

The view from the bridge

Robin Ramsay

*Thanks to Nick Must, Garrick Alder and Sally Walker
for editorial assistance with this edition of Lobster.*

Just another Texas murder?

CovertAction Magazine has an essay by its editor, Jeremy Kuzamarov, on the murders which accompanied LBJ's rise to power.¹ The essay is very good, thoroughly documented. Just before the endnotes is this: 'The author would like to thank Robert Morrow for his help with this article.' Morrow is a Texas-based researcher who has been promoting the LBJ-dunnit explanation of JFK's assassination.² If you want a brief introduction to the dark side LBJ's political career, illustrated with many excellent photographs, this is as good as any I can think of. But Kuzamarov stops short of examining the LBJ-dunnit explanation of Dallas. The only references to that come in a couple of footnotes, where the idea is dismissed as unproven.

Among the sources cited by Kuzamarov is J. Evetts Haley, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon: A Study in Illegitimate Power* (Canyon, Texas: Palo Duro Press, 1964).³ This is the most striking of the immediate crop of books which followed the assassination. For Haley laid out much of the same material that Kusamarov uses in his essay – the dead bodies which punctuated LBJ's political ascent. Haley didn't have as much evidence as been uncovered since, but the basics are there. He was the first to suggest – if only by implication – that while JFK's assassination was a big deal to the rest of the world, in Texas

¹ 'Was LBJ a "Serial Killer" Who Advanced His Career By Murdering at Least 6 Other Men Who Stood In His Way?' at <<https://tinyurl.com/237rz5hz>> or <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2023/02/06/was-lbj-a-serial-killer-who-advanced-his-career-by-murdering-at-least-6-other-men-who-stood-in-his-way/?mc_cid=fea08de285&mc_eid=53f70ad8e2>.

² He writes at <<https://robertmorrowpoliticalresearchblog.blogspot.com/>> where you have to ignore the preposterous vainglorious boasting.

³ Although he may have been little known outside Texas, in that state he was a well known figure and historian. See <<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/haley-james-evetts-sr>>.

politics it was just another LBJ murder. Haley even discussed Malcolm 'Mac' Wallace who is believed to have done some of the killing for LBJ.⁴ To my knowledge this was the sole reference to Wallace in the literature until Glen Sample and Mark Column were told by Loy Factor about a man just called 'Wallace' who had hired Factor as a potential shooter in 1962. Their identification of 'Wallace' is at the heart of their 1995 *The Men on the Sixth Floor*. On page 178 Glenn Sample writes:

During the research and investigation phase of this book I once had the opportunity to communicate with a retired member of the intelligence community. He related to me about an event he once attended, a luncheon at the Petroleum Club in San Antonio, in 1973.

'I couldn't pass up the chance to ask Texas oil guys their view of the Hunt family being involved in JFK's death. After much laughter my host said, "Hell, half of Dallas was in on it!"'

Labour and anti-semitism

George Monbiot has entered the debate about Labour and anti-semitism. In an essay in the *Guardian* he commented on the possible legal costs (£millions) to the Labour Party if it proceeds with a civil lawsuit against former employees accused of leaking an internal Party report on how it handled anti-semitism.⁵ Towards the end of the essay Monbiot returns to the notorious Panorama programme on anti-semitism in Labour and shows that two of the quotes used in the programme by former Labour Party staffers were not accurate and conveyed meaning not apparently intended.⁶ The programme's director John

⁴ Haley's book was recommended by Jack Ruby in a letter he wrote while in prison. Ruby implies that reading the book would explain JFK's assassination. Extracts are quoted on p. 604 of Phillip F. Nelson's *LBJ The Mastermind of JFK's Assassination* (Xlibris, 2010). This was reviewed in *Lobster* 61 at <<https://tinyurl.com/5n6f8wa4>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/61/lbj-the-mastermind-of-jfks-assassination-by-phillip-f-nelson/>>

⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/2bda7mwb>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/feb/15/sunak-labour-keir-starmer-labour-party>>

⁶ Had Monbiot gone a step further he could have mentioned that Izzy Lenga, one of those misquoted, had been a leader of the Federation of Zionist Youth and had been trained by the Israeli army – details Panorama failed to mention. See <<https://tinyurl.com/mr2mh9bb>> or <<https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/asa-winstanley/labour-womens-candidate-izzy-lenga-trained-israeli-army>>.

Ware and producer Neil Grant⁷ responded to Monbiot in a letter. One of the misquotations had been accidentally created in the editing of the programme, they said. In the second example they try to evade acknowledging it as a misquotation. See for yourself.⁸

The anti-semitism campaign against Corbyn is the most extraordinary smear campaign in this country in my lifetime. There have been many accounts of it⁹ but the best analysis I have seen is by what I think of as the Glasgow Media Group, though this book is not listed on that group's website. At any rate Greg Philo, one of the names I associate with that group, is one of the co-authors of *Bad News for Labour: Antisemitism, the Party and Public Belief* (Pluto Press, 2019).¹⁰ The extraordinary scale of the assault on Corbyn is described on page 1:

A search of eight national newspapers shows that from 15 June 2015 to 31 March 2019, there had been 5497 stories on the subject of Corbyn, antisemitism and the Labour Party.

In sharp contrast, the writings on this subject by members of Jewish Voice for Labour (JVL) get zero attention from our major media. In a recent comment on the European Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report on anti-semitism and Labour,¹¹ they write:

Our most recent letter of 8 February 2023 referred the EHRC to the latest statistics on Jews targeted under Labour's disciplinary procedures.

JVL is currently aware of fully **60 Jewish Labour Party members** targeted.

We estimate that:

⁷ Neil Grant was one of Ken Livingstone MP's researchers in the later 1980s (when I met him) and it was through Grant that Colin Wallace directed the material that Livingstone used in the House of Commons about Wallace's claims about the war in Northern Ireland.

⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/568z6m5v>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2023/feb/17/questions-raised-about-bbc-panorama-episode-on-labour-and-antisemitism>>

⁹ From 2016 see <<https://tinyurl.com/2xzk5ef8>> or <<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/jeremy-corbyn-media-bias-labour-mainstream-press-lse-study-misrepresentation-we-can-t-ignore-bias-a7144381.html>> and <<https://tinyurl.com/2xsrj5d6>> or <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/jeremy-corbyn-impartiality-and-media-misrepresentation/>>.

¹⁰ This is online free at <<https://tinyurl.com/yckhjan3>> or <<https://s3.amazonaws.com/supadu-imgix/plutopress-uk/pdfs/look-inside/LI-9780745340661.pdf>>.

¹¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/musntxtx>> or <<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/investigation-into-antisemitism-in-the-labour-party.pdf>> I had a scroll through this. There are almost no examples of anti-semitism in it.

A full, Jewish member of JVL is **at least 37 times more likely to be investigated for antisemitism** than an average Labour Party member.

A full, Jewish member of JVL is **54 times more likely to be expelled** than an average Labour Party member.

A full, Jewish member of JVL is **63 times more likely to be auto-excluded** (i.e., expelled for supporting a proscribed group) than an average Labour Party member.

A JVL Executive Committee member is **462 times more likely to be auto-excluded** (i.e., expelled for supporting a proscribed group) than an average Labour Party member.¹² (emphases in the original)

JVL Jewish members are obviously the wrong kind of Jews for Sir Keir's brave new Labour.

Woke imperialism

Identity politics and diversity allow liberals to wallow in a cloying moral superiority as they castigate, censor and deplatform those who do not linguistically conform to politically correct speech. They are the new Jacobins. This game disguises their passivity in the face of corporate abuse, neoliberalism, permanent war and the curtailment of civil liberties. They do not confront the institutions that orchestrate social and economic injustice. They seek to make the ruling class more palatable. With the support of the Democratic Party, the liberal media, academia and social media platforms in Silicon Valley, demonize the victims of the corporate coup d'etat and deindustrialization. They make their primary political alliances with those who embrace identity politics, whether they are on Wall Street or in the Pentagon. They are the useful idiots of the billionaire class, moral crusaders who widen the divisions within society that the ruling oligarchs foster to maintain control.¹³

Thus Chris Hedges. In her amusing book *Welcome to the Woke Trials* (London: Academica Press, 2021) Julie Burchill argues something similar, albeit from an entirely different perspective.

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¹² <<https://tinyurl.com/2zm2jdmz>> and <<https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/statement/the-ehrc-has-spoken-labour-is-no-place-for-left-wing-jews/>>

¹³ <<https://consortiumnews.com/2023/02/06/chris-hedges-woke-imperialism/>>

Ukraine

Those on the left who are opposed to the Ukrainian resistance to the Russian invasion write a great deal about the way that NATO/US 'provoked' Russia into the invasion. One of those, Caitlin Johnstone, quotes Noam Chomsky on this.

'Right now if you're a respectable writer and you want to write in the main journals, you talk about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, you have to call it "the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine," Chomsky said.

"It's a very interesting phrase; it was never used before. You look back, you look at Iraq, which was totally unprovoked, nobody ever called it 'the unprovoked invasion of Iraq'. In fact I don't know if the term was ever used — if it was it was very marginal. Now you look it up on Google, and hundreds of thousands of hits. Every article that comes out has to talk about the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

Why? Because they know perfectly well it was provoked,' Chomsky said. 'That doesn't justify it, but it was massively provoked.' (emphasis added)¹⁴

In fact if you google it, there are quite a few hits for 'the unprovoked invasion of Iraq'. No matter. My question to Chomsky (and others with his position) would be this: an *invasion* was provoked? Surely the invasion was just the latest Russian action after their occupation of Crimea and their intervention in the Donbas in 2014, in response to the rejection – by the Ukrainian parliament, let us not forget – of Russian-backed President Yanukovych. The Russians claim that the West began the war in 2014 but that is just disinformation. The *Russians* began the war that year. Yes, the activities of NATO/US and, to a much lesser extent, the EU in Ukraine in encouraging Ukraine to look west and not east were seen as provocative by the Russians. And yes, you dicker with great powers at your peril. But even if it is true, as *Consortium News* and *CovertAction* have repeatedly argued, that the US wanted Russia to invade Ukraine,¹⁵ nonetheless the Russian invasion was an *invasion*. European states are now coexisting with a large, nuclear-armed, fascist kleptocracy which is willing to slaughter its neighbours. At which point everything changes.

