

# **The View from the Bridge**

**Robin Ramsay**

*Thanks to Garrick Alder and Nick Must for editorial and proof-reading help.*

## **Going round in circles**

**I**n the section below subheaded 'What goes around', I referred to David Teacher's massive study of Le Cercle. Teacher informs me that his fifth, final and slightly revised version is now on-line.<sup>1</sup>

Also known as the Pinay Circle or Le Cercle Pinay, it is another of those secretive, international anti-communist groups of spooks and pols formed during the Cold War. There is some interesting material from Le Cercle on the Net.<sup>2</sup> Somebody has been leaking its internal documents, including the texts of a couple of speeches given at their meetings by the late Brian Crozier.<sup>3</sup> In his 1982 speech, in the midst of a gloomy analysis which suggests that the Soviet Union might win the Cold War, he asserted:

'In the United Kingdom, the counter-subversive arm of the Foreign Office, the Information Research Department (IRD) was destroyed in a complex operation in which the CIA traitor, Philip Agee, played a leading part.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At <<https://isgp-studies.com/david-teacher>>. Teacher writes that 'the most important additions being CIA files declassified in January this year revealing Jean Violet's true identity, and the 1983 book by Eschel Rhodie of "Muldergate" fame, alleging covert South African funding for both NAFF [National Association for Freedom] and FARI [Foreign Affairs Research Institute]'.

NAFF and FARI were both active in the UK in 1970s.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, <<https://isgp-studies.com/le-cercle-pinay>>.

<sup>3</sup> The Wiki entry on him at <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian\\_Crozier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Crozier)> does its best to minimise his intelligence connections. A much more accurate account is at <[https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Brian\\_Crozier](https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Brian_Crozier)>.

<sup>4</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/yc5t5938>> or <[https://isgp-studies.com/organisations/Cercle/1982\\_06\\_11\\_13\\_Crozier\\_Cercle\\_speech\\_Germany.pdf](https://isgp-studies.com/organisations/Cercle/1982_06_11_13_Crozier_Cercle_speech_Germany.pdf)>

Oh, really? I had a look at Crozier's memoir, *Free Agent* (HarperCollins, 1993). There is nothing in it about such an operation involving Agee.<sup>5</sup>

What actually happened is more prosaic. By the mid-1970s the foreign policy establishments in the US and UK had accepted that detente with the Soviet bloc was established and the 'hot' Cold War of previous decades was over. (Arguably it had been over since the Cuba missile crisis.) In this context IRD was a Cold War anachronism. Crozier and his ilk never believed in detente and thought that, if the Red Menace was less visible, it just meant it was better hidden. (This may just have been old men – and they were all men, I think – unable to change their minds . . . .) History tells us that Crozier and the cold warriors were wrong: since the demise of the Soviet Union no evidence has come to light supporting their view of it.<sup>6</sup>

Detente and its opponents is one of the subjects of the PhD thesis of Tom Griffin. A journalist interested in Irish and intelligence affairs, Griffin has an interesting website<sup>7</sup> and his recent PhD thesis is now on-line.<sup>8</sup> It is titled 'Offensive Intelligence: An Epistemic Community in the Transition from Cold War Liberalism to Neoconservatism'. This is his introduction:

'This thesis examines the development of neoconservatism through the lens of the distinctive theory of intelligence associated with the movement. The key primary sources for this theory are the writings of the National Strategy Information Center, and its project, the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence. An analysis of this literature in its historical context shows it to reflect the development of an epistemic community theorising the practice of a cadre of activists experienced in political warfare – the covert intervention by one country in the internal politics of another.

The roots of this tradition are traced to the beginnings of modern

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<sup>5</sup> David Leigh's 1978 *Guardian* account of the demise of IRD is archived at <[http://www.cambridgeclarion.org/e/fo\\_deceit\\_unit\\_graun\\_27jan1978.html](http://www.cambridgeclarion.org/e/fo_deceit_unit_graun_27jan1978.html)>.

<sup>6</sup> History also tells us that when the Reagan administration revived the Cold War and began another arms race, the attempt to compete militarily with the US damaged the already inefficient Soviet economy and hastened the demise of that system. A renewed arms race was proposed by a number of strategic analysts, notably Colin S. Gray, who were writing in the late 1970s and early 80s. Gray must have as much right as anyone else to claim he won the Cold War for the US. See <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin\\_S.\\_Gray](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin_S._Gray)>.

These days, Professor Gray teaches part time at the University of Reading. See his biographical page at <<https://www.reading.ac.uk/spirs/about/staff/c-s-gray.aspx>>"

<sup>7</sup> <<http://www.tomgriffin.org>>

<sup>8</sup> <[http://opus.bath.ac.uk/57359/1/GRIFFIN\\_Thomas\\_PhD\\_Thesis\\_FINAL.pdf](http://opus.bath.ac.uk/57359/1/GRIFFIN_Thomas_PhD_Thesis_FINAL.pdf)>. Garrick Alder alerted me to this.

mass propaganda in the context of the First World War and the Russian Revolution. The Comintern developed as a centre of expertise in the field before fracturing in the 1930s. A group of activists associated with the Lovestoneite group gravitated towards the Western Allies at the outset of World War Two, marking the development of a political warfare coalition, an alliance of state intelligence agencies and sympathetic civil society groups committed to supporting covert political intervention in other societies.

This coalition was institutionalised in the early Cold War, but broke up as it lost state support in the era of detente in the 1970s. In the context of a counter-movement against detente, former intelligence officers and labour activists attempted to develop an epistemic community around a theory of intelligence that would provide a basis for renewed state support for political warfare. This theory informed the actions of neoconservatives in the presidential administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush.'

I had to google 'epistemic community' and found it means 'a transnational network of knowledge-based experts who help decision-makers to define the problems they face, identify various policy solutions and assess the policy outcomes'. Well, OK: for a PhD some theoretical top-dressing has to take place and Foucault is duly quoted on p. 24. But beneath that – on a quick skim so far on my part – as well as a brisk canter through the American liberal/labour movement/spook anti-communist alliance in the Cold War, there is a useful reminder of what some of the American, Red Menace-proselytising spooks (and their allies in the UK – Crozier again – and Israel) did to oppose detente between the USA and the Soviet bloc; and how that 'menace' was exhumed and revived, in part by using the device of claiming that the Soviets sponsored terrorism. The National Strategy Information Centre, on which Griffin focuses, includes some names which might be familiar to *Lobster* readers, notably Roy Godson.<sup>9</sup>

Griffin concludes:

'In prioritising counterintelligence and covert action, neoconservative intelligence theory defended the relationship that had existed between the intelligence community and elements of Cold War liberalism during the early Cold War. In effect that alliance, exemplified most clearly in the relationship between James Angleton and Jay Lovestone, moved out of the Government and into the conservative movement. Questions of

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<sup>9</sup> See <[https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/National\\_Strategy\\_Information\\_Center](https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/National_Strategy_Information_Center)>.

intelligence thereafter remained central to the development of neoconservatism at every major turning point from Team B to Iran-Contra to the War on Iraq.'

That last sentence says in polite academic terms what I would put this way: false intelligence was critical to the recreation of the Soviet 'threat'. When official (CIA) intelligence estimates supported detente, private sector alternatives were created to attack it.<sup>10</sup> We might also add: breathing life into the corpse of the 'Red Menace' recreated the conditions in which the careers of the anti-communists could resume and munitions contracts from the government flowed again onto the books of their corporate sponsors.

## Reviewers needed

Routledge keeps sending me books I didn't ask for and it seems churlish not to mention them. I have Richard Griffiths, *What did you do during the war? The last throes of the British pro-Nazi Right, 1940-45*; Philip M Coupland, *Farming, Fascism and Ecology: A life of Jorian Jenks*; Colin Holmes, *Searching for Lord Haw-Haw*; and Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, *Marketing the Third Reich: Persuasion, Packaging and Propaganda*. If you would like to review any of these, please send me an email.

## Ed Herman RIP

Edward Herman has died.<sup>11</sup> He subscribed to *Lobster*, God bless him. Herman was an academic economist but is probably best known for the books he wrote with Frank Brodhead (*The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection*) and Noam Chomsky (most notably *Manufacturing Consent: the political economy of the mass media*). He also produced controversial, revisionist accounts of events in Rwanda and Cambodia which, knowing little about the official versions, I was unable to evaluate. His Wikipedia entry seems reasonably complete.<sup>12</sup>

For a recent and typical piece of Herman's writing, see his long review essay (produced with his last writing partner David Peterson) on Steven

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<sup>10</sup> See, in particular, Anne Hessing Cahn, *Killing Detente: the Right Attacks the CIA* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> An appreciation is at <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/11/15/thank-you-ed-herman/>.

<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_S.\\_Herman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_S._Herman)

## The Brexiteer's gazette

There's a smart, political novel by a sometime CIA officer Joseph Finder, *Guilty Minds* (New York: Dutton/Penguin Group, 2016). Watching the progress of a smear story from the Net into the major media, one character asks if it has reached the *Daily Mail website* yet.

'Does this count as a news site?'

'Not even close. But it's on the border between gossip and real news.'

That is spot on, of course: the *Daily Mail* is a dreadful rag etc. etc. and its website is worse. But it does run some good stories. On the 27 November the *Mail* website reported: (a) that while the British-based American financial company for which Prime Minister May's husband works had paid no corporation tax since 2009, during the same period it had paid its directors £43 million in salaries, pensions and other benefits;<sup>14</sup> and (b) ran a long story about the career of Rachael Whetstone, some time chief of PR for Uber in the UK. Whetstone also previously worked for Google, was married to former Tory Party policy chief Steve Hilton and is a personal friend of former PM David Cameron.<sup>15</sup> She is currently at Facebook, vice-president of communications for the Facebook 'platforms' Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger. The *Mail* scents corruption . . . .

But would the *Mail* have run the stories had May and Cameron been Brexiteers?

## The new MM

Glancing at the coverage of the Meghan Markle story, I noticed that she was a 'global ambassador' for World Vision.<sup>16</sup> I wonder what Markle knows about World Vision. They're evangelical Christians and partners with and funded by,

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<sup>13</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yckn9gsr>> or <<https://www.globalresearch.ca/reality-denial-apologetics-for-western-imperial-violence/32066>>

<sup>14</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y7bzv7ch>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5120309/PMs-husbands-investment-firm-NO-tax-8-years.html#ixzz4zfXU3U8k>>

<sup>15</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y8r8o8hb>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4407046/GUY-ADAMS-investigates-links-Uber-Cameron.html#ixzz4zfZ6PRLv>>

<sup>16</sup> Something which World Vision will presumably make such of. See, for example, <<http://artistcollective.ca/artists/meghan-markle/>>.

*inter alia*, USAID. And USAID has a long documented role as a cover for the CIA. (Never mind the rumours that World Vision itself provides cover for the CIA.)

## Russiagate

'Deception is getting real. This month, lawyers for Facebook, Twitter, and Google testified before Congress, facing hard questions and ugly truths about Russia's online operations to inflame American divisions and undermine American democracy. The story keeps getting worse. Twitter has now found more than 2,700 accounts controlled by Russians and 36,000 suspected Russian "bots"— accounts that automatically generated 1.4 million election-related tweets receiving 288 million impressions during the final 10 weeks of the 2016 presidential election. Google has discovered that suspected Russian agents uploaded more than 1,000 YouTube videos about divisive social issues. And Facebook revealed that Kremlin-instigated content may have reached 126 million Americans.'<sup>17</sup>

So this is real, then, and not some fabrication by anti-Russian or anti-Trump forces in America? I am almost persuaded of this despite the major media's persistent over-hyping of real stories and not so infrequent promotion of false ones.<sup>18</sup> At any rate, the Russians were doing *something* on social media. The most interesting account of this I have read is by Julia Ioffe.<sup>19</sup> This describes in some detail Putin's – mostly accurate – view of American operations against Russia. It also includes the claim, from Russian sources, that the Russian internet operations were started in response to the Panama Papers on off-shore banking which exposed the corruption of some people in Putin's circle. Now that has the resounding ring of real politics about it.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand . . . 1,000 videos uploaded onto YouTube sounds impressive until you check how much is arriving at Youtube: 300 hours of new material every *minute*; and notice how the article uses the weasel words 'may'

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<sup>17</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yc9jqssd>> or < <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/11/deception-russia-election-meddling-technology-national-security/546644/>>

<sup>18</sup> See Glen Greenwald on this at <<https://tinyurl.com/ya4y4glf>> or <<https://theintercept.com/2017/12/09/the-u-s-media-yesterday-suffered-its-most-humiliating-debacle-in-ages-now-refuses-all-transparency-over-what-happened/>>.

<sup>19</sup> 'What Putin really wants' at <<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/01/putins-game/546548/>>.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, <<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/apr/03/panama-papers-money-hidden-offshore>>.

and 'suspected' (used twice) in that quotation above. Perhaps one day there will be some indication of how much effect (if any) this Russian activity had, but at present we don't know; and it may be impossible to measure.<sup>21</sup> This kind of caveat also applies to the brilliant research by Carole Cadwalladr on Robert Mercer, Cambridge Analytica and the less than transparent funding of the Brexit campaign at the referendum.<sup>22</sup>

The sound you can hear accompanying all this is a very large flock of free market chickens coming home to roost. The Net was allowed to grow unregulated in the West; and as long as it was mostly used for porn and shopping, and the propaganda it carried was predominantly pro-American and pro-market, the American corporations benefitting from it were happy. But as the consequences of this vast, dopamine-driven<sup>23</sup> cacophony of facts, factoids, inventions, opinion, gossip, malice, narcissism, acting-out, propaganda, psy-ops and psy-war become clearer – growing sections of the population move away from professional news gatherers and onto social, editor-free media<sup>24</sup> – some of our masters are getting nervous. But they're working on it. The end of Net neutrality and the tweaking of Google's algorithms to downgrade 'fake news'<sup>25</sup> will just be the first steps.

