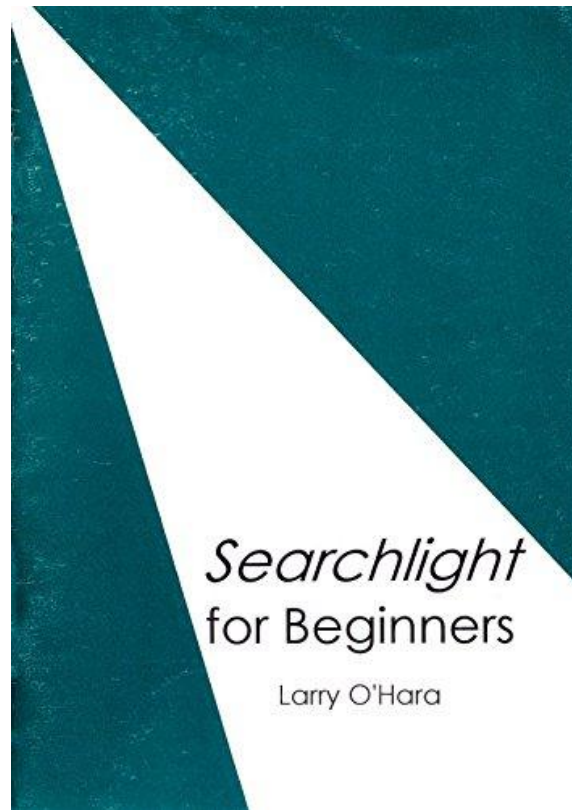


# Searchlight for Beginners

Larry O'Hara



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# Part One, the 1970's

## *Searchlight's* Origins/Editorial Staff

People attending Leftist demonstrations and meetings (as well as this years Trade Union Congress) might have seen a brightly-coloured A4 magazine *Searchlight* on sale. Along with tabloid-style slogans and accompanying photographs, *Searchlight's* cover modestly bills itself as 'The International Anti-Fascist Monthly'. The magazine itself despite world-wide distribution has a maximum declared circulation of 7,000. *Searchlight* appears to break UK company law, by not submitting accounts: but that is the least of their infractions. Closely related bodies are the '*Searchlight* Educational Trust' (a supposedly charitable body) and '*Searchlight* Information Services', which sells stories to the media. The *Searchlight* team have never admitted to more than a dozen staff members, and present themselves as specialists in the relatively narrow area of racism/fascism. However in their chosen field *Searchlight* are very influential, in fact virtually monopolistic: barely a story on fascists printed in the UK newspapers has not got their paw-print on it, and the same (even more so) goes for TV documentaries on fascism. They have established links with nearly every anti-fascist intelligence publication in Europe (East and West), with dire consequences for the independence and integrity of the latter. *Searchlight's* political influence is also immense: they were **rapporteurs**, providing official and exclusive research back-up for the two European Parliament reports into racism and fascism in Europe.

*Searchlight* started life as an irregularly produced news-sheet in 1965, involving among others two Left-leaning Labour MPs (Reg Freeson and Joan Lestor). The first really interesting development however was the publication of an anonymous well-distributed and highly-libellous document 'The Monday Club-A Danger to Democracy' in 1972 (the Monday Club is a racist right-wing pressure group in the Conservative party). No-one has ever admitted to writing this, but the content and style is highly redolent of themes that were to be staple *Searchlight* stories throughout the 1970's and later. In 1974 *Searchlight* resurfaced in the shape of a one-off (quite good) pamphlet entitled 'A Well-Oiled Nazi Machine', devoted to exposing then premier fascist group, the National Front, who had just obtained 3.2% in the February General Election and were to get 3.1% in October. Spurred on by this, *Searchlight* magazine was started in February 1975 and has continued to the present day. The first editor was sometime sports journalist (and member of the Stalinist Communist Party of Great Britain, hereafter CPGB) Maurice Ludmer. Ludmer died in 1981 and after a short **inter regnum**

in which a female academic (Veronica Ware) was in charge there have only been two editors since. For most of the time Gerry Gable (former CPGB member) has been at the helm, only stepping aside for a short time to allow TV journalist Andrew Bell to take temporary charge<sup>1</sup>.

## The Scope / Limits of This Study

In what follows I cannot look at more than a fraction of the disinformation that spews forth both through the monthly magazine and behind the scenes. Nevertheless, the character of their operation will hopefully be revealed by centring analysis on some key episodes and the operatives involved. Since its foundation *Searchlight* has propagated three really major stories: ‘Column 88’ in the 1970’s, the ‘Notting Hill Bomb Plot’ in 1981 and the ‘Combat 18’ story in the 1990’s. The Column 88 and Combat 18 fantasies are the most interesting, both in themselves and for the parallels with each other. Of equal importance is what these stories and the activities of *Searchlight* operatives reveal about the organisations real agenda: spying on and disrupting the Left/Greens as well as running errands for various state agencies.

## Column 88: *Searchlight*’s Homunculus

In May 1975, four months after their relaunch as a magazine, *Searchlight* entered the lists with their first major scoop. This was a detailed treatment of ‘Column 88’ (hereafter C88), so named because each number stood for the letter H: hence **‘Heil Hitler’**. C88 was described as a well-organised Nazi group whose “long-term objectives are to have their members in places of influence across the whole spectrum of the Right, from Monday Club to the National Front, and to slowly but surely make sure National Socialism is not only not forgotten but also hedges ahead bit by bit within these groups”<sup>2</sup>. The only media coverage of C88 I have been able to find before this date are three articles in a local paper the *Western Daily Press* in April, just before *Searchlight*’s May issue went to print<sup>3</sup>. In content they are very similar to *Searchlight*, clearly derived from each other or some other common (secret) source. There is a major difference between the local press coverage and *Searchlight* though: while the newspaper explicitly

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<sup>1</sup> Not that Bell has ever publicised his short spell in the editors chair. A clue suggesting there was another editor during this period is provided by regular *Searchlight* sycophant Denis Campbell, describing Gable as publisher and the editor as a “television journalist” who “does not want to be named” (*Guardian* 29/9/86). My information comes from an unimpeachable source close to the highest levels of the ‘team’. Bell is not only a producer on the notorious ‘World In Action’ TV documentary strand, he was also credited as co-author of Ray Hill’s semi-fictional autobiography ‘The Other Face of Terror’ (Grafton Books 1988).

<sup>2</sup> May 1975 issue p.5

<sup>3</sup> 7/4/75, 29/4/75, 30/4/75

stated much of their information came from “a man helping Special Branch with their inquiries”<sup>4</sup>, this was not something *Searchlight* told *their* readers. Yet if *Searchlight* was a genuinely independent magazine as opposed to a satellite publication, surely they would have told their readers the source of their story was a state asset. In April 1976 C88 hit the national headlines in a big way when it was revealed a unit had carried out joint military exercises with members of Britain’s reserve (Territorial) Army in the Savernake forest a few months earlier, in November 1975. One source of these allegations was unquestionably Dave Roberts, *Searchlight*’s first disclosed ‘star agent’<sup>5</sup>. That *Searchlight* were not coy in trumpeting their own role ‘exposing’ C88 in this way is made plain in all the relevant newspaper articles. In the follow up issue of May 1976, *Searchlight* boasted of their “scoop on the activities of Column 88 and a Unit of the Territorial Army...the many stories that have resulted from *Searchlight*’s research into the extreme right Column 88”<sup>6</sup>.

At this time, *Searchlight* was estimating C88 membership as “in the region of 200–300” and again describing “the long term aim of C8 8 to provide a highly trained and efficient cadre for a national socialist party of the future”.<sup>7</sup> *Searchlight* concluded by pompously stating “C88 is a private army. It is illegal. There is no legitimate reason why it should be allowed to continue”<sup>8</sup>. Roberts, like Gable another former CPGB member only ‘came out’ as an agent after he was caught in the act and convicted in March 1976 for trying to assault the staff of an Indian Restaurant after a botched arson attempt on nearby Communist Party premises in Birmingham<sup>9</sup>. His codefendants, when it came to sentencing, issued (implausible) statements denying his involvement, leading to him receiving only a suspended sentence (later served for a public order offence). The facts of Roberts presence and role are undeniable: without a police patrol stumbling across the scene he would never have been caught, and his codefendants were so convinced he was as complicit as they were that one entrusted to Roberts the task of visiting his home address and removing documents for safekeeping<sup>10</sup>. *Searchlight* returned to the topic of C88 in May 1978, implying very strongly that contemporary attacks on Black Left and Community bookshops were “co-ordinated on a national scale...Whatever the name used, C88 or 11<sup>th</sup> Hour Brigade; they all come from the same stable, with an interchangeable personnel”<sup>11</sup>.

These extracts don’t quite do justice to the flurry of TV and other Media stories covering C88, nor the way the whole phenomenon captivated anti-fascists. As late

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<sup>4</sup> 7/4/75 and 29/4/75: exact same phrase used in each article

<sup>5</sup> see May 1976 issue p.4, also *Sunday Telegraph* 18/4/76 & *Guardian* 19/4/76

<sup>6</sup> pages 2 and 3 respectively. This was (and is) an established pattern: stories are sold to the media and then recycled/embroidered in the next months magazine

<sup>7</sup> May 1976 issue pages 3 and 4 respectively

<sup>8</sup> same issue p.4

<sup>9</sup> *Observer* 21/3/76

<sup>10</sup> June 1976 issue p.11. Roberts own story is contained in the May/June/July 1976 issues of *Searchlight*. See also issue 26 (August 1977) and issue 1 of *Unity Against Fascism* (1977).

<sup>11</sup> issue 35 May 1978 p.3

as October 1980 a *Searchlight*-written story in Left magazine *The Leveller* depicted C88 as “by far the nastiest group...thought to have 250 members organised into small cells...Currently lying low, their potential more worrying than the reality”<sup>12</sup>. Without *Searchlight*’s lurid 1975 coverage and subsequent follow up in April and May 1976, there would not have *been* any national C88 story. This fact is of great significance, as we shall see. The other story *Searchlight* pushed with all their might at this time was a reprise of the themes in the anonymous ‘Monday Club’ document mentioned earlier: exaggerating the political clout of George Kennedy-Young (former deputy head of MI6) and various associates, the height of whose influence had been a failed attempt to take over the Monday Club in September 1973. Particularly noteworthy was The Men In The Shadows\* issue (November 1976) crammed full of primary source material intended to illustrate “the growing trend towards a military/political involvement on the right which bodes ill for democracy in Britain” (p.4). It was thus MI6-connected initiatives or sideshows/irrelevant failures who attention was being focussed on. That this occurred while Ludmer was still the editor, and it was he who initially ‘controlled’\* both Dave Roberts and Sonia Hochfelder (see below) makes me highly suspicious of his lack of integrity. A fitting epitaph for Ludmer is provided by the fact that according to Gable at the very moment he died Ludmer was on the telephone to a “senior Special Branch officer”<sup>13</sup>.

As we now know, the key murky secret state activity of the mid-1970’s was MI5’s efforts to use the situation in Northern Ireland to their own advantage, and even undermine Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson<sup>14</sup>. **MI5 did not make the slightest appearance in either of the *Searchlight*-hyped stories, which is a chilling omission.** C88 never added up to much<sup>15</sup>, and neither, frankly did George Kennedy-Young and his friends. As I stated in 1993, “by the Left (and media) concentrating contemporaneously on the agenda *Searchlight* were pushing...the more dangerous strategies and personnel constructing them were left in peace unmolested”<sup>16</sup>. *Searchlight* can thus, in the politically charged and volatile 1970’s, be seen to have performed a very useful function as a ‘distractor’\*, diverting potentially prying eyes away from what was really going on.

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<sup>12</sup> 29/10/80 p.25

<sup>13</sup> BBC Radio 4 ‘Soundtrack’\* programme 16/3/95: it would perhaps be too unkind to speculate about the content of the conversation

<sup>14</sup> see for example Peter Wright ‘Spycatcher’ (Heinemann Australia 1987), *Lobster* 11 April 1986, Paul Foot ‘Who Framed Colin Wallace’ (Pan London 1989) and Steven Dorril/Robin Ramsay ‘Smear! Wilson & The Secret State’ (Fourth Estate 1991)

<sup>15</sup> see my piece in *Lobster* 23 June 1992 p.16/18

<sup>16</sup> ‘At War With The Truth’ p.27



## ***Searchlight* Come Clean About Column 88: Or Do They?**

Having built up C88 so much, indeed based their reputation on it, the admission by *Searchlight* concerning the group later on, in for example their ‘Community Handbook’ (1995) is nonetheless staggering. After two pages of an (as usual) error-strewn chronology of the far right, they stated “C88, the nazi underground group that existed from around the late 1960’s until the end of the 1970’s was a honey trap operation by British intelligence and should not be counted as a genuine far right or racist group” (Section 2.2–2). Shortly before, *Searchlight* had gone even further, claiming that “Column 88...is now thought to have been an unofficial adjunct to the British section of the Gladio network”<sup>17</sup>. In January 1991, while still asserting C88 had been an “underground fascist paramilitary organisation”, and not, therefore, a state operation as such (p.6), there was an attempt to retrospectively tie C88 in with George Kennedy Young himself, saying that he “and his close associates used organisations like Column 88 as a smoke screen for their more criminal plans” (p.3). Attacking MI6 in this general way (ie with little evidence) is yet another instance of *Searchlight*’s predisposition towards their MI5 rivals, something we will have reason to return to. If we take their 1995 argument about C88 being a state ‘honey trap’ at face value, then if C88 was a state operation from start to finish, why did *Searchlight* not disclose this when it was relevant to do so: ie *when it was actually functioning*, or while George Kennedy Young was still alive to answer their allegations about his supposed involvement? By not blowing the whistle when it mattered, they themselves acted as “unofficial adjuncts” and disinformers on behalf of this very same “honey trap operation”. Indeed, without them, this “honeytrap” would not have been able to function at all in the first place. If *Searchlight* had not existed, no doubt the secret state would have used (or set up) some other conduit to hype C88—ie peddle disinformation. But the fact is the state didn’t need an alternative *outlet*. *Searchlight* willingly did (he job of selling C88 to the media Left & Right, and at the time were happy to take the credit. In the light of *Searchlight*’s record on C88 alone, everything they say on the subject of security service involvement in fascist politics should be treated as disinformation, in no way as credible ‘hard’ information. The alternative charitable view, that *Searchlight* weren’t aware at the relevant time of the nature/function of C88 hardly sees them as coming out better: they would be equally lacking in credence but merely naive as opposed to malign.

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<sup>17</sup> OFOT p.224

## Dave Roberts: Special Branch Pimp?

Was *Searchlight*'s promotion of the C88/George Kennedy-Young 'distractor' stories due to naivety or a more sinister motivation? An answer can be found by looking in more detail at some of their active personnel. Dave Roberts made no secret of the fact that after his arrest he passed a great deal of information to Special Branch<sup>18</sup>. There are only two logical reasons for him doing this: either he wanted a shorter sentence in his trial, or he wanted to enter into a working relationship with the state. These are not mutually exclusive options: once a 'relationship' with Special Branch (or MI5) is established, they have a hold over the individual concerned and it is difficult, if not impossible, to shake them off, especially as the public exposure of a past relationship is very harmful for any political activist to whom it applies. It seems probable that Roberts was *already* a state asset when the attempted arson occurred, most likely Special Branch. Indeed, Terry Liddle (ex-husband of key 'team' member Daphne Liddle) referred to Roberts as someone "reputed to trade information with Special Branch"<sup>19</sup>. Even if Roberts wasn't a state asset up till that point, after the trial he clearly felt himself bound to the state. How else to make sense of the assertion in *Unity* magazine (issue 1) by editor Daphne Liddle in 1977 that "hours of taperecordings and hundreds of documents have gone to the authorities...But since, we presume, a great deal of this material records fascist activity in, or with, some organs of the state, Dave's lips are sealed" (p.7). Why, logically, should that have been the case: hardly the stance of a non state-compromised anti-fascist and self-declared Communist is it? Robert's release from prison in March 1978 hardly produced a lessening of his pleadings to a supposedly 'infiltrated' state to increase its own powers. *Forewarned* (issue 2 April 1978) also edited by Daphne Liddle quoted Roberts as calling "on the authorities to arrest leaders of Column 88...under the Public Order Act and to ban all marches, meetings and literature. 'Only then', he added, 'could violence on a large and escalating scale be avoided\*'" (p.11). Calling upon the state (and therefore the political police of all persuasions) to enhance its capacity to monitor and suppress political dissent, was something *Forewarned* never desisted from<sup>20</sup>.

## Gerry Gable:errand Boy for the State

There is no doubt about the allegiances of current editor Gerry Gable, who has always played a crucial role in the organisation, and boasts privately that he has owned *Searchlight* since 1968. His first public media appearance was when he was prosecuted for breaking into the flat of right-wing historian David Irving in 1963. His defence counsel Ivan Lawrence (now Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee) said

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<sup>18</sup> *Guardian* 30/9/85

<sup>19</sup> *International Times* March 1986 p.2

<sup>20</sup> *Guardian* 18/10/85

in mitigation “they intended to hand over any documents or books they found to the Special Branch”: rather damning don’t you think?<sup>21</sup>. In May 1977, when employed by London Weekend Television he wrote a notorious (and he hoped confidential) document that has passed into infamy as the ‘Gable Memorandum’<sup>22</sup>. In it, he outlined his spying on radical journalists in a celebrated press freedom case, which involved among others Philip Agee. He concluded with the memorable phrase “I have given the names I have acquired to be checked out by British/French security services...It is now a time of waiting for feed-back and also further checks here”<sup>23</sup>. Gable has never adequately explained away this Memo, unsurprisingly, as it can only lend itself to the interpretation he is a true flunkey of the state, and a nasty one at that. In an exchange with me in the *New Statesman* letters column he admitted writing it and absurdly attempted to justify such by saying that “if one is engaged in an area of journalism covering the exposure of the wrongdoings of Britain’s security services, as I have been...one will inevitably find oneself in situations where one has to speak to people from the areas one is investigating”<sup>24</sup>. Certainly: but as the document makes crystal clear, he was not ‘investigating’ the secret state, but spying on the Left *on behalf of the secret state*, and has been doing the same (and worse) in the twenty years since, with considerable but not total success. On subsequent occasions, Gable has been almost as explicit in public about his cosy relationship with the state: a fawning profile in 1987 referred to the “magazines stories, gleaned from a wide range of contacts (including people in the secret services)”<sup>25</sup>.

