

# FIGHTING TALK

Issue 6

Price £1

## *RESISTANCE*



## *GERMAN STYLE*

**Anti-Fascist Action**



# BNP BEATEN IN BURNLEY

AFA's strategy of physical opposition to fascism has forced the BNP to seek ever closer co-operation with the forces of law and order during their recent campaign in the series of local elections in East Lancashire.

Following a number of incidents over recent months, BNP regional organiser Ken Henderson has been forced to adopt an increasingly 'brown nose' attitude towards the local constabulary. This has led to antagonism between those who see themselves as tough street fighters capable of driving the 'reds' and asians off the streets of East Lancs, and those who would like to present a more respectable image for the voters of the area, and are quite happy to hide behind lines of police. The pressure applied by militant anti-fascists has brought these differences to the fore in spectacular fashion.

The BNP stood a candidate in Colne during the May local elections, and announced plans for a pre-election rally in the town on Saturday 1st May. On the morning of the rally, the BNP gathered at a re-direction point 20 miles away in Todmorden, and were escorted in a police convoy to Colne.

Their plans were thrown into disarray when AFA out-witted both the police and the BNP by occupying the spot where the BNP intended to hold their rally. After several scuffles, the BNP accepted police advice and were escorted out of Colne "for their own safety".

The police, somewhat miffed at being made to look stupid, decided to nick a couple of anti-fascists out of spite. In the election itself, Shaun Crambie, the BNP candidate, managed 162 votes. Fairly respectable considering what was to come.

In June, the BNP stood a candidate in the Stoops area of Burnley. The Stoops estate gained nationwide notoriety last year when it erupted in a wave of anti-police riots. The candidate on this occasion, baby-faced Scott O'Sullivan, obviously wary of local opinion, and the estate's reputation, attempted to play down the 'law and

order' aspect of BNP policy. This tactic failed when prior to a mass-leafleting of the estate, the BNP were ambushed at their re-direction point (again in Todmorden) by 'anti-fascist militants'.

This forced the BNP to invite the police to accompany them onto an estate with a long-standing hatred of the forces of law and order. For the rest of the afternoon, the BNP provided the police with an ideal opportunity to mount a show of strength on the estate. This lack of respect for local feelings, and the fact that the police were visibly protecting the BNP from the anti-fascists, no doubt contributed to their feeble showing in the polls. A miserable 53 votes provided a clear thumbs down for the forces of law and order.

Clearly unable to take a hint, the BNP announced that they would be standing a further two candidates in Burnley during local elections in September. They also announced plans for a major march and rally in the town on Saturday 28th August. Despite being forewarned of possible trouble, the police seemed determined to allow the march to go ahead. This decision seems even more remarkable considering that Burnley FC were playing at home that day.

On the morning of the 28th, 150 AFA activists arrived at Burnley Central Station. Although we were unable to avoid detection by the police surveillance operation, we were at least in the area in which the BNP intended to march. This in itself represented an achievement considering the manner in which the police had kept us off the Stoops in June.

The presence of this large group also attracted the attention of a small section of Burnley fans, who having been wound-up by 5 or 6 local BNP members, attempted to attack the AFA contingent. This attack failed, and the assailants were chased off. AFA has no quarrel with fans of any football club, and had at first ignored attempts by these fans to start trouble. However, when this bunch started throwing bottles at anti-fascists, then the course of action was never in doubt.

These particular fans might like to ask themselves why the BNP members who had been egging them on, were the first to run when the trouble started. AFA members later met 'spokesmen' from the main Burnley firm, who declared themselves impartial, and

announced that they would attack whoever was in town after the game, although they were not too pleased at the way in which the BNP had tried to manipulate Burnley fans.

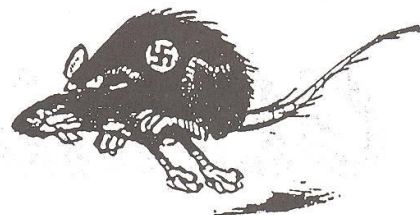
If it was the intention of the BNP to use Burnley fans against AFA, then the plan back-fired, because the police refused to allow the BNP to leave their re-direction point, due to 'serious public disorder' in Burnley. This sparked a furious row between local activists and party leader John Tyndall, who meekly complied with police orders not to travel into Burnley. A few locals defied the police and ventured into town anyway, where they apparently got slapped around by irate Burnley fans.

Their plans thwarted, the BNP turned on themselves. One of the candidates, David McNee, withdrew from the election declaring that he was "totally disillusioned with the BNP". Others started fighting amongst themselves, while most just quietly bemoaned Tyndall's lack of bottle, forgetting that it was their own previous cosy relationship with the police that had led to their downfall in the first place. Their reliance on the police for protection had left them no room to manoeuvre when the police eventually decided that the BNP were more trouble than they were worth.

In the end the BNP mustered a pitiful 32 votes for the candidate who withdrew, and a magnificent 9 votes for the candidate who stayed the course. In attempting to sell a tough streetwise image to white working class youth, while still attempting to win over respectable voters, the BNP have managed to do neither.

The BNP's East Lancs campaign is in tatters, unable to strike a balance between electoral respectability and strength on the streets, the BNP will have to opt for one or the other. There are signs locally that those who desire success in elections are still in control, it remains to be seen if the "streetfighters" will continue to meekly comply.

## Nazis Out!



← PO BOX 83, SWDO, MANCHESTER, M15 5NJ.

THE ARCHIVIST



# THE UNITY ARTICLE

Despite endless full-timers, fax machines and funding, the combined efforts of the ANL, ARA and YRE have made very little difference to the fascists. The recent election of a BNP councillor in East London merely underlines the urgent need for a new strategy.

As the fascists gain a higher profile in the media so the calls for anti-fascist unity reach a new level. But is this unity around the old, failed methods or should we be looking to a radical new approach?

The so called 'Unity' march to close down the BNP HQ in Welling is a good example. In particular this march is backed by the ANL and YRE - the two biggest anti-fascist organisations and the best they can come up with to fight fascism in South East London is another march. There have been six marches and 27 lobbies of the council to remove the BNP HQ and none of them have worked. Not only that but this lack of a long-term strategy has had the opposite effect in terms of isolating the BNP. The anti-fascists are now seen by many local people as the problem - not the BNP.

Ever since the supporters of these organisations marched away from the fascists on Thamesmead after Rolan Adams was murdered, the strategy of these groups was exposed and discredited.

Some people assume that anti-fascists must all share the same views and the only thing that prevents 'unity' is sectarianism (normally attributed to the 'leadership') and once this 'unity' is achieved success is guaranteed! The potential effectiveness of an activity doesn't enter the equation - it's more of a numbers game. If the previous six marches on the BNP HQ have failed it's because they weren't big enough, rather than the fault lying with the idea of just marching (and what happens if the BNP HQ is closed down - do all the fascists go with it?). In Germany there have been massive demonstrations against fascism, hundreds of thousands strong but this hasn't stopped the killings or electoral gains of the Far Right. Protest marches are only one part of a campaign, unless the fascists are directly put under pressure the campaign will not succeed.

The difference between AFA and groups like the ANL is not personal or sectarian but political. As reported in the last issue

of Fighting Talk (The Battle of Ball Grove) after AFA had prevented the BNP from holding a meeting while the ANL protested in the town centre, the ANL were quoted in the local paper saying, "We have the same aims as AFA, but don't necessarily approve of their more direct methods." These "direct methods" being exactly what stopped the BNP.

At Waterloo in October 1992, when AFA smashed Blood and Honour's attempt to organise openly in London, the ANL had a protest march in South London on the same day a few hours earlier. Of the 500 ANL supporters on the march only 50 came to Waterloo. That is the difference. Our priority is to stop the fascists, the ANL's to complain about them.

We are not looking for unity around failed strategies, the unity of lemmings as they leap over the cliff - it's a question of effectiveness. As a militant German anti-fascist said: "We don't care for the idea that if we are

murdered by Nazis a small part of the working class will carry out a half hour protest which only makes the Nazis laugh for having got off so lightly." This was said in 1932, just before the Nazis took power, but is just as relevant today. This point must be taken seriously, political activity is not a game, what is done or not done makes a difference.

Unity cannot be created artificially at meetings or conferences but will come about through practical activity. We have found that the paths of militant anti-fascists invariably cross at some point - then you have something to talk about.

After the BNP election victory the ANL, YRE and other groups (including AFA members) responded by physically driving the BNP off their regular paper sale at the top of Brick Lane. This is to be applauded but does it signify a change in policy by these groups or was it simply that they were sick and tired of being battered by the BNP and for once decided to do something about it? The article in this issue about the police/ANL operation at Brick Lane makes this look extremely unlikely. We will support activities called by other groups if they are going to disrupt and therefore weaken the fascists. That is how we judge an activity, not by who called it.

The conclusion for us is straightforward. AFA approached the left in 1989/90 with a suggestion for a militant united front against the fascists. The left failed to respond and instead launched their own anti-fascist organisations shortly afterwards. They have failed to stop the fascists. Where AFA has been able to implement our strategy we have been successful (see the article on East Lancashire in this issue).

AFA is growing - four new branches in the last few weeks - but rather than spend our time arguing with existing organisations we are looking to new

**"We don't care for the idea that if we are murdered by Nazis a small part of the working class will carry out a half hour protest which only makes the Nazis laugh for having got off so lightly."**

**Germany 1932.**

groups and individuals who support the ideas of militant anti-fascism. We can talk until we're blue in the face, but unless some real impact is made on the fascists then Derek Beackon won't be the only BNP councillor. The priority isn't numbers, the priority is how to beat the fascists and we will not compromise the growth of effective anti-fascism just to accommodate people for the sake of abstract unity.

In the 1980s with the rise of Le Pen's Front National in France, the largest anti-fascist organisation was SOS Racisme, a soft liberal protest movement capable of mobilising hundreds of thousands of people. They were smashed by aggressive fascists. So if all the other anti-fascist groups in this country formed one big organisation but carried on with the same tactics that have failed to dent the fascists, we would be no better off.