## **The Cambridge phone call redux**

**Anthony Frewin reports:**

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<sup>21</sup> Bill Blum is extremely sceptical about Russiagate in his *Anti-Empire Bulletin* 153. <<https://williamblum.org/aer/read/153>> as are many of the writers at <[consortiumnews.com](http://consortiumnews.com)>.

<sup>22</sup> Her articles are listed at <<http://journalisted.com/carole-cadwalladr?allarticles=yes>>. Summary of these issues is at <<https://tinyurl.com/yc83bfsq>> or <<http://truepublica.org.uk/united-kingdom/british-ministers-spies-oligarchs-bankers-russian-diplomats-colluded-brexit/>>. Kudos also to <[opendemocracy.net](http://opendemocracy.net)> who flagged up some of the issues with the 'leave' funding before anyone else. See <<https://tinyurl.com/jvywdnx>> or <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/peter-geoghegan-adam-ramsay/you-aren-t-allowed-to-know-who-paid-for-key-leave-campaign-adverts>>.

<sup>23</sup> See <<https://tinyurl.com/y9dfx5r2>> or <<https://www.theverge.com/2017/12/11/16761016/former-facebook-exec-ripping-apart-society>> and <<https://tinyurl.com/ya3wpk94>> or <<https://www.ama.org/publications/MarketingNews/Pages/feeding-the-addiction.aspx>>.

<sup>24</sup> See <[www.journalism.org/2017/09/07/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2017/](http://www.journalism.org/2017/09/07/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2017/)>.

<sup>25</sup> <<http://fortune.com/2017/04/25/google-search-algorithm-fake-news/>> To no-one's surprise this tweak now classifies as 'fake news' a great of left-wing writing. See, for example, <<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2017/07/27/goog-j27.html>>.

The BBC News website carried a story on 4 December 2017 that the BBC had made a Freedom of Information request to the Cambridge Police asking them to check their files for anything relating to the call apparently predicting the Kennedy assassination in November 1963. The response was

'Searches were conducted at Cambridgeshire Constabulary for information relating to your request. These searches failed to locate any records or documents relevant to your request.'<sup>26</sup>

Well, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. However, it was over fifty years ago and any papers may have been lost, thrown away, or weeded, so this absence doesn't mean much. I wrote about this in *Lobster* 30,<sup>27</sup> having spoken to a Cambridgeshire Special Branch detective in the mid-1990s who confirmed the call did take place.

My previous article stated how the CIA in London sent a memo to the CIA HQ in Langley. It said:

'The Cambridge reporter had never received a call of this kind before, and MI5 state that he is known to them as a sound and loyal person with no security record.'<sup>28</sup>

Interesting phraseology, 'a sound and loyal person'. Could the journalist have been an intelligence agency asset or informant? Being a journalist would be a good cover for keeping an eye on radical students and others.

## **I am paranoid. But am I paranoid enough?**

**A** character in a recent spy novel says: the basic truth of conspiracy? If it can be imagined, then someone's already tried it.<sup>29</sup> This may be an exaggeration but perhaps not that much of one, as the recent list of '58 admitted false flag attacks' suggests.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> <<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-42209208>>

<sup>27</sup> In 'JFK, the FBI and the Cambridge phone call'.

<sup>28</sup> There is no mention of the call in Jefferson Morley's recent biography of James Angleton, *The Ghost: The Secret Life of CIA Spymaster James Jesus Angleton* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2017). And Angleton would have been informed of it.

<sup>29</sup> In Olen Steinhauer, *The Nearest Exit* (London: Atlantic Books, 2010) p. 7. Steinhauer is very good.

<sup>30</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y9jqne48>> or <<http://educateinspirechange.org/alternative-news/dont-believe-conspiracies-58-admitted-false-flag-attacks/>>. I have doubts about some of the examples but there remain enough solid ones to make the point.



That the rise of conspiracy theories to prominence is at least partly the result of the actual behaviour of states, is apparently understood by few of the contributors at <conspiracyanddemocracy.org>. This project was set up with Leverhulme funding to examine society's apparent recent propensity to believe conspiracy theories. There is little to detain us there. Only John Naughton, of the *Observer* and one of the project's founders, seems to grasp the connection between the behaviour of states and conspiracy theories. In a piece on the site,<sup>31</sup> Naughton mentions an article in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* which showed that outside intervention in civil wars was more likely if the country concerned had oil. Well, there's a surprise! The article he referenced is 'Oil above water', and its abstract is this:

'We explore economic incentives for third parties to intervene in ongoing internal wars. We develop a three-party model of the decision to intervene in conflict that highlights the role of the economic benefits accruing from the intervention and the potential costs. We present novel empirical results on the role of oil in motivating third party military intervention. We find that the likelihood of a third party intervention increases when a) the country at war has large reserves of oil, b) the relative competition in the sector is limited, and c) the potential intervener has a higher demand for oil.'<sup>32</sup>

## **All the news that fits**

**I** have commented before in these columns on the lack of quality control at the website <globalresearch.ca>: articles are simply reposted or published without anyone apparently checking their contents. It's all the news that fits a certain left perspective. One of the articles they carried in late November was reprinted from *The Oriental Review*, self-described as 'an independent Moscow-based Internet journal focusing on current political issues in Eurasia and beyond'. 'Independent' and 'Moscow' do not sit easily together. Nonetheless this is worth looking at. It is a report, based on an Italian TV programme, which included interviews with three men who claim/confess to have been among the snipers who fired on the demonstrators on Maidan Square in Kiev killing 50? 100? people depending on which source you use.<sup>33</sup> Curious – or

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<sup>31</sup> <<http://www.conspiracyanddemocracy.org/blog/crude-conspiracies/>>

<sup>32</sup> <<http://repository.essex.ac.uk/13557/1/BGS.pdf>>

<sup>33</sup> <<https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-snipers-massacre-on-the-maidan-in-ukraine/5619863>>

perhaps not – that these confessions have not yet been deemed newsworthy by the mainstream media in this country and the USA.

## The JFK assassination documents

In the end President Trump caved in to the hated 'deep state' and blocked the release of some of the Kennedy assassination documents scheduled to be declassified on 26 October.<sup>34</sup> In six months the whole circus will take place again, though with less media interest.

Processing the 3000 or so documents that were released is going to take the researchers a while and I doubt they are expecting to find much: how carefully have those files been 'weeded' in the last half century? Among the initial discoveries was something about the 'Cambridge phone call', an apparent advance warning of the assassination.<sup>35</sup> The BBC News website ran this story, which got picked up and circulated among some of the JFK researchers in the US.<sup>36</sup> But there was nothing new there: Anthony Frewin wrote about this in *Lobster* 30 in 1995. When the story resurfaced, Frewin rang the *Cambridge News* journalist who was taking the media's calls on this, could not reach him, left a message but did not get a call back. In their coverage of the story to which they are central, the *Cambridge News* seemed keen to deny

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<sup>34</sup> Occasional contributor to these columns, Michael Carlson, has some interesting things to say on this at <<http://tinyurl.com/ydxodpuu>> or <<http://irresistibletargets.blogspot.co.uk/2017/10/jfk-assassination-papers-partial-dump.html>>.

Former CIA analyst Ray McGovern has an essay on this subject titled 'The Deep State's JFK Triumph Over Trump'.

<<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/10/30/the-deep-states-jfk-triumph-over-trump/>>

How many documents remain depends on who you read. The major media initially told us that a few hundred remained but the Mary Ferrell foundation – the experts – wrote this on the subject:

'What happened on Thursday, Oct. 26, with the JFK records scheduled for release under the JFK Records Act? A travesty. Most news reports correctly noted the release of about 2800 documents, but added that only a few were held back, in some cases saying "300 documents" remain withheld (see CNN, and Washington Post for example). They are off by a factor of 100. In fact, tens of thousands of documents, possibly as many as 30,000, remain sealed at the National Archives.'

The fact that subsequently, on 9 November, 13,213 new documents were made public, with more to come, settled any debate about whose information was reliable.

<sup>35</sup> Emphasise apparent. The caller said something like 'Ring the American embassy in London for some big news', not 'JFK's going to be killed in Dallas.'

See <<https://www.archives.gov/press/press-releases/nr-18-09>>.

<sup>36</sup> <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-41773716>>

that there was anything to it. But in his original research Frewin talked to a retired Special Branch officer who was involved and his discomfort when talking about the subject made it pretty obvious the phone call did take place.

The JFK assassination is a unique subject: everybody and their cousin thinks they can comment on it without knowing anything. It's as if in this one area there are no facts, only opinions. Although journalists are a sceptical – nay cynical – group of people, they endlessly repeat the CIA's line on the assassination first articulated in a 1968 memorandum, 'Countering criticism of the Warren Report'. This was sent to 'chiefs, certain stations and bases' and stated that those who doubted Warren's conclusion were 'conspiracy theorists'.<sup>37</sup> Every account of this files release story in the Anglosphere's major media (AMM) that I saw used this phrase.<sup>38</sup> That CIA memo must be the most successful media psy-op in post-WW2 history.

Centrally, the AMM behaves as though the Warren Commission was an inquiry into who shot Kennedy. It wasn't: the conclusion was preordained. The Warren Commission hired some young lawyers to make the case against Oswald. They duly cherry-picked evidence and rewrote eyewitness testimony where it was inconvenient. But they were still left with a ballistics scenario in which the wounds of Kennedy and Governor Connally were caused by a single bullet. As an American gun enthusiasts site recently put it, this 'magic bullet' went through '15 layers of clothing, a necktie knot, 7 layers of skin, and 15 inches of tissue, shattering 4 inches of rib and a wrist bone', and emerged unmarked.<sup>39</sup> American society surely has more gun buffs than anywhere else, so it is bizarre that this laughable nonsense is still taken seriously by their major media.

That AMM also behaves as though nothing official has happened since Warren. The House Select Committee on Assassinations is rarely mentioned. This was an investigation, albeit time constrained and underfunded, and it concluded there probably was a conspiracy. The Assassination Records Review Board (ARRB) in the 90s is never mentioned. Created to examine which official documents could be made public, it conducted what amounted to another inquiry in the 1990s.

Buried under the coverage of the declassification story, it was announced

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<sup>37</sup> This was declassified and can be seen at  
<<https://www.history-matters.com/archive/jfk/cia/russholmes/pdf/104-10406-10110.pdf>>.

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Freedland, loyal mouthpiece for the US and Israel, ran this nonsense. See  
<<http://tinyurl.com/y7wlnx2q>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/27/conspiracy-stories-jfk-donald-trump>>.

<sup>39</sup> <<https://www.gunsamerica.com/blog/lee-harvey-oswalds-carcano-rifle-shooting-it-today/>>

in October that 50,000 emails, generated by the ARRB's activities, were now on a searchable database.<sup>40</sup> On my second search of this I came across a story from 1968 in the *Capital Times* newspaper of Madison, Wisconsin. In this a doctor, Wayne Owen, reported that *four days before* Kennedy was killed, he and other trainee doctors heard a patient talk about an assassination plot involving 'Jack Rubenstein'

'On Tuesday, Nov. 19, 1963, the 11 interns were making their hospital rounds when they came upon a room into which three men had been brought following an automobile accident. The men had been picked up by Louisiana State Police, were presumed drunk, and transported to the hospital. One of the three also had a bullet wound in his stomach. The man with the bullet wound soon died. But the other two men had only minor injuries. While the interns checked the patients, one of them casually remarked that he knew of "a plot to kill Jack Kennedy". He went on to tell the 11 startled medical students that one of the men involved in the plot was a man called "Jack Rubenstein". "We all just laughed it off, thinking the man might be spouting off for some reason", Owen explained.'

This rang a faint bell for me so I googled 'Wayne Owen + JFK', and he crops up in the story of Rose Cheramie, who also predicted JFK's assassination and mentioned Jack Ruby. This incident with the three men occurred in the same hospital that Cheramie was in and at the same time.<sup>41</sup> That two people, in the same hospital, apparently unconnected, both predicted the assassination of JFK and mentioned Ruby (Rubenstein) is beyond implausible. But neither of the accounts of Cheramie that I looked at mention this other man's prediction.<sup>42</sup> And Dr Owen is quoted as saying that when they went to look at the hospital files to identify the male patient who had predicted the assassination, the records were missing.

So this is a typical JFK research experience: something looks interesting and instantly turns out to be more complex than it first appeared. If my brief experience searching these ARRB e-mails is anything to go by, they are a treasure trove.

