Russian citizens were running blogs and social networks that ordinary Americans read. The fact that Jennifer Abrams, for example, had over 50 million views on Twitter showed that ordinary Americans supported the very ideas that we were bringing to them because Russian bloggers exposed problems that have existed in the United States for years and decades.

Now about why we did it. We did it only because the U.S. boorishly

³³ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/live/2023/jun/21/uk-inflation-cost-of-living-squeeze-food-energy-interest-rates-mortgages-business-live>

³⁴ <<http://www.bilderberg.org/>>

³⁵ <https://www.academia.edu/41409801/Bilderberg_participants_database_v2_0>

³⁶ See this column in *Lobster* 85 under subhead **Russiagate**. To take a recent example, Jacob Siegel does. See below under subhead **All our futures**.

³⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/ybjdwc7>> or <<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/23300537-yevgeny-prigozhin-statement-to-the-intercept-11-10-2022>> If this document is a fake, no-one has said so as far as I can see.

interfered in Russian elections in 1996, 2000, 2008, and 2012. Moreover, this interference was at such a cynical level that top U.S. officials and diplomats not only participated in the illegal actions but also organized them. And the American media and social networks were manually changing the picture of what was happening on the Internet in order to force the Russian people to follow their instructions. Frankly, it was their whip (the U.S. State Department's) that 50 young guys, whom I personally organized, kicked the entire American government in the ass. And we will continue to do so as many times as needed.

Weaponising antisemitism

In my review (in this issue) of Asa Winstanley's *Weaponising Anti-Semitism*, I wondered how the media would respond to it (if they respond at all). I have seen no major media reviews to date but in *The Guardian* John Harris wrote this:

A section of the enduring cult focused on Jeremy Corbyn claims that his defeat was not the result of millions of former Labour voters walking away, but a conspiracy authored by the "Israel lobby" – the kind of antisemitic cliché that finds an echo at the other end of the political spectrum.³⁸

This is seriously misleading – and spectacularly disingenuous. No-one denies that millions of Labour voters declined to vote for Jeremy and/or Labour. What is at issue is why this happened. Among the contributing factors was the extraordinary Jeremy-is-anti-semitic campaign which was run through the entire major media between the two general elections. And this was a literal conspiracy by the Israel lobby in the UK, as Winstanley has documented in minute detail.³⁹

Erstwhile token lefty on the BBC, Paul Mason has a similar reaction in his review of a film on this subject, a screening of which was planned for the Glastonbury festival but which was officially pulled after complaints from the

³⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/4vkua9ru>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jun/18/conspiracy-theories-britain-politicians>>

³⁹ There is a comically bad, hostile review in the *Jewish Chronicle* at <<https://tinyurl.com/yf59ztav>> or <<https://www.thejc.com/lets-talk/all/the-book-adrian-mole-would-have-written-if-he-hated-israel-2hhDSQOgP6X1n5s5RHNmUH>>.

Israel lobby.⁴⁰ Mason pooh-poohs the notion of such a lobby – apparently unable or unwilling to see that the network, whose existence he denies, had just suppressed the showing of a film about it.⁴¹

Until the arrival of Sir Keir Starmer, the Labour Party was a complex, frequently fractious coalition of MPs, members, trade unions, local authority politicians and Party officials. When Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader by the members, at least 70% of Labour MPs opposed him. Jeremy Corbyn should not have accepted the role as leader of the Labour Party: a leader cannot function without the support of the majority of his or her MPs. Many of the members who voted for Corbyn were the £3 variety who joined specifically to do so. The irony here is that the £3 membership scheme was introduced by then Labour leader Ed Miliband as a means of encouraging 'ordinary people' to join and so offset the influence of left members in the Party. Has there been a bigger political cock-up?

More rubbish about conspiracy theories

The spate of essays about and academic research into the phenomenon of conspiracy theories continues. One Christopher Snowden, who works for the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA),⁴² has joined in, with an essay on the different conspiracy theories of right and left.⁴³ Snowden is discomfited by the fact that most of the conspiracy theories in English are coming from the right. Against George Monbiot's recent claim that 'Almost all successful conspiracy theories originate with or land with the far right', Snowden cites a recent study which

. . . concluded that neither the Left nor the Right are systematically biased towards conspiracy theories. Based on 20 surveys conducted in the US between 2012 and 2021, the authors found that around a third of the conspiracy theories they reviewed were more attractive to

⁴⁰ 'Glastonbury Cancels Screening Of "Oh, Jeremy Corbyn, The Big Lie" Doc After Jewish Groups Accuse Film Of Pushing Antisemitic Conspiracy Theory' at <<https://tinyurl.com/26r6hte5>> or <<https://deadline.com/2023/06/glastonbury-cancels-screening-of-oh-jeremy-corbyn-the-big-lie-doc-after-jewish-groups-accuse-film-of-pushing-antisemitic-conspiracy-theory-1235420477/>>.

An unofficial screening did take place.

⁴¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/2ue9sx5s>> or <<https://labourlist.org/2023/06/the-big-lie-jeremy-corbyn-glastonbury-screening-film-watch-conspiracy-mason/>>

⁴² Where he is Head of Lifestyle Economics.

⁴³ <<https://quilllette.com/2023/03/31/the-rise-of-the-respectable-conspiracy-theory/>>

Republicans than to Democrats, a third were more attractive to Democrats than to Republicans, and the rest were non-partisan.

But the fact that Left and Right are *sympathetic* to different conspiracy theories, has no bearing on Monbiot's claim about *successful* conspiracy theories. Snowden continues:

The authors [of the survey] make the important observation that widely believed conspiracy theories sometimes start out on the Left or Right and become bipartisan over time. Neither the 9/11 "truth" movement nor the JFK conspiracy originated on the far-Right. On the contrary, they most appealed to people who hated George W. Bush and couldn't face the reality of Kennedy being murdered by a Marxist, respectively.

He offers no evidence for the assertions in the last sentence. A study of the early JFK researchers has been published and there isn't one about whom it could be said s/he 'couldn't face the reality of Kennedy being murdered by a Marxist'.⁴⁴ And Snowden has missed a trick. Had he read anything about the first wave of Kennedy researchers, he would have discovered that, by American standards, they were on the liberal-left. But 9/11 and the Kennedy assassination are subjects on which people feel free to comment without reading any of the material. Snowden's description of Oswald as 'a Marxist' tells us he's read nothing.

