

FIGHTING TALK

Issue 25

Price £1.50

ZK.9.b.7571

INTO BATTLE ON THE POLITICAL FRONT

INSIDE:

MULTI-CULTURALISM: THE TROJAN HORSE
CZECH ANTI-FASCISTS
THE HOLOCAUST INDUSTRY



Anti-Fascist Action

Front cover The phrase "parachute politics" is often used to describe political interventions that have no basis in the community. It is imperative for anti-fascists to grasp the need for a genuine renaissance in political organising in working class communities if Fascism is to be denied a seed bed. Too often physical confrontation, whilst necessary, is literally jumping into an area and then departing. Result: short term damage but little long term impact

★INSIDE★

- 3 In the Area...**
AFA news from around the country.
- 10 Are We Winning?**
*Anti-Fascist Strategies:
Interview with Czech AFA*
- 13 The Multi-Cultural Trojan Horse**
- 16 Cable Street Beat**
Music Against Fascism
- 19 Reviews**
*The Holocaust Industry
Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering
Norman Finkelstein's book reviewed*
- 22 Between the Sheets**
Fascism and the Media

AFA on the Internet

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APPEAL FOR INFORMATION

**WE URGE ALL OUR READERS TO
SEND ANY INFORMATION ON
FASCISTS IN THEIR AREA DIRECT
TO AFA. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO
GUARANTEE THE MILITANT ANTI-
FASCIST MOVEMENT HAS THE
NECESSARY INFORMATION TO
SUCCESSFULLY BEAT THE
FASCISTS.**

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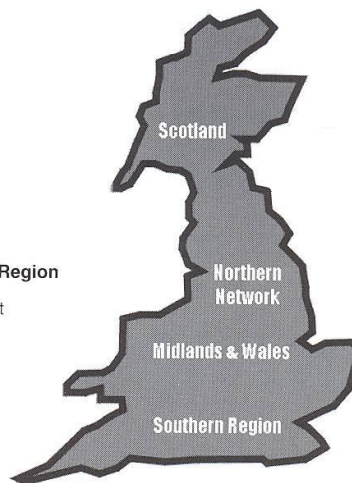
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JOIN AFA

Contact the National Office for details

AFA CHARTER

- AFA is committed to fighting fascism both physically and ideologically.
- In the struggle against fascism the working class must look to reinforce its own class position at every opportunity. It must take the field as an independent class power not as a junior partner to middle class liberals.
- When the Far Right prioritise community politics over street confrontation militant anti-fascism must adapt accordingly. The Far Right must not merely be removed from working class areas but in order to fill the political vacuum, the ambition of militant anti-fascism is to see them replaced there.
- AFA rejects the 'anyone but fascist' strategy of cross-class alliances. In the direct competition for working class hearts and minds, militant anti-fascism owes no loyalty to bankrupt political formulas designed mainly to protect the status quo.
- Between fascism and anti-fascism the State is never neutral. It always has its own agenda. Which is why, principle apart, AFA refuses to collaborate with the police, or intelligence services, in pursuit of short term advantage.
- AFA recognises its responsibility in the fight against race attacks. Not least because race attackers are a significant part of a large reactionary pool from which the fascists seek to recruit. All racial violence needs to be addressed from a political rather than moral or criminal perspective.
- Starting with the defeat of Mosley in the 1930's, in every successful campaign since (from the paramilitary 43 Group to the 'squadists' of the 1970's) the tactic of physical confrontation has proved indispensable. AFA is determined to maintain that physical force tradition.

IN THE AREA



Welcome to Issue 25 of Fighting Talk. We start with our usual round up of news and views from the front line against fascism.

NF MARCH IN BERMONDSEY

Time for New Thinking

The NF march in Bermondsey on Saturday 7th April attracted the predictable ANL counter-demonstration. Having boldly advertised beforehand that they were going to "Stop the NF march", they subsequently reported in a rather more restrained manner, after the NF had marched, that "Bermondsey unites against the National Front".

In fact the ANL's anti-fascism is no more than a protest - and the question is, does a protest damage the fascists? And if it doesn't damage the fascists can it rightly be called anti-fascism?

The ANL complained after Bermondsey that they were penned in by the police. Of course they were, they had always intended to allow the police to keep them apart from the NF or else they would have planned the event differently.

That being the case, who benefits from the militant slogans? If the intention was to stop the NF, then the anti-fascists failed. And what impact did the protest have on the NF? As Red Action have rightly pointed out: "So intimidated were the NF by the strategy of the ANL in Bermondsey, so impressed were they by the vicars and MPs, so depressed were they by the 'unity of Bermondsey' against them that they have announced a second march for ... next Saturday. Says it all really."

Unless the whole exercise is a game, why present a failure as a success? The potential recruits to fascism in the area won't be put off by anything they saw or heard on Saturday - in fact we hear the opposite happened and the impotence of the anti-fascists encouraged a group of locals to attack ANL supporters leaving the area.



Police grabbing NF demonstrator April 7th

This kind of dishonesty is nothing new to the ANL. One week previously, on 31st March, the ANL reported on a 'victory rally' against the NF in Oldham. Victory? A full week before the ANL rally to 'Stop the NF' marching, the NF themselves issued a statement: "Nothing, and we mean nothing, is happening on Saturday 31st March. Don't believe what the local paper is saying or the ANL site. We are getting on with our election work in our target seats and that doesn't include Oldham." This makes the 'victory' seem somewhat hollow!

ANL propaganda is geared towards giving the impression of activity and success; that their activities against the NF (real or imagined) are at the cutting edge of anti-fascism. This is wholly misleading - and the danger of this illusion is that by exclusively concentrating on the wrong target - the NF - they are deliberately avoiding having to deal with the BNP; the BNP who have clearly demonstrated that the potential for a Euro-Nationalist party to attract disillusioned working class voters exists.

The ANL is not just trying to steer anti-fascism in the wrong direction, it uses tactics that were never designed to stop anything. And by inviting speakers like Simon Hughes MP and Trevor Phillips, chair of the GLA, to speak at the rally in Bermondsey sends out all the wrong signals. In a place like Bermondsey, an inner city working class area lacking

resources where racism is rife, this allies the anti-fascists with the establishment and allows the fascists to appear as the radicals to their target audience. This is when the ANL become counter-productive.

Ironically it hasn't always been like this. At Lewisham in 1977 it was the SWP who were attacked by the Labour Party, Communist Party, church leaders and other liberals for refusing to be confined to a passive protest and going on to attack an NF march. Sheer weight of numbers and genuine aggression successfully inflicted lasting damage on the fascists that day.

Sadly the innovative approach of 1977 has long been lost. With almost complete radio silence regarding the BNP, no tactical flexibility and propaganda rooted in the past, the ANL serve little useful purpose. The ANL leaflet in Oldham enlightened their readers that the NF "admire Hitler and stand for racism, bigotry, and violence" while in Bermondsey "the NF are a Nazi Party". Times have moved on, what might have worked 25 years ago needs to be updated to make the propaganda relevant to the issues of today.

Despite all their bluff and bluster the ANL strategy is not working. The evidence shows that they are not effective. Time for new thinking!



THE LESSONS OF NEWHAM FOR ANTI-FASCISTS

The Newham election may appear to have only limited significance, but in fact perfectly illustrates many of the key issues.

The BNP came third in the Newham by-election, winning 17.1% of the vote, behind Labour (40.3%) and the Christian Peoples Alliance (34.2%). The Tories came last with 8.3%.

The good vote for the Christian Peoples Alliance was based on addressing local working class concerns, particularly on the question of gentrification. This makes the East London Socialist Alliance's decision not to stand against Labour even harder to understand, when a little known party like the CPA can come within 60 votes of winning the seat by addressing working class issues.

Indeed, if you consider that the Socialist Alliance can normally rely on getting at least 60 votes in local elections, then any influence they had on the outcome, by calling for a Labour vote, would have been to ensure that Labour beat a party that sided with the local working class population against middle class gentrification!

From an anti-fascist perspective it is disappointing that the Left are so unambitious and lacking in confidence that they are not prepared to challenge the BNP for the disillusioned working class vote. The CPA were, and did better than the fascists. The final straw in this whole sordid affair is that the Labour candidate who the ELSA backed is a recent recruit from the Tory party.

The concerns raised by AFA about the way the Socialist Alliance reacted to the Newham by-election should have initiated a serious discussion within the Left and anti-fascist movement as to what is needed to beat the threat from the Far Right. Apart from a few lines agreeing with AFA in *Weekly Worker* and some comments on the UK Left discussion site, the targets of AFA's criticisms have remained completely silent. The Newham election may appear to have only limited significance, but in fact perfectly illustrates many of the key issues.

The local paper described the area in the south of the borough as "being in the top two per cent of the most deprived areas in the country and long term unemployment has become an accepted feature of life there. Poor housing stock,

a lack of social amenities and a decline in essential services have all conspired to create an atmosphere of isolation and despair. The community regard themselves as the forgotten people of Newham and that feeling runs deep among the 16,000 living there." (Newham Recorder 29/3/01.) Perfect territory for the Left to attack the Labour run council you would think. But no, instead the East London Socialist Alliance called for a Labour vote.

As a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain said on the UK Left discussion site: "Given that the only reason that the BNP ever gets any halfway decent votes is because working class people feel they are being disenfranchised by Labour (old and new), it is therefore bizarre to then call for a vote for Labour to defeat the BNP!!"

And why did the Socialist Alliance back Labour? Because they placed race above class. Fearing their intervention might split the Labour vote and allow the BNP to win the seat, rather than out-radicalise the Far Right and win over working class voters from the BNP, they instead backed the class enemy. In a community where some resources are already allocated racial lines, a failure to be seen to be standing up for all sections of the community only helps those who seek to divide the working class into competing racial groups.

Having backed Labour in the election, it is hard to stomach the prospective Socialist Alliance candidate in the forthcoming general election claiming in a letter to the Newham Recorder (4/4/01) that: "Newham New Labour council's plan for Canning Town is nothing other than 'social cleansing' - push out working class people and bring in the rich and those for whom a flat or house is a 'property investment', not a place to live and bring up your family. The Socialist Alliance will stand with those fighting this 'social cleansing', and opposing Jim [Fitzpatrick MP] and his New Labour friends on Newham and Tower Hamlets councils at the general election."

The question is, will the 'working class people' referred to by the Socialist Alliance have any faith in an organisation that was launched with a fanfare to fight

Labour, then decides to back Labour, and now announces it will stand against Labour in a few months time? This is hardly principled opposition designed to show the community you have their interests at heart.

Unlike the Socialist Alliance, the Christian People's Alliance were keen to stand against Labour, their candidate speaking out against Labour's "gentrification" before the election, and afterwards said: "On the streets I heard a lot of hurt and anger. No one is upset about the need to do things for Canning Town, but the housing programme will destroy communities." (Newham Recorder, 4/4/01.) And what were the Socialist Alliance doing while this was going on? Backing the forces of 'social cleansing'!

The need for a consistent working class opposition to Labour becomes a priority when you look at the big picture. The latest Commission for Racial Equality survey found that "three quarters of white respondents thought that ethnic minority communities receive too much advice and assistance from the Government" and 20% of those surveyed were hostile to asylum seekers. These are the issues that the BNP will look to exploit and at the same time these are issues that the Left can challenge the fascists on. The BNP only appear radical in the absence of any alternative, a point AFA is totally confident on. Whether it is consistent support for local working class concerns or addressing the refugee situation with a working class friendly 'For the community - Against racism' approach, the Left could isolate the fascists from working class communities.

If, on the other hand, none of these lessons are learned and it remains 'business as usual' then projects like the Socialist Alliance will have no value for the anti-fascist movement. To make it a serious three-cornered fight in working class communities between Labour, the BNP and the Left (because this is the issue), then the Socialist Alliance will have to do a lot more than just turn up with a few slogans.

SCOTLAND: WELCOME TO OUR WORLD

In Glasgow AFA activists have been working around the issue of refugees, and have tried to influence the political direction of the Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees. Back in August, AFA leafleted a 'Refugees Welcome Here' meeting called by the ANL.

"The question we raise here, although not popular within both liberal and left wing circles, must be asked if any campaign to help refugees cope with the position they find themselves in is to be successful and have any longevity. It has been obvious that to some they are not welcome and by placing the blame on Tory or Labour asylum policies, it is the importance of community politics that is ignored. Most of the initial statements by locals living in the areas where refugees have been placed claim that they did not have enough to get by on, yet were still being asked to share the little they have.