¹⁴ <<https://caitlinjohnstone.substack.com/p/its-not-okay-for-grown-adults-to-2cf>>

¹⁵ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/yea52jhx>> or <<https://consortiumnews.com/2023/02/24/more-evidence-emerges-that-us-wanted-russia-to-invade/>>. Against which thesis see the various accounts by US military and intelligence personnel of the weeks leading up to the invasion at <<https://tinyurl.com/2akwsx7e>> or <<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/02/24/russia-ukraine-war-oral-history-00083757>>. Not even a hint there that anyone was glad the invasion had happened.

Editors needed!

I was reading Michael Brenner, professor of international affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, on events in Ukraine.¹⁶ He referred to:

The sporadic shelling of Donetsk city (where 14,000 civilians were killed between 2015 and 2002, according to an official estimate by a U.N. commission)

That figure seemed far too high (and he means 2022 not 2002). The actual UN source of the 14,000 figure appears to be this:

Total conflict-related casualties in Ukraine in 2014-2021

OHCHR estimates the total number of conflict-related casualties in Ukraine from 14 April 2014 to 31 December 2021 to be 51,000–54,000:

14,200-14,400 killed (at least 3,404 civilians, estimated 4,400 Ukrainian forces, and estimated 6,500 members of armed groups), and 37-39,000 injured (7,000–9,000 civilians, 13,800–14,200 Ukrainian forces and 15,800-16,200 members of armed groups).¹⁷ (emphasis added)

The 14,000 figure refers to *the whole of Ukraine* not Donetsk city.

*

I keep looking at the various claims of the anti-vax people. Albeit based on nothing more than skimming, to date I have seen nothing of substance. I did, however, see a classic blob on Toby Young's THE DAILY SCEPTIC. This was article's dramatic headline:

'The Link Between the Massive Drop in Birth Rates and mRNA Vaccines is Undeniable'.

But the opening sentence of the concluding paragraph of the article was this:

'It is unknown if or how mRNA vaccination is connected to the decline in birth rates seen since 2021, not just in Sweden but throughout the world'.

Come on, people, pay attention!

¹⁶ His 'Tanks and Tragedy'
at <<https://consortiumnews.com/2023/01/27/tanks-and-tragedy/>>.

¹⁷ It's the final paragraph at <<https://tinyurl.com/5n8u7sc3>> or <https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Conflict-related%20civilian%20casualties%20as%20of%2031%20December%202021%20%28rev%2027%20January%202022%29%20corr%20EN_0.pdf>

I have removed the footnote numbers from the text.

Back to the future

Even the orthodox economics media are starting to register that the UK is in big trouble. There was Ben Marlow, Chief City Commentator of the *Telegraph*, on 28 January with the headline 'Rolls-Royce's scandalous demise is a national tragedy that shames the establishment' and subhead 'There is urgent need for a credible industrial strategy to get the UK back on its feet'.¹⁸

Well, well, well: 'Industrial strategy' and 'the establishment' is the language (and thought) of the pre-Thatcher era. Curious that he's a City commentator because few in the City give a dull fuck about an industrial strategy – or the nation, for that matter. They care about profits and bonuses. And who is this 'establishment' these days?

Russiagate

Here comes Russiagate again. There are two new strands. The first begins with four articles in the *Colombia Journalism Review* by Jeff Gerth, a former *New York Times* journalist (and much else besides).¹⁹ Those articles are over 20,000 words in total and I have only read the first two of the four. To do them justice you would need a great deal more knowledge of the step-by-step development of Russiagate than I possess. Nonetheless I can say this: Gerth shows in enormous detail how the largely Democrat-supporting media in Washington and New York enthusiastically pursued and exaggerated reported links between Trump and Russia, initially in the hope of preventing him winning the 2016 presidential election. In this they were supported by large parts of establishment Washington who feared that Trump would be a disastrous president. For Gerth this seems to mean that Russiagate was largely a fiction.

Another well known liberal journalist, David Corn, has replied to this, showing that while Gerth has done a great job in assembling the narrative, he has – as Corn puts it – missed the point.²⁰

Gerth deflects attention from the core components of Russiagate,

¹⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/5n8w8uck>> or <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2023/01/28/rolls-royces-scandalous-demise-national-tragedy-shames-establishment/?li_source=LI&li_medium=liftigniter-rhr>.

¹⁹ Part one begins at <https://www.cjr.org/special_report/trumped-up-press-versus-president-part-1.php>. On Gerth's distinguished career see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Gerth>.

²⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/yuaum9k4>> or <<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2023/02/columbia-journalism-review-jeff-gerth-trump-russia-the-media/?ref=upstract.com>>

mirroring Donald Trump's own efforts of the past six years to escape accountability for his profound betrayal of the nation. Though Gerth's target is media outlets, particularly the *New York Times* (where he worked for 29 years), Gerth ends up bolstering Trump's phony narrative that there was no Russia scandal, just merely a hoax whipped up by reckless reporters and Trump's enemies in the press, with the assistance of the Deep State.

On this I'm with Corn. You don't have to read much of the House Select Committee on Intelligence report on *Russian Active Measures and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election* to see that this was/is a real issue.²¹

The second thread is more complicated. In 2017 a group called the Alliance for Securing Democracy set up a website it called Hamilton 68. Using the content of 600 Twitter accounts, the identities of which were withheld by the research team, it tried to show how Russian influence was being spread on Twitter. It lasted a year before being pulled by its creators. When Elon Musk took over Twitter he made some of Twitter's internal working available to researchers and people were able to work out to whom those 600 Twitter accounts belonged. Cue outrage and derision when it was discovered that most of the Twitter feeds concerned belonged to US citizens. Here is Matt Taibbi:

Now we know: the "Russian threat" was, in this case at least, just a bunch of ordinary Americans, dressed up to look like a Red Menace.²²

Well, sort of.

The Alliance for Securing Democracy, creators of Hamilton 68, replied to this furore, pointing out that the website had been designed not to identify *who* was recycling Russian disinformation but to show *how* it was happening.²³ The problem here was that it had apparently not occurred to the politically innocent souls who were running the Alliance for Securing Democracy that there could be American citizens who might take the same line as Russia on some issues without the need of Russian influence to do so. The editor of *CovertAction* was one such who discovered his was among the 600 Twitter

²¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/2juk9ty8>> or <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume1.pdf>

²² <<https://tinyurl.com/mpd7jaj4>> or <https://www.racket.news/p/move-over-jayson-blair-meet-hamilton?r=2xssg&utm_medium=ios&utm_campaign=post>

From the right on this see <<https://tinyurl.com/ytic63zy7>> or <<https://thefederalist.com/2023/02/03/by-exposing-hamilton-68-the-twitter-files-proved-the-deep-state-is-a-weapon-aimed-directly-at-you/>>

²³ <<https://tinyurl.com/yjxsf7d3>> or <<https://securingdemocracy.gmfus.org/fact-sheet-hamilton-68-dashboard-2017-2018/>>

accounts being monitored.²⁴

In the event, while Hamilton 68 apparently gave lots of easy copy to lazy journalists covering 'Russian influence', it was short-lived and pretty small beer. In her long account of the Russian-influence story on *The Conversation*, Sophie Marneau gave Hamilton 68 merely a passing reference.²⁵ And the fact that Hamilton 68 got it wrong says nothing about Russian influence operations in the US.

AI on JFK again

So, why not? I tried out the new AI search app ChatGPT. I asked it 'Who was Chauncey Holt?' And in about 5 seconds it produced this:

Chauncey Marvin Holt was an American criminal and self-proclaimed CIA contract agent who claimed to have been involved in several high-profile events in U.S. history, including the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Holt made these claims in the 1990s, but the veracity of his statements has been disputed. The CIA has denied any connection to Holt, and many of his claims have been discredited. Holt passed away in 1997, so it is not possible to verify his involvement in any of the events he claimed to have been a part of.

So: 'many of his claims have been discredited' have they? I asked the app which of his claims had been discredited. *Inter alia* it told me

Holt claimed to have been involved in the delivery of forged documents to the anti-Castro Cuban community in Miami, but this has been proven false through an investigation by the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

So there you go: garbage in and garbage out. I am not about to search for Chauncey Holt in the hundreds of documents produced by the House Select Committee on Assassinations [HSCA], but trust me, Chauncey Holt *was not mentioned* during the HSCA investigation. He was entirely unknown to the JFK research world at that point. (He was in prison for most of the period of the committee's investigation and the HSCA report is not mentioned in his

²⁴ For a debunking of the significance of the Twitter files, see Devin Coldewey, 'Deconstructing "The Twitter Files"' at <https://techcrunch.com/2023/01/13/deconstructing-the-twitter-files/>.

²⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/ytw55ad9>> or <<https://theconversation.com/fact-check-us-what-is-the-impact-of-russian-interference-in-the-us-presidential-election-146711>>

memoir.)

I continued, asking where in the HSCA investigation was Holt referred to.

The exact reference to Chauncey Holt in the House Select Committee on Assassinations report may be difficult to find without access to the full text of the report. However, information about the committee and its findings can be found in various secondary sources such as books and articles that have analyzed its work.

Even though ChatGPT couldn't access it for some reason, the final report of the HSCA is on-line and Chauncey Holt is not in it.²⁶ So where did ChatGPT get the idea that it is false to claim that Holt took forged documents to anti-Castro Cubans in Miami? For several days it was too busy to let me log in but eventually I did and asked it to search for Chauncey Holt + Miami + leaflets and, *inter alia*, got this response:

Holt claimed to have been in Miami, Florida on November 22, 1963, the day of Kennedy's assassination, and to have distributed leaflets there that contained information implicating the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the killing.

This about a man who said he was photographed in Dallas on 22 November 1963! Weirder and weirder. Where is the app finding this nonsense? I asked it and got this reply:

Chauncey Holt made the claim himself in interviews and in a self-published book.

