

A Bold Exposure. Review of Edward Curtin's "Seeking Truth in A Country of Lies"

A review of Edward Curtin's book, Seeking Truth in a Country of Lies

By [David Lorimer](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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The following review of Edward Curtin's book - [Seeking Truth in a Country of Lies](#) - appears in the current issue of [The Paradigm Explorer](#) and is written by the journal's Scottish editor David Lorimer. Director of the Scientific and Medical Network from 1986-2000. He is now Programme Director and continues to edit Paradigm Explorer. He is author and editor of over a dozen books. He is a Fellow of the International Futures Forum, Founding chief executive of Character Scotland, and former President of Wrekin Trust and the Swedenborg Society. He was educated at Eton and the Universities of St Andrews and Cambridge.

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Edward Curtin ('from a young age obsessed with truth, death and freedom') is one of a number of courageous writers including Douglas Valentine, Robert F. Kennedy Jr, James Douglass and David Ray Griffin who systematically take the lid off the nefarious, ruthless and manipulative role played in US politics by the CIA.



He is also inspired by Albert Camus, who 'tried to fight injustice while extolling life's beauty and the human search for happiness.' This deeply humane volume of over 40 essays and book reviews is beautifully and incisively written, ranging over a wide field, both existential and political. It makes especially significant reading in the run-up to the 20th anniversary of 9/11 in highlighting the lamentable shortcomings of tight-lipped mainstream investigative journalism that refuses to question the integrity of official reports for fear of being labelled conspiracy theorists. By 2004, Curtin was convinced (like David Ray Griffin) that the U.S. government's claims (and *The 9/11 Commission Report*) were fictitious: 'they seemed so blatantly false that I concluded the attacks were a deep-state intelligence operation whose purpose was to initiate a national state of emergency to justify wars of aggression, which came to be known euphemistically as "the war on terror." The sophistication of the attacks, and the lack of any proffered evidence for the government's claims, suggested that a great deal of planning had been involved.' (p. 55) [and see his recent essay *Second Stage Terror Wars* [here](#)]

The key political events of the 1960s cascading down to our own time are the CIA-sponsored assassinations (for challenging the interests of the 'military-industrial-financial-media intelligence complex that rules America to this day') of JFK, RFK, MLK and Malcolm X, all of which are meticulously documented and exposed in a number of Curtin's book reviews. He maintains that 'we live in the era of massive fraud where the transnational wealthy elites, led by the American war and propaganda machine, continue to try to convince the gullible that they are saviours of humanity even as they lie and cheat and murder by the millions.' This is a strong claim but it is extensively backed up in what follows. If we turn a blind eye to what Thomas Merton called 'the unspeakable' (Matthew Fox told me that he too was probably assassinated) then we become complicit – the only noble response is to exhibit a redemptive courage. In his 2005 Nobel Literature Acceptance Speech, Harold Pinter (quoted) caustically observed *"It never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't matter. It was of no interest. The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good.*

Jacques Ellul observed that propaganda deception and the public's proclivity to believe it and obey are reciprocal. Curtin writes (p. 18) that 'today's propaganda is anchored in the events of the 1960s, specifically the infamous government assassinations of JFK, Malcolm X, MLK, and RFK, the truth of which the CIA has worked so hard to conceal. In the fifty or so years since, a vast amount of new information has made it explicitly clear that these murders were carried out by elements within the U.S. government, and were done to silence

the voices of four charismatic leaders who were opposed to the American war machine and the continuation of the Cold War. To turn away from this truth and to ignore its implications can only be described as an act of bad faith and culpable ignorance, or worse.’ Official reports are accepted at face value while ‘the power of the oligarchic, permanent warfare state’ has only increased and anyone who questions this line is a conspiracy theorist (a weaponised term invented by the CIA in the 1960s). The political system works to prevent change, and every president has been complicit, including Obama, who told CIA Director Panetta that he would ‘get everything he wanted’ (p. 21): ‘since we know that every president since JFK has refused to confront the growth of the national security state and its call for violence, one can logically assume a message was sent and heeded.’

For the peace activist Daniel Berrigan, ‘a human being is a child of God, and as such is called to resist the rule of human death-dealing in the world, to resist violence with love and non-violence. A human being is a lover. This means that a human being is necessarily at odds with the powers-that-be, the governments and corporations that, in the name of peace, prepare for and wage war. It is a view of human being that is bound to be unpopular, more likely to be affirmed with pieties than contradicted by actions.’ (p. 37) People like him are frequently excoriated in their lifetimes and celebrated after death – the government that assassinated MLK created a special national holiday in his honour...