An extraordinary episode in 1986 shows just how much Gable is genuinely valued by his state contacts. In April 1986, under pressure because of an ongoing libel action by some Tory MPs against the BBC for a *Searchlight*-sourced story on ‘fascist infiltration’ into the Tory party, Gable panicked. He printed a fictitious tale in that month’s issue (p.2–3) implying that a Tory MP involved in the libel action and others were planning to kidnap and murder him. In fact, they were only investigating him, and the ‘harassment’ described is far less than has been undertaken by *Searchlight* against anti-fascists such as myself (see below). Knowing the story was a fabrication to gain sympathy, *Searchlight* were careful not to name the MP supposedly concerned. They passed the story to *Private Eye*, who were rash enough to print the name (2/5/86). The MP concerned and a business associate successfully sued *Private Eye*, winning substantial “undisclosed damages”<sup>26</sup>. What is germane here isn’t so much the lies, but

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<sup>21</sup> May 1986 Report p.1

<sup>22</sup> March 1986 ‘Paranoia Peddled’ p.2–3

<sup>23</sup> April 1995 p.2: *Searchlight*’s customary inaccuracy/invention is shown by the statement here that C88 operated “in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s”—if they can be out by four or five years on the ending of this operation, why should we take seriously any factual claims they make about it?

<sup>24</sup> see for example *Sunday Telegraph* 18/4/76, *Daily Telegraph* 19/4/76 and *Unity Against Fascism* issue 11977 p.7

<sup>25</sup> *Volva* April 1986 p.6

<sup>26</sup> issue 8 (April 1980) saw *Forewarned* still casting itself in the role of supplicant to the state,

how the ‘plot news’ was received. In the original *Private Eye* piece, Gable admitted discussing the matter with Special Branch. A more recent account by Gable associate Gary Murray with “Mr Gables kind permission” outlined that after hearing others were investigating him, “Gable’s next step was to speak with a friend in Special Branch who decided to arrange armed bodyguards to watch over him”<sup>27</sup>. Murray goes on to say that “from there the matter was referred upwards, and when the police enquiries were concluded a report was given to Mrs Thatcher at a meeting in Downing Street and to Lord Bridge then Chairman of the Security Commission”<sup>28</sup>. Just how could a supposedly anti-establishment journalist of Left-leanings, running a magazine with 7,000 circulation (maximum) have the political clout to get threats against him (real or invented) investigated by the Security Commission Chairman (an oversight body) and even the Prime Minister? The simple answer is that this kind of protection is not available to genuine radicals, but is forthcoming to prized state assets<sup>29</sup>.

## Roberts & Liddle Circulate Hit-lists

A noteworthy and bizarre *modus operandi* of *Searchlight* operatives in the 1970’s was the almost simultaneous infiltration of Left *and* Right-wing groups, as well as the passing of information from each side to the other to facilitate the circulation of ‘hit lists’, including details of supposed former ‘comrades’. Take, for example, the magazine *Forewarned Against Fascism* published between 1978 and 1981 by Dave Roberts and Daphne Liddle, the latter even today a photographer for the *Searchlight* ‘team’. From issue 5 (November 1978) they began publishing ‘hit-lists’ of fascists, giving hundreds upon hundreds of names/addresses/work-places. This understandably upped the political temperature, and the publication of these lists *preceded* those produced by fascists in *Bulldog* and *South London News*<sup>30</sup>. Issue 9 of *Forewarned* recognised the fascist hit-lists were probably a response to their own publication of such (April 1981 p.3). The point isn’t that fascists needed hit-lists targetting them to act violently: they never have, the significance is that *Forewarned*, run at arms-length from but clearly connected to *Searchlight* (and their ultimate protectors) proactively took the initiative in pouring petrol on the flames of political violence. At the *same time* Roberts and Liddle were calling upon the state to increase its surveillance and powers of the very organisations whose members were intended to be the targets of attack and thus public disorder. While urging state intervention *and* publishing ‘hit-lists’ made some political sense, the combination of the two simultaneously seems highly illogical. Looked at

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calling “for a public commission of enquiry into the Nazi inderground” (p.10): this of a newly-elected Conservative government headed by Margaret Thatcher no less!

<sup>27</sup> *Islington Gazette* 17/1/64

<sup>28</sup> reproduced in full *Lobster* 24 December 1992, along with commentary by editor Robin Ramsay

<sup>29</sup> *Lobster* 24 p.4: see also ‘Destabilising The Decent People’ by Duncan Campbell et al in *New Statesman* 15/2/80

<sup>30</sup> 22/10/93

from the hypothesis that *Forewarned* was a state operation conducted at ‘arms length’ designed to escalate political turmoil and justify concomitant increased powers to deal with the same, these two positions make perfect sense. Starting in 1978 the *Nazi League Review* featured extraordinarily well-informed articles on anti-fascists under the pseudonym **Heimdall** (in Norse mythology, a look-out for the Gods). Issue 26 (August 1979) saw **Heimdall** helpfully giving fascists the home details of ‘AntiNazi League’ Committee Members: a body to which Roberts had very recently narrowly failed to be elected. In the atmosphere of conflict then prevailing this was clearly intended to set those of them lacking police protection up for attack. Issue 27 carried an article by **Heimdall** which supposedly rubbished Roberts, but which would have built him up greatly in Leftist eyes. This article printed personal details of many associates with whom Roberts had fallen out or never liked, and displayed a detailed knowledge of the arcane by-ways of Stalinist theory I’ve never seen matched before or since in any fascist publication. Significantly, **Heimdall** left out Roberts then address, sagely informing readers that “we shall of course inform our readers of Roberts’ new address as soon as he finds one”<sup>31</sup>. They never did! A normally reliable source has suggested that **Heimdall** was in fact a codename for Roberts himself, which would make sense. Eventually, Roberts fell out with *Searchlight* and the August 1981 edition disowned him: but his work for them had been completed; they had concocted new fantasies for which he was no longer necessary. He died in June 1982.

## Sonia Hochfelder & the UVF Death Squads

The final 1970’s ‘team’ member analysed here, Sonia Hochfelder, is today married to the editor of *Searchlight*, Gerry Gable, and was a co-Founder in 1992 (later Executive Director) of the ‘*Searchlight* Educational Trust’. Back in the mid- 1970’s she was in a tiny but militant Maoist group, the self-styled ‘Communist Party of England-Marxist Leninist’ (hereafter CPE-ML). Nothing remarkable in that, but while a student at Imperial College (London) she jumped ship in late 1974 and threw in her lot with the fascists, becoming the girlfriend of another student at the same institution, the well-known Northern Irish fascist Steve Brady, about whom *Searchlight* (edited by her future husband) were to print all manner of lurid stories<sup>32</sup>. In March 1975 the fascist paper *Britain First*, produced by a National Front faction with which Brady was closely involved, reported on a ‘National Front Students Association’ meeting at Imperial College, attended by Richard Lawson and the late Dave McCalden as guest speakers<sup>33</sup>. Lawson, a key fascist strategist from that time to this, was editor of the paper. McCalden, some US readers may recall, was in charge of California-based revisionist outfit the ‘Institute for Historical Review’ between 1978–81 before he parted

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<sup>31</sup> *Jewish Chronicle* 23/10/87 p.10

<sup>32</sup> *Guardian* 22/5/87

<sup>33</sup> p.252 All quotations from ‘Enemies of the State’ (Simon & Schuster 1993)

company with Willis Carto. Hochfelder, according to a well-informed source, booked the room.

On March 8<sup>th</sup> 1975 Irish Republican Socialist Party member Michael Adamson was shot dead at home in Belfast by the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force<sup>34</sup>. Speaking of this murder, a letter from Brady to Hochfelder circa March/April 1975 refers to CPE-ML members: **“apparently they had been carrying on a friendly correspondence with an IRSP student Michael Adamson, and the letters were discovered when UVF Auxiliary Unit (ie ‘Death Squad’) officers searched Adamson’s flat following ‘an exchange of views’ between the UVF and Adamson which the UVF men won with that most forceful and final argument a .45 calibre bullet! Rifkin Rowe Evans and Reakes have incurred the displeasure of UVF Brigade Staff over this; not a situation particularly good for the future health and prospects of the individuals concerned-their activity in certain fields, such as politics, revolutionary mobilising of the glorious proletarian masses, eating and breathing may shortly be permanently discontinued”** This was reproduced in *Searchlight* (May 1983 p.3/April 1992 p.6). In 1983 it was described as being written “to another fascist”, by 1992 it was now said to have been written to Andy Tyrie of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) a rival paramilitary grouping. This second attribution is clearly fictitious: a 1980 letter from Brady to Tyrie (that I have stated before was most likely passed via intermediaries from British Army Intelligence to *Searchlight*, a contention I stand by) clearly shows that five years after the Adamson letter Brady hardly knew Tyrie. Note also that Brady didn’t feel necessary to give the full names of the CPE-ML members, who had clearly been discussed before. Brady was not exaggerating UVF hatred for the CPE-ML, first featured in their publication *Combat* January 1975. In July 1975 *Combat* referred to them as the “most violent Communist organisation in the UK” and confirmed Brady’s reference to correspondence with the CPE-ML having been stolen from Adamson’s home. CPE-ML individuals named were Adrian Rifkin Paul Rowe and Alan Evans: three of those featured in Brady’s letter. In May 1975 the UVF reminded *Combat* readers that Adamson had been “a legitimate military target. He was a revolutionary socialist...when the UVF executed Michael Adamson they were not engaged in a murderous act, they were simply eliminating a revolutionary terrorist who, one day, would perhaps murder scores of British citizens”.

According to *Searchlight* in 1983 the letter was to be interpreted as “showing his close knowledge of UVF violence”<sup>35</sup>. By 1992 we were told “this extract...shows how closely he is linked with the Ulster Volunteer Force Death Squads”<sup>36</sup>. I see no compelling reason to

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<sup>34</sup> p.255

<sup>35</sup> Prized does not mean indispensable, and the nuances of Gable’s tiffs with the state need not concern us here. I will go into that if and when *Searchlight* ever dare to answer this present study. Murray, needless to say, accepts Gable’s version of the mythical plot being real (p.252–55), an illusion he didn’t want to dispel in his readers by informing them of the libel case outcome.

<sup>36</sup> The young Patrick Harrington, later a prominent ‘political soldier’, was involved in the latter

set aside my 1992 opinion that this letter isn't hard proof of operational links between Brady and the UVF<sup>37</sup>, but there are doubts now concerning this episode that weren't there before. These centre around subsequent research into the Adamson killing. A worrying aspect of the murder is the UVF claim (*Combat* May 1975) that letters were taken from Adamson's home "some days prior to his execution". This is more likely than Brady's assertion the letters were taken after the death, for Adamson was killed while the family home was being used for a wedding, and UVF gun-men staying to rifle the premises would hardly have gone un-noticed. It is reasonable therefore to infer that Adamson's correspondence was used to determine whether or not he should be executed in the first place. Burgling the residence so soon prior to his murder was intrinsically risky, and points to the strike against Adamson not being the result of their own intelligence-gathering but a consequence of information received from outside 'normal channels'. Holland & McDonald point the finger at the 'Official IRA' from whom the IRSP were a split, and they may well be right<sup>38</sup>. However there is another disturbing possibility worth airing. Was Adamson set up by someone in England, well aware he was in correspondence with prominent CPE-ML members? That would explain why the information had to be riskily checked out locally before action. In this light, a throwaway remark by Holland & McDonald that the UVF paying such attention to the CPE-ML was "Loyalist naivety" (p.57) can be viewed another way. The CPE-ML, small as they were, *did* play a highly-visible and aggressive part in English anti-fascist street demonstrations. And in any event, it was the intention of some part of the secret state (such as Special Branch or MI5) to stir up political strife, exaggerating the significance of Republican-Leftist links and implying they were operational is a well-worn stratagem.

If we follow *Searchlight's* stated position, that the above-quoted letter really does illustrate Brady's links with 'UVF Death Squads', then *it must also denote Hochfelder's links*, and raises the question as to whether she transmitted information about the CPE-ML and their affairs (such as dealings with Adamson) to the UVF either via Brady or some other conduit—a well-informed source has stated that she was Intelligence Officer for the Nazi League of Saint George at this time. That such an obscure group as the CPE-ML appeared in the UVF's sights shortly after Hochfelder began consorting with fascists in late 1974 is hardly coincidental. The CPE-ML were of interest to the British state too: their 1975 Conference was raided by police looking for weapons, who found some bullets. Such a raid is likely to have been a late phase in a state operation that would have started covertly earlier. Being Intelligence Officer for the League of Saint George almost by definition implies gathering information on Leftists, but might she have contemplated setting up former comrades for attack by disclosing information to the enemy? An answer can perhaps be found in the July 1975 edition of *Britain*

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initiative

<sup>37</sup> p.27 October 1979

<sup>38</sup> on Brady see my piece in *Lobster* 24 December 1992 p. 15–17. The marriage took place in November 1984, with Andrew Bell as witness and best man.

*First*, which carried another article penned by McCalden, this time on the CPE-ML. It divulged members personal details (including addresses) that could only have come from someone with detailed knowledge of that tiny milieu. All four activists referred to in Brady's letter were fingered, three of them named previously by the UVF. Even if Adamson himself was not set up for murder by Hochfelder, the above matrix connecting her to Brady and McCalden (both from Northern Ireland), is highly suggestive of her knowing full well the implications of targetting Leftists in this way. The balance of probability has to be that despite being well aware (from private correspondence and the UVF's public pronouncements) of lives being in danger, Hochfelder passed CPE-ML details to McCalden nonetheless. Not until I had publicly made known to the Left her relationship with Brady and speculated in general terms about her 1970's activities in 1993<sup>39</sup> was a very half-hearted attempt made to paint her as an anti-fascist 'mole', with little believable detail<sup>40</sup>. A related article clouds the issue even further, describing her as "an infiltrator in the BNP for several years"<sup>41</sup>.

Yet the BNP wasn't founded till 1982, and she was involved with Brady/Nazism as early as 1974. Debate about the nature of links between Hochfelder Brady and UVF/fascist /state targetting of anti-fascists can only now be carried forward by *Searchlight* fully revealing the complete text of the Brady/Hochfelder letter; the exact dating of which and comparison to information in the public domain would be most helpful.

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<sup>39</sup> issue 27 p.5, written by David McCalden

<sup>40</sup> see Malcolm Sutton 'An Index of Deaths From The Conflict in Ireland' (Beyond The Pale/Belfast 1994 p.72), also Jack Holland & Henry McDonald 'INLA:Deadly Divisions' (Tore/Dublin 1994 p.56- 7).

<sup>41</sup> issue 95 May 1983 p.3



## Part Two: The 1980's & Beyond

To summarise the key features of 1970's *Searchlight* activities sketched so far: a close working relationship with the state, passing information on Leftists to Fascists, and Fascists to Leftists (often simultaneously), running stories deliberately designed to conform to secret state agendas and spying on Leftists for the state. There is a definite pattern: one that was to be repeated in the 1990's. Only this time, unfortunately for *Searchlight*, sections of the Left were to be rather more clued-up about such things than we were the last time round.

### Ray Hill, Column 88 & The Notting Hill Bomb Plot

The major *Searchlight* story of the 1980's was their thwarting of the supposed 1981 plot to bomb the Notting Hill Street Carnival in London. The official version states that operative Ray Hill uncovered a daring plan by fascists to foment race war in the UK by planting a bomb at this Black-run street festival, the largest in Europe. A key figure in the thwarted outrage was said to be the Nazi paramilitary fantasist Tony Malski. After Hill's hearing of the plot, the subsequent publicisation of it in the media is said to have frightened Malski and company, causing mayhem plans to be abandoned. I have already disposed of this fictional episode elsewhere and refer readers to that treatment, to which a promised reply by *Searchlight* has predictably not materialised.<sup>1</sup> A couple of points are worthy of mention here. The *Searchlight* operative who allegedly foiled this devilish plan was Ray Hill. His autobiography states he and his controllers decided to "give the story to a national newspaper and just hope against hope that I would not be uncovered as the source of the information. A few days before the carnival, the *Daily Mirror* carried 'Carnival Bomb Plot' all over its front page"<sup>2</sup>

Turning to the newspaper article in question, a direct creation of *Searchlight*, two recurrent themes of this study so far reappear: Special Branch and Column 88. According to the piece, "Special Branch officers have discovered that the neo-Nazis plotted to set off a suitcase bomb...The plot has been revealed by officers who infiltrated the extremist groups...The Special Branch spies say...Detectives believe...Last night Spe-

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<sup>1</sup> issue 202 April 1992 p.6

<sup>2</sup> *Lobster* 24 December 1992 p.15

cial Branch officers said they were still investigating the men behind the plot”<sup>3</sup>. While we now know the Bomb plot was a fiction, there is no way a journalist working for a major circulation national newspaper like the *Mirror* would have dared to make such copious reference to the Special Branch in a controversial front page story without their approval. Which raises the further question: is it likely that Ray Hill was a state asset/agent provocateur? There is more to go on than just this story and the admission of its sourcing in his own autobiography to provide an answer. Hill reached a position of some power in the British Movement, British Democratic Party and British National Party. An NF splinter group, the BDP was formed in 1979, led by Leicester solicitor Anthony Reed-Herbert; and on Hill’s account engaged in gun-running. Unquestionably, one Luger pistol was obtained by an associate of Reed-Herbert’s for sale to a US Nazi in 1981: key moments in the transaction were shown on a ‘World In Action’ TV programme<sup>4</sup>. Beyond this one event (and the July 1981 conviction of another BDP member for possessing an unauthorised firearm) there is no proof of the BDP doing anything more: hardly ‘Iran- Contra’!

Two aspects of this affair are disturbing. First, it was Ray Hill *himself* who claims to have introduced the idea of mixing overt (legal) and covert (illegal) political activity to Reed-Herbert. In his own words, “would it not be better, I asked, if the Nazi movement could evolve a form of ‘pincer strategy’, appealing on the one hand as a respectable ‘clean’ political party, but still, on the other hand, retaining the capacity for ‘underground activities’ like attacks on Left-wingers and immigrants”<sup>5</sup>. According to a news item on the BDP, Hill actively recruited to the BDP on the basis of this ‘pincer strategy’<sup>6</sup>. That Reed-Herbert, a political lightweight, apparently agreed to it doesn’t negate the fact that the strategy was proposed by a so-called anti-fascist infiltrator, who recruited new thugs on that basis. Secondly, the US weapon buyer featured in the TV programme was as phoney as Hill, put up to it jointly by *Searchlight iWork! In Action*<sup>7</sup>. Given the role of what can only be described as agent provocateurs at both ends of this deal, it is ridiculous for Hill to bemoan the fact that “to this day, despite all the evidence, there has been not one single prosecution arising from the entire affair”<sup>8</sup>. Hill and his controllers might well retort that gun-running was a habitual sideline of Reed-Herbert’s: what a pity then, that no evidence other than this contrived example has ever been produced. Furthermore, the idea that US citizens were genuinely interested in obtaining guns from British sources when you could buy them over the counter in much of the USA would have struck any genuine arms dealer as preposter-

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<sup>3</sup> op. cit. p.44

<sup>4</sup> ‘At War With The Truth’ p.27

<sup>5</sup> BBC Radio 4 ‘Soundtrack’ programme 16/3/95

<sup>6</sup> *Jewish Chronicle* 17/3/95

<sup>7</sup> see *Lobster* 24 1992 p.17–18. As far back as February 1993 *Searchlight* promised a response: in the immortal words of Diana Ross ‘I’m Still Waiting’

<sup>8</sup> ‘The Other Face of Terror’ (hereafter OFOT) 1988 p.218

ous. The BDP folded shortly after the incident, providing a telling indicator of how manufactured the whole thing was.

