

# **The view from the bridge**

**Robin Ramsay**

*As always, thanks to Nick Must and Garrick Alder  
for editorial help with Lobster.*

## **Check this**

**I** am not a lover of faction. I prefer my facts and my fiction distinct. I didn't even read Chris Mullin's *A Very British Coup*. However I received an email from one Thomas Wood which began:

I wonder if you might be interested in reviewing a novel I have written which draws heavily on "Smear", "War Without Honour" etc. . . .The blurb on the back reads

"It's 2007 and, after more than thirty years service in MI5, David Nixon is retiring. The revolutionary left, the miners, the IRA have all been consigned to history and he is looking forward to quiet future of birdwatching, gardening and reading. But his former employers have one last, quick job for him; to write a whitewashing report on a corrupt Tory Peer whose bribery has come to the attention of the CIA. "Don't find anything," they tell him. "We haven't got the budget." But behind the bribery lies something darker. And when he pulls at these threads David finds himself on the run, with so much of what he thought was history on his tail."

Unsurprisingly, Wood has failed to find a mainstream publisher so has put it out himself : <<https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B0BP9TV7ZW>>.

If you want to try it, the first chapter can be read at :  
<<https://www.buildingjerusalem.co.uk/>>.

## **Dallas and the CIA 'mole hunt'**

**Paul Bleau** is a Professor at St Lawrence College in Canada. He is one of a handful of academics who have taken the JFK assassination research

seriously.<sup>1</sup> In a recent essay<sup>2</sup> he has produced a précis of a new book by Professor John Newman, *Uncovering Popov's Mole*.<sup>3</sup> Newman is regarded as a major figure in the JFK research and Professor Bleau has written a detailed account of Newman's latest and the striking conclusions it contains.

We are back with the CIA and the 'mole hunt' of the 60s and 70s – James Angleton and all that. The received view of that episode is something like this: two Soviet defectors turned up in the US. The first was KGB officer Anatoly Golitsyn who arrived in 1961. Published accounts of the man vary enormously. Some take him very seriously indeed and regard him as the most important of the Soviet defectors. But others suspect that he was sent to the US precisely to encourage Angleton's wilder fantasies about Soviet penetration of the CIA – beliefs which eventually paralysed a chunk of the Agency in the hunt for Soviet 'moles'.<sup>4</sup> Jefferson Morley wrote:

Under Golitsyn's influence, Angleton came to believe that in 1959, the KGB had launched a massive deception operation designed to lull the U.S. government into believing Soviet propaganda about "peaceful coexistence" between capitalism and communism, with the goal of prevailing over the complacent West.<sup>5</sup>

The second KGB officer, Yuri Nosenko, arrived in 1964. An account published by the CIA has it thus:

Nosenko claimed that he was responsible for KGB handling of Lee Harvey Oswald when Oswald received political asylum in the Soviet Union in 1959. Nosenko said the KGB never trusted Oswald and had sent him to Minsk, where he labored in a factory, to keep him isolated. While Oswald was in Minsk, Nosenko claimed, the KGB had no contact with him and was, in fact, pleased when Oswald insisted on returning to the United States.

Nosenko stated categorically that the KGB had not recruited Oswald and was not involved in the Kennedy assassination and told the Agency

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<sup>1</sup> I wrote about some of Bleau's research in 'Still Thinking About Dallas' in *Lobster* 75. <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/75/still-thinking-about-dallas-2/>>

<sup>2</sup> <<https://www.kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/uncovering-popov-s-mole>>

<sup>3</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/gIKBu>> or <<https://www.amazon.co.uk/UNCOVERING-POPOVS-MOLE-ASSASSINATION-PRESIDENT/dp/B0BJN2XFX1>>

<sup>4</sup> Golitsyn didn't believe that the collapse of the Soviet Empire after 1989 was real and argued that it was all a giant deception operation.

<sup>5</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/KIzRu>> or <<https://theintercept.com/2018/01/01/the-complex-legacy-of-cia-counterintelligence-chief-james-angleton/>>

that Soviet intelligence had no interest in Oswald.<sup>6</sup>

This message was welcomed by most because it bolstered the 'lone assassin' verdict in the killing of Kennedy. But CIA counterintelligence chief James Angleton didn't believe Nosenko's claim that the KGB had no interest in Oswald while he was in the USSR and Nosenko was imprisoned and tortured by the CIA for years but refused to change his story.

It is not a big step from all this to wondering if Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union had something to do with the 'mole hunt' back in Langley. Jefferson Morley noted:

Every piece of paper about Lee Harvey Oswald that came into the CIA between 1959 and 1963 was routed into a file controlled by Birch O'Neal, chief of the mole-hunting Special Investigations Group.<sup>7</sup>

Into this complicated patch comes Professor Bleau with a lengthy exposition of some of Newman's new book. Bleau offers us Newman's own summary of his book's thesis:

A high level mole in US intelligence revealed to the Russians that the US was running one of their agents, Pyotr Popov, causing him to be apprehended and put to death by Moscow but not before telling his US handlers that there was a mole in US intelligence who betrayed him. This was certain to initiate a US based mole hunt that had to be independent of James Angleton's CI/SIG Division where the mole was thought to have burrowed into. The hunt involved sending Oswald to Russia as a marked card dangling U2 spy plane secrets. The kicker is that the CIA molehunter, Bruce Solie, was in fact the mole who was in the perfect position to thwart the hunt and present false conclusions.

In other words, Oswald was sent to the Soviet Union in the hope that his presence would produce a reaction within the KGB which would be echoed in some way by its agent within the CIA, thus identifying him. This presupposes that the KGB or its agent within the CIA would be sloppy enough to reveal its interest in Oswald's defection. Which seems unlikely to me. Nonetheless, even though Bleau is apparently not entirely persuaded that Newman has identified Bruce Solie as the real KGB 'mole' in the CIA, he offers these points as some of Newman's new information:

1. Oswald was likely a useful idiot being used as a marked card during his Russia sojourn. This goes a long way in explaining the

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<sup>6</sup> <[https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB431/docs/intell\\_ebb\\_019.PDF](https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB431/docs/intell_ebb_019.PDF)>

<sup>7</sup> <<https://jfkfacts.org/tag/mole-hunt/>>

very incriminating administration of his CIA files as uncovered by Betsy Wolf of the HSCA.

2. Nosenko was clearly a plant, that the FBI, CIA and others were keen to accept as genuine to protect their own image and to support the lone nut scenario that excluded foreign influence in the assassination.

3. Newman identifies, for the first time, how the Russians handled Oswald in Minsk and who his handlers were.

4. Marina is described as an unwilling "Swallow" or plant used in honey traps, who wanted out from this role and to escape Eastern Bloc poverty.

5. The CIA was clearly stung by Russian penetration as were European allies and NATO.

6. Angleton comes across as a twice-jilted, narcissistic sucker.

7. Oswald was seen as unreliable and weird by the Russians and of no use as a double agent.

Oswald as 'marked card' we have all known – assumed, perhaps would be better – for a long time, though why he was sent and by whom remains unclear. Is it just a coincidence that Oswald defected offering his knowledge of the U2 plane six months before Gary Powers' U2 was shot down? Calling Nosenko a plant is perhaps a little unkind. He was sent to tell the Americans a reassuring story about Oswald. Presumably his KGB superiors thought that the message would be more credible coming from a 'defector' rather than – say – the Soviet ambassador in Washington. In fact Nosenko's 'defection' wasn't required: bar elements on the far-right of US politics, nobody really thought that the Soviets had anything to do with the assassination.<sup>8</sup> Items 3 and 4 are genuinely new and interesting.

This is Newman's third book on matters relating to the assassination. The first two books of his I tried were very hard work and I am grateful to Professor Bleau for the considerable effort he has made in explaining Newman's third. But by the sounds of it, like the first two, this new one tells us nothing about the events on Dealey Plaza.

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<sup>8</sup> Reading this, Garrick Alder commented

'There was some currency to the commies-dunnit interpretation of the JFK assassination, because that was precisely the story that Lyndon Johnson was peddling to strongarm the Warren Commission into producing a coverup. Most obviously, there's the famous incident in which Johnson browbeat Earl Warren himself into tearful surrender by raising the spectre of a US-Soviet nuclear war in which millions would die.'

To which I would reply, Yes, but that was just politics. Nobody of significance really thought the commies had done it.