What we need is a strategy that is seen to make a real difference against the fascists and the racist gangs they encourage. When this is seen to work, this will bring in the numbers - which is the opposite of thinking that having large numbers of people to start with (at least on paper) in an anti-fascist organisation will somehow automatically lead to victory.



**FIGHTING TALK GIVES THE VERDICT ON THE BNP ELECTION WIN**

# GONE TO THE DOGS?



The election of a BNP councillor on the Isle of Dogs, in East London, did not come as a shock to AFA. We have warned for the past two years that support for the BNP was growing in certain areas, that they're not just isolated fascists, and that they're well organised and aggressive... It's no coincidence that the Tower Hamlets area is the poorest local authority in Britain. There's been polarisation in British Society over the past ten or fifteen years, with the divisions between rich and poor growing steadily. The big issue in Tower Hamlets has been housing, with the Asian population being perceived as having some sort of advantage in the way that housing is distributed, and that has helped the BNP. Although it isn't true, it's become accepted as part of the folklore of the area and the myth is actually now more potent than the facts.

A wave of panic has swept through the media and the establishment parties in response to the result. The hypocrisy was sickening. John Major said there was no place for that kind of racism in 'our' society, despite the fact that his party has consistently sought to undermine minority rights and that an elected member of his own parliamentary party, Winston Churchill, openly espouses the same views as the BNP on race, immigration and housing.

Liberal leader Paddy Ashdown was quick

to condemn the BNP and to censure local Liberals for their racist policies and propaganda - it's a pity he wasn't so concerned in the past. The overt racism of the Tower Hamlets Liberals was their main ideological weapon in their struggle against the local Labour Party, and the chief lever they used to oust the former Labour council. Racism was fine for the Liberals while they were winning, but when they get outflanked Ashdown gets serious. It's pathetic.

The central issue in Millwall ward and the rest of the Isle of Dogs is housing. Labour offers no perspective of solving this problem whatsoever. In the face of an apparently insoluble problem, voters turned to the BNP as the radical alternative that was so lacking elsewhere.

There is no escaping the responsibility that the establishment parties bear for the result, but nor can the left escape its share of the blame. Last Autumn the BNP polled 20 per cent in a bye-election in the same ward. The BNP saw the potential and continued to work in the area. The left, taken by surprise, failed to respond. The anti-fascists who turned over the BNP paper sale the following Sunday deserve credit, and this forceful response to Beackon's election included members of YRE and the ANL. If these groups had supported AFA's campaign in 1991-92 in the East End then the

subsequent course of events would have been different.

Because while the rest of the left stood aside, the BNP grew. The election result shows this clearly. It should be remembered that this was only the third time that a fascist has won an election in post-war Britain and that even at the height of its influence, the National Front never won an election - the other two elected fascists were members of the National Front breakaway group, the National Party, in Blackburn, 1976.

Unlike then the BNP now campaign on an openly violent and Nazi agenda. They don't disguise the fact that they are a 'National Socialist' party. Their activists are the direct descendants of the SS men who ran the concentration camps - and they're proud of it. Knowing this, or not caring, a section of the British electorate voted for them.

Our role is the same today as it was before the election. It is to challenge the far right in such a way that they cannot organise and consolidate elsewhere in the way that they have done in Millwall. It can be done, just as it is possible to turn the Millwall result around. This is only possible, though, so long as the lessons of the inactivity, passivity and pacifism of the past are learnt, and learnt fast. This is the challenge that lies ahead of us.



# Police protect the ...

In this article Ben Brown argues that despite recent events nothing has changed with the ANL. While critical of the ANL/Police action, AFA remains firmly committed to No Platform for fascists.

The recent ANL mobilisations in Brick Lane reveal the precise nature of the close relationship that has developed between the ANL leaders and the police hierarchy. First, they show that stable lines of communication with the police have been opened up; it emerges that communications between senior police officers and ANL officials are routine. Second, they demonstrate that in accordance with police guidelines, ANL events take the form of a precisely choreographed event played out at a media friendly 'flashpoint'. Importantly, the anti-fascist contingent accepts being corralled by a strong police presence. By collaborating in this way, the ANL know that police protection is guaranteed. The police know that they know, and the fascists know that they know. Although the event may be initiated by the ANL, this form of 'mass anti-fascist action' is in practice both organised and bossed down to the last detail **by the police**. As a threat to the state or fascism, the ANL mobilisations are on a par with the Rotary Club Christmas Social. This does not prevent the 'hotheads' with the lollipops chanting 'police protect the fascists'.

Some people might have thought this an exaggeration. No longer. The ANL now feels it's relationship with the police is secure enough to 'come out'. Here is a police officer quoted in the 'Independent' (27.9.93) in relation to the Brick Lane demo of 25th September. Remember, one of the groups the officer is speaking about claims to be a **revolutionary socialist organisation** dedicated to the violent overthrow of the state, the other is a group of fascists. Explaining why the police elected to arrest the fascists the officer said: "On the one hand we had a properly convened and organised rally, which we had been informed about; on the other, we had a bunch of people coming along, who wanted to cause disruption." It's not too difficult to sort out who was who. The **revolutionary socialists** are instinctively recognised by the police as the co-operative element; the fascists as wanting to 'disrupt' the gentleman's agreement on which the whole charade is based. Who would you expect most working class people in South and East London to recognise as the 'revolutionaries' - or as people like themselves.

The police were understandably well pleased with the arrangement: the officer in charge of the operation (Commander David Kendrick) claimed: "We were able to have a peaceful operation without major disorder... It was our objective to maintain law and order and we have successfully achieved that."

An ANL spokeswoman confirmed that maintaining law and order was also their objective: "We welcomed the police action, but it should really have come sooner. We wanted them to stop the BNP selling their newspaper in the area long ago." Why call on the police to stop the fascists? She continued: "It [the BNP newspaper] promotes racial hatred and is an incitement to violence". It is because the BNP are **breaking the law** that they should be **arrested**.

The trade off couldn't be clearer: the ANL demand that the **police** deal with the fascists, and offer to pay the price demanded in return: collaboration in keeping the anti-fascist movement within the confines of 'law and order'. Leading ANLite, Paul Holborrow, called this a great victory. So it was, for the police. Revealing the full degree of complicity with the ANL, the police spokesperson confided, that after the BNP arrests, "Perhaps the paperwork took a little longer than usual..."

Holborrow also said that it was the first time 'in many years' that the BNP paper sale had been stopped. What he meant was that it was the first time it had been stopped by **the police**. Working class activists on the AFA march through Bethnal Green stopped it in November '91. No police arrests of fascists were made on that day because the fascist hid themselves and were seen by the entire population of the area to hide themselves. And before, in October 1990, AFA stewards took the pitch off the fascists and then fought off a combined BNP/NF attack. The joint police/ANL action in Brick Lane didn't inflict any damage on the fascists. On the contrary; though none were charged, the mass arrests portrayed them as victims of undemocratic, repressive, and for what it's worth 'illegal' actions by the police: perfect material for feeding their white working class constituency.

Perhaps the really alarming aspect of the contemptible collaboration of the ANL, is that **the ANL are supporting the very same police tactics used against flying pickets in support of the miners during**

**the 84-85 strike**. Groups of miners travelling to support strikers in other areas were arrested (and charged) by the police with threatening a breach of the peace - in blatant contravention to all conditions relating to applications of this particular item of the common law. Exactly the same 'illegal' police tactic was used against the BNP, most were arrested over two miles away from Brick Lane. The SWP have now explicitly endorsed the legitimacy of these police actions - actions questioned even by liberal elements within the establishment itself. If the police were right to use this tactic against the BNP, then they must have been right to use it against the miners. The parallels will certainly be noted by working class anti-fascists, and perhaps even by sections of the ANL rank and file.

Nothing could highlight more conclusively the rock solid reformist instincts of the SWP leadership. Perhaps it did not occur to the SWP, or perhaps it did, that the next time that the police carry out mass arrests on a group of anti-fascists or striking workers who are not playing by ANL or Rotary Club rules, they can cite the precedent of the BNP arrests - and the applause of the SWP. It is in no way to defend the BNP to point out that police actions which are in this instance used against the BNP, will be in the future, as they have been in the past, used with far greater effect against anti-fascist and other working class militants. This tactic was also used against republican supporters at the James Connolly march in Edinburgh this summer. In effect, the SWP are working hand in glove with the police to outlaw the possibility of all direct action, notably by AFA, against the fascist gangs. If the SWP leadership truly believes, as they have now said outright, that it is the job of **the police** to stop the fascists, why don't they follow the logic of their own argument and join the Met? They could be on overtime for what they're now doing for nothing.



'Councillor' Beackon leads an unsuccessful attempt at retaking the BNP paper sale pitch from AFA stewards, in October 1990



# GERMANY CALLING

Following the establishment of contacts between members of AFA and Autonome Antifa (M), a militant anti-fascist group in Gottingen, Germany, a speaking tour was arranged for one of their militants in this country. During that tour this interview was set up by *Fighting Talk*, to introduce people in this country to the methods and ideas of militant anti-fascists in Germany, and also to introduce a regular column in future issues, given over to their national organisation, Antifaschistische Aktion/Bundesweite Organisation.

As people will learn from the following text, it's not just all boneheads and racist attacks in Germany, indeed, the fight against the fascists is both well organised, and highly imaginative...

**FT - What's the major fascist outfit on the streets and what are their strengths?**

It's not quite easy to identify a fascist in daily life. Apart from fascist Skinheads they look pretty ordinary. But if you look at demos or parades they wear their special combat gear that shows quite clearly the tradition under which they are marching. For example FAP (the successor of the NSDAP) activists wear uniforms on marches which are almost identical to the historical Nazi uniforms. For the fascists this is one way of showing their strength. The rising power and political relevance of the extreme right goes close together with the falling of the wall and the resulting economic situation.