Most significant of all – but also ignored by the AMM – it was reported for

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<sup>40</sup> <<https://www.muckrock.com/news/archives/2017/oct/30/arrbmails/>>

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, <<http://spartacus-educational.com/JFKcheramie.htm>> or <<https://riversong.wordpress.com/the-strange-and-revelatory-saga-of-rose-cheramie/>>

<sup>42</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y84x6yg4>> or <<https://kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/rose-cheramie-how-she-predicted-the-jfk-assassination>> and <<http://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/cheramie.txt>>.

the first time at the beginning of October that a young US Navy doctor, James Young, present at the autopsy of JFK, had been sent back to the presidential limousine to look for bone fragments. He found some – but he also found a bullet. Another bullet meant more than one gunman had been firing and his discovery was suppressed to preserve the lone assassin, ‘magic bullet’ thesis. Young’s account – complete with his correspondence about this with Warren Commission member (and former US President) Gerald Ford – was discovered recently in the Navy’s archives. I will be surprised if anything as significant as this turns up in those 3000 pages.<sup>43</sup>

## **The money men**

**Y**anis Varoufakis is unique in being the only left-leaning politician to have actually tried to deal with the core EU financial figures – what the subheading of a recent interview with him referred to as ‘the international monetary deep state’. There are lots of interviews around now in which he explains in nice simple terms what he described in great detail in his book.<sup>44</sup> Here is his core thesis.

‘What happened was very simple. In 2010, the Greek state went bankrupt, because it was part of a common currency area, a monetary union, that was simply not fit to the purpose of sustaining the great financial collapse of Wall Street, the city of London, the Frankfurt banks, the French banks, etc., and the Greek banks, and so on and so forth. So, there was a cynical transfer of private sector, private bank losses onto the shoulders of the weakest of taxpayers, the Greeks, knowing that those shoulders were weak, so weak that they wouldn’t be able to sustain that burden, and that burden would then be transferred to the shoulders of the German, the Slavic, the French taxpayers. And once they did this, it’s like Shakespeare, it’s like Macbeth: You commit one crime, then you have to commit a second crime to hide the fact that you committed the first one, and then a third one, and then a fourth one. And the second crime, of course, was the second bailout, because once the first bailout makes whole the bankers, then, within a few months, it becomes abundantly clear that the Greek state cannot sustain that loan. So, a second predatory loan is enforced upon the Greek government in order to pretend that it is making its payments for the first loan, and then a third one, and then a fourth one. And the worst aspect of it is that these loans, which

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<sup>43</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/ycysdjnf>> or  
<[whowhatwhy.org/2017/10/06/navy-doctor-bullet-found-jfks-limousine-never-reported/](http://whowhatwhy.org/2017/10/06/navy-doctor-bullet-found-jfks-limousine-never-reported/)>

<sup>44</sup> Reviewed in this issue of *Lobster*.

were not loans to Greece, were given, extended, on condition of stringent austerity that shrunk our incomes. So we entered a debt deflationary cycle, a great depression, with no end in sight, and a great depression which sees – has absolutely no chance of a New Deal kind of solution like we had here in the United States in the 1930s, as long as the powers that be in Berlin – we heard the White House spokesman siding himself completely with Berlin – insist that this extending and pretending shall continue.’<sup>45</sup>

## **The Israel network**

Things might just be changing vis-a-vis the role of Israel in British politics. The BBC News website started the Priti Patel and Israel story, which led to her resignation, running an item which began:

‘The International Development Secretary held undisclosed meetings in Israel without telling the Foreign Office while accompanied by an influential pro-Israeli Conservative lobbyist, the BBC has learned.

Priti Patel met the leader of one of Israel’s main political parties and made visits to several organisations where official departmental business was reportedly discussed.

According to one source, at least one of the meetings was held at the suggestion of the Israeli ambassador to London.’<sup>46</sup>

Would this have been reported three, four years ago? Would the BBC have run this before the Al Jazeera series on Israeli operations in London?<sup>47</sup>

Al Jazeera also reported on the British government’s refusal to publish a report on terrorism. The story began thus:

‘The British government has announced that it would not publish in full its report on the sources of “funding of extremism” in Britain, prompting opposition charges it was trying to protect its ally Saudi Arabia’.<sup>48</sup>

And why are the government so concerned not to annoy the Saudis? Once upon a time it might have been because of oil. But these days oil flows into a

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<sup>45</sup> <[https://www.democracynow.org/2016/4/28/yanis\\_varoufakis\\_bailouts\\_of\\_greece\\_are](https://www.democracynow.org/2016/4/28/yanis_varoufakis_bailouts_of_greece_are)>

<sup>46</sup> <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-41853561>>

<sup>47</sup> <<http://www.aljazeera.com/investigations/thelobby/>>

<sup>48</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y7pgmeay>> or <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/uk-refuses-publish-report-funding-extremism-170712151158340.html>> >

world market and Saudi Arabia cannot stop oil getting to an individual country. No, it's about weapons sales. We don't make much in this country any more – the really big problem no-one wants to discuss – but we do apparently make some nice weapons. And Saudi Arabia buys them.

Al Jazeera's reporting on issues such as this one explains why the Saudis and Americans are so hostile to Qatar, which hosts it. The text of the agreement between Qatar and other Middle Eastern states on the non-support of terrorism has been published. The alleged breach of these agreements is the pretext for the anti-Qatar activities. But it is manifestly almost entirely about Al Jazeera.<sup>49</sup>

## **All our yesterdays**

**T**here was an event in Bristol on 3 November, remembering the ABC trial 40 years ago.<sup>50</sup>

ABC were the defendants, Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell, charged under the Official Secrets Act, right at the beginning of the slow exposure of the British secret state which has been the background to this journal's existence.<sup>51</sup> I'm not sure what it says about this country but one of the ABC defendants, Duncan Campbell, was one of the speakers at a 2015 Ditchley Foundation conference on intelligence, secrecy and privacy. Campbell notes on his site:

'I was asked to open the conference discussions, in conjunction with GCHQ's new Director, Robert Hannigan. . . . No-one argued against calls for greater openness. That's a first; coming 40 years after a time when it was a crime in Britain even to mention the existence of GCHQ, and programmes on the subject were banned.'<sup>52</sup>

## **Broon**

**A**nd there's 'oor Gordon', with his new memoir, explaining why he supported

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<sup>49</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/yas9536a>> or <<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/10/politics/secret-documents-qatar-crisis-gulf-saudi/index.html>>

<sup>50</sup> <<http://www.crispinaubrey.org/latest-news/the-abc-secrecy-trial-40-year-on>> Thanks to Jane Affleck for this link.

<sup>51</sup> The wikipedia entry on this looks reasonably accurate:  
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ABC\\_trial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ABC_trial)>

<sup>52</sup> <<http://www.duncancampbell.org/content/talking-gchq-interception-not-required>>

the US attack on Iraq. We were misled, he claims: we didnae ken.<sup>53</sup> How can he believe that will wash? There was a blizzard of information about Iraq and its putative WMDs and there was no evidence for their existence. Even if the evidence was there it could not justify the invasion, half million deaths and the subsequent lethal pollution by depleted uranium.

The late Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary while Brown was Chancellor, had access to the same information and resigned in opposition to the approaching war. He said in his resignation speech:

'Why is it now so urgent that we should take military action to disarm a military capacity that has been there for 20 years and which we helped to create? And why is it necessary to resort to war this week while Saddam's ambition to complete his weapons programme is frustrated by the presence of UN inspectors?

I have heard it said that Iraq has had not months but 12 years in which to disarm, and our patience is exhausted. Yet it is over 30 years since resolution 242 called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories.

We do not express the same impatience with the persistent refusal of Israel to comply.'<sup>54</sup>

Truth is, since about 1985 there was no American policy that Brown wasn't willing to swallow in pursuit of his dream of being PM.

## Brillo

'Those who know the history of Soviet Russia will know that there is a strain of antisemitism that has always run through parts of the British intellectual left.'<sup>55</sup>

Thus Andrew Neil, with a classic non-sequitur, during his speech at the annual Holocaust Educational Trust dinner. I am not aware of this strain of anti-semitism and – unlike him – I've been in or around the British intellectual left my whole life. Yes, there is an anti-Israel thread among the British left. Looking at the condition of the Palestinians, it would be pretty strange if there wasn't.

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<sup>53</sup> <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41872701>>

<sup>54</sup> <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/mar/18/foreignpolicy.labour1>>

<sup>55</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/ybhholky>> or <<https://www.thejc.com/news/news-features/andrew-neil-the-scourge-of-antisemitism-is-changing-form-1.446339>>



## Briefly.....

There is a detailed summary on the True Publica website of the the Iraq-Supergun-Project-Babylon-Nadir embroglio, largely based on the writing of Andrew Rosthorn in *Tribune* with other material from the Jancom site (now apparently defunct).<sup>56</sup>

Watching the Vietnam War series on BBC4 recently – the Americans doing to Vietnam what they did to Korea – I was reminded of the original genocide of the native peoples living in the US when the Europeans arrived.<sup>57</sup> Mass killing was the American way from the get-go. Occasionally an anecdote conveys more than pages of prose. I was reading a biography of the American singer Lena Horne, who was part Native America.<sup>58</sup> The author mentions that so shitty was the experience of being 'an Indian', one of Horne's Native America relatives, back at the turn of the century, chose to pass as black.

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'More Than 50% of President Trump's Nominees Have Ties to the Industries They're Supposed to Regulate'.<sup>59</sup> In other words, yes, Trump was bought and paid for; but not by the Russians.

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*Voices for Peace: War, Resistance and America's Quest for Full-Spectrum Dominance* is a collection of essays and interviews edited by occasional contributor to these columns T. J. Coles. Good titles for books like this are difficult and Coles' title/subtitle sort of covers the range of contributions. For example, the full-spectrum dominance part of the subtitle is represented by Noam Chomsky, John Pilger, Bruce Gagnon (on US attempts to dominate space) and an essay of mine from *Lobster* 57, 'Why are we with Uncle Sam?'. The resistance in the title is represented by essays from Brian Terrell<sup>60</sup> and

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<sup>56</sup> <<https://wikispooks.com/wiki/JANCOM>> <<http://tinyurl.com/yb9gawpx>> and <<http://truepublica.org.uk/global/story-project-babylon-british-spooks-illegal-arms-deals-murder-judicial-state-conspiracy/>>

<sup>57</sup> Coincidentally, a brief but pointed item on which arrived in my in-box. <<https://hubpages.com/education/Never-Forget-The-Native-American-Genocides>>

<sup>58</sup> James Gavin, *Stormy Weather: the life of Lena Horne* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009)

<sup>59</sup> <<https://www.thedailybeast.com/donald-trump-pledged-to-drain-the-swamp-instead-he-filled-it-with-industry-sharks>>

<sup>60</sup> See for example <<http://vcnv.org/author/brianterrell/>>.

Kathy Kelly<sup>61</sup>; and there are others which do not fit comfortably within it: Ilan Pappé <sup>62</sup> on an Israeli massacre in Gaza and former US Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney on the 'Making sense of tragedies like the Charlie Hebdo incident when the government narrative doesn't make much sense', which tip-toes up to the line where conspiracy theorising begins and doesn't quite cross it.

This is published by [clairviewbooks.com](http://clairviewbooks.com) at £10.99.

## Brexit is dead

Earlier in this column (see below) and in the previous issue, no. 73, I asserted that the failure of Mrs May to get a resounding affirmation at the last general election meant that Brexit was dead. This judgment still looks correct to me. There was another row over Brexit in the media at the end of September – this time between Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and No. 10.<sup>63</sup> According to Johnson's allies, prior to his intervention, Prime Minister May was going to opt for the so-called 'Norwegian option' <sup>64</sup> – i.e. staying in the EU while pretending to leave. Various media stories also reported that the Treasury and the Chancellor wanted a five year transition – i.e. staying in while pretending to be planning to leave.

Elsewhere it has been reported that David Davis, in charge of negotiating Brexit, has been reading the book by Yanis Varoufakis, *Adults in the Room*,<sup>65</sup> which describes the Greek government's attempt to negotiate with the EU.<sup>66</sup> Varoufakis found that the EU was simply unwilling to negotiate and went through a series of blocking and delaying manoeuvres. The fact that David Davis has been reading the Varoufakis book may explain why, during the Tory Party conference, he said that the UK might have to prepare for a Brexit

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<sup>61</sup> See <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathy\\_Kelly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathy_Kelly)>.

<sup>62</sup> See <<http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/iais/staff/pappe/>>.

<sup>63</sup> Summarised at <<http://tinyurl.com/y92btjer>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/sep/23/johnson-forced-mays-hand-on-eu-claim-tories-as-cabinet-truce-unravels>> Johnson forced Theresa May's hand on EU, claim Tories as cabinet truce unravels.

<sup>64</sup> Summarised at <<http://tinyurl.com/y92btjer>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/sep/23/johnson-forced-mays-hand-on-eu-claim-tories-as-cabinet-truce-unravels>>

<sup>65</sup> Reviewed in this issue of *Lobster*.

<sup>66</sup> See <<http://tinyurl.com/y7rm8txz>> or <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/03/cabinet-fatally-divided-brexit-without-threat-no-deal-sunk/>>.

without an agreement.<sup>67</sup> But such a policy would be blocked in either or both the House of Commons or Lords, where there is no majority in favour of such a step.

Cries of 'betrayal' and 'sellout' (and worse) have been heard for months coming from UKIP and those of similar views on the Conservative right. Occasional contributor to these columns, Robert Henderson, an enthusiastic Brexiteer, put the following at the top of one of his regular e-mail collections of newspaper stories:

'The fact that we have a remainder PM says it all. That she heads a remainder majority Cabinet and a remainder majority party in a remainder majority Commons and remainder majority Lords underlines the massive scope for subverting Brexit which exists.'

