

Phoenix Press
0 948984 33 3

£2.00

Searchlight
for Beginners

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SEARCHLIGHT 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. He 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 ¹.

¹ 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

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" ². 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 ³. 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 stated much of their information came from "a man helping Special Branch with their inquiries" ⁴, 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*

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).

² May 1975 issue p.5

³ 7/4/75, 29/4/75, 30/4/75

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

first disclosed 'star agent' ⁵. 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"⁶.

At this time, *Searchlight* was estimating C88 membership as "in the region of 200-300" and again describing "the long term aim of C88 to provide a highly trained and efficient cadre for a national socialist party of the future" ⁷. *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"⁸. 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 ⁹. His co-defendants, 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 co-defendants 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 ¹⁰. *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 11th Hour Brigade; they all come from the same stable, with an interchangeable personnel"¹¹.

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 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" ¹². Without *Searchlight's* lurid 1975 coverage and subsequent follow up in April and May

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

⁶ 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

⁷ May 1976 issue pages 3 and 4 respectively

⁸ same issue p.4

⁹ *Observer* 21/3/76

¹⁰ 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).

¹¹ issue 35 May 1978 p.3

¹² 29/10/80 p.25

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" ¹³.

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 Wilson¹⁴. **MI5 did not make the slightest appearance in either of the *Searchlight*-hyped stories, which is a chilling omission.** C88 never added up to much¹⁵, 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" ¹⁶. *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.

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

¹³ BBC Radio 4 'Soundtrack' programme 16/3/95: it would perhaps be too unkind to speculate about the content of the conversation

¹⁴ 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)

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

¹⁶ 'At War With The Truth' p.27

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" ¹⁷. 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 the 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.

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 ¹⁸. 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

¹⁷ 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?

¹⁸ see for example *Sunday Telegraph* 18/4/76, *Daily Telegraph* 19/4/76 and *Unity Against Fascism* issue 1 1977 p.7

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" ¹⁹. 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 tape-recordings 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 from²⁰.

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 in mitigation "they intended to hand over any documents or books they found to the Special Branch": rather damning don't you think?²¹ 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'²² 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

¹⁹ *Volya* April 1986 p.6

²⁰ issue 8 (April 1980) saw *Forewarned* still casting itself in the role of supplicant to the state, 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!

²¹ *Islington Gazette* 17/1/64

²² reproduced in full *Lobster* 24 December 1992, along with commentary by editor Robin Ramsay

a time of waiting for feed-back and also further checks here" ²³. 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" ²⁴. 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)"²⁵.

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 months 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" ²⁶. What is germane here isn't so much the lies, but 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"²⁷. 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" ²⁸. Just how could a

²³ *Lobster* 24 p.4:see also 'Destabilising The Decent People' by

Duncan Campbell et al in *New Statesman* 15/2/80

²⁴ 22/10/93

²⁵ *Jewish Chronicle* 23/10/87 p.10

²⁶ *Guardian* 22/5/87

²⁷ p.252 All quotations from 'Enemies of the State' (Simon & Schuster 1993)

²⁸ p.255

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 ²⁹.

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* ³⁰. 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 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 'Anti-Nazi 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

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ The young Patrick Harrington, later a prominent 'political soldier', was involved in the latter initiative

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" ³¹. 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 ³². 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 ³³. 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 company with Willis Carto. Hochfelder, according to a well-informed source, booked the room.

On March 8th 1975 Irish Republican Socialist Party member Michael Adamson was shot dead at home in Belfast by the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force ³⁴. 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**

³¹ p.27 October 1979

³² 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.

³³ issue 27 p.5, written by David McCalden

³⁴ 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' (Torc/Dublin 1994 p.56-7).

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 Tyrrie of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) a rival paramilitary grouping. This second attribution is clearly fictitious: a 1980 letter from Brady to Tyrrie (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 Tyrrie. 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" ³⁵. By 1992 we were told "this extract...shows how closely he is linked with the Ulster Volunteer Force Death Squads" ³⁶. I see no compelling reason to set aside my 1992 opinion that this letter isn't hard proof of operational links between Brady and the UVF ³⁷, 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

³⁵ issue 95 May 1983 p.3

³⁶ issue 202 April 1992 p.6

³⁷ *Lobster* 24 December 1992 p.15

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 ³⁸. 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, if 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 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 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 ³⁹ was a very half-hearted attempt made to paint her as an anti-fascist 'mole', with little believable detail⁴⁰. A related article clouds the issue even further, describing her as "an infiltrator in the BNP for several years" ⁴¹.

³⁸ *op. cit.* p.44

³⁹ 'At War With The Truth' p.27

⁴⁰ BBC Radio 4 'Soundtrack' programme 16/3/95

⁴¹ *Jewish Chronicle* 17/3/95

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 targeting 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.

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 materialised¹ 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"²

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-Nazi 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 Special Branch officers said they were still investigating the men behind the plot"³. 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

¹ 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'

² 'The Other Face of Terror' (hereafter OFOT) 1988 p.218

³ *Daily Mirror* 21/7/81 pages 1,3

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 programme⁴. 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"⁵. According to a news item on the BDP, Hill actively recruited to the BDP on the basis of this 'pincer strategy'⁶. 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*/World In Action⁷. 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"⁸. 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 preposterous. 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 ear⁹. 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

⁴ see OFOT p.98-115

⁵ OFOT p.98

⁶ *Daily Mirror* 6/4/81

⁷ OFOT p.99-100

⁸ OFOT p.115, see also *Searchlight* February 1982 p.3. In the circumstances Hill & company are lucky to have escaped prosecution for their part.