As for 9/11, on the day it happened I was watching the traffic on a couple of conspiracy-oriented sites. Yes, among the early responses to the event was the thought that it might be a false flag attack, a distraction from the Republicans stealing the election for George W. Bush. (Remember the hanging chads in Florida?) There were also pilots who could not believe the plane that hit the Pentagon could have been flown so fast and so low. However the majority thought the Twin Towers were obviously demolished by explosive charges. Among the early advocates of this view was a demolition expert in New Mexico, Van Romero, whose comments made the front page of *The Albuquerque Journal* and were subsequently removed from the paper's website after criticism.⁴⁵ 'It looks like a demolition job' is chiefly what produced the 9/11 conspiracy theories (and a mountain of detailed research). And yes, it still looks like a demolition job to me.

Seeking to incorporate the left as well as the right into the generation of

⁴⁴ John Kelin, *Praise from a Future Generation: the Assassination of John F. Kennedy and the First Generation Critics of the Warren Commission* (San Antonio: Wings Press, 2007). This is reviewed in *Lobster* 55 by Anthony Frewin.

⁴⁵ Romero's comment and subsequent retraction are at <https://www.911research.wtc7.net/disinfo/retractions/romero.html>.

conspiracy theories, Snowden creates new categories – ‘respectable conspiracy theories’ and ‘high status conspiracy theories’ – with which to label Naomi Klein, George Monbiot and Carole Cadwalladr as examples of left conspiracy theorists. But this doesn’t work. It was Anthony Summers who formulated the crucial distinction. Accused of being a conspiracy theorist, Summers said he wasn’t interested in conspiracy theories but he was interested in *theories about conspiracies*. The left is interested in theories about conspiracies; and the left wants evidence. That’s the key difference between left theories about conspiracies and right conspiracy theories. Did you see any QAnon believers looking for evidence?

Still in Dallas

On JFKfacts is a recent note by Chad Neagle, ‘Tale of Two Defectors; One was thoroughly debriefed by the CIA. The other was accused of killing JFK.’⁴⁶ Neagle points out the significance of a recently declassified CIA memo about the debriefing of Robert Webster.⁴⁷ Like Oswald, Webster went to the Soviet Union, renounced his American citizenship, grew unhappy in the USSR and returned to America in the same year as Oswald. The declassified Webster file is almost unintelligible and/or unreadable but that isn’t the point: the fact that it exists at all is the point. For Webster was questioned by the CIA upon his return, while Oswald was not. It is difficult to see Oswald’s non-debriefing as indicating anything other than that Oswald was still ‘on the job’, still operational, when he returned to the USA. Commenting on this, Jefferson Morley writes:

After Webster was debriefed extensively in the summer of 1962, he was of no interest to the Agency. Oswald, who returned a couple of weeks later, was not debriefed yet his subsequent actions within the United States were closely monitored by senior Agency officers—including the assistant deputy director of plans, the acting chief of operations in the Western Hemisphere, the liaison officer for the Counterintelligence Staff, and the chief of the Mexico Desk—all of who signed off on a cable about Oswald six weeks before JFK was killed. In short, the declassified Webster documents are significant because they illuminate the unusual handling of Oswald the

⁴⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/yckcsvm7>> or <https://jfkfacts.substack.com/p/tale-of-two-defectors?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email>

⁴⁷ <<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=16423#relPageId=1>>

defector.⁴⁸

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Texas-based JFK researcher, Robert Morrow, is a strange mixture. On the one hand he offers ridiculous descriptions of himself: his latest is 'The World's Leading Public Intellectual'. On the other he produces and/or promotes interesting material on the assassination and related areas. For example on his blog he has recently pointed out a video recording by former Kennedy-era presidential Secret Service officer Abraham Bolden. In this Bolden describes hearing a White House row between JFK and LBJ in 1961 about the then brewing Billie Sol Estes scandal.⁴⁹ Bolden is now very old. With that caveat, this is still a significant detail in the story of the LBJ-JFK relationship.

Of less significance but still interesting is Morrow's account of his relationship with the notorious Roger Stone. According to Morrow, he wrote most of two of Stone's books, *The Clintons' War on Women*, the attack on Hilary Clinton they co-authored, and Stone's version of the LBJ-dunnit thesis, *The Man Who Killed Kennedy*. The fact that Stone has apparently stiffed him over royalty payments may explain this particular blog entry.⁵⁰

A beginning?

The wall of silence in the major media about the health risks of mobile phone technology⁵¹ was breached in May when *The Times* reported a study that was published in *The European Heart Journal*.⁵² Its conclusion was unusually plain:

Mobile phone use for making or receiving calls was significantly associated with a higher risk of new-onset hypertension, especially among high-frequency users.

⁴⁸ <<https://jfkfacts.substack.com/p/is-there-really-nothing-new-in-the>>

⁴⁹ The Bolden interview is at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pz6KsqPhEEI>> and the reference to the argument begins around 23.20.

⁵⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/23bme2nr>> or <<https://robertmorrowpoliticalresearchblog.blogspot.com/2023/05/jfk-60th-anniversary-must-buy-roger.html>>

⁵¹ See under subhead **More on 5G** in this column in *Lobster* 80. Or see Christopher Ketcham, 'Is 5G Going to Kill Us All?' in *The New Republic*, 8 May 2020 at <<https://newrepublic.com/article/157603/5g-going-kill-us-all>>.

⁵² 'Mobile phone calls, genetic susceptibility, and new-onset hypertension: results from 212 046 UK Biobank participants', by Ziliang Ye and nine others at <<https://academic.oup.com/ehjdh/article/4/3/165/7131479>>.

In other words, radiation from mobile phones raises your blood pressure; and the risk increases with increased use.

You never know: this might just be the event which lets the other research on e-m radiation risks begin to seep out. To take the obvious example: if radiation from something as piffling as a phone raises blood pressure, what is the radiation from the phone towers doing to those living near them?

All our futures

Jacob Siegel's 'A Guide to Understanding the Hoax of the Century: Thirteen ways of looking at disinformation'⁵³ is over 13,000 words long; and since we all have far too much to read, below are the bits I thought most notable on first reading. This is very striking in places.

In his last days in office, President Barack Obama made the decision to set the country on a new course. On Dec. 23, 2016, he signed into law the Countering Foreign Propaganda and Disinformation Act, which used the language of defending the homeland to launch an open-ended, offensive information war.

[. . . .]

The message from the U.S. defense establishment was clear: To win the information war—an existential conflict taking place in the borderless dimensions of cyberspace—the government needed to dispense with outdated legal distinctions between foreign terrorists and American citizens.

Since 2016, the federal government has spent billions of dollars on turning the counter-disinformation complex into one of the most powerful forces in the modern world: a sprawling leviathan with tentacles reaching into both the public and private sector, which the government uses to direct a “whole of society” effort that aims to seize total control over the internet and achieve nothing less than the eradication of human error.

[. . . .]