With the failure of Boris Johnson to replace May as PM after the party conference, the (closet) Remainers are still in charge of the party. This became open when Mrs May refused to answer the question put to her by Iain Dale: 'How would you vote now if there was a referendum on leaving the EU?'<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, at the Labour Party conference, Jeremy Corbyn announced that Labour's policy would be to guarantee 'unimpeded access to the Single Market' – which will entail membership of the EU in some form. In short, as has been obvious for some while, the solution to this acute problem for the British political system is to stay in the EU while pretending to leave.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y78mrlm4>> or <<http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/861795/Conservative-party-conference-2017-live-David-Davis-speech-Brexit-news-update>>

<sup>68</sup> Nigel Farage responded this in the *Telegraph*:

'Everyone listening to that interview knows that the reality is that May is still a Remainer. I don't believe it's possible to carry out this great, historic change against a huge amount of international criticism unless you truly believe in it. Nor, as it happens, does May: in a speech on June 1 she herself said: "To deliver Brexit you have to believe it". This is the clearest proof yet that the Great Brexit Betrayal is under way.'

<<http://tinyurl.com/yc6krhq3>> or <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/10/theresa-may-now-eus-stepford-wife-subservient-submissive-every/>>

<sup>69</sup> Related to this, the Europe minister Sir Alan Duncan – technically Minister of State for Europe and the Americas – was heavily criticised in Brexit circles for apparently saying that Brexit happened because of a 'tantrum' by the working class. Curiously, on the same day the results of a survey conducted by people at the University of Warwick of reasons for voting 'leave' was published. It showed

' . . . .The key predictor of someone's Brexit vote was their deep-down feelings about their own finances – whether they felt they were managing comfortably, doing OK, just about getting by, or having some – or extreme – difficulty.'

<[https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/brexit\\_was\\_caused/](https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/brexit_was_caused/)>

## Labour and the money-movers

**D**uring the Labour Party conference, CNBC had this headline: 'Socialist firebrands in UK prepared for a "run on the pound" if elected'.<sup>70</sup> 'Firebrands' made me chuckle. What, our Jeremy? But it was John McDonnell's use of the expression 'run on the pound' which caught my attention. Oh, dear: Labour's Shadow Chancellor apparently still hasn't grasped that while a 'run on the pound' meant something back in the day when the pound had a fixed value vis-a-vis the dollar, in the wonderful world of global finance and floating currencies, a 'run on the pound' has no meaning. In the event of a left-wing Labour government taking office, the international value of the pound may fall as the money-movers conclude that said government will damage the British economy with reduced inward investment and lower corporate profits etc. But 'a run' implies more than that; it implies political intent on the part of those selling sterling. And the global financial markets have no intent other than financial.

The thing to do, if the pound starts falling, is do nothing. (Not that there's much a relatively small nation-state like the UK could do, any way.) The system is self-correcting. If the money-movers conclude a fall in the pound has gone too far they will start buying pounds again and its value will rise. This is something Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling never grasped. Even though they had given the City more than it could have possibly dreamed of, they spent their years in office anxious that the City was planning something nasty for them.

## Tarzan

**I** picked up a copy of Michael Heseltine's autobiography, *Life in the Jungle* (2000 h/b and 2001 p/b), in a charity shop. Heseltine served in the government of Edward Heath, which was partly responsible for the worst inflation this country has ever experienced, and in that of Margaret Thatcher, which created the worst recession since the 1930s. I was curious to see how he dealt with these politically uncomfortable facts. Not well, is the answer. Or: predictably and politically, is the answer.

His only comment on the Heath years is that the oil price rise of 1973 'put an end to the "dash for growth" policy that Tony Barber at the Treasury had been pursuing' (2001, p. 155). No acknowledgment that central to the 'dash for growth' was deregulating the money-lenders, which created the first

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<sup>70</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/yd3qp9pa>> or <<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/09/27/socialist-firebrands-in-uk-prepared-for-run-on-sterling-if-elected.html>>.

big post-WW2 credit boom and stoked inflation. On the Thatcher recession he merely notes 'Geoffrey Howe's success in reducing inflation from a rising 10% in 1979 to 3.7% in May and June 1983.' (2001, p. 203). This is an extremely selective use of inflation stats, as you can see if you consult the data.<sup>71</sup>

There is one other striking claim. Heseltine was Secretary of State for Defence in the 1980s and was in charge of the policy of countering the growing influence of CND. He describes how the Ministry of Defence set up a unit, DS19, to 'develop arguments in support of NATO's plans'. (2001, p. 247) In practise this meant propaganda against CND. He assures us that 'no information was used that was not in the public domain, The allegations by an ex-MI5 junior officer, Cathy Massiter, that the Security Service collected information for this purpose were untrue.' (2001, p. 250)

Of course I couldn't remember precisely what Massiter had said so, for the first time in quite a while, I went into my filing cabinets and dug out the collection of clippings I had on her. In a very long article, 'The spymasters who broke their own rules', in the *Guardian* of 1 March 1985, Massiter explained her objection to MI5 supplying information to DS19:

'It was was a very important party political issue. Unilateral nuclear disarmament had been adopted as a policy by the Labour Party, a general election was in the offing and it had been clearly stated that the question of nuclear disarmament was going to be an important issue there. It did begin to seem to me that what the Security Service was being asked to do was to provide information on a party political issue.'

She did *not* say that the MI5 collected information on CND for DS19.<sup>72</sup>

## Huh?

**I** noted below (under subhead 'Two thoughts on the General Election') that the *Daily Mail* ran a big smear story about Jeremy Corbyn just before the election. They're still at it, this time using comments by former MI5 D-G Stella Rimington on the political history of some of the people around Corbyn.<sup>73</sup> Guess what? They used to be Trots when they were younger! A revelation!

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<sup>71</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/ybwjezsl>> or <<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KCPTCEaGSi9OEaoQVzSyEh8xzPSolWwaXd3iwSjw0sU/edit#gid=0>>

<sup>72</sup> Dale Campbell-Savours MP on this issue can be read at <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1986/jul/24/business-of-the-house-1>>.

<sup>73</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y8nx69je>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4979404/Communists-spied-MI5-senior-Corbyn-advisors.html>>

Rimington is now 82 and perhaps not as sharp as she was once, nonetheless she also said this:

‘My first job when I joined the service, I was responsible for the Devon and Cornwall branch of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

And my job was to know exactly who belonged to it, so should they ever apply for a job that gave them access to classified information, I would pop up and say, “Ah, no.” *That’s why Trotskyists came into that area at the time.*’ (emphasis added)

Is she really saying that MI5 believed that the growth of Trotskyist groups was caused by the effectiveness of MI5’s monitoring of the CPGB?

## Bilderberg

**I** have already said in this column that I don’t think that Bilderberg matters much any more but, if you are interested, one Robin Upton has done a big job of assembling the extant information on the annual meetings – attenders and subject matter – which can be found at  
<<https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Bilderberg>>.

## In the air

**I** am not on Facebook and have never visited it except by accident. (My brother calls me a Facebook refusenik.) But two *billion* other people are – including most of those reading this column, I expect. Which means that two billion people are providing data about their lives, friends, tastes and opinions to an unaccountable organisation which is doing who-knows-what with it (mostly selling us things, of course, including US presidential candidates).<sup>74</sup> Julian Assange said of Facebook:

‘Facebook in particular is the most appalling spying machine that has ever

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<sup>74</sup> See, for example, <<http://tinyurl.com/ydaa2pyz>> or <<https://www.facebook.com/bbcnewsnight/videos/10154695768566200/>>

Nick Must commented: Carole Cadwalladr, the journalist who made this piece, says that military ‘hearts and minds’ operations in countries like Afghanistan are purely psychological operations. She is somewhat mistaken here, as the original hearts and minds process was established by the SAS in conflicts such as those in Oman and Borneo. This included sending medics to treat the local populations with antibiotics, etc, that were not available to the ‘enemy’. So, there was more of a physical-action aspect to a ‘hearts and minds’ campaign than Ms Cadwalladr seems to understand.

been invented. Here we have the world's most comprehensive database about people, their relationships, their names, their addresses, their locations and the communications with each other, their relatives, all sitting within the United States, all accessible to U.S. intelligence.' <sup>75</sup>

A sense of what Facebook and the other mega-corporations now running the Internet are doing and are capable of is given in a very good essay by John Lanchester, 'You are the product', in a recent issue of the *London Review of Books*.<sup>76</sup>

There is also the prospect of Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg running as a Democratic presidential candidate for 2020.<sup>77</sup> With his immense personal wealth and Facebook to promote him, who would bet against him becoming the candidate?

## Grauniadia

As the *Guardian* slides slowly down the pan there have been odd signs of intelligent life there beyond the economics pages. There was Owen Jones on the prospect that the British (secret) state might not take too kindly to a Corbyn-led Labour government. Invoking Chris Mullins' *A Very British Coup* and Peter Wright in a jumbled account of anti-Wilson coup talk and planning, which conflated events in the 1960s and 70s, Jones prefaced it all with the obligatory 'What, me paranoid?' reference:

'You are probably imagining me hunched over my computer with a tinfoil hat. So consider this: there is a precedent for conspiracies against an elected British government, it is not so long ago, and it was waged against an administration that represented a significantly smaller threat to the

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<sup>75</sup> This quote is originally from an interview he gave to Russia Today in 2011 (see <<https://www.rt.com/news/wikileaks-revelations-assange-interview/>>) but it has been more recently referred to this summer in a profile of him, his activities, Trump and the Russia connections in *The New Yorker* at <<http://tinyurl.com/y7pygthg>> or <[http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/08/21/julian-assange-a-man-without-a-country?mbid=synd\\_digg](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/08/21/julian-assange-a-man-without-a-country?mbid=synd_digg)>. This *New Yorker* article is very good (but very long – more than 20,000 words) and strikingly sympathetic when compared to other articles on Assange in the major media.

<sup>76</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n16/john-lanchester/you-are-the-product>>. Lanchester's book on the banking crisis a decade ago, *Whoops! Why Everyone Owes Everyone and No One Can Pay* (Penguin, 2010), was very good indeed. An example of Google suppressing information it didn't like is given at <<http://tinyurl.com/yaa6zp55>>.

<sup>77</sup> See for example <<http://tinyurl.com/yb7bxbgn>> or <<https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/15/mark-zuckerberg-could-be-running-for-president-in-2020.html>>

existing order than that offered by Jeremy Corbyn's Labour.'<sup>78</sup>

As usual, Colin Wallace, by far the most significant source on all this, was not mentioned.

In the midst of a long essay on the innocence of middle-class white Americans (like herself),<sup>79</sup> Suzy Hansen noted:

'The sheer number of international interventions the US launched in those decades is astonishing, especially those during years [post 1945] when American power was considered comparatively innocent. There were the successful assassinations: Patrice Lumumba, prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in 1961; General Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, also in 1961; Ngo Dinh Diem, president of South Vietnam, in 1963. There were the unsuccessful assassinations: Castro, Castro, and Castro. There were the much hoped-for assassinations: Nasser, Nasser, Nasser. And, of course, US-sponsored, -supported or -staged regime changes: Iran, Guatemala, Iraq, Congo, Syria, Dominican Republic, South Vietnam, Indonesia, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay and Argentina. The Americans trained or supported secret police forces everywhere from Cambodia to Colombia, the Philippines to Peru, Iran to Vietnam. Many Turks believed that the US at least encouraged the 1971 and 1980 military coups in Turkey, though I could find little about these events in any conventional histories anywhere.'

Welcome to the world of Philip Agee, *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, Herman and Chomsky and Bill Blum, circa 1980 – where I came in (but the *Guardian* didn't).

Bill Blum is still issuing his *Anti-Empire Reports*. In his most recent, number 150,<sup>80</sup> he notes

'I still get emails criticizing me for the stand I took against Islamic terrorists earlier this year. Almost every one feels obliged to remind me that the terrorists are acting in revenge for decades of US/Western bombing of Muslim populations and assorted other atrocities. And I then have to inform each one of them that they've chosen the wrong person for such a lecture. I, it happens, wrote the fucking book on the subject!

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<sup>78</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y7leh23v>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/09/prime-minister-corbyn-very-british-coup-establishment-backlash>>

<sup>79</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y7nc8fak>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/08/unlearning-the-myth-of-american-innocence>>

<sup>80</sup> <<https://williamblum.org/aer/read/150>>



In the first edition of my book *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, published in 2001, before September 11, the first chapter was "Why do terrorists keep picking on The United States?" It includes a long list of hostile US military and political actions against the Islamic world during the previous 20 years.'

## **Lockerbie: a new thesis?**

Occasional contributor to these columns, Dr. Roger Cottrell, recently sent me the text of his new book on Lockerbie, *Ashes in the Fall: Iran-Contra, the godfather of terror and the bombing of Pan Am 103* (forthcoming from Red Door).<sup>81</sup> The paragraphs below are from the introduction. I have not been following Lockerbie and this was new to me and thus, perhaps, new to some *Lobster* readers.