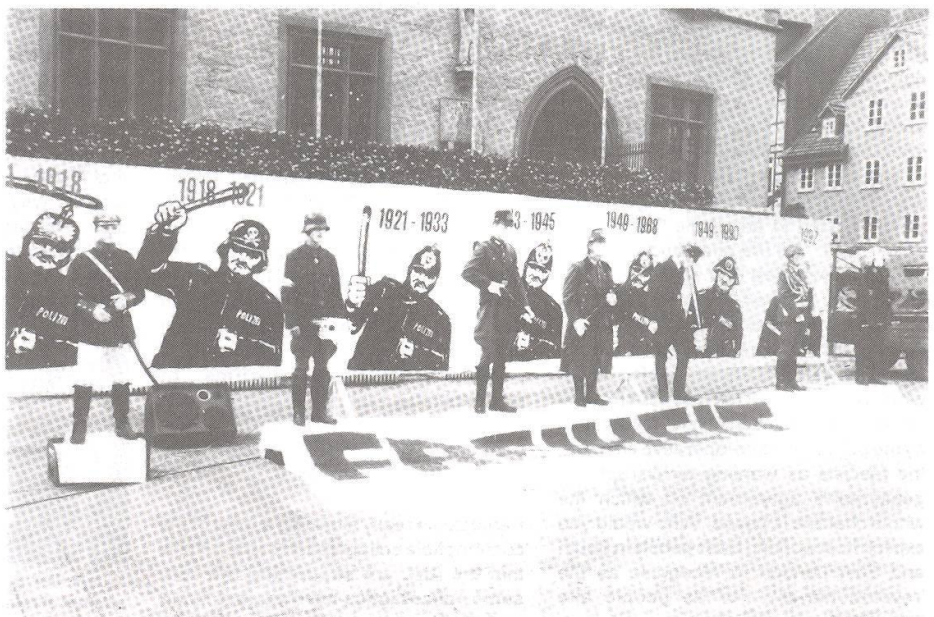
For most people, especially on the territory of the ex-GDR, left ideas, utopias are no real alternative because of 40 years of GDR dictatorship. They say: If that was Socialism, then I don't want to have anything to do with Socialism. So we can't reach huge parts of the German population with progressive ideas and our propaganda at the moment. On the other hand many people lose confidence in capitalism, rising unemployment and no economic perspectives drive people to despair. This is the ground on which fascist propaganda succeeds. Slogans like "German jobs for German workers only" are well received.

Racism, especially, in large areas of German society, is a good breeding ground for fascist organisations. Talking big right-wing slogans, music from fascist bands, "Skinhead, better say Bonehead styling" is trendy. Not all of these kids are hard-core fascists but this is a "twilight zone" where racist, fascist ideas are mixed with youth rebellion. This is the sphere where most of the brutal attacks against foreigners come from. It happens mostly spontaneously or "out of a mood". These kids are the ones the fascists try

to get hold of, this is their recruiting ground where they try to draw the kids into their organisations. And that's the real great danger. If the fascists succeed in doing so.

**FT - In Britain, one of the most important strategies of the BNP in recent years has been to jump on the back of racial difficulties on estates etc. presenting themselves as the answer for white residents, and their emphasis on parades etc., has been limited in favour of this. A similar thing happened in Rostock, but how many other "Rostocks" have gone unreported, and what, if anything, has been the response of militant anti-fascists in Germany?**

After Rostock the fascists tried to create loads of "little Rostocks" but didn't succeed in gathering again such a massive crowd to follow their terror. But Rostock was a symbol. Since then almost everyday fascist attacks take place. To get an impression, here are a few official figures (from the Office for the Protection of the Constitution). Needless to say, the real figures are a lot higher. 1992 saw 2584 serious fascist attacks, 90% against foreigners. It's 74% more than in '91. 17 people got killed in '92 by fascists. Usually, after a fascist attack takes place, a demonstration is organised by anti-fascist groups. That's not enough, no question. But also direct, militant actions take place. Again official figures: In '92, 398 militant actions happened against fascists, almost 400 got rather badly injured. The well known fascist leader Gerhard Kaindl was killed in Berlin by anti-fascists.



*Another kind of anti-fascist demonstration. All the uniforms were later ceremoniously burnt.*





A "European" Rudolf Hess march of 500 nazis in Fulda, 14/8/93. The fat one on the right is the leader of the FAP, Freidhelm Busse.

**FT - One thing that doesn't get reported in Britain is whether the fascists are trying to organise in the workplace/trade unions. If they are, what are their tactics and how are they organised? How are they opposed?**

Since the early 80's the fascists are trying to set up their own trade union, until now this project wasn't very successful but is still part of their strategy. More left-wing trade unionists had to deal with, for some time now, an increasing number of people in the workplaces being open minded for easy fascist solutions and propaganda. It's a sad thing, but if we look at the latest election results, pretty often in traditional working class areas, the fascists have gained a lot of new votes. At present the fascists are playing no role in the trade unions. If a member is spotted as racist/fascist he gets thrown out straight away. Anti-fascist propaganda within the trade unions doesn't get much feedback. Most working class people are not interested in politics.

**FT - How many national anti-fascist/anti-racist organisations are there in Germany, and what sort of numbers are we talking about ?**

The anti-fascist movement in Germany is divided in two big groups. On the one hand you got the VVN/BdA (anti-fascist association). This organisation was founded shortly after World War II and

was led by Moscow orientated, dogmatic communists until the wall came down in '89. It was directly sponsored by the GDR Government. The politics of this organisation were strict reformist following a legal course, e.g. not supporting direct, militant action in any way. Politically they always forged alliances with the SPD (similar to the Labour Party) and the trade unions. Practically, they always marched where the fascists would definitely not show up, in contrast to the militant anti-fascists, who were trying to directly hit and physically confront the fascists.

When the wall came down their whole organisational structure broke down. Now, in the stage of reorganisation and moving away from their old dogmatic positions, they're looking more and more for cooperation and alliances with the revolutionary wing of the anti-fascist movement: the autonomous anti-fascists.

Autonomous anti-fascist groups are spread all over Germany but are no homogeneous movement. They are concurring that militancy plays an important part in their politics against the capitalist state and the fascists. They also do agree on the coherence of imperialism and fascism. But that's about it really, no exact definition of the term "autonomous" exists. The autonomous movement as such is a mixture of various communist, anarchist etc. political

currents which came out of the specific political situation in Germany.

One of the central themes at the moment is the discussion about organisational structures within the autonomous scene. In '92 the Antifaschistische Aktion/Bundesweite Organisation (Anti-fascist Action/Nationwide Organisation) was founded. It comes out of the need to fight the fascists effectively on a national level with organised force and on an anti-imperialist base. So far, 14 Anti-fascist groups from 11 different cities are members. Some of the autonomous groups refuse to become members because of a deep going fear of possible hierarchies, party-like developments and out of a general refusal of any form of organisation (which is a very special problem amongst the German lefties). It's hard to tell how many people are actually involved in the movement, official figures talk of about 2 - 6000 people.

**FT - Within these organisations, what is the political, class and ethnic make-up?**

A working class as such isn't existing, better say the class consciousness isn't existing any more. Most of the political activists have a middle class background, few workers are involved in the movement, they are rather the exception. The working class plays no part in the anti-fascist struggle. And, sad but true, there are more working class people



marching with the fascists than on our side. The politicised foreigners in Germany are organised in their own groups. Strong Turkish and Kurdish organisations are active, but cooperation is often difficult because most of them are following a very strict dogmatic communist/stalinist line and their main activities have to do with their countries of origin. Beside these organisations are another two big groups, political emigrants and a huge number of economic refugees, mostly from eastern Europe.

Quite often local self-defence groups are formed, but they can't risk getting into trouble with the police, because they might lose their resident permits for Germany. Another big group are the kids of the foreigners, grown up in Germany, they organise themselves in streetgangs. Although they are not explicitly political, cooperation works quite well sometimes. Within the autonomous movement with the ethnic groups it's the same as with working class people, there are a few, and they are the exception.

**FT - FIGHTING TALK had a report recently on anti-fascist football fans in Germany, written by one of its correspondents. What do you know about the efforts being made in the football world against the fascists. Which teams are most markedly for or against the Fascists ?**

In many places in Germany you have so called "Fanprojects". State-paid social workers dealing with fanclubs tending more to the right wing, this has partly to do with the bad image German footie fans got in other European countries. We don't like social workers particularly, but some of them are from the left scene and at least try to organize good things. One fanclub has to be mentioned in this context (yes, you got it right): FC St. Pauli. It's the only club we can definitely say is anti-fascist and takes a stand. Other fanclubs might well produce stickers and stuff, but this is probably only individuals, it doesn't say much about the real numbers.

Racism and nationalism flare up

from time to time amongst the fans, but organized fascists never really managed to get a hold in the scene because there are quite a lot of footie fans that don't exactly like fascists amongst them. It's not possible to give a clear statement about the present situation at football grounds, but most fans are more interested in their team than in politics.

**FT - What successes have anti-fascists had in organising with local communities against the fascists. What is the level of resistance of local ethnic communities in response to racial attacks.**

Speaking for the southern part of Lower-Saxony (where Göttingen is situated) there are no structures comparable to local communities in Britain. If there's a fascist attack or something, an antifa-emergency phone call is activated, calling together in a relatively short time a few dozen people. Be sure, with every political initiative, we're trying again and again to involve people from all different strata. The difficulties with that were mentioned earlier on.

**FT - What is the level of pressure that is being put on the fascists on the streets. Are there any notable or landmark victories?**

We already tried to answer that a bit in the first question so we'll give you just a few examples of well-done direct actions against fascists.

In the early eighties when the militant

neo-nazis started to show their faces, several attacks were launched against their infra-structure and leading figures. A famous one is that against a "Wehrsportlager" (fascist training camp) near Celle/north Germany. In December '84 an antifa commando unit set the whole place on fire. Most of the barracks, 5 lorries, 5 jeeps, several vans, trailers with rubber dinghies, tents, uniforms, the radio operation office etc. burnt to ashes. The damage inflicted upon the fascist logistics went into the millions.