Delving into Hill's past, he comes across as a mercenary thug; as early as 1962 sentenced to two years jail for attempted theft and ripping off a policeman's ear<sup>9</sup>. Also in the 1960's after he became a Nazi, Hill engaged in racial attacks, later stating that "it all started as a bit of a game-the odd night out attacking a few Pakis. I even desecrated a synagogue"<sup>10</sup>. In September 1969 Hill assaulted a Jewish cafe owner for political motives, shortly after which he fled to South Africa<sup>11</sup>. In early 1979 Hill returned to England in rather a hurry, jumping bail on a fraud prosecution in Johannesburg arising from credit card fraud and alleged embezzlement of funds from a Masonic organisation unfortunate enough to have put him in a position of trust<sup>12</sup>. Thus, even without knowing Hill worked for *Searchlight*, he matches the profile for a certain type of state asset: amoral, criminal, and racist. Hill supposedly 'saw the light' in South Africa and became an anti-racist overnight—this seems unlikely. Consider what was revealed as a result of a court case arising from an indecency charge in which the alleged victims included Ray Hill's sons. This was reported in the *Lincolnshire Echo* 26/3/88, thus relating to events well after Hill had supposedly surfaced as a redoubtable opponent of anti-semitism/racism generally. Jewish businessman George Lewis was acquitted after he claimed that the "allegations were made by a former friend who had found out about his past" (indecency charges in the former Rhodesia). This "former friend" was Ray Hill, and the jury evidently believed Lewis' claim that he had become "the victim of an attempted blackmail plot" cooked up by Hill, in collusion with his offspring. Of interest is the further contention that their friendship had been strained by Hill's realisation Lewis' "brother was a Jew. 'He doesn't particularly like Jews', alleged Lewis". Even in the *Searchlight* column under his own name (currently in abeyance), Hill sometimes finds it difficult to contain what I see as racist sentiments: describing Black Separatists on one occasion as a "Gucci-outfitted bunch of middle-class wankers...Black fascism"<sup>13</sup>. In March 1988, just after Hill's autobiography was published, *Searchlight* spoke about his 'security arrangements'. Because a trio of presumed nazi thugs had visited his home looking for him while he was out, "one carrying a cricket holdall containing a long thin object"<sup>14</sup> and the next day an "anonymous caller" promised the "Italian boys" wouldn't miss him next time. All hell was let loose. According to *Searchlight* "when the hit team's visit was reported to the local police they immediately installed panic alarm buttons in every room of the house, fitted new security locks and arranged

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<sup>9</sup> *Daily Mirror* 21/7/81 pages 1,3

<sup>10</sup> see OFOT p.98–115

<sup>11</sup> OFOT p.98

<sup>12</sup> *Daily Mirror* 6/4/81

<sup>13</sup> OFOT p.99–100

<sup>14</sup> OFOT p.115, see also *Searchlight* February 1982 p.3. In the circumstances Hill & company are lucky to have escaped prosecution for their part.

for the property to be guarded by a patrol passing several times each hour”<sup>15</sup>. This is not the sort of protection afforded to mere mortals: Hill was not even a witness in a forthcoming case, save that concerning the Jewish businessman just referred to. Victims of racist attack, or for that matter domestic violence from former partners, do not get this sort of protection: it is provided though, to people of ‘political significance’ and those of use to the state, as we saw with Gable earlier. It is no doubt this state back-up which makes *Searchlight* so free and easy with publishing the photographs and addresses of people they target—for their victims will not get the state protection certain key *Searchlight* operatives evidently enjoy as a matter of course.

Returning to the ‘Notting Hill Bomb Plot’, the *Searchlight*-sourced *Daily Mirror* tale described (without naming) Malski. He was said to be “now working for the ultra-right extremists who call themselves Column 88”. In which case, C88 were operating even later than *Searchlight* have admitted: yet more questions arise from this pronouncement. It is feasible of course, that C88 was a near-fictional organisation, as has been suggested by one plagiariser of my research. Even if that were so, it doesn’t let *Searchlight* or their sponsors off the hook, for by seeking to convince the media the Left and the Right of the reality of C88 when they did, attention was being diverted from fundamental developments on the interstices of the state and the far right. And C88 was thus enabled to function as a ‘honey trap’ partly due to the activities of the *Searchlight* team, including Hill., who admits joining in 1981 but never taking an active part<sup>16</sup>. Either the Notting Hill Bomb Plot was a fiction from start to finish—or Hill was privy to the plans of, and thus by definition active in, the very organisation C88 who were seeking to carry it out. An anonymous 1982 fascist bulletin entitled ‘Ray Hill Is A Police Informer’ referred to his membership of C88: a breach of security or reference to something that was common knowledge due to Hill’s activism?

## Dirty Tricks Against the Left

*Searchlight* have shown themselves willing and able to play their part in dirty tricks against the Left, especially anarchists, something obviously related but not reducible to, the Stalinist origins of many *Searchlight* personnel. In 1985 close *Searchlight* associate journalist David Rose printed lies about the militant anarchist group ‘Class War’ implying they were “run by former leading figures in the National Front”<sup>17</sup> lies he later admitted came from *Searchlight*<sup>18</sup>. A couple of weeks later, Rose (who is always very well informed as to the opinions of Special Branch) retracted this specific charge, in the

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<sup>15</sup> *Birmingham Mail* 28/7/62

<sup>16</sup> *News of the World* 25/3/84

<sup>17</sup> OFOT p.39

<sup>18</sup> *Guardian* 11/5/79; see also the tendentious explanation by Hill (or the highly inventive Andrew Bell) in OFOT p.65–67

course of making more general insinuations about Class War<sup>19</sup>. The (intended) damage had been done, and the recently formed street-oriented ‘Anti-Fascist Action’ suspended Class War’s membership and set up a Commission of Enquiry. When AFA’s report into the matter was finally published in 1986, they exonerated Class War, and had this to say: “Despite the leading role of *Searchlight* magazine in the affair, and despite many approaches to the magazine for evidence, the sum total of material from *Searchlight* to the enquiry was nil. We are bemused by *Searchlight*’s role in this affair”<sup>20</sup>. They shouldn’t have been bemused: this was yet another instance of *Searchlight* running errands on behalf of the state, disorganising the anti-fascist movement by spreading disinformation. A fascinating article in the nowdefunct *International Times (IT)* illuminated the state operation against Class War, and the similarity of specific lies spread by Gable to those coming more directly from the state<sup>21</sup>. When the *IT* reporters caught up with Gable, he repeated the assertion that “Class War is being manipulated by the state” (p.3). There was, needless to say, no evidence for this in the slightest, but the episode shows how, as *IT* speculated “Gable is using *Searchlight*’s street-credibility and Fleet street credibility to spread rumours about anarchists” (p.3). This is precisely the point-by getting close to militant antifascists, *Searchlight* have been able not just to spy on them, but disseminate tit-bits of genuine information, and thereby use this leverage to more effectively aid state operations of various kinds, including those against sections of the Left. The first lies about Class War surfaced in 1985 in the aftermath of the Brixton riots which had followed the shooting by police of a black woman in her home<sup>22</sup>. In October 1994 there was again rioting on the streets of London, this time against the Criminal Justice Bill (now Act) which curtailed many political and civil rights. As sure as night follows day, the lies about Class War were recycled, and one instance, not sourced to *Searchlight* freely admitted the state was the origin of the fantasies. It was reported that “Special Branch officers believe that Class War itself has been infiltrated by elements of the extreme right...in an attempt to stir up violence and thus encourage draconian laws banning all public protest”<sup>23</sup>. That this story does not mention *Searchlight* shows very well the ultimate source of the disinformation being the state and not them. Which is not to say they didn’t get in on the act: regular team associate Julian Kossoff in *Time Out* quoted Gable without criticism as stating that “one of the leading members of Class War in the ’80’s fed information to the far right”. Kossoff supplemented this clear lying reference to Tim Scargill with his own slur: that “Class War has attracted fascists to its ranks with their own sinister motives for creating chaos”<sup>24</sup>. In this (ongoing) operation against anarchists *Searchlight* have

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<sup>19</sup> June 1992 p.11

<sup>20</sup> p.5 Maybe it contained a cricket bat?

<sup>21</sup> March 1988 p.5

<sup>22</sup> Cherry Groce was paralysed for life

<sup>23</sup> *Evening Standard* 12/10/94:

<sup>24</sup> *Time Out* 19/10/94:as no doubt too do the likes of Kossoff have their own state-sponsored motives for lying about anarchists.

only been one (albeit at times crucial) conduit. Not all ‘favours’ *Searchlight* performs in this way are on behalf of the national state or security agencies. A good example of a ‘groundsetting’ operation intended to have local effects was the smears against anarchist squatters describing them as heavily infiltrated by nazis in Hackney (East London) which began in January 1988 (p.2) and culminated in a lying one page spread in the March 1988 issue, which came out just a couple of days after a massive police operation evicted the squatters<sup>25</sup>. It shows how useful *Searchlight* were to the local (Labour) Council in suppressing Left-field dissent and sowing dissension between the squatters and potential supporters<sup>26</sup>.

## Tim Hepple: The Agent That Never Was?

The key *Searchlight* operative whose career is relevant to more recent events is one Tim Hepple, about whom I have written in great detail elsewhere: though few other people have. It is a standing indictment of not just the so-called ‘investigative media’ but most of the Left that this case is not wider known than it is<sup>27</sup>. In a relatively short time, he got up to virtually all the activities I have attributed to *Searchlight* assets above, and in so doing confirmed the antics of Gable, Hill, Hochfelder, Roberts & company were not aberrations, but integral to *Searchlight*’s occupation of the interface between the secret state and their targets. Starting as a ‘football hooligan’ in the 1980’s, Hepple is distinct from the others in that he actually boasted about working for MI5 directly, and claimed he had witnessed executions by British army death squads in Northern Ireland. Even his official autobiography admitted a period in the army, but enigmatically stated “I do not wish to dwell on this experience”<sup>28</sup>. Other of his actions include organising race riots (Dewsbury 1989), infiltrating Left-Green groups and trying to steal/access their membership lists and even petitions! At the same time, Gable approached the Green Party, and tried to obtain a copy of their membership lists—he was given short shrift<sup>29</sup>. Along with Ray Hill (and while simultaneously infiltrating the fascist British National Party) Hepple sought to try and take over one group under heavy state pressure, the *Green Anarchist* magazine/collective. As part of this infiltration into the groups orbit, Hill wrote Richard Hunt, then editor, a letter dated

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<sup>25</sup> March 1988 p.7, on the eviction see *Independent* 10/3/88

<sup>26</sup> on the falsity of the allegations see *Black Flag* 180 23/3/88 p.9 & *Direct Action* 48 April/May 1988 p.4

<sup>27</sup> my contributions are ‘A Lie Too Far’ (hereafter ALTF) April 1993 and ‘At War With The Truth’ (AWWT) October 1993, both published by Mina Productions

<sup>28</sup> ‘At War With Society’ *Searchlight* 1993 p.17 He did not, therefore, ‘dwell’ on where he was unquestionably based for at least part of the time: Army Intelligence Training centre at Ashford Kent

<sup>29</sup> not unrelated to my informing some of those approached as to his likely motives. The matter is referred to in Derek Wall’s article for *Red Pepper* August 1996 (p.18). Membership lists are amongst the most highly-prized information state assets seek to procure: known in the parlance as ‘Operation Still Life’

20/6/91. He opened by declaring he had “recently read your booklet, ‘The Natural Society’, which was given to me by a mutual acquaintance, Tim Hepple”. In a sentence of rare coherence, Hill continued that he “was very impressed with the content and any reservations which I may have are merely of detail and interpretation”. I stress Hill’s involvement in this operation because the ‘Ostrich Left’ seek to deny the significance of Hepple’s activities, portraying him as a lone nut fantasist, whose activities were mostly invention, and who was working on his own account when he entered the Left. This ‘lone nut’ theory can in no way account for Hill’s involvement: and the idea that Hill actually believed any of the rubbish published under his name in *Green Anarchist* 28 (Autumn 1991 p. 14–15) is just too much—he works for a viciously anti-anarchist magazine, and neither before nor since has shown any sympathy for, or knowledge of, anarchist ideas. A 1994 article under his name in *Searchlight* called for the banning from sale of *Green Anarchist* describing it as “trash”<sup>30</sup>. It was the very appearance of an article by Hill in *Green Anarchist* that first alerted me to the fact a state operation was underway<sup>31</sup>. Nor can Gable escape responsibility for Hepple’s actions<sup>32</sup>, yet absurd attempts to pretend Hepple was deranged/acting on his own have the effect of letting *Searchlight* off the hook, as perhaps they are intended to do.

Hepple offered *Green Anarchist* arms and high-tech communications facilities, and gave them lists of fascist names and addresses (many wildly inaccurate) to print and distribute as their own work. The reasoning for doing so was the gross fiction that “the BNP have published the membership lists of Class War and Red Action”<sup>33</sup>. This was a blatant lie, but Leftists receiving these lists, and then acting on them, wouldn’t have known that. And once the BNP/C18 or whoever got wind of the Left attacking their members (and others) using these lists, then they *would* have undertaken retaliatory action and so on (just like in the 1970’s). When *Green Anarchist* didn’t fall for this ploy (due in large measure to my intervention), *Searchlight* or MI5 directly passed these same lists to another anarchist (Tim Scargill) who did print them. After Scargill (an ex-fascist) had fallen unwittingly for the state bait, *Searchlight* acted in exactly the way I had predicted stating “Scargill has all the hallmarks of a sloppy nazi infiltrator ..or a state *agent provocateur*. His circulation of what he claims to be lists of C18 members could lead to undisciplined elements in the anti-fascist movement carrying out attacks on individuals—which might suit both the fascists and the authorities. *Searchlight* has examined some of the lists and found them ludicrously inaccurate, to the extent they can only be deliberately false”<sup>34</sup>. Sadly for them, Hepple had admitted in writing his own involvement in the lists production and *Searchlight*’s knowledge of this. To date, there has been no satisfactory attempt by *Searchlight* to explain his

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<sup>30</sup> April 1994 p.12 By this time Hunt had been removed as editor due to his increasingly racist stance: perhaps it was this that upset Hill so much?

<sup>31</sup> seeALTFp.16-17/AWWTp.9

<sup>32</sup> seeAWW Tp.12

<sup>33</sup> ‘Targetters Targetted’ first version, (typed by Hepple or his controllers) p.1

<sup>34</sup> April 1993 p.14

activities, which also included setting up a UK newspaper for a branch of the US-run ‘Church of the Creator’, and weapons/street warfare training, as well as highly suspect foreknowledge of the contents of fascist hit-lists (which *did* feature Class War and Red Action) months before they were produced. Since its publication in November 1993, they have never dared refer to my second (definitive) publication on Hepple ‘At War With The Truth’, whether by name or otherwise. That *Searchlight* have been able to get away with this suppression of a major scandal is a testimony to their agenda-setting power: even Leftist Labour MPs are just not interested.

## Combat 18: *Searchlight* Build Them Up

The decision to form this neo-nazi group, in which the numbers (like C88) stand for letters: l=A(dolf), 8=H(itler), was taken after events at a meeting in Kensington (London) in May 1991, when the fascist League of Saint George meeting was turned over by opponents<sup>35</sup> The precise origins of C18 aren’t the main point at issue here<sup>36</sup>, but *Searchlight*’s account and role is highly relevant.

Hepple’s autobiography put it this way: “I was witness to the early events in the life of C18 and I reported them back to *Searchlight*. My and other information led the *Searchlight* team to set in motion a thorough investigation into every aspect of C18.”<sup>37</sup> What were the fruits of this ‘investigation’? These were divulged for the first time in the April 1993 issue of *Searchlight*<sup>38</sup> with C18 described as Nazi gangsters, and as “instigator, the American Nazi Harold Covington” (p.3). The magazine went on to say “what has become clear in charting the development of this terror group is that for the first time since the mid-1960’s British nazis have been able to put together an organisation, **albeit inspired from abroad**, which is able to gather intelligence, analyse it...and send out thugs and arsonists to act on it” (p.7/my emphasis). In their written evidence to the Parliamentary Home Affairs Select Committee, submitted in May 1993, *Searchlight* continued this theme of Covington being the key, adding a flourish that the “South African state security services” were possibly involved too, though no real evidence was given (p.3). In December 1993, verbal evidence to the committee by Gable called for MI5 (no less!) to ‘take the lead’ in the fight against C18. According to close *Searchlight* associate, journalist Ken Hyder, Gable said “a shift to MI5 would make sense because...Combat 18 had links with Northern Irish

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<sup>35</sup> one of whom was Gerry Gable, whose trial for public order offences collapsed before the prosecution even had time to present *their case* (*Jewish Chronicle* 31/7/92). I reiterate my view (AWWT p.26) that the likely reason for charges being brought was to enable Gable to gather intelligence on co-defendants Red Action.

<sup>36</sup> my article ‘Combat 18 & MI5’ (*Lobster* 30 December 1995 p.28–9) deals with this to some extent, and some of that information will be repeated here.

