

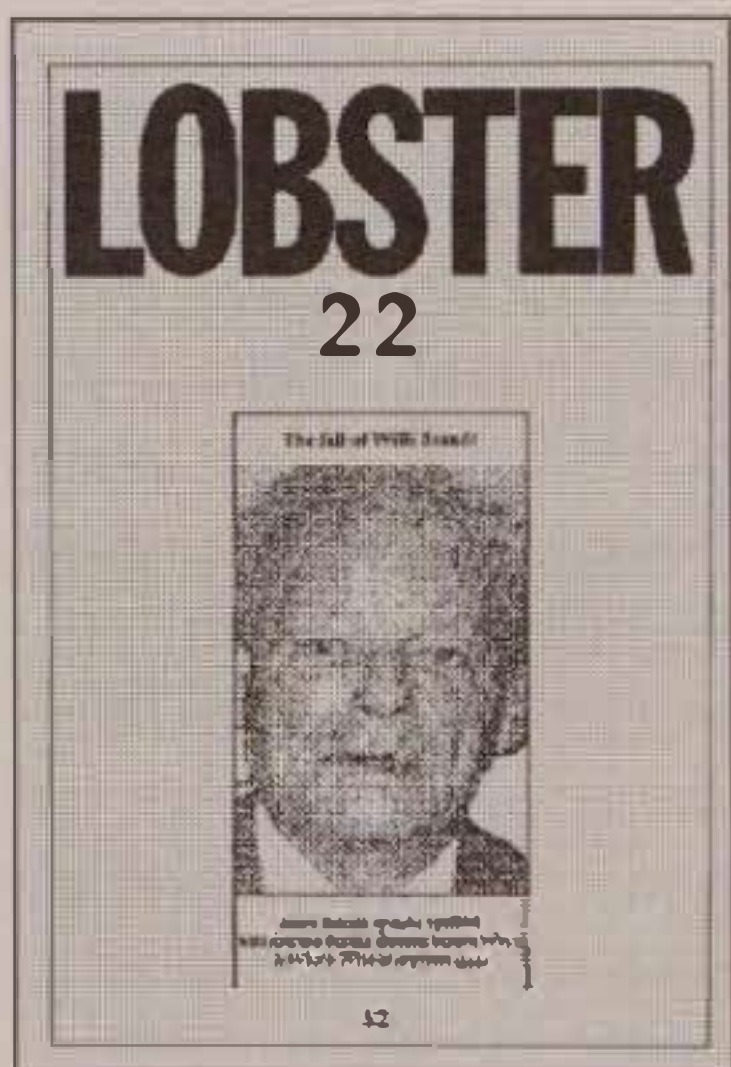
THE READER'S GUIDE TO INTELLIGENCE PERIODICALS

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LOBSTER - a journal of parapolitics

The provenance of *LOBSTER* is as unusual as its name. In 1982, Robin Ramsay and Stephen Dorril, two of Great Britain's self-proclaimed eminent conspiracy theorists, decided to emulate the radical anti-CIA Professor Peter Dale Scott (University of California, Berkeley), whom they admired.¹⁰⁰ They did so by publishing a small anti-establishment, "newsletter for about 50 like minded friends;" something "we wanted to read and no one else would do it." The problem of what to call their publication was solved by Dorril, a writer and sometime British probation officer, who "maintains a list of nonsense names for such occasions;"



LOBSTER was the choice. Mr. Ramsay, who once worked for the Independent Television Network (INT), insists the name has no special significance and serves only to identify their publication, which it very nicely does.¹⁰¹

According to Ramsay, *LOBSTER* is a labor of political love that provides no salary and there is no outside subsidy, or "Moscow gold" as some British papers have hinted; subscriptions pay publications costs. Ads are not solicited though they are printed "if someone sends money." Despite this unconventional approach from "a couple of weirdos in the North of England... that's all we are," as Ramsay and Dorril have characterized themselves, each issue sells out, many have

100. This information, and that which follows, on the provenance of *LOBSTER* was provided by Mr. Ramsay during a telephone conversation with the author on 12 July 1989.

101. Stephen Dorril is the co-author with Anthony Summers of *Honeytrap: The Secret Worlds of Stephen Ward* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987). Dorril and Ramsay have recently published, *SMEAR!: Wilson & the Secret State* (London: Fourth Estate Limited, 1991).

been reprinted; some are out of print and "won't be reprinted, whatever the demand."

The editors see *LOBSTER* as a "member of the international brotherhood of parapolitics mags." The other members are *TOP SECRET - GEHEIM*, *Intelligence Newsletter*, and *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, which *LOBSTER* describes as "about as good as it gets."¹⁰² Despite the fraternity, *LOBSTER* is distinctive in its depth of coverage, its detailed documentation, and in the absence of the rhetoric of the radical left so prevalent in its brother publications.