"For the past year I have been fighting to get benefits for me and my children. But these people come over and get a furnished house, benefits sorted out straight away, social work help, everything." (David, unemployed)

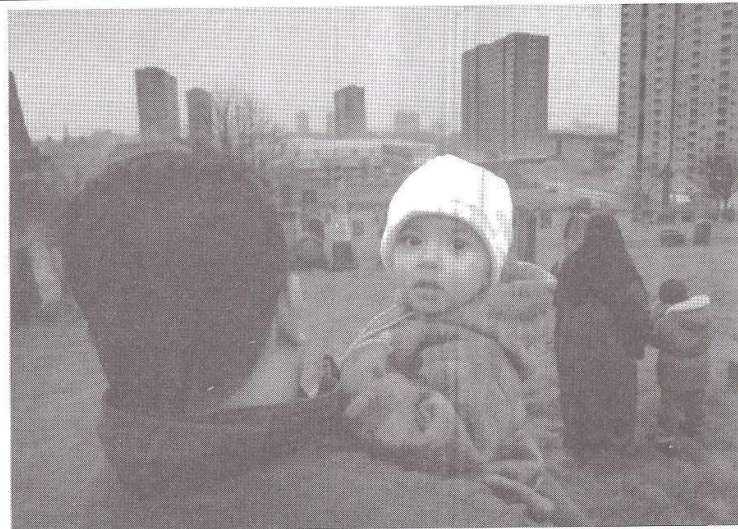
"I have got an invalid husband who has brain damage and all we can hope for is 55p a week interest in our pension. We don't get income support because I have a pension from my work." (Jeanette, old age pensioner)

Are these racist statements or is it anger from working class communities already suffering from welfare and service slashes, unemployment and poor housing?

With the expected £30 million shortfall in reimbursement to local councils these sentiments will only be hardened and further any divide between the host community and the refugees. If local services were seen to improve as a result of the arrival of refugees then it is hard to imagine any great support for the Far Right and Tory line currently being peddled

If the BNP is the organisation that is willing to address working class interests - for their own benefit - for many there appears to be no alternative. It is the failure to build strong pro-working class groups that will endanger the integration of refugees.

While currently based on moral responsibilities, unless this campaign begins to recognise political realities then "Refugees Are Not Welcome Here" could



Refugees' first sight of their new home - in the midst of an already impoverished community

be a statement which carries more resonance in the working class areas in which refugees must live.

Tactics and strategies born from political realities now may avoid further conflict in these areas later."

At the meeting itself AFA's attempts to question the SWP strategy, predictably, were blocked. During the course of the meeting the different class backgrounds of the refugees came to light, and although this is another issue that is never discussed, should the former bank manager, now a refugee, be entitled

to special treatment because he isn't used to living in a working class community? The meeting then got into an argument about the use of violence as a possible tactic to stop the attacks which have been carried out on some of the refugees, but this was all too much for some who asked that the subject be changed so the meeting could "end on a happy note."

Another argument broke out at the October meeting, when AFA argued that a Labour MP shouldn't be invited to speak at a public meeting as this would alienate potential working class support, and once again the SWP shouted it down. Unhappy with AFA's public criticisms they even tried to block AFA having a representative on the committee; despite the fact that AFA had turned people out for the activities.

In November the campaign picketed Sainsbury's over the voucher issue and this activity was well supported by the SWP and Scottish Socialist Party. However when a leaflet was organized for a housing estate, and AFA's suggestion that the leaflet should clearly support the local community *and* the refugees was inevitably rejected, it was AFA who provided 60% of the bodies.

The future of the campaign remains to be seen, but the key issues that will have to be addressed are internal democracy, a strategy to deal with racist attacks, and propaganda that isn't seen as being hostile by the local community.

WARNING!

Bogus 'asylum seekers' are swamping Scotland!

Every day of every year, thousands of immigrants, a lot of them illegal, swarm into Britain, many of them seeking the easy comforts of free benefits - All funded by YOU - the British taxpayer!

Now a new flood has started! Tens of thousands of 'asylum seekers', supposedly fleeing oppression in their own countries but in many cases just getting a free ride on our economy, are coming into this country from Albania, Kosovo, other parts of Europe and in fact from dozens of Third World countries. Our economy cannot bear the strain of all these new asylum seekers - many of them bogus. The New Labour Government which doesn't give a damn for the feelings of the real British people are funneling out these folk into lots of different areas in Britain - and YOUR area is one of them! Only the National Front with its firm policy of STOP IMMIGRATION NOW, can save Britain from this floodtide.

The NF stands for the interests of YOU - the real people of Britain! To help, send a donation, or four first class stamps for information on how you can help our Campaign To Halt Immigration to:

Scotland National Front,
PO Box 10003,
Dunedin, DD2 4YN
Tel: 07625 124512 or 029-3285-1122
Website: www.scotfront.com

Scottish NF anti-asylum seeker leaflet

AFA ROUND-UP

AFA RALLY SABOTAGED

In a display of abject political cowardice the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), having formally accepted and subsequently confirmed an invitation to speak, failed to turn up to AFA's 'Can The Left Beat The BNP?' debate in October, last year.

The invitation to the SWP was made precisely because they disagree with AFA's analysis of how to fight fascism, and the purpose of the debate was to put the two contrasting strategies into the public arena. While AFA is confident in its arguments, based on 15 years practical experience, the SWP obviously are not. The deliberate failure to notify AFA that they would not be sending a speaker means it was impossible for AFA to organise a replacement.

Red Action, Class War and the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) spoke from the platform and although Red Action was the only group actually in AFA all three organisations broadly agreed with much of AFA's analysis - making the debate one-sided. Mike Marquese, an independent from the London Socialist Alliance, although invited, belatedly found out he was on holiday and was unable to attend. The Socialist Labour Party were unable to agree a speaker but did send two representatives who spoke from the audience.

With most of the Left boycotting the meeting an opportunity for productive discussion was lost. We can only assume they do not take the threat from the Far Right seriously, despite being beaten in virtually every election where they have stood against the fascists since the general election. The minutes of September's London Socialist Alliance meeting highlights the cowardice: "It was agreed to sponsor and participate in the



Communist demonstration in London, 1936, when the Left had real links with the working class.

AFA round table debate on 1st October." As with so much on the Left, all talk - no action!

On a more positive note were the areas of agreement on AFA's analysis from the two organisations not active in AFA - Class War and the CPGB. Both groups, and Red Action, agreed that society is moving to the right, not to the left (as the rest of the Left believe) which indicates that the strategy of the Left isn't working. Unlike the Far Right who have reinvented themselves to suit the situation, the Left, at least most of them, continue as before with their failed strategies. The speakers all agreed that the Left doesn't represent

the working class and unless they are prepared to accept reality and change then there is a very real danger that the Far Right will become the radical voice for the white working class; as in Europe. As the Red Action speaker put it, there has to be "new thinking, new strategies, new language".

There was also agreement on AFA's assertion that the State has no positive role to play in the fight against fascism, which is in stark contrast to the ANL, especially in regards to their collaboration with the police-linked Searchlight operation and their 'Jail All Nazis' slogan. The Left must be challenged on their ongoing support for the pro-State anti-fascism of the ANL as opposed to the class-based anti-fascism of AFA.

The CPGB, in acknowledging that AFA had fought the BNP to a standstill in the early 90s, and provided the Left with the space they currently enjoy, declared that "the Left owes AFA a debt of honour".

The fact that AFA is trying to initiate debate on the Left about how to meet the challenge from the BNP is significant. Equally, the fact that most of the Left is scared to debate is, as the Red Action speaker pointed out, a result of their "crisis of confidence". The immediate target for AFA is to build on the common ground displayed at the rally and turn the talk into action.



France - Where the failure of the Left allowed the FN to fill the vacuum.

TINY BANDS OF FASCISTS?

In contrast to the positive input from the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) speaker at AFA's October Rally, their paper (Weekly Worker) printed two hostile articles at the end of last year.

Commenting on the Preston bye-election, where the Socialist Alliance candidate polled over 5% compared to the BNP getting just over 1%, they say: "This result ought to scotch once and for all the notion that extreme right-wing groups like the BNP are about to make a breakthrough ... for too long the left has spent too much time chasing tiny bands of fascists instead of putting forward our own positive alternative. The most infamous example of this was the SWP campaign in the mid-1990s, calling on workers, 'Don't Vote Nazi' - with the implicit suggestion that they should continue to vote for Labour". (Weekly Worker, 30/11/00)

"Tiny bands of fascists" is a curious term to use, especially in reference to the Isle of Dogs, because at the very time they refer to, the BNP won a local election and got a councillor elected - Derek Beackon. More recently these 'tiny bands of fascists' received 80,000 votes in the GLA elections, 27% in Tipton, 23% in Bexley, 21% in Burnley ... so let's not be too dismissive! With racist attacks as high in Britain as anywhere else in Europe, and recent polls suggesting 80% of the population are opposed to refugees, the reservoir of reaction is sizeable and the Far Right, following the successful strategy of their European counterparts, are looking to exploit it. These are facts. But a stupid remark downplaying the threat from the Far Right is then included with an accurate

criticism of the ANL. No distinction is drawn between the different strategies. Militant anti-fascism is dismissed.

Their criticism of the ANL's 'Anyone But Fascist' approach on the Isle of Dogs is perfectly valid, and a point that AFA made at the time, and since 1995 AFA has argued for a 'Filling The Vacuum' strategy to challenge the BNP, precisely to promote a "positive alternative", as opposed to chasing after the tiny NF, which is the ANL alternative. So despite AFA making the very same criticisms of ANL policy, and making them many years before, the CPGB choose to ignore this and present themselves as something superior. This arrogance is surprising seeing as how the CPGB toyed with the idea of joining AFA in the early 90s, only to jump on board the ANL when the SWP relaunched it in 1992. They then mobilised their members for the ill-fated first leaflet session in Whitechapel which ended up in the ANL walking into the most obvious ambush AFA scouts have ever seen and getting badly beaten. Not what you would describe as a good call.

The idea that the Left have spent "too much time" fighting fascism is laughable, and clearly this is a veiled attack on AFA. But AFA, who make no apology for taking anti-fascism seriously, have spent considerable time and effort trying to get the Left to realise that the tactics employed against the fascists in the 70s, 80s and early 90s are no longer appropriate.

This leads on to the second point which appeared in the following week's paper (Weekly Worker, 7/12/00) where the CPGB come out in support of Searchlight,

dismissing AFA's criticisms with the comment "... before the politically correct left decided it [Searchlight] was a state tool for infiltrating them".

AFA has not said that Searchlight is "a state tool for infiltrating them [the Left]", rather that Searchlight work closely with the State, in particular sitting on the police's Racial and Violent Crime Task Force. This, coupled with their willingness to work with anyone so long as they're not fascists means they inevitably have some very reactionary bedfellows. Being identified with the status quo, and the police and intelligence services, not only identifies 'anti-fascism' as conservative in the eyes of many working class people, but surely presents some problems for a organisation like the CPGB that describes itself as 'revolutionary'? Given the fact that the State and its security forces have played a consistent, and often brutal, anti-working class role (eg. the Miners Strike) it would be naive to imagine that their influence is harmless.

In Germany, whose police work closely with their British counterparts, anti-fascists have been targeted by the State in a sustained manner. Activists from the militant AA(M) in Göttingen were targeted over a 5 year period which culminated in 17 doors getting kicked down in dawn raids and the group suffering long term damage. In Britain AFA has been the subject of harassment, intimidation and attempted criminalisation at the hands of the police and intelligence services. And for what? For upholding the militant anti-fascist tradition in this country which stretches from Cable Street to Lewisham and beyond; a tradition which most of the Left are happy to pay lip service to.

Do the CPGB seriously suggest we should work with these people, or their allies in Searchlight?

Despite their links with the police and intelligence services, manipulation of the anti-fascist movement, and their support for the status quo - criticised in the Weekly Worker the week before - AFA's criticisms are dismissed as being "politically correct".

It is not clear why the CPGB have decided to attack AFA, but they would do well to remember that their ability to operate with relative safety from fascist attack was brought about by AFA winning the battle of the streets in the early 90s, a luxury many left-wingers no longer enjoy in parts of Europe.



NF march, Lewisham 1977, a time when the Left preferred militant action instead of relying on the State.