At companies like Facebook, Twitter, Google, and Amazon, the upper management levels had always included veterans of the national security establishment. But with the new alliance between U.S. national security

⁵³ <<https://tinyurl.com/yt377sm5>> or <<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/guide-understanding-hoax-century-thirteen-ways-looking-disinformation>>

and social media, the former spooks and intelligence agency officials grew into a dominant bloc inside those companies; what had been a career ladder by which people stepped up from their government experience to reach private tech-sector jobs turned into an ouroboros that molded the two together. With the D.C.-Silicon Valley fusion, the federal bureaucracies could rely on informal social connections to push their agenda inside the tech companies.

[. . .]

The crime is the information war itself, which was launched under false pretenses and by its nature destroys the essential boundaries between the public and private and between the foreign and domestic, on which peace and democracy depend. By conflating the anti-establishment politics of domestic populists with acts of war by foreign enemies, it justified turning weapons of war against Americans citizens.

[. . .]

What is coming into being is a new form of government and social organization that is as different from mid-twentieth century liberal democracy as the early American republic was from the British monarchism that it grew out of and eventually supplanted.

[. . .]

In a technical or structural sense, the censorship regime's aim is not to censor or to oppress, but to rule. That's why the authorities can never be labeled as guilty of disinformation. Not when they lied about Hunter Biden's laptops, not when they claimed that the lab leak was a racist conspiracy, not when they said that vaccines stopped transmission of the novel coronavirus. Disinformation, now and for all time, is whatever they say it is.

[. . .]

The authors⁵⁴ made the extraordinary claim that the "melding of Russian-friendly accounts and Trumpkins has been going on for some time." If that was true, it meant that anyone expressing support for Donald Trump might be an agent of the Russian government, whether or not the person intended to play that role. It meant that the people they called "Trumpkins," who made up half the country, were attacking America from within. It meant that politics was now war, as it is in many parts of the

⁵⁴ Clint Watts and Andrew Weisburd, 'How Russia Dominates Your Twitter Feed to Promote Lies (And, Trump, Too)', August 2016, at <<https://tinyurl.com/4xtty9rf>> or <<https://www.thedailybeast.com/how-russia-dominates-your-twitter-feed-to-promote-lies-and-trump-too>>.

world, and tens of millions of Americans were the enemy.

[. . . .]

Conveniently, it was the same lesson that many intelligence and defense officials had drawn from the ISIS and Russian campaigns of 2014—namely, that social media was too powerful to be left outside of state control—only applied to domestic politics, which meant the agencies would now have help from politicians who stood to benefit from the effort.

[. . . .]

With the normal rules of constitutional democracy suspended, a coterie of party operatives and security officials then installed a vast, largely invisible new architecture of social control on the backend of the internet’s biggest platforms.

[. . . .]

It is a supreme irony that the very people who a decade ago led the freedom agenda for other countries have since pushed the United States to implement one of the largest and most powerful censorship machines in existence under the guise of fighting disinformation.

[. . . .]

The coordination necessary to carry out the Russian collusion frame-up was the vehicle, fusing (1) the political goals of the Democratic Party, (2) the institutional agenda of the intelligence and security agencies, and (3) the narrative power and moral fervor of the media with (4) the tech companies’ surveillance architecture.

[. . . .]

The claim that Russia hacked the 2016 vote allowed federal agencies to implement the new public-private censorship machinery under the pretext of ensuring “election integrity”.

[. . . .]

It is no coincidence that the war against disinformation began at the very moment the Global War on Terror (GWOT) finally appeared to be coming to an end.

[. . . .]

According to the Biden White House and the army of disinformation experts, the threat is now coming from within. A network of right-wing domestic extremists, QAnon fanatics, and white nationalists is supported by a far larger population of some 70 million Trump voters whose political sympathies amount to a fifth column within the United States. But how did these people get radicalized into accepting the bitter and destructive white

jihad of Trumpist ideology? Through the internet, of course, where the tech companies, by refusing to “do more” to combat the scourge of hate speech and fake news, allowed toxic disinformation to poison users’ minds.

[. . .]

. . . that once the internet entered its populist stage and threatened entrenched hierarchies, it became a grave danger to civilization. But this was a fearful response, informed by beliefs widely, and no doubt sincerely, shared in the Beltway that mistook an equally sincere populist backlash termed “the revolt of the public” by former CIA analyst Martin Gurri for an act of war.

[. . .]

And it received the full backing of the Pentagon, the intelligence community, and President Biden, all of whom, notes Glenn Greenwald, have declared that “the gravest menace to American national security” is not Russia, ISIS, China, Iran, or North Korea, but “domestic extremists’ in general—and far-right white supremacist groups in particular.”

[. . .]

The new information regulators failed to win over vaccine skeptics, convince MAGA diehards that the 2020 election was legitimate, or prevent the public from inquiring into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, as they tried desperately to do.

[. . .]

To take just one example, Google’s censorship, which applied to its subsidiary sites like YouTube, called for “removing information that is problematic” and “anything that would go against World Health Organization recommendations”—a category that at different points in the constantly evolving narrative would have included wearing masks, implementing travel bans, saying that the virus is highly contagious, and suggesting it might have come from a laboratory.

[. . .]

The legal framework for this had been put in place shortly after Trump took office, when the outgoing DHS chief Jeh Johnson passed an 11th-hour rule—over the vehement objections of local stakeholders—declaring election systems to be critical national infrastructure, thereby placing them under the supervision of the agency.

[. . .]

In January 2021, CISA “transitioned its Countering Foreign Influence Task

Force to promote more flexibility to focus on general MDM [ed. note: an acronym for *misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation*],” according to an August 2022 report⁵⁵ from the DHS’s Office of Inspector General. After the pretense of fighting a foreign threat fell away, what was left was the core mission to enforce a narrative monopoly over truth

[. . .]

“DHS insiders’ collective justification, without uttering a peep about the switch’s revolutionary implications, was that ‘domestic disinformation’ was now a greater ‘cyber threat to elections’ than falsehoods flowing from foreign interference.” Just like that, without any public announcements or black helicopters flying in formation to herald the change, America had its own ministry of truth.

[. . .]

The deep state refers to the power wielded by unelected government functionaries and their paragovernmental adjuncts who have administrative power to override the official, legal procedures of a government.

[. . .]

The ultimate goal would be to recalibrate people’s experiences online through subtle manipulations of what they see in their search results and on their feed. The aim of such a scenario might be to prevent censor-worthy material from being produced in the first place.

[. . .]

In a statement to the website Just the News, Mike Benz called prebunking “a form of narrative censorship integrated into social media algorithms to stop citizens from forming specific social and political belief systems” and compared it to the “pre-crime” featured in dystopian science-fiction movie *Minority Report*.

[. . .]