<sup>37</sup> ‘At War With Society’ (1993) p.35

<sup>38</sup> the same issue contains the atrocious smear on Tim Scargill (p.14) and a usual dig at me (p.21)



terrorists like the outlawed Ulster Defence Association”<sup>39</sup>. This was followed up by a keynote editorial in the January 1994 issue of *Searchlight* (p.2) which had a clarion “call for the investigation of nazi terror groups either to be put into the hands of a special police unit...or to be turned over to MI5 or MI6”. This subtle difference of emphasis, in which MI5 were only one of the agencies named can be accounted for by the slightly different audience-*Searchlight* after all, with considerable success, present their magazine in some circles as quite ‘radical’, even a touch ‘anti-Establishment’. The cost of running such a blatant errand for MI5 as they did before the Home Affairs Select Committee meant the tension between their dual roles of sometimes pretending to be part of the Left and in reality being creatures of the state had been exposed. Some indication they were aware of this was shown by the subsequent admission that “This proposal might astonish some of our readers” (p.2). It would not have been a shock to readers of my work, for as recently as November I had published a calculated guess that *Searchlight’s* written evidence to the Committee (not yet seen) was consistent with “an MI5-sponsored agenda” and would “regale the Select Committee with the latest briefing from Ms Rimington” (then Director General of MI5)<sup>40</sup> At War With The Truth was published at a very embarrassing time indeed for the team and their sponsors, and its distribution to all Committee members will not have helped much (despite Sir Ivan Lawrence’s efforts). The final report of the Committee took specific issue with *Searchlight’s* criticism of Special Branch/the police generally, and call for MI5 to exclusively take over monitoring the far right. They urged “the police, Special Branch and the Security Service to continue to monitor extreme right-wing groups”<sup>41</sup>.

The argument about C18 from *Searchlight* up to this time was quite clear, almost consistent. It was portrayed as a group of Nazi thugs, acting autonomously, who had nonetheless been inspired by US Nazi Covington (definitely) and South African Intelligence (perhaps). Their activities were worrying because of links with Ulster Loyalists. Special Branch, with whom *Searchlight* worked closely in the 1970’s when the key inter-agency rivalry was MI5 versus MI6, had by now entered into a ‘turf war’ themselves with MI5. This reached something of a crescendo with the April 1992 achievement by MI5 of wresting primacy in Loyalist and Republican ‘terrorist’ matters from Special Branch. In this situation, twilight operators like *Searchlight* were faced with something of a choice to make as to which side to back in this new inter-agency conflict. Gable and his ‘team’ unambiguously chose MI5, hence his attack on London Special Branch (the largest and most powerful) who had allegedly “failed to comprehend the dangerous nature of groups like C18 here and abroad”<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> *Evening Standard* 9/12/93, see also *Independent* 9/12/93

<sup>40</sup> AWWT Appendix 1 p.25–6. A recent defector from the team has suggested that in December 1993 Gable’s main concern wasn’t C18, but my exposure of his activities.

<sup>41</sup> Third Report HMSO 1994 p.xxvi

<sup>42</sup> January 1994 Editorial p.2 He was more polite about weaker regional Special Branches.

## A Contrasting View of Combat 18

My contemporary reading of the internal situation in C18 was radically different to *Searchlight's*. Way back in April 1993, I wrote that MI5 was seeking to operationally influence C18<sup>43</sup>, and as already stated predicted in October 1993 before seeing *Searchlight's* written parliamentary evidence that they would seek to justify and facilitate this<sup>44</sup>. A more detailed treatment published in 'Turning Up The Heat:MI5 After The Cold War' (hereafter TUTH)<sup>45</sup> developed the argument. I outlined allegations Covington was an FBI asset, something never mentioned by *Searchlight* until after my publicising that possibility<sup>46</sup>. I also drew a distinction between 'Mark I' C18, most of whom I take to be genuine Nazi thugs', and Mark II state assets. It was (and is) my contention that the gameplan of MI5 involves supplanting this leadership by Mark II controlled assets, in order to "turn it in practice (as opposed to rhetoric)" in a "terrorist direction"<sup>47</sup>. As intimated above, I viewed *Searchlight's* call for MI5 to 'investigate' C18 as an errand run on MI5's behalf, aimed at job creation for the agency and legitimisation of illegal activity already in progress. When, in March 1995, *Searchlight* printed my illegally taken photograph, work and home details, as the culmination of a set of linked lies implying I (a Catholic) was setting up meetings for the purpose of drug deals between C18 and Ulster Loyalists, I was rather perturbed<sup>48</sup>. I seized the opportunity to attend a meeting addressed by number 2 in the *Searchlight* 'team', office manager Tony Robson, and put these points forcefully to him. He had no satisfactory reply, and was still peddling the line that "we have called for MI5 to take over surveillance of extreme right wing groups because that is what they should have been doing all along"<sup>49</sup>.

## Combat 18 Revisited: *Searchlight* Change Their Tune

A few days after I confronted Robson, the April 1995 issue of *Searchlight* went to print, and its contents included a dizzying somersault. It was now announced that MI5 had in fact *set up* C18, as a 'honey trap' in order to "know the extent of...joint operations" between fascists and Ulster Loyalist paramilitaries. This claim has been repeated

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<sup>43</sup> ALTF p.30-32/37

<sup>44</sup> AWWT p.25-6

<sup>45</sup> Phoenix 1994 p.66-86

<sup>46</sup> see TUTH p.68-71, also my update in *Lobster* 30

<sup>47</sup> TUTH p.81, see also p.78-83

<sup>48</sup> see June 1994 issue p.5/August 1994 p.7/September 1994 p.3, & my statement of response '*Searchlight*. Time To Turn It Off (November 1995):available on various Internet Sites

<sup>49</sup> tape-recording of meeting at London University 9/3/95. See my piece in *Green Anarchist* 38 June 1995 p.12-14

subsequently, and is still *Searchlight's* position<sup>50</sup> In the context of *Searchlight's* history, and the line they propagated enthusiastically up to this point, their C18 coverage is plainly a disinformation project on behalf of MI5. Disinformation is not to be confused with complete fiction, and many of the names photographs and even addresses of C18 personnel are genuine. All this does not negate the fact that when it mattered *Searchlight* were begging for MI5 to 'investigate' the very group they would now have us believe was set up in the first place by...MI5! *Searchlight* have never even referred to this inconsistency, much less explained it. Both their line pre-April 1995, and the change subsequently, are eminently understandable when viewed as a task undertaken, indeed the two diametrically opposed positions don't make much sense any other way. Unless you accept the hypothesis that all *Searchlight's* analysis of both fascists and the state is largely fiction. My research published in *Lobster* and elsewhere of what fascists actually get up to would certainly point to that being likely. However it is not all fiction, and it is the area of overlap between *Searchlight's* coverage, reality and the state that concerns us most here. The current *Searchlight* justification for MI5 setting up C18 puts in perspective Gable's 1993 comments cited above that their links with Loyalist paramilitaries necessitated MI5 investigation; clearly taken from the same page of the script. In July 1996 *Searchlight* claimed that "since the embarrassment C18 nazis caused in Dublin at the Ireland v England football match in February last year, the word is that the state has been looking hard for a good reason to dump them" (p.5). Using *Searchlight's* logic (not mine) a reason for their change of tune on MI5 and C18 in the April 1995 issue is thereby suggested. Given the Dublin riot (for which C18 were given unjustified credit both by themselves and others) occurred on the night of February 15<sup>th</sup> 1995, and *Searchlight* were inundated by over 200 media enquiries concerning the matter, it would have been too late for them to make significant alteration to the March issue, then just going to print. Therefore, the earliest possible issue in which *Searchlight* could have reflected faithfully any change in secret state policy over the C18 was the very issue which *did* see such a change: April 1995! Using their own reasoning and public domain evidence therefore, would it not be consistent to see this abrupt change of Une by *Searchlight* as yet another indication of them conforming with alacrity to MI5's agenda?

If you believe, as I do, that MI5 didn't set up C18, then what strategic purposes did the *Searchlight* change of line serve over and above obeying orders? One aim would have been to preserve *Searchlight's* leftist credentials: my continual calling them to account for MI5-friendly activities was increasingly worrying for them, as hinted at above<sup>51</sup>. To superficially (and uniquely) criticise MI5 helped *Searchlight* to regain some lost ground. If more Left/Greens become as fully aware of *Searchlight's* real purposes as open-minded readers of my research on the subject do, then *their ability to spy on, lie to and manipulate the Left/Greens will be severely diminished*. In this circumstance,

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<sup>50</sup> see July 1996 issue p.3 for example, and earlier references cited in *Lobster* 30.

<sup>51</sup> at London University 9/3/95, my intervention reduced Robson to stuttering incoherence

the secret state would certainly look elsewhere to other conduits, a prospect that fills Gable and his cohorts with great fear. The second strategic purpose served by *Searchlight* announcing MI5 set up C18 is to facilitate the very take-over of C18 by Mark II state assets that I have long surmised has been their intention. An apparent throwaway remark in a recent *Searchlight* gave the game away, conjecturing about a scenario whereby “a new leadership, not under the control or influence of the state security services, emerges in the NSA, as appears to be happening” (NSA stands for ‘National Socialist AIUance’, another name for C18)<sup>52</sup>. If key figures in the Mark I C18 leadership go to prison for various offences: as is a distinct possibility given certain trials pending, the way will then be clear for Mark II personnel to take over. Should the accused avoid jail, the idea is to imply this will have been due to them being state agents from the start, and hasten their being pushed aside anyway<sup>53</sup>. Either way, the secret state is supposed to win: and for anti-fascists that means being on the receiving end of more state-sponsored violence of a potentially fatal nature. The third strategic purpose behind *Searchlight* alleging MI5 set up C18 is to cover the whole MI5 operation concerning neo-nazis in a thick fog of disinformation, the better to enable state operatives to escape unscathed and operations to remain undetected.

## The BNSP: Another *Searchlight* Co-production?

In recent months a transparent state front, the British National Socialist Party, (hereafter BNSP), has arisen bearing the characteristic hall-marks of *Searchlight* /MI5 input. *Searchlight*’s hysterical coverage of the BNSP, containing almost as many lies as paragraphs, only tends to confirm my suspicions as to their involvement. The BNSP is described as “not a genuine nazi party but a state honey trap...a state operation”<sup>54</sup> *Searchlight* hope that by slamming a phantom outfit run by a trans-sexual fall-guy (or fall-girl?) they will be able to recover some anti-state credibility themselves in the process. The BNSP’s activities are undoubtedly an embarrassment to BNP leader John Tyndall, as illustrated by his uncomfortable statement admitting that BNSP letters were sent out using BNP membership and subscription lists stolen from Alf Waite’s home in July 1995<sup>55</sup>. It is equally the case however that the front person for the BNSP, A McHugh, is no friend of C18, as *Searchlight* lyingly implied. In March 1995 issue 11 of C18 magazine *The Order* denounced McHugh as a “vile pervert who was for over

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<sup>52</sup> quote from March 1996 issue p.6

<sup>53</sup> it is perhaps the belief that their incarceration was imminent that lies too behind the characteristically interesting article by Nick Griffin in *Spearhead* (issue 331 September 1996 p. 12–14) implying very strongly that an (un-named) C18 is a state ‘pseudo-gang’ along Brigadier Frank Kitson’s lines. Elsewhere the same month Griffin wrote that fascist “groups should agree to exchange information on violent Red and Zionist opponents-as well as suspected state agents” (*Northern Way* p.19).

<sup>54</sup> July 1996 issue p.4

<sup>55</sup> see *Spearhead* 329 July 1996 p. 15

25 years active with the reds”<sup>56</sup>. More recent information in my possession tends to confirm this allegation of McHugh’s involvement in Stalinist fringe politics. This is something I will return to elsewhere.

## The Column 88 and Combat 18 Operations Compared

*Searchlight* themselves have drawn attention to C88:C18 parallels, stating that “those who have watched C18 have noted that in some ways it resembled a little too closely a nazi underground group called Column 88. C88 turned out to be a ‘honey trap operation’ set up by British intelligence...[and] disappeared into the wilderness of mirrors that is intelligence once *Searchlight* and Members of Parliament started to ask too many questions and even infiltrate its ranks”<sup>57</sup> With hindsight, what are we to make of this? Aside from the posthumous rehabilitation of Dave Roberts, this account of how C88 panned out is an inversion of the true sequence of events. For as we have seen it was *Searchlight*’s publicising C88 in 1975 and feeding stories to the media and MPs in 1976 concerning the Savernake forest exercise and so on that led to the effective *launch* of C88 nationally without which it couldn’t function as a ‘honey trap’. And as I have repeatedly stated, there is no evidence MI5 created C18, indeed the only motive suggested by *Searchlight* for them doing so is preposterous, that concerning Ulster Loyalists. For of virtually all ‘extra-parliamentary’ groups Ulster Loyalist paramilitaries are the most susceptible to infiltration by the state. The case of the UDA’s Chief Intelligence Officer 1987–1990, state asset Brian Nelson, under whose auspices Loyalist paramilitaries were flooded with arms via South Africa, springs immediately to mind. Given that in any fascist-Loyalist co-operation the Loyalists would unquestionably be the senior partner, MI5 would already know, via their assets inside the Loyalists, precisely what ‘joint activities’ might be going on, indeed they’d be in a good position to organise them! C18 has far more of a reality and street presence (although a patchy record on functioning cells), than C88 ever appeared to have, so the parallels there are not exact. No significant reports of substantial power struggles *within* C88 were ever filed, this is not the case concerning C18, for close observers like myself. There are two similarities between C88 and C18 though. The first is one that would not unduly perturb *Searchlight*: the operations (real/imagined) of both are clearly matters within the province of the secret state generally, both Special Branch and MI5. The second similarity is one which would, and should, make *Searchlight* very uncomfortable indeed were it to gain wide circulation, and will hopefully already be apparent to those of you who have read this far. *Just as Searchlight about C88 on behalf of the state when it*

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<sup>56</sup> p.4: p.2 denounced me as “a red”, and sagely commented that “just because he has some feud with *Searchlight* does not make him one of us”—exactly!

<sup>57</sup> April 1995 issue Editorial p.2

*mattered, so they have already done, and are still doing, in relation to C18*, If C18 is a ‘honey trap’ then *Searchlight* have helped it become effective, by building it up so much: the first TV programme featuring it was coproduced by them and old friend Andrew Bell for ‘World In Action’ April 1993. On this ‘honey trap’ scenario, *Searchlight* acted in exactly the same way concerning C18 as they did with C88. On the other hand if C18 (no matter how distasteful a band of neo-nazi thugs they evidently are) is at present run by a leadership who *are* largely independent of state control, by lying about the allegiance of this Mark I original leadership *Searchlight* are facilitating a take over by real state operatives. Such a takeover would not be undertaken for pacifist purposes, that much is for sure.

## Spooks on the Internet?

I have concentrated in this study on the C88/C18 stories particularly, because in their symmetry they provide great insights into the *Searchlight* organisation’s rationale and methodology. One of their current themes, ‘fascism on the Internet’ is worth looking at too. As is the case in the US, certain state agencies are lasciviously eyeing the Internet as a means of expanding their powers and finding a use for surveillance personnel/equipment left relatively inactive with, the end of the Cold War. Along with porn on the Internet, the spectre of Nazis/Holocaust revisionists using it spread their ideas is a key argument used to legitimate increased state power. In running this errand for the state *Searchlight* are not alone, and a keynote report on the subject appearing in the March 1996 issue was written by a colleague of theirs, Louise Bernstein.<sup>(1)</sup> There is no way any casual reader would realise that in her political past she was, supposedly, an anarchist, occasionally writing for *Black Flag*, respected for its serious coverage of the secret state. One contributor to *Black Flag*, the late Leo Rosser, wrote consistently well informed articles on a variety of topics, including *Searchlight*<sup>58</sup>. His partner until his death in 1990 was Louise Bernstein. It might have been thought that Bernstein would therefore be very well informed about the nature of *Searchlight* and what value is to be placed upon it. Imagine my surprise (and dismay) when I came across an article written by Bernstein in a 1992 book published in French on fascists in the UK<sup>59</sup>. The whole analysis parroted that of *Searchlight*, even describing a ludicrous disinformational pamphlet of theirs as “excellent” (p.70). It is either the case that Bernstein had no awareness of her former partners acute understanding of *Searchlight*, and was thus able to enthusiastically promote the magazine with an easy conscience and an empty head: unlikely, especially given she wrote for *Black Flag*. Or

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<sup>58</sup> see for example issues 155 156 & 160, 1985–6

<sup>59</sup> ‘L’Europe en Chemise Brune\* (Reflex Paris 1992); Grande Bretagne: Ascension et chute des enfants de Mosley’

<sup>(1)</sup> [Archivists note: On these allegations against Louise, see the appendix].

she miraculously changed her mind and scrambled her brain very quickly: which would be an insult to her intelligence. Or there is a third possibility, that her presence in *Black Flag's* orbit was itself some kind of 'operation', and once completed she moved on to another task. Veteran anarchist the late Albert Meltzer after paying a fulsome tribute to Leo Rosser, had this to say in his recently published autobiography. Leo and I "talked about an event that was coming up in Spain the following year which we both wanted to attend. He also mentioned investigating some stories about drug dealers and the Spanish police in the next few weeks. But within a week of the conversation he was dead. The evidence, that he had been depressive for some weeks but concealed it from people, that his relatives and girl friend had finally decided to take him to the hospital for observation for suicidal tendencies, that he had left the hospital, being left unsupervised, and jumped from the nearest high building, seems undeniable. My suspicions as to what really happened are different but unprovable. I am not to be convinced otherwise"<sup>60</sup> In the early 1990's the magazine did become defunct for a time; mostly due to personal reasons, but has now made a welcome return. As to Bernstein's subsequent trajectory, she was heavily involved with the militant French anti-fascist publication *Reflex*, and (according to a reliable source) influenced their move closer to *Searchlight*: they have a monthly article in *Searchlight*, under the highly-unfortunate description I hope for their sake isn't true, that "*Reflex* is the French equivalent of *Searchlight*"<sup>61</sup>. Currently, Bernstein is in an even more prestigious position, working for the anti-racist/fascist network 'United for Intercultural Action' based in Amsterdam the Netherlands. In that guise, she writes to (and therefore possesses access to the details of) anti-fascists throughout the whole of Europe. How adequate is the security of 'United' and those who communicate with them in this situation? No doubt history will provide the answer to that one.

## *Searchlight* and the Jewish Community

Their relationship with the Jewish community is a theme *Searchlight* return to when in difficulty, they feel that by manufacturing scare stories about, or exaggerating, anti-semitism this will ensure a ready flow of funds from Jewish sources. The Union of Jewish Students (UJS) provides personnel to perform various tasks for *Searchlight*, although thankfully some of their number are aware (and horrified) of what *Searchlight* gets up to. I have elsewhere stated my suspicion about *Searchlight* producing/distributing anti-semitic propaganda, as well as the possible involvement of their personnel in cemetery desecrations<sup>62</sup>. One fascist hit-list circulating in 1993 contained not just details of Jewish students resident in Nottingham, but their family addresses elsewhere in

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<sup>60</sup> 'I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels'/AK Press Edinburgh 1995 p.341

<sup>61</sup> I have written to *Reflex* pointing out the incongruity of their association with *Searchlight* and concomitant dangers

<sup>62</sup> see AWWT p.25-6 and 7 respectively

the country ('Sieg Redwatch' p.1). This doesn't look like information that would have been obtainable from just one or even two person's stolen address books, but rather an extract from a far greater data base, such as for example membership lists of the Union of Jewish Students. How might such information have passed into fascist hands? The most likely way is straightforward theft, although if we grant the possibility of discreet 'leaking' then *Searchlight* had the means, track record and motive: to keep the UJS 'mustard keen' in terms of providing shock troops for *Searchlight* activities.