## The myth persists

In this column in issue 88, on page 23, I noted that Aditya Chakraborty, the *Guardian's* senior economics commentator, had described Britain as the 6th richest economy in the world.<sup>9</sup> In reality we're about 26th.<sup>10</sup> The same claim appears in Frederick O'Brien's 'In the Sixth-Richest Country in the World, How Can You Build a Welfare State on Food Banks? The Stats that Reveal Just how Widespread Food Poverty Is In the UK'.<sup>11</sup> Unite General Secretary, Sharon Graham, made the same claim in her speech to the Labour Party conference: 'we are the sixth richest economy in the world'.<sup>12</sup>

Graham also noted that in 1945, when the Labour Party began its creation of social democratic Britain, 'our debt to GDP was 270 per cent. Nearly three times higher than it is now'. Her point being that there was no need to worry about debt and the government should just borrow and spend. The problem for that argument is that in 1945, as well as the enormous doubts incurred by WW2, the UK had a large manufacturing economy, mining and fishing – and an empire to which goods could be sold. Now we have none of those.

## London calling

London was described as the 'money laundering capital of the world' in that well known vehicle for left-wing views, CITYAM.<sup>13</sup>

## BAP

John Booth spotted an official history of the formation of the British-American Project (BAP)<sup>14</sup> which was first written about by Tom Easton in 1997 in *Lobster* 33. This 'official' account notes that what it calls conspiracy theories about the organisation's origins first began in *Lobster*, which it describes as 'an obscure, anti-American news-sheet'. Obscure? Yes. Anti-American? No. Anti-American foreign policy and anti-British subservience to it.

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<sup>9</sup> I also noted that in 2019 Jeremy Corbyn had described it as the fifth richest.

<sup>10</sup> 27th, for example, at <<https://www.worldometers.info/gdp/gdp-per-capita/>>.

<sup>11</sup> <<https://bylinetimes.com/2024/06/18/food-banks-uk-trussell-trust/>>

<sup>12</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/jWwIV>> or <<https://www.unitetheunion.org/news-events/news/2024/september/labour-conference-unite-general-secretary-winter-fuel-allowance-speech>>

<sup>13</sup> At <<https://tinyurl.com/mx4nbpap>> or <<https://www.cityam.com/criminal-case-against-natwest-tip-of-90bn-iceberg-in-money-laundering-capital-of-the-world/?curator=upstract.com>>

<sup>14</sup> <<https://www.britishamericanproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/History-of-BAP.pdf>>

This official account notes:

Many BAP Delegates down the years have wondered whether there was some governmental impulse behind the BAP, but — to the disappointment of those who like conspiracy theories — nothing of the kind has ever been uncovered, or even hinted at by those who might be in a position to know.

Which isn't even a non-denial denial.

Incidentally, this 'official' account is rather interesting and worth a look.

## **Lest we forget**

Lest we forget that the Republicans stole the presidential election in 2004 (and maybe in 2000) there is a short sharp account of the events of 2004, with some (to me) new evidence.<sup>15</sup> One of the commentators notes that what little steam there was in this issue disappeared after Obama won in 2008.

## **Tony Bunyan**

The death of Tony Bunyan was reported in October. Bunyan was one of the creators of *State Research* in the late 1970s. A neat, little, typeset A5 magazine, *State Research* showed how research into the state – and especially the secret state – should be presented and was a major influence as Steve Dorril and I began *Lobster*. I still have *State Research* on my bookshelves – not that I have cause to look at it very often. There is a very good obituary of Bunyan which recounts in some detail his work on Statewatch, the successor to *State Research*, and with the GLC.<sup>16</sup>

## **Our political police**

Tony Bunyan published his groundbreaking *The History and Practice of the Political Police in Britain* in 1976. I don't know how Bunyan would have reacted

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<sup>15</sup> At <<https://shorturl.at/qbb8J>> or <[www.benzinga.com/news/11/07/1789905/forget-anonymous-evidence-suggests-gop-hacked-stole-2004-election](http://www.benzinga.com/news/11/07/1789905/forget-anonymous-evidence-suggests-gop-hacked-stole-2004-election)>. Also worth a look is <<https://shorturl.at/aY51O>> or <<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/12/19/2004-kerry-election-fraud-2020-448604>> and the late Christopher Hitchens at <<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2005/03/hitchens200503>>.

<sup>16</sup> <<https://www.statewatch.org/news/2024/september/tony-bunyan-1941-2024/>>

to the 18 October *Middle East Eye* report that Asa Winstanley, one of the leading voices in *The Electronic Intifada*, had been raided at home by the police and had all his electronic devices confiscated.<sup>17</sup> Outrage? Resignation? Both? My main reaction was: as Winstanley has been one of the leading UK anti-Israel voices for many years, why bust him now?<sup>18</sup> Or is it that having confiscated other peoples' phones – e.g. Sarah Wilkinson's, discussed below – they are working through their contacts lists?

Winstanley was given a letter by the police telling him that the raid was under sections 1 and 2 of the Terrorism Act, relating to the offence of 'encouragement of terrorism'.<sup>19</sup>

On the same day that I noticed the reported raid on Winstanley, I received the following from Louis Shawcross.

On Thursday 29th August, 2024, journalist Sarah Wilkinson was arrested by a team of counter-terrorism police, her home was ransacked, and Sarah is left practically under house arrest. Sarah posts media articles to social media platforms, mostly on the subject of Gaza. During the police raid, her mother's ashes were scattered over the attic. Her son was pushed against a wall. Sarah was denied her medication. Christmas decorations were smashed. Christmas candles broken. Personal items were stuffed into a mattress, and allegedly hidden, by police. Cash was allegedly stolen. All electronic equipment was confiscated. Sarah was handcuffed so tight it cut off the circulation to her hands. No search warrant was shown. She was even denied a solicitor until she pointed out legal requirements. In the aftermath, she noticed putty all over the floor and believes her home was bugged, i.e. surveillance devices were implanted in the walls and concealed with wall putty. Sarah says her passport was confiscated without any police acknowledgement. As part of her bail conditions Sarah must hand over her passport to police. As Sarah cannot do this, she believes it is an entrapment to jail her at some future date for breaking bail conditions. Maybe the most unsettling aspect of her arrest and interrogation was the police wanting to know the locations and phone numbers of Palestinians Sarah corroborates with as part of her

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<sup>17</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/tBSp4>> or <<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/uk-counterterrorism-police-raid-home-electronic-intifada-journalist-asa-winstanley>>

<sup>18</sup> Winstanley's recent book on the campaign against Jeremy Corbyn by the Israel lobby was reviewed in *Lobster* 86. <<https://tinyurl.com/ycyn2ww3>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/86/weaponising-anti-semitism-how-the-israel-lobby-brought-down-jeremy-corbyn/>>

<sup>19</sup> If you're curious, this is at <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/11/section/1>>.

work with a charitable organisation that builds wells in Gaza for fresh water. Having these locations and phone numbers could lead to those Palestinians being targeted and bombed by the Israelis. Sarah's traumatic experience, echoes the same experiences as happened to Trevor Birney and Barry McCaffrey, both investigative journalists from Northern Ireland. They produced the *No Stone Unturned* documentary highlighting collusion between the security forces in Northern Ireland and loyalist terrorists. The reasoning for this harsh treatment meted out to a growing number of journalists across the UK, is firstly to punish activists who hold opinions contrary to establishment views. It's to silence the counter narratives coming from Gaza and other conflict areas which contradict mainstream sources. Lastly, it's to understand the journalistic process, I believe, so that techniques can be formulated in the future to hamper journalism that doesn't echo mainstream narratives and frustrates how governments want you to think.

### **He had the receipts . . .**

**S**cott Ritter is a former United States Marine Corps intelligence officer who was chief weapons inspector in Iraq during the the hunt for WMDs. The Iraq experience radicalised him and he is a regular critic of US foreign policy in the liberal/left media, notably *Consortiumnews*. On that site he has published a very interesting account of how, during the search for Iraqi WMDs, he was working with the CIA and the Israelis, using U2 photographs and similar from Israel satellites.<sup>20</sup> A complicated tale concludes with Ritter keeping a copy of these photographs – which were not technically classified material – in his home. He writes:

In every article and essay I wrote, I debunked the lies being peddled by the Bush administration claiming Iraq was a threat worthy of war because of its continued pursuit and possession of proscribed weapons. Every article was unassailable in terms of its factual predicate. Because I had the receipts. . . .

These 'receipts', documents and photographs, were seized by the FBI in August this year, along with all his electronic devices. Ritter concludes his essay:

There can be no doubt that my UNSCOM [United Nations Special Commission] archive did more than any other source of documented

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<sup>20</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/d5zyn2v>> or <<https://consortiumnews.com/2024/08/16/scott-ritter-a-farewell-to-truth/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=3197f99c-c733-410e-9acf-2549fb745c77>>

information to apprise the American people about the lies of their government when it came to Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. And now it is gone.

