

THE SPECTRE OF FASCISM: A MILITANT ANTI - FASCIST MANIFESTO  
(DRAFT FOR EUROPEAN ANTI- FASCIST CONFERENCE)

The spectre of fascism is haunting Europe. Having shook off the albatross of the holocaust the far-right has re-invented itself. The forces of the far-right are once again on the move. What we are actually witnessing in 1994 is the beginning of a fascist renaissance.

Even worse it is the very people who have been largely responsible for creating the problem who have assumed responsibility for providing the solution. Since 1945 the left has failed the working class in every country without exception. Dogma and failed formulas caused the problem; loyalty on redundant doctrines in the fight against fascism promise only to compound that failure.

Anti-fascism is by definition a rearguard action; with fascism the consequence not the cause of the lefts failure. The re-emergence of the far-right represents a political and ideological threat to the left, not simply a physical one. While for the most part the political threat is ignored, the physical aspect is dealt with theoretically rather than practically. The middle class Left do not want to fight. They lost the habit of fighting years ago. The struggle frightens them. So they invent excuses.

Some pretend that only skinheads are fascists, and so if there are no skinheads there are no fascists. And as skinheads are a recognised subculture, the problem is largely social rather than political anyway. Others take comfort from the fact that if the far-right of the 90's do not resemble 'Hollywood nazis' they must be democrats, so only anti-racist campaigns carried out strictly within the confines of legality can be justified by way of protest. SOS Racisme in France against the FN in the 80's and the ANL in Britian today are proof of the dangerous shortcomings of such an approach.

The function of militant anti-fascism is to seperate those who want to fight from those that do not. Once the distinction is achieved unity among the militants is essential. The basis of this unity may well be on this single issue, or on an agreement of the lowest common denominator. To insist on additional demands runs the risk of division among the fighters. Theoretical differences amongst those fighting against fascism is something we cannot afford.

Anti-fascism is not the appropriate political arena to sort out historical arguements between anarchism and marxism; feminism and separatism; or the choosing of sides in national or international disputes. Such preoccupations are best pursued

elsewhere. We have a common enemy, and if the enemy is to be defeated then primacy must be given to what unites us rather than what divides us.

The far-right has reinvented itself and ultimately the far Left must do the same. The prerequisite for this renaissance is that fascism is defeated. And in so doing, providing the rest of the working class with proof that the ideas and resilience of the left is greater than the demagogy of the right. The ambition of militant anti-fascism is not simply to see the threat posed by fascism to the existing political order removed so that the social conditions that gave rise to the fascist can one again be safely ignored. On the contrary, it is not for militant anti-fascists to argue that radical change is not necessary: our primary role is instead to ensure that if a successful challenge to the establishment is mounted it comes only from the left.

The philosophy that governs every modern bourgeois state is the ability to respond to economic cycles of boom and slump by adopting the political form compatible with the economic reality. This is the systems traditional safeguard. Reactionary arguments which manifest themselves in the propaganda and activities of far-right parties serve as the impetus or pretext that steers the capitalist state toward a suitably reactionary haven. A fascist movement does not have to be large to achieve this affect. (Sometimes the simple existence of a fascist movement enables a parliamentary party to win support for reactionary measures that would not otherwise be tolerated) Militant anti-fascism is automatically deemed subversive, if and when it threatens to deny to the ruling powers the opportunity to exercise this option.

In Britain, Anti-Fascist Action has come under increasing pressure from state security. Its members have been subject to all types of surveillance, telephone taps interference with mail, exposes in the media, alledged terrorist links, punitive sentences, agent provocateurs, collusion between the far-right and the state etc

The strategy of the state is to make effective anti-fascism untenable: to demonstrate that due to their [state]intervention confrontational tactics no longer work. The

The expectation is that militant and effective tactics are abandoned thereby creating the space for a far-right agenda to flourish.

On 5th of July 1994, 17 members of the anti-fascist organisation Autonome Antifa(M) were arrested in dawn raids in the German city of Gottingen. They face a variety of charges, including belonging to a 'criminal organisation', providing 'propaganda for a terrorist organisation', and running a 'private army'. This is the first step.

There is also at the moment, through the Trevi group, unprecedented cooperation between the various state security services across Europe and inevitably an interchange of ideas and a discernible pattern in relation to their activities. What works in Belfast today can be tried in London, Paris or Munich tomorrow.

Without fear of argument it can be stated that the events in Gottingen represent not just a threat to anti-fascism within Germany, but represent a threat to militant anti-fascists everywhere. As well as cooperation between the various state security systems operating at an unprecedented level. the far-right also have an extensive, and probably in some cases possibly complementary network. As of course, do our more moderate political rivals.

Things being what they are, it is of course precisely those elements most likely to be condemned as extreme by all quarters and as a consequence the focus much black propaganda; the sections most likely to suffer from political isolation in their own countries; the very ones most likely to benefit from international solidarity, are the militants who lack at present even the rudiments of a network.

Nor can it be argued convincingly that an international militant anti fascist network is not needed in the complacent belief that we have 'coped up to now' and that we, as militant anti fascists, can continue to survive in individual isolation.

For the first time since the 1920's the far right has surfaced nationally and simultaneously in many countries across the Continent. Since the mid 80's the far right has set the agenda in France; changed the German constitution, and, as a coalition partner in government, taken power in Italy.

If the implication of drawing a direct parallel between Europe in the 1920's and the situation today might still be considered an exaggeration it should be remembered that whatever the necessary ..... need of a visibly menacing counter threat. If there is no physical danger fascists do not need to hide behind a sinister private army.

...necessary qualifications, it should also be remembered that the Communist Parties in Europe who for all their faults commanded the support of hundreds of thousands of working class people, no longer exist. The demise of the far Left, the demise of the 'communist menace' means there is no need...

The 'battle for the control of the streets' need not be fought if control is not being contested. If the end can be achieved without the traditional means there is no need for the rough stuff. And so this time around with the prospects of a violent putsch being out of the question, the fascists can afford to appear respectable. And so while on the whole the middle classes relax, a section at least are thrilled by the prospect of political seduction. It is in this way that fascism creeps up insidiously.

With 30 million unemployed in Europe and a parliamentary democracy advertising an indifferent impotence, other sections of society, i.e. the bottom 30%, have and will continue to prove even more susceptible to fascism's pseudo radicalism. In direct proportion to the failure of parliamentary democracy to even attempt a solution, government by decree is, as history has demonstrated, usually the ante room to constitutional dictatorship.

In October 1993 representatives from AFA met and discussed the proper response to these and other problems with representatives from Autonome Antifa (M) in Gottingen. While there was much common ground and a similarity of approach it became apparent that while a detailed analysis could be provided of the situation in our respective countries, when our information on the situation in Europe generally was pooled no hard information or knowledge of complementary organisations existed.

If an anti fascist network was to be established an international meeting would have to be called. The question was, given the paucity of our information, how were the militants in other countries to be invited, and moreover, who were the militants in other countries?

We concluded that first of all the invitations would have to be inclusive rather than exclusive. It was agreed that a militant manifesto would be drawn up jointly between Autonome Antifa (M) and AFA, and circulated widely, so that as many groups as possible would be aware of our intentions while at the same time ensuring that no group suffered under any illusions as to our approach.

By adopting this method it is anticipated that rather than the organisers being faced with the dilemma of who to invite, the groups to whom the manifesto is addressed reach their own conclusions as to whether sponsorship of such a conference would for them be appropriate and beneficial. The proposed date for the conference is in the Spring of 1995., and Gottingen it was agreed would be the most suitable venue.