The longest-standing Jewish organisation in the UK is the 'Board of Deputies of British Jews', an inherently conservative body with extensive Establishment links. Their 'Community Defence Organisation' purports to monitor fascists, but their 'intelligence-gathering' capacity is minimal, seeming to consist of little more than the ability to phone two numbers: the Home Office and *Searchlight*. The evidence given by the Board to the Home Affairs Select Committee in 1993, the same one *Searchlight* tried to nobble, was (apart from detailed statistics on anti-semitic incidents) of poor quality and showed their lack of an independent research capacity, consisting mainly of reproductions of fascist documents! A more recent offering by Board Defence Director Mike Whine on the internet was similarly lacking in detailed original research<sup>63</sup>. I have it on good authority that (in conjunction with *Searchlight*) the Board has taken an active part in smear campaigns against Greens including myself. Indeed, the Board are so subordinate to *Searchlight's* agenda that they have suppressed criticism of former Green Party member David Icke, who has been wandering around propagating the anti-Jewish forgery the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' as though it was fact, and getting large paying audiences to listen to him. That I have played a prominent part in the campaign to oppose him (not fitting in with their labelling me a fascist) has been reason enough for *Searchlight* to ignore the affair. But that is no good reason for the Board of Deputies and more recently the *Jewish Chronicle* to do the same<sup>64</sup>. There is no public branch of the US-based (and notorious spying group) the Anti-Defamation League in the UK (unlike many other countries): with the existence of *Searchlight* one is hardly needed. The ADL have never, to my knowledge, featured in *Searchlight* more than once or twice, and tiny uncritical mentions at that. Therefore, a reasonable working hypothesis is that *Searchlight* collaborates with the ADL behind the scenes, and is perhaps even (covertly) affiliated. Keeping it quiet would, after all, make it easier for *Searchlight* to gather intelligence on US anti-fascists, to then be passed to the ADL or even the FBI directly. The FBI gets a very easy ride from *Searchlight*, much of their coverage of it/the US Right seems to verge on more or less blatant and unapologetic disinformation from state sources<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> 'The Far Right on The Internet', paper given at University of Teesside 12/4/95

<sup>64</sup> on Icke see Dave Black 'Karma Chameleon' *Outlook* September 1991 p.14-16/Dave Black 'Son of God or Son of the Devil?' *Greenline* September 1994 p.14-15/*Green Party Anti-Racist Network Newsletter* October 1994 p.1/*Open Eye* 3 1995 p.7/my 'David Icke: Time For The Hard Truth' *Greenline* December 1995 p.15-16.

<sup>65</sup> see March 1995 p.12/January 1996 p.4-6/March 1996 p.3-4 for example



## Is the Writing on the Wall?

To what extent are political activists (or even the media) becoming wise to *Searchlight*, in the light of the above despicable record of lies, incitement, targeting anti-fascists, multiple fabrication and supine subordination to the secret state? There are positive signs: Anti-Fascist Action no longer advertise *Searchlight*, and AFA's most militant component street-wise, Red Action, launched a savage attack in Summer 1995, declaring that "for *Searchlight*...there can be no way back. One way or another, their number is surely up"<sup>66</sup>. Greenleaf bookshop in Bristol took the brave step of banning *Searchlight* of their own volition in 1995, for which they are to be commended. Aware of in just what contempt clued-up anti-fascists hold them, and the fact that AFA were no longer prepared to tolerate the practice of selectively omitting certain branches, *Searchlight* were forced as from the March 1996 issue to announce they were no longer listing contact points for anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations (p.2). Even more positively, it is my belief that certain 'team' members are so ashamed of their association with the organisation that they write articles elsewhere under false names: Steven Silver may well write using the pseudonym Peter Brighton for a reason he probably thought clever, once. Sometimes the name-changes are only slight: Rob Lowell formerly a supposed Trotskyist<sup>67</sup> is very shy indeed: no articles have appeared under his actual name in *Searchlight*, although maybe in another publication<sup>68</sup> Given that *Searchlight* have always thought it perfectly acceptable to target anti-fascists and publicise their personal details, it is high time more *Searchlight* personnel stepped forward from the shadows. Why shouldn't the readers know full details concerning the younger and expanded team they boasted of in September 1996?<sup>69</sup>

On the other hand, *Searchlight*'s monopolisation of media coverage of fascism shows no signs of being weakened. Very recently, they have sought to launch a 'Trade Union Friends of *Searchlight*' front-organisation, to gather intelligence on, and money from, the working class. A recent series of connected libel-cases brought against them/their printers (good) and radical book shops stocking *Searchlight* (bad), that have arisen in part because of ridiculous (and characteristic) lies by the magazine, have had an unfortunate effect. Media coverage of the proceedings thus far has completely left out the fact that not only did *Searchlight* partly cause the problems in the first place by its scurrilous content, they gave no help whatsoever to the book shops initially targeted (Housmans and Centerprise in London)<sup>70</sup>. Therefore, these book shops felt compelled to settle the first couple of libel claims, creating a precedent that will do them no good

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<sup>66</sup> issue 71 p.3, pages 1–3 cover *Searchlight*, and for my view of this welcome turn see *Green Anarchist* June 1995 p.12–14

<sup>67</sup> of the 'Socialist Organiser' group, whose leadership I wrote to for explanation without reply

<sup>68</sup> 'Minister Courted by ultra-racists' *Observer* 30/6/96 is by-lined Jonathan Calvert (who exists) and Nick Lowles (a suspected pseudonym)

<sup>69</sup> How far my disclosure goes depends on the nature of *Searchlight*'s response to this text...

<sup>70</sup> see for example *Independent* 22/6/96, *Jewish Chronicle* 28/6/96

in court when related claims are discussed, and encouraging the litigants to pursue the further claims that have led to the current situation where bankruptcy is possible. Even more appalling for a magazine that habitually prints lies and libels about virtually everyone it mentions, *Searchlight* have refused to provide book shops with a ‘libel indemnity’ covering legal action. This would have been equitable, because *Searchlight* themselves, as a shadow company with virtually no share capital and which doesn’t submit proper accounts, can easily escape legal liability for their own contents, an escape route not available to small book shops. Yet not only has no criticism come their way, *Searchlight* are obscenely seeking to make political capital and no doubt real money from the whole thing. In this regard it is essential for them to give the impression that it is only sections of the far right who have it in for them. The above text shows that isn’t the whole story, and *Searchlight* attempts to use the episode to enhance their ability to spy on Leftists by getting closer to them should be strenuously resisted. The weekly newspaper of the largest far left group here in the UK, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in covering the case described *Searchlight* as “respected” :this from an organisation whose members *MI5/Searchlight* asset Tim Hepple boasted of beating up with enjoyment<sup>71</sup>. Furthermore, any ‘respect’ the SWP have for *Searchlight* certainly isn’t reciprocated: the team have spoken contemptuously of “the SWP’s odious track record of stirring up anti-semitism in the student world...armed with propaganda material that rivalled that of the nazis”<sup>72</sup>

It is vital to distinguish between support for radical book shops (including that run by the SWP, now also targeted) and the question of what *Searchlight* is, and who it really represents. The SWP ‘model resolution’ circulated in the book shops defence signally fails to do this, again describing *Searchlight* as “respected”. Not only have the media and much of the Left not broken with *Searchlight*, the only potential competitor in terms of analysing racism/fascism, the bi-monthly CARF, in its most recent issue had this to say. Referring to the BNSP they routinely report, without criticism, that “*Searchlight* has suggested that the security services may have some involvement”<sup>73</sup>. Needless to say, CARF, despite the being a split from *Searchlight* (that I even used to write for) have never informed their readers of my own analyses concerning state/far right connections, and in citing *Searchlight* as an opinion source without qualification, thereby show just how analytically dependent they are. That is bad both for CARF and the anti-fascist movement/Greens generally, for the hydra that is the *Searchlight* organisation (the magazine being merely the public face of such) cannot be reformed or reasoned with, it must be destroyed and replaced, as soon as possible. It is not for me personally to replace it, that is for anti-fascists as a whole to do.

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<sup>71</sup> *Socialist Worker* 22/6/96 p.11. On Hepple see AWWT p.6–7.

<sup>72</sup> April 1992 p.15

<sup>73</sup> August/September 1996 p.13, a position echoed by *Statewatch* (July/August 1996 p.7) who also repeat the standard uncritical line concerning the libel cases.

## Conclusion: Search for the Militant Inside Yourself

Without an independent means of gathering information and analysing it accurately, *Searchlight* will keep its position of malign influence. Rather than think for themselves, too many anti-fascists have been content to fall back on *Searchlight*, who are only too pleased (when it suits them and their sponsors) to hand over low-grade information such as meeting locations, redirection points, names and addresses. This enhances their ability to spy on and manipulate those they supposedly ‘help’. The facts about *Searchlight* being a state sub-contractor, with privileged media access for their lies/fantasies/disinformation, playing a plausibly deniable part in state operations going back two decades: all these things are well established. Key *Searchlight* personnel receive state protection in return for these tasks, and thus imagine themselves to be in a deliciously immune situation whereby they can ‘dish it out’ but not be on the receiving end. For how much longer? The answer lies in your hands.

LARRY O’HARA

1/10/96

# Appendix: Putting the record straight

Submitted by lbernstein on January 17, 2007

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How tiring to see that dull, overworked myth still circulating on the net. I refer, of course, to:

<http://libcom.org/library/SearchlightForBeginnersLarryO'hara2>  
p26/27.

I find it absolutely laughable that I'm supposed to be an MI5/MI6 plant of some kind. To set the record straight, I am not now, nor ever have been some kind of state agent bent on passing on information about anarchists or anti-fascists to my so-called masters in government. How Larry O'Hara ever dreamed up such a fantasy is beyond me. The facts of the matter are as follows:

I was an active anarchist during the 1980s while I lived in the UK. My commitment and record while I lived in Leeds are beyond doubt. Through my involvement in the anarchist Black Cross I met Leo Rosser, fell in love with him and eventually moved to London to be with him. Through Leo, I joined the team at Black Flag and was also active in the Direct Action Movement. Leo's illness, which his family and I still believe was the beginnings of a kind of schizophrenic breakdown, came on quickly in the winter of 1989. I had thought we were happy together and I never doubted that we would be together a long time. Sadly that was not to be. Within 3 months, Leo was dead, having committed suicide by jumping off the roof of a block of flats in Waterloo. The facts are indisputable and I still have all the police and hospital papers to prove it. Leo was supposed to be on suicide watch at St Thomas' Hospital, having been sectioned just hours earlier – against the wishes of myself, his parents and Leo himself. The so-called level of care at St Thomas' was a joke. He was able to walk out of the ward undetected and kill himself, while I and his parents sat in a room round the corner arguing with consultant to try and have the section lifted. I found out at 7 o'clock the following morning from the police that the man I loved was never coming home.

The next few months in particular were very tough for me as I struggled to cope with my grief at losing Leo. I'm not ashamed to admit I tried to kill myself 3 months after Leo died. I ended up in the Maudsley Hospital for that and they tried to section me as well.

A month later I resigned from Black Flag after a particularly callous remark Albert Meltzer made to me that it was time I was over it and I should pull myself together!!! My lover was dead barely 4 months and Meltzer, whom I had trusted as a friend and comrade, was kicking me while I was down. I was shocked how little support I had from my so-called comrades on Black Flag so I quit. There seemed little point staying there and I certainly wondered what had happened to the principle of “mutual aid”. I was pretty shocked when I saw what Meltzer had written about me in his biography and Leo’s family were devastated. They were already struggling to come to terms with losing Leo and they too had considered Meltzer a friend. What really hurt me was reading about Meltzer’s own loss of a loved partner to suicide, so to tell me I should pull myself together was hypocritical to say the least. I have never forgiven Meltzer for his callousness towards me. I bent over backwards for that old man when he was alive – visiting almost every week, helping him round the house, making sure he was looked after alright. And yes, I feel bitter towards him. Meltzer’s biggest problem, however, was accepting that his protégé had been mentally ill. No wonder he came up with a warped fantasy about what really happened to try and fit the facts!

Initially Leo’s parents and I wanted to sue St Thomas’s for negligence leading to Leo’s death but we abandoned that idea when we discovered we weren’t eligible for legal aid, and that as Leo was over 18 he was not a dependent. As he wasn’t married to me I wasn’t a dependent either and the legal advice was that we would get a maximum of £ 3000 in compensation and it could take years. The money was a joke – three grand was all the man I loved was worth, but I didn’t want to sue for the compensation as much as I wanted to sue to stop the hospital doing the same to anyone else. I couldn’t stomach years of legal battle and I certainly couldn’t afford it, especially as I lost my job a couple of months later.

Although Leo and I were involved in the same political activities and shared many beliefs, we were not joined at the hip. I did indeed share his suspicions about Searchlight when we were together. But perhaps I was also more naïve in many ways, as at Black Flag the level of paranoia about other non-Flag anarchists was high as was the paranoia about the state. Now I’m the first to agree that the state are untrustworthy and I have a healthy dislike of the police and the government but I can say that being involved in Black Flag was enough to warp anyone’s mind. Meltzer was the leader as far as the rest of the Flaggers were concerned and everyone bowed deferentially to his opinion and experience. If Meltzer had said the Queen was running a ring of paedophiles, it probably would have been taken as gospel. I felt less savvy than the other Flaggers, always felt I had to prove myself to them, and always felt they were more sussed than I was. So when such opinions were tossed around I saw no reason to doubt anything. After all, they were more experienced than me. Stupidly perhaps, I preferred to try and see the good in people and never understood the amount of hatred directed towards other anarchist groups – I always thought we were all on the same side! Maybe with a few differences of opinion but nothing so bad it couldn’t be sorted out over a drink. So I’m naïve.

Eighteen months after Leo killed himself, I married a French comrade of his and moved to Paris to try and forget my pain. My (now-ex) husband was also very active politically, particularly with the anti-fascist magazine Reflexes. I joined it and worked alongside my husband. I used to translate articles and take care of the archives. The involvement with Searchlight began when we got a tip-off from a comrade who was working undercover inside French neo-nazi groups that a bunch of French Blood and Honour skins were on their way to the UK for a gig in Kent organized by Ian Stuart. I rang Tony at Searchlight to inform them so they could organize a reception committee in Dover. As the tip turned out to be good, Searchlight rang back to thank us. There began a tentative relationship in which bits of information were exchanged on the movements around Europe of neo-fascists. Gradually the relationship developed to the point where Gable himself contacted Reflexes and asked us if we wanted to do a regular column exchange. The agreement was that I would write a page a month on the French situation and in return Searchlight would send us an article for publication.

At Reflexes we never saw anything wrong with this. It seemed straightforward enough and as far as I was concerned, the most important thing was to expose the fascists. Living in Europe in the first half of the 1990s, it was impossible to ignore the rise of far right in France, Germany, Eastern Europe and elsewhere. It was a major problem in France. By this time, I was getting a reputation as someone who did good research on the international links of the extreme right and I travelled around Europe a lot as a speaker on this topic. I only met Gable once when I was invited to a secret meeting of Searchlight correspondents in Europe. I think it fair to say Gable was as wary of me as I was of him. He'd obviously done his homework on me and I never made any secret of my political views anyway. He clearly distrusted me as an ex-Flagger and I was aware how much he loathed anarchists. I remember how he tried to expose Malcolm of Doncaster a few years earlier as a fascist. I knew Malcolm when I was in the DAM and it was known by everyone he'd been in the NF years earlier but he had genuinely changed and everyone who knew him knew he'd seen the error of his ways. Then Gable published a load of crap about how he was still involved!! So we were very wary of each other.

I used to talk to Gable on the phone sometimes, but mostly I dealt with Graeme Atkinson who was a decent and genuine bloke and he became a good friend for a while. I don't know where Larry O'Hara got his information about me being one of Gable's lackeys because Gable himself will tell you what a load of rubbish that is. The article I did on Hate on the Internet was all my own work and was first published in Reflexes, before being reprinted in Searchlight. It certainly wasn't mouthing a Searchlight line. I recall very well when O'Hara first contacted me. He sent me a badly typed letter, full of spelling errors warning me about Gable! The letter stank of paranoia despite its friendly tone and I chucked it in the bin, as I was already aware enough of Gable and I had no idea who O'Hara was but he certainly came across as a bit of a nutter but perhaps harmless. Well as the months went by I heard plenty about O'Hara from Gable but as O'Hara never tried to contact me again I wasn't really interested. If he'd

come forward I'd have given him a fair hearing but he didn't and I just dismissed him (at least until he wrote lies about me in his book). As far as I was concerned my only interest at that time was to expose the European fascists and that was the driving force behind all my actions. I wasn't interested in petty political squabbles – I'd had enough of that at the Flag and the DAM. That again shows you how naïve I was.

In 1995 my marriage broke down and I quit Paris and moved to Amsterdam to work for United, a fact which O'Hara has documented. I worked there for 10 months. I hated the job I had there and I didn't get on with the other staff, so I left. I was burned out from political activity, plus I had met a new partner who wasn't involved in politics and that was a refreshing change I can tell you. I decided to try and rebuild a normal life for myself with my new man. I gave up my political activity and took a new job which didn't involve politics. A straight life, and it's been wonderful.

While I was rebuilding everything, O'Hara published his book. To this day I don't know what it was called and I've only read one page – the page about my alleged involvement in Leo's death, which a friend kindly faxed to me. I was devastated when I read this – more than 6 years had passed since Leo's death and I was just starting to really put it behind me when not only did O'Hara rake it all up again but he also made serious allegations about me. My first thought was to sue for libel but I still had no money and I felt I and Leo's family had been through enough so we decided to ignore the allegations (yes I am still close to Leo's family). So I did my best to ignore it. Although it hurt like hell.

I was astonished to read on the web that Black Flag had refused to review O'Hara's book "out of deference to Louise Bernstein's feelings"!!!! To this day I have never had any contact with Black Flag since the day I quit. And I was unaware that they had any consideration for my feelings – the hypocrites didn't have any in 1990!