## **The same river twice**

Larry Hancock is probably best known for his work on the Kennedy assassination but, like many Americans, he is ex-military and understands the what we might call the military-economic dimensions of the American empire. I noticed a recent comment of his in which he argues that the Russians are currently playing the Americans in the way the Americans had helped destroy the Soviet Union: create an arms race and get your opponent's spending on weapons up to meet imaginary threats. This is important enough to quote at length.

It's something I speculated about in an early book – *Shadow Warfare* – wondering if something so obvious and so 'retro' could possibly work. As it turns out the answer is 'yes' and Putin is playing that track far better than the U.S. did when it drove the Soviet Union bankrupt. Basically the strategy is to spend so much on advanced weapons systems that the opponent extends themselves financially – with the Soviet Union it led to system collapse. Of course it was tremendously expensive for America in the earlier Cold War.

Putin saw that as a KGB officer and he understands the drill. Worse, he knows how to do it more efficiently. The thing to do is to a) focus your propaganda on the most expensive and terrifying part of your military – nuclear weapons, b) announce sensational new weapons and spend some to develop them but not the huge amounts to bring them operational and c) project your threat into new venues with as little expense as possible.

At present Putin and his military are four years into touting nuclear exchanges as a standard tactical option, they have announced and are working on doomsday weapons which make no sense at all [ . . . ]

The result is that we are starting on a massive and horrendously expensive upgrade of our entire strategic nuclear capability (why we still need 4,000 megaton class weapons is another question, only answered by the response that Russians have that many . . . sigh). The Congressional Budget Office has estimated the first 10 years of the modernization plan will cost nearly \$500 billion – over a 30-year span

the total would hit \$1.2 trillion, including the cost of sustaining the current and future force. Add that to the now trillion dollar budget deficit and you have some real numbers.<sup>21</sup>

## **AI and targeting**

**I**f you ever wondered how the Israelis identified their targets for missiles and bombs in and around Gaza, it turns out that they are using the products of massive electronic data collection – and AI. What could possibly go wrong? Pretty much everything you could imagine, as is illustrated by three recent essays, two by Sophia Goodfriend<sup>22</sup> and one by Yuval Abraham.<sup>23</sup> The Israelis have killed over a hundred journalists and ‘media workers’ since the Gaza war began<sup>24</sup> and with her combination of knowledge of the Middle East and advanced computing Ms Goodfriend must be on their shit list.

## **Havana syndrome**

**T**his story trundles on. A US attorney, Mark Zaid, who is pursuing this, said recently:

‘This whistleblower complaint represents the most significant and lawful disclosure of information that undermines the public posture of the Intelligence Community, and specifically the CIA, concerning AHIs [anomalous health incidents; i.e. Havana Syndrome],’ Zaid said. ‘The information seen first-hand by this whistleblower directly contradicts the asserted conclusions that U.S. personnel, particularly within the IC [intelligence community], are not being attacked by a foreign power using some sort of directed energy. It asserts the existence of classified documents, which are specifically identified in the complaint, is being deliberately covered up, including being withheld from other investigating federal agencies.’<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <<https://larryhancock.wordpress.com/2020/02/22/putins-cold-war/>>

<sup>22</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n19/sophia-goodfriend/kill-lists>> and <[https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online\\_articles/israels-security-theater/](https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/israels-security-theater/)>.

<sup>23</sup> <<https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>>

<sup>24</sup> <<https://cpj.org/2024/10/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/>>

<sup>25</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/zsqJH>> or <<https://www.salon.com/2024/09/16/active-suppression-of-witnesses-cia-lied-about-havana-syndrome-whistleblower-documents-reveal/>>

The concept of 'directed energy' is also endorsed by a group of scientists who concluded that microwaves was the most plausible explanation

The mystery ailment that has afflicted U.S. embassy staff and CIA officers off and on over the last four years in Cuba, China, Russia and other countries appears to have been caused by high-power microwaves, according to a report released by the National Academies.<sup>26</sup> A committee of 19 experts in medicine and other fields concluded that directed, pulsed radiofrequency energy is the 'most plausible mechanism' to explain the illness, dubbed Havana syndrome.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, despite the US intelligence community's public line being that there is nothing to be seen here,<sup>28</sup> the *Washington Post* reported that in 2021 CIA Director Burns warned the Russians to lay-off or face retaliation<sup>29</sup> and may have done so again.<sup>30</sup>

## The deep state

In a recent edition of the print version of *Byline Times*, is Arthur Snell's 'A Short History of the "Deep State"'. He cites the use of the phrase by former PM Liz Truss in her explanation of why her stay at No. 10 was so short-lived and offers a brief history of the use of the term. He notes:

I first heard the term 'deep state' – or '*derin devlet*' – in Istanbul in the early 2000s from a friend who is an expert in Turkish politics. At the time it was obscure in English and certainly not used in any contexts in the US or UK.<sup>31</sup>

Peter Dale Scott coined two predecessor terms: parapolitics in the 1970s and its successor term, deep politics, as in his 1991 book *Deep Politics and the*

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<sup>26</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/kQBxd>> or <<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/25889/an-assessment-of-illness-in-us-government-employees-and-their-families-at-overseas-embassies>>

<sup>27</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/GwTuR>> or <<https://scitechdaily.com/scientists-believe-us-embassy-staff-and-cia-officers-were-hit-with-high-power-microwaves-heres-how-the-weapons-work/>>

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, <<https://www.politico.com/news/2023/03/01/havana-syndrome-cia-intelligence-00085021>>.

<sup>29</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/k5hb88w2>> or <[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/cia-havana-syndrome-russians-warning/2021/11/24/6d5a6e26-4d40-11ec-94ad-bd85017d58dc\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/cia-havana-syndrome-russians-warning/2021/11/24/6d5a6e26-4d40-11ec-94ad-bd85017d58dc_story.html)>.

<sup>30</sup> <<https://www.fpri.org/article/2024/04/havana-syndrome-the-history-behind-the-mystery/>>

<sup>31</sup> Alas the pages I was sent by an anonymous correspondent are undated and the essay is not on-line.

*Death of JFK*.<sup>32</sup> In the mid 1970s former USAF Colonel L. Fletcher Prouty wrote about *The Secret Team*<sup>33</sup> and the use of 'the secret state' became commonplace in the UK in the 1980s.

While 'parapolitics', 'deep state', 'secret team' and 'secret state' referred to the state's military and intelligence services, in the civilian world American sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote about 'the power elite' in the 1950s and this term was used by William Domhoff in the 1960s. In this country the original formulation of something akin to the 'power elite' idea was the 1959 anthology edited by historian Hugh Thomas, *The Establishment*. This suggested that there were unelected conservative forces within the state which existed to prevent any (elected) liberal/left from enacting policies which threatened the status quo.

The recent talk on the right about the 'deep state' in the UK and USA frustrating Truss and Trump is thus a misuse of the term. The 'deep state' refers to military and intelligence networks. It would be more accurate for Truss and Trump to claim that there are 'establishments' in Washington and London which have obstructed and frustrated them.

## **The Israel lobby**

**I**n this column in *Lobster* 88<sup>34</sup> I noted the role of Morgan McSweeney and the organisation Labour Together in the rise of Keir Starmer to leadership of the Labour Party. I also noted the significant sums of money Labour Together had received from members of the Israel lobby in the UK. In the *London Review of Books* of 15 August, Peter Geoghegan has a long piece, 'Labour and the lobbyists'.<sup>35</sup> Although this is an excellent account of the money Starmer's

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<sup>32</sup> Published by the University of California Press in 1991. This was reviewed by Mike Small in *Lobster* 32 at <<https://shorturl.at/vBAji>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/32/from-parapolitics-to-deep-politics-deep-politics-and-the-death-of-jfk/>>. Small is editor of *Bella Caledonia*. See <<https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/contributor/mike-small/>>.

In this field this journal published Jonathan Marshall's 'Blackmail in the Deep State' in issue 73.

<sup>33</sup> The title of the book he wrote, subtitled *The CIA and Its Allies in Control of the United States and the World*. The text is free at <<https://shorturl.at/DyBiE>> or <[https://ia801908.us.archive.org/29/items/l.-fletcher-prouty-the-secret-team-the-cia-its-allies-in-control-of-the-united-s/L.FletcherProuty-TheSecretTeam\\_TheCIA&itsAlliesinControloftheUnitedStates&theWorld-Prentice-Hall\(EnglewoodCliffs,NJ\)\(1973\).pdf](https://ia801908.us.archive.org/29/items/l.-fletcher-prouty-the-secret-team-the-cia-its-allies-in-control-of-the-united-s/L.FletcherProuty-TheSecretTeam_TheCIA&itsAlliesinControloftheUnitedStates&theWorld-Prentice-Hall(EnglewoodCliffs,NJ)(1973).pdf)>.