AFA ROUND-UP

THE AUSTRIAN QUESTION

Haider's Freedom Party (FPO) vote fell from 17% to 12% in the provincial elections in Styria (15/10/00). This was the first electoral test for the FPO since they entered the Austrian government. The drop in support is because the FPO claimed to represent the interests of the disenfranchised and disillusioned working class, but on taking power proceeded to support major cuts in social welfare spending. In other words attacking the very people who had turned to the Far Right for support. This disillusion with the FPO isn't just confined to Styria, a recent survey carried out by the Format magazine showed that only 24% of Freedom Party supporters believed the Party had stuck to its election pledges in government.

What is important for anti-fascists to realise is that the disillusioned FPO voters haven't returned to the Social Democrats, who received their lowest vote in Styria since 1945. The betrayal of the working class by all the major parties allowed the Far Right to pose as the radical alternative.

Nearly 6 months later the Freedom Party's vote also fell in Vienna's city elections; but still polling over 20% leaves little room for complacency.

The situation in Austria sounds very similar to Britain, where the failure of the Left to address working class concerns allows the Far Right to racialise real social problems. "Mr Haider's anti-immigration message and calls against foreign drug dealers has been received with enthusiasm at rallies in the capital's working class districts." (BBC Homepage. 25/3/01)

The same BBC report also hints at the potential antidote that anti-fascists must exploit. "A year in national government pushing through unpopular budget cuts has not proved popular with the Freedom Party's working class support base."

As AFA has long said, the Far Right have exploited the political vacuum that existed in working class areas across Europe. Not because they have the political answers, but because they appear radical in the absence of any progressive alternative.

A recent article in the Independent on Sunday (18/3/01) unwittingly points to the weakness in the anti-fascist counter-strategy: "The battle for the hearts and minds of Austria has shifted backstage,

to the corridors of ministries and to the theatres and studios where the 'resistance' movement began."

This poses a serious question, while the liberal opposition decide on their next move - is anyone attempting to replace the fascist influence in working class areas? Protests are simply that, a public display of opposition, and hard to maintain. As the Independent point out: "The people of Ballhausplatz have been converging here every Thursday night since the Freedom Party swept into government. But a year on they come in ever smaller numbers. The Freedom Party is here to stay, while resistance, in the streets at least, is crumbling."

Progressive political change requires much more, and in Austria where the Far Right have substantial backing, it means anti-fascists need to be "for" something. To win working class voters away from Haider the Left need answers, better answers than the fascists, and it should be clear by now that protests, and even physical confrontation, are not enough. The Freedom Party's vote may go up or down a few per cent, but until anti-fascists start the hard work of building a political movement of and for the working class, then the Far Right will continue to appear as the radical alternative and gain support.

Enquiries made by AFA so far suggest the Austrian anti-fascist movement is restricted to protest, both passive and militant, but as yet has not embraced the political aspect which is the vital ingredient.

FAR RIGHT GAINS IN EUROPE

The Far Right have made gains elsewhere. In Norway the Far Right Progress Party "outstripped the ruling Labour Party to become the most popular political force with this affluent country's 4.5m people. Its approval rating has soared as high as 35% and its charismatic leader, Carl Hagen - or "King Carl" - is being touted as the next prime minister." (Guardian, 6/10/00), while in Belgium the Vlaams Blok became the biggest political force in the country's second city, Antwerp, with 33% of the vote in local elections. When this result was announced, according to The Guardian, "the hand-wringing began".

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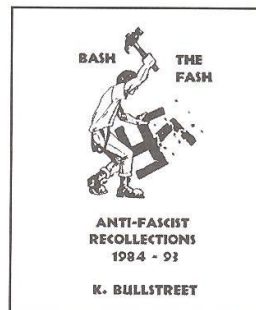
EU SURVEY CONTRADICTS LEFT

"A growing number of people wants legal immigrants sent back to their country of origin, a survey has found. More than one in five - 22 per cent - favoured the idea." (London Metro. 21/3/01)

These figures, from a European survey, indicate that current anti-racist strategies are not working. In fact the Left's 'Refugees Welcome Here' slogan is in danger of becoming confrontational in working class communities.

"The British are the most hostile to political refugees of all EC people, according to a report from the European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia ... Although the report shows an increase in tolerance since the previous survey in 1997, it reveals that many Europeans are seriously concerned about the implications of mass immigration." (Guardian. 21/3/01)

It would be arrogant of the Left to ignore the evidence; not just because their strategies are failing, but how long before the Far Right manage to exploit this growth in reactionary ideas?



Bash the Fash – Anti-fascist recollections 1984-93
By K. Bullstreet.

Price £2. Available from Kate Sharpley Library, BM Hurricane, London, WC1N 3XX.

Written by an AFA 'veteran', with a tendency to downplay his own contribution, this is an enjoyable 36-page read. Apart from one error (regarding the Enkel Arms) the book illustrates many of the clashes between AFA and the fascists with humour and honesty. The only real criticism from the 'staff' at FT is that it is obviously a rushed job. Nevertheless ... recommended and a timely taster before the full "History of AFA" book is published.

BNP POWER STRUGGLE

Last summer there was an attempt to oust Nick Griffin as BNP leader. The 'plotters' were centred around Steve and Sharron Edwards in the West Midlands and Michael Newland, and the main thrust of the attack was that "our party Chairman has been robbing us blind from the Trafalgar Club account" as senior BNP official Tony Lecomber put it. Initially the Edwards' were expelled, then reinstated, but when a statement attacking the Edwards' was circulated by Griffin in December, signed by all the main organisers, their fate was sealed. In the New Year the Edwards' joined the launch of the Freedom Party, another Far Right group involving mainly extreme right-wing Tories who had gathered in the Bloomsbury Forum.

The exact reasons for this power struggle are unclear, and probably somewhat curious bearing in mind MI5's infiltration and disruption of the National Democrats in the same area a few years previously, but there is no doubt that the BNP are back on course. Even former leader John Tyndall criticised the splitters in his 'New Year message' in Spearhead.

Suggestions by some on the Left that the BNP were in terminal decline were obviously wrong, and the announcement that the BNP magazine was moving to monthly production, in full colour, showed that the crisis was over.

In the March edition of Identity the BNP explain their strategy for the coming general election: "At this time large elections aren't important to the BNP. That is why the BNP is not going to waste large sums of money and time, just to get half a percent across the country. What will make the difference to the party is capturing a council seat, and that is what we are working towards. We have 26.2% in Bexley, 24% in the Black Country, 22% in Burnley, 16% in Dudley, and a national average of 10%. This is where the spark that will light the flame of British Nationalism will come from." Bearing this in mind it would be dishonest, and misleading, if anti-fascists then claimed the low number of BNP candidates as some kind of victory.

BAN NAZIS?

The following extract from the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2/2/01) highlights the dangers of calling for the Far Right to be banned. The strategy only benefits those

organisations who seek to defend the status quo, because invariably, as this case illustrates, the call for action against the fascists is used as an excuse to take action against all radical organisations, Left and Right.

"Postbank Axes Accounts on Left and Right. One week after Postbank, the German postal service's banking arm, closed an account belonging to the Berlin-based right-wing publication Junge Freiheit, the bank said on Thursday that it had also closed the accounts of numerous left-wing groups."

BNP BEAT TORIES IN BEXLEY

BNP candidate Colin Smith beat the Tories into second place in a by-election in Bexley, south east London, on 6th July, 2000. Standing in the North End ward, the BNP polled 456 votes (26.2%), behind Labour's 772 (44.4%) but ahead of the Conservatives 413 (23.7%). The Lib Dems came 4th with 99 votes (5.7%).

Using a leaflet headed 'Labour Doesn't Care' and 'Two-Faced Tories', they concentrated on local community issues, with a working class orientation, to present themselves as an alternative to Labour's indifference and the Tories' hypocrisy. In the absence of an independent working class alternative, they have made progress in 'filling the vacuum'.

Reminiscent of Le Pen's remarks in France when the mainstream conservatives adopted a more right-wing agenda to try and undermine growing support for the Front National (- why vote for the discredited conservatives when you can vote for the 'real thing' -) the BNP attacked Hague's recent outbursts on asylum seekers. "Most people are disgusted with the Conservative controlled council. Why? Because they decided that our local community should be chosen to house all the asylum seekers that are coming in to the area ... and yet after causing the problem in the first place, the two-faced Tories have the nerve to be campaigning on the asylum seeker issue in this election."

In particular the BNP pointed out that the asylum seekers were being housed in the poorest parts of the borough - not the middle class, Tory voting areas like Sidcup and Old Bexley.

The Left remain either indifferent or complacent, despite the BNP's vote going steadily up in London; from 18,000 in the 1999 Euro election to 47,000 in last year's GLA election. This lack of

analysis is illustrated by the ANL's comments made in the aftermath of the Copeland nail bomb trial - just 6 days before the Bexley election! : "The Nazi terror is a sick attempt to bomb their way into popular consciousness - it is also evidence of their isolation from mainstream political society. Copeland said that he planted the bombs to start a race war, so that people would vote for the BNP. It is a sign of their desperation that they can consider nailbombs will bring them success at the ballot box."

Following their 26.2% vote in Bexley, the first issue of their local newsletter deals with issues like cuts in local services and drug abuse. For example: "After closing the Youth Club in Slade Green, it has been confirmed that there will be NO replacement service - our youngsters have nothing to do now other than roam the streets! Another reason for not voting Labour, Conservative or Liberal!" The BNP will gain support when the Left aren't doing the work in the area.

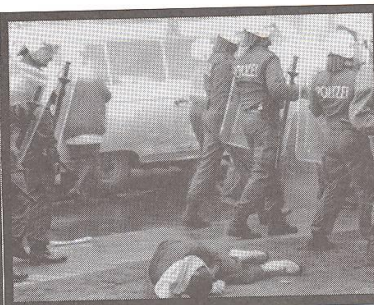
The Left must have the ambition to present better solutions to working class concerns than the fascists. That is the challenge. After all, the fascists, for all their talk about their "traditional working class heartlands" are burdened with the in-built contradictions that exist in their 'national interest' politics. In Nick Griffin's New Year message he is pleased to announce the "rise in the quality of the average new recruit. Particular among those who come from the Internet, graduates, and managers."



The new issue of the Celtic anti-fascist magazine TAL (No 28) is now available. Featuring articles on the Campaign Against Sectarian Attacks, Hillsborough Justice Campaign, Glasgow's Black shirts, and much more, it is available from TAL Books, BM 266, London, WC1N 3XX. Cheques and Postal orders (British PO only) should be made payable to 'TAL'. Single issue - £1.50 (including p&p). 6 issue subscription - £8 UK/£10 Ireland and Europe/ £12 rest of the world.

ARE WE WINNING?

anti-fascist strategies



As the Far Right continue to grow across Europe, Fighting Talk will be publishing a series of articles that discuss the different strategies being implemented by anti-fascist groups. We welcome contributions from other groups or individuals, which will be printed in future issues as part of an ongoing debate.

In this issue, Fighting Talk spoke to AFA in the Czech Republic. One of the points that comes across in their replies is the confusion about what we mean by the words 'working class'. We do not mean that in Britain the working class is a united political force, and it does not matter whether people describe themselves as working class or not. Without wanting to get into an argument about exact definitions, we are talking about roughly the bottom 40% of the population; bus drivers, cleaners, building workers, factory workers, postal workers, etc. If you like it is the 'ordinary' people, who are not managers, landlords, landowners, big businessmen, etc. The people who have no interest in defending capitalism, the people whose needs are not met by the capitalist system, the people who are exploited. In too many cases it is the people who turn to the fascists because none of the political parties are interested in their concerns.

After years of Stalinist rule in Czechoslovakia, in the name of the 'working class', we can understand that the term may have unwelcome connotations, but it is important we recognise the importance of this section of society. In the 1920s and 30s the best anti-fascist fighters came from the mass working class organisations; in Spain the anarchists, in Germany the communists, in Italy both. The mass organisations have now gone, but the people have not. The fascists recognise that the needs of working class people are not being addressed, and in the absence of any progressive movement are able to present themselves as the radical alternative. To beat the fascists, anti-fascists must be able to come up with better solutions to working class problems than the fascists. To avoid this area of political work is to allow the

fascists to grow unchallenged. To create an anti-fascist sub-culture can mean anti-fascists are isolated from the working class.

There is a danger that winning working class support is not confused with making 'compromises', and to use nazi Germany as an example of how anti-fascists are isolated is a mistake. In nazi Germany the anti-fascist resistance had to be clandestine - the nazis had already won! The fact that Czech AFA is now strong enough to win the physical battles on the street is a success, the question remains can they now win the political battles?

Across Europe the Far Right are picking up support from the disillusioned and abandoned working class. Is this the case in the Czech Republic?