Less than three weeks before the 2020 presidential election, *The New York Times* published an important article titled “The First Amendment in the age of disinformation.” The essay’s author, *Times* staff writer and Yale Law School graduate Emily Bazelon, argued that the United States was “in the midst of an information crisis caused by the spread of viral disinformation” that she compares to the “catastrophic” health effects of the novel coronavirus. She quotes from a book by Yale philosopher Jason Stanley and linguist David Beaver: “*Free speech threatens democracy as much as*

⁵⁵ <<https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2022-08/OIG-22-58-Aug22.pdf>>

it also provides for its flourishing.”

[. . .]

Former Clinton Labor Secretary Robert Reich responded to the news that Elon Musk was purchasing Twitter by declaring that preserving free speech online was “Musk’s dream. And Trump’s. And Putin’s. And the dream of every dictator, strongman, demagogue, and modern-day robber baron on Earth. For the rest of us, it would be a brave new nightmare.” According to Reich, censorship is “necessary to protect American democracy”.

RFK Jr.

With the announcement that Robert Kennedy Jr. is going to stand as potential Democratic presidential candidate, we finally have a (relatively) mainstream candidate for the position who has said publicly that he does not believe the official line on the assassination of JFK (or his father, RFK Sr.) and is willing to talk about it.⁵⁶ What a pity then that RFK Jr. has chosen to lead the American opposition to vaccines. For this, not the murder of his uncle, will dominate the conversation. Why he has gone down this road is unclear to me. I commented on his anti-vaxx writing in this column in *Lobster* 84 where I wrote, under subhead **RFK Jr.**, ‘Two detailed analyses of his anti-vaxx writing seem to me to show that he doesn’t really understand the science and has been sloppy (at best) when writing about it.’ Russ Baker has done the most recent analysis of RFK Jr.’s thinking on vaccines that I have seen and comes to the same conclusion.⁵⁷

Broken-down Britain

Reporting from the *Financial Times* has claimed that at current levels, the UK will be poorer than Poland in a decade, and will have a lower median real income than Slovenia by 2024. Many provincial areas already have lower GDPs than Eastern Europe.

⁵⁶ See, for example, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nc6O4KXcHzQ>>.

⁵⁷ <<https://russbaker.substack.com/p/building-herd-immunity-to-truth-more>>

The earlier analyses were <<https://tinyurl.com/hamcty3j>> or <<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2021/05/how-robert-f-kennedy-jr-became-anti-vaxxer-icon-nightmare>> and <<https://tinyurl.com/mt35prf7>> or <<https://www.mcgill.ca/oss/article/covid-19-health-pseudoscience/anti-vaccine-propaganda-robert-f-kennedy-jr>>.

[. . . .]

Because of its status as an initially advantaged first mover, the UK now has a fortified elite content to live on the rents of bygone ages. Its social order is constituted by the cultural legacy of the old aristocracy, underwritten by London financial brokers, and serviced by a shrinking middle class. Its administrative and political classes developed a culture of amateurism, uninterested in either the business of classically informed generalism or that of deep technical specialism. The modern result is a system that incentivizes speculative, consultative, and financial service work over manufacturing, research, and production.

Thus one Samuel McIlhagga in a very good essay at Palladium.⁵⁸ The recently deceased Tom Nairn would have enjoyed this.

Down under

Way back in the 1980s, I used to correspond with a couple of people in the New Zealand peace movement which was engaged in trying to prevent New Zealand allowing US nuclear submarines into its waters: 'No Nukes'. One of them was Owen Wilkes, who committed suicide in 2005. The current leading 'peace campaigner' in New Zealand, Murray Horton, recently mailed out a piece about Wilkes. The New Zealand Security and Intelligence Service (SIS) refuses to release its file on Owen Wilkes but did release a snippet to his widow.

Horton writes:

The accompanying letter to her (15/5/23) from new SIS Director, Andrew Hampton, says that she was never the subject of an SIS Personal File. Any material it held on her was in Owen's file.

There is one paragraph in Hampton's letter that cannot pass without challenge, in fact it is breathtaking.

"As a high-profile peace activist during a period when the USSR sought to use the legitimate peace movement to further its own geopolitical objectives, Owen Wilkes came to NZSIS attention (as did you, purely by association). Mr Wilkes was never, however, considered to be a threat to security".

Horton commented:

1/ If "Mr Wilkes was never considered to be a threat to security", why did the SIS spy on him for decades (and on people close to him, such as

⁵⁸ <<https://www.palladiummag.com/2023/04/27/britain-is-dead/>>

his then wife)? Why does the SIS still refuse to release the bulk of its file on him?

Which are indeed good questions. But he then writes:

2/ Then there is the not so subtle smear of the “legitimate peace movement” being used by the USSR to “further its own geo-political objectives”. That was an outrageous lie then and even more so in a letter written in May 2023. What is Director Hampton implying here? For example, is the suggestion that those who successfully campaigned for NZ to become nuclear free (something that is so much part of the cultural furniture that it is used in beer commercials) were puppets of the Kremlin?

And that is protesting too much, is it not? When an anti-American campaign sprang up in New Zealand the chances are good that the Soviets did seek to use/influence/encourage it. Whether they succeeded is another question. New Zealand has a population less than Greater London and the room for covert Soviet activity was severely limited. The SIS head isn't saying that SIS *detected* any such activity, merely that they presumed its existence. As they would.

Official inquiries and cover-ups,

With the JFK event, it was obvious pretty early on that what was being covered-up: anything which might suggest more than one shooter. The cover-up was largely organised by Arlen Specter, one of the young lawyers who produced the Warren Report. Jim diEugenio noted a recently published exchange between Edward J. Epstein and Specter from Epstein's new book *Assume Nothing*. This exchange must date from 1965 or 66 when Epstein was writing his 1966 book *Inquest*.

Epstein: When the Secret service did a reconstruction on Dec. 7, 1963, why didn't they arrive at your single bullet theory?

Specter: They had no idea at the time that unless one bullet hit both Kennedy and Connally, there had to be a second assassin.⁵⁹

As diEugenio notes, this is as close to Specter confessing to the fabrication of the 'lone assassin' story as can be expected.

As far as we know, with 9/11 the cover-up required the suppression of one chapter in the official 9/11 report, detailing Saudi links to some of the hi-

⁵⁹ <<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/29011-epsteins-memoir-priceless-exchange/>>

jackers.⁶⁰ That chapter, which became known as the 28 pages, was eventually declassified in 2016. ABC News' report of the event noted:

The information in the pages lays out a number of circumstances that suggest it's possible two of the 9/11 hijackers living in California had been receiving operational support from individuals loyal to Saudi Arabia in the months leading up to the attacks.⁶¹

In response to this revelation, Richard Clarke, at the time of 9/11 National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counter-Terrorism, wrote 'Behind the 28 Pages: Questions About an Alleged Saudi Spy and the CIA'.⁶² In that he wrote:

Among those dangling strands of the investigation, two stand out. The first, the subject of these 28 pages, is what role Saudi government officials played in supporting al-Qaeda and the 9/11 plot.