<sup>34</sup> Under the subhead **Labour and the Israel Lobby at** <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/88/the-view-from-the-bridge-51/>>.

<sup>35</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n16/peter-geoghegan/labour-and-the-lobbyists>>

faction has taken from lobbyists, Geoghan has omitted the fact that much of the money for Labour Together came from the Israel lobby in the UK. I wonder why.

Not a million miles from which . . . as far as I can see BBC News, the *Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* have not reported the arrest of Richard Medhurst and Sara Wilkinson under anti-terrorism legislation for their reporting of Israeli actions in Gaza. The UK *Press Gazette* warned in 2015 of the dangers the legislation presented to the media.<sup>36</sup>

## 9/11

On 11 September, Ian Henshall of reinvestigate911.org sent out an email summary of recent developments. One of the links he sent was to a series of articles on a site called *Florida Bulldog*. What's interesting about the material there is that it concerns continued attempts to get a US court to hear evidence about Saudi involvement in the 9/11 attacks.<sup>37</sup> At heart of this is the FBI's Operation Encore, its investigation of said Saudi links. Some of Encore's documents have been released but many are heavily redacted.<sup>38</sup>

When 9/11 happened a number of people suggested it would turn out be the JFK assassination for the 21st century. And so it has proved in some senses but not in others. Both events were followed by official reports which no-one takes seriously. The material is very complicated – as is the JFK research. The US state is doing its best to obstruct citizens' access to its files on the case – as it did with Dallas. The difference is that energy is being spent by the US state in suppressing the Saudi connection. There is no obvious

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<sup>36</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/BHcdf>> or <[https://pressgazette.co.uk/media\\_law/media-lawyer-warns-looming-problem-terrorism-act-being-used-see-out-journalistic-sources/hh](https://pressgazette.co.uk/media_law/media-lawyer-warns-looming-problem-terrorism-act-being-used-see-out-journalistic-sources/hh)>

<sup>37</sup> Try 'Court fight over public access to FBI's secret 9/11 records intensifies' at <<https://shorturl.at/b546b>> or <<https://www.floridabulldog.org/2024/07/court-fight-over-public-access-fbis-secret-9-11-evidence-intensifies/>>.

There is a summary of this act <<https://shorturl.at/5A6yo>> or <https://www.propublica.org/article/saudi-officials-may-have-assisted-911-hijackers-new-evidence-suggests>

Not a million miles from this are reports that the Saudi state has been using agents to manipulate Wikipedia's material relating to Saudi Arabia. See <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-64195644>>.

<sup>38</sup> <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/09/11/senate-sept11-saudi-arabia/>> The documents released are at <<https://shorturl.at/Yu33r>> or <<https://vault.fbi.gov/9-11-attacks-investigation-and-related-materials/9-11-material-released-in-response-to-executive-order-14040>>.

analogy with JFK. The alleged role by the Soviets in that event was never taken seriously by anybody other than the far (and ignorant) right, notably the John Birch Society.

There is a striking absence of US state activity against those who believe the Twin Towers were demolished. Architects and Engineers for 911 Truth,<sup>39</sup> which seems to be the biggest of the organisations campaigning on the issue, is still on the fringe, rarely if ever mentioned by the major media when it discusses 9/11. But when demolition is evoked, it gets complicated very quickly. How do we square the demolition theory with the Al Qaeda plane bombings? Did the US state secretly rig both buildings with explosives, knowing they would be targeted by Al Qaeda, and demolish them to make the attacks more deadly? This seems profoundly implausible and there is not a shred of evidence that American intelligence had that kind of penetration of Al Qaeda. Or perhaps it was the Israelis? But where's the evidence? And would it be possible to spend months placing explosives in a building that size and not be detected? And what about WTC7, which also collapsed in its own footprint? Did they rig that, too? If so, how many others did they rig, just in case? No: this simply won't work. We have to presume that if the buildings were rigged with explosives it was simply a coincidence that they were struck. So why were they so rigged? And by whom?

As I have mentioned before in this column, I have seen only one attempt to reconcile demolition with the Al Qaeda plane bombs. Before 9/11, an engineer with the Otis elevator company, when asked how closely packed skyscrapers would be taken down in the future, when they were no longer wanted, said that they were built with explosives in them for precisely that purpose.<sup>40</sup> To my knowledge there has been no supporting evidence for this and the 9/11 sceptics seem unaware of it. But if not that thesis, then some other is required, no matter how absurd it may seem. For the evidence for demolition is compelling;<sup>41</sup> and Al Qaeda flew the plane bombs.

## **Same old same old**

**I**n her first statement to the House of Commons, the new Chancellor of the

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<sup>39</sup> <<https://www0.ae911truth.org/>>

<sup>40</sup> <<https://rense.com/general48/chargesplacedinWTC.htm>>

<sup>41</sup> A German Professor of Structural Engineering has reported how he and other engineers, watched the Twin Towers come down and initially were full of praise for the fantastic demolition job they had witnessed. See 'The view from there bridge' in *Lobster* 87 under subhead **9/11** at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/87/the-view-from-the-bridge-50/>>.

Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, showed how well she had absorbed the lessons she learned while working at the Bank of England. There was almost nothing in what she said, proposed or implied that could not have been said by Tory chancellors of the last 50 years. She received raspberries from both left and right. Among the dissenting voices in the *Guardian* was Adita Chakroborty.<sup>42</sup> Alas, among his many valid points he referred to the UK as 'one of the richest economies in the world'. No it isn't, I'm afraid, as I have been pointing out in this column for years now. And if he hasn't grasped this fundamental point, why should we take him seriously?

Then there was Nick Timothy, former chief of staff to Tory PM Theresa May. Trying to big-up the outgoing Conservative Party's economic record, he asserted:

Inflation, borrowing and unemployment are all lower than when Labour last left office. Debt is lower than in the 1950s, and lower than in countries including France, Italy and the United States. The economy is growing.<sup>43</sup>

UK inflation in 2010 was 2.5%<sup>44</sup> and this year has recently dropped to 2%. So his first claim is true (but would have been false three months ago). But in 2010, when Labour left office, UK public debt was 69.6% of GDP.<sup>45</sup> Today it is around 90% of GDP.<sup>46</sup> Yes, it is true that government debt was higher in the 1950s, but HMG was then still paying off the debt created fighting WW2. Desperate stuff from Mr Timothy.

## **The blessed Tony**

Tony Blair was interviewed in the *Observer* on 12 September and he said:

The day I left office in 2007, we had improving public services, a strong economy, we were America's closest ally, we'd won the bid for the

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<sup>42</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/zQ0UX>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/aug/01/george-osborne-osbornomics-labour-party-public-sector-cuts-rachel-reeves>>

<sup>43</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/7n4zp>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/07/22/we-have-lost-control-of-our-economy-rachel-reeves/>>

<sup>44</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/hvH8c>> or <<https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/GBR/united-kingdom/inflation-rate-cpi>>

<sup>45</sup> <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/282841/debt-as-gdp-uk/>>

<sup>46</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/ElwAP>> or <

Olympics, we had peace in Northern Ireland, and \$2 to the pound.<sup>47</sup>

Very striking that he thinks it worth boasting that the pound was worth two dollars (actually \$2.07 at its peak in 2007). A strong pound is bad for the British manufacturing economy, making exports expensive and competing imports cheap. But Blair (and Chancellor Brown) didn't care about manufacturing – or simply didn't understand the impact the value of sterling had on it – or both. After all, we had the knowledge economy, didn't we? We didn't need to make things. Thus it was that manufacturing was 20% of UK GDP in 1997 when NuLab took over and 10% when Labour lost the 2010 election.<sup>48</sup>

### **The times they might be a-changin'**

**O**ne day in July I was reading 'CIA has a long history of empowering monsters' by the editor of *Covert Action Magazine*, Jeremy Kuzmarov. True, of course, but predictable from that source. That same day I saw this paragraph:

For decades, American presidents have waged illegal wars, plotted to assassinate foreign leaders, unlawfully detained and tortured people, toppled democratic governments, and supported repressive regimes without any possibility of legal accountability in either domestic or international courts.

Kuzmarov could have written that. In fact it was in *Foreign Affairs*, of all places, the house organ of the Council on Foreign Relations.<sup>49</sup>

### **From Dallas to Kiev**

**P**rofessor Jeffrey Sachs has written about some of the recent consequences of US foreign policy.

Here is not the place to revisit all of the foreign policy disasters that have resulted from U.S. arrogance towards Russia, but it suffices here

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<sup>47</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/Z0iOT>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/sep/01/tony-blair-on-leadership-book-interview-starmer-ai-trump>>

<sup>48</sup> For details see, for example, <<https://www.investmentmonitor.ai/manufacturing/who-killed-british-manufacturing/>>.

