

Notes on contamination

Searchlight

At the beginning of the essay on the Blairites above, I discuss the concept of political contamination, the denigration of people on the left by association - real or fictitious - with ideas or people on the right. The most enthusiastic users of the contamination device in Britain today are found in *Searchlight* magazine.

A colleague of Larry O'Hara's found on the Internet a piece posted by *Searchlight's* European Editor, Graeme Atkinson, titled 'Burkhard Schroder...or The Strange Case of the Nazi Errand Boy's Pimp'. Those familiar with the *Searchlight* campaign against O'Hara will recognise the second half of the title as a variation on one of *Searchlight's* descriptions of him. This piece is similar to that in *Searchlight* in January this year which contained more character assassination of Larry and another reproduction of his photograph. (Their earlier publication of his photograph and details of his place of work having failed to get him assaulted, they had another go.)

At the heart of *Searchlight's* campaign against Larry is a classic example of the contamination weapon. Larry has interviewed ex-National Front (NF) leader Patrick Harrington who has provided material and insights into the internal politics of the NF leadership. Thus Larry becomes Harrington's 'errand boy'. The use of 'pimp' in the title of the Internet piece refers to the fact that Burkhard Schroder - about whom I know nothing - has apparently been repeating O'Hara's allegations about *Searchlight* and MI5. ¹ Atkinson's Internet piece is another assault on Larry - with additional apparently fictitious (and libellous) material on Alexander Baron and Mark Taha, both of whom, at time of writing, are pursuing legal action against *Searchlight*. Atkinson also has a dump on *Lobster*. Namely:

'So nasty were O'Hara's inaccurate contributions to *Lobster* that Stephen Dorril, the founder and co-editor of the magazine left and set up his own version of *Lobster*.'

This is a complete invention and illustrates as well as anything could *Searchlight's* lack of interest in the truth. *Searchlight* published an 'open letter' from Dorril on his ouster in February 1993 in which O'Hara is not mentioned and the only reason given for my dumping him is my suffering from the male menopause!

O'Hara has responded to the 'errand boy' charge - and all the others - in his latest pamphlet, *Searchlight Fiction Pulped*. He notes the double standard involved in the 'errand boy' charge: *Searchlight* writers and allies are allowed to talk to the far right but when he does so he is an 'errand boy'.

¹ In his Net piece Atkinson really lets his rhetoric off the the leash. The language used to describe the unfortunate Mr Schroder includes these phrases: 'sewer pipes of lies and slander.....his previous descent into the slime.... wallowing again in the same sewer.... a bucket of vomit...'

The use of such language by anti-fascists is discussed in the brilliant analysis of British anti-fascism by Don Keoghty (sic), 'Fearful Symmetry' in *Here and Now* issue 14. Thanks to Tony Hollick for reminding me of it. *Here and Now* is at PO Box 109, Leeds, LS3 3AA.

'One of *Searchlight's* regular themes is to associate me in the public mind with former NF Directorate member and current Third Way activist Patrick Harrington, whom I have interviewed (along with others) for my research..... Patrick Harrington's stated position is that he never refuses interviews to any journalists or student enquiring about political matters. Something that is, I would imagine, easily verifiable. [*Time Out* journalist] Dennis Campbell and Andrew Bell (both mentioned in the January *Searchlight*) are well aware of this attitude already, having met and interviewed Harrington on a number of occasions. The famous photograph showing Nick Griffin and Derek Holland [of the NF] in Tripoli on the January 1989 cover of *Searchlight* was actually given by Harrington to Andrew Bell in one interview. Bearing in mind tensions within the Official NF over attitudes to Libya, Harrington had a political motive for leaking this photograph - and by printing it without attribution cannot Bell (a past editor of *Searchlight*) be said to have acted as Harrington's 'errand boy', using *Searchlight's* logic?....' ²

Perhaps because he was addressing an overseas left audience, Atkinson's Internet piece presents the reasons for *Searchlight's* hostility to Larry more openly than the magazine has done in Britain.

'O'Hara's analysis of the far-Right in Britain was chaotic and he was clearly prepared to accept the views of key nazi, fascist and loyalist activists and leaders in preference to those of *Searchlight*....All of his articles were inaccurate and no wonder! The 'facts' in them had come direct from the mouths of the Nazis themselves.'

