

## *The Searchlight Victims Support Group*

A. JONES.  
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8.10.96

Dear Mr Baron,

Thank you for your letter and order which is enclosed.

The issue of the Southampton newspaper that you refer to is inside issue 6. We do not have a full page photocopy available, but I feel sure this reduced version will suffice. The issue is of the 5th of May 1994 and appeared on the front page.

The Hanson evidence is there for all to see. Other "moles" you mention must be supplemented by Searchlight informants, ie: those who have not infiltrated Nationalist groups for any political motives, but pass on information to Searchlight for other motives, revenge, jealousy or just plain cash. We believe you have interviewed such people in the past and have "cleared" them without any real research being conducted. We must also consider the antics of Tony White. We would welcome any comments you may have on this subject.

Congratulations on your libel actions against Cable and the distributors. An up to date resume would be appreciated. As a support group for Searchlight victims, we have been advising various radical bookshops to boycott Searchlight, lest they become victims of the dreaded libel writ.

I have enclosed a copy of a typical letter sent to many of the country's independent bookshops. We have teams who will follow up the letters and make "test purchases" to see if our advice is being heeded.

Until Victory,



A. Jones.  
Victim Support Co-ordinator.

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*CONFIDENTIAL*

Dear Friends,

As an independent bookshop selling radical publications you may not be aware of the serious threat that is facing all small independent's that distribute publications by, or associated with, the Searchlight organisation.

Two of London's most prominent radical bookshops, Housmans, of Caledonian Road, and Bookmarks, of Seven Sisters Road, have admitted that they face very serious legal and financial threats to their existence by being forced to defend themselves against libel writs issued by people named in Searchlight magazine.

These writs were issued against several bookshops distributing Searchlight, including, Centerprise, of Hackney, East London, who rather than face massive legal bills in mounting a defence, opted to settle out of court for a figure believed to be around five thousand pounds.

**Under the law of defamation, victims are entitled to sue not only the author and publishers of the defamatory item, but also the printers and distributors.**

Housmans and Bookmarks intend presenting a defence of "innocent dissemination" claiming it is unreasonable to expect distributors to vet the contents all of the many hundreds of titles stocked.

Our legal advisors have suggested that this defence is flawed, as Searchlight magazine has a well established record of being successfully sued for defamation and therefore booksellers must accept the risks if they choose to distribute it. In brief, if booksellers accept the financial rewards gained by selling Searchlight, then they must also accept the potential risks.

We are given to understand that Searchlight has been asked to indemnify booksellers against future litigation and significantly, have refused. This has led to Housmans, Bookmarks, Centerprise and others deciding to boycott the magazine.

Another publication by the Searchlight organisation, "When hate comes to town" also contains several defamatory statements, and victims of the defamations have already contacted us to discuss the possibility of litigation.

It is also possible that the legal authorities may take issue with Searchlight over its practice of printing the names and home addresses of political opponents. This practice has led to damage to property, attacks of violence and, even life threatening arson attacks. Sources close to the CPS suggest that a prosecution for "incitement" is seriously being considered.

As an independent radical bookshop, we genuinely believe that you provide a valuable service to students of politics, and would not wish to see you forced into liquidation because of an organisation which clearly works to its own agenda. Searchlight is content to bathe in self-generated publicity and quick to accept the financial rewards offered by a gullible media, but they are not so quick in protecting their distributors against potentially ruinous litigation brought about by their actions.

To date, most Searchlight victims have come from within the ranks of the extreme right. But, now YOU, the independent bookseller are likely to join the ranks of Searchlight victims.

**To avoid this, we strongly urge you to join in the boycott of Searchlight publications.**

Yours Fraternally,

**Victim Support Co-ordinator.**