On a more lyrical note, Curtin writes about the importance of silence and poetry: ‘silence, like so much else in the present world, including human beings, is on the endangered species list’ in a society ‘suffering from socially induced attention-deficit disorder.’ He asks if we shut up long enough to listen to what the silence might reveal? And without poetry, he writes, we are dead: ‘Poetry is the search for truth. It marries outer to inner. It probes reality with words. It suggests, states, intimates, inviting the reader to raid what was previously unspeakable. This exploration is composed of ideas, images, and words arranged in ways that engender powerful emotions and thoughts. Like life, a poem swims in mystery.... true poetry startles. It inspires. It enlivens. It is a distillation of the human spirit, as essential as bread. It is composed of a few simple ingredients, as is bread. They are: the real, actually existing, outside world, and us; the outside world that we are in and that is in us, and our emotional thoughts about our condition. Flour, water, and yeast. The bread rises, the poem forms. (p. 83)

In the interests of space, I will highlight only one further significant theme: our embrace of instrumental logic and technical reason where ‘the theology of technological “progress” operates according to the law of can do, will do’, an ‘innately amoral’ position which ‘has caused many of the problems we seem unable to remedy. These include environmental catastrophe, high-tech wars, GM foods, drone killings, drug addiction, biological and nuclear weapons, to name but a few.’ (p. 111) Unlike Camus with his knowledge of Greek thought, we are culturally unaware of hubris and limits, always justifying the Promethean crossing of a new frontier. Now, however, we face potentially terminal existential challenges as a result. Curtin invites readers to think the unthinkable beyond consensus reality and linguistic mind-control as promoted by Edward Bernays in his classic book on propaganda: ‘It is impossible to overestimate the importance of engineering of consent. The engineering of consent is the very essence of the democratic process. It affects almost every aspect of our daily lives.’ Even the engineering metaphor is indicative and we are seeing its daily operation.

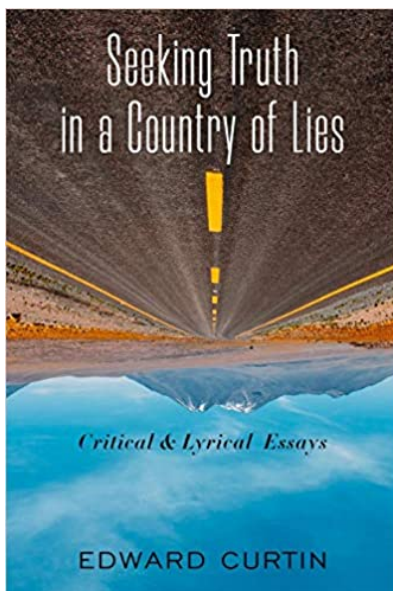
We need to wake up from this consensus trance of technical efficiency where, as Ellul put it, ‘for every problem caused by technology there is always a technological solution that creates further technological problems, ad infinitum.’ We are engaged in a battle for minds

and even souls through technological perception management – Curtin’s courageous and outspoken voice invites us to think the unthinkable and reminds us of what makes us essentially human: it is a call to escape from the high-tech trap of permanent busyness and speed. Living faster is not living better, so take a moment to slow down – advice I need to heed myself. Here is Curtin’s last word: ‘Rhythm, melody, and movement: from these, life is born and sustained. They are also integral to art—music, writing, painting, sculpture, dance...they lie at the heart of spiritual experience, as breath is the inspiration that carries us along.’

I urge you to read this outstanding book.

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He is the author of *Seeking the Truth in a Country of Lies*

To order his book [click the cover page](#).

“*Seeking Truth in a Country of Lies* is a dazzling journey into the heart of many issues — political, philosophical, and personal — that should concern us all. Ed Curtin has the touch of the poet and the eye of an eagle.” Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

“Edward Curtin puts our propaganda-stuffed heads in a guillotine, then in a flash takes us on a redemptive walk in the woods — from inferno to paradiso. Walk with Ed and his friends — Daniel Berrigan, Albert Camus, George Orwell, and many others — through the darkest, most-firefly-filled woods on this earth.” James W. Douglass, author, *JFK and the Unspeakable*

“A powerful exposé of the CIA and our secret state... Curtin is a passionate long-time reform advocate; his stories will rouse your heart.” Oliver Stone, filmmaker, writer, and director

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