

PRESS RELEASE: October 23, 1995

Alexander Baron v Gerry Gable & Others - Libel Actions

This press release is being issued to clarify the position with regard to the above litigation. It is subject to the provisions of the 1981 Contempt Of Court Act.

Following serious allegations in the November 1993 issue of the magazine Searchlight, Alexander Baron instituted libel proceedings against the publisher, Gerry Gable. The originating summons was subsequently amended to include three further defendants: the magazine's printer, Russell Press; the distributor, Central Books; and Housmans Bookshop, where Mr Baron purchased a copy of the said magazine.

In the Summer of 1994, Mr Baron issued a further writ in connection with allegations made in the February 1994 issue. This summons was against twelve parties, as follows:

- (1) Gerry Gable
- (2) Ray Hill
- (3) Russell Press Ltd
- (4) Central Books Ltd
- (5) Housmans Bookshop Ltd
- (6) Bookmarks Ltd
- (7) Mushroom Books Ltd
- (8) Dillons Ltd
- (9) Waterstones Ltd
- (10) Economists Bookshop Ltd
- (11) Centerprise Trust Ltd
- (12) Alleycat Books Ltd

The case numbers of these actions - which are both in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court - are 1993 B4482 and 1994 B2491 respectively.

At a hearing on October 11, 1995, two consent orders were signed, and the following agreements were made: Mushroom Books and Alleycat Books each agreed to pay Mr Baron the sum of £100, as part of the same agreement, Mr Baron agreed to discontinue proceedings against them and against Ray Hill; no orders for costs were to be sought by any of the parties. No admissions or apologies were either made or sought.

Housmans Bookshop agreed to pay Mr Baron the sum of £3,200, and in return Mr Baron agreed to discontinue proceedings in both actions against Housmans. Housmans agreed also to publish the following statement as a full page advertisement in the next issue of Peace News magazine:

"Housmans Bookshop Limited regrets any upset caused to Alexander Baron by references to him in the November 1993 and February 1994 issues of Searchlight Magazine, which were on sale at Housmans Bookshop".

Centerprise Trust Ltd agreed to pay Alexander Baron the sum of £2,000 + £300 costs, and Mr Baron agreed to discontinue proceedings against Centerprise Trust. No apology was either made or sought.

At an earlier hearing, the company W.H. Smith, owner of the 9th Defendant Waterstones, had signed a consent order for £1,800 (£1,500 + £300 costs). No apology was either made or sought. A spokesman for the company said they had sold one issue of the February 1994 edition of Searchlight, at their Goldsmiths College branch.

Proceedings against Mr Gable, Russell Press Ltd, Central Books Ltd, Bookmarks Ltd, Dillons Ltd, and Economists Bookshop Ltd, continue. Bindman & Partners were removed from the record as solicitors for the Defendants Dillons Ltd and Economists Bookshop Ltd on an affidavit sworn by Robin Lewis of said firm on October 10, in accordance with Order 67, Rule 6(1) of the Rules of the Supreme Court.

Bindman & Partners of 275 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, are solicitors for all the remaining Defendants in these actions.

Two motions to gaol Mr Baron for alleged contempt of court in both actions (on an affidavit by the solicitor Robin Lewis of Bindman & Partners) were heard on October 20 by Sir Michael Davies (sitting as a High Court Judge) in Court 20. The fact that I am able to issue this press release is comment enough on those proceedings.

No further public statements can be made by the Plaintiff at this moment in time.

Photocopies of both consent orders in the above actions may be obtained from the Plaintiff at £1.50 post paid (US residents, \$5 cash only [at sender's risk]).

This press release was issued by the Plaintiff, Alexander Baron, of 93c Venner Road, Sydenham, London SE26 5HU.