Well no, he didn't. At which point I gave up for the night. Next morning I asked it 'Where was Chauncey Holt on 22 December 1963?' And it replied:

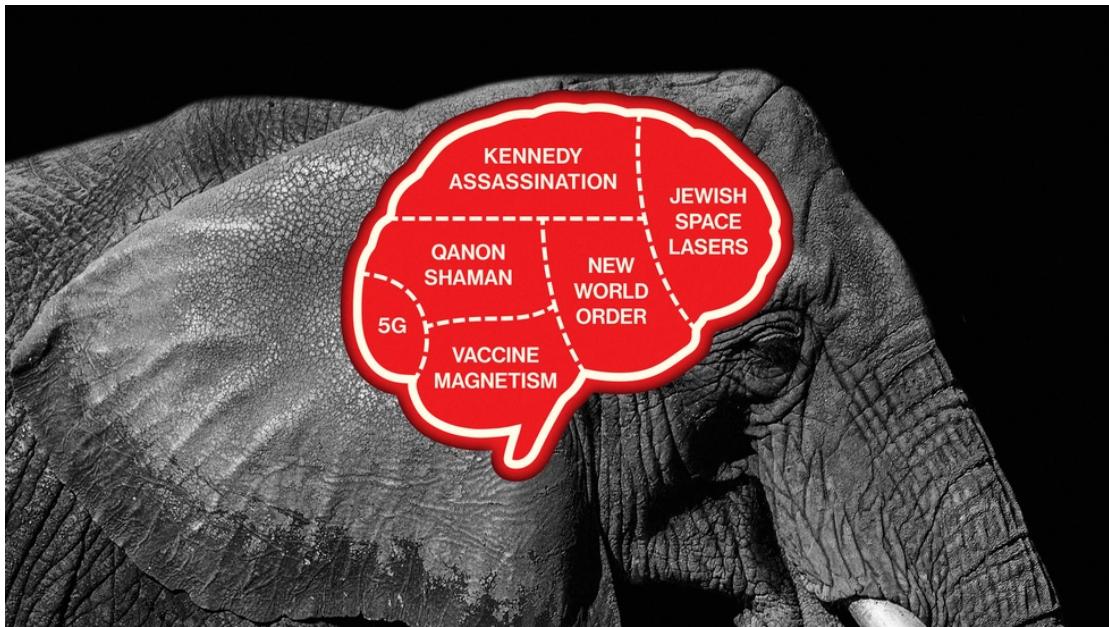
... the exact whereabouts of Chauncey Holt on November 22, 1963 remain unknown.

Still . . .

On *The Atlantic* site there is an essay by Brian Klass on the current popularity of conspiracy theories in America, 'Conspiracism Is Hurting Democracy'.²⁷ It is illustrated with the image below.

²⁶ <<https://www.archives.gov/research/jfk/select-committee-report>>

²⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/2rbd426v>> or <<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/01/conspiratorial-thinking-polarization-america-united-kingdom/672726/>>



Kennedy assassination research next to Jewish space lasers . . . It is getting on for 60 years since the CIA sent out the notorious memo²⁸ to its network of assets and allies in the media and academia, telling them to describe those who questioned the Oswald-dunnit verdict of the Kennedy assassination as 'conspiracy theorists'. What would you bet Mr Klass has never heard of the CIA memo?

Ukraine and the left

In this column in *Lobster* 84 (under subhead **NewsGuard**) I noted that the right-wing US media monitoring organisation of that name was looking at *ConsortiumNews* (CN) as a purveyor of disinformation, notably about the war in Ukraine. Given its political orientation, no surprise then that NewsGuard has since duly pronounced CN guilty of said charge. In an article responding to this, CN offered this summary of the causes of the war in Ukraine.²⁹ Something like this is behind the support for Russia among sections of the Anglo-American left.

Those causes are: NATO's expansion eastward despite its promise not to; the coup and 8-year war on Donbass against coup resisters; the lack of implementation of the Minsk Accords to end that conflict; and the

²⁸ Text at <<https://tinyurl.com/4x4yhskk>> or <<https://ia800705.us.archive.org/30/items/COUNTERINGCRITICISMOFTHEWARRENREPORT/COUNTERING%20CRITICISM%20OF%20THE%20WARREN%20REPORT.pdf>>

²⁹ <<https://consortiumnews.com/2023/01/03/a-history-of-dissent/>>

outright rejection of treaty proposals by Moscow to create a new security architecture in Europe taking Russia's security concerns into account.

But . . . there was no NATO promise not to expand eastwards. There was talk among US leaders of not doing so in the early days after the break-up of the Soviet Union but it never got beyond that.³⁰ It would hardly be accurate to describe those fighting the government of Ukraine in Donbass, as 'coup resisters'. There was a contest between America and Russia for the future direction of Ukraine. A very crude summary of some extraordinarily complex events would be that the Americans helped the EU-leaning Ukrainians (who were in the majority) to eject the Russians' choice as president and installed their own. In retaliation Russia invaded Crimea and supported or initiated – which isn't clear to me – a low-level war in south-east Ukraine.

The two attempts at a ceasefire in this conflict, the Minsk Accords, broke down after both sides ignored them and carried on fighting.³¹ If anyone has produced a credible account of who was to blame for this breakdown, I haven't seen it.³² As for the Russian 2021 proposals, they were made while the Russians had their 40 mile long military column parked on the Ukraine border and no-one in the West took the proposals seriously. In retrospect there are two interpretations of this. The first is that the threat of military invasion was intended to push America/NATO into responding positively to the Russian proposals. If this is the case, not for the first time the Russians completely misunderstood how US/NATO operate. There was no way that the US/NATO could possibly enter talks about 'the architecture of security', to use the phrase of the time, while their client, Ukraine, was threatened by Russian forces. Alternatively, the Russian proposals were not serious, were intended to be rejected and so provide another *casus belli* for the planned invasion. The latter interpretation is the one most favoured in Western comment.

Labour and anti-semitism

(1) Ware

³⁰ Discussed at <<https://tinyurl.com/mry5zws2>> or <<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2022/feb/28/candace-owens/fact-checking-claims-nato-us-broke-agreement-again/>>.

³¹ The OSCE tried to monitor the fighting after the breakdown of the Accords. Their reports are on-line. Here is one example: <<https://tinyurl.com/8exun6t2>> or <<https://www.osce.org/files/2021-12-17%20Daily%20Report.pdf?itok=57620>>.

³² Try this, one of many versions:
<<https://epicenter.wcfia.harvard.edu/blog/through-ashes-minsk-agreements>>.

In 2021 it was announced on *Skwawkbox* that the BBC's John Ware had allowed his libel action against Jeremy Corbyn to lapse.³³ However right at the bottom of the piece was an 'update':

John Ware has told Skwawkbox that contrary to some reports at the time, at no stage did he instruct his lawyer to take proceedings against Jeremy Corbyn and that is therefore incorrect to say that he "abandoned" the case against Mr Corbyn having never initiated proceedings in the first place.

Oh really? So did Mr Corbyn and his supporters raise hundreds of thousands of pounds to fight a non-existent legal action? So I went back to have a look and at the centre was this:

Panorama reporter John Ware is taking legal action against former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, his lawyer has confirmed.

The move follows Corbyn's statement on Wednesday that Labour agreeing to settle the Panorama case "risks giving credibility to misleading and inaccurate allegations" about action to tackle anti-Semitism in the party.

Asked if action would be taken arising from Corbyn's statement after the hearing, lawyer Mark Lewis from Patron Law – who represented the Panorama whistleblowers and Ware – said: "I can confirm that I have been instructed to pursue cases."³⁴

That statement by Mark Lewis was duly quoted in reports on the affair by *the Press Gazette*,³⁵ *Daily Mirror*, ITV, the *Jewish Chronicle*, *Telegraph* and *The Times*.³⁶ Only the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mirror* reports referred to action by Ware. This is the *Mirror*:

Panorama reporter John Ware *has asked* lawyer Mark Lewis to initiate libel action. It's understood a letter could be sent to Mr Corbyn in the coming days, the first step of a legal case.³⁷ (emphasis added)

³³ <<https://tinyurl.com/yc693xte>> or <<https://skwawkbox.org/2021/10/05/breaking-panoramas-ware-drops-lawsuit-vs-corbyn-says-crowdfund-page/>>

In this column in *Lobster* 80 I wrote: 'My guess is that . . . Ware will find some way of backing out and the case against Corbyn will not proceed.' At <<https://tinyurl.com/2u4xwp56>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster80/lob80-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>> under subhead **Ware's comeuppance?**

³⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/4s84ms8a>> or <https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/panorama-jeremy-corbyn_uk_5f18589dc5b6296fbf3c6ae8>

³⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/yem8pvxj>> or <<https://pressgazette.co.uk/news/labour-pays-damages-to-bbcs-john-ware-over-smears-after-panorama-anti-semitism-programme/>>

³⁶ <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tears-for-keirs-7v2zpf0mk>>

³⁷ <<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/jeremy-corbyn-faces-legal-action-22399637>>

Everybody believed that Ware was preparing to sue Corbyn; and his legal defence team is reported to have spent *over a million pounds* preparing the defense.³⁸ But was there a charge to defend? Mr Lewis conspicuously did not name Corbyn in his only quoted statement. Only the *Zelo Street* blog seems to have noticed that the threat of suing Corbyn had not actually materialised.³⁹ Which raises this curious question: why was all this money spent? What – if anything – did Corbyn receive from Ware’s lawyers?⁴⁰ I have contacted Mr Lewis, Mr Corbyn’s office and one of those who helped raised all the money and, to date, have received no replies.

Paddy French, who runs *Press Gang*,⁴¹ was not so lucky and got fined £90,000 for libelling Ware.⁴²

(2) **Subtexts**

One of the victims of the Labour Party’s drive to expel the left using the charge of anti-semitism is Chris Williamson, former MP for Derby North. Williamson has published a book about this⁴³ and in a recent article on the issue of Jeremy Corbyn and anti-semitism,⁴⁴ he discusses some of the internal politicking on the issue of those around Corbyn. *Inter alia* he writes:

In short, giving in to the Israel lobby was seen as a price worth paying, given that those who bore the brunt of the witchhunt were Palestinian and Muslim members. They were apparently viewed as expendable by Corbyn’s coterie of white advisers.

Furthermore, in Owen Jones’s account of the Corbyn years, Corbyn’s policy director Andrew Fisher and his political secretary Amy Jackson

³⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/49h2ssh2>> or <<https://skwawkbox.org/2022/11/03/corbyn-crowdfund-looks-to-fill-over-three-quarter-million-pound-hole-despite-case-win/>>

³⁹ <<https://zelo-street.blogspot.com/2020/07/corbyn-lawsuit-where-is-it.html>>

⁴⁰ Ware discusses the various legal actions generated by his Panorama programme and related issues – e.g. the Al Jazeera programmes – in two long pieces: <<https://tinyurl.com/4zrxx6kj>> or <<https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/opinion-denied-a-right-of-reply-i've-now-won-my-libel-case-against-corbynite-accusers/>> and <<https://tinyurl.com/yk5kcf6r>> or <<https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/opinion-how-jeremy-corbys-cantankerous-cronies FAILED-to-rewrite-history/>>.