The situation in the Czech Republic is still a bit different than in most west European countries. The Far Right has its certain position, both on political and non-political levels. But much of the traditional nationalist, xenophobic or fascist agenda has been adopted by mainstream political parties and are part of common culture. Most parliamentary parties agree on restrictions of immigrants, discrimination against minorities and protection of national interests. This type of attitude is often hidden. There are only a few major political legal parties being more outspoken. Those are mainly various factions of the former Republican Party and Communist Party. The Republican Party has lost its previous support of an average 8% votes and most of its voters now prefer the Communist Party or openly fascist groups. Unusual as it is, the Communist Party and its more radical Stalinist factions are the most attractive parties for the abandoned working class with reactionary attitudes.

The more open fascist organisations, from nationalists to neo-nazis, are being supported by a smaller part of working class, but the smaller the groups, the more aggressive they tend to be. There is no major Far Right party like Haider's Freedom Party or Front National. The Republican Party is history but it is

probably only a matter of time for some groups being strong enough to organise the Far Right into a united structure. Also, the nazis are getting their support from all levels of society. Working class, as we know it from Britain, does not exist here - definitely not as an organized united structure with common interests.

What steps are anti-fascists taking to counter this?

Who are the anti-fascists in the Czech Republic? There are many people opposing fascism and like tendencies. But only very few of them are revolutionary anti-fascists opposing not only fascism but the State system as well. Basically, the non-establishment anti-fascists are either part of anarchist autonomous movement or belong to Marxist, Trotskyist or similar organisations. We think that Trotskyist anti-fascist activities are somehow fake: they claim to be strong, but they often have no more than a few people, they claim to represent the working class and youth, but they know nothing about their problems, they claim to be the alternative against capitalism, but they offer nothing but dead ideology, strong language and disrespect towards "chaotic" antifa. In fact, they only talk, never act.

The AFA (Antifasistická Akce) and a number of other non-organised antifas are the only ones who realise that fascism is just another face of the establishment and that we must act to win. We try to say clearly: it is not only about neo-nazis shouting Sieg Heill, it is mainly about the whole system of oppression and hatred, it is about politicians lies and about everyday racism and intolerance. The pressure in society which drives many people into unbearable situations and despair often breeds hatred against the weakest. The areas with greatest unemployment (up to 20%) are the areas of highest racial tension and strongholds of both nationalist legal parties and illegal neo-nazi activists. We are trying to show the true roots of fascism - the system itself.

We work on different levels. We are reaching to the youth communities, showing them the alternative to the

ARE WE WINNING?

fascist street gangs. Even by turning them into anti-fascist street gangs. Every time the fascists meet to address the public, we go there and oppose them. We use propaganda – magazines, internet, leaflets etc. We attend public hearings and discussions, explaining our positions. We create our own subculture of lifestyle, political activism, music. We fight fascists in the streets. The anti-fascists are part of anti-authoritarian movement. Many of us are anarchists, working in different anarchist structures. We believe that we can counter the fascists by providing our own alternative. We must be prepared to use all means necessary – from education to war.

Does the 'Left' (anarchists and marxists) have any credibility in the working class?

The Left is mostly perceived as a communist, (i.e. Stalinist) thing and it has strong support of low level working class and ex-communist alike. But we anarchists do not consider ourselves to be part of the 'Left'. We believe in neither Left nor Right, but forward. The only position that matters to us is simple: is it towards a more free society or towards a more oppressive society? We do not want to be identified as part of the 'Left', we think that our alternative is vital as itself. The Stalinists never gave us any support and they only try to abuse our own activities for their credit. The anarchists are considered to be extremists by the majority of the population and our support is limited to a rather small portion of youth and an even smaller portion of the public. Unfortunately, the inability to attract wider support is not only a problem for Czech anarchists but a problem for anarchist and anti-system freedom fighters worldwide. Nevertheless, we believe in what is right and we are ready to fight for it. We understand that we are at the beginning of our journey and it will take a lot of work to get the job done. Also, the public support is important to us but we cannot be driven into compromises. In nazi Germany, most of the people supported nazis or were quiet – still the anti-fascist resistance was happening and it was right. We will fight regardless of public opinion.

Do the Far Right have significant electoral support?

Right now, there is no Far Right party in any level of political representation. The former Republican Party has dissolved into a couple of minor parties. It used to draw support of 8 % in parliamentary elections. In the last election, they got



Czech Elements: Photos from Prague 1992 showing boneheads (top), anarchist anti-fascists (middle) and Roma gypsies (bottom). In the years following the "Velvet Revolution" there were frequent violent clashes, with both the Roma and the (mostly young) anarchists under pressure from a growing Far-Right movement seeking to control the streets by force.

3,9% and did not pass the 5% votes required by the voting system. The party fell into internal power struggles and is rather obscure now. In the past, there were a few attempts to build a major party based on "patriotic" nationalistic, racist and populist foundation. The fascist movement includes some 7000 – 8000

supporters and some 800 hardcore activists. They also get support from tens of thousands of Far Right voters. The fascist scene is divided in two main factions. One prefers the legal way to power and tries to reach the public and gain its support. Organisations such as Narodni Aliance (National Alliance) and

ARE WE WINNING?

Vlastenecka Fronta (Patriotic Front) represent this trend. They host less aggressive neo-nazis, mainly connected to bonehead subculture. Both organisations claim to be patriotic and not fascist, but they often cooperate and work together with openly fascist structures. They held a number of public demos on which the speakers attacked the anti-fascists, refugees, minorities and claimed the Holocaust was a lie.

party received about 5000 votes and fascist candidates got about half of those votes. The fascists will no doubt try to control the party – get a legal platform for their activities, skip the lengthy and blocked process of establishing a new legal party and attract more followers. The more radical activists will continue in illegal activities and will orientate part of the movement on acts of terror and random violence.

but to create a space for our own alternative. We never had to choose between a new Hitler and a democratic candidate, but such a situation would mean we have already missed something and lost an important part of our struggle. Real change does not come from elections.

There were until now no independent candidates truly supporting the interests of working people and working for the benefit of his/her voters.

If the fascists are very active on the streets, do other anti-fascist groups help you physically oppose them? If not, what alternative strategy do they suggest?

Well, fascists are very active on the streets. We think that the situation got better compared with previous years, but there is still a lot of work. We try to oppose the fascists every time they meet or when they attack their foes – either AFA or anyone else they hate. There have been a number of direct confrontations. In the past the fascists were often the victors, now it is us who has the upper hand in conflict. If there is a small scale action, we go out and fight alone. If there is something larger, AFA cooperates with other comrades – mainly from anarchist and autonomous structures. There is a major consensus on the necessity of direct action against the fascists among the people from our movement. Of course, not everyone favours radical anti-fascist violence. We have to face people from our own ranks who believe in non-violence and education. They claim that public awareness, propaganda and major changes in public consciousness are more important than fighting in the streets.

We do not oppose education or propaganda, but believe in harmony of all possible means of struggle. Sometimes we must deal with people who want to cooperate with law enforcement, because they think our non-organised methods of work are not effective. It is OK to use whatever means possible to stamp out the fascists, but such involvement with the police is a denial of our own principles and often leads to betrayal. In the long term, the police are the same enemy as the fascists. We therefore fight fascism without cooperating with the cops.

Very often there are calls for something like a united anti-nazi front. But we are not going to unite with those who stand against us (either liberals, reformists or authoritarian marxists), just because we happen to have a common enemy. We cannot forget that we not only fight against fascism, we also fight for freedom. Death to fascists! Down with the State!



German Autonomes: an important influence on the Czech anarchist anti-fascist movement.

The leader of Narodni Aliance has been arrested on hate crime charges and later released from prison on probation. Narodni Aliance is in the process of a legal ban now.

The other fascist faction focuses on clandestine methods of struggle. There is an extensive network of activists and supporters, both organised in small organisations, such as Národní Odpor (National Resistance) or Obrana Naroda (National Defence). The majority of fascists are only loosely organised. Older activists from Blood and Honour and Bohemia Hammer-skins were replaced by younger ones with more ambition. Czech fascists have ties with foreign activists, mainly from Slovakia, Germany, Scandinavia and Serbia. They claim to have established their own Combat 18, but it is more a statement of militancy than a real existing structure. Lately, about one hundred members from Narodni Aliance and leading figures from Narodni Odpor became members of the rather insignificant Vlastenecka Republikanska Strana (Patriotic Republican Party). They were independent candidates in its ranks in the last regional elections. The whole

The risk of serious terrorist activities is high, although not imminent. So far, the fascist violence has claimed about 25 lives in the past 10 years – mainly Roma (gypsies), immigrants and anarchists. The total number of violent racist and fascist crimes goes into thousands. The public response was with few exceptions very low. The police investigate such crimes rather passively.

Does AFA support anyone but fascist strategy, i.e. support a mainstream party to keep the fascists out? What do you think of independent working class candidates standing in elections in working class areas to fill the vacuum and keep fascists out?

So far, we do not deal with such situations. There was no such clear example of either a democratic or fascist candidate. We understand it is important to stop the fascists, but we also have other principles regarding the whole political system. We oppose the current system and our fight against fascism is only a part of our struggle towards a more free and just society. As in the Spanish Civil War, we do not fight the fascists to preserve the oppressive State system,

THE MULTI-CULTURAL TROJAN HORSE

As part of AFA's attempt to initiate discussion on the Left around the issues of race and class, here we print an article from a former member of the Black Liberation Movement and current AFA activist about the reactionary nature of multi-culturalism.

The Trojan Horse is routinely cited as the most outstanding military tactic of all time. Mythology has it that the City of Troy was besieged by the Greeks who found both their opponents and the metropolis unconquerable. In tribute to their gallant foe the Greeks left a giant hollow wooden horse and departed. The "victorious" Trojans accepted the gift and brought it into their city. Their guard down (and why shouldn't it be?) they were slaughtered, when, from the giant horse poured hundreds of Greek soldiers.

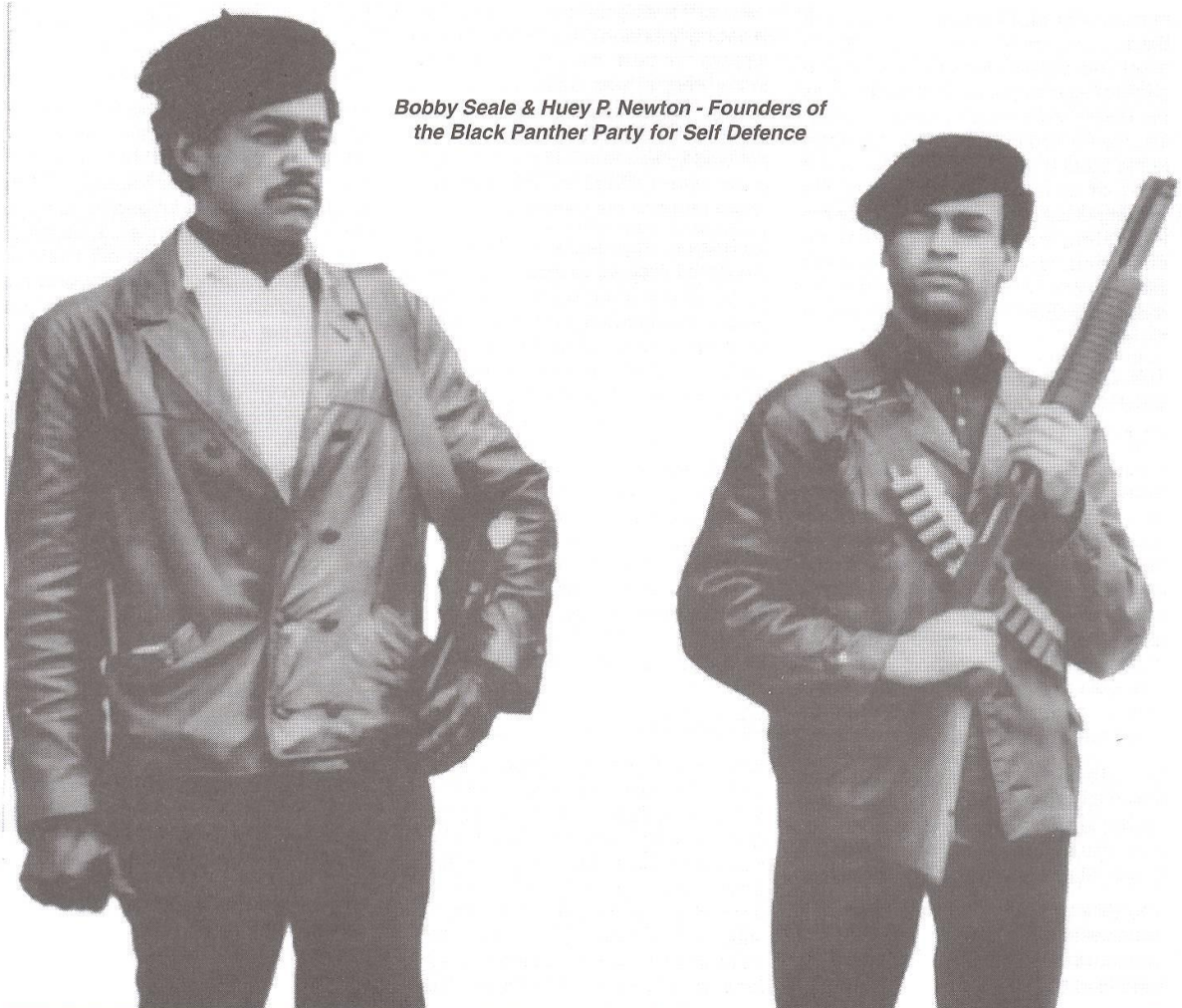
For activists in the Black Liberation Movement, the Working Class Independence Movement and militant Anti-Fascist Movement the tactic needs to be understood for when the naïve perceive an action by the State to be either a magnanimous gesture or a forced concession our guard should never be lowered and we should be in full awareness that the name of their game is counter-insurgency and inevitably the bigger the State concession to the working class the more damaging it is planned to be to working class self-determination.