In June '89 another antifa commando unit stormed the flat of neo-Nazi leader Christian Worch, dressed like a police special riot squad (wearing masks etc.). He believed himself arrested and was easily overpowered. Loads of fascist files and records as well as other interesting material changed ownership. It took a while for the fascists to realize who the uninvited visitors were...

The FAP-Headquarters in Mackenrode near Göttingen was attacked by 30 anti-fascists in October '91. A short skirmish took place in which 15 fascists got their heads kicked in, none of the anti-fascists were injured. These are just three well executed militant direct actions from a long list of... let's say... "practical" anti-fascist activities...

**Autonome Antifa (M)**

**Part of Antifaschistische Aktion/  
Bundesweite Organisation.  
(Antifascist Action/Nationwide  
Organisation)**



The "Black Block" assembling at the head of an anti-fascist demonstration, March 1993



# The BNP/Rangers Connection

Glasgow Rangers pre-season friendly at Sunderland received national coverage when a section of their fans went on the rampage leaving a trail of blood and destruction behind them. The trouble, according to the media, was the work of Rangers casual gang, the I.C.F. The official response of the club was to deny all knowledge of the existence of this gang, instead blaming it on "groups of men with English accents wearing Rangers colours who are not Rangers fans"! The police statistics told a somewhat different story. Of the forty Rangers fans arrested during the trouble in Sunderland, more than thirty came from the Glasgow area. In the days that followed there were further revelations that the police's Soccer Intelligence Unit had uncovered evidence that the Inter City Firm (the Rangers casuals took the name from their counterparts at West Ham) had strong links with the Chelsea Headhunters (the English accents perhaps?) and are led by prominent members of the British National Party (BNP). The BNP's response was immediate.

A paper sale outside Ibrox, Ranger's ground, had the Scottish BNP leadership queuing up for interviews with the craven media. Steve Cartwright, the BNP's Scottish organiser, declared that he personally welcomed the casual violence at Sunderland. Scott Maclean, Glasgow BNP's 'boss' whose home overlooks Ibrox Park, said that he had been selling at Ibrox for about five years and had encountered no hostility from the home support. Seizing the opportunity to pander to the Ibrox Club's Ulster loyalist supporters, Cartwright described the press in Scotland as "Fenian rags"!

None of these media 'exclusives' came as any great surprise to AFA members in Glasgow who have been monitoring BNP activity at Ibrox for some years now. Despite the mock protests of the club,

supported by the left, that there is no nazi connection at Rangers, it is clear that the BNP's main source of recruits comes from their orientation towards young Rangers fans. Central to the fascist strategy has been the establishment of their regular paper sales at the ground. The problem for anti-fascists is that the BNP have become an integral part of the furniture at Ibrox. Rather than creating a backlash against the fascist, the events at Sunderland have positively re-established them as a force amongst those loyalist youth who support Rangers. The reaction of the left, however, has confirmed that they have little to offer either politically or physically in any

Militant that "genuine Rangers fans want nothing to do with the BNP". This position is entirely in keeping with the Walter Mitty existence that most Scottish Militant supporters lead. Remember, this is the same group who say that it's alright to be a loyalist (i.e. a local fascist) but it's not alright to be in the BNP (a national fascist). The facts are that the fascists have an influence at Ibrox that goes beyond their numbers; they lead a gang of thugs associated with the club and they have a regular paper sale which is a source of further recruits.

Most of those who currently infest the BNP in Scotland have come into the



Rangers fans on the march. Note the BNP banner on the far right.

campaign to remove the BNP from outside the ground.

In the wake of the Sunderland story, the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) issued a statement to the press that "the BNP had not sold at Ibrox for at least five years". This would probably concur with the SWP's position that fascism did not exist until they recently re-established the ANL. Scott Maclean's statements together with Glasgow AFA's own intelligence work shows the SWP/ANL to be liars. The secretary of Youth Against Racism in Europe and who claims to be a Rangers supporter, writes in a recent edition of

sphere of the far right through football. Gus McLeod, a leading fascist, first came across the NF and then the BNP on regular trips to Ibrox with his local Rangers Supporters Club in Argyll. McLeod became a regular visitor to London where he made strong links with the likes of Charlie Sargeant of C18.

Similarly, Eric Brand who, like McLeod, went on to become a fascist organiser with the NF and the BNP, first met up with the nazis at Ibrox. Brand has been on the run for the last three years after he took part in a BNP/ICF attack which hospitalised two members of the





Glasgow SWP. Three other members of the BNP - also ICF casuals - were jailed for twelve months for their part in the same incident. One of these, Ian "crazy" MacMillan, has since graduated to greater things with C18 and the League of St. George, although we understand that his blood still curdles at the mere name of AFA and he positively runs for cover at any mention of masked men!

At the most recent meeting at Ibrox of the "old firm" - Celtic v Rangers - the "non-existent" BNP and ICF held up copies of British Nationalist throughout the game in an effort to antagonise the

strongly anti-fascist Celtic support. Amongst their number were Scott McLean and Warren Bennett from Edinburgh (who also doubles up as a Hearts casual where appropriate). Situated in the enclosure nearest to the Celtic fans, they were drawn to the attention of some members of AFA amongst the visiting support. There then followed 45 minutes of mime which would be worthy of Marcel Marceau. Unfortunately the fash didn't take up our offers to discuss the matter further at several mutually accessible locations after the game.

On a more serious note though, the need to respond to the fascist presence at Ibrox has never been greater. With the upsurge in fascist support generally together with the increased activity of the loyalist death squads in Ireland - the Scottish BNP's main preoccupation - it is incumbent upon the left to provide an alternative. We cannot sit by and allow a large section of young people to be lost to the enemies of the working class. The left's capitulation on this question

will come back to haunt them.

The BNP's success at Ibrox has been used as a springboard for a reign of terror elsewhere. In Garnethill, adjacent to the city centre, an elderly Asian couple were subjected to a firebomb attack on their home. Two petrol bombers wearing baseball caps launched the attack at 4.50pm in broad daylight on a Saturday afternoon - the day after the news announced that a fascist had been elected in London's Tower Hamlets. In Dennistown, the following Saturday, where a council by-election was being contested by Militant, the BNP decided to flex its street muscle and leafleted the main thoroughfare in defiance of the groups of Militant supporters who were canvassing the area. Asian shopkeepers were informed that they should "move out or be kicked out". Militant's response was pathetic and predictable. The YRE secretary pledged Militant's opposition to fascism and urged that those who wanted to fight the BNP should join him, "...in building a big demonstration in London against fascism".

Real words of comfort, no doubt, to those in the firing line of fascists in Scotland.

## KENT

# "One Safe Nazi; One Dead Sikh"

Police in Gravesend, Kent, have stooped to an all-time low in arresting and charging anti-fascists for daring to criticise their protection of a C18 member.

Regular readers of Fighting Talk will know that it was back in April that John Cato, a Nazi activist involved in producing an 'intellectual' journal called "The Oak", was exposed as being a leading light in C18 (possibly the editor of their hit-list Redwatch) and tracked down to his house in Gravesend.

The Kent Anti-Fascist Action Committee and the local Anti-Nazi League immediately sprung into action with leaflets explaining who Cato was, headed "Danger - Nazi Thug Organiser in Gravesend". Cato's presence was linked with the vicious racist attack on 60-year-old Avtar Singh Gill who had been put on a life

support machine shortly before, and a huge increase in fascist stickers and material circulating in the area.

We also tried to get the local media interested in revealing his presence to their readers. Most of the young reporters we spoke to seemed very interested (perhaps they saw a Pulitzer Prize glittering on the horizon) and keen to cover the story. But once their (older and 'wiser') editors had been heavily leant on by the police, the stories never appeared.

A similar response met us from the local establishment. All of the learned anti-racist officials seemed to want to ignore Cato's presence and instead concentrate on calming 'all sides' down. The leader of the Labour group on the council (now the leader of the council) even got a resolution through the whole council "deploring the circulation of literature by extremists

of Left and Right designed to create a climate for further violence."

Anyone who challenged this 'consensus' was met by newspaper editors, police, councillors and other local worthies with outright hostility. It was as though we were the problem for raising the thorny issue of a fascist organiser in the area, while everyone else tried to look the other way and sweep the whole thing under the carpet. But the two most shameful episodes were yet to come.

Firstly, we discovered that the police had provided Cato with a panic button direct to the police station and installed a video camera at his house. These didn't prevent him being driven away by the strength of local feeling - he told the local paper that he'd been shunned by neighbours and his workmates had sent him to Coventry. But the victory of driving him out (we understand to somewhere in East Anglia) was overshadowed by the police protection. When we put out a leaflet criticising this headed "Police Protect Nazi Thug Organiser", two of us were nicked! A local ANL member and an 80-year-old Labour movement veteran have been charged with "distributing a writing, namely an anti-fascist leaflet, which was abusive or insulting, within the sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress."



## SOUTHAMPTON:

# ON MORSE'S CASE

Southampton Anti-Fascist Action was set up as a direct result of the rise in fascist activity in the south. We have been aware of sporadic incidents involving racists and we have been gathering information for some time. Recently, of course, the Jewish cemetery in Southampton was attacked by Fascists. This confirmed our belief that direct action was necessary.

Our attention has been focused on John Morse, who lives in Winchester and is employed by Hampshire Bus. Given that Morse is third in command in the BNP and editor of the "British Nationalist" we felt that Morse at least would seek to exploit racial tension in the area.