I guess to some it may have looked as though I dropped out of the anarchist/anti-fascist scene after being "exposed" by O'Hara. The truth is more mundane. I met someone and fell in love, decided to give up being an activist and shortly after that was struck down with ME. I was a semi-invalid for 5 years so I couldn't do anything political even if I'd wanted to. If anyone doubts this they are welcome to see my medical records.

I have nothing to hide. The only thing I've been guilty of is naivety. It's time, after 16 years, that the record was set straight and my name cleared.

While I'm at it, there's more crap about me on <http://website.lineone.net/~grand-laf/Fafl.htm> (which I think is published by Green Anarchist). This page claims I shared a flat in Brixton with Paul Bowman.

"Bernstein, meanwhile, had turned to writing State-scripted 'hate on the Net' stories in Searchlight and had shared a flat in London with none other than Searchlight asset Paul Bowman during his days with AK Dean in the TSDC. Pissed off Black Flag weren't covering the Gandalf case - presumably on AK's insistence, as they were miffed at our role in exposing Bowman - we put this to them in 1996."

A complete load of bollocks, as far as I'm concerned. I knew Paul when we both lived in Leeds, then he unexpectedly pitched up in London to help the Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign, which I was also involved in. We became good friends, but certainly never shared a flat - he crashed on my sofa a couple of times when pissed, but that was that. I don't even know where he was actually living at that time. As to whether Paul was a "Searchlight asset", I really wouldn't have the faintest, but I very much doubt it. Paul was always more the AFA type.

## Comments

[Deleted comment]

...

## Ibernstein

Maybe, but there's still a huge amount of disinformation about me circulating on the net, some of it on this very site.

My reputation has been trashed as a result.

## Tacks

*revol68*

*I wouldn't worry no one takes Larry Double O'Seven Hara seriously, he's a crank.*

certain things he's done have had a lot of currency actually revol, SLFB is probably the the most influential.

I'm not commenting on: whether O'Hara is a crank or whether the calims in question are true or not (i haven't even read a quarter of the OP).

## Tacks

I've read the whole post now and it would see O'Hara's work was callous in the extreme.

I certainly don't think everyone who ever worked with and even for searchlight are 100% suspect either.

It's problematic cos as you say Ibernstein, the main thrust of SLFB is correct; gable is a state informant, SL is dodgy etc. but the individual parts of the picture are sketchy.

O'Hara has an online presence on [meanwhileatthebar.org](http://meanwhileatthebar.org) and [urban75.com](http://urban75.com) - i don't think he regularly posts here. I'm not sure a protacted public eachange would bring you



much closure. perhaps open the private channel of communication that you initially rejected? In your shoes the best thing would be for O'Hara to issue a retraction of his claim and then have it taken out of online versions etc. I think you'd only get that if you wrote to him privately cos people never own up to being wrong like this publically.

## JDMF

why has libcom reproduced his stuff?

## Jason Cortez

well some of it is interesting and revelant unfortunately Larry has the very bad habit of guilt by association in the extreme. It was published probaly to inform people about the dodginess of searchlight as it's quite thorough, but really it should come with a strongly edited veracity warning.

## Jason Cortez

of the people i know who knew you both the few conservations mentioning either of you have always been friendly, even affectionate, and unsurprisingly tinged with sadness. Maybe it time for closure through listening to each other without trying to prove who's right on every detail. This obviously is not directed to Larry.

## Ibernstein

*Tacks*

*I've read the whole post now and it would see O'Hara's work was callous in the extreme.*

*I certainly don't think everyone who ever worked with and even for searchlight are 100% suspect either.*

I know many good people who have done stuff for Searchlight. That doesn't make them all state informants or plants.

*Tacks*

*It's problematic cos as you say Ibernstein, the main thrust of SLFB is correct; gable is a state informant, SL is dodgy etc. but the individual parts of the picture are sketchy.*

I have no idea if Gable is a state informant or not. I know what's been claimed. I also, as I said above, have not read any of O'Hara's book, except the page about me, so I can't say if the thrust is right or not. But I'm willing to take your word for it.

*Tacks*

*O'Hara has an online presence on [meanwhileatthebar.org](http://meanwhileatthebar.org) and [urban75.com](http://urban75.com) - i don't think he regularly posts here. I'm not sure a protected public exchange would bring you much closure. perhaps open the private channel of communication that you initially rejected? In your shoes the best thing would be for O'Hara to issue a retraction of his claim and then have it taken out of online versions etc. I think you'd only get that if you wrote to him privately cos people never own up to being wrong like this publically.*

I've no interest in contacting O'Hara at all. If I had, I would have replied when he first wrote to me in Paris, or certainly after the book was published. When his book came out, I was already trying to put my political past behind me, as well as Leo's death. I had no interest in raking it up again, especially as I have a moral duty of care to Leo's family, who I have done my utmost to protect from all the muckraking.

A retraction would be great, but I'm not holding my breath. I only want to set the record straight. The problem is, though, it's very hard to prove you are not an agent of the state...

## Ibernstein

*Jason Cortez*

*of the people i know who knew you both the few conversations mentioning either of you have always been friendly, even affectionate, and unsurprisingly tinged with sadness. Maybe it time for closure through listening to each other without trying to prove who's right on every detail. This obviously is not directed to Larry.*

Thanks for your kind words - you cannot know how much it means to me to read them.

## Tacks

Ibernstein - i'm fairly sure that this topic posted elsewhere would do anything but put the past behind you i'm afraid. It may actually lead to you having to argue about it with O'Hara anyway - this is a public forum, and one he takes an interest in.

I think that if claims are wrong and damaging, it should be possible to get them retracted and apologised for. No need for legal battles. If you have never had any

contact with O'Hara, you don't know what he might say. Also, you just offered to show everybody who read the original post your medical records and police documents; if you are willing to do that, surely that indicates some appetite for taking this further and gaining some resolution...?

## Tacks

*revol68*

*He sent me a PM on Urban75 after I asked if he'd had a shag in a while. The mans a fucking crank, he thinks he's got a license to kill but really it's just a pass for a community day centre.*

*He's the MI5 equivalent of the "special character" who used to ride the buses all day thinking he was a bus conductor.*

Revol i'm not sure if making this a 'larry hara is nuts anyway, fuck him' debate is really going to help tbh. Lots of people don't think so. SLFB is a very well respected piece.

## Ibernstein

*Tacks*

*Ibernstein - i'm fairly sure that this topic posted elsewhere would do anything but put the past behind you i'm afraid. It may actually lead to you having to argue about it with O'Hara anyway - this is a public forum, and one he takes an interest in.*

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I'm not interested in a legal battle - I have neither the money or the stomach for it. I only posted on here in the first place as I decided, out of curiosity to do a google search on Leo, and was rather surprised to see what pages came up! This is a public forum, as you say, and as such it's given me the first opportunity in 16 years to try and clear my name. An apology and retraction from O'Hara would be very nice indeed, but I'm not going to beg him for it. If he does read this forum, maybe he'll be man enough to admit he was wrong and has caused me harm and emotional pain.

I do have all the documents concerning Leo's death - the file is a couple of inches thick and contains the coroner's report, the legal correspondence, police statements, hospital statements etc. I'm quite willing to go into full detail of exactly what happened in the 24 hours leading up to Leo's death, and I'm happy to go into it here, so there can be no doubt in anyone's mind about the facts. His parents were with me that day, for the entire time.

And yes, I have several years' worth of medical records (in Dutch) concerning my treatment for ME, as well, which I have thankfully now recovered from.

## Ibernstein

*revol68*

*Well from experiance of him on Urban he's just another conspiraloon, he might have got it right once but even then the issues raised on this thread would suggest he's quite liberal with the "TRUTH!!11!!".*

Frankly, I don't care if O'Hara is nuts or a "conspiraloon" or whatever.

What I care about is clearing my name. You know, I could have written back to O'Hara when he first wrote to me c/o of Reflexes, but I didn't, for reasons explained in my first post. I'd never heard of him, had no idea who he was and his letter came across as paranoid. My ex-husband and I together decided to bin the letter. By the time O'Hara's book was published, I'd not only left Paris, but also left United in Amsterdam and had pretty much jacked in activism. If I recall correctly, I was alerted to the page about me around the time I was being tested for ME and I was also awaiting a diagnosis for something else, which means I'm now disabled. So my health was another good reason for not pursuing O'Hara at that time.

O'Hara could easily have contacted me via United, even though I'd left - they would have passed the letter on, given that I was at the time living right around the corner from the United office. He could have said "I'm writing a book and I'm curious about your role in Searchlight. Do you want to talk to me? Do you have any comment to make?" But he didn't - he just wrote about me without bothering to check his facts - with me, Leo's family, or anyone else connected to that whole period of my life in London, Paris or Amsterdam. That's pretty poor research, by my standards.

## Steven.

*Jason Cortez*

*well some of it is interesting and revelant unfortunately Larry has the very bad habit of guilt by association in the extreme. It was published probaly to inform people about the dodginess of searchlight as it's quite thorough, but really it should come with a strongly edited veracity warning.*

Yes this we're going to do. Louise I'm sorry about all this, we weren't aware of anything particularly controversial in the text - it is one of thousands on our site. We will look into the details of this and then post accurate information alongside Larry's claims.

Larry does read this site so I would imagine that he has seen it... does he have anything to say for himself?

On O'Hara and NFTB, I've never met him but I have one NFTB person once, who then echoed some ridiculous accusations by raw at us (libcom group) for "censoring" another anarchist group, then spread lies and insults about us, our personal lives and our backgrounds, which the guy knew absolutely nothing about, on an email list. He'd only met 4 or 5 of us once at this one meeting, and never spoken to any of us. Larry I've seen on urban75 going on about Social Services "harvesting babies" and other nonsense. I'm not sure about the claims NFTB is a very "respected" journal, the only people I know who seem to give it any credence (or read it) are a few class war and womble types. That said there may be lots of useful information around the journal and Larry, but if there are huge inaccuracies and false allegations like this then it doesn't help his case more generally.

Has anyone let him know about this thread?

## Ibernstein

Fair comment, Steven. I wouldn't expect anyone who didn't know me or the circumstances I was in at the time to be aware of any controversy. But it's frightening how fast disinformation about people can travel round. I have firsthand experience of this. Not long after I quit working at United, I came home to London for a visit with my partner. I wanted to go to 121 Bookshop and catch up with people I used to work with there (I worked at 121 Bookshop the whole time I was based in London - helping run the shop, doing the Squatter's Advice session every Sunday etc). So we turned up and the two people I'd hoped to see were not there. But some other people I knew reasonably well from the antifa movement were there, ditto some anarchist acquaintances, including others I'd done shifts with at 121. I was told very bluntly that I couldn't wait there to see if my friends showed up and it was made very clear that my presence was not welcome. I could see that they were literally very edgy at my being there. As this was not very long after O'Hara's book was published, I can only assume that was why I was asked to leave by people I would have expected to be friendly to me or at least give me the benefit of the doubt. I remember leaving 121 with my face burning with embarrassment and fear, wondering what people were saying about me once I'd gone and wondering what other untruths were circulating about me.

My beliefs in anarchism have not changed over the years but the damage O'Hara has done to my reputation as an alleged agent of the state means I can never be active again in the anarchist movement. Who would trust me?

As others have said, O'Hara does read this site, so I think people can safely assume he's read this thread - it's been up here 10 days already. I've already asked him to be man enough to admit he was wrong - his silence speaks for itself.

I have posted my first post from the top of this thread as a comment to O'Hara's article.

## Larry O'Hara

This thread has just been drawn to my attention.

I notice that Louise Bernstein

1) admits extensive dealings with *Searchlight* over a number of years: and note she is careful to reveal little more than I have already placed in the public domain.

2) Invites people to contact Gable to confirm her version of her allegiances & events: the incongruity of that, and what it signifies, I'll leave you all to work out.

3) Refers to how 'nice' Graham Atkinson of *Searchlight* is—those who have read *Searchlight* Fiction Pulped will remember just what a nasty specimen he is.

4) Does not explain in the slightest how somebody who one would have thought knew all about *Searchlight* ends up parroting their 'analysis' and providing an entree for them into anarchist circles in France

5) Further admits I wrote to her—a letter which she binned & didn't reply to, but utters abusive remarks concerning. For her to then whine about why I didn't contact her again is preposterous—her friends at *Searchlight* never contacted me before printing incessant lies about me in 25 issues of the magazine & elsewhere.

6) Has a dig at a dead man, Meltzer: whose 'suspicions' I merely reproduced

7) Ludicrously claims only to have read the relevant part of SFB on her—thereby evading dealing with the rest of it, which cites chapter & verse on *Searchlight* continually doing the work of SB & undermining/smearing anarchists. A standard tactic of *Searchlight* apologists: always evading the issue.

Therefore, in the circumstances, I see no reason to retract anything I have written in the slightest: and do not intend to do so.

The comments by the retarded troll who has also been engaging in cyber-harassment of me on U75 as well as here, are not worthy of a response.

If lib.com wants to accept the word of a *Searchlight* apologist like Bernstein, they are free to. I contend (and the evidence proves it) hers was no mere casual association—and she was (is) somebody who should have known better. I asked questions in SFB: not adequately answered here, and also quoted Albert Meltzer's views in a book. Should I hold a seance & get Albert to retract? I could raise emotive matters, like LB, vconcerning the depths to which *Searchlight* harassment of myself has sunk, but why should I? That would cloud the issues.

**petey**

LARRY O'HARA

*should have known*

no, don't like the sound of that

**Larry O'Hara**

*newyawka*

LARRY O'HARA

*should have known*

*no, don't like the sound of that*

why not?

**Steven.**

LARRY O'HARA

*5) Further admits I wrote to her—a letter which she binned & didn't reply to, but utters abusive remarks concerning. For her to then whine about why I didn't contact her again is preposterous—her friends at Searchlight never contacted me before printing incessant lies about me in 25 issues of the magazine & elsewhere.*

Larry, this doesn't give you an excuse to lie about people

*6) Has a dig at a dead man, Meltzer: whose 'suspicions' I merely reproduced*

Er, you can't play the "dead man" card here.

Meltzer may have been a very good guy, he certainly seems like a great one from personal testimonies and Golden Angels, but to say every word he spoke must've been true is silly.

*7) Ludicrously claims only to have read the relevant part of SFB on her—thereby evading dealing with the rest of it, which cites chapter & verse on Searchlight continually doing the work of SB & undermining/smearing anarchists. A standard tactic of Searchlight apologists: always evading the issue.*

It's not ludicrous if it's true. And she admits searchlight smeared anarchists.

*Therefore, in the circumstances, I see no reason to retract anything I have written in the slightest: and do not intend to do so.*

So you're not providing any evidence any of what you say is actually true then, and are going to maintain your insinuation that she played a role in her partner's death? that sounds pretty stupid.

*The comments by the retarded troll who has also been engaging in cyber-harassment of me on U75 as well as here, are not worthy of a response.*

who are you referring to here? :?

*If lib.com wants to accept the word of a Searchlight apologist like Bernstein, they are free to. I contend (and the evidence proves it) hers was no mere casual association—and she was (is) somebody who should have known better.*

Her explanations here seem entirely reasonable to me. This isn't an official libcom position or anything.

*I asked questions in SFB: not adequately answered here, and also quoted Albert Meltzer's views in a book. Should I hold a seance & get Albert to retract? I could raise emotive matters, like LB, vconcerning the depths to which Searchlight harassment of myself has sunk, but why should I? That would cloud the issues.*

Yes it wouldn't be relevant here, though obviously are valid concerns.

This isn't just about what albert said, you're saying she's a state agent.

And tbh if she really was would she really be posting on here nearly 20 years later, obviously upset by it? What motive would the "secret state" have for doing that? to try to get her to re-infiltrate some group? (and which one??)

## Larry O'Hara

*Steven.*

LARRY O'HARA

*5) Further admits I wrote to her—a letter which she binned & didn't reply to, but utters abusive remarks concerning. For her to then whine about why I didn't contact her again is preposterous—her friends at Searchlight never contacted me before printing incessant lies about me in 25 issues of the magazine & elsewhere.*



Larry, this doesn't give you an excuse to lie about people[/quote]  
Indeed it doesn't—and I haven't

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Er, you can't play the "dead man" card here. Meltzer may have been a very  
good guy, he certainly seems like a great one from personal testimonies and  
Golden Angels, but to say every word he spoke must've been true is silly.*

I never said every word he said was true: I merely reproduced his thoughts, along  
with questions. It is LB, I am afraid, who is playing the dead man card, as you put it.

*7) Ludicrously claims only to have read the relevant part of SFB on her—  
thereby evading dealing with the rest of it, which cites chapter 8 verse  
on Searchlight continually doing the work of SB 8 undermining/smearing  
anarchists. A standard tactic of Searchlight apologists: always evading the  
issue.*

*It's not ludicrous if it's true. And she admits searchlight smeared anarchists.*

And it is that record of smearing anarchists, including Black Flag, that made me  
so suspicious then (and now) of L Bernstein

*Therefore, in the circumstances, I see no reason to retract anything I have  
written in the slightest: and do not intend to do so.*

*So you're not providing any evidence any of what you say is actually true  
then, and are going to maintain your insinuation that she played a role in  
her partner's death? that sounds pretty stupid.*

I merely recounted her bizarre changes of allegiance, and reproduced a question  
from Meltzer. Is the new slogan 'question nothing' then?

*The comments by the retarded troll who has also been engaging in cyber-  
harassment of me on U75 as well as here, are not worthy of a response.  
who are you referring to here? :?*

I would have thought that was obvious here—but revol68 if you need it pointing out.

*If lib.com wants to accept the word of a Searchlight apologist like Bernstein,  
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Her explanations here seem entirely reasonable to me. This isn't an official  
libcom position or anything.*

Depends on your definition of reason

*I asked questions in SFB: not adequately answered here, and also quoted Albert Meltzer's views in a book. Should I hold a seance & get Albert to retract? I could raise emotive matters, like LB, vconcerning the depths to which Searchlight harassment of myself has sunk, but why should I? That would cloud the issues.*

*Yes it wouldn't be relevant here, though obviously are valid concerns.*

Ah, I get it—LB is allowed to post reams about her personal problems (nothing to do with me) but I am not allowed to talk about harassment by her Searchlight friends. Thanks for clarifying.

*This isn't just about what albert said, you're saying she's a state agent. And tbh if she really was would she really be posting on here nearly 20 years later, obviously upset by it? What motive would the "secret state" have for doing that? to try to get her to re-infiltrate some group? (and which one??)*

The ending above is a straw-man rhetorical question. Can you point me to the precise passage where I insinuate she's a state agent? I merely ask questions and point to her incongruous allegiances. As to her motives today: I could speculate, but have too much to occupy myself with to do so, frankly.