<sup>49</sup> Oona A. Hathaway, 'For the Rest of the World, the U.S. President Has Always Been Above the Law' at <<https://shorturl.at/IZ6WX>> or <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/rest-world-us-president-has-always-been-above-law>>.

to mention a brief and partial chronology of key events. In 1999, NATO bombed Belgrade for 78 days with the goal of breaking Serbia apart and giving rise to an independent Kosovo, now home to a major NATO base in the Balkans. In 2002, the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty over Russia's strenuous objections. In 2003, the U.S. and NATO allies repudiated the United Nations Security Council by going to war in Iraq on false pretences. In 2004, the U.S. continued with NATO enlargement, this time to the Baltic states and countries in the Black Sea region (Bulgaria and Romania) and the Balkans. In 2008, over Russia's urgent and strenuous objections, the U.S. pledged to expand NATO to Georgia and Ukraine. In 2011, the U.S. tasked the Central Intelligence Agency to overthrow Syria's Bashar al-Assad, an ally of Russia. In 2011, NATO bombed Libya in order to overthrow Muammar Gaddafi. In 2014, the U.S. conspired with Ukrainian nationalist forces to overthrow Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. In 2015, the U.S. began to place Aegis anti-ballistic missiles in Romania, a short distance from Russia. From 2016 to 2020, the U.S. supported Ukraine in undermining the Minsk II agreement, despite its unanimous backing by the UN Security Council. In 2021, the new Biden administration refused to negotiate with Russia over the question of NATO enlargement to Ukraine. In April 2022, the U.S. called on Ukraine to withdraw from peace negotiations with Russia.<sup>50</sup>

After Sachs, read the striking essays by the always interesting James diEugenio on his new substack. In one he gives us a detailed account of JFK's foreign policy thinking and – once again – shows in detail that, far from being just another cold warrior, as he is conventionally presented, JFK really was trying to take US foreign policy in a new direction.

Far from perpetual war, Kennedy refused to go to war in Cuba—even when he had two opportunities to do so—he also refused war entry into Laos, and Vietnam. He did not believe in American Exceptionalism, as he foresaw a multi-polar world, including the rise of former Third World states. He thought America could cooperate with those rising states. In fact, far from Perpetual War, in his American University speech in June of 1963, he was propagating for Perpetual Peace.<sup>51</sup>

Of particular interest in the third of diEugenio's essays is his account of the

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<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey Sachs, 'How the Neocons Chose Hegemony Over Peace Beginning in the Early 1990s' <<https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/jeffrey-sachs-a-front-row-seat-to>>.

<sup>51</sup> <<https://jamesanthonydieugenio.substack.com/p/jfk-and-the-neocons-pt-3>>

way Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney worked to kibosh detente with the Soviets in the 1970s, preparing the way for the neocon revival of the Soviet 'menace' under Ronald Reagan and his successors.<sup>52</sup> The actions listed by Sachs have their immediate roots in the mid 1970s and ultimately – diEugenio would argue, I think – on Dealey Plaza in 1963.

## **Oh-oh**

**B**y some distance the biggest story I have seen recently is that told on CBS's 60 Minutes series recently, Scott Pelley's 'Havana Syndrome mystery continues as a lead military investigator says bar for proof was set impossibly high'.<sup>53</sup> Which headline must win a prize for the biggest under-selling of a story in recent memory. In fact Pelley offers what is close to proof that the Russians have developed a microwave weapon and are using it on US military, diplomatic and security personnel. Hundreds of them, in the US and abroad, have been attacked and disabled, some permanently. Which creates big problems. Diplomatically: is this an act of undeclared war? Not quite. We are in new territory here. How do US personnel defend themselves against such a weapon? Who would volunteer to go abroad for a diplomatic posting if the consequence might be permanent injury and disability?

This is an enormous step by the Russians. Hitherto in the various contests between them and NATO members, individual state personnel on either side have not been attacked. That line has now been crossed.

Previously it was unclear if it was a microwave beam or a sonic beam which was being used. One little detail in the piece tells us it is microwaves. A FBI agent who was attacked reports that the beam caused her phone's battery to expand and break the phone's casing. I know nothing of the physics involved here but a sound beam surely would not expand a battery.

## **Dallas again**

**M**ore from Robert Morrow. He reproduces a recent email from Abraham Bolden, the first black Secret Service agent, who was on the White House

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<sup>52</sup> This episode is described in detail in Anne Hessing Cahn, *Killing Detente* (Pennsylvania State University, 1998) which I reviewed at <<https://shorturl.at/RS2Wx>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/45/killing-detente-the-right-attacks-the-cia/>>.

<sup>53</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/V3LQ3>> or <<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/havana-syndrome-culprit-investigation-new-evidence-60-minutes-transcript-2024-07-07/>>.

detail with JFK.<sup>54</sup> Around the time of the assassination Bolden saw things he should not have; and ended up in jail on a bogus charge. Arguably, he was lucky: others got killed.

Notably, Bolden describes hearing a row between the Kennedy brothers and Vice President Johnson about the Kennedys trying to use the Billy Sol Estes scandal against him. This is Bolden verbatim.

1. On or about June 28, 1961, a secret service agent [Bolden] guarded the main door leading into the Oval Office. At about 7 pm, Vice President LYNDON B. JOHNSON entered the office shouting vulgarities toward President John Kennedy and Attorney General ROBERT KENNEDY, who were waiting inside.

LBJ was livid.

"You bastards trying to send me to jail"? He shouted as he closed the door. The voices became muffled, but it was clear that Johnson was furious. The three engaged in a heated discussion, mostly between Bobby Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. The meeting lasted for about 20 minutes. As he left the office, Johnson turned toward the Kennedys, who were standing next to the Oval Office desk, and shouted "Yall better stop fucking with me, you son of a bitches."

As he left the office, Johnson made eye contact with the agent. Johnson's driver was meandering in the hallway leading to the Oval Office.

"Who is that boy standing over there by that godammed door?" Johnson asked the driver.

The driver explained that he did not know the person but the person would have to be an FBI or Secret Service Agent to stand there.

Related to which is Morrow's reproduction of the text of a 1984 report in the *Dallas Morning News* which includes this:

Former Texas Atty. Gen. Will Wilson said Tuesday that federal authorities refused to cooperate with the state in a 1962 investigation of the death of an Agricultural Department official [Henry Marshall] who was looking into the business dealings of Billie Sol Estes [ . . . ]

'It became quite evident to us early in the investigation that Marshall's death was not a suicide, and secondly, we had a great deal of opposition from the federal government in cooperating with us at all,' said Wilson, 70, who is now retired and living in Austin.

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<sup>54</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/Lw7rj>> or <<https://robertmorrowpoliticalresearchblog.blogspot.com/2024/06/1961-attorney-general-robert-kennedy.html>>

It is reasonably well established that Marshall was murdered by 'Mac' Wallace, a member of LBJ's entourage. Morrow suggests that the hostility to the investigation coming from the Kennedy White House was a desire to avoid something which might embarrass the Democratic Party.

There are two recent large rehashes of the LBJ-dunnit thesis. One is by Ron Unz, who does a competent job running through the literature.<sup>55</sup> Much better, though, is M. C. Armstrong's 'Murder Most Foul: The Role of Lyndon Johnson in the Murder of John F. Kennedy',<sup>56</sup> which presents the evidence (but ignores some of the difficulties). Armstrong joins that very small band of academics who have taken the assassination literature seriously. If you want an introduction to LBJ-dunnit, this would be as good a place as any to start.

However, neither Armstrong nor Unz mention Chauncey Holt in their accounts. Holt's role – as unwitting CIA technical support in the assassination conspiracy – means that the story must include both LBJ and the Agency. The only Agency figure to have talked of that was E. Howard Hunt, just before he died. The serious assassination researchers have chosen to dismiss Hunt.

## Assange

In all the mainstream media coverage of Julian Assange's release from Belmarsh prison, I saw no mention of the fact that 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 accessible – but only to possessors of a password held by Assange. That password was published by David Leigh and Luke Harding in their 2011 *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy*.<sup>57</sup> To my knowledge, neither Leigh nor Harding have commented on this; and, as you would expect, none of the major media referred to this in their rehashes of the affair.

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<sup>55</sup> <<https://www.unz.com/runz/american-pravda-the-jfk-assassination-part-ii-who-did-it/>>

The unz.com website is anti-semitic and ran an essay arguing that it was the Israelis who shot JFK. I referred to this in my 'View from the Bridge' in *Lobster* 88 (under subhead **Dallas and Dimona**).