The first action, organised by AFA with the support of YRE and ANL, was a protest outside Morse's house. The police response was quick and excessive, but

**Secondly, the vengeance of the local establishment fell right on the head of an unfortunate Sikh, When Sohan Sanghera was done for possession of an offensive weapon (a cosh and a sheath knife), the magistrate told him: "You ... will be aware of the serious outbreak of violence that has taken place in this borough in recent months ... The time has come when this court can no longer tolerate this sort of behaviour. The seriousness we put upon this matter could even include a custodial sentence." So the victims of this "serious outbreak of violence" - Asians - were to blame, particularly if they dared to possess anything to defend themselves. Sohan, a worker at Fords Dagenham with four kids, was sent home to await the sentence. He hung himself three days later.**

Still the local establishment and the media skirted around the issue. They were, of course, very "sad" about Sohan's death but no-one tried to call the magistrate to account for his disgraceful remarks. It took an excellent full-page article in "The Independent" (4.9.93) headed, "One Safe Nazi; One Dead Sikh" to really stir up the hornets' nest.

Taken altogether, these two linked events tell us much about the attitude of the state to the fascists - "Of course they're a bit of a nuisance and we all abhor racism, but leave them alone

we managed to leaflet all of his neighbours and flyposted all of his windows before we were dispersed. AFA members were also responsible for distributing incriminating literature about Morse to various sources. Consequently, our campaigning has attracted widespread media coverage in the local press and on television. The response was extremely positive, with many people grateful that AFA had exposed the presence of a prominent fascist in the community.

In order to maintain pressure on Morse, the local AFA branch, in cooperation with other Anti-Fascist groups, organised a picket of his workplace. This time Morse was prepared and a contingent of fat boneheads from London came down to ensure the safety of the local Fuhrer.

Of course, we cannot be content with our limited success and more activity is planned. We will confront the fascists wherever and whenever they appear. Morse has gone on record as saying that he intends a recruitment drive in Southampton. Our message to Morse and the rest of the nazi filth is - "Go ahead John, make our day!"

**and they'll go away. The real enemies of our way of life are those who dare to challenge fascism, either through propaganda or preparation for self-defence." (God only knows what they'd have said if it had ever got as far as someone actually defending themselves.)**

**The two anti-fascists are up for trial at the end of September. They've already received wide support from local people and the Labour movement - for example, over 800 people, including Arthur Scargill and other national trade union leaders, signed our petition at the recent TUC Congress. The problem we now have with the petition, calling for all charges to be dropped, is that no-one will accept it! All anti-fascists have a duty to support this defence campaign - if criticising the police becomes a crime, we'll all be in a lot of trouble!**

## STOP PRESS:

**On thursday 30th september, charges against both of the anti-fascists were thrown out at Gravesend Magistrates court.**

**So ends another example of the harrassment carried out by the state against the militant anti-fascist movement....**

## BATH:

# Getting Ready to Clean Up

Bath AFA was successfully launched a couple of months ago. About forty people attended the launch meeting, thirty of which signed up and play an active role.

In Bath and Chippenham (Wiltshire), as in Bristol, there is an increasing number of Blood and Honour. During the recent showing of the film Romper Stomper forty boneheads attended a Sunday night showing simply walking under the ANL banner and pushing the picket aside. An evening of sporadic fighting and swastika waving ensued. They had come from all over the region.

The Bath and Chippenham B&H are closely linked, attending football (Bristol Rovers) at Twerton in Bath although there is no evidence of any paper sale. The Chippenham Gazette ran a letter from the Wiltshire BNP organiser, Edwin Bowyer - this is the first evidence of them in the county. Unfortunately no address was given.

## FROZEN OUT

The day after the BNP won their first By-election, an Anti-Fascist Action benefit was pulled by a major venue in the heart of London's black community.

Following phoned threats, believed to be from the self styled paramilitary group C18, The Fridge in Brixton said they "...couldn't afford to take sides..." Police advised them to cancel.

The Isle of Dogs By-election victory was a tremendous boost for the far right but things must be kept in perspective. If every band and venue caves in to fascist threats, we will have lost half the battle before it has begun. What is already apparent is that the capitulation of The Fridge will certainly encourage more of the same.

AFA has successfully put on numerous trouble-free gigs up and down the country, and is confident of its ability to continue to do so. Threats from fascists come with the territory.

We would urge those who patronise The Fridge and who understand that fascism must be fought rather than appeased, to register their disgust at this decision by voting with their feet, until management policy with regard to Anti-Fascist gigs/benefits is reversed.



# Fascism and

**The Trade Unions remain the main mass organisations of the working class. In this article, Len Holloway looks at the threat that fascism poses to the unions, and at the role that unions can play in the fight against the far right today.**

To understand the real nature of the threat that fascism represents to the trade unions, you have to start by looking at the class interests they defend. The far-right talk of a national revolution to rescue the country from capitalism and communism, they talk of defending the interests of the white worker, but the reality behind the slogans tells another story.

The fascists preach harmony between the classes. They say they want to replace class struggle with class co-operation. But whenever they have come to power, the first targets of their repression have been the organisations of the working class. Of course, revolutionary groups like the communists, the radical socialists and the anarchists find themselves in the front line of the attacks. But the fascists do not stop there: their aim has always been to crush any working class opposition, however mild, however limited.

Much to their surprise in many cases, the leaders of the reformist parties have also fallen under the axe. These leaders, like Labour's John Smith or Neil Kinnock, spend their lives making sure that working class anger doesn't get out of control and threaten the capitalist system

- but even their begging bowl politics has no place under fascist rule.

The picture is the same with the trade unions. The fascists do not distinguish between militant unions like the National Union of Mineworkers, and likes of the electricians' union (EETPU) who scabbed on the print workers at Wapping. All must be smashed. Even the most timid union remains an independent organisation of the working class, and this the fascists cannot tolerate.

Once the unions and the working class parties have been crushed, the fascists build cross-class unions in which the boss and the worker are both 'represented', with fascists at the top working out how best to 'harmonise' the two groups' demands in the national interest. Strikes are out, working conditions deteriorate and wages fall through the floor - while profits soar through the roof. Any dissenters are dispatched to the concentration camps as red subversives.

It is not for nothing that the veteran communist Georgi Dimitrov defined fascism as the open terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary sections of the capitalist class.

## **Trade Unions and the struggle against fascism.**

Fascism is a knife held at the throat of the unions. But how have unions responded to this threat? Do they fight? Or do they stand by hoping the problem will go away?

There is no simple answer to these questions. The truth is that sometimes the unions have fought back, but this has by no means been the case everywhere. In fact, there have been many occasions where the unions have done little more than pave the way for an eventual fascist victory. And worse still, there are many examples of where union leaders have gone over to the other side, seeking a role for themselves even under a fascist dictatorship (see inset).

It is important to start by distinguishing between different types of union. In this country, the union movement is very united. There is only one national trade union centre, the TUC, and although some unions have no party political links, most are still affiliated to the Labour Party. Indeed, it was the unions that created the Labour Party in the first place.

Elsewhere, the situation is very different. In most countries, political movements founded their own unions, with their own ideology and approach to defending workers interests. Thus in Italy, there are communist unions, social democratic union and catholic unions all with mass memberships. In Spain at the time of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) the biggest union was the anarcho-syndicalist CNT (National Confederation of Labour), while there were also socialist and communist unions.

The revolutionary and radical unions have a proud record of resistance to fascism. When the fascists launched their armed rebellion against the Spanish Republic in 1936, the unions responded immediately, and organised working class resistance. It was this workers uprising which robbed the coup leaders of an easy victory. And it was the unions which organised the militias which carried the brunt of the fighting in the early months of the civil war.

Although in Spain, the Socialist Party's unions took up arms against Franco, in other countries this was not always the case. In Germany, the Socialist Party's unions stood aside from the fight against the fascists for the most part - their leaders appeared to be more concerned with fighting the radical left than with fighting the fascists. Their symbols and their slogans reflected this. The Socialists' armed organisation, the Reichsbanner, made no secret of its commitment to

**In 1927, when the fascists were already in power in Italy, the reformist union leaders showed their true colours. The fascists were moving to get rid of any remaining pockets of resistance. Instead of putting up a fight, the right wing leaders dissolved their unions.**

**What was worse, some went so far as to claim there was even something progressive, something socialist, in what the fascists were doing. The most notorious names include Rigola and Caldera, leading members of the Socialist Party's union wing, and the people running their newspaper, *Problems of Labour*.**

**Caldera and Rigola argued that the fascists were implementing part of the socialist programme, and this should be supported. The same view was argued in the exile Socialist Party paper, *Avanti*.**

**This consent and collaboration by self-proclaimed socialists with open fascists should be seen as a warning and a lesson for all of us.**



# the Unions ★

crushing communism in order to defend 'democracy', ie capitalist democracy.

The truth is that union leaders have all too often felt their loyalties torn between opposing the fascists and continuing their normal role of mediating between the workers and their bosses. This is inevitable: the role of the moderate unions has always been to reach a compromise between the workers and their bosses, which inevitably means a compromise on the capitalists' terms.

With the right leaders, trade unions are a powerful weapon of class struggle, and can play a leading role in the fight against fascism and the system which produces it. But there is no guarantee of this. It is necessary to wage a struggle in order to turn the unions into organisations that can fight effectively. But to achieve this means to take the class struggle into the unions themselves in order to take the unions into the class struggle. And this is no easy task at the best of times.

## Trade Unions and Fascism in Britain.

Many argue, with some justification, that there is a proud history of trade union anti-fascism in Britain. In 1936, when the Labour Party leaders were calling for non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War, it is true that the TUC called for arms to be sent to the Republican side. It is true, also, that many trade unionists volunteered to go to Spain and fight with the International Brigades (IB), and that unions in some areas acted as recruitment organisers for the IB. This is especially true of the Miners Federation of Great Britain, fore-runner to the NUM.

It is also true that more recently unions have been swift to reject and condemn the 'support' that some fascist groups have offered in time of strikes. During the Miners Strike of 1984-85, Arthur Scargill told the National Front where to get off when they made overtures, as did the Printworkers at Wapping in 1985-86. In countless other examples of more localised disputes, unionists have responded in the same way.

But this is at best half the story. The unions were very slow, to say the least, to even begin to tackle the problems of racism, both in the workplace and in the unions themselves. Verbal commitment from the top to unity across racial lines

has not been matched by an actual commitment to building a militant fighting unity on the shop floor or in the communities. At times, this complacency has had serious consequences, most notably in the case of the Imperial Typewriters dispute in the 1970s (see inset over).