### **Motive and Target: Chuck McKee and his Team**

In all previous books and documentaries on the Lockerbie bombing, one of two scenarios is pursued. The first, and official, view that Abdelbaset al Megrahi and the Libyan regime bombed the plane is based (as we shall see) on tissue thin and often fabricated evidence and has all but been discredited by everybody who has examined the bombing in a serious way. But there are also problems with the "default position," particularly identified with Allan Frankovich's important (but ultimately flawed) documentary, *The Maltese Double Cross*, in 1994. Here, and in subsequent documentaries both for *Al Jazeera* and ZDF TV, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC) is assumed to have carried out the bombing as a "contract killing" for the governments in Damascus and Tehran. Specifically, the bombing of Pan Am 103 is seen, in this scenario, as revenge for the shooting down of Iran Airbus 655 by the *USS Vincennes*, in the Gulf of Hormuz on July 3, 1988. Among the 290 passengers and crew killed on the routine commercial flight from Mehrabad Airport in Tehran to Dubai were pilgrims to Mecca, participating in the annual *Haj* and 66 children. The subsequent failure of the US administration even to apologise for this incident led to understandable fury in Iran on the part both of the regime and population but is not, in my mview, the reason why Pan Am 103 was bombed.

That there is a *connection*, between the existence of the PFLP-GC cell in Germany, and Sweden, led by Hafez Dalkamini and mostly

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<sup>81</sup> See <<http://www.reddoorvision.co.uk/rogercottrell.htm>> for a brief biog.

operating in Dusseldorf, and Neuss, and the bombing of Pan Am 103 is not disputed in this book. In particular, Jordanian double agent Marwan Khreesat is identified as having made a number of barometric Toshiba cassette bombs for the Dusseldorf cell, containing military grade Semtex H, one of which undoubtedly destroyed Pan Am 103 (*The Maid of the Seas*) over Lockerbie, Scotland. But as a Jordanian GID agent involved in a sting operation, set up by the recently formed Counter Intelligence Centre of the CIA's Directorate of Operations, it is doubtful that Khreesat (who was quietly released from police custody and allowed to return to Amman) ever intended his bombs to be used. Rather, it seems that an asset of the CIA, deeply involved in Iran Contra and with consequent connections to the 200 strong force of Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon, drew these forces into a bogus plot to bomb several western civilian aircraft in revenge for Iran Airbus 655. With its origins in October Surprise in 1980 (see text) the Revolutionary Guards were pursuing their own clandestine Foreign Policy independent of the Tehran government by this time.

Such was the BKA-CIA sting operation that led to the *Operation Herbstlaub* (Operation Autumn Leaves) bust on October 30, 1988. Thereafter, the PFLP-GC was a spent force in continental Europe. But we believe that this CIA asset, who helped the CIA's Duane Clarridge (himself an Iran Contra insider and veteran) and Vincent Cannistraro (later notorious in the Lockerbie cover up) to facilitate the sting had his own reasons for wanting Pan Am 103 destroyed. Thanks to the aforementioned CIA sting and complicity of a CIA asset called Abu Elias, he also had access to the bomb that was later placed on board the plane at Heathrow.

In this book, we set out to prove that the actual target of the bombing was Green Beret Captain Charles "Chuck" McKee (attached to the Pentagon's Defence Intelligence Agency), Martin Gannon, the Deputy Head of CIA Station in Beirut and a young Lebanese man called Khaled Jaafar, whom they had accompanied from Frankfurt on Pan Am 103A to place into witness protection in the United States. Two Security Officers from the US Embassy in Beirut were also part of the group. Jaafar, aged just 22, was a member of a powerful drug producing clan in the Be'eqa Valley, who wanted to be free to marry his cousin. He could provide supportive testimony to the 200 page dossier that McKee was also taking back to the US to present as testimony to the Kerry Commission. This was why he was killed. The second purpose of the Lockerbie bombing was to destroy or recover McKee's file.

## **Brexit is dead**

In 'A big business Brexit for a bargain basement Britain', Nick Dearden complained that:

'An analysis of official statistics on lobby meetings with ministers from the UK's Department for Exiting the EU (DExEU) and members of the EU's Brexit Task Force reveals a common willingness to privilege the representatives of corporate interests above all others. The analysis shows:

- Between October 2016 and March 2017, DExEU staff had six meetings with big business representatives for every one meeting with an NGO, a trade union or a think tank. This figure may even just be the tip of the iceberg, as Brexit lobby meetings are also likely to take place with DExEU officials not required to disclose meetings.
- The team of Chief EU Brexit Negotiator Michel Barnier had ten meetings with corporate lobbyists for every one NGO they met between October 2016 and May 2017.'<sup>82</sup>

This is hardly a surprise and – for those against Brexit, such as Dearden – is good news, surely, because those corporate lobbyists will all be opposed to it.

The Labour Party's new policy on Brexit, announced on 28 August, shows the way out for the British political system: remaining in the EU while pretending to leave; a.k.a. 'transition'. The trick is going to be selling this to the Brexit supporters, whose leaders are already crying 'Sell-out! Betrayal!'.

## **Bringing it all back home**

In May, after briefings from 'Whitehall sources', the British media reported:

'Intelligence officers have identified 23,000 jihadist extremists living in Britain as potential terrorist attackers, it emerged yesterday. The scale of the challenge facing the police and security services was disclosed by Whitehall sources after criticism that multiple opportunities to stop the Manchester bomber had been missed.

About 3,000 people from the total group are judged to pose a threat and are under investigation or active monitoring in 500 operations being

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<sup>82</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/ycxl3ua3>> or <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/08/big-business-brexit-bargain-basement-britain-170827080555325.html>>. In this he cites information from <<http://tinyurl.com/yd526js6>> or <<http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/news/2017/aug/25/big-business-dominates-lobby-meetings-uk-and-eu-brexit-negotiators>>.

run by police and intelligence services. The 20,000 others have featured in previous inquiries and are categorised as posing a "residual risk".<sup>83</sup>

Fast forward three months and EU counter-terrorism coordinator Gilles de Kerchove stated that 'Britain is home to up to 35,000 fanatical Islamists of whom 3,000 are "worrying" for the security service MI5.'<sup>84</sup> The gross totals differ but the core group remains the same. 500 is a lot of operations to be running.

A measure of how the world has changed is the fact that in the mid 90s MI5 had so little to do, it was scuffling around Whitehall trying to find/generate roles for itself. I wrote this in *Lobster* 28 (1994).

'The available fragments of evidence suggest that MI5 will continue on its present course, dealing with a mixed bag of domestic threats and various promising, new subjects. ("Promising" in the budget-sustaining sense.) There are the "foreign terrorists in Britain", and a variety of new, post Cold War themes emerging out of the general "turbulence" of the New World Disorder. (London's role as one of the world centres for flight capital is attracting some of the world's major scumbags.) Some of it even has reassuring Eastern European labels on it. If the former Soviet bloc can no longer be plausibly portrayed as exporting revolution, terrorism, subversion and espionage to Britain, the remnants of the Soviet empire are now (we are told) engaged in money laundering, drug-running, gun-running and – the holy grail – nuclear material smuggling. A "senior police officer" was quoted in the *Observer*, 6 November 1994: "It's very easy to present drugs and organised crime as a threat to national security particularly because of Eastern Europe. There the threat of armoured divisions has been replaced by the threat of the Russian mafia."

Then there is the ever-expanding new European Union super state to be policed. The *Independent* of 9 November 1994, reported that "MI5 . . . and Special Branch are vying to take the lead in representing Britain at Europol's headquarters in The Hague. MI5 is making an aggressive bid to takeover the European Liaison Unit of the Metropolitan Special Branch. . . ."; and the front page of *Computer Weekly* of 10 November, 1994, reported that "The security service MI5 is to offer advice to government IT managers on nearly all computer security issues further diluting the role of Whitehall's dedicated computer agency the CCTA."

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<sup>83</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/yarfud2u>> or <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/huge-scale-of-terror-threat-revealed-uk-home-to-23-000-jihadists-3zvn58mhq>>

<sup>84</sup> <[www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4840604/Britain-home-35-000-Islamic-fanatics.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4840604/Britain-home-35-000-Islamic-fanatics.html)>

This was before the UK joined the Israeli-American plans to smash most of the states of the Middle East into ethnic and religious fragments. So, since the current domestic jihadism problem is part of the price of supporting US foreign policy in the Middle East, is there anyone left in Whitehall who thinks that policy was a good idea? Apparently so: token British forces are currently working with the US in at least four wars in the region.<sup>85</sup> Or is that taking the British presence too seriously? In a review of a new account of the war in Afghanistan, former British ambassador there, Sherard Cowper-Coles, says that the British Army was there:

'Mainly, of course, to please the Americans, or, more precisely, the American military. To show them after Basra what good allies and brave soldier the Brits really were. But there was another, less honourable, reason, one that led me to wonder if the British Army had deployed to Helmand to fight not the Taliban but the Treasury, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. As one general put it to me: "If I don't use the battle groups coming out of Iraq in Afghanistan, Sherard, I will lose them in a defence review."' <sup>86</sup>

## **Economic bits and pieces**

There is quite a chorus of voices now warning that we are heading for another financial crash. One such, and he's worth taking seriously, is Professor Frank Portnoy, who wrote in the *Financial Times*, 'The sequel to the global financial crisis is here'.<sup>87</sup> It's the same formula as last time: vast personal debt is being created and bundled up into interest-bearing instruments (derivatives). The difference this time is that, if things go kablooeey again, governments are too indebted from the last bail-out to rescue the banks a second time.

The *Guardian's* Larry Elliot had a piece, 'While Hammond looks for a magic money tree, Labour has found one', about an idea from Professor Avinash Persaud, which would involve removing some of the exceptions from

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<sup>85</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/ybonr65f>> or <[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/mark-curtis/britains-seven-covert-war\\_b\\_12332368.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/mark-curtis/britains-seven-covert-war_b_12332368.html)> On the war in the Yemen, in particular, see <<http://tinyurl.com/y6w2bdal>> or <<http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/culture-concealment-uk-governments-brazen-duplicity-yemen-1005387832>>.

<sup>86</sup> 'So what the hell were we doing in Afghanistan (and why did we stay?)', *The Times* (books) 19 August 2017.

<sup>87</sup> <<https://www.ft.com/content/95808118-662e-11e7-9a66-93fb352ba1fe>> Portnoy wrote *Fiasco: blood in the water on Wall Street* (London: Profile, 1997) about the financial derivatives business and the men (almost entirely men) engaged in it. This anticipated the financial crash a decade later.

stamp duty charged on share purchases.<sup>88</sup> This might raise over £4 billion a year, which would just about cover the annual NHS deficit. But the *annual* UK government deficit for 2016-17 was £52 billion. Labour needs a magic money *forest*, not a tree, if its economic policies are to be taken seriously without there being talk of raising taxation on the general population.

Meanwhile, down under in New Zealand, Bryan Gould – to my knowledge the last significant British Labour politician who understood macroeconomics – got into an exchange with Don Brash about the creation of money.<sup>89</sup> Brash, who is a sometime leader of the New Zealand equivalent of the Conservative Party and Governor of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, would not accept that banks created money for themselves by lending to other people. Gould's article includes this:

'My own efforts to clear up the confusion concluded with the *New Zealand Herald's* disappointing decision to decline to publish my rebuttal of Don Brash's repeated attempts to deny the truth about money creation. . . In his various contributions, Don Brash chose repeatedly, on the central issue as to how money is created, to deny (without any evidence or countervailing argument) what is now almost universally accepted – that an individual bank, in the act of placing a credit entry in a borrower's account, creates new money.'

## **What goes around. . .**

**T**ony Gosling, this country's leading Bilderberg-watcher,<sup>90</sup> drew his subscribers' attention to an essay, 'Meet "Le Cercle" – Making Bilderberg Look Like Amateurs' by Graham Vanbergen.<sup>91</sup> This is a decent introduction to the role of Le Cercle in the past 30 years or so but the best study of Le Cercle remains David Teacher's massive *Rogue Agents: Hapsburg, Pinay and the Private Cold War 1951-1991*,<sup>92</sup> which I noted in *Lobster* 71 when this latest edition appeared. This summary is from Teacher's introduction.

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<sup>88</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/yazl6jmv>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jul/23/while-hammond-looks-for-a-magic-money-tree-labour-has-found-one>>

<sup>89</sup> Bryan Gould, 'Banks Create Billions Out Of Thin Air Every Day For Their Own Profit-Making Purposes' at <<http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/45/04.html>>.

<sup>90</sup> See <<http://www.bilderberg.org>>.

<sup>91</sup> <[www.globalresearch.ca/meet-le-cercle-making-bilderberg-look-like-amateurs/5606887](http://www.globalresearch.ca/meet-le-cercle-making-bilderberg-look-like-amateurs/5606887)>

<sup>92</sup> <<http://www.cryptome.org/2012/01/cercle-pinay-6i.pdf>>

'This study is an attempt at a preliminary transnational investigation of the Paneuropean Right and particularly of the covert forum, the Cercle Pinay and its complex of groups. Amongst Cercle intelligence contacts are former operatives from the American CIA, DIA and INR, Britain's MI5, MI6 and IRD, France's SDECE, Germany's BND, BfV and MAD, Holland's BVD, Belgium's Sûreté de l'Etat, SDRA and PIO, apartheid South Africa's BOSS, and the Swiss and Saudi intelligence services.

Politically, the Cercle complex has interlocked with the whole panoply of international right-wing groups: the Paneuropean Union, the European Movement, CEDI, the Bilderberg Group, WACL, Opus Dei, the Moonies, Western Goals and the Heritage Foundation. Amongst the prominent politicians associated with the Cercle Pinay were Antoine Pinay, Konrad Adenauer, Archduke Otto von Habsburg, Franz Josef Strauss, Giulio Andreotti, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Paul Vanden Boeynants, John Vorster, General Antonio de Spínola, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.'