⁴¹ <www.press-gang.org>

⁴² The legal judgment is at <<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/KB/2022/3030.html>>.

⁴³ Reviewed by John Booth at <<https://tinyurl.com/ypwx3xa7>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/84/ten-years-hard-labour-by-chris-williamson/>>.

⁴⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/mrxhv3b4>> or <<https://electronicintifada.net/content/face-facts-corbyn-surrendered-israels-smears/36896>>

were also in favor of adopting the IHRA examples,⁴⁵ as were Jon Lansman and Rhea Wolfson, who sat on Labour's NEC.

There was an alternative strategy for Corbyn: he could have named the subtext to all this and pointed to the *Al Jazeera* documentary on the Israel lobby's activities in Britain. But he chose not to. Labour leaders are rarely if ever willing to name these subtexts and passively accept the agenda set by the mass media. For example, there was the incident when a member of Neil Kinnock's staff rang a member of Peter Wright's legal team during the *Spycatcher* trial in Australia in 1987. Presumably because the phones of Wright's legal team were all tapped, Mrs Thatcher was informed of the call and in the House of Commons she accused Kinnock of dealing with a traitor – or words to the effect.⁴⁶ Kinnock panicked, wrapped himself in the Union Jack and never, to my knowledge, went near the subject of the British spooks ever again. Had he been a little quicker on his feet and been willing to name the subtext, he might have asked the prime minister how she knew this.

Our friends (even further north)

One of the few pieces about *Lobster* in the major media was done 20 years ago by Graeme Bowman for the *Glasgow Herald*. I have no idea how Bowman sold the idea to the *Herald*, but he persuaded them to fund a trip to Hull. It was a nice sunny day and we sat in the garden with a bottle of wine and had a an enjoyable chat. Out of which came a very good article.⁴⁷ It was thus a pleasure to have his book on Winston Churchill reviewed in these columns by Simon Matthews.⁴⁸ Since when Bowman has put together a website about the book on which there is a collection of other reviews.⁴⁹

Regular contributor to these columns, John Booth, has an important new piece about the funding of the Labour Party.⁵⁰ This complements Colin

⁴⁵ The IHRA examples were part of the new definition of anti-semitism which the Israel lobby was trying to get adopted across Europe. On which see – among hundreds – <<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/antisemitism-ihra-definition-what-controversial-why>>.

⁴⁶ I can not find this exchange in Hansard with its search facility.

⁴⁷ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/lobster-review-sunday-herald-17-august-2003/>>

⁴⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/bdm683aj>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/81/churchills-war-against-d-day-by-graeme-bowman/>>

⁴⁹ <<https://empirefirst.org>>

⁵⁰ <<https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/article/why-do-private-donors-fund-labour>> Booth blogs at <<https://forthzando.com/sir-keir-and-his-loyalties/>>.

Challen's piece on the same subject in this issue.

Davos

There was William Hague, *en route* to the annual Davos meeting, bemoaning the state of the British economy in his column in *The Times* on 17 January. He noted of the UK:

a country with low savings rates, poor productivity growth and a huge trade deficit cannot manage without a healthy [inwards] flow of foreign capital.

Hague cannot bring himself to note – possibly even to recall – that before the arrival of Mrs Thatcher, whom Hague supported and under whom he served, this country did not have a trade deficit. It was the decimation of the manufacturing base by her policies and those of her acolyte, Tony Blair, which produced the 'huge trade deficit'.

When he was a young man, Hague was in the McKinsey management consultant company, spreading the gospel of free markets and management power.⁵¹ There is a new book about McKinsey,⁵² reviews of which make it sound like a cult – a management version of Scientology, with about as much contact with reality.⁵³ Yet even as Britain sinks slowly into the North Sea, the ideas of McKinsey and their ilk are still treated as if they offer something useful to our notional political governors, rather than being part of the problem.

Also at Davos was *Times* columnist Gerard Baker who wrote this in his second para:

So when, at the registration tent in this Alpine fastness, I don my lizard robes, sip from the horn of virgin goat's blood handed me by a Goldman Sachs intern, submit to the implant of Bill Gates' microchip, right hand on the collected thoughts of St Greta of Sweden, swear my allegiance to [Davos founder] Klaus Schwab, Georg Soros and the global partnership of McKinsey and Co, I do so with a clear-eyed understanding of it all.

⁵¹ He wrote about his time at McKinsey at <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/feb/21/williamhague>>.

⁵² <<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/pulling-back-the-veil-of-secrecy-surrounding-mckinsey/>>

⁵³ McKinsey as a cult is not a new idea. See, for example, <<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/duff-mcdonald-cult-of-mckinsey>> and <<https://tinyurl.com/bdehf5nr>> or <<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/02/how-mckinsey-destroyed-middle-class/605878/>>.

A little further on he comments:

The dirty little secret of Davos is that it's one enormous business opportunity. Financial and industrial titans come not primarily to plot social and political control but to make money, shake hands, ink deals, size up competitors.'⁵⁴

And as the former editor-in-chief of the *Wall Street Journal*, he probably knows whereof he speaks.⁵⁵

In a 23 January mailing, Tony Gosling had a subheading: 'UK PM: Starmer passes Davos Job Interview'. And it was something like that, wasn't it? Though perhaps more an audition before the global leaders of capitalism than a job interview.

Dallas again

On John Simkins' Education Forum website on the JFK assassination, Michael Griffith discusses a new academic study of JFK's policy towards Vietnam: Dr. Marc Selverstone, *The Kennedy Withdrawal: Camelot and the American Commitment to Vietnam* (Harvard University Press, November 2022).⁵⁶ Hitherto it has been widely believed among the JFK assassination researchers that JFK planned to withdraw from Vietnam and this has been offered as a motive for the CIA and/or the military organising the shooting.⁵⁷ In his article Michael Griffith writes that Selverstone shows:

– The final version of NSAM 273 was not a drastic departure from the original draft, and it was not a drastic departure from JFK's Vietnam policy. JFK had been intensely interested in taking the war to North Vietnam. RFK even urged General Krulak "to devise a bolder set of options against Hanoi". JFK and most of his advisors believed that "actions against the North needed to be larger, more frequent, and

⁵⁴ Garrick Alder pointed out that in Baker's comment – 'Financial and industrial titans come not primarily to plot social and political control' – 'not primarily' might be taken to be an admission that such plotting *is* part of the point of Davos. Or is Baker being ironic?

⁵⁵ 'Davos is less satanic cabal, more globalist hell', *Times* 20 January.

⁵⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/3wfjbu8t>> or <<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/28669-the-kennedy-withdrawal-the-definitive-new-book-on-jfk-and-vietnam/>>

⁵⁷ Largely based on the research of Peter Dale Scott. See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/4bprrorv>> or <<https://www.history-matters.com/essays/vietnam/KennedyVietnam1971/KennedyVietnam1971.htm>>.

more systematic". Selverstone also notes that JFK's "interest in supporting covert action against the North actually increased during his time in office". . .

Yes, Selverstone definitely rejects – and refutes – the idea that JFK was determined to totally disengage from South Vietnam no matter what.

He makes a compelling case that JFK wanted to withdraw all U.S. military personnel as soon as was feasible, but that JFK had no intention of abandoning South Vietnam to a Communist takeover on his watch. And, yes, JFK was prepared to continue economic and military aid for many years.

This will not be the last word on the subject.

William Pepper and the assassination of Martin Luther King

CovertAction,⁵⁸ *ConsortiumNews*,⁵⁹ and *Global Research*⁶⁰ have run recent pieces about the assassination of Martin Luther King. All are worth a look. At the centre of this is the British lawyer, William Pepper, who has now spent nearly 40 years researching the case and has more or less solved it. I reviewed the second of Pepper's three books on the subject in *Lobster* 45.⁶¹ To judge by accounts of his third book conveyed in the *Covert Action* piece, it contains largely the same material as the second one.

It's not surprising that the US's major media has taken almost no notice of Pepper's efforts. Evidence of the role of US state agencies – the big political no-no in America – is unavoidable in King's death.

More on the British American Project (BAP)

Matt Kennard, one of the main people at the excellent *Declassified UK*,⁶² has a long article on the current and recent membership and activities of the BAP.

⁵⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/yc34wzae>> or <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2023/01/16/did-j-edgar-hoover-order-the-assassination-of-martin-luther-king-jr-3/>>

⁵⁹ <<https://consortiumnews.com/2023/01/09/martin-luther-king-enemy-of-the-state/>>

⁶⁰ <<https://www.globalresearch.ca/orders-to-kill-martin-luther-king-the-government-that-honors-mlk-with-a-national-holiday-killed-him/5559300>>

⁶¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/mwzz3uve>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/45/an-act-of-state-the-execution-of-martin-luther-king/>>

⁶² <<https://declassifieduk.org/>>

(Somebody leaked some internal BAP papers.) None of this will be surprising to regular readers of *Lobster*: the work of pro-American groups within British politics has been one of its recurring themes. And while such activities on behalf of the former Soviet Union, today's Russia, or China would be of interest to the major media, similar activities – covert and overt – by the USA, have mostly been deemed to be not worthy of investigation or publication. Kennard's piece should have been run in one of the major newspapers but none of them would dream of so doing.

Curiously, Kennard appears to be unaware of Tom Easton's big piece on the BAP in *Lobster* 33 – which is 25 years ago.

... but still no cigar

So, after all the pre-event publicity, the CIA did *not* release all its extant records on JFK. Notably the Agency apparently retained a collection about CIA officer, George Joannides, and a Cuba-related operation he ran. On this Tucker Carlson of Fox News, no less, commented:

We spoke to someone who had access to the still hidden CIA documents. Person deeply familiar with what they contain. We asked this person directly. Did the CIA have a hand in the murder of JFK, and American president?