In fact, it would be more accurate to say that there is a proud tradition of militant anti-fascist trade unionists. At times, this militancy has been organised through the unions at national and regional level (for example the miners in the 1930s), but it has been far more common for the initiative to come from below or from local branches in which militant anti-fascists have been active.

Today, when the far right is once again on the rise, the trade union movement has given very strong support on paper to the Anti-Racist Alliance. This is significant. ARA is the least active, least militant, least effective organisation of all those professing to be fighting the fascists. It is the respectable wing of the anti-fascist movement, the wing least likely to actually make an impact on the fascists. It is no coincidence that a trade union movement which has retreated from confronting the law on industrial relations should opt to lend its support to an organisation which has done so much to undermine militant anti-fascism.

Trade unionists and trade union branches which have taken part in militant confrontations with the fascists have done so independently or in spite of the union hierarchy, and not because of it.

The question underlying all this is: what



kind of anti-fascism? Anti-Fascist Action has a twin-track strategy combining ideological and physical confrontation, which inevitably brings us in conflict not only with the fascists but with the state as well.

Trying to bring the unions into this struggle is an uphill battle. Most union branches are very inactive. Any support they give tends to be passive support - a donation here, a resolution there, maybe even a union banner and a couple of bodies on a peaceful demonstration. There is a place for all this, but it is a secondary one. ARA have built a strategy based on this passivity and paper support. But if unions are to really contribute to defeating the fascists, their support and their role must be active and combative. Financial support is important - it is even vital - but it is not enough.

Unions are workers organisations, and wherever workers come together the arguments for militant anti-fascism must be raised. AFA is committed to this, and



In 1974 there was a serious dispute at Imperial Typewriters in Leicester, in which white workers were pitched against Asian workers, with the bosses the only winners. There were 1650 manual workers at the factory at the time, 1100 of them Asian. Most were members of the T&G. But when workers took action against low pay and poor conditions, and in particular in response to the company having fiddled the bonus system, the T&G locally refused to make the strike official.

The Asian workers stood firm, but many white workers turned scab. The NF moved in quickly to exploit the racism of this sector of the white workers and the management alike. There were famous pictures at the time of scabs carrying banners with the slogan "White workers of Imperial Typewriters". The situation deteriorated to the point where senior T&G figures were sent in to calm things down. Their report condemned the local organisation of the union, in particular a ruling which prevented the Asian workers from electing their own shop steward.

The officials were able to patch things up on the surface, but the damage was done. When Imperial Typewriters' other company, Littons, decided to close down its British operations, the divided and demoralised workforce was too weak to respond - and workers, Asian and white alike, lost their jobs.

has spent a lot of time and resources addressing union meetings and conferences. The reality is, though, that it is very difficult indeed to generate an active response.

### Fascists in the Unions

At times, the fascists openly state their real opinions on trade unions. In 1977 John Tyndall, then head of the National Front and currently the British National Party's Fuhrer, made no bones about it: the sensible solution to mass pickets, he said, was "to equip the police with water cannon, tear gas and rubber bullets." In 1978 he put it even more blatantly. Discussing what the National Front would do with pickets, he said "when we take over the reins of government ... those mobsters will find themselves in police cells so quickly they won't know what hit them."

At other times, though, the fascists show rather more tactical sense. In the 1980s, the fascists criticised the way they had been overshadowed by the left during the miners strike, and drew some conclusions. The result was a new strand of propaganda aimed at white workers.

This "Left-Wing Nazism" has a long history. Within the German Nazi Party there was a wing which argued that white workers were a potential mass base for the fascists, particularly the unemployed sections. The leaders of this trend were two brothers, George and Otto Strasser, and indeed this strand of nazism is often referred to as "Strasserism". Perhaps less well known is that another leader of this wing of the Nazi Party was none other than Hitler's right hand man Goebbels, who wrote in his diary in 1926 that it is "terrible that we and the communists are bashing each others heads in." He had no such qualms about Nazis bashing communists heads in when in power, of course.

Strasserism is strong on anti-capitalist

rhetoric, and short on anti-capitalist answers. Hitler himself saw how useful they could be at a certain stage, and endorsed the Strasser brothers call for the setting up of a National Socialist Workplace Organisation (NSBO) to build support in working class districts. This did not stop him from slaughtering the Strasserite wing of his party when he got into power and started on the real task of smashing the working class.

The NSBO never succeeded in winning support amongst German workers - in the big cities its membership was never more than one per cent of the employed workers. The modern equivalents of this Strasserism may well be beginning to overcome this failure, though.

Today's British National Party aims itself openly at white workers in white working class areas, like Tower Hamlets. The success of their strategy, even at this early stage, is worrying: at the general election they polled 2,500 votes in Tower Hamlets; in September of this year they won a council bye-election in the Millwall ward on the Isle Of Dogs in the same Borough.

For some time now fascists have been entering unions, either to win positions or simply to lie low. The real aim remains to smash the unions, but for tactical reasons the fascists see the unions as areas in which they can recruit.

The record of official unions in dealing with fascist infiltration is very poor. The most common response is to turn a blind eye hoping the problem will go away, or to hide behind the facade of a legal straightjacket. But this is an area in which unions have a unique role to play in the fight against fascism.

In the 1980s, Malcolm Skeggs, a leading NF member was discovered to be working at Hither Green DHSS. Fellow workers responded with strike action. These are not the only tactics that can

be used to oust a nazi from the workplace, of course, but united action on this level is a powerful weapon.

Earlier, a known fascist, Paul Kingsley, was found to be in post as an administrative officer for the local government union NALGO in West Sussex. Searchlight's exposure led to his being sacked.

These individual cases are positive examples of what can be done. Currently, similar moves are being made against John Harrison, a League of St George member who is a security guard at Fords in Dagenham, and Kathy Murphy, a member of the Nazi Aryan Resistance Movement employed at the DSS in Coventry.

The Harrison case in particular throws up important issues, though. Not only has this Nazi been able to join the Transport and General Workers Union. To rub salt into the wound, he is a shop steward. That this is possible at all shows that there is a potential for fascists to give a lead to white workers under certain conditions. That the union should have allowed it to happen shows where official complacency can lead.

### Conclusion

The unions were created by the working class to defend its own interests. Today, their role is limited to defending workers rights within the framework of present day capitalist society. So long as they remain at this level, unions cannot offer a real and radical alternative. And it is precisely this failure to offer a positive solution to the crisis that creates the possibility for the fascists to make gains within the working class.

If unions are to play a positive role in the fight against fascism today, they need to transform themselves into fighting organisations that are able to defend the real interests of ordinary workers. Verbal anti-fascism is not enough.

Today, with right wing leaders firmly in place and with a reluctance to challenge even the trade union laws, there is little likelihood of a major shift in perspective at national level.

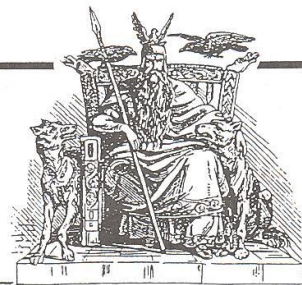
But those trade unionists who are trying to fight back and trying to revive an active union militancy are a different matter. Like in the 1930s, it is people like these who can be won over to militant anti-fascism. And it is people like these who can be won over to Anti-Fascist Action.



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# A VIEW FROM VALHALLA

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In this issue's VFV, our "warriors paradise" correspondent, Dan Woinsaker, reveals all about Blood and Honour's erstwhile treasurer, Neil 'expenses' Parrish, gives a "valhalla's eye view" of Romper Stomper, and ponders whether that job lot of second hand chariots was really a good deal after all...

After all their legal problems of recent times, Issue 15 of BLOOD and HONOUR has finally hit the streets. As we turn to the editorial page, we are given an apology for the delay but are assured that B & H is "Alive and kicking", or kicked, as is the case in many parts of the country. They go on to say that the only thing that will harm the movement is, "Dis-unity or lack of support and we see absolutely no sign of that." In the very next paragraph they mention they are going to relaunch B & H merchandise. It has become clear that Skrewdriver services and B & H merchandise has been shut down because, B & H No 2 and spokesman, Neil Parrish, was stealing the money being sent in for goods - "All (mail order) of that has come to an end due to one man's greed and betrayal. Neil Parrish alone was behind this disgusting rip-off." There is talk of Criminal Investigations. If so, it looks likely that Parrish will be joining his brother Paul behind bars. Paul was sent to jail for 27 months after the Buntingford attack. As you can see, there is no dis-unity or lack of support within the ranks of B & H.

If you were to believe the hype of the ANL, "Romper Stomper" was the 90's remake of "Birth of a Nation." The film, in fact, does not attempt to induce people to be sympathetic towards Neo-Nazi skinheads. The leading Vietnamese actor in the film even said about his character, "It was the first time I had a role where I could fight back against racists instead of being a passive victim." Every review of the film in fascist publications has been totally dismissive of it. In B & H they write, "These are not Blood and Honour Skinheads who live with high nationalist morals and standards." One of the only parts of the film they did like was the odd quote from Mein Kampf, "Which shone through this derogatory

film like a lone beacon of truth and light." B & H summed up their review, "In our point of view the only reason to have a film such as this is that it upset the Half-wits of the ANL." I myself was approached to boycott the film by two ANL supporters. When asked which scenes they found offensive, they both admitted they had not actually seen the film themselves. If the ANL are serious about trying to stop B & H, they should participate in events such as Waterloo. Even B & H noticed the absence of the ANL at Waterloo. In Issue 14, they awarded them "Divvies of the day", because they picketed a pub 15 miles from the venue and almost as far from Waterloo station.