<sup>56</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/scq2S>> or <<https://www.wrath-bearingtree.com/2023/06/murder-most-foul-the-role-of-lyndon-johnson-in-the-murder-of-john-f-kennedy/>>

<sup>57</sup> This was discussed by Bill Goodwin in 2020 in his 'WikiLeaks published unredacted cables after password was disclosed in book'. <<https://shorturl.at/4nyWU>> or <<https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252489382/WikiLeaks-published-unredacted-cables-after-password-was-disclosed-in-book>>

## The lobby news

In an email from the excellent *Declassified UK*,<sup>58</sup> John McEvoy wrote:

I went through the register of interests of every MP in the last parliament, revealing that 180 of Britain's 650 parliamentarians had accepted funding from pro-Israel lobby groups or individuals during their political career. That amounts to over 1 in 4 MPs.

One of those MPs is Wes Streeting, who by Friday is likely to be the UK health secretary. Matt [Kennard] revealed how Streeting has received nearly £30,000 from the Israel lobby, and another £175,000 from companies linked to private healthcare.<sup>59</sup>

So there you go: the new Health Secretary has been bought by the private healthcare lobby. How very NuLab.

## Who's left?

Dr. Roger Cottrell has published a large diatribe about the British left over the past four decades of so: 'Watch that man! Frank Furedi and the new fascist right in Britain and Europe'.<sup>60</sup> Here's part of a relatively toned down paragraph.

### **The Legacy of Stalinism: Those Who Transgress From Left to Right**

. . . . In short, there is a relatively short step from the global anti-capitalist movement and populist left railing against a non-existent "globalisation," to Fiore or Marine Le Pen condemning global capitalism and "globalism" as a threat to national cultural identity. The war in Ukraine has acted as a catalyst to this process with many such as Max Blumenthal of *Grayzone* crossing into the fascist camp and even Noam Chomsky singing the praises of Donald Trump over Ukraine (44). It is within this context, in which George Galloway also shared a platform with Nigel Farage, that Furedi finally nailed his fascist colours openly to the mast by championing the racist immigration policies of the fascist Viktor Orban regime in Hungary and in his latest book defending the existence of national boundaries (Furedi, 2020)

Cottrell noted in an email to me that he needs an editor. He certainly does.

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<sup>58</sup> <<https://www.declassifieduk.org/>>

<sup>59</sup> McEvoy has subsequently updated and expanded this at <<https://consortiumnews.com/2024/07/10/israel-lobby-funded-half-of-new-uk-cabinet/>>.

<sup>60</sup> <<https://rogercottrell.substack.com/p/watch-that-man>>

Nonetheless this is interesting and entertaining.

## **All Trussed up**

**A**ndrew Rosthorn spotted a very interesting essay by Jon Moynihan on capx.co: 'Did Liz Truss really cause the bond market rout?'.<sup>61</sup> A venture capitalist, Mr Moynihan knows his way around the City of London and argues that the real cause of the turbulence in the money markets which led to the fall of the Truss government was not her desire to increase government borrowing and reduce personal taxes but the effect of leveraged Liability-Driven Investment (LDI) funds owned by UK pension funds. Mr Moynihan explains:

In its simplest form, the bet is 'borrowing short' and 'lending long'. Borrowing short means the interest you pay on your borrowing changes rapidly; when interest rates rise fast you pay much more per month. 'Lending long' means buying, with the borrowed money, assets that yield a fixed and initially higher rate than your interest costs (in this case the assets were government bonds, known as gilts). Their value varies as long rates go up or down. If you have to sell these gilts at the wrong moment, you lose a lot of money, well below 100% of what you paid for them – but you still have to pay back 100% of the borrowings that funded your purchase of gilts.

The bet that you'll be OK is variously known as the fool's bet, the carry trade or – most evocatively – the widowmaker. Some describe it as 'picking up nickels in front of a steamroller'.

Essentially: pension funds borrowed money from banks at low interest rates and bought government bonds – gilts – with it. These gilts paid a fraction more than the interest on the loans used to buy them, so the funds were making money. Then interest rates were raised by the Bank of England; so the interest rates on the borrowed money rose; and thus a lot of public debt – gilts – had to be sold to make the interest payments. This selling pushed down the value of those gilts.

The LDI issue was discussed in a subscription-only bulletin distributed by Reuters in March 2023 which I cannot quote.<sup>62</sup> The IMF followed with a paper 'Lessons from the United Kingdom's Liability-Driven Investment (LDI) Crisis' in

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<sup>61</sup> <<https://capx.co/did-liz-truss-really-cause-the-bond-market-rout/>>

<sup>62</sup> 'Regulatory and legal issues in leveraged liability-driven investment: accounting rules, repos and swaps'

July.<sup>63</sup> This analysis laid the *immediate* cause of the crisis firmly at the Truss government's door.

The September 23 [2022] "mini-budget" unnerved the UK's core financial markets. While aimed at promoting growth, the £45 billion unfunded tax cuts were delivered against the backdrop of historically high inflation. In addition, unlike a standard budget, the "mini-budget" was not accompanied by an assessment by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), the fiscal watchdog. The market's concerns about fiscal sustainability, skepticism around growth objectives/impact, and increased uncertainty around how inflation would be brought down, triggered a swift selloff in UK assets. By the following trading day, the pound fell to its lowest-ever level on record (1.03) against the dollar, while gilt prices collapsed. . . .<sup>64</sup>

Subsequently, to protect the pension funds which were engaged in this 'carry trade', and to prevent ripples of selling into other areas of the wonderful world of corporate debt, the Bank of England bought large amounts of government debt to stop the value of gilts falling.

In his essay for the CPS Moynihan concludes:

While it's politically convenient and conventional to blame the whole thing on Liz Truss, we should really be pointing the finger at foolish regulators and the Bank of England, both of whom failed to stop the industry's leveraging short/long practice at the start, and to notice that the whole edifice had been tottering for some time. The Truss government had no reason to know of this emerging problem, and had not been warned by the Bank of England. What was bound to happen – mini budget or no mini budget – did happen.

This won't quite work. Even if there was no specific in-house knowledge of the large volume of LDIs, some of the people around PM Truss and Chancellor Kwarteng must have known enough about the financial situation to be aware that there were risks in the policies being proposed and that, at a minimum, there would be resistance to the simultaneous creation of more government debt and reduced taxation.

Moynihan's essay appeared on a subsection of the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) website, the intellectual heart of what we might still call Thatcherism. To find it carrying an essay arguing for *more regulation of the*

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<sup>63</sup> <<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2023/253/article-A002-en.xml>>

<sup>64</sup> 'Gilt yield' is explained at <<https://shorturl.at/1lexq>> or <<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/investing/article-11292641/What-gilt-yields-Investing-Explained.html>>.

*City of London* might raise an eyebrow.

### **By their omissions . . .**

**M**ichael Gove, the outgoing Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, passes for an intellectual in today's Conservative Party. In May he delivered a speech on anti-semitism.<sup>65</sup> He made some interesting points. This paragraph, for example:

There are no BDS [Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions] campaigns directed against Bashar Assad's Syria, the regime guilty of killing more Muslims in living memory than any other. There are no student encampments urging university administrators to cut all ties with China given what is happening in Xinjiang or Hong Kong, or what happened in Tibet. I know of no efforts to organise marchers in their thousands to demand immediate action to stop the persecution of the Rohingya or Karen people by Myanmar's Government. I may have missed it, but agitation to end the war in Sudan, or in the Democratic Republic of Congo or Mali or Ethiopia does not seem to energise our campuses.

But he also offered this in his conclusions:

And yet Israel succeeds. Why? Because of its values. A belief in courage, enterprise and endeavour. A belief in the worth of every individual's soul. A robust democracy. A market economy. A commitment to liberty.

What has Gove omitted? American money, for one: since its foundation, 'about \$310 billion (adjusted for inflation) in total economic and military assistance', according to the Council on Foreign Relations recently.<sup>66</sup> And American weapons for another, notably nuclear technology which has enabled Israel to be the only nuclear power in the Middle East.

The story of Israel's acquisition of nuclear technology, and in particular the role in that enterprise of the CIA's James Angleton, has been recently told again by the excellent Jefferson Morley in 'The CIA and Zionism: A Complex History'.<sup>67</sup> It might profitably be read in conjunction with another essay on the same website about anti-semitism in the CIA, 'An Antisemitic History Lies

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<sup>65</sup> <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/secretary-of-states-speech-on-anti-semitism>>

<sup>66</sup> <<https://www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts>>

<sup>67</sup> <<https://www.spytalk.co/p/the-cia-and-zionism-a-complex-history?>>

Buried at CIA'.<sup>68</sup> This discusses the US and CIA role in the post-WW2 Middle East and only uses the word 'oil' once. By their omissions . . . .