Here is the reply we received verbatim – "The answer is yes. I believe they were involved. It's a whole different country from what we thought it was. It's all fake."⁶³

Into the quagmire . . . Tucker's use of 'we' suggests that it wasn't him who spoke to the CIA but someone on his team. (He is merely the frontman for a group of people working on the show.) Taken literally, someone with 'access to the still hidden documents' must be very senior CIA and with the need to know.⁶⁴ This will be a very small group – so small that the Agency could probably identify the source if it chose to. Would such a person talk to a member of Carlson's team, even off the record, without permission? And if it's an *authorised* CIA comment, what is the objective in telling Carlson's team?

I do not believe these files exist. The file names and numbers may still be there in the indexing system but the CIA surely destroyed any trace of links between itself and Oswald in the lead-up to the assassination soon after the

⁶³ <<https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/tucker-carlson-heres-source-cia-jfks-assassination>>.

⁶⁴ Garrick Alder suspects that Donald Trump was the source. I think it unlikely that CIA would show Trump anything so dangerous.

event. If I'm right about this, the CIA is refusing to release files which do not exist rather than admit they were destroyed; and the comments by this senior CIA person to a Fox News employee is a part of the process of making the files seem real.

Carlson also said this:

It means that within the US government, there are forces wholly beyond democratic control. These forces are more powerful than the elected officials that supposedly oversee them. These forces can affect election outcomes. They can even hide their complicity in the murder of an American president. In other words, they can do pretty much anything they want. They constitute a government within a government mocking, by their very existence, the idea of democracy. As cynical as we have become after 30 years of watching government officials ignore the voters who employ them, we were shocked to learn this. It's not acceptable.

Which is a pretty good exposition of Peter Dale Scott's original concept of the 'deep state' and a striking contrast with the recent use of 'deep state' by Donald Trump and others on the Republican right to mean an alliance between state officials, Democratic Party politicians and Democrat-supporting media.

As to the intentions of the editorial team at Fox News – your guess will be as good as mine. The simplest explanation is that someone at Fox saw the JFK files event as another chance to run the 'deep state' thesis about Washington and the Democrats. After all, it was the Democrats in office in 1963.⁶⁵

Carlson's statements, and those of some other mainstream journalists in the aftermath of the CIA *not* releasing all the documents, *is* a striking change of tone. Jefferson Morley, one of those pushing for the documents release, commented:

The traditional mode of mainstream JFK journalism—airy (or vitriolic) dismissal of anyone with doubts about the official story—was replaced by common sense skepticism about the CIA's penchant for assassination secrecy, a willingness to hear alternative views, and in Carlson's case, a full-throated prime time TV attack on the government's credibility.

Nothing like this has happened in decades. The landscape of the JFK assassination story has shifted beneath our feet.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ There is discussion of the significance of the Tucker events on John Simkins' JFK site at <<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/28549-protecting-tucker-s-source/>>.

⁶⁶ <<https://jfkfacts.substack.com/p/tucker-carlson-the-liberal-media>>

Has it? Some media comment on the story has shifted but nothing else has. The difficulty is that once a secret state agency has decided upon a cover story to conceal something embarrassing, that cover story will be sustained no matter what. If the CIA had released documents about Joannides which showed – as some JFK researchers believe⁶⁷ – that the CIA was using Oswald in some operation regarding Cuba, the entire lone-nut explanation of Kennedy's shooting might collapse. If it did, those in the CIA and elsewhere who had defended it for over half a century would be revealed as fools or knaves. Similarly, having concocted the Libya-dunnit explanation of the Lockerbie bombing, this has to be maintained. The unfortunate Abu Agila Mohammad Mas'ud Kheir Al-Marimi, the former Libyan intelligence officer arrested two days before the CIA files event, will probably spend the rest of his life in prison to save US officials admitting they got Lockerbie wrong. Therefore the cover-up in both cases will – must – remain.

Morley didn't mention that there was a witness to the CIA operation involving Oswald. Chauncey Holt was a minor part of it – and is in one of the photographs taken of Oswald in New Orleans, while he was handing out 'Hands off Cuba' leaflets.⁶⁸ But as I have discussed *ad nauseam* in these columns, the JFK researchers ignore Holt because they have persuaded themselves – wrongly – that he was a fraud. The JFK researchers should start taking Holt seriously and follow the leads he provided. Never mind CIA files which may or may not actually exist; and which, if they haven't been 'weeded', will never be released.

CovertAction

Back to *CovertAction* and its campaign to justify the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They have run an article describing a new film about a young American, Ted Hall, who was part of the American nuclear programme during WW2 and leaked what he knew to the Soviets.⁶⁹ The article states on the one hand:

We see [in the film] that major bank owners-CEOs and weapons industrialists *urged* [President] Truman to take over the Soviet Union (15 republics), in order to engorge Wall Street profits. (emphasis

⁶⁷ For example Jefferson Morley at <<https://jfkfacts.substack.com>>.

⁶⁸ See <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/83/dallas-again/>>.

⁶⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/4m5swx4a>> or <<https://covertactionmagazine.com/2022/12/02/can-an-american-scientist-who-smuggled-critical-nuclear-secrets-to-the-russians-after-world-war-ii-be-considered-a-good-guy-new-film-says-yes/>>

added)

But also, on the other hand:

by 1946, Wall Street bankers and weapons industrialists *had convinced* President Harry Truman, as the film shows, to produce 400 more atomic bombs to attack the Soviet Union in 1950-51, kill millions of its people, and take over its huge land and natural resources. (emphasis added)

That Truman was so *urged* I could believe. That Truman was so *convinced* is another thing altogether. It's been a long time since I read the Cold War literature. Even so, US plans for a preemptive nuclear strike on the USSR would be at the centre of all discussion of America's post-war handling of nukes. And it simply isn't there, as a quick perusal of the basic literature will show. Of course, after the nuking of Japan the US military began making plans for how to use these new weapons.⁷⁰ But there is no evidence that the US military had persuaded the politicians that they should prepare for a preemptive strike in 1950-51.

One of the least attractive things about the left is its use of guilt-by-remote-association to attack people. Editor of *CovertAction*, Jeremy Kuzmarov, did this recently. As part of an article describing and condemning a conference on Ukraine at the George W Bush Institute, he referred to a panel chaired by one Paula Dobriansky, Under Secretary for Global Affairs from 2001-2009. Dobriansky, wrote Kuzmarov, is 'the daughter of an ally of Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera'.

Stealing the 2020 presidential election?

I've got some time for John Ward at *The Slog*. He often comes up with a new snippet or an interesting perspective. On 22 November he ran a set of material which argues that the Democrats stole the 2020 presidential election and the 2022 mid-terms.⁷¹ (Not that he has any sympathy for Trump.) I had a look at some of the evidence he cites for fraud in 2020. At the centre of that is a documentary by Dinesh D'Souza, *2000 Mules*,⁷² which claims to show evidence of election fraud by the Democrats in the 2020 election.

The title, *2000 Mules*, refers to an alleged 2000 people who took part in

⁷⁰ Some of the original documents involved have been declassified and can be seen at <<https://tinyurl.com/23dmankd>> or <<https://blog.nuclearsecrecy.com/2012/05/09/weekly-document-the-first-atomic-stockpile-requirements-september-1945/>>

⁷¹ <<https://therealslog.com/2022/11/22/assassins-of-freedom/>>

⁷² <<https://node-1.2000mules.com>>

ballot stuffing. First, the credibility of the documentary is undermined at the outset by the fact that it opens with a clip of Joe Biden which has been crudely edited to make it sound as though he is admitting ballot-rigging. Second, a political conspiracy which involves 2000 people is an absurdity. Such a thing would never happen, would never be contemplated; far too many loose lips which might sink the ship. A detailed fact check by Reuters concluded – convincingly in my view – that the evidence offered by D’Souza doesn’t stand up to scrutiny.⁷³

Whitlam and Kerr

On the subject of things the major British media will probably ignore, there is the essay, ‘The Queen’s Coup’, by Jenny Hocking and Peter Cronau based on their 2020 book.⁷⁴ In this, declassified documents show, as the essay’s subhead puts it, that ‘Queen Elizabeth II of England advised the governor-general he could overthrow the elected government of Australia – and he did’. Yes, we’re back at the overthrow of the Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam by Governor-General John Kerr in the mid 70s. What the authors show through correspondence between the Palace and Kerr is that, if push came to shove and Kerr needed time, the Palace would drag its feet:

Kerr was told that should “the contingency to which you refer” arise – that is, if Whitlam advised the queen (sic) to remove Kerr on becoming aware of Kerr’s intentions to dismiss the government – the queen (sic) would delay responding, thereby stalling Whitlam.

It will be interesting to see if the BBC news returns to this subject now it has been revived. They ran a slightly softer version of the story 2020 when the book was first published.⁷⁵ That version included these paragraphs:

The letters revealed on Tuesday showed the Queen was not told in advance by Sir John of his decision to sack the prime minister. This was expected by most observers, who said the governor-general would have sought to protect the Crown.

However, the letters reveal discussion over the political power held by Sir John. They indicate too his decision to withhold information from the

⁷³ <<https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-usa-mules-idUSL2N2XJ0OQ>>

⁷⁴ <<https://consortiumnews.com/2022/11/14/the-queens-coup/>> This first appeared here: <<https://declassifiedaus.org/2022/11/11/the-queens-coup/>>.

⁷⁵ <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-53399094>>

prime minister, whose advice he was bound to accept.

"In the starker possible fashion, the letters reveal how Australia's constitutional independence was fatally compromised," says Prof Mark McKenna, a leading Australian historian.

He told the BBC the letters showed that, in the middle of a huge constitutional crisis, the Queen and her private secretary knew more about Sir John's intentions than Australia's elected prime minister.

Was the Covid outbreak the result of a lab escape?