Going back to B & H 15, they carried an advert for a "Rock Against Communism" concert on 31 July 1993. Unfortunately for B & H and the Red Lion pub in Heanor, Derbyshire, the "Plod" closed the whole Aryan Fest down before it even got started. At a substantial cost to both B & H and the Red Lion, four thousand pounds worth of beer had been ordered in anticipation of brisk trade as the pub had agreed to be the redirection point for the gig. The Red Lion should take note that AFA takes a very keen interest in businesses that court fascist trade.

In Issue 7 of "Hail", a Leeds based skinzine, there are interviews with two

fascist bands, "Hobnail" and "Black Out". I'll start with the Stoke - on - Trent based "Hobnail" questioned about their political stance, "We are a far right-wing political band who play for white power and white unity only." They talk of playing but, since their formation in October 89, they have not managed to play a single gig. They have even received the ultimate insult of having a record deal turned down by Rebelles Europeens, because of bad musicianship, which takes some doing, judging by some of the pathetic efforts released by this label over the years. "Black Out" who come from the Merthyr area in South Wales seem to be confused over their musical influences, "Skrewdriver, Brutal Attack, Skullhead, Dead Kennedys....." Obviously they have not heard of the classic Dead Kennedy song, "Nazi punks. Fuck off." Also carried in "Hail", is an environmental article entitled, "Why must patriotic youth aspire to protect our Environmental, Moral Values and National Characteristics?", written by ageing green fascist Magnus Wagegg. As is usual, all he has done is take a Greenpeace leaflet and twist it to his own warped thinking..

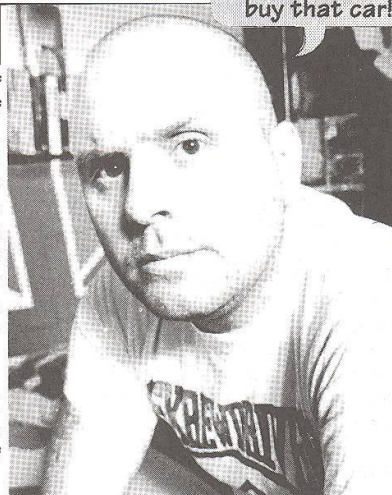
All of you who were waiting for the last issue of Chris Hipkin's "British Oi" are to be disappointed as it has folded. Thanks to people who have sent stuff in. Anything of the slightest interest please send it in.

Think before you buy that car!!

## STOP PRESS:

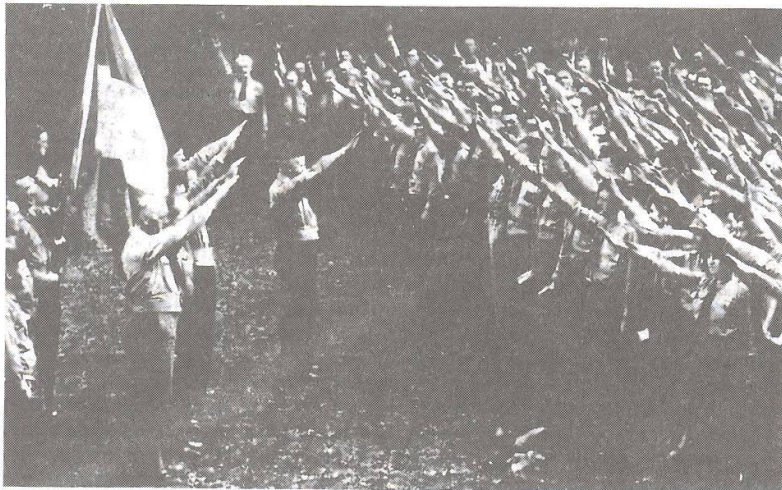
Ian Stuart Donaldson, founder of Blood and Honour, lead singer of Skrewdriver, and notorious bottle-job, died in a car crash on Friday 24th September 1993. We hope this will be a major setback to fascists everywhere. While Ian would have preferred to die in battle on his white charger, we are unable to confirm whether dying in mortal combat with a steering wheel qualifies for admission to Valhalla.

What with Violent Storm last year and now Skrewdriver, we think the time is now right to reveal the existence of "The Mechanic".





# THE BLUESHIRTS



*O'Duffy takes the salute at the Blueshirt Congress, August 1934.*

## BACKGROUND

The Blueshirts, Ireland's home grown variant of Fascism developed in Ireland during the 1920's and 30's. The bitterness created by the betrayal of the principles of Republicanism in 1920 led to the Civil War during which the Bourgeois forces allied themselves with the defeated British to ensure the dominance of anti-republican and anti-socialist forces in the emerging neo-colonial Irish state.

During the 1920's the Cumann Na nGael party, which had won the Civil War, were in power for 10 years. In government they implemented draconian anti-working class and anti-republican policies. The reality of life in the Irish Free State was one of grinding poverty, slum housing and emigration. The world economic crisis of the 1930's was an important aspect of the rise of Fascism throughout Europe and this was also the case in Ireland.

Opposition to Cumann Na nGael came from the diverse forces of the Republicans divided on the question of policy and tactics after their defeat in the Civil War. The main Republican grouping was centred around Eamonn de Valera who set up a constitutional Republican party, Fianna Fail, to challenge Cumann Na nGael for power in parliamentary elections. It gained significant support between 1927 and 1932 when it defeated Cumann Na nGael in the general election. The left

wing of the IRA, grouped around leaders such as Frank Ryan and George Gilmore, argued that the Republican movement should adopt a more radical stance on social issues to win the support of the working class and small farmers away from Fianna Fail. Ryan and his supporters were routinely denounced as communists.

The run up to the 1932 election was marked by increasing repression of Republican and Socialist groups with the indiscriminate banning of progressive political organisations and the regular imprisonment of their leaders. The General Election campaign itself was characterised by the Chief of Police, Eoin O'Duffy, touring Bishop's palaces with Special Branch files which, he claimed, proved the rapid spread of communism in Ireland. The Bishops obliged by issuing pastoral letters denouncing this non-existent threat.

Despite this clamp-down on dissent, Cumann Na nGael still failed to win the election and this defeat marked a serious setback for Irish conservatism and was the backdrop to the rise of the Blueshirts. Having been defeated in the democratic field they turned to extra-parliamentary means to regain power. Cumann Na nGael launched a reactionary campaign to portray Fianna Fail as an extreme organisation supported by communists, republicans and atheists.

**'While we have fists and hands and boots to use and guns, if necessary, we will not allow free speech to Traitors' (Frank Ryan)**

The Blueshirts had been set up in the spring of 1931 under the name of the Army Comrades Association comprising ex members of the Free State army. Their first leader was Dr. T F O'Higgins. In late 1931 the ACA claimed a membership of 100,000, adopted the uniform of a blue shirt and changed its name to the National Guard. A new leader, Eoin O'Duffy, was appointed in 1933 after he had been sacked from his post as Police Commissioner. O'Duffy had been prominent in the Free State army during the Civil War and had been responsible for the murder of 8 Republicans by tying them together over a landmine in Kerry. The Blueshirts used the handy label of "anti-communism" as a cloak for their fascist activities. This excuse was used to justify the breaking up of republican and socialist meetings. James Hogan claimed that: "It was the growing menace of the Communist IRA that called forth the Blueshirts as Communist Anarchy called forth the Blackshirts in Italy". The movement went through many name changes over a period of five years but were generally known as "The Blueshirts". The organisation confined its membership to those of the Christian faith.

The policy of the Blueshirt movement included the demand for the creation of an Irish Corporate state. While O'Duffy and other military figures were the public face of the movement its ideologists included ex-government ministers and college professors. One of these was Prof. James Hogan who wrote a paranoid tract entitled "Could Ireland Become Communist?". The famous poet WB Yeats composed a marching song for the Blueshirts. The Blueshirt newspaper commenced publication from August 1933. Blueshirt propaganda was racist and anti-semitic, as in this extract from their journal: "The founders of Communism were practically all Jews. This can scarcely be a mere coincidence. It may appear singular that Marx, Engels, Lasalle and Ricardo were all Jews".

Blueshirt publications also proposed that the leader should be greeted in the Nazi style, suggesting the ludicrous "Hail O'Duffy". In February 1934 John A



Costello, a leading Cumann Na nGael member declared in the Dail:

"The Blackshirts have been victorious in Italy and Hitler's Brownshirts have been victorious in Germany, as assuredly the Blueshirts will be victorious in Ireland".

O'Duffy had contacts with European fascist groups. In December 1934 he attended an International Fascist Conference in Switzerland which included representatives of far right groups in 13 European states.

At this stage Fascism was firmly established in Italy and Salazar had come to power in Portugal. Germany had embarked on the Nazi nightmare. The far right had made strong headway also in Eastern Europe and the Franco coup d'etat in Spain was only two years away. To themselves and to others the Blueshirts seemed to be on the crest of a wave that would sweep fascist regimes into power throughout Europe. Although the Blueshirts had, to a large degree, grown out of a specifically Irish situation they shared a lot of the features with fascist movements abroad. These included anti-semitism, anti-communism, hatred of democracy, indoctrination of children in youth wings, the uniform of a shirt (the blue came from the traditional colour of St. Patrick), the ideology of the corporate state, violent attacks on opponents and stupidity.

The main force of the Blueshirts was drawn from the conservative class of big farmers but the organisation also mobilised low life elements of the working class, particularly in Dublin, as a street mob to attack "communist" meetings. This group of thugs were known as the "Animal Gang".

O'Duffy proposed a huge march of Blueshirts in Dublin in August 1933 to commemorate the deaths of Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith, two Free State leaders. It was not difficult to discover O'Duffy's motivation for this suggestion. He was attempting to recreate, in an Irish setting, Mussolini's March on Rome.

De Valera invoked a Public Safety Act to ban the march. Huge contingents of police were drafted into Dublin to enforce the order. Armed IRA volunteers, unsanctioned by their leadership, were prepared to physically stop the Blueshirts from marching. O'Duffy drew back from the confrontation and cancelled the parade. From this period on the Blueshirts went into terminal decline. This was partly because O'Duffy had failed to live up to his rhetoric but also because the promised Communist takeover did not emerge.