Arguably few counter-insurgency efforts come bigger, as ideologically sophisticated or as politically devastating to the working class as multi-culturalism.

BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENT

I was an activist in the Black Liberation Movement for a decade. State disruption of our activities was routine and predictable: stop and search; overt and intimidatory surveillance; infiltration; intensified conflict with anti-social elements; house raids; imprisonment; media criminalisation; armed police attacks and the proliferation of dubiously funded "rival organisations". The State displayed its skills through the timing and intensity of their operations. For example in 1991 the demand for an organised response to racist attacks and an aggressive BNP strategy saw many organisations within the Liberation Movement bring their activities and security personnel into discussions. Among the areas discussed was

Bobby Seale & Huey P. Newton - Founders of the Black Panther Party for Self Defence



working with AFA to ensure and enforce a no platform policy. No surprise then that the State unleashed a veritable counter-insurgency cyclone against us. The Black Unity and Freedom Party for example had 25% (1 in 4) of its activists arrested on separate trumped up charges in 1991 alone, many of them key personnel. Other groups faced raids on homes and meetings. Under such pressure the hatches were battened down and organisations, rather than reaching out, had to look within. Security had to assess breaches and damage. Campaigns had to ensure mobilisation and support for those charged. But there was no organised reinforcement for AFA who, rather than encountering the socialist groupings within the Black Movement met careerist anti-racist professionals and cultural nationalists.

This type of activity is traditionally how counter-insurgency is viewed by political activists and reflects the self-absorption and self-delusion of the Left and its failure to grasp what class politics is truly about. The truth is that the entire active membership of the British Left and the Black Liberation Movement could fit into a second division football ground with plenty of room to spare. That hardly forces the ability of Britain's colossal counter-insurgency apparatus. Whilst the threat to the State is coming from no particular party in Britain at the moment, the working class pose an eternal danger to the ruling order and so must be disrupted, divided, and politically exterminated. In other words contrary to received wisdom: forget the fish – pollute the sea.

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY FOR SELF DEFENCE

The 1960's saw organised Black resistance in America on a scale unseen for over a century. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defence spearheaded the revolutionary wing of the Black Liberation Movement. It was quickly and relatively easily dispatched: 50 dead, scores wounded, 2000 in prison and many in exile. It can be categorised as a "phase 2" conflict in accordance with the criteria laid down by British Army General Frank Kitson in his book "Low Intensity Operations".

In defeating the Panthers it was essential that the American State also moved to ensure that the conditions that gave rise to them were addressed. The British State watched and duplicated.

The BPP saw itself as spearheading a national liberation movement and the vanguard of a socialist revolution. It described the condition of Black people

in the US as domestic colonialism: subjected to military occupation; the wealth of the Black community left the community and a foreign government imposed an alien culture.

MULTI-CULTURALISM

Multi-culturalism was the vehicle for defeat of the anti-cultural revolt and pre-empting future class struggle. In a beautifully choreographed performance, federal government and state after state were seen to "concede" to the demand for Black history and Black

studies in school curricula. Student based petty bourgeois Black cultural nationalist organisations and activists "forced" the local government into creating positions for them on race matters. In post, the slogan "All Power to the People" was substituted for "Buy Black". A neo-colonial leadership was capped on the Black working class politically, economically and in local government. Cultural Nationalists in return rallied to the Democratic Party.

In Britain, the State in the 1970s presented itself as starting to 'concede' to the "demand" for Black history being taught to Black children. But where would the State rather Black children learn about their history? In one of the many Sunday schools run by most Black political organisations at the time in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester, where a cursory glance at history leads to the unavoidable conclusion that the loss of Black self-determination and the rise of capitalism were part of the same dynamic? Or would the State prefer those children learning Black history, with a view that white people in general and not capitalists in particular were responsible for slavery?

CO-OPTION

Activists fighting in the areas of education, health, housing, employment and policing began to be co-opted by the State at local government level. The State was appearing to "back down". National and cultural groups were not only allowed but encouraged to assert their supposedly hegemonic identities. Multi-culturalism became an ideology within local government. Within the Black



Fred Hampton of the BPP - executed in his bed by the FBI

Movement, the reformers, the careerists, the cultural nationalists and the battle weary cried victory and accepted the Trojan Horse. The era of Black Power was dead. Black Protest was now directed into the cul-de-sac of reforming the State and fighting racism.

Anti-racism, funded by the State, led by careerist Black cultural nationalists and white middle-class lefties, lead the Black community to campaign in the most ridiculous and futile of terrain's – the minds of white people. In essence an unsuccessful 250-year-old strategy that was as far from the liberating strategy of "power in our own hands" as one can get.

Multi-culturalism, raising culture over class and imposing such a derisive and dehumanising term as "ethnic minorities" on people of colour who compromise 90% of the world's population, has brought us to where we are now: the Left is dead. The Black Liberation Movement is dead. The State is now looking to capitalise and concretise our disorganisation as a class. Thus multi-culturalism sets to create politically and strategically (if not cognitively) an unholy alliance between the Black working class and the exponents of multi-culturalism: the white middle class. Meanwhile, in the political vacuum existing in the absence of the Left, the growing sense of victimhood among the white English working class as a result of an unjettisoned colonial psyche; the promotion of other cultures, finger-wagging anti-racist strategies. British devolution and European integration and their abandonment by Labour, an equally unholy alliance between the white working class and the Far Right seems

RACE & CLASS

very plausible. Recognising that this turn to the right is part of the multi-culturalist counter-insurgency game plan (the quaintly termed "white trash backlash") the issue of the future of local Government becomes interesting.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The professional anti-racists and multi-culturalists in advising local Government, health, education and social services have polarised and paralysed policy and delivery. Their existence was the genesis of "political correctness" (a bastardisation of the concept of Liberation terminology) and their much hyped anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic etc. antics held councils up to ridicule and, when combined with privatisation and incompetence, in contempt. Labour now proposes to reduce democracy at local council level. The BNP seems to have every chance of winning council seats.

Checkmate to Labour: - to remove the BNP from councils (or at least prevent re-election) scrap local democracy as we know it and all with the backing of the middle class Left no doubt.

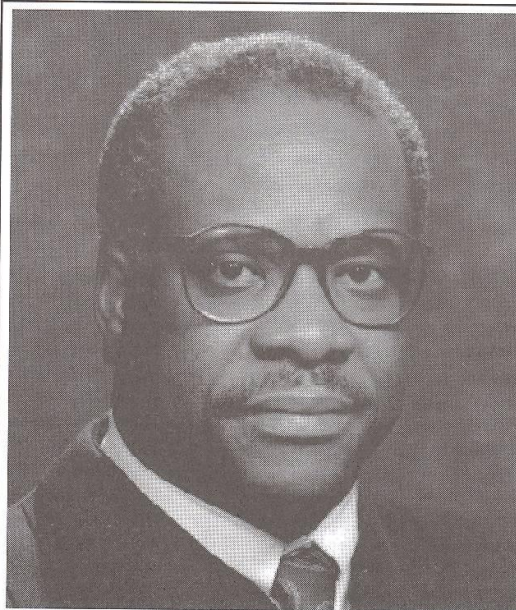
INSTITUTIONALISED RACISM & NEO COLONIALISM

In tandem with the hardening of the white working class towards the Far Right has been the crass attempts by the State at the mass recruitment of Black people into the instruments of our own domestic and international physical oppression i.e. the army, police and prison camp guards.

Starting with the McPherson enquiry the self-flagellation and soul bearing of one State institution after another demonstrated an acknowledgement of "institutional racism", Black under-representation and a sincere desire to change and improve. Improvement being "Black people being picked up by Black police, coming up before Black magistrates and being banged up by Black screws. The result: the nullification of the charge of racism due to the buffer provided by front-line Uncle Toms.

FILLING THE VACUUM.

So what is to be done? Recognising a Trojan Horse when we see it is a start. The love bug virus was a Trojan Horse. The withdrawal of internment in the north of Ireland in the 1970s was a Trojan



Race & Class: Justice Clarence Thomas of the U.S. Supreme Court. Black but right-wing. This is not black liberation - the most oppressive capitalist state on the planet has no problem with him.

Horse. Multi-culturalism is a Trojan Horse. It strengthens the State by co-opting radicals, divides the class, breathes life into the fascists, and isolates us as "extremists".

Our none-too-simple task is nothing short of the reinvention of the Left, the reinvention of the Black Liberation Movement, a new relationship between the two and an orientation by both towards our class. If as working class independence activists we aim to create geographical areas in which our class is contending with the State for power, we must aim to fill the political vacuum not just in the white working class but in the Black working class also. This presents anti-fascists with two immediate dilemmas: Black Nationalism and immigration.

BLACK NATIONALISM AND IMMIGRATION

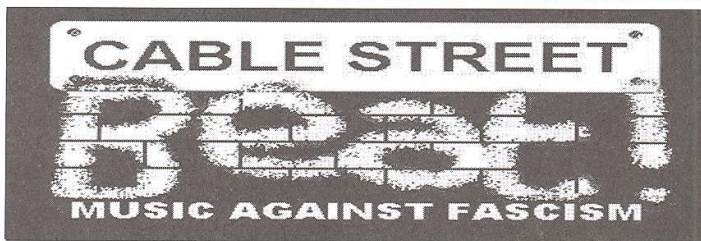
AFA's stance towards independent Black organisations is generally perceived as ignorant and offensive: all lumped together as "Black Nationalists" and that "nationalism" seen as 'bad' - almost a mirror image of Far Right "white nationalism". It is often asked, "how can the nationalism of the colonised be the same as that of the coloniser?" And "would the nationalism of the Basques, Palestinians or the Irish in the six counties be so damned?"

On the issue of immigration AFA has rightly identified the "Asylum Seekers Welcome Here" slogan of the LSA as being counter-productive. But for Black activists immigration and imperialism are inseparable. The resources of our homelands are taken here, to Britain, but our people can not follow them. Just think: the rubber on the soles of your Nikes, the cotton in your Levi jeans, the silk that make your "lucky draws", the gold in your earring, the silver in your watch, the copper in your zipper, the aluminium in your telescopic fash bashing cosh (on hold) and the contents of both your double strength coffee (needed to read FT in one go) and that cigarette (killing you softly) all come from lands where the working class control neither the minerals beneath the soil nor the factories above the soil and should they try to follow the fruits of their toil to Britain; face jail.

ANTI-FASCISM

Britain is indeed a many or multi-cultured society. To reject multi-culturalism is not to reject cultural expression, diversity and exploration. As anti-fascists we embrace such qualities. Our issue is with the "ism" - Latin for orientation. To be culturally or nationally orientated, promoting racial/ethnic separateness and difference over class is neither revolutionary nor radical when a political ideology. However, as the Black Panther Party demonstrated in America: when revolutionary politics takes on the form of working class rule in working class areas it is inevitably reinforced by a popular progressive working class culture.