## **lbernstein**

*LARRY O'HARA*

*This thread has just been drawn to my attention.*

*I notice that Louse Bernstein*

*1) admits extensive dealings with Searchlight over a number of years: and note she is careful to reveal little more than I have already placed in the public domain.*

That's because there is little to reveal. One phone call to Tony Robson to ask him to tip off AFA that some French Blood & Honour skins were on their way to Kent. One phone call from Tony to say thank you. A couple more phone calls from Steve Silver over a period of several months to the Reflexes office, where he often spoke to other people rather than me, to exchange information. One (one!) call from Gable to ask if Reflexes would do a magazine column swap. Some contact with Graeme Atkinson because he was European editor. And one meeting at which Gable avoided me like the plague - I was never once alone with him that weekend, a fact that was commented on by several people to my face along the lines of "have you done anything to upset Gerry?" to which I replied "I've no idea".

*2) Invites people to contact Gable to confirm her version of her allegiances & events: the incongruity of that, and what it signifies, I'll leave you all to work out.*

Er no, I didn't invite anyone to contact Gable. I said "if they ask him". IF. I myself have had no contact with Gable since 1994.

*3) Refers to how 'nice' Graham Atkinson of Searchlight is—those who have read Searchlight Fiction Pulped will remember just what a nasty specimen he is.*

I didn't call him nice - I said decent and genuine. That was my personal impression of him and remains so. He was always very polite, kind and respectful to me. If there are other sides to him I never saw them. And I'm unable to comment on anything in Searchlight Fiction Pulped because I've never read it and didn't know it existed until I just read this thread. That doesn't mean whatever it contains may not be true. It may well for all know. I can only say of Graeme what I saw of him.

*4) Does not explain in the slightest how somebody who one would have thought knew all about Searchlight ends up parroting their 'analysis' and providing an entree for them into anarchist circles in France.*

I have already said that Hate on the Internet was my own research. I quote from a number of sources, including Searchlight. Most of my resources were academic researchers and antifa groups in various European countries.

As for the latter comment - Reflexes was not an anarchist magazine. Some of the editorial committee were anarchists. About half were not. As far as I'm aware, Searchlight's only contact in France was me. I never introduced anyone from Searchlight to anyone else in France. And something you don't know is that about three years before I made that call to Tony Robson, five members of Reflexes had made a visit to London with the specific intention of making contact with Searchlight themselves. I met them on that visit for the very first time, so I could hardly have had a hand in that. And I gather that they attempted to make contact several times over the next few years, with no success. No doubt that fact that I am British and speak fluent English was why I was asked to ring Tony with the tip-off.

*5) Further admits I wrote to her—a letter which she binned & didn't reply to, but utters abusive remarks concerning. For her to then whine about why I didn't contact her again is preposterous—her friends at Searchlight never contacted me before printing incessant lies about me in 25 issues of the magazine & elsewhere.*

Why would I deny receiving a letter from you? Like any political mag, Reflexes got its share of dubious correspondence, all of which had to be considered carefully before deciding to reply or ignore. In your case, we decided to ignore. Apologies for slagging off your typing and spelling, even though your letter WAS badly written. [EDITED TO ADD] There was nothing in your letter that gave us any reason to take it seriously. We'd never heard of you, it was on unheaded paper (therefore indicating it was from an unknown individual rather than an academic source or known publication), and it was a two-page incoherent ramble warning us about Gable. Who we were already wary of. [END OF EDIT]

And you could have contacted me again - I'd have answered your questions if you'd asked. It's not my fault, incidentally, if Searchlight didn't contact you - I'm not now nor ever have been responsible for what they publish.

*6) Has a dig at a dead man, Meltzer: whose 'suspicious' I merely reproduced*

Albert was pretty horrible to me on the last occasion I saw him. That's the truth, not a dig. Despite his nastiness, I continued to respect him and his views. I was unaware he had written his autobiography until I saw the quote in your pages. At which point, I bought a copy. I was surprised how little he actually wrote about Leo - given the amount of time they had spent together over 9 years and the amount they had done, I'd have thought my lover would merit more than a page and a half. Some of what Albert wrote is inaccurate, for example saying he'd been living with his parents before moving in with his girlfriend (ie, me). Untrue. Leo had moved out of his parents years before we even met.

The sentence before your quote says "He [Leo] said reasonably that, while he could not understand healthy people committing suicide, when someone reached a certain state of deterioration they should be able to die as they wished." This is absolutely what Leo believed, as do I. His parents and I have always believed that Leo chose to commit suicide rather than be locked into a psychiatric ward against his wishes. As a freedom fighter, dying by his own hand was undoubtedly preferable. The inquest report raises a massive number of questions about the way that ward was run and gaps in his care (for example, the doctor deciding to put him under observation but the nursing staff not apparently being informed of this). The inquest verdict was open but only because for suicide to be ruled there has to be incontrovertible proof of the intention to kill oneself, such as telling someone or leaving a note, neither of which Leo had done. However, the coroner made it clear in his summary that he thought it was probably suicide.

Going back to Meltzer, don't you think I'd love to be able to ask him questions?

*7) Ludicrously claims only to have read the relevant part of SFB on her—thereby evading dealing with the rest of it, which cites chapter 8 verse on Searchlight continually doing the work of SB & undermining/smearing*

*anarchists. A standard tactic of Searchlight apologists: always evading the issue.*

I have read only the pages that were faxed to me when your book was published. I have since skimmed the text that is reproduced on this website, but as I'm no longer involved with Searchlight (and have not been since early 1996 when I resigned from United), nor any other active politics I'm really not that interested except in a passing manner.

*If lib.com wants to accept the word of a Searchlight apologist like Bernstein, they are free to. I contend (and the evidence proves it) hers was no mere casual association—and she was (is) somebody who should have known better. I asked questions in SFB: not adequately answered here, and also quoted Albert Meltzer's views in a book. Should I hold a seance & get Albert to retract? I could raise emotive matters, like LB, vconcerning the depths to which Searchlight harassment of myself has sunk, but why should I? That would cloud the issues.*

Just where is your concrete proof, Larry? All you have are theories and speculation. Let's see your "evidence". You're right I should have known better, but as I already said France at the time was in the grip of the rise of the extreme right and at Reflexes our priority was to fight that by any means possible. If I'd known that swapping magazine columns and having a few phone calls would have caused me such massive personal hassle years later, I'd never have bothered. I've already admitted I was naive. And I'm still paying for it.

## **lbernstein**

*Steven.*

*Meltzer may have been a very good guy, he certainly seems like a great one from personal testimonies and Golden Angels, but to say every word he spoke must've been true is silly.*

I have been told through the grapevine that a number of people close to Albert told him they thought his theory was "wild speculation".

*So you're not providing any evidence any of what you say is actually true then, and are going to maintain your insinuation that she played a role in her partner's death? that sounds pretty stupid.*

I'd like to see this evidence too!

*This isn't just about what albert said, you're saying she's a state agent.*

*And tbh if she really was would she really be posting on here nearly 20 years later, obviously upset by it? What motive would the "secret state" have for doing that? to try to get her to re-infiltrate some group? (and which one??)*

Why indeed? It's almost 17 years since Leo died. I've been out of active politics since I resigned from United in January 1996. That's 11 years. Even if I wanted to be active again, I doubt anyone would trust me after what's been said about me, so I wouldn't be able to.

## Ibernstein

LARRY O'HARA

*Ah, I get it—LB is allowed to post reams about her personal problems (nothing to do with me) but I am not allowed to talk about harassment by her Searchlight friends. Thanks for clarifying.*

What personal problems? Reams? I have briefly mentioned my grief and a suicide attempt I made 3 months after Leo died.

Larry, if Searchlight have harrassed you, and I have no reason to disbelieve you, that's not my fault. I'm sad if that's the case, but they have done it to others, including Malcolm of Doncaster DAM, which everyone knew, including me was an utter lie. They are not now or ever have been "friends" of mine, except the personal friendship I had with Graeme Atkinson, who was very supportive of me when my French marriage broke up and to whom I offered personal support when his relationship ended. This is usually called offering a shoulder to cry on. But I would not describe Searchlight as my friends - I've already detailed the precise nature of the relationship. I can't offer any more info because there is none to offer.

## Larry O'Hara

I note your response with interest

1) You give an account of your dealings with *Searchlight*, but nowhere do you explain away what first perturbed me—how could an anarchist, and ex-*Black Flag* member, suggest any genuine anti-fascists work with *Searchlight*. That, of course, was the central issue raised in my letter that you say you binned so peremptorily. You just do not answer that point, my central question. And as *Searchlight For Beginners* cites, you actually parroted *Searchlight's* 'analysis' in a book published in French—something Leo Rosser never did, nor would have done.

2) You claim naivety—but I do you the credit as an ex-*Black Flag* member of being more politically sophisticated than that.

3) That Reflex had apparently being trying to contact *Searchlight* & had failed till you facilitated such is hardly to your credit.

4) You are perfectly entitled to have binned my letter. But given

a) it raised questions about *Searchlight* and the need for non-state compromised anti-fascists to avoid these spooks like the plague

b) You were in contact with *Searchlight* at the time

—that is again something that reflects badly on you, in my view.

To criticise me for not having contacted you a second time is ludicrous. Am I supposed to be psychic, & waste my time sending letters to people who bin them? I again repeat, this Atkinson creature who you find "genuine" is a low-life Stalinist smear-peddler.

5) So, you have 'skimmed the text'—given it is on this site, I find it difficult to believe you haven't read it. I will leave others to decide how likely that is. Amazing, that you affect to remember the gist of a letter that was binned straight away, but other important written material (or political memories) are blank to you. I again reiterate, *Searchlight*/state operations against Black Flag are included in *Searchlight* For Beginners. I again ask those observing this exchange to think how plausible is it that a key Black Flag collective member should develop such political amnesia in so short a space of time as you seem to want us to think you did.

6) Claims that you are now not involved in politics are fair enough—but my pamphlet raised questions about your sudden political amnesia then that have still not been adequately answered.

## Ibernstein

LARRY O'HARA

*I note your response with interest*

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But you didn't know we'd binned your letter until I said so on here. Up until then, all you knew was that you didn't get a reply from anyone at Reflexes. I did not "parrot" Searchlight's analysis in my article. I quoted them, as I did others. Am I not allowed to reach my own conclusions or be capable of making them? I spent hundreds of hours in that period researching neo-nazi BB boards, the URLs of which were given to me by non-Searchlight sources.

What Leo did and what I did are two different things. I've already said we were not joined at the hip and didn't agree on everything politically.

*2) You claim naivety—but I do you the credit as an ex-Black Flag member of being more politically sophisticated than that.*

Sorry but I wasn't nearly as politically sophisticated as other members of Black Flag. I wrote very little for it. My main tasks at BF were collecting the post from the BM box, typing up articles, helping with layout etc. About 95% of what I did at BF was admin. I didn't feel confident enough to write much. Most of what I did write was short news snippets and book reviews. I don't recall writing any major investigative features.

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Leo warned the Reflexes people about Searchlight when they visited London. When I moved to Paris, I was asked several times to make contact with Searchlight but didn't want to. It was only when we had the tip-off about the skins going to Dover that I rang Searchlight to pass it on. I would have rung AFA if I'd had a reliable contact number but I didn't. I agree it's not to my credit and as I have said several times, I wish I hadn't and I would never have done if I'd known how much aggro it would create years later.

*4) You are perfectly entitled to have binned my letter. But given*  
*a) it raised questions about Searchlight and the need for non-state compromised anti-fascists to avoid these spooks like the plague*  
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*—that is again something that reflects badly on you, in my view.*  
*To criticise me for not having contacted you a second time is ludicrous. Am I supposed to be psychic, & waste my time sending letters to people who bin them? I again repeat, this Atkinson creature who you find "genuine" is a low-life Stalinist smear-peddler.*

4a) see my comments in answer to part 1 as to why we binned your letter. And we were, as I have also stated, aware of the need to be cautious where Searchlight was concerned.

4b) I never discussed Atkinson's political views beyond fighting fascism with him. I was aware that he leaned to communism, which kind I never asked. You didn't need to be psychic Larry - you knew I was working at United - all contact details were in the public domain.



5) *So, you have 'skimmed the text'—given it is on this site, I find it difficult to believe you haven't read it. I will leave others to decide how likely that is. Amazing, that you affect to remember the gist of a letter that was binned straight away, but other important written material (or political memories) are blank to you. I again reiterate, Searchlight/state operations against Black Flag are included in Searchlight For Beginners. I again ask those observing this exchange to think how plausible is it that a key Black Flag collective member should develop such political amnesia in so short a space of time as you seem to want us to think you did.*

Skimmed yes because the little time I have spent on here has been spent posting in this thread. Outside of that I have a living to earn. Which remains me, I really ought to go and do some paid work so I can cover my bills. I was not a key BF member. I was at the bottom of the heap there. See above. I repeat again that while at Reflexes I was well aware of the need for caution at all times in dealing in Searchlight. How is that amnesia?

6) *Claims that you are now not involved in politics are fair enough—but my pamphlet raised questions about your sudden political amnesia then that have still not been adequately answered.*

See last sentence by me above.

## JDMF

Its scary how little concrete evidence and how little far fetched circumstantial evidence is needed to be smeared publically by your "comrades" (or a "comrade"?).

## Larry O'Hara

*lbernstein*

LARRY O'HARA

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Now we have a variation that you didn't want to contact *Searchlight*—but of course you did!

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4a) see my comments in answer to part 1 as to why we binned your letter. And we were, as I have also stated, aware of the need to be cautious where Searchlight was concerned.

If you were aware of the need to be cautious, why have dealings with them? Just doesn't add up, at all.

4b) I never discussed Atkinson's political views beyond fighting fascism with him. I was aware that he leaned to communism, which kind I never asked. You didn't need to be psychic Larry - you knew I was working at United - all contact details were in the public domain.

Again you ludicrously imply I should have wasted my time contacting you a second time—when you never responded to me once. Ridiculous.

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It is amnesia because if you were aware of the need for caution, that should have precluded contact. It is the equivalent of saying 'I knew Special Branch were dodgy, but

I was aware of the need for caution & to be wary of them'. Acceptable for an apolitical punter, but not for somebody who has (past?) professed anarchist politics. You speak of discussing personal matters (two-way) with a key member of the *Searchlight* team, Atkinson. The level of trust required in any normal situation to do that would imply a far greater connection with *Searchlight* (even if only in the form of Atkinson) than you have disclosed.

*6) Claims that you are now not involved in politics are fair enough—but my pamphlet raised questions about your sudden political amnesia then that have still not been adequately answered.*

*See last sentence by me above.*

Still not adequately answered. And I, too, have lots better to do with my time than respond on this thread. The two recent posters apart from you have added nothing of substance—and I note troll 68 is now pretending he has some kind of rational argument: but his earlier post about 'oo7' 'license to kill' 'community centres' shows just what calibre this creature really is.

Let us just say, Ms Bernstein, you have your version of events, and I have a different set of questions not answered adequately. It is indeed a cautionary tale, and I should reiterate I bear you no personal malice. The key lesson is that no progressive/anarchist anti-fascists should have any dealings with *Searchlight*, ever. A lesson, of course, that Black Flag had already learnt before all this happened...

## **ticking\_fool**

*Again you ludicrously imply I should have wasted my time contacting you a second time—when you never responded to me once. Ridiculous.*

If you're accusing someone of being a state asset and implying that they may have had some role in someone's death, the onus is on you to ensure that they get the right of reply and the opportunity, for example, to provide documentation that might point in another direction. You're the one making serious accusations here and apparently you can't be arsed writing two letters because it would be a 'waste of your time'.

[edited because I only just spotted this and it's so out of order it's unbelievable]

*The key lesson is that no progressive/anarchist anti-fascists should have any dealings with Searchlight, ever.*

Because if they don't fuck you over, you're happy to do the job. Unbelievable.

## Ibernstein

LARRY O'HARA

*you only claim to have read two pages of SFB: that would include the footnote numbered 59 citing your article in the book 'L'Europe en chemise brune' (1992) which praised Searchlight's 'From Ballots to Bombs' as "excellent". That, as you well know, is something different entirely than the internet article. And it does parrot Searchlight's analysis of the UK far right, as you well know. Or are we asked to believe Searchlight secretly inserted their characteristic take on events while it was in the printers & you never noticed? How is that to be explained away?*

Yes, I wrote a chapter in English for L'Europe en Chemise Brune too. I've never denied that. It does not parrot Searchlight's analysis - if you look at the bibliography you can clearly see I referenced a number of sources - Robert Benewick, Joe Jacobs, FL Carsten, Christopher Husbands, Richard Thurlow and Martin Walker. Are you suggesting that all my other sources were parroting Searchlight too? Incidentally, I wrote the article in English because although my spoken French is very good, my written French is not good enough to write at that level. Someone at Reflexes translated my article, probably my ex. You are right that the footnote says I described From Ballots to Bombs as "excellent" in French. I cannot confirm if that is what I wrote in the original English version as the files are at Reflexes, not with me. And there was some very good information in that publication. Just not all of it.

*Members of a group do not need to write for it to be aware of the political line on key issues of the day. So I don't buy that evasion either.*

Very true. Which is why I have repeatedly stated that I did not share all of Leo's political views, nor indeed all of BF's line. I have already stated elsewhere in this thread that I thought BF was obsessed with the secret state. I was not.

*Now we have a variation that you didn't want to contact Searchlight—but of course you did!*

It's not a variation. It's an addition. I've never denied I picked up the phone and rang Searchlight. I was asked to pass on the tip. I didn't have a number for AFA so I rang Searchlight instead. And I was asked because I was the only member of Reflexes who spoke fluent English. That doesn't mean I was happy to do it. I was put under some pressure. And I have repeatedly stated that I was cautious.

*If you were aware of the need to be cautious, why have dealings with them? Just doesn't add up, at all.*

Because we had a tip to pass on.

*Again you ludicrously imply I should have wasted my time contacting you a second time—when you never responded to me once. Ridiculous.*

But you were quite happy to make serious implications about me without checking your facts. As a journalist, your first rule should surely be to talk to people involved in whatever you are writing about. Especially if you intend to make allegations. You wouldn't have been wasting your time, you would have been checking your story stood up to scrutiny. Which it doesn't. I've yet to see any concrete evidence supplied by you that a) I am a state agent or asset, b) that I was Gable's "lackey" and c) that I had any hand in Leo's death. When you provide some, maybe others will take you seriously. Because they are not at the moment.