This parapolitical monument began with Teacher's essay in *Lobster* 17 on what was then known as the Pinay Circle. The group's name changed with the death of its founder, Antoine Pinay. The problem is evaluating such a group. What, if anything, did it achieve?

### **. . . comes around**

**A**t the beginning of September Spinwatch issued a long document – 35 pages of text and supporting material – by Niall Meehan on the case of Dr Morris Fraser, the child psychiatrist who worked in Northern Ireland in the 1970s despite being convicted of the sexual assault of a 13 year-old boy. Fraser should have been but wasn't prominent in the recent Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.<sup>93</sup> (At time of writing the document had not been posted on the Spinwatch site.)

Spinwatch last year published Meehan's 'Morris Fraser, child abuse, corruption and collusion in Britain and Northern Ireland'<sup>94</sup> and the *Guardian* ran a profile of Meehan and the story at the same time.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> My critique of a part of which is in *Lobster* 73 at  
< <https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster73/lob73-colin-wallace.pdf>>.

<sup>94</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/ybdl3zsh>> or <<http://www.spinwatch.org/index.php/issues/northern-ireland/item/5850-morris-fraser-child-abuse-corruption-and-collusion-in-britain-and-northern-ireland>>

<sup>95</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/hfd4tzj>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2016/jun/16/journalism-academic-castigates-media-over-paedophile-doctor>>

## Things Russian

A little while ago I met a woman who told me her daughter was an investigative journalist for BuzzFeed. To which I said something like this: 'Buzzfeed? Really? I thought that was just click-bait stuff.' Well, it turns out I was quite wrong about that: BuzzFeed does indeed do investigative journalism and there is some worth your attention. For example there is a four part account of the deaths of fourteen people in the UK, mostly Russian, linked to UK-resident Russian oligarchs and gangsters.<sup>96</sup> The authors show that the deaths are all suspicious and suggest that they are the result of either Russian state or Russian mafia activity. But this they can't *demonstrate*. What they do show is that the British state and the police have apparently little interest in investigating these deaths too closely. This may not be unconnected to the fact that the City of London and all its associated activities – lawyers, accountants, estate agents and insurance companies for example – are currently awash with all that dirty Russian money. One part of the series is the spy-in-the-bag story, the death of the MI6 officer, Gareth Williams, which also suggests but cannot quite demonstrate Russian state involvement.

A theme running through much of the current speculation about Russia is the putative wealth of President Putin. The American businessman William Browder, whose father had been head of the Communist Party in the USA, did a lot of business in Russia in the early years after the Berlin Wall came down and got ripped-off there. Browder offers his opinion of Putin's personal wealth.

'Putin is a different type of leader than any other head of state in that Putin has been stealing money hand over fist to the tune of 200 billion dollars for himself in his presidency. Russia is effectively a mafia organization in which he's the capo and the only difference between this mafia organization and the Colombian mafia or the Italian mafia is that Vladimir Putin controls thousands of nuclear warheads.'<sup>97</sup>

Others have made similar claims about Putin's wealth<sup>98</sup> but, like Browder, have no direct evidence. Like so many of the contemporary claims about Russian

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<sup>96</sup> The first of the 4 parts is at <<http://tinyurl.com/yaoq5mbt>> or <[https://www.buzzfeed.com/heidiblake/poison-in-the-system?utm\\_term=.jjlPM6RoO#.huaL9ykDp](https://www.buzzfeed.com/heidiblake/poison-in-the-system?utm_term=.jjlPM6RoO#.huaL9ykDp)>.

<sup>97</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y99l5s5z>> or <<http://extragoodshit.phlap.net/index.php/whowhatwhy-investigated-russias-actions-long-before-the-mainstream-media/>>. See also <<http://tinyurl.com/yagtadwh>> or <<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/07/bill-browders-testimony-to-the-senate-judiciary-committee/534864/>>.

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, <<http://time.com/money/4641093/vladimir-putin-net-worth/>> and <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4242718/Vladimir-Putin-200-billion-fortune.html>>. Both articles use many of the same speculative estimates.



hacking of US politics, these are plausible but not verifiable.

Back at the did-the-Russians-hack-the-US-presidential-election story, the dividing lines remain as before. On one side:

'Daniel Coats, the director of national intelligence, said Friday there is no dissent inside U.S. intelligence agencies about the conclusion that Russia used hacking and fake news to interfere in the 2016 presidential election. . . .'<sup>99</sup>

On the other side a group of retired American intelligence personnel put their names to an essay on Consortiumnews which began:

'Forensic studies of "Russian hacking" into Democratic National Committee computers last year reveal that on July 5, 2016, data was **leaked (not hacked)** by a person with physical access to DNC computers, and then doctored to incriminate Russia.'<sup>100</sup> (emphasis in the original)

Former UK ambassador Craig Murray also received a copy of the DNC files and has repeatedly said that he *knows* the material didn't come from the Russians.<sup>101</sup>

So what is the basis of the current hostility to Russia? Here's Trump-supporter Pat Buchanan on that question:

' "Is Russia an enemy of the United States?" NBC's Kasie Hunt demanded of Ted Cruz. Replied the runner-up for the GOP nomination, "Russia is a significant adversary. Putin is a KGB thug."

To Hillary Clinton running mate Tim Kaine, the revelation that Donald Trump Jr. entertained an offer from the Russians for dirt on Clinton could be considered "treason".

Treason is giving aid and comfort to an enemy in a time of war.

Are we really at war with Russia? Is Russia really our enemy?

"Why Russia is a Hostile Power" is the title of today's editorial in *The Washington Post* that seeks to explain why Middle America should embrace the Russophobia of our capital city:

"Vladimir Putin adheres to a set of values that are antithetical to bedrock American values. He favors spheres of influence over self-determination; corruption over transparency; and repression over

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<sup>99</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/ycm7589x>> or <<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/intelligence-director-says-agencies-agree-russian-meddling-n785481>>

<sup>100</sup> <<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/07/24/intel-vets-challenge-russia-hack-evidence/>>

<sup>101</sup> See <<https://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2017/07/stink-without-secret/>>.

democracy.”

Yet, accommodating a sphere of influence for a great power is exactly what FDR and Churchill did with Stalin, and every president from Truman to George H. W. Bush did with the Soviet Union.

When East Germans, Hungarians, Czechs, Poles rose up against Communist regimes, no U.S. president intervened. For those nations were on the other side of the Yalta line agreed to in 1945.

Bush I and James Baker even accused Ukrainians of “suicidal nationalism” for contemplating independence from Russia.

When did support for spheres of influence become un-American?<sup>102</sup>

Buchanan has put his finger on it: Trump believes in spheres of influence, as does Putin. Trump has apparently understood (actually, it’s more likely to be those around him who have understood) that the US can no longer be the sole global power; its economy is too weak and too indebted. For obvious reasons of self-interest, despite Trump’s increase in the military budget, the American military-industrial-intelligence complex is unhappy with this and the Democrats are using all available sticks with which to beat Trump, whether true or not. Hence their mutual interest in ‘Russiagate’.

## **Brexiteering**

**I**n *Lobster* 73 after the election in May, I declared that ‘Brexit is dead’. I added that I could not see how this would play out. Peter Kellner has made an attempt at this in his article ‘When Brexit Meets Logic’ for Carnegie Europe, a foreign policy analysis site based in Brussels.<sup>103</sup> The article’s subhead is his conclusion: ‘It is increasingly likely that Britain will either stay in the EU or reach a transitional arrangement very similar to full membership.’ (A.k.a. staying in while pretending to leave.)

Since I wrote that Brexit is dead there has been a steady trickle of stories suggesting that the government’s position is changing as the reality of Brexit impinges on it and Nigel Farage, the perfect bellwether on this issue, has begun charging the Conservatives with betraying the Brexit voters.<sup>104</sup> Most

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<sup>102</sup> <<https://www.creators.com/read/pat-buchanan/07/17/russia-baiters-and-putin-haters>>

<sup>103</sup> <<http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/71558>>

<sup>104</sup> ‘The great Brexit betrayal has begun. The Tories have sold out the British people - now even Jeremy Corbyn has a tougher stance’ at <<http://tinyurl.com/y7blvlco>> or <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/25/great-brexit-betrayal-has-begun-tories-have-sold-british-people/>>.

interesting to me was the language used by hitherto ardent Brexiteer, Michael Gove:

'I think that when it comes to an implementation period, it should be driven by a pragmatic judgment, a shared pragmatic judgment, about what we need in the best interests of our economy and guaranteeing a smooth exit from the European Union, in line with the result that the British people voted for just over a year ago,' he said.<sup>105</sup>

Perhaps I am over-reading this but 'pragmatic judgment' and 'in line with the result' seems to leave lots of wiggle room, especially for someone who probably still wants to become leader of the Conservative Party.

## **Sailing . . . .**

**O**n 27 June the new British aircraft carrier HM Queen Elizabeth left port for the first time to much celebration. The decision to build two planned carriers was announced in 2008, just before the world banking system went into meltdown.<sup>106</sup> But the planning went much further back: the website of the Aircraft Carrier Alliance<sup>107</sup> tells us 'The design process began in 1999'. Politicians were barely involved in the decision to spend all those billions; Hansard records little debate on this. In 2010 Gordon Brown, then recently deposed as prime minister, gave the House of Commons the rationale for the carriers commissioned while he was PM and explained why so little parliamentary time was spent on such a large spending project:

'These are military decisions, made on military advice for military reasons. The reason the decisions have been made is that if we are to retain a global presence as a Navy, as armed forces and as a country, we will need these aircraft carriers in the years to come. We will need them not only because they are important to the defence of the Falklands, but because they are important for maintaining the 500-year role of the Royal Navy in being available to assist in any part of the world.'<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/yb4mf88r>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jul/21/michael-gove-says-cabinet-is-united-on-brexit-transition-period>>

<sup>106</sup> The second carrier is HM Prince of Wales, due to be launched from Rosyth later this year.

<sup>107</sup> <<http://www.aircraftcarrieralliance.co.uk>> Worth a look at this. The 'alliance' is a cosy little cartel whose aim is getting its hands on tax income.

<sup>108</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/ycqe6m3c>> or <<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2010-11-01/debates/1011025000002/AircraftCarriers>>

There you go: a lifetime in the British labour movement and he offers us Britain's world role, about which the military knows best.

However *The Times* (11 July) – in '£3bn warship is vulnerable to low-cost missiles' – reported on a sceptical paper from the Royal United Services Institute pointing out that (expensive) carriers are vulnerable to attack by (cheap) missiles. (Remember the French Exocet missiles which almost won the Malvinas war for Argentina?) Others have noted that the ship is run by the venerable and vulnerable Windows XP<sup>109</sup> and the construction costs are going to rise – as they always do, once they've got the initial fake price past the Treasury – probably to double the initial estimate.<sup>110</sup>

And which planes are going to be using this floating runway? The American F35, in many reports one of the worst planes ever built: designed to do everything for everybody and failing to do almost all of it. In other words, it's business as usual: to continue Britain's role as the cheer-leader for American military power, a British aircraft carrier is going to be parked somewhere – probably in the Middle East – flying expensive but dodgy<sup>111</sup> American planes on operations approved by America.

With rather less media attention, a campaign was launched a couple of months before this to provide free tampons to schoolgirls who receive free school meals because poor parents can't afford to buy them and girls are skipping school every month. Welcome to Blighty 2017!

## **Illumination**

**W**ill Banyan, who wrote 'The "Rothschild connection": the House of Rothschild and the invasion of Iraq' in *Lobster* 63,<sup>112</sup> has written a very interesting account of the relationship between the media and the Bilderberg group, 'Bilderberg Myths: "Fake News" from *Infowars* and Friends'.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> See, for example, <[https://www.theregister.co.uk/2017/06/27/hms\\_queen\\_elizabeth\\_running\\_windows\\_xp/](https://www.theregister.co.uk/2017/06/27/hms_queen_elizabeth_running_windows_xp/)>.

<sup>110</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/64y8e27>> or <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/robertpeston/2011/04/aircraft\\_carrier\\_costs\\_to\\_rise.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/robertpeston/2011/04/aircraft_carrier_costs_to_rise.html)>

<sup>111</sup> See, for example, <<http://tinyurl.com/musjr6b>> or <<http://www.dote.osd.mil/pub/reports/FY2016/pdf/dod/2016f35jsf.pdf>>

<sup>112</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/ydba39hw>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster63/lob63-rothschild.pdf>>

<sup>113</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y9yqsrpb>> or <<http://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2017/06/29/bilderberg-myths-fake-news-from-infowars-and-friends/>>.

Arguing against some of those on the American paranoid fringe who still cling to the idea that Bilderberg is a big secret (and secret society), Banyan shows in great detail that the group has been reported on or written about quite a lot in the last 40 years. This is the best article I have seen on Bilderberg since the late Mike Peters' seminal piece in *Lobster* 32.

## Spooky

On Jefferson Morley's site about the Kennedy assassination, [jfkfacts.org](http://jfkfacts.org), Morley writes: 'One of the stories I will tell in *The Ghost: The Secret Life of CIA Spymaster James Jesus Angleton* is how the British secret intelligence services pressured Harold Wilson, the leftist Labour leader, into retiring early.' In support of this he offers an article by Alexander Cockburn.<sup>114</sup> Cockburn quotes fragments from David Leigh's *The Wilson Plot* and asserts: ' . . . unending smears about his personal life, certainly contributed to his sudden resignation as prime minister in the spring of 1976. There had indeed been a "very British coup".'