As militant Anti-Fascists we have never abrogated our responsibilities. Physically we repeatedly engaged and defeated the fascists on the streets. When the BNP retreated from the streets in 1994 we didn't pursue them into their homes. The confrontations ceased. The fascists may in time believe that our tacit acceptance of their surrender was our very own Trojan Horse. For us, our time was well used and our strategy now clear. Working class rule in working class areas neutralises the multi-culturalist counter-insurgency and hurts the fascists more than a bosh from a cosh (made from Jamaican cobalt) in the hands of an AFA activist (who knows the date of Diwali and where to buy a decent pattie from) ever could. To their dread our enemies know: Anti-fascism is not just our politics- it is part of our culture.



ATARI TEENAGE RIOT

As titles of debut singles go, **Hunt Down and Kill the Nazis** is probably one of the most uncompromising around, so it's no surprise that the band who released it back in 1992 - ATR (Atari Teenage Riot as they were then) - have been at the forefront of radical music and politics in Germany and abroad. The single itself came out soon after the attacks on an asylum seeker hostel in Rostock; images of the blazing hostel surrounded by cheering and Sieg Heiling locals were seen by many around the world as the obvious face of a resurgent neo-Nazi movement in Germany, so ATR were making a clear stand by releasing the track, even more so considering some of the company they (unwittingly) kept on the dance scene in Germany (more of which later...). ATR are not just political in their views and actions, but have become known as a band prepared to push music to its limits in an attempt to explore new sounds and mixtures of styles, and they have picked up a growing following and critical acclaim across the world with a range of releases including **Burn, Berlin, Burn** and **Too Dead For Me**, as well as the recent collaboration with Rage Against the Machine, **Rage**. ATR have given support to anti-fascist action groups in Germany - and more widely anti-capitalist and anti-fascist ideas - throughout their career; Alec Empire, the main figure behind the band, was involved in the German antifa movement in Kreuzberg, Berlin, while the band have given money and practical support to anti-fascists, occasionally running into trouble with the state as a result; on one notable occasion, Empire was arrested on stage at an anti-war gig soon after the song **Start the Riot** did just that. So with frontman Alec Empire DJing at his record label Digital Hardcore's party in London, Fighting Talk decided to talk to the man behind ATR and pick his brains on issues musical and political.



FT: Which came first, the radical music or the radical politics ?

When we started the band we started it in theory first. It was like "here's the sample technology and great, now we can use this kind of collage of music that we can call revolutionary music - punk rock, free jazz - and combine all these elements into one thing and recreate this energy but on a bigger level". So that was always the idea - it wasn't that easy to be honest in the beginning. ATR has its own sound - nobody else really sounds like that, but that's because it was a theory thing. We decided that we wanted to do music that's anti-fascist, maybe that sounds a bit simple now or naive, but music that can also produce riots - basically makes people alert to what's going on, produce adrenalin in people's bodies - so we used signals and frequencies that disturb you and wake you up. We thought we could combine this with the information in the lyrics and get a lot over to people and at that point we didn't even care who was going to



play it on the radio. It was a case of let's see if we can get a band like this together that works and gets through to people.

You'd set out from a punk background ?

Yeah I was in punk bands in the 80s since I was 12. I was involved in the German punk scene, which it's important to say, was always political.

In what way political ?

In Germany, punk bands in the late 70s & 80s, came from a left - radical political background. There were no bands doing songs about having sex and drinking. It was like a perfect music for the generation at that time. I grew into that stuff through the demonstrations and the rest of it.

So the politics was set up as part of the music ?

Yeah - punk bands at the beginning they were using the rock'n'roll sound to get stuff across. But ATR speeded up these beats and used these guitars and turned MCing into something more like a Malcolm X speech. Carl Crack (vocalist) doesn't do rhymes like the hip hop people, so it worked out like that. Over the years we worked on that technique and in 95/96 ATR had the sound that we wanted.

What was the dance scene like at the time ? It seems that techno was a very white music then...

I came through the techno underground in the early 90s and I saw that there were all these racist attacks like Rostock and neo-nazis burning down houses and killing people and the population were applauding, and that was exactly at the time we started the band. Rostock was one thing out of many. But we looked at the techno and dance scene and asked what they were doing. They were like "we don't want politics on the dancefloor", and we were like, wait a minute, Germany 's just been reunified and there's this really strong nationalism coming up, and alongside that all this racism, and you're just going to have a dance party !? Another thing came into this scene when people started to say that the godfathers of techno were Kraftwerk, so we really invented it and it's really German music, so they were really proud. After that we saw articles in the neo-Nazi papers talking about the Berlin love parade celebrating techno as the "first German youth music" and saying how

proud they were they didn't have any "nigger music".

What was the reaction to your political stance ?

Straight away we got in a lot of trouble - our first record *Hunt Down and Kill the Nazis* was boycotted in record stores. DJs gave us shit and the weird thing was that this record was for us an important step because we saw that people we had partied with years before were suddenly super right wing. It was like fuck, there were people on the Frankfurt trance scene like Dr Motte who were old skinheads and that hadn't come through in what they did until we came out with this record.

There was one moment in a club in 1994 with these German skinheads and the DJ was playing these Rotterdam records and they were sieg heiling. I started to wonder why these skinheads liked this sound and hated ours. We started to think why is our sound anti-fascist ? I think the explanation is partly the position of girls in the band (*Hanin pictured below*), the

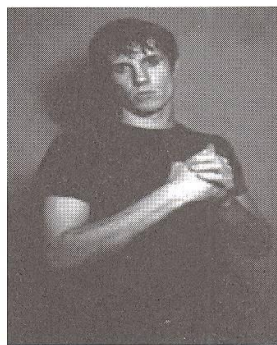


racial mix of the band - we weren't really aware of that when we formed the band but then suddenly you realise that for a lot of people it offends them - black people should listen to hip hop and girls should just sing, that kind of thing.... You don't think that people at our age would say these things, but the sound of a female voice when she screams is an important thing because that never happens in right wing music.

You said about the reunification of Germany; looking from abroad at Germany people see that as one of the things that gave rise to the recent surge in neo-nazi politics...

Totally, because the two go hand in hand. If the government promotes nationalism the consequence is always a fascist ideology. If you say

that our country is superior to others, with the German flag suddenly appearing everywhere, the next step is very logical. Where do people draw



the line ? Now the government has this big problem - the nationalists are changing the immigration laws and all that stuff supports the neo-nazi parties. That's why I'm against mainstream politics; it's schizophrenic. You can't on one hand have this power structure and then on the other say this is democracy - when corporations rule the country or guide the politics and make the rules. It's a contradiction in mainstream politics.

Isn't it the case that many of the voters for neo-nazi parties are generally working class and have no apparent alternative to vote for because no one represents them....

I know, it's very difficult, and they don't realise that they will be fucked also. It's a vicious circle. Also, with Germany there is still something in the mentality, I think. There is a very strong middle class with the worst bureaucrats and all these laws. Over here it's sometimes a joke about how strict Germans are but that often explains how this machinery is working itself towards a fascist system.

So who is going to represent these people if the mainstream parties aren't going to. Is there a credible alternative on the left ?

One of the worst things that happened was last year when the Social Democrats were elected and a lot of people I knew were like "don't be too pessimistic - it'll be better" but you've had Tony Blair here so you know. One thing that opened a lot of people's eyes was the Kosovo war where the Social Democrat government and the Green Party were taking part in this war and people thought "fuck we've supported these people all the time

and they're even worse than the conservatives".

Didn't people on the left look at their own country and come to the same conclusions ? Didn't they realise that the system wasn't working before the Kosovo war. Can you really blame people for voting for an apparently radical alternative ?

Yeah, generally I don't blame people anyway. A lot of them don't have the right information, but I think the ones who are to blame are the government - the people who have the power, the media etc. these people should have the responsibility to get more information out there, not just presenting the world in one way. You can't blame someone who's never had a chance, but still that's not an excuse. A lot of people say "these skinheads they're unemployed", but wait a minute they kill people. No matter how poor you are you don't need to kill someone who's different. I know the social structure kind of pushes that, but nazis must take responsibility for their actions. I'm not the kind of person who says the masses are stupid because that's an easy thing to say, and a lot of the left moan about it all the time.

It's ironic that the left who see themselves as the champions of the working class should moan about them when they don't do what they want them to...

It's very difficult for the radical left to present their ideas in the media in a way that people can understand because the media is just ignoring the issues - we know this as a band as the message always get simplified so we end up as coming across as just another band that wants a revolution.

So do you think parties like the NPD should be banned ? (FT note: the interview took place just before the German government put through legislation to outlaw the NPD)

It's difficult. I think firstly I'm against these kinds of laws and that the NPD shouldn't be banned, because if they're legal people can then see their development and how they are getting more power. If it's hidden it hides the fact that a lot of people think like that. The NPD has become more and more powerful which is dangerous sign, so maybe people will realise. In reality, on the other side, the police are always protecting these people on their marches etc, so I

MUSIC

damage them in some way, confiscate their newspapers etc, but in the long term I don't know if that's a solution. I never think censorship is ever a solution.

And if they use it against the far right they'll use it against the left.

Yeah it's always like that in Germany. One story is that the famous anti-nazi sticker with the person throwing a swastika into a trash bin is illegal.

Prominent businessmen have said they're against extremism from the right and from the left..

That's a common thing. Every time you hear a conservative politician talk about that in the media it's like that. The Christian Democrats when Rostock happened said "we're against this kind of thing either from the right or left", but hang on a minute the left had nothing to do with this.

It should be clear to anyone who's heard the band that ATR are serious about their politics. Given the nature of their music and the aims they've got - creating exciting "music to start riots" - it's hardly surprising that some of the subtlety of their political outlook gets lost in the mix. Alec Empire doesn't have any of the arrogant trappings of many frontmen in a similar position and it's certainly refreshing to have a discussion with a musician who is happy to talk politics and music.

AFA supporters may disagree with Alec's analysis of the media in Germany as the main barrier to a viable left alternative; after all, most of the community-based work done by progressives on the ground in this country tends to bypass the media anyway and go straight to the target communities themselves. Part of the problem is that the left has divorced itself from the communities it has always claimed to speak for, leaving gaping holes for the nazis to step into. The banning of parties like the NPD is about as credible as the ANL call to "Jail All Nazis" - you can cut back the growth as much as you like, but until you pull up the roots, it'll keep growing back in some other form.

It can only be a good thing that bands like ATR are prepared to engage in some sort of dialogue about the future of anti-fascism here and abroad, so thanks a lot to Alec for the interview and Gillian at Digital Hardcore Records for helping make it happen.

AFA Music News

AFA vs. Steps

Cable Street Beat upset small children across the country last summer with an attack on Steps, the mega-selling pop band. Interviewed by the Sunday Express in an article which was later picked up by gay paper *The Pink*, the band - not known for their political views (or much else of any interest really) - launched into an attack on asylum seekers amongst other things. Lee from the band stated "I think there should be more jobs for English people" while Claire chimed in with "Why are we paying for all these people to come into the country anyway?". The band then made a tearful plea for income tax to be lowered and the death penalty restored before passing comment on "British people" being given priority for housing. These statements prompted a response from AFA's music department to the NME music paper, and the press release was later picked up by the BBC and other news agencies.

In an AFA press release a spokesperson stated: "*While Anti-Fascist Action welcomes real debate on the issue of asylum seekers beyond the knee jerk responses of the reactionary right's "send 'em back brigade" and the liberal left's "asylum seekers welcome here", in which the needs of all communities are catered for - working class host communities and asylum seekers - these comments are an ill-advised step in the dark. London and the West Midlands, these comments are unhelpful, inflammatory and naïve.*

Having made our point we then warned the band would "*be likely to attract the attention of anti-fascists*" unless they withdrew their remarks. Obviously, the image of a spangly, lycra-clad Steps being chased down the street by dubious-looking AFA activists appealed to the media and the issue attracted some public attention and forced a frantic climbdown from the band. The NME printed a letter from AFA in their next edition and some useful debate was stimulated.

Unlike the conservative left, AFA has not tried to stifle debate on the asylum issue, but look at it from a working class perspective, responding to

both the rights of the asylum seekers and the host communities.

Cable Street Beat Newsletter

October saw the launch of a new AFA publication putting forward an anti-fascist message through music. The CSB newsletter features interviews with King Prawn, Pitchshifter, Attila the Stockbroker, ADF and Alice Nutter of Chumbawamba, as well as news from around the country. The newsletter is free and any bands who want to distribute it at gigs should contact the National Office to get some mailed out. The newsletter is now online on the AFA website and will be regularly updated with features and interviews. New bands have been added to the Cable Street Beat Network as a result of the newsletter's success and plans for AFA gigs this summer are in the pipeline.