As for Atkinson's claim that O'Hara's research is inaccurate, to my knowledge *Searchlight* have made no attempts to illustrate this to date. Indeed, one of the things O'Hara complains of is the lack of attention paid to his research by *Searchlight* and the rest of the British anti-fascists. It may be self-evident to Atkinson that fascists are bound to be liars but it isn't to me. In any case, a good deal of O'Hara's research on the far right is

² *Searchlight Fiction Pulped* p. 12.

Sixteen A5 pages, *Searchlight Fiction Pulped* is a detailed refutation of the recent *Searchlight* smears about him. Perhaps because of its narrow focus, this is relatively free of the conspiracy theorising and guesswork which have littered his previous pamphlets. It is also better written and proof-read than before. It is available for £1.50 (including postage in the UK) from Larry at BM Box 4769, London WC1N 3XX.

In their January 1997 piece attacking O'Hara, *Searchlight* reproduced Combat 18's recommended reading list, on which is O'Hara's pamphlet *Searchlight for Beginners*. Five lines above O'Hara on that list is an item, costing £1.20, that has been tipped out by *Searchlight*. Anybody care to bet against it being *Searchlight* itself that has been removed?

done by a detailed analysis of the published output - and internal documents - of the various fascist groups. A relatively small amount of it relies on first-hand testimony, and where it does that testimony is often supported - or not - by documentation. The material published in *Lobster* by O'Hara on the British far right is methodologically very sound - in sharp contrast to *Searchlight's* mixture of unsourced allegations, rumour and disinformation.³ But I am labouring this: Atkinson's charge of 'inaccuracy' is just predictable guff. His real complaint against O'Hara is that by doing his own research and actually going to the far right for their version of events, he is independent of *Searchlight* and thus a threat to their control of the anti-fascist agenda.⁴ *Searchlight* may argue that in the struggle with fascism the ends justify the means and fascists are fair game. But Larry O'Hara is not a fascist, despite *Searchlight's* attempts to portray him as somehow sympathetic to them.

Witches are sometimes real but. . .

To some extent the kind of witch-hunting in which *Searchlight* (and others) engage is rational because, on both left and right there have been, and still are, groups who have hidden agendas; who do wish to penetrate and manipulate. In the political sense, witches are sometimes real. But the legitimate checking of the credentials and political affiliations of political opponents can become a kind of ideological tick, a reflex with which individuals are automatically contaminated by identification with the political opposition. A recent example is the description 'right-wing allied' of the retrovirologist Peter Duesberg, an HIV/AIDS researcher with radically different views on the subject from the mainstream, in *Covert Action Quarterly*, January 1997, p. 52. What does 'right-wing allied' mean? People on the right have supported his views? I suspect this is what is meant, for the usual contaminating expression is *right-wing linked*, and 'right-wing allied' sounds weaker. In any case, what possible relevance would Duesberg's links to, or alliances with the right - presuming they exist - have to the status of his views on AIDS? Are we supposed to believe that right-wing political opinions mean bad science? The intention of describing him as 'right-wing allied' is to contaminate him, to diminish his standing, and persuade the presumed left-wing readership of *Covert Action* to ignore him and his work.⁵ Contamination by the right is so powerful that had Duesberg, say, been published in *The Spotlight*, that would be enough for many on the US Left to refuse to read him - or simply discount his views.

This has happened to the Chicago conspiracy researcher Sherman Skolnick. I have read little of Skolnick's work, and what I have read did not impress. But Skolnick writes for *The Spotlight*. Cue contamination of Skolnick. Here's part of an interview Skolnick did with Kenn Thomas for *Steamshovel*.

I deeply resent Chip Berlet, *Z Magazine*, various books, that run stories that I am a Nazi. The problem is that the liberal press will not run stories about what I do....

