*Understanding Shadows*
*The Corrupt Use of Intelligence*
Michael Quilligan
Atlanta (GA): Clarity Press, 2013, $21.95 (USA), p/b

**T**he author is or was – it isn't clear which – one of the writers for *Intelligence*, the Paris-based fortnightly intelligence newsletter[1] (and this has an introduction by *Intelligence's* founder/editor, Olivier Schmidt.) In the early years of *Lobster* we came across *Intelligence* in its first incarnation as a newsletter with summaries of stories and their sources. It was very good, though with much wider sources and more money than *Lobster*. In the late 1980s it went professional and became expensive; more importantly, it ceased to be a kind of parapolitical cuttings service and began publishing longer articles without a stated author. At that point I stopped reading it. Even if I could have afforded it – it was something like 200 euros a year even then – I do not trust 'blind' writing, which is why you never see *Private Eye* cited by me in these columns.

This is a collection of essays on:

* the Israeli oppression of the Palestinians and the slow-motion ethnic cleansing of Israel;

* the British state's handling of the domestic Jihadist threat;

* the corruption of the ANC government in South Africa;

* the creation of the Iraqi 'threat' prior to the invasion of 2003, 'dodgy dossier' *et al,* and subsequent post-mortems of the event;

* an examination of a very small part of Lee Harvey Oswald's journey back from the USSR and some general thoughts about the JFK assassination;

* an account of the abuse of children by Catholic priests and subsequent cover-ups;

* and a very detailed summary of the British state's activities in the 'dirty war' in Northern Ireland.

Thus the title is misleading: only a couple of the seven chapters are covered by it. (But, OK, titles are hard.) The account of the abuse by Catholic priests, the fabrication of the

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1   <http://intelligence-adi.pagesperso-orange.fr/>

Iraqi 'threat' and the musings on JFK are the least interesting to me. I don't care greatly about the Catholic church story (happy though I am to see it in the mire); the Iraqi field has been well ploughed already by others and the author brings little that is original; and the JFK chapter contributes only a few paragraphs of new (and inconsequential) information about LHO's stay in Holland *en route* to the USA. The other four chapters, on the other hand, – those on Northern Ireland, the ANC, 'Londonistan' and Israel – are detailed enough to feel like the outline of books.

The major problems with this book are technical. There is no documentation. Instead of footnotes the author lists the sources he has used – books, reports, websites – at the end of each chapter. This isn't good enough for me. Without footnotes we have mere assertion. To give one striking example, in the chapter on Northern Ireland he states that a gang of Loyalist killers known as 'the Glenanne Gang' [2] were the same people named as 'the Committee' in the book *The Committee* by Sean McPhilemy.[3] This is new to me and I would like to know the source. But without footnotes I don't. More generally, without sources it is impossible to assess the quality of the information presented.

This is also poorly proof-read and typeset. In Schmidt's introduction, for example, he bothers to put the cedilla under facade – *façade* – as in the original French but has David Cameron as David Cameroun; and although it probably shouldn't matter, I find it irritating that most pages have at least one line where the justification programme on the author's/typesetter's computer has given us a double space between words.

On page 158 the author describes *Lobster* as 'defunct'. Not quite, eh?

*Robin Ramsay*

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2   See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glenanne_gang>.

3   On which see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulster_Loyalist _Central_Co-ordinating_Committee>.  *The Committee* was reviewed in *Lobster* 36.