Gigs

AFA ran successful stalls at gigs by Pitchshifter on their Autumn tour, including dates in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Reading, Bristol and London. Plenty of AFA literature was distributed and new contacts picked up.

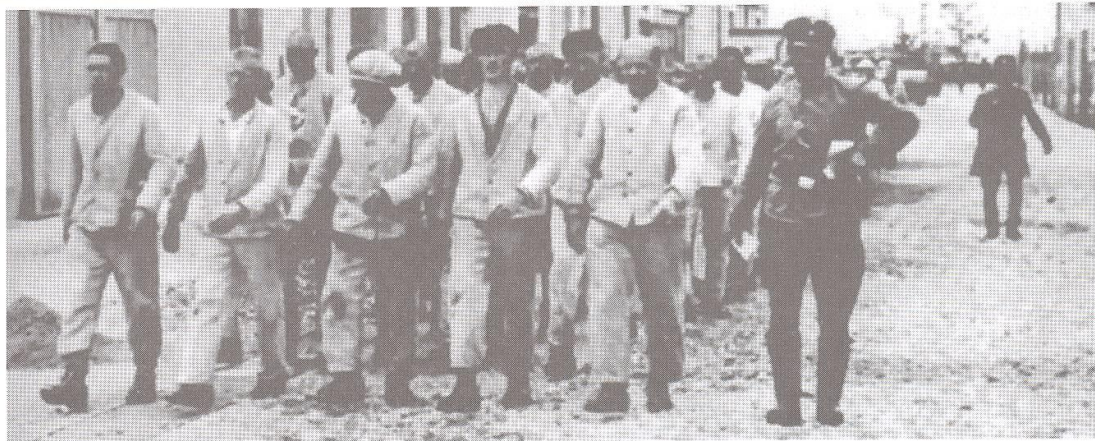


The Levellers also obliged and AFA ran stalls at gigs in Ipswich and Glasgow. Thanks to both bands for their continued support and to those bands who've offered their support in the last couple of months, particularly One Minute Silence (*pictured above*), Capdown, Sona Fariq and Bad Side Effect (*pictured below*).



Get in touch with the office londonafa@hotmail.com if you want to help.

THE HOLOCAUST INDUSTRY



This page: Dachau Concentration Camp 1933 - Communists and Social Democrats were the first victims

The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering.

By Norman Finkelstein
Verso, London 2000. £13.99

During the last 30 years, something strange has happened throughout the USA and Britain especially, but also in Europe as well. This is the way that the destruction of the European Jews by Hitler has become to be known as the Holocaust on the one hand and also, on the other, to become a cultural touchstone in its own right. The image of the Holocaust permeates almost every area of society and is used as an analogy in the most unsuitable of places. Survivors of the Holocaust have attained sainthood and anyone who says anything remotely negative about the Holocaust can easily end up being labelled anti-semitic.

Throughout the USA, almost every state has its own Holocaust Memorial museum, often state funded. Britain so far has the permanent Holocaust exhibition bizarrely housed in the Imperial War Museum and in the future one in Manchester. In addition, there is now an internationally agreed Holocaust Memorial Day, the first of which was in January. Why all this is happening now rather than immediately after the Second World War needs explaining.

American Jewish writer, Norman Finkelstein, has now done just that. His book, 'The Holocaust Industry' has been met with resounding opposition from most parts of the political spectrum, though on Left and Right individuals have welcomed the book as a whole or key sections of it. This is to be expected of a book that challenges received notions of the Holocaust by openly



criticising some of the key tenets of the 'Holocaust Industry' for the first time in the public arena. It is perhaps useful to point out to the dimwitted that Finkelstein's book is not about the Holocaust as an historical event but about the 'Holocaust Industry' that has grown up around it, particularly in the last 20 years. Therefore he is not suggesting that the Holocaust didn't happen or that it wasn't a crime against humanity. He is not even saying that the Holocaust isn't important today. Instead he is questioning the use of the 'Holocaust' as an ideological weapon as well as the

purpose of the growing number of museums, books, university courses, memorial days etc., that try to claim a piece of 'the Holocaust'. As he puts it, "Its [the Holocaust] central dogmas sustain significant political and class interests" (page 3, The Holocaust Industry).

This is Finkelstein's main focus. Before examining this, it is worth making a few points that are very important in showing how the skewed idea of what the 'Holocaust' was has led to a misunderstanding of the historical event and its importance.

The Nazis came to power in 1933 and their *first* aim was to smash any working class opposition, in

particular this meant the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party. This they did, filling up the first concentration camps with their members. All open political opposition was systematically destroyed within a matter of months of Hitler becoming Chancellor. From 1934, an atomised and demoralised working class offered no resistance to the Nazi regime. Once they had consolidated their grip on power, they were able to replace class politics with 'volk' politics and develop their racial policies in ways they had only been dreamed of in the past. Hence

REVIEWS

euthanasia programmes for the mentally and physically handicapped and the introduction of a whole series of laws, over a period of time, that stripped away all legal rights of the Jews.

However, what is referred to as the Holocaust, the systematic mass murder of Jews, whether by gun or gas, didn't begin until the spring/summer of 1941 in the wake of the German invasion of Russia. The first to be killed were the Jews of Russia, along with Communists, Russian Nationalists and just about everyone else in their way. The decision for the planned annihilation of the Jews from Germany and the occupied countries was probably made in October or December 1941. This means that the use of the term 'Holocaust' as a general term for everything that the Third Reich did to the Jews is not only wrong but serves to imply that for Hitler, the 'resolution' of the 'Jewish Problem' was the sole driving force behind the regime's 12 years of existence. In other words, the class nature of the Hitler regime is conveniently removed.

For the Establishment, Jews and Gentiles, in both the USA and Britain, the Holocaust has become an important tool that is useful in defending positions that are otherwise indefensible. To them, Finkelstein is a heretic, guilty of pissing against a sacred entity, despite the fact that his main arguments are simple and brief and have been elucidated recently by others. As Finkelstein points out, after the publication of his last work, criticising Daniel Goldhagen's book, 'Hitler's Willing Executioners', he was described as "...poison, he's a self-hating Jew, he's something you find under a rock". In his current book, he is setting out a number of key points that he believes have led to the growth of the Holocaust industry and have debased the memory of those who actually died at the hands of Hitler's followers.

1. The current obsession with all things to do with the Holocaust is no more than around 30 years old and has grown with the move of American Jews to the right and their subsequent support for Israel. Essentially, Finkelstein argues that the Holocaust has been used over this period as a justification for the actions of the state of Israel. With the role of Israel as the United States' watchdog in the Middle East, American politicians have become more inclined to spend money on Holocaust memorials and museums, including the United States

Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington. The constant linking of Israel to the fate of the European Jews leads to the portrayal of them as victims and thence to any criticism of Israel, by default, as being anti-semitic.

2. His second main theme is the extraction of compensation money from banks and governments in Europe. Finkelstein sees this as a form of dubious moral blackmail that has made very many people very rich but not the actual survivors of the Holocaust, who numbered around 100,000 at the end of the war. Rather than most of the money going to these people it generally goes to a variety of Jewish causes mainly in the USA. For example, Finkelstein's

In other words, the class nature of the Hitler regime is conveniently removed.

mother who was in the Warsaw ghetto and then in Majdanek death camp, received compensation from the then West German government, of \$3,500. The head of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, an umbrella of major Jewish organisations, that received the compensation money from Germany, receives a salary of \$105,000 a year. At the same time, out of the \$10 million received over 12 years, only 15% went to individual Jewish victims of the Nazis. The rest went amongst others to museums, university chairs, organisations encouraging emigration to Israel and lawyers, of course. The same process that happened to Germany is now happening to Switzerland. This isn't to deny that these countries should pay compensation but just that the money doesn't necessarily go to the right people. Finkelstein also points out that there were a large number of dormant Holocaust era accounts in the USA but strangely out of an estimated \$6 million that was due, only \$500,000 was made available to heirs of victims. However, there has been no pressure put on the USA by the various Jewish bodies.

Unsurprisingly, there has been much debate raised by Finkelstein's book, both negative and positive. The fact that the issues he raises are being discussed in public can only be good. However, most of the attacks on Finkelstein are on the basis that in questioning the Holocaust industry in any way, he is being offensive to the memory of its victims. Of course, when people defend

anything in this manner, without any argument, it's a sure sign that they are on shaky ground. Other criticisms of his work go into minute detail about tiny mistakes he is alleged to have made while not saying anything of substance.

More interesting, but equally wrong, are the reactions of the Left. Mike Simons, in the SWP magazine, Socialist Review, criticises Finkelstein quite heavily but he then goes on to say some very strange things: "It is true that the hardline Zionists have increasingly cited the Holocaust as an excuse for the violence and terror meted out by the Israeli state. It is true that hypocritical politicians will appear at Holocaust memorials and then go away and play the race card. But it is also true that the memory of the Holocaust is the biggest barrier to the rebirth of a modern Nazi movement" (Socialist Review, October 2000).

If this last sentence is true, then how come the

Far Right across Europe is at its strongest since the very time of the Third Reich. In fact as AFA said in a document written for the International Anti-Fascist conference in 1997, the Far Right has thrown off the shadow of the Holocaust in its turn towards the suited, Euro-Fascist strategy of Le Pen that has been taken up by the rest of Europe's fascists. However Simons goes on to contradict himself in his next paragraph: "Finkelstein seems unaware that one major explanation for the growth of Holocaust studies and memorials has been as a reaction to the growth of new Nazi movements around the world. He has clearly forgotten Jorg Haider's malevolent influence on the Austrian government, or French Nazi leader Le Pen's remark that the Holocaust was 'a mere detail of history', or the recent murderous Nazi attacks on Jews in Germany".

How can the memory of the Holocaust be both a barrier to the growth of fascism as well as a reaction to the growth of fascism. More importantly, most, if not all, Holocaust memorials are financed by national or local governments. Is Simons arguing that the USA, for example, paid for the USHMM because of its concern at the rise in fascism in Europe? The explanation for the growth in Holocaust studies in universities is simply that this has become a trendy area for people to do research in, which also attracts an increasing amount of funding. It has become trendy partly because of the raised profile of the Holocaust in and of itself but also due to the way that academics are stretching

the bounds of its meaning as a universal catch-all. It is also always easier to go with the flow of research than to try something new.

Reading between the lines of the above it is clear that Simons and the SWP don't have an analysis of racism and fascism that is different to the official government line. This explains why they are so keen to support pro-State groups like Searchlight and their call to jail all fascists now. Finkelstein's argument is that lessons of the Holocaust are too important to be left in the hands of governments and those with vested interests. His anger is directed at the people who want to narrow down the meaning of the Holocaust. Finkelstein is very clear on the fact that class comes into the question about who gains from the Holocaust Industry. Governments are only interested in the Holocaust for their own ends. A good example of this was the forthcoming National Holocaust Memorial Day on the 27th January where the Holocaust against the Jews and similar genocides in Rwanda and Botswana was commemorated. Oddly, the British government forbid any mention of the Armenian genocide that took place in 1915/1916 by the Turkish state where around 1.5 million Armenians were killed. This is because they don't want to upset the Turkish government who deny that any genocide took place. For an American example, Finkelstein quotes the director of the USHMM, Michael Berenbaum: [The Holocaust] "cuts against the grain of the American ethos. We see in [its] perpetration a violation of every essential American value". Oh yeah? Tell that to the American Indians, the Vietmanese and many others.

As I've tried to show above, there is a class explanation as to why the Holocaust is so prominently used in modern day society. If we look closer to home though, we see something similar happening here, not only in relation to the Holocaust, but also in the government's general attitude to racism. For at least the last 10 years, and even more so since Labour came to power, there has been a growing tendency for the State, and its various servants, to push the cause of 'anti-racism'. However, there is no connection between their version of 'anti-racism' and ours. Essentially, the British government, and the USA amongst others, have given up a long time ago on using racism to divide and split the working class. Instead, and more incidiously, they now use anti-racism to do the same job. This is the explanation of why official anti-racism reaches into every area of life. Of course, we're in favour of anti-racism when it is class



Auschwitz 1945: Survivors of Genocide

based but not when it's purpose is to racialise every issue and to divide people on race lines instead of class. One example of this in Britain is the law that now gives higher sentences for convictions in cases with a 'race' element.