It always seemed to me very likely that it was. After all, here's an outbreak and – gee whizz! – it's happened in the same city as a government lab experimenting with the virus. For that lab not to be the source of the outbreak, we are going to need an extremely compelling alternative explanation. And all we have had is stories about bats and a 'wet' food market in Wuhan. Now an American scientist, Dr Andrew Huff, who was involved, who was in the lab at Wuhan, has spilled the beans in a new book.⁷⁶ The story began to appear in advance of the book in February 2022⁷⁷ and Huff can be seen in an hour-long YouTube video.⁷⁸

Not that the bat cover story is going away. A week after Huff's book was summarised in *The Daily Mail*, virologist Dr. Peter Daszak of the eEcoHealth Alliance, one of the funders of the Wuhan lab, and a leading advocate of the bats-dunnit story, posted pictures of himself in a cave full of bats.⁷⁹

Here we go again

In this column in the previous *Lobster* I noted:

On the day that Prime Minister Truss made her announcement about dealing with the energy crisis here, *The Times* (8 September) briefly

⁷⁶ Book's content summarised at <<https://tinyurl.com/52yf6t9m>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11498155/Whistleblower-worked-funded-Wuhan-lab-claims-Covid-genetically-engineered-leaked.html>>

⁷⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/4u469j53>> or <<https://www.uncoverdc.com/2022/02/09/ecohealth-alliance-whistleblower-exposes-corruption/>>

⁷⁸ <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvJn5D0zknM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvJn5D0zknM)>

⁷⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/2wjyjukm>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11527795/Virologist-funded-Wuhan-lab-shares-videos-cave-filled-2-5m-bats.html>>

mentioned (on p. 39) that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was off to the City to discuss 'Big Bang 2' – further deregulation of the financial services sector.⁸⁰

Most of the changes – the constraints and safeguards – introduced after the 2008/9 banking crisis are being scrapped. The cowboys are being let loose again. The governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey, and former chief economist at the Bank, Sir John Vickers, architect of many of the post 2009 rules, are rather alarmed. The *Times* thought this important enough to give it half of one column on p. 37 (on 14 December). But why should the City care? On past performance, no matter what they do, the British state will bail them out.

In an account of these changes on the BBC website was this paragraph:

Leading hedge fund manager Sir Paul Marshall of Marshall Wace recently described the London financial markets as a "Jurassic Park" of old-fashioned companies and investors, and it has struggled to attract the world's fastest growing companies to list on UK exchanges, often losing out to New York, Shanghai or even Amsterdam.⁸¹

In the comments below that article someone wrote:

Is that the same Sir Paul Marshall that donates to the Tories, Vote Leave, and GB News? It's almost as if Brexit was a coup by moneyed charlatans to avoid tax, scrutiny, and regulations.

The evidence suggests that Brexit was indeed *in part* such a coup. Those 'moneyed charlatans' were chiefly hedges – hedge fund managers and owners.⁸²

AI on JFK

One Lori Spencer, posting at John Simkin's JFK site,⁸³ had the bright idea of

⁸⁰ Some sense of what this amounts to is visible in the equivalent piece in the *Financial Times* at <<https://www.ft.com/content/fdf43b25-caff-4049-8a72-d386c8ea4fdf>>.

⁸¹ <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-63905505>>

⁸² See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/5evhpkz3>> or <<https://bylinetimes.com/2022/10/03/exposing-the-conservative-hedge-fund-scandal-better-late-than-never-or-too-little-too-late>> and <<https://tinyurl.com/3ctb9cpu>< or <<http://www.brexitshambles.com/300-hedge-fund-companies-were-represented-by-vote-leave-during-the-referendum-campaign-and-they-formed-the-biggest-demographic-of-their-membership/>>.

⁸³ <<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/forum/126-jfk-assassination-debate/>>

asking AI 'Who killed Kennedy?' Spencer wrote: 'Just for grins, I asked open AI's amazing new Chat GPT program to answer a few questions on the Kennedy Assassination.' Here is the first q and a.

Q: Who killed JFK? And what was their motive?

A: The assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963 has been the subject of much debate and speculation. The Warren Commission, which was established by President Lyndon B. Johnson to investigate the assassination, concluded that Kennedy was killed by a lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald. However, many people have questioned this conclusion and have proposed alternative theories about who may have been responsible for Kennedy's death and why. Some of these theories implicate other individuals or groups, such as the CIA, the Mafia, or even Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson himself. Ultimately, the true motive for Kennedy's assassination may never be known.

Which isn't bad at all, is it? And interesting to see that LBJ is in there. Ten, maybe even five years ago he wouldn't have been.

Broken-down Blighty

Aaron Bastani, founder of Novara media,⁸⁴ sent out a Tweet (subsequently deleted, I think) which stated:

It is insane that in 2007 the UK had a higher GDP per capita than the United States, Austria and Finland, let alone France and Germany. Today GDP per capita in the US is more than 50% higher than the UK. We've become so much poorer, so quickly. The media cheered most of it on!

I read that and thought, 'The 2007 stat is wrong'. According to the CIA's World Factbook, the UK was 27th on the GDP per capita list for that year,⁸⁵ well below the US, Austria, Finland, France and Germany.

What's interesting is not that Bastani got the stat wrong (we can all make mistakes) but that it seemed plausible to him, an intelligent, well informed left journalist, that UK had a higher GDP in 2007 than the countries he listed. He is representative of a very large tendency in the UK which has failed to grasp how far down the economic wealth table the UK has slid in the past 30 years.

⁸⁴ <<https://novaramedia.com>>

⁸⁵ See the list at <https://photius.com/rankings/economy/gdp_per_capita_2007_0.html> compiled from the CIA's World Factbook.

Jeremy Corbyn is another one. In his speech to the Labour Party conference in 2019 as party leader, he described Britain as the 'fifth richest country in the world'. Incidentally, the CIA has the UK 40th – yes, *40th* – in that list for 2020.⁸⁶ As anyone who visits any of our near European neighbours can see, the UK is a long way behind them.

Our military-industrial complex

You may have noticed recent press stories about the Ajax, a light tank – or is it an armoured car?⁸⁷ – at any rate an armoured vehicle being built for the British Army. 589 of the Ajax were ordered from the UK division of the American arms manufacturer General Dynamics. The stories illustrate how the British military-industrial complex works and how little political supervision there is of spending by the military (or the security and intelligence services).

Ajax has made the news because it doesn't work.⁸⁸ Pretty much everything that could go wrong seems to have gone wrong and it is now unclear if any of them will actually be used.⁸⁹ At the beginning of a session on the Ajax by the House of Commons Defence Committee in 2021, the chair, Tobias Ellwood MP, said:

But today the MoD has already spent over £3 billion and has received over a dozen vehicles of the 589 [ordered]. The cost of each is likely to exceed £7 million, and there have been much-publicised reports of issues with the turret and firing mechanism, noise and vibration concerns, and speed performance, leading to the suspension of approval tests.⁹⁰

Less measured was *The Daily Mail* which headlined its report:

How top brass blew £3.5billion on a dud that is a menace to troops: Ajax is the British Army's new tank that's too heavy,

⁸⁶ <<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/real-gdp-per-capita/country-comparison>>

⁸⁷ Nick Must commented:

A kind of management speak seems to have infiltrated the military-industrial complex. Tanks and armoured cars are no longer called tanks or armoured cars; they now appear to be known under a single category as 'Armoured Fighting Vehicles' (AFV).

⁸⁸ See for example <<https://tinyurl.com/3a53kzfb>> or <<https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2021/06/03/the-british-armys-new-ajax-vehicles-ride-too-rough-too-loud-report/>>.

⁸⁹ See, for example, <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-57348573>>.

⁹⁰ <<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/2589/html/>>

makes crew sick and can't fire on the move . . . all thanks to a mix of cronyism and incompetence.⁹¹

The *Mail* asked:

So where does responsibility lie? The answer is complicated but involves an extraordinary 'revolving door' process whereby senior Army staff have ended up working for the firm that makes Ajax, General Dynamics (UK).

But there is nothing 'extraordinary' about that revolving door. This has been the standard practice since the 1950s in both the US and the UK. US President Eisenhower used the phrase 'military-industrial complex' in his farewell address to the American people in 1961. Companies hire retired military people and use them to lobby their former colleagues with implicit offers of jobs and money when they, in turn, retire from service with the state.

In the case of Ajax, General Dynamics hired General Sir Peter Wall, former head of the Army, Major-General Carew Wilks, former head of the MoD's 'land equipment' department, and Lieutenant-General Andrew Figgures from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

At the Defence Committee session, Carew Wilks appeared as a representative of General Dynamics and did his best to pretend that there was no cause for concern. During questioning, former defence minister Mark Francois had this exchange with former Major-General Wilks:

Mr Francois: We have given you £3.1 billion, and we are paying for the trials to try to find the problem with your vehicle. Right?

Carew Wilks: As I said, we are contributing—

Mr Francois: No, no, you are putting in crew, but you are not paying for it, are you? Please don't do this to this Committee. You are not paying for the trials; the MoD are paying for them. Yes or no?

Carew Wilks: That is correct. The MoD is paying for them [. . . .]

Mr Francois: So you start developing this system in 2010. The timeline is the same as the Warrior capability, which has just been cancelled. Warrior is aluminium; your vehicle is steel. In 2017, lots of rumours start to circulate, including at defence exhibitions, that there is something seriously wrong with AJAX. You carry on doing the trials with GD [General Dynamics] personnel; funny enough, they report no problems. Last summer, you hand the vehicles over to Army personnel

⁹¹ 30 July 2022 at <<https://tinyurl.com/5ybd28fx>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9845773/How-brass-blew-3-5billion-dud-menace-troops.html>>.

to start doing trials and straight away there are problems, which GD has not admitted to for nine years.

The *Daily Mail* piece has interesting but unattributed comments on the process of developing the Ajax, from which we can piece together some of what seems to have happened.

First, the Ministry of Defence refused to buy British Aerospace's (BA) existing CV90 machine which has been widely sold across the world. It did so because it wanted to punish BA for the failure from 1996 to 2010 in 'remanufacturing' – i.e. refurbishing and repurposing – a number of Nimrod planes.⁹² The result of this earlier debacle was that no planes emerged after £4 billion was spent. (I had a quick look at the Nimrod fiasco and there is a little hint in there that, while the Nimrod had originally been commissioned as a reconnaissance plane, behind the politicians' backs the RAF was trying to get it rebuilt such that it could also act as a bomber.)⁹³

Second, writes the *Mail*:

Officers were also smarting after procurement minister Lord Drayson scaled back a programme called FRES (Future Rapid Effect System) which involved a suite of sensors, communication systems and high-tech vehicles likened to the gadgetry on 'Thunderbirds'.

All that remained of FRES after this downgrade was the requirement for an 'Armoured Infantry Reconnaissance and Command Vehicle' — which explains why Army officers were determined to make it the best.

FRES was an Army plan for a vast fleet of vehicles with different capabilities. The specialist communications vehicles were scrapped in 2008 by Lord Drayson. So the Army tried to get round that decision by adding all these communications systems to the Ajax, the 'Armoured Infantry Reconnaissance and Command Vehicle'.⁹⁴

The *Mail* tells us:

Compounding the problems was the fact that commanders were determined to create the 'perfect vehicle', irrespective of cost — and they could not stop changing the design, long after the project was under way.