⁹ *Birmingham Mail* 28/7/62

a synagogue"¹⁰. In September 1969 Hill assaulted a Jewish cafe owner for political motives, shortly after which he fled to South Africa¹¹. 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 trust¹². 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"¹³. 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"¹⁴ 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 for the property to be guarded by a patrol passing several times each hour"¹⁵. 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.

¹⁰ *News of the World* 25/3/84

¹¹ OFOT p.39

¹² *Guardian* 11/5/79; see also the tendentious explanation by Hill (or the highly inventive Andrew Bell) in OFOT p.65-67

¹³ June 1992 p.11

¹⁴ p.5 Maybe it contained a cricket bat?

¹⁵ March 1988 p.5

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 part¹⁶. 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"¹⁷, lies he later admitted came from *Searchlight*¹⁸. 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 course of making more general insinuations about Class War¹⁹. 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"²⁰. 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 now-defunct *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

16 OFOT p.224

17 *Guardian* 30/9/85

18 *International Times* March 1986 p.2

19 *Guardian* 18/10/85

20 May 1986 Report p.1

state²¹. 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 anti-fascists, *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 at her home²². 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"²³. 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"²⁴. In this (ongoing) operation against anarchists *Searchlight* have 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 'ground-setting' 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 squatters²⁵. It shows how useful *Searchlight* were to the local (Labour) Council in suppressing Left-field dissent and sowing dissension between the squatters and potential supporters²⁶.

21 March 1986 'Paranoia Peddled' p.2-3

22 Cherry Groce was paralysed for life

23 *Evening Standard* 12/10/94

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

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

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

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 ²⁷. 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" ²⁸. 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 ²⁹. 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 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

²⁷ 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

²⁸ '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

²⁹ 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'

under his name in *Searchlight* called for the banning from sale of *Green Anarchist* describing it as "trash"³⁰. 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 ³¹. Nor can Gable escape responsibility for Hepple's actions ³², 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" ³³. 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" ³⁴. 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 activities, which also included setting up a UK newsletter 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.

³⁰ 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?

³¹ see ALTF p.16-17/AWWT p.9

³² see AWWT p.12

³³ 'Targetters Targetted' first version, (typed by Hepple or his controllers) p.1

³⁴ April 1993 p.14

COMBAT 18:SEARCHLIGHT BUILD THEM UP

The decision to form this neo-nazi group, in which the numbers (like C88) stand for letters:1=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 ³⁵ The precise origins of C18 aren't the main point at issue here ³⁶, 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." ³⁷ What were the fruits of this 'investigation'? These were divulged for the first time in the April 1993 issue of *Searchlight* ³⁸, 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 terrorists like the outlawed Ulster Defence Association" ³⁹. 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

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ 'At War With Society' (1993) p.35

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

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

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) ⁴⁰ 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" ⁴¹.

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" ⁴².

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 ⁴³, and as already stated predicted in October 1993 before seeing *Searchlight's* written parliamentary evidence that they would seek to justify and

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ Third Report HMSO 1994 p.xxvi

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

⁴³ ALTF p.30-32/37

facilitate this⁴⁴. A more detailed treatment published in 'Turning Up The Heat:MI5 After The Cold War' (hereafter TUTH)⁴⁵ developed the argument. I outlined allegations Covington was an FBI asset, something never mentioned by *Searchlight* until after my publicising that possibility⁴⁶ 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"⁴⁷. 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 perturbed⁴⁸ 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"⁴⁹.

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 subsequently, and is still *Searchlight's* position⁵⁰ 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

⁴⁴ AWWT p.25-6

⁴⁵ Phoenix 1994 p.66-86

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

⁴⁷ TUTH p.81, see also p.78-83

⁴⁸ 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

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

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

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 15th 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 line 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 above⁵¹. 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, 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 Alliance', another name for C18)⁵². 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

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

⁵² quote from March 1996 issue p.6

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 anyway⁵³. 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"⁵⁴. *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 1995⁵⁵. 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 25 years active with the reds"⁵⁶. 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

⁵³ 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).

⁵⁴ July 1996 issue p.4

⁵⁵ see *Spearhead* 329 July 1996 p.15

⁵⁶ 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!

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"⁵⁷. 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* lied about C88 on behalf of the state when it 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 co-produced 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 take-over 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

⁵⁷ April 1995 issue Editorial p.2

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. 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*⁵⁸. 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 UK⁵⁹. 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 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"⁶⁰ 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

⁵⁸ see for example issues 155 156 & 160, 1985-6

⁵⁹ 'L'Europe en Chemise Brune' (Reflex Paris 1992); Grande Bretagne:Ascension et chute des enfants de Mosley'

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

isn't true, that "*Reflex* is the French equivalent of *Searchlight*"⁶¹. 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 desecrations⁶². One fascist hit-list circulating in 1993 contained not just details of Jewish students resident in Nottingham, but their family addresses elsewhere in 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 research⁶³. 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

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

⁶² see AWWT p.25-6 and 7 respectively

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

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 same⁶⁴. 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 sources⁶⁵.

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"⁶⁶. 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

⁶⁴ 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.

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

⁶⁶ 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

Lowell formerly a supposed Trotskyist⁶⁷ is very shy indeed: no articles have appeared under his actual name in *Searchlight*, although maybe in another publication⁶⁸. 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?⁶⁹

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)⁷⁰. Therefore, these book shops felt compelled to settle the first couple of libel claims, creating a precedent that will do them no good 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 enjoyment⁷¹. Furthermore, any 'respect' the SWP have for *Searchlight* certainly isn't reciprocated: the team have spoken contemptuously

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

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

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

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

⁷¹ *Socialist Worker* 22/6/96 p.11. On Hepple see AWWT p.6-7.

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" ⁷²

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"⁷³. 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.

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

⁷² April 1992 p.15

⁷³ 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.