Finkelstein in his book has gone out on a limb to question the way in which the Holocaust has been used for purposes which are fundamentally dishonest. Essentially, he has the same concerns as AFA in mind when he points out the use made of race by the US government and those who have self-interest in its perpetuation. For this reason, the book should be essential reading for everyone committed to class, rather than race-based politics. However, it is worth flagging up some disagreements that we would have with him. The main one would be his support for affirmative action in favour of blacks and Hispanics, amongst others. Affirmative action contradicts what Finkelstein has already said about Jews using the Holocaust for

their own benefit. Of course, there should be an end to racial discrimination but equally, we should be against preferment for the same reasons as it would only breed resentment amongst the working class. Another criticism would be Finkelstein's dismissal of most Holocaust literature as rubbish. While he is right that much of it adds little to our knowledge, there has also been a considerable amount of material published that has increased our understanding of the subject.

Finally, Finkelstein criticises dishonest uses made of the Holocaust while at the same time acknowledging that it has to be remembered as the most savage event of a savage century. However, we prevent a repetition of it, not by glorifying it and its victims but by realising that the Nazis won in Germany, not by being anti-semitic but by implementing class politics. To defeat its modern followers, we also have to implement class politics, but of a different type.

TOM CORD

Between the Sheets



with Elvis Mondallant

David Copeland is now residing in Broadmoor Hospital. At the end of June last year he was found guilty of causing the Brixton, Brick Lane and Soho bombings in London. Three people died in the Soho bomb. The trial judge felt obliged to pass down six life sentences; one for each bombing and one for each murder.

During the bombing campaign and several fascist groups, including C18 and the White Wolves, made claims of responsibility for the attacks and the bombings were widely perceived by the media to be the work of fascists. However, after Copeland's arrest at the beginning of May 1999, Assistant Commissioner David Veness, speaking at a police press conference, was very keen to distance him from the Far Right: "The man is not a member of any of the groups which have made claims of responsibility for the bombings. Nor did he make any of the claims using their names. It is understood that he was working alone for his own motives."

Why was the State so quick to dismiss the Far Right? Were they keen to distance media attention from their own activities? Interestingly, *The Guardian* (7/6/00) reporting on the trial and contradicting David Veness somewhat, revealed that Copeland had in fact made a claim for the Brick Lane bomb on behalf of C18. Why he did this is not clear.

Apparently, after he was arrested, Copeland sung at the top of his voice during the journey to Charing Cross police station. He was seen as an unhinged individual, which is certainly true. However a photograph, courtesy of *Searchlight*, printed on the front page of *The Mirror* at the end of May last year, added an important qualification to that diagnosis. The photograph showed Copeland standing next to a bloody faced John Tyndall in the aftermath of a clash between the BNP and ANL supporters at Stratford, East London. The cat was out of the bag. All was revealed once the trial was over and it became clear that Copeland was not only an active fascist but was inspired by ideas from the extreme right of the fascist movement.

Copeland, then, was known to *Searchlight*. Apparently, after he had moved to London in 1997 and joined

the BNP, it was a *Searchlight* operative, codename Arthur, who kept an eye on the new recruit. *Searchlight* later reported that: "For six months he was an active member, attending meetings and participating in leafleting campaigns across the capital. Though a member of the Newham branch, he joined a BNP election team in Uxbridge and heard Nick Griffin, now party leader, speak in Redbridge."

Copeland later moved on to join the National Socialist Movement and was very quickly made Regional Organiser. This was, as *The Guardian* (1/7/00) points out: "a grand title for a small job". In fact the NSM collapsed completely after Copeland's arrest, perhaps an indication of the size and calibre of the organisation.

Speaking on *Panorama*, Commander Alan Fry of the Anti-Terrorist Branch made it clear that the NSM had not been regarded as potential candidates for the bombings: "The security services are looking at extreme right wing groups collectively. They are looking at those who pose a danger to the security of the State. We have a group here that had not actually carried out any violent activity."

It is likely that C18, from its inception, was a honey trap for extremist elements active in the fascist movement and that the State had assets at leadership level in the organisation, Charlie Sargent in particular. The security services would have built a profile of the organisation, including any split offs like the NSM, and an assessment of their potential for employing political violence in Britain.

C18 were not kept on a tight leash. Action was taken with regard to racist material produced by the organisation, possibly as a result of intense lobbying. However, C18 were allowed to publish extremist material including hit lists and bomb making instructions without any sanctions being applied by the State. Was this all part of the honey trap? In 1997, AFA, along with others including sporting personality Sharon Davies, were targeted by Danish fascists. Parcel bombs were despatched but quickly intercepted. During the subsequent trial, Wilf Browning of C18 was associated with the incident. The State's honey trap was perhaps getting a little out of hand?

QUOTES

"The voice of the black housing sector in Britain is saying segregation is not necessarily a bad thing."
(Parmjit Uppal, chair of the government sponsored Tenant Participation Advisory Service)

If segregation is being promoted in the name of 'anti-racism', then what does 'anti-racism' mean? Surely this is what the racist's dream of?

"Unless we can weep equally for black and white victims of these outrages our anti-racism is a sham."
(Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *The Independent*, 13/2/01)

Writing about social injustice and violence, a leading liberal academic challenges current anti-racist strategies. The failure of the Left to understand this point allows the Far Right to benefit.

"Contrary to legend, they were mostly working class."
(*The Guardian*, 10/11/00)

A reference to the British volunteers that fought in Spain with the International Brigades, and a timely reminder to the Left as to where the best anti-fascists can be found.

"Ken says the town is 'bursting with Bosnians'. He says the council saves all the money for the middle class wards, and dumps the asylum seekers on his doorstep. Del agrees, and says an anti-racism festival planned for September will cause trouble. 'They spend money on all that, but not on me and my family'. The BNP knocked on Ken and Del's doors, but neither of them could be bothered to vote. Apathy may yet halt the racists' progress."
(*The Guardian*, 15/7/00)

Written in the aftermath of the BNP's 26% vote in Bexley, and suggesting the situation is potentially worse than it appears.



Searchlight has speculated on, and hyped up, splits within the police and security services. The magazine reports that: "Departmental jealousy, territorial disputes and backbiting characterised the investigation. The case was given to the Anti-Terrorist Branch, and Special Branch, MI5 and the newly established Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force, CO24, were kept in the background. The infighting continued long after Copeland's arrest, with Anti-Terrorist Branch officers complaining of an intelligence void, a clear criticism of MI5 and Special Branch monitoring of the Far Right, while Special Branch responded by calling the Anti-Terrorist Branch "a glorified forensic team", a reference to their lack of knowledge of the Far Right."

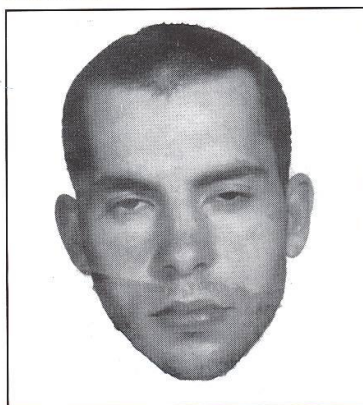
Rivalry between different police and security service organisations, drooled over by *Searchlight*, complicate the picture with regard to State involvement on the Far Right. The truth is that a number of these organisations are pursuing separate and sometimes conflicting agendas. Occasionally, perhaps in order to turn the heat up on these issues and share them with a wider audience, these differences are fed to the press.

Searchlight, of course, are no longer impartial observers. The organisation has attached itself to CO24 and, not content with this collaboration, feel obliged to hype up and intervene in any differences between police and security service units. The magazine, in its July issue, makes criticisms of the police investigation and of course it is their own intervention that is highlighted: "Searchlight can reveal that it was we who identified Copeland's name, which we passed to the police through a third party. However, it seems that London Special Branch sat on the information before informing the investigating team. Although Copeland could not have been arrested sooner, the information, which included his connection to the British National Party, would have made him a far more important suspect."

What is striking is the contrast between *Searchlight's* detailed and critical account of the police investigation against their previous efforts to talk up the threat of violent activity on the part of C18. At every opportunity over the past years, *Searchlight* has, in the pages of its own magazine and through the mainstream media, hyped up C18 in order to advance its strategy of encouraging State intervention. Of course this was easy enough; C18

publications were full of bravado, hit lists and so on, and the organisation revelled in the media attention afforded it through *Searchlight's* efforts. Compare this with Old Bill's rather cold assessment of the NSM's potential for political violence.

The police analysis is not surprising. Certainly, there was an attempt to refocus the media's attention on Copeland the individual as against Copeland the fascist. However, a cursory examination of C18's history would



indicate, even to the layman, an organisation that was all too capable of confusing ambition with ability. Browning's association with the Danish bombing affair was the exception. Although, of course, C18 members were involved in violent attacks on Left activists, generally soft targets, as a rule they simply did not deliver and were certainly not regarded as a dangerous organisation at street level by AFA.

Searchlight has, in the aftermath of this trial, positioned themselves on a very high horse. The truth of the matter is that the strategies that they have pursued in recent times have, at best, created a confused and distorted view in the mainstream media of the fascist organisations active in Britain; all of this at the expense of any proper analysis of the political threat posed by a revamped BNP. At worst, they have misled, misdirected and poisoned anti-fascist activists.

Searchlight's strategy of collaboration with the Police is a dangerous one. Rather than look to the resources available in working class communities in the fight against fascism, *Searchlight* and friends are happier conniving with the British State. As *Fighting Talk Issue 24* pointed out: "The fact that this "intelligence- led policing" has also been used to harass, imprison and intimidate anti-fascists is perfectly acceptable.

Anyone who doesn't back the status quo is fair game. For AFA, our enemies' enemy is most definitely not our friend."

The Independent (23/8/00) reported that Gerald Wheatley, a casualty of the Admiral Duncan bomb blast, is taking legal action against the brewery, Scottish and Newcastle "for failing to warn its customers of the risks of an explosion." The case is likely to focus on the nature of any security advice given by the police and the brewery's response to it.

The Independent tells us that the Admiral Duncan "is believed to have received a specific warning of the dangers." While *The Observer* (2/7/00) reports that: "Sources within MI5 were said to have warned members of the gay community that they believed the bomber was targeting a gay venue three days before the Admiral Duncan explosion, but that this was not considered to be the most likely target by the Met's anti-terrorist squad."

Nick Hopkins and Sarah Hall writing in *The Guardian* (1/7/00), report that: "There have been several persistent rumours the police had Copeland under surveillance before the Soho blast and lost him. Scotland Yard last night dismissed this as "absolutely untrue".

Gerald Wheatley's case may open up a can of worms, in particular if all of the various police and security service organisations are required to give an account of their actions. This, however, seems unlikely, we are more than likely in for further press speculation rather than any detailed report of MI5's activities. What is the true scope of the State's operations? In any case, C18 were allowed to publish extreme material and forge links with other, more potent, groups abroad. The Danish parcel bombing case may demonstrate a success for the security services. If so, then certainly it was a high risk escapade. It may be that the London bombings demonstrate the shortcomings of State strategy.

There has been a real lack of any serious investigative journalism with regard to this case and the State's activity on the Far Right in general. Why is no one in the mainstream media asking the relevant questions? Perhaps, as with much of the activity by the dirty tricks department in Ireland, the truth may emerge eventually, after a period of time.

Seen any interesting quotes or media comments? Send a copy to Elvis c/o London AFA



AFA MERCHANDISE



HEROES OR VILLAINS?



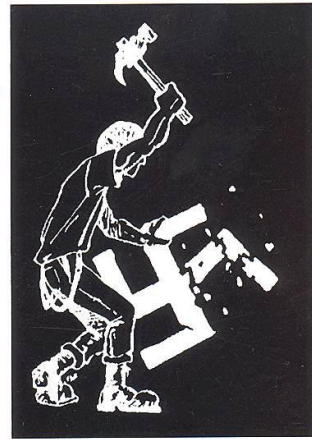
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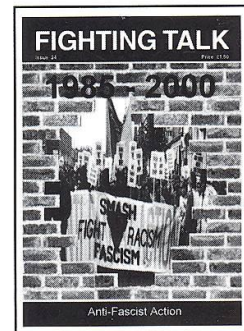
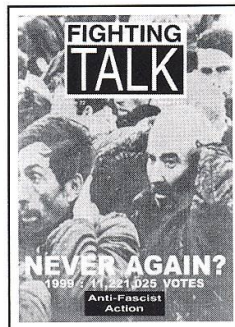
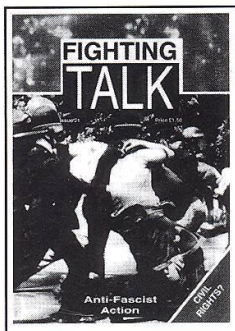
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