3 And, it has to be said, in sharp contrast to the polemical and speculative pamphlets he has published.

4 Why the control of this agenda is important enough for *Searchlight* to go to the lengths they do, is a mystery to me.

5 I have no idea if his work is of value or not.

I'm an orthodox Jew. My mother and her whole family died in the Warsaw ghetto....To say I'm a Nazi and promote the Nazi cause is the most horrendous thing you could say about me....I have been blotted out since 1971. So I started with my five minute recorded message. And then in the 1970s I got to know Tom Valentine and he wrote about me in his magazine *The National Tattler*, and then he became associate editor of *The Spotlight* and through him they would run my stuff verbatim. He'd get me on his radio program and they ran an accurate transcript of what I said. There's no free press in America..... So the press is the bus company. What my left wing critics are saying is that before you get on the bus, I must investigate the politics of the bus company. Otherwise, walk. Pass out leaflets! Holler on the street! With no free press in America, if they print my stories verbatim the fact that they got naked women on the other side, like the *LA Star* which used to run my stuff verbatim.... So Chip Berlet and others say Skolnick is Nazi, he's in with a paper that repudiates the Holocaust....Even A. J. Weberman calls me up and says, 'Skolnick, why aren't you at the Holocaust Museum. Why are you with *The Spotlight*, which repudiates the Holocaust?' So I says, 'Listen, they're the bus company... I can't help it. Find me a better place. I'd like to be printed on the front page of *New York Times* and a cover story of all my friends on *Time* magazine.'

Well, maybe. Now it's getting more complicated. Skolnick's example doesn't really work because he doesn't need to investigate the politics of this bus company; he *knows* what kind of bus he's getting on. I would not publish in *The Spotlight*, but on the other hand *The Spotlight* have been one of the few magazines to publish information on the transnational power elite organisations such as Bilderberg and the Trilateral Commission in the last decade. Should I *not* read the information put out by *The Spotlight* because the magazine's politics are repellent? Surely not. But what would you bet that the fact I refer to a *Spotlight* publication about the Bilderbergers later in this piece, is used against me in the future - perhaps by *Searchlight* as evidence of *Lobster* moving to the far right, the line they have been putting out among the British Left in the last year, to try and contaminate me.⁶

Alexander Baron, Mark Taha, Morris Riley and *Searchlight*

Baron, Taha and Riley are currently pursuing libel actions against *Searchlight*. Baron has already successfully sued *Searchlight's* printer and a number of bookshops stocking the magazine.⁷ In January 1996 *Searchlight* publisher Gerry Gable sent a long report on Baron to the Benefits Agency.⁸ Subse-

6 Information from a member of the Socialist Workers' Party.

7 Lest I be misunderstood here, like many others I urged Baron not to sue bookshops, printers and distributors. He ignored us.

8 The report included the usual collection of inaccurate and libellous allegations against Baron and others. For example, it said of the Libertarian Alliance that 'it is led by people who have connections with fascists and antisemites'. Classic contamination tactics.

quently Baron, Taha and Riley were all raided by officers from the Metropolitan Police, in Riley's case ostensibly searching for anti-semitic literature. Although they found none, Riley was arrested and charged with half a dozen spurious other offences, which were later dropped. (The officers concerned failed to turn up for the hearing.) Baron was interviewed - in the presence of his solicitor - by an official of the Benefits Agency. Foolishly, Baron then wrote this official a letter making various legal points and threats and was eventually charged with intimidation. He was refused bail and consigned to Brixton prison on 2 November 1996. The case was heard at the end of April, with Baron defending himself. Both Morris Riley and Gerry Gable were called as witnesses and *Baron was acquitted*.

The point here is not defend Mr Baron, for whom I have little time and with whom I have nothing in common, bar an interest in *Searchlight's* activities, but to note that from this case we have learned (a) that Mr Gable feels it legitimate to inform to the state on his opponents and (b) that, as Morris Riley has pointed out, the state now has access to the financial records of building societies.

For decades it has been assumed by the British public that the Benefits Agency (formerly the DHSS) did not have access to one's bank or building society details - or, indeed, to any other government agency. In mid-1996 the government made it pretty clear that they wanted the Benefits Agency to be able to obtain details from the Inland Revenue, banks and building societies. An article in the *Daily Mail* 7 August 1996, 'Benefits police may spy on your savings', reported that while there was no legal prohibition on the Benefits Agency accessing building society and banks' records, it was not done 'by bureaucratic custom'. In fact such access was already being granted to the Benefits Agency. For *six months before* this *Mail* article, the above mentioned official of the Benefits Agency had written to Alexander Baron demanding details of his accounts with five listed building societies. Although he had not revealed the existence of the accounts to the Benefits Agency because they were business accounts, the Benefits Agency knew of them.⁹

Fusion paranoia?

There is a concept abroad, fusion paranoia, just being launched among the ideologists of liberal democracy. A discussion of the term in the *Times Literary Supplement* on 20 December 1996 referred back to an earlier US discussion. Fusion paranoia refers to perceived similarities between the beliefs on the American Right and the American Left. The appeal of the concept is obvious. The right and left agree - and they're all paranoid! It is a double contamination. The concept simultaneously contaminates both right and left with each other and the addition of paranoia ensures that no-one - no-one, that is, among liberal democracy's right-thinking circles - need take the content of said fusion seriously.