Well, no, actually, there hadn't been (not that some people hadn't tried).

Angleton got the fantasy about Wilson-as-Soviet stooge from the KGB defector Golitsyn. Golitsyn was either simply playing defector games – singing for his supper and telling Angleton the things he thought Angleton wanted to hear – or was part of a KGB operation to mess with Angleton's head. While a section of MI5, fronted by Peter Wright, believed this nonsense from Angleton, most of the British intelligence-security establishment didn't.

Wilson had told his confidants within the Labour Party that he would retire at 60. During his final period in office 1974-76 he was visibly tiring, his alcohol consumption was increasing and his once formidable memory was declining. His father had suffered from Alzheimers and Wilson was afraid it would afflict him, too. Which it did.<sup>115</sup>

## Trump, Russia, hacking and all that

Things we definitely know: Trump wanted to lift the sanctions on Russia which

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<sup>114</sup> 'Ashes and Diamonds' from *In These Times*, 1 February 1, 1989, p. 17.

<sup>115</sup> Wilson's speech patterns in his later years have been analysed and appear to show signs of Alzheimers. See <<http://tinyurl.com/ycykjg2p>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1084534/Former-British-Prime-Minister-Wilson-suffering-Alzheimers-resigned.html>>

had been imposed by the Obama government in 2014.<sup>116</sup> His Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, was CEO of an American oil company which did a deal with the Russian state allowing it to drill there.<sup>117</sup> Tillerson also opposed the sanctions.<sup>118</sup> Trump has had relationships with Russian banks.<sup>119</sup> In short, some of the Trump regime's leading figures did not share the belief in the new 'Russian threat' which was generated during the Obama years; and it is not surprising that some of them had meetings with Russian officials.

After which it starts to get fuzzy. We have had a series of reports suggesting that Russians – hackers? spooks? military? – intervened during the recent presidential election and have been hacking American data bases.

There are three drivers of this. Electoral politics: the Democrats are using it to attack Trump. Internal Democratic Party politics: explaining why Hillary Clinton lost will influence the direction of the Democratic Party. The neo-conservative, corporate-oriented wing of that party wants to establish that Clinton's loss was the result of external factors, not a bad candidate with policies the electorate don't want. Russian hacking is a scapegoat for the Democrats' defeat. If they fail to make that stick, the more radical wing of the Democrats may triumph. (There is an obvious comparison with New Labour and the Labour Party led by Corbyn.) The third factor is what we might as well call the military-industrial-intelligence complex, which wants the new cold war to continue (good for careers and profits).

The Russia-gate thesis wasn't helped by the publication in January of an official account of allegations about Russian actions (and a great deal about the TV station Russia Today) which was received with wide-spread derision.<sup>120</sup> People on the left (who hope for an end to the new cold war or want to change the orientation of the Democratic Party), and the right (supporters of Trump) are resisting the Russiagate narrative. There's Pat Buchanan, for example, still best remembered as a Nixon speech-writer, who recently wrote this:

'We are approaching something of a civil war where the capital city seeks

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<sup>116</sup> See, for example <<http://tinyurl.com/y9yr3w8f>> or <<http://uk.businessinsider.com/trump-wanted-to-lift-russia-sanctions-days-after-taking-office-2017-6?r=US&IR=T>>

<sup>117</sup> Tillerson has been awarded the Russian Order of Friendship by President Putin for his contribution to developing cooperation in the energy sector.

<sup>118</sup> See, for example, <<https://350.org/oil-russia-and-trump/>>.

<sup>119</sup> See, for example, <<http://tinyurl.com/yc2esllt>> or <<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/05/trump-lawyers-up-conflicts-of-interest/526185/>>.

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, for example, <<http://tinyurl.com/h4amzgg>> or <<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-01-06/here-us-intelligence-report-accusing-putin-ordering-campaign-influence-us-election>>.

the overthrow of the sovereign and its own restoration . . . . That the objective of this city is to bring Trump down via a deep state-media coup is no secret. Few deny it.’<sup>121</sup>

This is the view of some on the American left, for example those writing at the Consortiumnews website, where Mark Ames upbraided another left-leaning magazine, *Mother Jones*, for its reporting on so-called Russiagate:

‘What passes for “Russia reporting” at *Mother Jones* is mostly just glorified InfoWars paranoia for progressive marks — a cataract of xenophobic conspiracy theories about inscrutable Russian barbarians hellbent on subverting our way of life, spreading chaos, destroying freedom & democracy & tolerance wherever they once flourished. . . . because they hate us, because we’re free.’<sup>122</sup>

Larry Hancock, one of the best of the Kennedy assassination researchers, recently recommended that anyone who doubted Russiagate should read four stories.<sup>123</sup> I did; and while it is true, as Hancock writes, that there are ‘clues’, there is no evidence. A number of these hacker stories<sup>124</sup> claim highly-placed but unnamed sources; but until recently there was no (public) evidence showing Russian, let alone Russian *state* involvement.<sup>125</sup> The closest we have got to evidence is a piece at The Intercept, ‘Top-secret NSA report details Russian hacking effort days before 2016 election’ and a report in the *Washington Post* recounting the Obama administration’s response to receiving a CIA report on Russian hacking in late 2016.<sup>126</sup> To my untrained eye these look like the real deal; but as McGovern and Binney have reported recently, the CIA has the technology to ‘*break into computers and servers and make it look*

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<sup>121</sup> <<http://buchanan.org/blog/nearing-civil-war-127177>>. Sean Hannity, a loopy conservative broadcaster, said something very similar. See <<http://tinyurl.com/yawrf7co>> or <<http://www.salon.com/2017/06/21/sean-hannity-sounds-the-alarm-says-there-is-a-soft-coup-to-overturn-novembers-election-results/>>.

<sup>122</sup> <<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/06/11/when-mother-jones-wasnt-russia-bashing/>>

<sup>123</sup> The stories are listed at  
<<https://larryhancock.wordpress.com/2017/06/05/patriotic-russian-hackers/>>

<sup>124</sup> For example <<http://tinyurl.com/ybquwdql>> or <<https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-06-13/russian-breach-of-39-states-threatens-future-u-s-elections>>.

<sup>125</sup> If you’re not as picky about evidence as I am, Russia-gate looks impressive. See, for example, <<http://tinyurl.com/y9dfg5jz>> or <<http://www.theweeklings.com/golear/2017/04/05/how-deep-is-your-treason-the-three-tiers-of-trumprussia/>>.

<sup>126</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y6u283qk>> or <<https://theintercept.com/2017/06/05/top-secret-nsa-report-details-russian-hacking-effort-days-before-2016-election/>>

*like others did it*'.<sup>127</sup> Which makes things difficult. At the very least it provides a get-out clause for those who don't want to believe that Russia has been hacking. On the other hand, the Ukraine has experienced years of hacking of the computers running its infrastructure,<sup>128</sup> and who can be responsible for that if not the Russian state? Or would McGovern and Binney want to claim that it's the CIA pretending to be the Russians?

## **The new anti-semitism**

**O**r, more accurately, the new definition of anti-semitism. The definition has been changed: if you criticise Israel, says the Israeli state and its supporters, it is now *true by definition* that you are anti-semitic. Hence all the charges of anti-semitism in the Labour Party in the last couple of years. How this has been done, in a long march through international institutions, is discussed in a very interesting article by Alison Weir (who is, by this definition, an anti-semite).<sup>129</sup> To this issue these columns will return.

## **Following the money**

**W**hat does this recent headline say about current American diplomacy? 'Qatar signs a \$12 billion arms deal with Defense Department after being labeled a state sponsor of terror by Donald Trump'.<sup>130</sup>

## **Two thoughts on the General Election**

**I**n the week preceding the election I was wondering what the big, last minute bombshell about Corbyn would be and who would run it. In the event we had the now notorious 13 pages in the *Mail* denigrating him but the new claim was in the *Daily Telegraph*:

'Jeremy Corbyn was monitored by undercover officers for two decades amid fears that he was attempting to undermine democracy, the *Telegraph* can disclose.

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<sup>127</sup> See below, under subhead 'Trump'.

<sup>128</sup> <[https://www.wired.com/story/russian-hackers-attack-ukraine/?mbid=synd\\_digg](https://www.wired.com/story/russian-hackers-attack-ukraine/?mbid=synd_digg)>

<sup>129</sup> <<http://ifamericaknew.org/history/antisemitism.html>>

<sup>130</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/y7ferzth>> or <<http://www.salon.com/2017/06/15/qatar-signs-12-billion-arms-deal-with-defense-department-after-being-labeled-a-state-sponsor-of-terror-by-donald-trump/>>



A former Special Branch officer, who does not wish to be named, said that the Labour leader was monitored because he was "deemed to be a subversive."<sup>131</sup>

In a follow-up the *Daily Mail* reported

'Corbyn's file was kept open by six commanders of the branch over the course of 20 years amid fears he was attempting to undermine democracy.'

Normally this would be a big story/scandal but in the present climate it may simply be ignored.

My second thought is about Brexit. In this column in the previous issue of *Lobster*, no. 73, I commented:

'Most of the groups in this society which have power, the EU itself, of course, and the Euro-establishment here, are opposed to Brexit. Consequently I do not believe it will happen. As the "negotiations" proceed, a negative feedback loop will be created: as more details emerge, criticism will increase; as the negative consequences of Brexit become clearer, public support for it will decline; as support declines, MPs who are fearful of opposing their constituents' wishes will grow emboldened and political opposition to Brexit will grow; as the political tide begins to turn, opposition from within the British economy will become more vocal. And so on.'

The loss of Conservative Party seats in the House of Commons is the beginning of that negative feedback loop. There is now a substantial majority in the House of Commons opposed to Brexit (as there is in the Lords) and Mrs May failed in her attempt to get a resounding public vote in support of her Brexit plans. I don't see how this will unfold but I think Brexit is dead.

## **All the president's sex slaves**

**I**n the piece in the previous issue of *Lobster* headed 'Fake news? Fake something . . .' I noted that the site globalresearch.ca had run a piece about the so-called Pizzagate story in the US. This is a fantasy about the upper echelons of US politics and pedophilia which is circulating on the Net. The origins of this can be traced back to an earlier fantasy about the CIA and mind-

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<sup>131</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/yc5svrl3>> or <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/06/exclusive-special-branch-monitored-jeremy-corbyn-20-years-amid/>>

controlled sex slaves which goes under the name of Project Monarch.<sup>132</sup> All one can say about Project Monarch is that apart from the testimony of putative victims of said program – basically Cathy O’Brien – there is no evidence that Monarch existed at all. And O’Brien’s claims are laughable, as even the most cursory look at them shows.<sup>133</sup>

## Manchester

To my knowledge it was voltairenet.org which first suggested that the bombing of the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester was blowback from MI6 operations in Libya.<sup>134</sup> When I checked I discovered that the *Daily Telegraph* had run essentially the same story – bar the reference to MI6, of course – the day before.<sup>135</sup> A couple of days later Peter Osborne in the *Mail*<sup>136</sup> and Max Blumenthal in Salon.com,<sup>137</sup> placed the Manchester-Libya events in the wider picture of American (and British) intervention in the Middle East and North Africa.

Blumenthal referred to the MI5 officer David Shayler, who had been on that agency’s Libya desk, and who spoke of the use by MI6 of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) in an assassination attempt on Libya’s Prime

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<sup>132</sup> Anthony Frewin spotted a new book about Monarch by Tracy Twyman. See <<http://tracytwyman.com/books/mind-controlled-sex-slaves-and-the-cia/>>. An earlier version of her ideas can be seen in a 2001 article she wrote about Monarch, Satanic child abuse *et al.* See <<http://tinyurl.com/y974cmds>> or <<https://homelessholocaust.wordpress.com/2012/08/12/the-stepford-whores-project-monarch-and-mind-controlled-sex-slaves/>>.

<sup>133</sup> As a CIA mind-controlled sex slave O’Brien claims to have had sex with, *inter alia*: Presidents Reagan, Bush, and Ford; CIA Director Bill Casey; Madeleine Albright and Dick Cheney; Senators Byrd and Spector, Congressmen Trafficant and VanderJagt, and Governors Thornburgh, Blanchard, and Alexander; Prime Minister of Canada Mulroney, President of Mexico de la Madrid, and Saudi Arabian King Fahd; and Bill and Hillary Clinton. See <<http://tinyurl.com/y974cmds>>.

<sup>134</sup> <<http://www.voltairenet.org/article196455.htm>>

<sup>135</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/l8h2hbj>> or <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/24/renegade-libyan-faction-accuses-britain-nurturing-manchester/>>

<sup>136</sup> ‘Why MI6 must share the blame for the jihadis in our midst’ at <<http://tinyurl.com/yctehkpa>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4546934/PETER-OBORNE-MI6-share-blame-jihadis.html>>

<sup>137</sup> ‘The Manchester bombing is blowback from the West’s disastrous interventions and covert proxy wars’ at <<http://tinyurl.com/ybd5s6fh>> or <[http://www.salon.com/2017/05/27/the-manchester-bombing-is-blowback-from-the-wests-disastrous-interventions-and-covert-proxy-wars\\_partner/](http://www.salon.com/2017/05/27/the-manchester-bombing-is-blowback-from-the-wests-disastrous-interventions-and-covert-proxy-wars_partner/)>

Minister Muammar Gaddafi. The father of the Manchester bomber was a member of LIFG.<sup>138</sup> So, yes, the Manchester bombing is almost literal blowback from the British state (and secret state's) dickering with Libya in the 1990-2005 period.<sup>139</sup> Shayler's knowledge of MI6's funding of LIFG may explain why the British state pursued him so hard.