Amazingly, senior Army officers were apparently jealous of their Royal

⁹² 'The Nimrod was an established airframe, having originally entered service in 1969'. <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/collections/hawker-siddeley-nimrod-r-mk-1/>.

⁹³ See <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/almost-a-bomber-the-nimrod-mra4/>.

⁹⁴ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Future_Rapid_Effect_System.

Navy and Royal Air Force counterparts as they had new aircraft carriers and next generation stealth jets. According to sources, they were determined to have their own prestigious piece of kit.

Inter-service rivalry, monkeying around with the specs, and getting what you want despite the politicians – as *Private Eye* used to say, this has the ring of truth about it.

The industry blurb on Ajax is impressive, dazzling.⁹⁵ Every conceivable bell and whistle in the communications field seems to have been added. But nowhere in the company PR I have looked at, nor in the proceedings of the House of Commons Defence Committee discussing the Ajax debacle, do you find the word drone. Yet one of the chief lessons of the Russia-Ukraine war is that the tank is now essentially obsolete in the face of drones. This new £7 million tank – in the unlikely event of it being deployed – will be a sitting duck for drones which cost less than half of one per cent of that.

The Russian question again

So: the question ‘Did the Russians try to intervene in the 2016 US presidential election?’ has apparently been definitively answered. This came when Yevgeny Prigozhin, one of Putin’s inner circle, posted comments on the Russian version of Facebook and said *inter alia*: ‘We have interfered (in U.S. elections), we are interfering and we will continue to interfere. Carefully, accurately, surgically and in our own way, as we know how to do.’⁹⁶ Prigozhin was one of those indicted in the US after the Mueller report on Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.⁹⁷ All of which reminded me of the comment by Terry Burke in 2019:

After Attorney General William Barr released his highly biased summary of the Robert Mueller investigation, which seemed to vindicate them, Chris Hedges, Glen Greenwald, Stephen Cohen, Matt Taibbi, Aaron Mate, Paul Street in Counterpunch, and Katie Halper from Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) castigated the US press for its extensive

⁹⁵ See, for example, <<https://www.forces.net/services/army/all-gen-ajax-military-vehicle>>.

⁹⁶ <<https://tinyurl.com/22ru4bft>> or <<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/russias-prigozhin-admits-interfering-us-elections-2022-11-07/>>

⁹⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/bx84n7as>> or <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/16/us/politics/russians-indicted-mueller-election-interference.html>>

coverage of the Russia/Trump allegations.⁹⁸

In response to which Will Banyan had emailed me:

In light of this record of rejected official reports, the sudden embrace of Mueller's findings could be seen as a unique moment in conspiratorial lore: perhaps for the first time ever, conspiracists could support an official report into allegations of illegal and corrupt activity by the holder of the highest political office in the land that *exonerated its powerful subject*.

Which brings us back to the question I have raised before in this column: why are sections of the Anglo-American left unable or unwilling to accept the reality of today's Russia?

5G – coming your way (like it or not)

It's been some years since I wrote anything substantial about the health risks of mobile phone and related technology. However, a recent essay on the subject, on *Propublica*, is noteworthy. It describes the attempts of a small American town to challenge the presence of a 5G mast, which was making some of its residents ill. But their lawsuit failed: the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has been given 'the sole power to regulate wireless-radiation risks' and continues to repeat the tech companies' line that there is no risk from this radiation. The article states:

Henry Lai, an emeritus professor of bioengineering at the University of Washington, has compiled a database of 1,123 peer-reviewed studies published since 1990 investigating biological effects from wireless-radiation exposure. Some 77% have found 'significant' effects, according to Lai. By contrast, an earlier review by Lai found that 72% of industry-sponsored studies reported no biological effects.⁹⁹

The name Lai rang a faint bell. He was named in a 1997 *Microwave News* report, 'Motorola, Microwaves and DNA Breaks: "War-Gaming" the Lai-Singh Experiments', quoted in these columns before.¹⁰⁰ Lai and Singh had

'found an increase in single-strand DNA breaks in the brain cells of rats after a single two-hour exposure to 2.45 GHz microwaves, at power

⁹⁸ <<https://countervortex.org/russiagate-syria-and-the-left/>>

⁹⁹ <<https://www.propublica.org/article/fcc-5g-wireless-safety-cellphones-risk>>

¹⁰⁰ <<https://tinyurl.com/3mjyderc>> or <<https://microwavenews.com/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/backissues/j-f97issue.pdf>>

levels considered safe according to current exposure standards'.

On 13 December 1994, Norman Sandler of Motorola's corporate communications department sent two memos to Michael Kehs of Burson-Marsteller, the big-time PR company in Washington. Sandler discussed how to respond to findings by Drs. Henry Lai and Narendra Singh and wrote 'I think we have sufficiently war-gamed the Lai-Singh issue'. So, ignore the scientists: it's just a PR problem.

The *Propublica* piece notes that because 5G radiation doesn't travel very far, it will need 800,000 masts and signal relay devices of one kind or another to carry the signal in the US. The US is about 40 times the area of the UK, so Blighty is probably set for about 20,000 of these devices. Coming to a mast, house, lamppost near you . . .

QAnon

The rag-bag of baloney which is lumped together as QAnon can't yet be ignored. There are two large essays on the subject which may be of use. 'The Prophesies of Q' by Adrienne LaFrance on *The Atlantic*,¹⁰¹ tries to convey who believes it and how the whole thing developed. Edward Tian's 'The QAnon Timeline: Four Years, 5,000 Drops and Countless Failed Prophecies'¹⁰² is, as its title suggests, a chronological analysis of the Q messages and the American political context within which they occurred. Tian writes:

This investigation illustrates key developments and discussions in the QAnon conspiracy theory over time. To identify these trends, we split the data into subsets of one to three month intervals with an average of 290 Q drops.

For each subset, we ran a clustering algorithm that grouped sentences with a similar sentiment together. Using the results of the clustering, we then summarised major topics and notable developments for each time period.

Has there been a previous occasion when so much effort and technical expertise was expended on a load of manifest nonsense?

¹⁰¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/26y3xsrv>> or <<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/06/qanon-nothing-can-stop-what-is-coming/610567/>>

¹⁰² <<https://www.bellingcat.com/news/americas/2021/01/29/the-qanon-timeline/>>
Incidentally, while I disapprove of Bellingcat dickering with the secret states of the US and UK, there is some interesting material on their site.

Them Ruskis

And then there's Bill Fairclough. His purported CV,¹⁰³ showing a career across accounting, finance and spookery, is extraordinary. He has written a rather interesting report, 'Britain's Dismal Dossier on Russian Political Infiltration'.¹⁰⁴ He presents this as an alternative to the Intelligence and Security Committee's 2020 report on the subject.¹⁰⁵ That ISC report is so heavily redacted as to be barely worth the skim I gave it.

Fairclough's report lists dozens of people and some organisations as being pro-Russian or Russian fronts.¹⁰⁶ Some of the names are familiar, some not.

The presence of one, the Legatum Institute, surprised me. In 2016 Legatum published 'Winning the Information War' by *Times* journalist Edward Lucas and Peter Pomerantsev.¹⁰⁷ Both are prominently hostile to the current Russian state. Their essay is headed by this paragraph:

Peter Pomerantsev and Edward Lucas are the authors of a new paper that offers techniques and counter-strategies to combat Russian propaganda in Central and Eastern Europe. Launched this week, the paper is published in partnership with the Center for European Policy Analysis's (CEPA) 'Information Warfare Initiative'.¹⁰⁸

And in his alternative to the ISC report Fairclough gives us this paragraph:

Hard evidence of other British Prime Ministers and political party leaders being set up and/or influenced by Russia abounds. Much of that evidence came from a KGB Colonel, Oleg Gordievsky. Few escaped the focus or clutches of the KGB/FSB. Just think about Ted Heath and

¹⁰³ <https://theburlingtonfiles.org/?page=The_Author>

¹⁰⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/msb7pj8n>> or <<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/britains-dismal-dossier-russian-political-herewith-bill-fairclough>>

¹⁰⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/3att7z6w>> or <https://isc.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CCS207_CCS0221966010-001_Russia-Report-v02-Web_Accessible.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Nick Must commented:

He really over-eggs his pudding with his 'list of Russian associated people close to Boris Johnson'. He includes Stanley Johnson who – shock horror – wrote a novel titled *Kompromat*, the plot of which includes Russian interference in the Brexit campaign. Also on the list is the now Mrs Johnson, Carrie Symonds as was. She is included because she attended meetings of the Conservative Friends of Russia, but she only did so because she was office aide to John Whittingdale – the group's honorary vice-president.

¹⁰⁷ <<https://li.com/reports/winning-the-information-war>> Lucas was one of those thanked by the ISC for his help in writing the report cited in footnote 3.

¹⁰⁸ There is an analysis of Legatum under subhead 'Brexit: disaster capitalism' at <<http://eureferendum.com/eumain.php>>.

Anthony Blunt of the Cambridge Five, the Labour Party's Michael Foot (aka Agent Boot to the KGB) and about how the KGB controlled Harold Wilson and James Callaghan through the trade unionist Jack Jones.

About Heath and the Soviet empire's spooks I know of nothing beyond the allegation by Joseph Frolik that the Czech intelligence service thought about entrapping and blackmailing Edward Heath, whom they presumed to be gay.¹⁰⁹ The Michael Foot story has been refuted: its source was Oleg Gordievsky, recycling claims made by other Soviet officers.¹¹⁰ Just as Czech intelligence officers in London were doing, KGB officers padded their reports to Moscow in the hope that they could continue living in the West.¹¹¹

Most striking is the claim that 'the KGB controlled Harold Wilson and James Callaghan through the trade unionist Jack Jones'. At one level this is just a variant of the MI5 *canard*, circa 1974, that the KGB controlled the Labour Party through its control of the British trade unions (which, in turn, controlled Labour). Since the KGB never came within a million miles of control of the British trade unions, that was simply a smear. The claim about Jack Jones is absurd. Jones was made a Companion of Honour (CH).¹¹² Suspected KGB agents do not receive such awards from the British state. Nor was Jones even pro-Soviet. George Galloway wrote this:

I was a protege of the then Scottish Secretary of the Union Hugh Wyper, a Communist of the reddest type and a dyed-in-the-wool supporter of the USSR. Before taking me to meet Jack Jones for the first time, he warned me: 'Jack has a blind spot against the Soviet Union so don't get him started on that subject or we will all fall out.'

