



**COLLAPSED:** Donald Trump claims there was a conspiracy against him which caused him to lose the race for the US presidency

# The world inhabited by conspiracy theorists inevitably collapses

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**A** FEW months ago one of my Twitter followers transferred to my Twitter-linked email account and bombarded me with daily reminders that there was no such thing as a threat from Covid and 'what's at the heart of all of this is a removal of our basic rights, the strengthening of globalism and the concentrating of all power in a world government run by a couple of hundred people.'

Another running theme was that the 'new social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter – set up to promulgate real free speech in opposition to the corrupt MSM – have now been secretly taken over and forced to do the bidding of the world government in waiting'.

I sent him an email on Wednesday morning, welcoming the news of the rolling-out of a vaccine and the further news that restrictions would soon be lifted everywhere, with life returning to the 'old normal'. It was like poking a wasp's nest with a stick. The vaccine, it seems, is just a plot to inject us with 'stuff' ('stuff' is a word beloved by conspiracy theorists) which will help the 'hidden state' keep us all under control, 'sitting in front of screens and too bamboozled by 24/7 trivia, game shows and celebrity to realise their rights and freedoms have been removed'.

In my reply I asked him what rights and freedoms he had been deprived of during the past few months of lockdowns and

restrictions. The response was a torrent of nonsense. Apparently he has been 'de-platformed' by Twitter for '...telling the truth and exposing the real agenda behind the Covid-19 conspiracy: which means I'm being deprived of my right to free speech'. I sent him a link to a letter in the latest issue of *The Economist*:

Freedom of speech is protected, but the right to be heard is not. Speakers were never guaranteed a platform for their views until social media came along. Now everyone has a chance to be heard. But denying access to anti-vaxxers, say, would in no way limit their right to free speech. They would still have all the freedom of speech they enjoyed before Facebook was created. They can talk to their neighbours, write letters, call people on the telephone, publish pamphlets, organise petitions and even start their own social media platforms.

But one thing the advent of social media platforms has taught us is that there are an

awful lot of people who want to say what they want without legal or moral restraint; and without any requirement that what they say has any basis in fact. De-platforming them has nothing to do with the platform-provider disliking their point of view; it has nothing to do with political correctness or promoting an 'opinion corridor' of socially acceptable, left-liberal views. They are de-platformed because, in the vast majority of cases, they are just dull and utterly deluded.

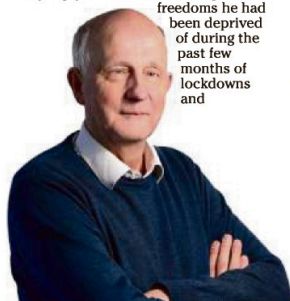
If they want an echo chamber there are plenty of them online. Ironically, most of these 'home of the truth' sites are constantly appealing for money because they can't build the sort of audience numbers that advertisers like (which is, of course, people who can set their anger aside long enough to buy something). Even *Fox News* in America has begun to row back from some of its feistier scheduling, finally realising that the mainstream is a better bet for viewing figures and revenues.

Many of the people who welcomed social media as the death of mainstream media and the opening of the door to 'real freedom' have now turned their back on it. They have begun to turn their back on Boris Johnson and other world leaders, too, over their response to Covid. They have shifted further and further into the recesses of a raft of alt-right platforms which regard everyone outside their readership circle as the enemy: the enemy being described as 'immigrants who drain the welfare state, radicals who undermine traditional values and an establishment that stigmatises voices of common sense like their own'.

The 'real truth', of course, is that the world inhabited by conspiracy theorists inevitably collapses around them because, at some point, they are required to present hard evidence rather than hard words. And as Mark Twain once noted, 'the interesting thing is that the people who claim to be saying what everyone else is actually thinking rarely get themselves elected to anything of importance or influence'.

Thank goodness.

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## ON THIS DAY

December 4 1970

### Internment Shock in South

IRELAND was clearly shocked and puzzled by last night's dramatic announcement in Dublin that internment camps may be re-opened after the uncovering of a plot to kidnap – and perhaps murder – Irish Ministers and leading citizens.

Gardai believe that the armed conspiracy also planned bank robberies and the Government's action was seen as an all-out attempt to stamp it out before it gets fully underway. The Taoiseach, Mr Jack Lynch said that information about the plot had been given to him by the Gardai. It is a grave situation, he said. Internment camps were being prepared.

### Discrimination Alleged in Civil Service

AN Opposition MP last night accused the Stormont Government of paying lip service to a promised reform programme while practising blatant discrimination in the allocation of jobs 'at the top'. And in a demand for reform Tom Gormley (Independent) is submitting a motion for debate in the House of Commons calling for an impartial inquiry into the recruitment for the Stormont Civil Service. Mr Gormley will have the support of other Opposition MPs.

Mr Gormley called for a full inquiry. The Ministry of Agriculture, for example, advertise quite frequently for staff and the unsuspecting 'minority public' are not aware that it is useless for them to write or to be recommended. 'We are entitled to our fair share of the cake ... We pay our way; we pay our rates and taxes.'

### B Men Did Not Report Fatal Firing

THE Scaman Tribunal was told at Armagh that none of the fourteen B Specials who fired their weapons into the air to disperse a Catholic crowd in the city on August 14, 1969, had reported the fact to the police. Mr J P Higgins, QC told the Tribunal that Mr John Gallagher was shot dead on Cathedral Road that night and two others wounded.

The Tynan platoon of B Specials had gone to the area that night. Three members fired seven revolver shots in the air, nine fired sixteen rounds from their .303 rifles in the air and one man – armed with a Sterling sub-machinegun – claimed that he had accidentally fired a shot into the ground and, finally, another member said he stuck his rifle out of the window of a car and fired a shot in the air to disperse the Catholics. (Many forget that the first threat to use internment came from the Irish government as a result of a threat from Saor Eire, a Republican splinter-group. Meanwhile the lethal actions of the unaccountable Tynan B Specials in 1969 competed for news space with fresh allegations of discrimination in Government employment.)

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