This supposed fusion has *not* taken place. Interest in groups like Bilderbergers and the Trilateral Commission is a large part of this alleged fusion and, as Mike Peters pointed out in *Lobster* 32, as soon as the US Right became interested in the power elite the US Left dropped it. The other component of the alleged fusion paranoia is just the belief that the US state is out

of control and plotting against its citizens. Sections of the American Right have discovered, through personal experience, that the US state is totalitarian, ruthless etc. - what the so-called New Left learned in the 1960's and 70's. Amerika with a 'k' used to be used by the US Left; now it is used by the far Right.¹⁰ The massacre of the Branch Davidians at Waco was the pivotal moment for the Right: eighty killed by the Feds - and for what? All the nonsense on the fringe of the US Right about the New World Order; Soviet soldiers in the US in disguise as the UN; the UN plot to take over America; the documents distributed apparently showing the US government planning concentration camps; the coming American Reich under Clinton - the whole ridiculous kit was somehow supported by the Waco slaughter.

But where is the fusion here? As far as I can tell, the US Left has taken almost no interest in the Waco massacre. It's contamination again. For the US Left, even in death Koresh and his little band were crazy Christians, gun freaks, fundamentalists, primitives - and, the spin planted by the Feds, child abusers.

Bilderberg

1. Self-contamination

Make of this what you will, but the only people to contact me about Mike Peters' substantial piece about the Bilderbergers in *Lobster* 32 have been on the British Right. In the US the only magazine I know of which is still seriously pursuing the Bilderbergers is the far-right *The Spotlight*; in this country it is *Freedom Today*, the journal of the Freedom Association. Volume 22 issue 2, for example, contains a long piece about the Bilderbergers, by Sir Louis Le Bailly, former Naval Attaché to Washington, and former Director-General of the Defence Intelligence Staff. It isn't a very good piece: it contains banal errors, Le Bailly doesn't bother with documentation, and it is xenophobic - Germanophobic - to a fault. This is in his conclusion:

'There can never be a true definitive answer to the influence of the Bilderberger Group in the ongoing defeat of British parliamentary democracy by Germany, by jealous continentals, by naive Americans and by communists, until there is a defector from its steering committee prepared to tell the world what this utterly secret and seemingly conspiratorial group is up to.'

2. Edward Heath at Bilderberg

Of more interest, the same issue of *Freedom Today* contains some striking evidence of attempts by Sir Edward Heath to conceal his participation in Bilderberg meetings. Asked about his attendance at Bilderberg meetings, Heath originally claimed to have attended just one 'about 20 years ago'. The Freedom Association's correspondent with Heath gleefully quoted information from the Congressional Record in 1971 showing that Heath had attended Bilderberg in '63, '66 and '67. Heath finally copped the lot.

The *Freedom Association's* interest in Bilderberg - and the

¹⁰ There are analogies here with the British NF in the eighties when they began to feel the force of the state and their ideologists began writing about the threat to democracy, civil liberties etc. See Larry O'Hara's discussion of this episode in *Lobster* 25 p. 18.

⁹ I am grateful to Morris Riley for the information in this paragraph.

Trilateral Commission - is a by-product of their opposition to the European Union. Faced with the apparently unstoppable drift to federalism, the Freedom Association detect the whiff of conspiracy and are looking for the hidden hand.

3. Bilderberg documents

Peter Watson sent me a photocopy of a large document published by the Liberty Lobby and *The Spotlight, Inside the Bilderberg Group*. The document consists of 50 pages of Bilderberg documents - letters, memoranda, invitations, reports and lists of participants - scattered over 30 years of the group's existence. This is the biggest single source on the group I know of since the Holly Sklar book in the early 1980s.¹¹ There is no price on the document but *The Spotlight* is at 300 Independence Avenue, SE, Washington DC 20003, telephone 1-800-522-6292.

4. Workers of the world....

John Monks, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), attended the June 1996 Bilderberg meeting. The list of those attending was printed in the *Toronto Star* - itself rather a remarkable event, given the Bilderberg organisation's desire for secrecy - and reprinted on various Net sites. I passed the rather striking news of Monks' presence at this elite gathering first to *Tribune*, which didn't use it, and then to the *Guardian*, which didn't use it.