'Why?' I asked.

'It goes back to the Spanish Civil War, and then Hungary, then Czechoslovakia,' explained Wyper.

I kept my counsel on that occasion but I did discuss the Soviet Union with Jack Jones on dozens if not scores of others. Wyper had understated Jones' blind spot. It wasn't a blind spot, it was visceral

¹⁰⁹ See <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18556213>>. After Colin Wallace and Clockwork Orange 2 we would add 'and by elements within MI5'.

¹¹⁰ See <<https://tinyurl.com/asbf2r96>> or <<https://theconversation.com/michael-foot-spy-allegations-and-why-mi6-should-come-clean-about-the-past-103490>>.

¹¹¹ This was discussed recently in relation to John Stonehouse. See <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/82/john-stonehouse-book-reviews/>>.

¹¹² See <<https://www.royal.uk/companion-honour>>.

opposition which had afflicted Jack Jones.¹¹³

On the other hand, the fact that Fairclough recycles this old right-wing MI5 nonsense suggests that he may have been the spook he claims.

So there was no 'communist threat' in post-war Britain? I wrote about this in 1993. I concluded then that there had been such a threat but only in this sense: the CPGB, with funds from the Soviet Union, was trying to bring down British capitalism. However, the conduit for the Soviet money had been discovered by MI5 in 1958 – who could have pretty much destroyed the CPGB by immediately revealing it. Instead they left the money running. I concluded that 1993 essay thus:

MI5 knew of the Soviet funding, it had the party's HQ wired for sound, and we must assume that, as in America for example, the party had been thoroughly penetrated by the state. . . . after 1958 and the discovery of the Falber conduit to the Soviet Embassy,¹¹⁴ the 'communist threat' in Britain was chiefly coming courtesy not of Moscow, but of MI5.¹¹⁵

Ukraine

In a speech in late September 2022¹¹⁶ President Putin said this:

We call on the Kiev regime to immediately cease fire and all hostilities; to end the war it unleashed back in 2014 and return to the negotiating table.

That Ukraine 'unleashed' the war in 2014 is absurd. But 2014 is when all this began, in a sense, with the US helping to unseat Russian-backed President Viktor Yanukovych. Given all the evidence documenting the US role in Ukraine,¹¹⁷ you might have thought that this was now a matter of historical

¹¹³ <<https://www.rt.com/op-ed/440191-gordievsky-skripal-mi6-spies/>>

¹¹⁴ Reuben Falber was the CPGB official who received money from the Soviets. See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/njhppvn>> or <<https://www.julianlewis.net/selected-news-coverage/3530:moscow-gold-and-the-cpbg-47>>.

¹¹⁵ See <<https://tinyurl.com/38n5ahpr>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/25/moscow-gold-the-communist-threat-in-post-war-britain/>>.

¹¹⁶ Text at <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/69465>>.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/mr2fxstu>> or <<https://mronline.org/2022/03/08/national-endowment-for-democracy-deletes-records-of-funding-projects-in-ukraine/>>.

fact. Apparently not. In the *Financial Times*, Gideon Rachman¹¹⁸ recently wrote:

It is increasingly evident that Putin actually believes many of the conspiracy theories he peddles. A deeply conspiratorial view of the world has driven his actions for years. He has repeatedly insisted that 'colour revolutions' in Ukraine and Georgia were not spontaneous democratic movements, but 'coups' manufactured by western intelligence agencies.¹¹⁹

Does this mean Rachman doesn't know about the involvement of the American state, using the NED *et al*, in the 'colour revolutions', or simply can't or won't admit it?

*

Under Putin, Russia has become a unique form of rentier state capitalism: its elite, and thus its fiscal stability and the wealth of its middle classes, are entirely reliant on rents from gas and oil. The Tsars had serfs; the Soviet bureaucracy had workers; Putin has carbon.

But carbon will be over by the mid 21st century. As the world weans itself off coal, oil and gas to combat climate change, the primary source of Russian wealth will disappear. Putin's project — to destroy the rules-based international order before the carbon era ends, creating a three-power world system in which Russia stands co-equal to China and the USA — follows logically from that.

Thus Paul Mason recently.¹²⁰ It's an interesting idea, and I would like to believe that Mr Putin is this rational. Alas, the evidence suggests that he isn't.

The Trussites

George Monbiot gave us a very interesting couple of paragraphs on the way the free market propaganda groups operated on the edge of the Conservative Party.

For decades, policy development on the right was shaped as follows. Oligarchs and corporations funded the thinktanks. The thinktanks

¹¹⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gideon_Rachman>.

¹¹⁹ 'When conspiracy theorists run countries' at
<<https://www.ft.com/content/dc79e50c-45dc-4bb4-a688-ac59d3fb1073>>

¹²⁰ <<https://medium.com/mosquito-ridge/conflict-democracy-issue-6-958db3b3c7>>

proposed policies that, by sheer coincidence, suited the interests of oligarchs and corporations. The billionaire press – also owned by oligarchs – reported these policy proposals as brilliant insights by independent organisations. Conservative frontbenchers then cited the press coverage as evidence of public demand: the voice of the oligarchs was treated as the voice of the people.

In his autobiography *Think Tank*, Madsen Pirie, founder of the Adam Smith Institute, explained how it worked. Every Saturday, in a wine bar in Leicester Square, staff from the Adam Smith Institute and the Institute of Economic Affairs would sit down with Conservative researchers and leader writers and columnists from the *Times* and *Telegraph* to plan 'strategy for the week ahead' and 'co-ordinate our activities to make us more effective collectively'. The *Daily Mail* weighed in to help the lobbyists refine their arguments and ensure there was a supportive article on its leader page every time they published a report.¹²¹

Monbiot has omitted one significant detail. Pirie is describing the period in the late 1970s when there was a Labour government. It is much easier in opposition to coordinate attacks on the government: everybody has the same objective. Operating with a government in office is different. The late Chris Tame discovered this. His Libertarian Alliance had been putting out material similar in orientation to that of Madsen Pirie and co. and he expected it to be used by the Conservative government when Mrs Thatcher won in 1979. But his phone did not ring.

Wilson

John Newsinger emailed me that the new biography of Harold Wilson, *Harold Wilson: The Winner*, by Nick Thomas-Symonds, has a chapter on the Wilson plots. Oh, really? So off I went to books.google.com to have a look at the text there. No word search hits for Colin Wallace, or Clockwork Orange. Ho hum.

Labour and anti-semitism

You wouldn't know it if you read only the mainstream media (on- and off-line),

¹²¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/4sb8d5hh>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/sep/23/liz-truss-power-extreme-neoliberal-thinktanks><

which has virtually blanked the story,¹²² but *Al Jazeera* has followed-up its reports of some four years ago on the activities of the Israel lobby in London with a four part documentary on the subsequent activity of the Labour Party using alleged anti-semitism as a means of expelling members of the Party.¹²³ In enormous detail these films document the conspiracy – yes, that's the correct term – to rid the Labour Party of members who either would not accept 'the line' on anti-semitism or opposed the current leadership. *Lobster* has been noting all this for some years. Thanks to a leak of internal documents, *Al Jazeera* got the proof. It is fairly mind-boggling stuff. If you want the gist without watching the films, the excellent Jonathan Cook has written an account of this.¹²⁴ Cook comments about the role of the *Guardian* in the affair:

To investigate the leaked documents would convict the paper – traditionally seen by many Labour voters as their house journal – of colluding in a bogus antisemitism narrative against the Labour left that it played a central role in building. The *Guardian* would expose itself not as it wishes to be seen – as a fearless, independent newspaper confronting the British establishment with uncomfortable truths – but as a key pillar of that very establishment.

In the 1950s and early 60s the Labour Party organisation liaised with MI5 and Special Branch to find 'communists'.¹²⁵ These days it liaises with the Israel lobby in the UK.¹²⁶

By their omissions . . .

Danny Finkelstein has been around the upper reaches of the British political

¹²² There was an on-line comment in the *Independent* at <<https://tinyurl.com/2w8h96s5>> or <<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/labour-files-forde-report-keir-starmer-racism-b2198773.html>> and one on the *London Review of Books* site at <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2022/october/business-as-usual>>.

For a variety of comment by individual journalists see <<https://tinyurl.com/2prhjxey>> or <<https://www.thecanary.co/trending/2022/09/27/corporate-media-silent-over-labour-files-as-al-jazeera-pulls-part-three/>>.

¹²³ <<https://www.ajiunit.com/investigation/the-labour-files/>>

¹²⁴ <<https://tinyurl.com/58xj9nwn>> or <<https://www.mintpressnews.com/britains-labour-party-became-criminal-conspiracy-members/282071/>>

¹²⁵ This is discussed in *The Clandestine Caucus*, under subhead 'Common Cause and IRIS' at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/cc/common-cause-and-iris/>>.

¹²⁶ For details see <<https://tinyurl.com/42e6jks2>> or <<https://electronicintifada.net/content/secret-document-reveals-israel-lobbys-dominance-labour/36591>>.

centre since the 1980s. He helped David Cameron write his memoir and Cameron sent him to the House of Lords. In his column in *The Times* of 12 October, Finkelstein attributed the success of Mrs Thatcher in the 1983 election to the Falklands War and simply omitted the role of the Social Democratic and Liberal Alliance (SDLP) in splitting the anti-Conservative vote. The SDLP took more than 25% of the vote in the general election.¹²⁷ Finkelstein knows this better than most: at the time he was Chair of the Young Social Democrats.

Watergate

I have just noticed a recent(ish) piece by the excellent Jim Hougan about Watergate. (This is the 50th anniversary of the beginning of those events.) If you have even a passing interest in the story, check out Hougan's 'Watergate's Known Unknowns'.¹²⁸ This will show you in a couple of thousand words what a shoddy job has been done by all the official investigations and most of the media. Mind you, Hougan is discussing unknowns that most of us didn't even know existed – unknown unknowns, in fact.

¹²⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/mrxr7bh>> or <<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-information-office/m09.pdf>>

¹²⁸ <<https://whowhatwhy.org/deep-state/watergates-known-unknowns/>>