## Bubbles

*Consortiumnews* carried an interesting piece by Patrick Lawrence on the death of Moorhead Kennedy Jr., one of the U.S. hostages in Iran in 1979/80.<sup>69</sup> Kennedy Jnr.'s experience as a hostage led him to understand and empathise with his Iranian captors and, on his return to the US, he moved from being an American diplomat to a radical critic of US foreign policy. Lawrence wishes more American politicians and officials could make a similar empathic leap where Russia is concerned. He quotes some recent comments by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov: "They live in a bubble," he said of the Biden regime's policy cliques, "and do not perceive outside signals that go against their preconceptions." He went on to say of 'the US-led bloc', 'We feel not an ounce of trust, which triggers political and even emotional rejection.'

Mr Ryabkov and Patrick Lawrence are also living in bubbles if they cannot understand why the NATO members distrust Russia. In the last 20 years, as well as invading Ukraine and killing tens of thousands of people so far, Russia invaded Chechnya twice, more or less levelled Chechnya's main city, Grozny,<sup>70</sup> and did something similar to Aleppo in Syria. Plus there have been constant so-called 'hybrid warfare' attacks on the Baltic states, and there is an on-going struggle with the West in Georgia: EU and US money versus violence from Russia-supporting groups.<sup>71</sup>

Mr Lawrence (and others of his inclination in the West) are treating today's Russia as if nothing has changed since the Cold War. Then it was true – at any rate could be plausibly argued – that the Soviet Union had no aggressive military intent and had developed its nuclear arsenal in response to NATO's. The Russia of today is an aggressive, violent, kleptocracy, willing to kill

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<sup>68</sup> <<https://www.spytalk.co/p/an-antisemitic-history-lies-buried>>

<sup>69</sup> <<https://consortiumnews.com/2024/06/04/patrick-lawrence-opening-us-diplomats-eyes/>>

<sup>70</sup> For a brief account see <<https://shorturl.at/5ZFDk>> or <<https://www.npr.org/2022/03/12/1085861999/russias-wars-in-chechnya-offer-a-grim-warning-of-what-could-be-in-ukraine>>.

<sup>71</sup> On which see see the piece on *Byline News* by Will Dean, 'Georgian Officials Accused of "Whitewashing" State Violence With Trip to London' at <<https://bylinetimes.com/2024/06/07/georgian-officials-visit-london-foreign-influence/>>. For the anti-NATO/EU viewpoint see Kit Klarenberg's 'US-EU assets pushing color revolution in Georgia' at <<https://thegrayzone.com/2024/05/26/us-eu-color-revolution-georgia/#>>.

tens of thousands of people – including its own citizens – in pursuit of geopolitical ends and the personal wealth of its leaders.

## Russiagate

'Russiagate' centres on the claim that Russia tried to influence the 2016 American presidential election which saw Trump elected. I referred to contributor Will Banyan's writing on the subject in this column in *Lobster* 84, under subhead **Russiagate**. Since when, Banyan has written two further parts of his study.

Three years after Trump's election, the inquiry into the Russiagate allegations, the *Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election* – the Mueller report – was published. Just before its publication, a statement *about* the report was issued by Trump's Attorney General William Barr who poo-pooed it: nothing to see here, folks, move along. Banyan quotes a slew of American writers and intellectuals, many on the liberal left, who accepted Barr's summary of the report without actually reading the report itself. Banyan notes this very odd incident as

. . . a unique moment in conspiratorial lore: perhaps for the first time ever, conspiracists could support an official report into allegations of illegal and corrupt activity by the holder of the highest political office in the land that *exonerated its powerful subject*.<sup>72</sup> (Emphasis in the original.)

Banyan quotes Andrew Weissmann, the lead prosecutor in the Special Counsel's office which did the investigation:

Barr repeatedly stated that the special counsel 'did not find' that the Trump campaign conspired with the Russian actors. What actually happened is that *we did not find sufficient evidence of a conspiracy to bring a criminal case*—which requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt. *It is not true we did not find any evidence . . .*<sup>73</sup> (Emphases added.)

Parts two and three continue the detailed analysis of who said what and why. Centrally, Banyan works through the assertions and theories of those denying

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<sup>72</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/CWZxU>> or <<https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2020/02/24/the-truther-temptation-the-russiagate-skeptics-the-mueller-report-part-1/>>

<sup>73</sup> *Where Law Ends: Inside the Mueller Investigation* (2020) p. 335; emphasis added. Cited in part 3 <<https://shorturl.at/uXEoe>> or <[https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2021/10/20/the-vindicated-and-the-vanquished-the-russiagate-skeptics-the-mueller-report-part-3/#google\\_vignette](https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2021/10/20/the-vindicated-and-the-vanquished-the-russiagate-skeptics-the-mueller-report-part-3/#google_vignette)>.

the existence of Russian meddling with the election.<sup>74</sup>

'Deep State coup' theorists had been disputing the Russian hacking allegations since 2016, deploying two main lines of attack. The first was to reject the US intelligence community's claims on the grounds they had a history of lying *and* they had failed to provide any evidence. The second line of attack was to suggest there was actually an elaborate 'Deep State' conspiracy involving CrowdStrike, the FBI and US intelligence agencies, to falsely blame Russia, in a bid to hide the fact the hacking [of the Democratic National Committee files] was actually an 'inside job'.

Banyan has done a really impressive piece of research, far too big and complex to be adequately summarised here.

## Elsewhere . . .

The *London Review of Books* is the last publication to which I subscribe. Even though I think there's a pretty good chance it is funded by the CIA, every once in a while it publishes something no other hard copy journal would. An example is Tom Crewe's analysis of the Conservatives in government since 2010. His near 10,000 word 'Carnival of Self-Harm' is very good indeed (and, happily, available to non-subscribers).<sup>75</sup> As is, in the same issue, an excellent piece by Adam Shatz on the Israeli genocide in Gaza.<sup>76</sup>

*Salon.com* carried two striking pieces about spending in the US by the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). In one they noted:

A fundraising arm of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has shoveled nearly \$5 million into opposing incumbent Rep. Jamaal Bowman, D-N.Y., in his upcoming congressional primary as the group targets progressive critics of Israel's invasion of Gaza.<sup>77</sup>

In the second they quoted the *New York Times* describing how 'Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs organized and paid for a digital campaign to influence U.S. lawmakers, especially Democrats who are Black'. The campaign included

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<sup>74</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/tIU2j>> or <<https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2020/09/30/collusion-or-coup-the-russigate-skeptics-the-mueller-report-part-2/>>

<sup>75</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n12/tom-crewe/carnival-of-self-harm>>

<sup>76</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n12/adam-shatz/israel-s-descent>>

<sup>77</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/fmc8cz6e>> or <<https://www.salon.com/2024/05/24/very-abnormal-expert-worries-pro-israel-megadonors-trying-to-make-dems-a-pro-netanyahu-party/#>>

'fake news websites and hundreds of fake accounts on X, Instagram, and Facebook that posted pro-Israeli messages, trying to push lawmakers such as Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., the House minority leader, Rep. Ritchie Torres, D-N.Y., and Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., to fund Israel's military and support its war efforts . . .' <sup>78</sup>

All stories about political spending by the Israel lobby in the US raise the central mystery in this: since several Arab states are infinitely wealthier than Israel, why don't the Arabs simply outspend the Israel lobby in the bribing of American politicians?

A couple of interesting essays about the CIA recently. *Covert Action* has editor Jeremy Kuzmarov's account of the joint CIA and New Zealand SIS surveillance operations in the 1980s against the New Zealanders who opposed the expansion of US bases in their country.<sup>79</sup> *The Intercept* describes how the CIA used the murder of its Athens station chief, Richard Welch, in 1975 to discredit not only defecting CIA officer Philip Agee but also, more importantly, Democratic Senator Frank Church, who was the focal point of demands within the Democratic Party that the Agency should be more accountable to the politicians.<sup>80</sup>

Now, with Welch's assassination, the White House and CIA quickly realized they had been handed a political gift — a martyred hero whose death they could lay at the feet of liberal Democrat Church. It didn't matter that Welch's murder had nothing to do with the Church Committee. It didn't matter that [CIA officer] Estes had told CIA headquarters that the Greek intelligence service had leaked Welch's name and address to the Greek press as revenge for U.S. policy in Cyprus. Largely through innuendo, the White House and the CIA blamed the Church Committee for Welch's death, claiming that its investigations had somehow led to his exposure.

Church duly lost his Senate seat.