The presence of a reported 10,000 Libyans in Manchester, an unknown number of whom are sympathetic to radical Islam, is a consequence of the pretensions of empire among our leaders, both elected and unelected.

## 9/11 and the left

There is an interesting essay, 'Beyond their wildest dreams: 9/11 and the American Left', by Dr Graeme MacQueen, former co-editor of the *Journal of 9/11 Studies*.<sup>140</sup> MacQueen lists all the American left websites which have declined to take the 9/11 researchers seriously and tells us that this allergy to what we might call deep political research goes back to the Kennedy assassination. He notes that some prominent American leftists – he cites Noam Chomsky and Alexander Cockburn – dismissed JFK's assassination.<sup>141</sup> I think that some of the reluctance shown by Chomsky, Cockburn and others is a fear of being tarred with the conspiracy theory brush. This fear of guilt by association with certain sections of the extreme right-wing has been discussed in *Lobster* before. Some of the reluctance also comes from a sense that we shouldn't be distracted from the more important areas of history – imperialism, capitalism, and now the environmental crisis – by individual incidents such as assassinations that are of little consequence by comparison.

MacQueen's essay appeared on a site I had not come across before, Truth and Shadows, devoted to 9/11. I glanced at the other essays listed on the site's home page. One caught my eye: 'How we KNOW an airliner did NOT

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<sup>138</sup> What's the likelihood that Ramadan Abedi (the Manchester bomber's father) was one of the dozen LIFG members resident in the UK that were affected by this: 'Libyan dissidents put under house arrest following Tony Blair's "deal in the desert"'? (*Daily Mail* 11 September 2011). See <<http://tinyurl.com/646bl8j>> or <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2036049/Libyan-dissidents-house-arrest-following-Tony-Blairs-deal-desert.html>>

<sup>139</sup> Discussed in Mark Curtis' *Secret Affairs: Britain's Collusion with Radical Islam* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2010). On LIFG see <<http://tinyurl.com/ydza5ebo>> or <[https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Document:Manchester\\_Alleged\\_Suicide\\_Bomber\\_Linked\\_to\\_Libya\\_Islamic\\_Fighting\\_Group](https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Document:Manchester_Alleged_Suicide_Bomber_Linked_to_Libya_Islamic_Fighting_Group)>

<sup>140</sup> <<https://truthandshadows.wordpress.com/2017/03/14/911-and-american-left/>>

<sup>141</sup> He tells us that Cockburn endorsed the Warren Commission verdict.

hit the Pentagon'. This is one of the most striking of the 'truthers' claims. If true it means that the eye-witnesses who say they saw an airliner flying into the Pentagon are lying.<sup>142</sup> Were they part of the plot? Or were they warned off immediately after the event? Both propositions seem vanishingly implausible to me. The essay contained this assertion:

'There is NOT ONE piece of wreckage that has been positively tied to Flight 77. The engines, virtually indestructible, were not recovered, although it is claimed that an engine "core" was from one of the 757 engines. There were no bodies, no seats, no pieces of luggage. There were a couple of pieces of fuselage but they were big enough that one person could pick them up. There's no proof it came from that plane.'

It's been a while since I looked at 9/11 but I thought I remembered quite a lot of photographs of debris inside and outside the Pentagon. So I went to Google Images and asked for '9/11, Pentagon, debris' and yes, there are now hundreds if not thousands of such images.

As for the claim that 'There is NOT ONE piece of wreckage that has been positively tied to Flight 77' – why would anyone seek to do that? It's only some of the 9/11 'truthers' who ask for that level of proof (knowing they won't get it). Everyone else takes it for granted that the debris – yes, including engine and fuselage parts – in and around the Pentagon is from the missing Flight 77.

In the comments below this essay 'Tamera' writes:

'I was on the phone with my hubby when I heard a whirring noise. I thought the web server I was working on was acting up. After that I woke up on my back on the 1st floor. I didn't know it was the 1st floor yet, that realization would come later when we were trying to get out of the pitch black office with wires hanging down and zapping everything they touched. Once we were able to crawl from floor 1 up to floor 2 using fallen computer equipment, the first thing we smelled was fuel. One of our group, a hobby pilot, new [sic] it was jet fuel. As we got out onto the corridor we weren't able to see through the black wall of smoke leading to the E ring. Bloody bodies full of glass from the windows were making their way out, soldiers trying to go back in to help others but couldn't see. Long story short... saw the bits of plane parts all over the parking lot when we got out. Those who were there . . . know . . . those who talk nonsense like this blogger know nothing of what they speak. Many years later . . . I can still remember the smell, see the bodies and hear the cries of my dead

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<sup>142</sup> See <<http://911research.wtc7.net/pentagon/evidence/witnesses/bart.html>> and <<https://ratical.org/ratville/CAH/F77pentagon.pdf>> for witness statements.

comrades.'

After which the 'truthers' try to explain away 'Tamera's' comments, concluding that she's a troll (and, by inference, that they are being monitored by the American state).

Dr MacQueen wonders why the America Left doesn't take the 9/11 'truthers' seriously. This essay, and the comments below it, suggest why.<sup>143</sup>

## Trump

Hillary Clinton is still thinking about how she lost the election. She claims there was a big Russian-directed social media conspiracy to defeat her,<sup>144</sup> using the data-mining of Cambridge Analytica and the money of American billionaire 'hedgy' Robert Mercer which paid for it.<sup>145</sup> *The Atlantic*, which published Clinton's comments, sources this Russian conspiracy claim to two members of the Senate Intelligence Committee who referred to '*some reports . . . that there were upwards of a thousand internet trolls working out of a facility in Russia, in effect taking over a series of computers which are then called botnets, that can then generate news down to specific areas.*' (emphasis added) The reality is more complex.<sup>146</sup>

As yet there is no *evidence* that all this social media wizardry had any effect. There are lots of other possible explanations of why Clinton lost the election: a poor campaign on behalf of a poor candidate, offering the same old pro-corporate, neo-con lines as her husband; voter suppression techniques and gerrymandering by the Republicans; and disenchanted supporters of Bernie Sanders not voting for her.

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<sup>143</sup> A recent more detailed account of the evidence showing that it was a plane which struck the Pentagon is at <<http://tinyurl.com/yb7p9dcz>> or <<https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2016/10/07/bringing-closure-to-the-911-pentagon-debate/>>.

<sup>144</sup> See <<http://tinyurl.com/y6vg7lvf>> or <<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/05/hillary-clinton-information-wars/528765/>>.

<sup>145</sup> On Mercer and Cambridge Analytica see <<http://tinyurl.com/lkhgkdk>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/may/07/the-great-british-brexit-robbery-hijacked-democracy>>; and <<http://tinyurl.com/zcokxl8>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/dec/04/google-democracy-truth-internet-search-facebook>>; and <<http://tinyurl.com/jd4fluh>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/feb/26/robert-mercerc-breitbart-war-on-media-steve-bannon-donald-trump-nigel Farage>>.

<sup>146</sup> See <<http://observer.com/2017/04/russia-bots-bernie-sanders-progressives/>> and the detailed chronology of events at <<http://tinyurl.com/yahoqk6o>> or <<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/05/trump-putin-russia-leaks-hacks-tweets-2016-election-timeline>>.

Without suggesting that I have any idea what is going on, let me draw your attention to three striking essays. The first, by the excellent Russ Baker and two others, is a long analysis of Trump and his links to the Russian Mob. It seems to explain why the FBI appears to be foot-dragging in its inquiries: they're trying to protect an older operation of theirs which penetrated the Russian Mob in the USA.<sup>147</sup>

The second, 'Tainted Leaks: Disinformation and Phishing With a Russian Nexus', shows how complex the analysis of data disinformation campaigns is becoming. It's summary is this:

'This report describes an extensive Russia-linked phishing and disinformation campaign. It provides evidence of how documents stolen from a prominent journalist and critic of Russia was tampered with and then "leaked" to achieve specific propaganda aims. We name this technique "tainted leaks." The report illustrates how the twin strategies of phishing and tainted leaks are sometimes used in combination to infiltrate civil society targets, and to seed mistrust and disinformation. It also illustrates how domestic considerations, specifically concerns about regime security, can motivate espionage operations, particularly those targeting civil society.'<sup>148</sup>

The third, by Ray McGovern (ex-CIA) and William Binney (ex-NSA), suggests that we are well and truly through the looking-glass. They tell us:

'On March 31, 2017, WikiLeaks released original CIA documents — almost completely ignored by the mainstream media — showing that the agency had *created a program allowing it to break into computers and servers and make it look like others did it* by leaving telltale signs (like Cyrillic markings, for example). The capabilities shown in what WikiLeaks calls the "Vault 7" trove of CIA documents required the creation of hundreds of millions of lines of source code. At \$25 per line of code, that amounts to about \$2.5 billion for each 100 million code lines. But the Deep State has that kind of money and would probably consider the expenditure a good return on investment for "proving" the Russians hacked into Democratic Party emails.

In other words, it is altogether possible that the hacking attributed to Russia was actually one of several "active measures" undertaken by a cabal consisting of the CIA, FBI, NSA and Clapper — the same agencies

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<sup>147</sup> <<https://whowhatwhy.org/2017/05/17/fbi-cant-tell-trump-russia-2/>>

<sup>148</sup> <<https://citizenlab.org/2017/05/tainted-leaks-disinformation-phish/>>

responsible for the lame, evidence-free report of Jan. 6.’<sup>149</sup> (emphasis added)<sup>150</sup>

## True or what?

The first three of what will be many books about the ‘post truth’ era we are now apparently living in were reviewed in the *Guardian* on 23 May.<sup>151</sup> I am uncertain about how seriously we should take all this. This is not an entirely new phenomenon. There was a 2001 anthology, for example, *YOU ARE BEING LIED TO: the Disinformation Guide to Media Distortion, Historical Whitewashes and Cultural Myths* (New York: the Disinformation Company). The authors who contributed to this covered the spectrum from the sober and academic like Howard Zinn to the conspiratorially-minded Alex Constantine.<sup>152</sup> What is new is that it used to be only the left which complained about the lies of the mainstream media (MSM) and used MSM as a term of abuse. Now it’s the left *and* the right. All my life the British Left has assumed that the MSM would tell lies, to conceal the embarrassing truth, to denigrate the left, support the Conservative Party and to express the opinions of the owners of the media. Rupert Murdoch’s set of newspapers and the Rothermere family’s *Daily Mail* have been around a long time; and their predecessors were not markedly different.

The origin of this ‘post truth’ world in politics lies in changes to broadcasting regulations made in 1987 by the Federal Communications Commission. American broadcasters were then freed from the so-called Fairness Doctrine – the legal requirement to present multiple viewpoints on political issues.<sup>153</sup> This opened the door to ‘shock jocks’ and political attack radio – Rush Limbaugh etc. – lying, in short. A decade later the Internet developed, without state regulation, and with it the growth of the conspiracy theory culture we now live in and the rise to prominence of shysters like Alex Jones.

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<sup>149</sup> <<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/05/20/the-gaping-holes-of-russia-gate/>>

<sup>150</sup> For an explanation of how Google is gamed to spread fake news, see <<http://tinyurl.com/ycmahxdl>> or <<https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2017/06/how-the-trump-russia-data-machine-games-google-to.html>>.

<sup>151</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/kz863rd>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/21/post-truth-evan-davis-matthew-dancona-james-ball-fake-news-nick-cohen-review>>

<sup>152</sup> It included a version of my writing on New Labour as the American tendency.

<sup>153</sup> See <<http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1880786,00.html>>

## Marshall

**J**onathan Marshall, who has two excellent essays in the previous edition of *Lobster*, has three more important pieces of work on the Consortiumnews website about political lobbies in the US political system: the China lobby of the 1950s and today's Saudi and Israeli lobbies.<sup>154</sup> Marshall is about as good as it gets these days.

## London calling

**A**nd then there was the story claiming that 'London economy subsidises rest of UK region bar London, the south-east and the east of England in 2015/16'.<sup>155</sup>

This is a classic case of blaming the victims. The economic policies of the Thatcher governments were designed to benefit the City of London, which largely funds the travel-to-London work region. The victims of those policies were British manufacturing which contracted under the pressure of the highly-valued pound and the abolition of exchange controls. The City of London (and thus the wider greater London area) boomed but much of the rest of the UK was depressed. Since when little has been done to rebuild those depressed areas except pour public spending (dole money) into them.

I am suspicious of the Conservative Party's recent enthusiasm for regional autonomy – city mayors, for example. I suspect the long-range plan is to create fiscally autonomous regions in England which would have to raise their own taxes. This would free London from the 'burden' of the rest of the UK and effectively create the city-state which some in the City of London have been dreaming of since the expansion of the City in the late 1980s after 'big bang'.

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<sup>154</sup> See <<https://consortiumnews.com/tag/jonathan-marshall/>> where you will find a list of the essays by Marshall on the Consortiumnews site.

<sup>155</sup> <<http://tinyurl.com/lud7vh8>> or < <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/may/23/uk-budget-deficit-grows-to-more-than-10bn-as-people-spend-less>>