Beyond its unabashedly anti-establishment tenor in general, *LOBSTER* is anti-intelligence services in particular; those of the West, not the East. The Soviet Union, the KGB and the Eastern Bloc countries (when they existed) are largely ignored. The main focus is on the "bad" MI6 and MI5, with the CIA close behind, and other services with ties to these principals. The articles are written from the British political left and it is assumed the reader is familiar with the events and the cast of characters. Those wishing to grasp all the subtleties and innuendo, will have homework to do. A British journalist recently wrote that, "much of its content is impenetrable."¹⁰³ He is almost right, but *LOBSTER* is also intriguing. A good example is issue # 11 (April 1986, 55 pp.), which is devoted to "Wilson, MI5 and the Rise of Thatcher," or, "covert operations in British politics 1974-78." Despite the up-front political slant, it is a comprehensive account which should be included in serious study of these matters.¹⁰⁴

LOBSTER has also been a frequent source of stories related to Philby and the Cambridge spies. Issue #16 has an interesting discussion of the possible role of Lord Rothschild in this regard, as seen by the press, and authors Nigel West and Chapman Pincher, among others. Also included is a translation, done by the FBI, of Philby's 1971 interview in Estonia.¹⁰⁵ Many articles are heavily footnoted, an element of scholarship Ramsay and Dorril have made an art form that the

102. *LOBSTER*, #9, p. 4, and conversation with Ramsay.

103. Jim White, *The Observer*, 1990, p.

104. *LOBSTER*, #17, footnote #7, p. 3. See fn #96 regarding the authors recent book on this subject which they describe as "essential for a full understanding of the Wilson plots."

105. *ibid.*, #16., pp. 9-15, n.d.

documentation does not always support the conclusions which they candidly admit. An article in issue #19 contains the comment, "The material above is incomplete, under researched and does not sustain the following conclusions. Nevertheless, this is how we believe, this is how it feels."

As Julius Mader did in 1968 with his *Who's Who in CIA*, *LOBSTER* published its own "A Who's Who of the British Secret State,"¹⁰⁶ giving names and biographical data about British government officers "with indications of intelligence background." Perhaps in order to be fair, lists of alleged CIA officers stationed in London were reprinted from its German brother, *GEHEIM*.

LOBSTER issues frequently contain book reviews and news items. A recent review of the Hugh Thomas book, *Hess: A Tale of Two Murders* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988),¹⁰⁷ lays out an account recently challenged on British television by Cambridge historian, Dr. Christopher Andrew. Dorril and Ramsay attack Andrew and academics like him for "refusing to distinguish between conspiracy theories and conspiracy research."¹⁰⁸ In another review, Richard Deacon's book, *The Truth Twisters* is taken to task, rather unfairly, to put it mildly, "as a classic of Western disinformation purporting to describe Soviet disinformation."¹⁰⁹ In short, *LOBSTER*'s reviews are not just descriptive of content. They are to the point, analytical, and reflect the political position of the authors.

In the news category, issue #19 has an obituary of Greville Wynne which is a balanced account of his life by any measure. They have also commented on American newsletters, like *FILS* (see page 46), which they characterize as "mainstream, (by contemporary American standards centre-right), academic, orthodox anti-communist, anti-Soviet, [and] anti-left."¹¹⁰

106. This document is the 111 page May 1989 issue. It is not the first time *LOBSTER* has done something like this. Issues #9 & 10 contained earlier attempts and #16 has a few. The consolidated May 1989 (unnumbered) issue covers some of the same ground (mostly the A & Bs), though some names have been added and others deleted. A supplement to the May 1989 issue included in issue #19, 19 May 1990.

107. *LOBSTER*, #17 pp. 20-1 & #20, pp. 29-31.

108. *LOBSTER*, #19, p. 26.

109. *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

110. *LOBSTER*, #17, p. 22.

Finally, there are articles on the problems of the world's intelligence services, and the personalities who served them. In the former category (in addition to the continual thumping on Britain's own) is the story of the French Secret Service and the Rainbow Warrior episode. In the latter group, there is an interesting account of the career of George Kennedy Young (MI6), "written by a close friend of his."¹¹¹ The author remains anonymous, but hints of Anthony Cavendish abound. In issue # 21, guest author Jeffrey M. Bale takes on the Unification Church and the KCIA.

LOBSTER has not been the victim of over planning. No charter has been publicly articulated. It began in 1983 and has averaged just under 3 issues per year. Only a few of the early issues are dated, most are numbered though beginning with #17 (November 1988) they have both. Topics, says Mr. Ramsay, are selected from "current news, subscriber comment, and leaks," which appear plentiful. Contributions, like Jeffrey M. Bale's "The Ultrationalist Right In Turkey and the Attempted Assassination of Pope John Paul II," are welcome,¹¹² but no compensation is paid.

LOBSTER issues contain from 20 to 50 black and white pages (20 x 30 cm). The printing is small, with a two column format and some photographs; starting with issue #17, desktop publishing has been abandoned for typesetting. Annual subscriptions (2 to 3 issues) are £7.00 in the US; Europe £6.00, Britain £4.0. Dollars and credit cards not accepted; international money orders in pounds will do nicely. Some back copies are available, prices vary with issue number. Subscriptions and further information can be obtained from *LOBSTER*, 214 Westbourne Avenue, Hull, HU5 3JB, U.K. Telephone: Robin Ramsay 0482 447558; Stephen Dorril 0484 681388.

¹¹¹*LOBSTER*, #16, pp. 30-32; and Issue #19, pp. 15-19.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, #19, pp. 28-41. Bale has an extensive bibliography and 257 footnotes, many annotated. He looks at the question of whether Agca's connections with the Turkish right could have provided motive for his acts. He allows, however, that this does not mean others were not involved. The evidence on that question is still not sufficient to say.

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