The intelligence service of the US State Department, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), has had very little attention. (There are only two references to it in *Lobster* in 40 years.) An essay on *vox.com* shows how

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<sup>78</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/29veyc37>> or <<https://www.salon.com/2024/06/06/israel-funding-covert-influence-campaign-to-push-democrats-to-back-on-gaza-ny-times/>>

<sup>79</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/hlKYj>> or <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2024/06/05/cia-collaborated-with-new-zealand-intelligence-service-to-spy-on-peace-activists-who-protested-expansion-of-u-s-military-base-network-in-new-zealand-in-the-1970s/>>

<sup>80</sup> <<https://theintercept.com/2023/05/09/cia-frank-church-richard-welch-book/>>

the INR was almost always right about the big issues in American foreign policy from Vietnam onwards but had little influence – because, compared to the CIA and the military, the State Department itself had little influence.<sup>81</sup>

There is a good piece by George Monbiot on his website about the Anglo-American network of so-called think tanks which have delivered the disastrous free market nonsense around the world.<sup>82</sup> Many of them are sponsored and/or funded by the Atlas Network,<sup>83</sup> named after *Atlas Shrugged*, the novel by the American novelist/political writer Ayn Rand, whose brand of individualism has been influential in sections of the American and British conservative movement. In some ways Thatcher's children really are Rand's offspring. It was Rand who first said 'There is no such thing as society',<sup>84</sup> echoed by Thatcher in 1987. Whether or not Thatcher had read Rand is, as far as I know, still unclear. Nevertheless Mrs Thatcher wanted to take Britain back to the way it was before WW2 and the arrival of the socialist virus. And here we are, well on the way back.

## **Were troops used in the miners' strike?**

This is a minor detail, perhaps, but nonetheless less an interesting one: did the British state use soldiers dressed as policemen during the miners' strike of 1984? I was prompted to write this by the recent statement below.

Peter Lane

Former 1. RAF Technician/Weapons Manager Trident Subs.

Feb 28

Well, this is my take on the situation, I have no interests in Trade Unions or coal mining. I was a Sergeant in the RAF at the time. I managed a Test Bay for High Altitude Equipment. A Corporal who worked for me went to an RAF Station up north for a Junior NCOs course. He said when he returned he saw various Army personnel changing into police uniforms and they said they were going to control the picket lines. I just thought that was what the Government did in those sort of situations and never thought much of it until years later. It seems amazing if this was covered up nobody has verified this. They

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<sup>81</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/ab2Yo>> or <<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/351638/the-obscure-federal-intelligence-bureau-that-got-vietnam-iraq-and-ukraine-right>>

<sup>82</sup> <<https://www.monbiot.com/2024/01/08/the-programme/>>

<sup>83</sup> <<https://www.atlasnetwork.org/>>

<sup>84</sup> See <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhJvOKJCYP4>>.

must have all signed the official Secrets Act, specifically for this circumstance: nobody seems to have come forward. As I said previously, I thought it was normal procedure for potential riots. We are a Democracy, we can't have Troops on the streets. Not after Peterloo.<sup>85</sup>

This is unusual in coming from a named former member of the military. But nevertheless it is a second-hand report.

There are other second-hand reports on the Net<sup>86</sup> and there is Tony Benn's account on pp. 479/80 of his *The End of an Era: Diaries 1980–1990*, where he describes meeting a man who said he was a soldier during the strike and had been in a sixty strong group of soldiers deployed in police uniforms on the picket lines. The only first-hand report is by Peter Sanderson who, during the interviews for 'The British Gladio and the murder of Sergeant Speed' in *Lobster* 81, told me that groups of unemployed Territorial Army (TA) men from Teesside would rendezvous at his business premises where they were given police uniforms to work on the picket lines.<sup>87</sup> Sanderson was in the TA.

## Unbecoming American

**Dr** T. P. Wilkinson wrote a dozen or so striking essays for *Lobster*. Some of them are included in a collection of his essays, *Unbecoming American: A War Memoir*, available from Amazon.<sup>88</sup> About the collection he writes:

The context of these essays, the cultural history of the United States, is also one of a country that has been at war for most of its history. This is a war memoir, but one written by a non-combatant. Based on more than forty years of travel, work, and scholarship, this book is a reflection on what it has meant to be intimately connected to the 'front' and yet neither armed nor a helpless refugee. Eschewing the ambulance chasing of contemporary journalism and popular history, this is an

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<sup>85</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/KII0W>> or <<https://www.quora.com/Have-any-of-the-soldiers-who-were-dressed-as-police-to-quell-the-miners-strike-in-the-UK-come-forward-with-testimonies-yet>>

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, <<https://skwawkbox.org/2016/11/08/exclusive-compilation-of-new-orgreave-evidence/>> and <<https://harrypaterson.com/2015/02/01/did-thatcher-use-soldiers-during-the-miners-strike/>>

<sup>87</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/fwkFR>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/81/the-british-gladio-and-the-murder-of-sergeant-speed/>>

<sup>88</sup> <<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0D2TCL5PS>>

attempt to synthesize a perspective in which the entire duration of the US as nation-state forms the time frame for examining everyday life, culture, art, politics, economics and the imagination in which past, present and future are enveloped.

## **NuLab old and new**

### **The new vision**

To state that Keir Starmer wrote an article for the *Daily Telegraph* in December last year presumes that he writes his own material; and the chances are good that he doesn't. Leaders of major parties are usually too busy for such chores, especially in the final few months before a general election. So let's just say his name was on an article in the *Telegraph*, near the beginning of which was this striking paragraph.

Every moment of meaningful change in modern British politics begins with the realisation that politics must act in service of the British people, rather than dictating to them. Margaret Thatcher sought to drag Britain out of its stupor by setting loose our natural entrepreneurialism. Tony Blair reimagined a stale, outdated Labour Party into one that could seize the optimism of the late 90s. A century ago, Clement Attlee wrote that Labour must be a party of duty and patriotism, not abstract theory. To build a 'New Jerusalem' meant first casting off the mind-forged manacles. That lesson is as true today as it was then.

The historian David Edgerton<sup>89</sup> commented:

Starmer suggests Attlee and Blair's strengths were their submission to duty and patriotism, and the fact that they both changed Labour. Attlee rejected abstract theory (presumably meaning socialism), and Blair a stale, outdated Labour Party (presumably meaning Attlee's).

However, he continues:

Far from unleashing natural British entrepreneurialism, this has been a period characterised by historically slow emergence of significant British firms, and of a historically unprecedented entry of foreign capital (and entrepreneurialism) into nearly all parts of the British economy. Since Thatcher, there has been a high negative balance of payments paid for by capital flows into the country, and much higher inequalities in income and wealth and between regions than in the 1970s. The past 40 years

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<sup>89</sup> <<https://www.davidedgerton.org/>>

have seen a politics of redistribution to the top, to London and to wealth.<sup>90</sup>

Which is true, but could be put more plainly. It is now 45 years since the arrival of PM Thatcher and the free market nonsense. In that time, the UK has been in continuous relative economic decline (when measured by GDP per head) from around 10th to 25th? 27th? on the world list. Are the Starmtroopers unaware of this? Or merely unwilling to mention it?

### **Foreign policy**

**As** I write this, it looks likely that Labour will win the general election. In that event, David Lammy will probably be Foreign Secretary. He gave us a glimpse into what that might look like in an essay he wrote for *Foreign Affairs*, 'The Case for Progressive Realism'.<sup>91</sup> (Now there's a catchy little phrase!) It apparently means this:

Progressive realism advocates using realist means to pursue progressive ends. For the British government, that requires tough-minded honesty about the United Kingdom, the balance of power, and the state of the world. But instead of using the logic of realism solely to accumulate power, progressive realism uses it in service of just goals—for example, countering climate change, defending democracy, and advancing the world's economic development. It is the pursuit of ideals without delusions about what is achievable.

So far, so much well-meaning guff. But there is some meat here, too.

. . . the United Kingdom must seek a new geopolitical partnership with the EU. The centerpiece of this relationship should be a security pact that drives closer coordination across a wide variety of military, economic, climate, health, cyber, and energy security issues—and that complements both parties' unshakable commitment to NATO, which will remain the foremost vehicle for European security. The United Kingdom should also double down on its close relationships with France, Germany, Ireland, and Poland. It should, for example, pursue a British-German defense agreement to go along with the similar Lancaster House treaties it signed with France in 2010.

'closer coordination across a wide variety of military, economic, climate, health, cyber, and energy security issues' – this is a proposal to rejoin the EU without actually saying so.

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<sup>90</sup> <<https://shorturl.at/buPW5>> or <<https://www.redpepper.org.uk/political-parties-and-ideologies/labour-party/keir-starmers-bad-history/>> Simon Matthews spotted this.

<sup>91</sup> <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-kingdom/case-progressive-realism-david-lammy>>