The second question, with which the 9/11 Commission struggled but was unable to answer, is why the CIA failed to tell the FBI and the White House when the agency knew about al-Qaeda terrorists in the United States.

I believe that the two questions may be linked and that a major element of the 9/11 tragedy may remain unrevealed: a possible failed CIA-Saudi spy mission on U.S. soil that went bad and eventually allowed 9/11 to proceed unimpeded.⁶³

This spy mission involved a Saudi citizen, Omar al-Bayoumi, who made contact with two of the hijackers when they arrived in America.

Clarke's theory has support. A group of former FBI agents have claimed that CIA personnel were trying to penetrate Al-Qaeda by recruiting al-Bayoumi

⁶⁰ See <<https://tinyurl.com/hdvpnhl>> or <<https://theintercept.com/2016/07/15/saudi-ties-to-911-detailed-in-documents-suppressed-since-2002/>>.

⁶¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/48ebwmmh>> or <<https://abcnews.go.com/International/us-declassifies-secret-911-documents-28-pages/story?id=40583069>>

⁶² <<https://tinyurl.com/ra7n3upy>> or <<https://abcnews.go.com/International/28-pages-questions-alleged-saudi-spy-cia/story?id=40697425e>>

Clarke had speculated along these lines five years earlier. See <<https://tinyurl.com/mwvwz29p>> or <<https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/08/richard-clarke-makes-new-911-coverup-allegations/354002/>>.

⁶³ Richard Clarke has recently talked about the CIA withholding material on the hi-jackers from him. <<https://tinyurl.com/5n7r7us4>> or <<https://rubble.com/v13034j-911-and-cia-malfeasance-richard-clarke-interview.html>>

and withheld intelligence about the Al-Qaeda hi-jackers.⁶⁴

More on Clockwork Orange

There is now a free on-line book, *OPERATION CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, in the words of its subtitle, about 'MI5's Control of Loyalist Vice Rings, the Murder of a 10-Year-Old Boy, Treachery, the Deception of Parliament, Gunrunning, Collusion, Bombings, Forgery, Perjury and Vilification'.⁶⁵ It begins with these two paragraphs:

The United Kingdom is paying a ghastly price for the decades during which the State turned a blind eye to a wide spectrum of sexual offences committed by the elite of British society.

At least three forces became the instruments of amoral politicians and their spymasters for various nefarious purposes: the Metropolitan Police in London, the Sussex Constabulary, and, in Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Senior officers were asked to bend the rules and a turn blind eye to all sorts of wrongdoing. This brought forward the worst impulses lurking inside opportunists who were prepared to do the Establishment's bidding. Many were rewarded with promotions and awards they might not have obtained in normal circumstances as a reward for their dishonesty.

This is followed by a catalogue of allegations – the majority of them involving Conservative Party and/or establishment figures – with many of the accusations being that children were physically and sexually abused. And that list does include Clockwork Orange – the MI5 operation to smear British politicians, which was exposed by Colin Wallace. But there is a downside: for such an extraordinary story, the author – Irish barrister, David Burke – has provided zero documentation.⁶⁶

Some of the content I was already familiar with and could assess – e.g. Clockwork Orange – some I was not. A section I knew nothing about concerned the posthumous investigation of sexual abuse allegations against Edward

⁶⁴ <<https://www.spytalk.co/p/exclusive-fbi-agents-accuse-cia-of>> And see also <<https://tinyurl.com/4mukmhew>> or <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2023/05/13/former-dea-agent-details-how-the-cia-concealed-identity-of-two-9-11-hijackers-granted-visas-to-the-u-s-from-the-fbi/>>

⁶⁵ <<https://coverthistory.ie/2023/04/09/download-an-orchard-of-bad-apples-by-david-burke/>>

⁶⁶ Other books by Burke are at <<https://www.mercierpress.ie/authors/burke-david>>.

Heath. This police inquiry was called Operation Conifer, and its report is on-line. (Although, as mentioned, Burke does not provide any reference for this.) The key conclusion of Conifer was:

1.10.12 Where it is concluded that, if he had still been alive, Sir Edward Heath would have been interviewed under caution to gain an account, it is emphasised that his account would be as important as other evidence gathered as part of the wider investigation. Accordingly, it is critical to stress that no inference of guilt should be drawn from the fact that Sir Edward Heath would have been interviewed under caution.⁶⁷

[Punctuation in the original!]

David Burke reliably reports the Conifer investigation and his account of areas I know better, those involving Colin Wallace, for example, are similarly accurate. So it may all be reliable. Definitely worth a look.⁶⁸

Why NATO

A while back I wrote in this column that one of the main points of NATO for the Americans, is the fact that NATO members have to buy American weapon systems. American manufacturing is heavily dependent on state military spending (and the arms companies help fund the politicians' expensive election campaigns).⁶⁹ There is an interesting example in an article bemoaning Finland's decision to join NATO on Consortiumnews.com.⁷⁰ The authors note that 'Finland has already committed \$10 billion to buy American F-35 fighters to replace its three squadrons of F-18s'.

The same river twice

If you look at the Wikipedia entry for the Greek political party Syriza, under subhead 'Government formation', you will see this sentence:

⁶⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/2zk4bfpc>> or <https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/wiltshire/news/op_conifer_summary_closure_report.pdf>

⁶⁸ Colin Wallace can be seen on *Al Jazeera* commenting (with ex-MI5 officer Annie Machon) on the big leak of US classified documents which was reported on 7 April. <<https://tinyurl.com/3ezw3yx6>> or <<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/inside-story/2023/4/11/how-serious-is-the-pentagon-files-leak-for-the-us-and-its-allies>>

⁶⁹ See, for example, <<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-104154>>.