David Icke and Nexus

The contamination device was used by *Open Eye*'s Murray and Kalman in their pieces about *Nexus* and David Icke. Their campaign against Icke's dotty conspiracy theories provoked the Icke Org. into publishing a leaflet in April 1996 protesting Icke's innocence of the charge of being an anti-semitite.¹² For what it's worth, I doubt that Icke is an anti-semitite in the sense that he hates the Jews or believes in the Jewish conspiracy: he's just a bit out of his depth in the great maw of US conspiracy theories currently circulating, and ought to stop touring for three or four years and do some reading.¹³

In a footnote to their piece in *Lobster* 30 Kalman and Murray wrote:

'*Nexus* and to a lesser extent *New Dawn* cleverly mix articles from the far right with others from non-right sources. *Nexus* has been successful in attracting both a readership and contributors who are unaware of this' (p. 27)

According to the leaflet 'The HIDDEN truth about NEXUS magazine', distributed in London by *Open Eye*, the charges against *Nexus* are:

'*Nexus* printed a four part history of banking where Hitler and Mussolini were named as the last men who could have stopped the 'usurious' Jewish bankers. (Notes beneath recommended racist far Right books like *White America* and *Teutonic Unity* - Klu Klux Klan

favourite.)'

'it has included articles by prominent militia leaders...'

'it included an excerpt from *Spotlight* - a far Right US paper which promotes Holocaust Revisionism...'

'it includes adverts from far Right groups...'

'*Nexus*' UK distributor assisted David Icke in writing a chapter for his current book which attacks the facts of the Holocaust...'

'*Nexus* called Icke's book "A must-read book."'

'*Nexus* editor Duncan Roads is friends with Robert Pash (editor of *New Dawn*).'

That footnote in *Lobster* and the *Open Eye* leaflet provoked an angry response and a bundle of documents from the editor of *Nexus*, Duncan Roads, seeking to refute the charge of having a far-right hidden agenda. Of the charges listed by Murray and Kalman, Roads's response deals tolerably with all but the first and the last.¹⁴ Whatever it once was - and I haven't seen the early issues - *Nexus* is now just a wacky, fascinating but unreliable collection of alternative health cures, alternative technology and conspiracy theories. As his decision to publish a piece about the 1930s 'hollow earth' nonsense illustrated, Roads does not see his role as editor encompassing the evaluation of the claims made by his contributors; and if he had a far-right hidden agenda it is now well buried.

There is no doubt that *New Dawn* editor Robert Pash was a racist activist but I don't see much of a *hidden agenda* in the four complete issues I have seen, 30, 31, 32 and 34. These are something like *Nexus* crossed with, say, *Prevailing Winds*: more politics, conspiracies and less alternative medicine. If there is a 'line' or agenda here, it is most obviously the same populist, conspiratorial, anti-elitist, vaguely New Age line that pervades *Nexus*.

Evidence of a hidden agenda might be seen in issue 29 which contained articles about the Japanese writer Mishima and a piece by the Italian writer Julius Evola about 'The Way of the Samurai'. Evola is/was popular on the European right, especially in Italy. But this is getting tenuous. The main item on Pash's political agenda is Libya: issue 27 was devoted chiefly to pieces about it, and issue 34 carried a full-page ad for Qadhafi's *Green Book*. But this is hardly a *hidden agenda*. Issue 27 had Qadhafi on the front cover, and Pash is well known in Australia as the Libyans' front man.¹⁵ Given Pash's history, *Open Eye* are justified in being suspicious of his intentions but evidence of his hidden far-right agenda in the recent issues is slight.

14 If anybody wants to see Roads' reply send me a stamped addressed envelope and another 20p stamp to cover copying.

15 The frontpiece of *New Dawn* 30 carried 'special thanks' to Bob Banner. In the mid-1980s Bob Banner used to edit and publish a magazine called *Critique* in the USA, whose sub-title, like *New Dawn*'s, was 'A Journal of Conspiracies and Metaphysics'. Banner was the pioneer in the conspiracy-cum-New Age mysticism formula. See *Lobster* 13, p.15 for a discussion of Banner and *Critique*.

11 For a supply of which see the AK section in Sources, below.

12 See *Lobster* 30 for Murray and Kalman.

13 This was written before reading the *Observer* report on Icke sitting next to ex-US President Carter and being infected by Carter's aura! Mr Icke may have drifted off too far to be retrieved.