*It is amnesia because if you were aware of the need for caution, that should have precluded contact. It is the equivalent of saying 'I knew Special Branch were dodgy, but I was aware of the need for caution & to be wary of them'. Acceptable for an apolitical punter, but not for somebody who has (past?) professed anarchist politics. You speak of discussing personal matters (two-way) with a key member of the Searchlight team, Atkinson. The level of trust required in any normal situation to do that would imply a far greater connection with Searchlight (even if only in the form of Atkinson) than you have disclosed.*

There's nothing wrong with my memory. I do not have amnesia. Would you like me to get checked out by a neurologist of your choice? I'll happily sit a polygraph test too.

We all do things against our better judgement. I made an error of judgement in opening up contact with Searchlight. For which I am still paying. But it seemed the right thing to do at the time because we had info that needed to be passed on.

Re talking to Atkinson about our relationships, yes I felt he was enough of a friend to tell him why my marriage broke up. I spent longer listening to him when his relationship ended - he was deeply upset. I'd like to think I am a compassionate person who takes time to help people when they have personal troubles. In fact, I know I am. I have many friends who confide personal stuff in me. And it stays private. I'm not a gossip.

*Still not adequately answered. And I, too, have lots better to do with my time than respond on this thread. The two recent posters apart from you have added nothing of substance—and I note troll 68 is now pretending he has some kind of rational argument: but his earlier post about 'oo7' 'license to kill' 'community centres' shows just what calibre this creature really is.*

I have answered all your questions repeatedly. You seem to be just choosing to ignore what I say because it doesn't fit your theory. As for revol68, what he posts about you is nothing to do with me. I'm not responsible for him. I don't even know who he (she?) is beyond a nickname on this forum.

*Let us just say, Ms Bernstein, you have your version of events, and I have a different set of questions not answered adequately. It is indeed a cautionary tale, and I should reiterate I bear you no personal malice. The key lesson is that no progressive/anarchist anti-fascists should have any dealings with Searchlight, ever. A lesson, of course, that Black Flag had already learnt before all this happened...*

If you don't bear me malice, why make a number of allegations about me without checking your facts? Where's your EVIDENCE?????

## **Larry O'Hara**

1) So, you're now saying I should have (more than once) written to you to ask your views—when your *Searchlight* associates, who produced the "excellent" *From Ballots to Bombs*, and who have tried to get me beaten up twice in addition to printing stories implying I was involved in drug-deals between Nazis & Loyalists...they are immune from such requirements, yet I, have an obligation to grant 'right to reply' in advance. I understand. Searchlight did not, and do not, merely ask questions and quote the referenced remarks of third parties—they make/have made definitive statements I am a Nazi. But I forget, like anybody who has ever written for Searchlight, or had close dealings with them, you know nothing about anything they have ever written.

2) You admit Atkinson was a 'friend' of yours—given his work for *S/Light*, he could only have become such if your dealings with the 'team' were more extensive than you have admitted.

3) Notice the seamless way, when I caught you out implying I was talking about the article praising *S/Light* in the book, you do not admit your earlier subterfuge, but seek to bring in straw-men by citing other things in the bibliography & implicitly/partly blaming a translator! Priceless.

4) You say giving info to *Searchlight* "seemed the right thing to do at the time"—it was not then, and is not now. And this continued talk of being "cautious" is an evasion too.

5) I carefully quoted Albert Meltzer's views, in addition to asking questions about how somebody with your political past could have had so quick a political mind-change. You have still not adequately answered my questions, and it seems you are not going to. Fair enough.

6) If my criterion of political acceptability is being taken seriously by somebody who has had the dealings with *Searchlight*—which includes counting Atkinson as a friend/confidante—that you have had, I might be even slightly worried by your lack of approbation. But I am not.

## Ibernstein

LARRY O'HARA

*1) So, you're now saying I should have (more than once) written to you to ask your views—when your Searchlight associates, who produced the "excellent" From Ballots to Bombs, and who have tried to get me beaten up twice in addition to printing stories implying I was involved in drug-deals between Nazis & Loyalists...they are immune from such requirements, yet I, have an obligation to grant 'right to reply' in advance. I understand. Searchlight did not, and do not, merely ask questions and quote the referenced remarks of third parties—they make/have made definitive statements I am a Nazi. But I forget, like anybody who has ever written for Searchlight, or had close dealings with them, you know nothing about anything they have ever written.*

IIRC, you never asked for my views in the letter that you sent me. I simply suggested that any investigative journalist (or any other type of journalist for that matter) should check their facts before publication. I have not seen any statements in Searchlight that you are a Nazi, a drug dealer or any other wild statement but I haven't seen Searchlight since the March 1996 issue, so I'm happy to take your word for it that they did. I'm also happy to accept your word that you are not a Nazi or a drug dealer. I've already said that Searchlight have smeared people, viz. Malcolm of Doncaster DAM. If they can do that to him, there was nothing to stop them doing it to you either. And I do not condone such behaviour. Nor do I condone attempts to beat you up, if that's what happened.

*2) You admit Atkinson was a 'friend' of yours—given his work for S/Light, he could only have become such if your dealings with the 'team' were more extensive than you have admitted.*

Well, I'm a close friend of the CEO of a blue-chip plc too, but I've never had any "dealings" with that person. It's possible to be friends with someone on one level but not be close to them on others you know. My dealings with Atkinson were no more than I have already said. I've had no contact with anyone in Searchlight since early 1996 when I left United.

*3) Notice the seamless way, when I caught you out implying I was talking about the article praising S/Light in the book, you do not admit your earlier subterfuge, but seek to bring in straw-men by citing other things in the bibliography & implicitly/partly blaming a translator! Priceless.*



Caught me out on what exactly? L'Europe en Chemise Brune is in the public domain and all my sources are a) referenced as notes and b) in the bibliography. I quoted one line From Ballots to Bombs in a paragraph about UK neo-nazis, amongst a number of other sources. I'm not blaming whoever translated the chapter. Mistakes can and do happen. I tell you once more, I am unable to compare the original to the translation as I don't have access to it anymore.

*4) You say giving info to Searchlight "seemed the right thing to do at the time"—it was not then, and is not now. And this continued talk of being "cautious" is an evasion too.*

I was always cautious when in contact with Searchlight. Passing on that tip to Searchlight DID seem the right thing to do at the time as I didn't have a number with which to contact AFA. I have admitted several times now that I made an error of judgement.

*5) I carefully quoted Albert Meltzer's views, in addition to asking questions about how somebody with your political past could have had so quick a political mind-change. You have still not adequately answered my questions, and it seems you are not going to. Fair enough.*

What political mind change? I've already said I didn't agree with every tiny bit of BF's political line. Am I not allowed to have my own views?

You haven't answered my questions either - where is your EVIDENCE? You haven't produced any yet and several people have now asked you for it. People, I might add, who don't know me or vice versa. They would like answers too and you're not giving them. If that's not evasive, what is? You have not one shred of proof to back up your assertions

*6) If my criterion of political acceptability is being taken seriously by somebody who has had the dealings with Searchlight—which includes counting Atkinson as a friend/confidante—that you have had, I might be even slightly worried by your lack of approbation. But I am not.*

Don't worry - I'm not taking you seriously. And I never will until you produce concrete evidence to back up your allegations, which you can't cos you haven't got any.

## **Larry O'Hara**

I thought the name Atkinson rang a bell—as I recall, he began to actually write for 'United' while you worked there, and as recently as 2004 was still doing so. See this link for example, where he appears to be representing both organisations equally:

link

So, we have you

- a) acting as a bridge between United & *Searchlight*
- b) praising *Searchlight* in a 1992 book
- c) writing an article that appears in *Searchlight*
- d) passing "tip-off" to *Searchlight*
- e) binning a letter from me advising you have no dealings with *Searchlight*
- f) acting in a way contrary to Black Flag's history of/dealings with *Searchlight* and finally

g) becoming not only friendly personally with Atkinson, but actually getting this creature to contribute to United, something that continued until quite recently. As illustrated (for example) by that link.

How interesting that in the reams of self-defence you put forward, you have never admitted actively bringing Atkinson into United's orbit, as you patently did: in my files currently in storage (they may not be on the internet) I have articles by United from Atkinson/plugs for *Searchlight*. Before you worked for United, I don't recall *Searchlight* being plugged by them at all (my archives would show this).

How, exactly, is this 'caution' in dealing with *Searchlight*? It is not at all. And (unlike your account concerning Reflex) this cannot be blamed on pressure from others to do so. And there is no doubting Atkinson (still) works for *Searchlight*. No doubt, **after I have raised it here** you will proceed to offer some plausible-sounding explanation for inflicting *Searchlight* upon Europe-wide anti-fascists.

## Ibernstein

LARRY O'HARA

*I thought the name Atkinson rang a bell—as I recall, he began to actually write for 'United' while you worked there, and as recently as 2004 was still doing so. See this link for example, where he appears to be representing both organisations equally:*

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I've not had any contact with Graeme Atkinson since I left United and I certainly did not put him in contact with United when I worked for the latter. Searchlight were in contact with United before I was!

My very first contact with United was around 1993/1994 when they rang Reflexes and asked me to do a workshop at their first European conference, which I agreed. When I arrived at the conference, which was held in Cologne, I discovered Searchlight had sent someone too (not Graeme). And that was absolutely nothing to do with me. As I understand it, United had rung around a large number of prominent anti-racism and anti-fascism organisations all over Europe to find speakers and workshop leaders. They had asked Searchlight to participate before contacting Reflexes, which I didn't even know until I arrived in Germany. So don't blame me for doing what United themselves chose to do.

## Ibernstein

PS - you've still not answered my questions.

Where is your evidence?

Why are you being so evasive on that score?

## Larry O'Hara

*Ibernstein*

*PS - you've still not answered my questions.*

*Where is your evidence?*

*Why are you being so evasive on that score?*

you have still not properly answered **my** questions,  
and much less have you proffered credible evidence.

And I understand perfectly why you are being so evasive.

You calculate by just repeating the mantra above, aided by trolls, you will get away with avoiding the truth. You won't, even if you appear to.

## **JDMF**

Motherfucker.

Is that all the evidence you have Larry? If i was you i would be glad if lbernstein doesnt stab you in the eye because that is exactly what i would do if someone would write shit about me based on such circumstantial and flaky evidence.

## **Larry O'Hara**

*JDMF*

*Motherfucker.*

*Is that all the evidence you have Larry? If i was you i would be glad if lbernstein doesnt stab you in the eye because that is exactly what i would do if someone would write shit about me based on such circumstantial and flaky evidence.*

speak of trolls, and on cue one turns up, inciting violence. How tediously predictable. In my original article I

- a) quoted Albert meltzer
- b) raised questions—none satisfactorily answered here.

I see no reason to change anything I wrote: but no doubt those affected (in a broad sense) will be gratified by the kind of remarks you have uttered.

## **lbernstein**

The fact is, JDMF, he doesn't have any evidence. If he did, he would have produced it in his book in 1996. It's all conjecture, based (as someone else suggested) on gaps in the knowledge and circumstantial evidence. He has not provided one shred of concrete proof that I am:

- a) a state agent or asset
- b) Gable's lackey
- c) involved in Leo's death.

And he apparently won't produce any evidence until I do! Which I can't because a), b) and c) are untrue.

I've admitted my mistakes, such as using a dodgy Searchlight pamphlet in my research. O'Hara is not big enough to admit that he has made a mistake in his own research.

## Larry O'Hara

I do not admit a mistake, because there isn't one—I raised questions, not adequately answered

regarding Leo's death, I merely quoted Meltzer: sadly not available for clarification

LBs extensive dealings with Searchlight have been reiterated, and amplified, on this thread.

In the absence of anything fresh, rather than disinformational fog/personal abuse being added here, I do not intend to respond further. Pointless.

**gav**

*revol68*

*I'm seriously glad Larry has shown up on this thread, now everyone can see what a mad old crank he is.*

Ain't that the truth. Just for the record Larry, I donated an evening of my free time to do security for the public meeting between you and David Shayler last year. If I had realised then what a dishonest cunt you are, I wouldn't have bothered.

**Steven.**

*gav*

*revol68*

*I'm seriously glad Larry has shown up on this thread, now everyone can see what a mad old crank he is.*

*Ain't that the truth. Just for the record Larry, I donated an evening of my free time to do security for the public meeting between you and David Shayler last year. If I had realised then what a dishonest cunt you are, I wouldn't have bothered.*

Yeah I'm pretty shocked too, given the esteem he is held in by some people.

LARRY O'HARA

*So, we have you*

- a) acting as a bridge between United & Searchlight*
- b) praising Searchlight in a 1992 book*
- c) writing an article that appears in Searchlight*
- d) passing "tip-off" to Searchlight*
- e) binning a letter from me advising you have no dealings with Searchlight*
  
- f) acting in a way contrary to Black Flag's history of/dealings with Searchlight*
- and finally*
- g) becoming not only friendly personally with Atkinson, but actually getting this creature to contribute to United, something that continued until quite recently. As illustrated (for example) by that link.*

OMG!!! Somebody shoot her!

The thing is, ridiculously flimsy as all those claims are, they're not even all true. And most that are true are totally irrelevant.

Either way you have not produced one shred of evidence of the fucking serious things you insinuate about her in your pamphlet - namely that she was a state asset, and played a role in her partner's death.

But seriously, as I asked before, do you think if she was some super secret agent she'd be trying to clear her name on the internet nearly 20 years later?

## Ibernstein

Disclaimer: what follows has been written after two bottles of wine and a dinner with three Dutch lawyers so excuse any typos etc.

Larry says:

*you have never admitted actively bringing Atkinson into United's orbit, **as you patently did** (my bold*

Making it up as you go along, as usual... I've already said United contacted Searchlight of their own volition, before they even contacted me, but hey, to paraphrase that old cliché - don't let the facts get in the way of a good smear campaign! I patently did nothing there.

Apparently I was a "key" member of Black Flag. If only that were true! Ha! Key mail collector possibly but not on any other score.

Toeing the party line: let's examine this more closely. At Black Flag, in Larry's world, I'm supposed to toe the party line - so much for independent views... Was I

supposed to agree with everything that Leo or Albert thought? Hey, why not keep me barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen in that case? But wait, I'm also supposed to be toeing the Searchlight official party line! Which doesn't quite explain why Gable avoided me at the one meeting I attended.

Thank god I was only in Brixton or Paris - if I'd been in Russia I'd have been packed off to a Siberian gulag I expect for not obeying the official line of either BF or Searchlight. But again, in Larry's world I'm not entitled to have my own views.

I ask once more - where is the evidence to back up O'Hara's claims? If he has it, why not put in the public domain and let people draw their own conclusions? You'd think that after 10/11 years, he would be able to cite at least one documented source...

It all boils down to credible journalism. I'm a trained journalist myself - I've studied media law. Rule no. 1 is back up your claims. Because if it ever should go to court, you need proof so you better be damn sure you have it. Without citable sources, you're stuffed. Even the hacks at *The Sun* know that much.

I and others have challenged O'Hara to produce credible evidence. He hasn't. Make of that what you will. Without that evidence, why should anyone take him seriously? This all reminds me of Jade Goody on Celebrity Big Brother. Max Clifford said "the show that made her will be the show that breaks her". I suspect that SFB will be not only the book that made O'Hara but also the one that breaks him, simply because of one page that he has yet to provide credible sources for...

## Ibernstein

I'll tell you something else too - if both Leo and Meltzer were still around, they'd both be binning letters from O'Hara too - I knew Leo well enough certainly to be 110% sure of that. And I knew Meltzer well enough to know what he'd think of undocumented claims. They both had a pretty low threshold when it came to loony letters, of which we had a high amount when I was on the BF collective.

## JeezSheff

Hello Louise

I bet you are so glad that you tried to put the record straight. Isn't it a shame that you can't just say well actually you were wrong.

Try to take it like a compliment, at least they slag you off, Paul stayed on my settee a few times and I knew Malcolm from Donc (both good people) and I never get slagged off.

I was very involved in the 1980's and 1990's. Met some great people in the early days, but I am glad I am no longer involved. In the 1990's it just seemed to be try to do something and get slagged off by someone wanting to make a name for themselves, such a shame.

Don't take it to heart, there are some sad people about that's all.

## **lbernstein**

Cheers, JeezSheff.

Don't I know you already? I'm sure I do!

## **Jason Cortez**

Larry your technique for analysis, far too frequently relies on guilt by association, and speculation from that basis. It is clear that LBernstein will never be able to answer your questions to your satisfaction and equally clear that your allegations lack any credence. I don't think your intention was to smear her name, but your style of speculation could have only that end result. Quite simply you have done yourself no favours here.

Larry O'Hara had a working relationship with Green Anarchist, a publication which published an article praising a Japanese religious cults gas attack on the underground as an herald of the collapse of the mega-machine and it's rationalist discourse. so Larry is clearly.....

It's so easy to do, if you really want to and have the time and the inclination. Larry and associates have produced interesting and thoughtful articles, but have definite tendency to see conspiracy in every muddy puddle.

## **Jason Cortez**

his 'independent researcher' to forgot to add with "no political alliance" despite his Green Party membership.

## **petey**

*Jason Cortez*

*Green Anarchist, a publication which published an article praising a Japanese religious cults gas attack on the underground as an herald of the collapse of the mega-machine and it's rationalist discourse.*

holy fucking shit

## **Tacks**

*newyawka*

*Jason Cortez*



*Green Anarchist, a publication which published an article praising a Japanese religious cults gas attack on the underground as an herald of the collapse of the mega-machine and it's rationalist discourse.*

*holy fucking shit*

ha ha yeah :D

Fucking civilisation :x

## **Tacks**

*revol68*

*oh and Larry O'Hara is an Everton supporter, a club that employed the infamous Duncan Disorderly from Rangers for many years, which is a club followed by Ulster and Scottish Loyalists which have been offered support by English fascists, ergo Larry O'Hara has some serious questions to answer regarding his fascist links.*

I've sent him a letter; its up to him to reply now.

## **gypsy**

This has to be bumped. What a discussion.

## **Nate**

I just found this thread. I notice Mr. O'Hara's failure to reply to these serious allegations.

The Ted K Archive

Larry O'Hara  
Searchlight for Beginners  
1 Jun. 1996

<<https://libcom.org/article/searchlight-beginners-larry-o-hara>> &  
<[www.libcom.org/discussion/putting-record-straight](http://www.libcom.org/discussion/putting-record-straight)>

An investigation into anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight*, and its links with British intelligence services. Despite causing a lot of problems for fascists, *Searchlight* gathers intelligence on both the right and the left and amongst other things has launched smear campaigns against anarchists. Its agenda is firmly set in the interests of the British liberal capitalist state.

While the text contains some useful information, it also contains unproved assertions and wild speculation. So while agreeing with the thrust of the text, we would advise readers to approach it with a large pinch of salt.

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**[www.thetedkarchive.com](http://www.thetedkarchive.com)**