⁷⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/y8u3tjzj>> or <<https://consortiumnews.com/2023/04/12/finland-abandons-the-helsinki-spirit/>>

See also Tenth austerity package (Greece), Eleventh austerity package (Greece), Twelfth austerity package (Greece), and Thirteenth austerity package (Greece).⁷¹

Thirteen IMF austerity packages, applying the same policies The obvious analogy with this ludicrous repeated application of failing policies would be using leeches hundreds of years ago. Leeches not curing the patient? Add more leeches! The comparison is not exact. When the use of leeches was widespread in Europe, relatively little was known about illness and the body. In the 21st century a great deal is known about the economy and there are obvious alternatives to IMF policies. The problem with the IMF is ideology, its view of what should and should not be done. Essentially it believes that the less well off should pay for an economy's problems and the cuts to state expenditure and the raising of taxes it imposes should not impact the incomes or property holdings of the rich.⁷²

I was reminded of this reading Aeron Davis's excellent *Bankruptcy, Bubbles and Bailouts* (reviewed in this issue). Davis interviewed officials from the Treasury and Bank of England, and some politicians. As others have reported, Davis found that politicians simply do not understand macroeconomics and simply implement the received views of financial officials and 'the markets'. Even after the banking crisis of 2008-10, those received views still rested on the core beliefs inherited from the oil-funded years of Thatcherism: taxes should be low and the state should be small (but must bail out the banks whenever their gambling backfires).⁷³ 'The posh boys' – David Cameron, George Osborne and Nick Clegg, who led the coalition government from 2010 to 2015 – simply followed the kind of policies the IMF would have imposed had they been called in. It had not occurred to them, any more than it had to their New Labour predecessors, that such policies had created the problems in the first place and they should look for alternatives.

40 years on

It is 40 years since the first issue of *Lobster*. In that I ran an essay I had

⁷¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriza#January_2015_election>

⁷² Related to which is the research which shows 'Without the Bush and Trump tax cuts, [US] debt as a percentage of the economy would be declining permanently'. <<https://tinyurl.com/4fb526xx>> or <<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/tax-cuts-are-primarily-responsible-for-the-increasing-debt-ratio/>>.

⁷³ The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) estimates that, as at the end of January 2018, bailing out the British banks for their gambling in 2008-2010 cost the public £23 billion. See <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05748/>>.

written about Carroll Quigley and the assertions he had first made in his 1966 book *Tragedy and Hope* about the secret network created by followers of Cecil Rhodes, using money left in Rhodes' will. Quigley was ignored by his academic peers but adopted by the far right in America, especially the John Birch Society, which saw his book as proof that there really was a great conspiracy. It might not have been the great communist conspiracy the Birchers previously thought they could see but it was a conspiracy nonetheless.⁷⁴

I was reminded of Quigley by a recently acquired copy of a 2015 book, Robin Brown's *The Secret Society: Cecil John Rhodes's Plan for a New World Order*.⁷⁵ This expands and elaborates Quigley's thesis about Rhodes and the Round Table. But as one of the few comments on the book points out, it has almost no documentation.⁷⁶ In this, Brown is following in Quigley's footsteps, for *Tragedy and Hope* has over 1300 pages and no documentation at all. To my knowledge, Quigley has never publicly commented on this. He has said, however, that the book was going to be published in two volumes but, after a take-over of the publisher, the new owners decided that would be too expensive and did it as one volume.⁷⁷ The academic world has continued to ignore Quigley, in large part precisely because of his lack of documentation; and they will ignore Brown's book for the same reason.⁷⁸

A book which did stand up much of Quigley's thesis about the Round Table in formal academic terms (while actually ignoring Quigley) was Deborah Lavin's *From Empire to International Commonwealth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). Lavin told me that the first version of the manuscript for her book had been stolen from her car and her research materials were destroyed in a house fire.

⁷⁴ There is a good account of both the book and the (mis)uses made of it by the Birchers at <<https://tinyurl.com/ybw8bn9k>> or <<https://www.unityofthepolis.com/professor-carroll-quigley-and-the-article-that-said-too-little/>>

⁷⁵ Published by Penguin in South Africa but not, as far I can tell, in the UK or the USA. A Kindle edition is available from Amazon.com. Brown has had a long career in television, making documentaries.

⁷⁶ <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299512663_Secret_society_secret_sources>.

⁷⁷ So said Quigley at <<https://tinyurl.com/53zbj9sn>> or <http://www.carrollquigley.net/Interviews/Carroll_Quigley_1974_Interview_Transcript_Part1.htm>.

There is a website devoted to Quigley at <<http://www.carrollquigley.net/>>.

⁷⁸ Andrea Bosco, author of *The Round Table Movement and Fall of the 'Second' British Empire, 1909-1919* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), notes on p. 26 of his introduction that the 'the highly unscholarly character of his [Quigley's] study strongly undermined its value'. That introduction is well worth reading and is at <<https://tinyurl.com/mvmxehzj>> or <https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/The_Round_Table_Movement_and_the_Fall_of/OzzZDQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=From+Empire+to+International+Commonwealth&printsec=frontcover>.

In other words, nearly half a century after the Round Table network had apparently ceased to mean much, someone seriously tried to prevent publication of a book about it.⁷⁹

Ukraine and the left, again

Covert Action Magazine magazine is running a four part series by one Jim Cole (who is new to me) on the background to the events in Ukraine. At time of writing the first two parts were available.⁸⁰ Cole's account of the US state's overt and covert operations (in what used to be called the developing world) is decently sourced and worth a read. Much of it might have been written by the late Bill Blum, though he would not have used rhetoric like this:

But the goons and dragoons that do the dirty work of empire are largely only pawns, radicalized with weaponized nationalism to face killing and death without squinting in the service of empire. Meanwhile, safely a few steps detached and hidden behind the façade of liberalism or feigned benevolence and endless trails of front organizations, the power players keep their hands clean and faces out of sight. These psychotic puppeteers use their psychotic puppets as agents of chaos, division and terror against the masses and their enemies.

In the second of the two pieces, Cole discusses the contest between the US, its allies (notably the EU) and the Russians over the allegiance of Ukraine which led to the events in Maidan Square.⁸¹ He pieces together what he calls 'the soft power ecosystem' of the USA which encouraged Ukraine towards that end. The climax of those events was the shooting of demonstrators in the Square (49 of whom died). Cole argues that the shootings were the work of anti-Russian forces; and, as far as can be determined, this is true.⁸²

Do Mr Cole and *Covert Action Magazine* think Russia was justified in invading Ukraine? If so, they never quite state it. Perhaps they are inhibited by

⁷⁹ I am rehashing there what I wrote in *Lobster* 32.

⁸⁰ The first one is 'Ukraine 2014: The Tipping Point of Terror' at <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2023/04/02/ukraine-2014-the-tipping-point-of-terror/>>.

⁸¹ 'U.S.-NATO Involvement in the 2014 Ukraine Coup and Maidan Massacre: The Soft Power Ecosystem and Beyond' at <<https://tinyurl.com/yw3nzw8p>> or <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2023/04/16/u-s-nato-involvement-in-the-2014-ukraine-coup-and-maidan-massacre-the-soft-power-ecosystem-and-beyond/>>

⁸² See, for example, the long analysis by Ivan Katchanovski, at <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4048494>.

the fact that Russia under Putin is a murderous, fascist kleptocracy, whose leaders are motivated by greed and fantasies of restoring Russia to the status it had during the Cold War.

All our yesterdays

'George W. Bush misrepresented our work at CIA to sell the Iraq invasion. It's time to call him what he is: "A liar"'. That is the striking title of a piece on *Businessinsider*.⁸³ In this, two former CIA analysts – anonymously – discuss the events leading up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. None of this is exactly new;⁸⁴ but it is useful to be reminded of the way the information being produced on Iraq by the US (and UK) intelligence services was simply ignored by the American politicians bent on invasion. There is one striking little detail. One of the two analysts says:

British intelligence realized it first. They essentially said, "My god, these people are going to invade. It doesn't matter what we write."

The 20th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq was 21 March 2023. Four days earlier the warrant for the arrest of Vladimir Putin was issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Invading Iraq caused hundreds of thousands of deaths. To date the ICC has not issued arrest warrants for George Bush, Dick Cheney or Tony Blair. Had it done so, the world might have taken its action about Putin more seriously.

Another JFK

There is a striking essay by Bob Buzzanco, 'John F. Kennedy Goes Hollywood: Oliver Stone's Fantastic History'.⁸⁵ The 'fantastic history' is Stone's film *JFK*. Bob Buzzanco is Robert Buzzanco, an American academic, specialising in the Vietnam War.⁸⁶ His essay asserts that, contrary to the beliefs of many of the Kennedy assassination researchers (including Stone), JFK was not a closet

⁸³ <<https://tinyurl.com/mr28p4vf>> or <<https://www.businessinsider.com/george-bush-liar-cia-mohammed-atta-prague-911-iraq-invasion-2023-3?r=US&IR=T>>

⁸⁴ See, for example, the article on *Iraq* in *Lobster* 47 at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/47/iraq/#kwiatkowski>>.

⁸⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/5374tfr>> or <<https://afflictthecomfortable.org/2022/04/30/john-f-kennedy-goes-hollywood-oliver-stones-fantastic-history/>>

⁸⁶ <https://www.uh.edu/class/history/faculty-and-staff/buzzanco_r/>

peacenik.

As the evidence made clear, Kennedy was deeply committed to success in Vietnam with heavy firepower and a growing commitment, and believed that he had gained the upper hand in Indochina in 1962. The administration was so flush with success and optimistic that the war would be over quickly, in fact, that it later approved the withdrawal of 1000 American troops (a point Stone would later use to argue that JFK was souring on and planning to get out of Vietnam) [. . . .]

Yet, throughout 1964 and 1965, as the Johnson administration repeatedly escalated the war in Vietnam, the military remained unconvinced of the need for or value of intervention. Indeed, both Generals Taylor and William Westmoreland, the ambassador and commander who are remembered as hawks on Vietnam (indeed, some vets derided the commander as “General Waste-more-men”),⁸⁷ strongly opposed the introduction of combat troops in the crucial 1964–65 period, as did ranking officers in every service [. . . .]

He did nothing heroic and while it is certainly possible that the cold war might have thawed a bit more had he lived — and remember that it was cold warriors and war criminals Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger who reached out to Moscow and Beijing — there is no reason to believe that he [JFK] was going to pull out of Vietnam, call off the dogs in Cuba, stop sending money for “internal security” in the Third World, build fewer bombs, or spend less money on the Pentagon.

This is mostly tosh. The author should read Jim DiEugenio’s essay on JFK’s foreign policy.⁸⁸

Nigel Lawson RIP (and good riddance)

Lawson was the chief architect of the economic policies of (what we call) Thatcherism and thus the person chiefly responsible for the creation of today’s Broken-down Britain. Of the triumvirate in charge of the economic policy in the first Thatcher government, he was the one who knew what he was doing. Geoffrey Howe and Thatcher merely had some free market clichés in their

⁸⁷ Did they? I remember it as Wastemoreland but Google tells me there were other puns, including Waste-more-men.

⁸⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/kdnv9dyt>> or <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2021/01/14/deconstructing-jfk-a-coup-detat-over-foreign-policy/>>

brains at the bit marked 'economic ideas'. Lawson had a policy wish-list from his years working in the City of London and – I suspect to his surprise – he was allowed to implement all of them. The disastrous consequences of those policies have been discussed *ad nauseam* in these pages and need no further rehashing.

It might be worth mentioning again Lawson's comment in his memoir on the decline in the manufacturing base caused by his economic policies: 'As the oil gradually runs out, the manufacturing trade balance can be expected to show a corresponding improvement'.⁸⁹ Not so far!

Proof-reading this, Nick Must noted: 'Interestingly, a new edition that was "fully revised and updated" (published in 2011) does not include these words. Do I detect some hindsight?'

Assange

I have written little about Julian Assange in these columns because I have nothing to offer which others don't have. It has always seemed obvious to me that the US state would destroy – kill, imprison – Assange, one way or another. *Pour encourager les autres*. Recently the appearance of an excellent big piece by Andrew Cockburn, 'How the media failed Julian Assange',⁹⁰ sent me back to the archives to see what I had written on the subject. There was a short piece in this column in *Lobster* 67, the first paragraph of which is this:

Julian Assange fell out with the major media partly because of a culture clash between the radical hacker movement and liberal journalists; but mostly because he wanted to control how they handled the material. As everyone discovers eventually, you can't do that: you give it to them or you don't; those are the only choices.⁹¹

Cockburn runs through some of the conflict between Assange and the major media, centrally the early role played by the *Guardian's* David Leigh and Luke Harding. Prior to engaging with the major media, Assange/Wikileaks had been careful to remove the names of US personnel from the leaked files before they were released. However, an unredacted form of the files was still accessible –

⁸⁹ *The View From No. 11* (London: Corgi, 1993) p. 185

⁹⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/2p82fumz>> or <<https://harpers.org/archive/2023/03/alternative-facts-how-the-media-failed-julian-assange/>>

⁹¹ See subhead **The thin white ghost** at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/67/the-view-from-the-bridge-30/>>.

but only to possessors of a password held by Assange. Cockburn reminds us:

Two of Assange's earliest collaborators, David Leigh and Luke Harding of the *Guardian*, published the password in *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy*, a 2011 book, later excusing the breach of security by claiming that Assange had told them the key code was "temporary," a fact disputed by others involved in the process.

Were Leigh/Harding just having a dig at this irritating digital upstart? Or is there an innocent explanation of the publication of the password? It has been suggested that this may have simply been a misunderstanding. In their book Leigh and Harding refer to Assange having a 'temporary' website and it has been suggested that they simply muddled temporary website with temporary password.⁹²

'Disputed' crops up again when Cockburn writes:

'he [Leigh] fanned the flames of Assange's negative public image in an interview with PBS's *Frontline*, claiming that, in a meeting, he [Assange] had said that people named in the original Afghan documents were "collaborators" who "deserve to die". This is strongly disputed by [John] Goetz, who recalls working with a team of journalists, including Assange, to discuss the documents' publication.

Nor was this the only time the *Guardian* undermined Assange. It also carried reports that he had met with Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort and had a relationship with the Putin regime.⁹³

The second half of the piece I wrote about Assange was this:

Assange was also afraid that they [the major media] would do a hatchet job on him; and they have. The climax of those hatchet jobs is Andrew O'Hagan's 'Ghosting' in the *London Review of Books*, 6 March 2014, all thirteen pages of it.⁹⁴ Why on earth would the LRB devote all that space to something of so little consequence? Assange isn't the story: what Wikileaks revealed is the story; and that didn't receive thirteen pages of coverage in the LRB.

This assault on Assange is the biggest hit piece carried anywhere that I recall.

⁹² The passage in the book is reproduced at <<https://twitter.com/FTBandFTR/status/1306899859983740929>> where the idea of the confusion of temporary password and temporary website is suggested.

⁹³ Discussed by Glen Greenwald at <<https://tinyurl.com/5ywzbn62>> or <<https://theintercept.com/2019/01/02/five-weeks-after-the-guardians-viral-blockbuster-assangemanafort-scoop-no-evidence-has-emerged-just-stonewalling/>>.

⁹⁴ <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v36/n05/andrew-o-hagan/ghosting>>

The striking thing about the *LRB* is that it pays more for copy than any comparable journal in this country: 61 cents a word is the latest rate I have seen.⁹⁵ Some years ago I was told by someone then writing for it that he was getting about £800 a page. This was then – and still is – at least twice what any other literary journal in the UK pays and vastly more than it needs to pay. Most people would write for the *LRB* for notional payment; the prestige would be enough. Yet it loses money and survives, we are told, because it is subsidised by a trust fund owned by the family of its editor, Mary-Kay Wilmers. The only figure I have seen on the size of that subsidy says that by 2010 it totalled £27,000,000.⁹⁶ Yes, £27 million, twelve years ago.

This funding story is probably true, of course. On the other hand, think of *Encounter*, the literary magazine in London in the 1960s, the *LRB* of its day. It was funded by the CIA, paid more than its rivals and thus built up an impressive roster of writers and offered a platform to those politicians – notably the Gaitskellite members of the Labour Party – who were being promoted by the Agency. *Encounter* was eventually exposed as a CIA operation and, as far as we know, the Agency quit the magazine publishing business.

There is no evidence that the CIA is involved with the *LRB*. There is no evidence that the Wilmer family trust explanation of its financing isn't true. It's just that the assault on Assange was so over-the-top . . .

Cuba

Given the war in Ukraine, the Russian state has chosen a surprising time to allow the declassification of documents describing the Soviet side of the attempt to put their nuclear missiles on Cuba in 1962. These are recounted in 'Blundering on the Brink: The Secret History and Unlearned Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis' by Sergey Radchenko and Vladislav Zubok. This is their summary of what the documents tell us.

But the declassified Soviet documents make some important corrections to the conventional view, highlighting the Achilles' heel of the Kremlin's decision-making process, which persists to this day: a broken feedback mechanism. Soviet military leaders had minimal expertise on Cuba, deceived themselves about their ability to hide their operation, overlooked the dangers of U.S. aerial reconnaissance, and ignored the

⁹⁵ <<http://whopayswriters.com/#/publication/london-review-of-books>>

⁹⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/yck9kzaj>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/mar/09/london-review-books-lrb-best-magazines-world-mary-kay-wilmers>>

warnings of experts. A small coterie of high officials who knew nothing about Cuba, acting in extreme secrecy, drew up a sloppy plan for an operation that was doomed to fail and never allowed anyone else to question their assumptions.⁹⁷

Seymour Hersh and the Nordstream bombing

So, Hersh got world-wide headlines for his scoop that the Americans blew up the Nordstream pipelines. Since American officials had already more or less threatened to do that, the claim was unsurprising. However, Hersh based all this on one unnamed source, which was swiftly pointed out by American journalist Russ Baker⁹⁸ and the EU Disinformation Review⁹⁹ that I noticed; and presumably by others. In my essay about Peter Sanderson and the British Gladio in *Lobster* 81, Sanderson was the only source.¹⁰⁰ But he wasn't anonymous. Basing anything, let alone something major like the Nordstream bombings, on a single anonymous source is unacceptable.

Hersh is taken very seriously by many people. One of those who is less impressed is Jim DiEugenio, who used the occasion of the Nordstream article to re-run his criticisms of both Hersh's book on JFK and his account of the death of Osama Bin Laden. This is pretty devastating stuff.¹⁰¹ Hersh may be right about Nordstream but he just doesn't have the evidence.

The Manchester arena bombing

I have paid little attention to the Manchester arena bombing but even I knew that the father of the youth who planted the bomb had links to the British

⁹⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/4auxv7vp>> or <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/cuba/missile-crisis-secret-history-soviet-union-russia-ukraine-lessons>>

⁹⁸ <<https://russbaker.substack.com/p/nord-stream-explosion-plenty-of-gas?>>

⁹⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/5n73uyjc>> or <<https://euvsdisinfo.eu/nothing-to-see-here-look-over-there/>>

¹⁰⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/335zwb3y>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/81/the-british-gladio-and-the-murder-of-sergeant-speed/>>

¹⁰¹ 'Sy Hersh Falls On His Face Again, and Again, and Again' at <<https://tinyurl.com/mr2eaadh>> or <<https://www.kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/sy-hersh-falls-on-his-face-again-and-again-and-again>>.

Professor David Wrone also critiques Hersh's JFK book at <<https://tinyurl.com/ysxf5sk2>> <<https://www.kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-reviews/shame-on-you-sy-for-the-awful-book-on-jfk>>.

state's covert role in Libya. This was bound to be dodged by the inquiry into the event, if only to avoid embarrassing the Americans with whom the British state (as usual) was working. And so it turned out. MI5 issued big '*mea culpas*', family members of dead children wept bitter tears on camera and no-one mentioned UK military aid to radical Islamists fighting Gaddafi. There are no references in the official report to SIS, MI6 or the Secret Intelligence Service.¹⁰² On the other hand, Nick Must noted that the report contains 76 references to 'MI5' and 213 to 'Security Service' – so it is very clear where the British state/secret state wanted the blame to be laid. The excellent *DeclassifiedUK* has reported all this in some detail.¹⁰³

¹⁰² <<https://manchesterarenainquiry.org.uk/report-volume-three/#2>>

¹⁰³ <<https://declassifieduk.org/manchester-arena-inquiry-lets-david-cameron-off-the-hook/>>
'The final report from the public inquiry into the Manchester Arena terrorist attack fails to address any of the key questions about the bomber's connections to the UK military and intelligence services.'