On the political front the politicians who

were sympathetic towards, or openly supportive of the Blueshirts, realised that there was not going to be a fascist coup d'etat in Ireland and that they would have to revert to parliamentary tactics to regain power. The Cumann Na nGael party amalgamated with the Blueshirts and a number of smaller groups to form the Fine Gael (United Ireland) party in 1933. O'Duffy was its first president but became an embarrassment to the organisation and was soon ousted to make way for more moderate leadership.

The youth wing of Fine Gael, the "Young Ireland Association" continued the militaristic tradition of the Blueshirts. This faction was banned in December 1933 and reappeared as the "League of Youth". The Blueshirts did not lose faith in the idea of a coup d'etat although they were always on the decline after O'Duffy's failure to confront the ban on the Dublin march. This has been portrayed by liberal historians as being the result of the failure of the Blueshirts to win power in the political sphere. The strong working class and left opposition to fascism in Ireland is pointed out by Michael O'Riordan in his book "Connolly Column": "The fascist threat was not demolished by the De Valera government. This was done by a powerful anti-blueshirt movement that developed in the streets and in the countryside. A fighting united front met them everywhere....This front drove them off the streets after many violent encounters."

The anti-fascist united front was composed of Republicans, Trade Unionists, Communists and small farmers. It was led by Frank Ryan, Tom Barry, Peadar O'Donnell, Sean Murray and George Gilmore. O'Donnell and Ryan issued a call for a united front to fight fascism and imperialism: "The dangers that face this and every other country from Capitalism, Fascism, International War and Imperialism are too real and too serious for us to remain parties to artificial divisions within working class ranks. We call for a truce among all who stand for an Irish Workers Republic and a united front against the common enemy".

The Labour party refused to participate in the united front. The official Trade

Union movement passed policy against fascism but did little to implement it. "An Phoblact", edited by Frank Ryan, condemned the failure of the trade unions and called for mass mobilisation of the working class to defeat the Blueshirts.

The leadership of the mainstream of the IRA discouraged the involvement of volunteers in the struggle against fascism. It denounced street battles against fascism as "aggravated faction fights", and boasted that only six of several hundred anti fascist prisoners were IRA men. The Army Council argued that the campaign against the Blueshirts was hysteria whipped up by the Fianna Fail "Irish Press". The right wing of the IRA saw the main fight not as the advancement of the working class or the defeat of fascism but instead hoped for the re-commencement of the Civil War.

**"O'Duffy was struck on the head with a hammer on his way to address a meeting and over 100 Fine Gael supporters were besieged in a hall by a stone throwing crowd outside. O'Duffy's car was burnt and he had to have a Garda escort as far as the county border. An unexploded bomb was found at the rear of the hall the following day".**

In 1933 a mob incited by catholic reactionaries attacked and burned Connolly House, the headquarters of the Irish Revolutionary Workers and Small Farmers Groups. Members of the IRA who were present defended the building but were disciplined by the organisation for doing so.

The organisation of the battle against the Blueshirts was carried out by the left wing rank and file of the IRA, the tiny Communist Party of Ireland and a number of radical trade unionists. Urban workers and rural small farmers were mobilised to physically break up Blueshirt meetings and rallies throughout the country. The police and the army were used to break up anti-fascist protests and on many occasions the demonstrators had to face bullets, baton charges and bayonets as well as the Blueshirts themselves. The full force of the Public Safety Act was invoked against anti-fascists and more of these were jailed than were Blueshirts. In his book "The Irish Republican Congress" George Gilmore reports on a fascist meeting in Co. Mayo: "Blueshirts were driven in military lorries to a rally in Swinford to be





*Blueshirts arriving at the Mansion House, Dublin for the 1934 conference.*

addressed by O'Duffy....many of them were escorted home without any shirts".

In another incident in Tralee, Co. Kerry: "O'Duffy was struck on the head with a hammer on his way to address a meeting and over 100 Fine Gael supporters were besieged in a hall by a stone throwing crowd outside. O'Duffy's car was burnt and he had to have a Garda escort as far as the county border. An unexploded bomb was found at the rear of the hall the following day".

The Republican Congress was founded in 1934 to organise a broad front campaign against fascism, imperialism and British occupation on the basis of the mobilisation of the progressive elements of the Irish people towards the establishment of the Worker's Republic. The Republican Congress received its greatest publicity and historical recognition as a fighting anti-fascist group.

After the defeat of the Blueshirts Fianna Fail brought the full force of repressive legislation down on the IRA and the Republican Congress, banning both organisations in 1936.

In 1936 O'Duffy resurrected the Blueshirts into a 700 strong Irish Brigade to fight for Franco in Spain. O'Duffy had the open backing of the Catholic church in this venture as evidenced by the statement of the Dean of Cashel:

"The Irish Brigade have gone to fight the battle of Christianity against Communism. There are tremendous difficulties facing the men under O'Duffy and only heroes can fight such a battle".

The media was strongly pro-Franco. The Irish Independent declared:

"All who stand for the ancient traditions of Spain are behind the present revolt against the Marxist regime in Madrid".

There had been strong links between Irish Republicans and the Basque people of Euskadi who were strongly anti-fascist. The Basque priest Fr. Ramon La Borda spoke at meetings in Ireland refuting the pro-Franco propaganda of the Catholic Church. The suppression of the Basque and Catalan nations, the murder of workers and the destruction of democracy in Spain was not only condoned but actively supported by the Catholic Church in Ireland.

The Blueshirt organisation ended soon after their farcical intervention in the Spanish Civil War. O'Duffy's group joined the Tercio, Franco's Foreign Legion. In their first military engagement they shot at their own side. There were regular threats of mutiny among the Blueshirt Brigade and on one occasion O'Duffy had to review his army without guns for fear that they would shoot him. O'Duffy wrote a highly amusing account of the Spanish fiasco under the title "Crusade In Spain". The demoralised Blueshirts voted to return home after only a few months of the fight for Christianity. Brendan Behan quipped that they were the only army in history to return from war with more soldiers than they left with. Despite their pathetic performance the returning "heroes" received a civic reception in Dublin. After his disastrous intervention in the Spanish Civil War O'Duffy offered to recruit Irish volunteers to fight for Hitler in Europe but the Nazis showed no interest in his suggestion.

The Republican Congress activists of the anti-fascist struggle in Ireland supported the Spanish Republic during the Civil War. 300 volunteers, under the command of Frank Ryan, went to fight in the 15th International Brigade. Fifty nine of the best socialists and republicans in Ireland gave their lives fighting for democracy and freedom in Spain.

"Fascism is the biggest invisible presence on Planet Rock 1993... So go on then, AFA and ARA (!), end the phoney war; terminate Britain's last 200 or so nazi skins."

(Simon Price, Melody Maker, 4/9/93)

Two weeks later the BNP won their first ever bye-election.





## FILM REVIEW:

# ROMPER STOMPER

Although the Australian film *Romper Stomper*, and the controversy surrounding it, may seem now like an old issue, many people are yet to see it. This is partly due to the fact that the Anti-Nazi League mounted a campaign of pickets outside, against the screening of the film.

If the film was an openly fascist propaganda movie, then AFA would have agreed that the film should not be shown on the basis of not giving the fascists a platform. The fact is it isn't. It's the usual knee-jerk reaction we have come to expect from the ANL, the vast majority of whom it seems, haven't even seen it themselves.

Norwich AFA, when they heard the film was coming to their local cinema, decided on a slightly more inspired course of action. The idea was to use the film to promote AFA, by getting the cinema to show "Fighting Talk", a half-hour video made by AFA for the BBC2 Open Space programme, before each screening of the main feature. As well as this the AFA exhibition was to go in the foyer, and speakers were lined up for certain viewing times.

What followed isn't so outrageous, because it's so predictable. Up come the ANL, with the foreknowledge of Norwich AFA's plans, and threaten the cinema with the lollipop treatment if they show the film. What's bloody ridiculous is the cinema actually caved in to such 'terror'. Did somebody say unity?

Unfortunately, Norwich didn't have time to reverse the decision back before the showing was cancelled, but apparently negotiations are now under way to sort the situation out for the future.

Below we've printed an in depth review culled from the Oxford AFA bulletin, which provides the reader with an insight into the film and the issues surrounding it. Like we've said, seeing so many people are yet to see the film, a review still has relevance even though it's been out for ages!

Back in the spring the Australian film "Romper Stomper", which had been advertised as a "coming attraction", was pulled from the Phoenix Cinema in Walton St. Oxford. The management of the cinema explained that although, personally, they had no problems with the film, fear of reprisals by anti-fascists had persuaded them to cancel it. The "Anti-fascists" concerned were of course the Anti-Nazi League who have called for pickets and lollipop patrols outside all cinemas which show the "vile film".

The ANL had started campaigning against *Romper Stomper* before it had even been released in this country. Not one member of the Oxford branch of the ANL, who were planning to protest against the film had actually seen it and I would guess the same applies nationally. As one local ANL member put it, "if the ANL Central Committee (or steering committee as they are now called) deem the film to be nazi propaganda, then we must accept their word for it and act accordingly". This is a perfect example of the lack of autonomy and intelligence encouraged in a centralised organisation.

The award-winning film explores the world of a gang of fascist skins in contemporary Australia. The gang is led by Hando (Russell Crow) who exercises almost complete control over the others. He is obsessed with Hitler's Germany and ideas of white supremacy. He sees the Vietnamese (and the government that 'let them in') as the enemy and leads the gang to commit violent racist attacks.

In fact the film opens with one such attack upon a group of Vietnamese children. The violence is indeed repulsive and all the more real for this reason. These acts of brutality and the cowardice shown by the fascists leave you with no illusions about the film maker having any sympathy for them. The film does lose it a bit as a dissection of neo-nazism when a love triangle develops halfway through and the ending is weak, but I still found it compelling.

The film has been criticised for failing to centre on any of the Vietnamese characters, therefore depriving us of any intimacy with them. This is a valid point but the film sets out to explore the fascist

skins lifestyle. There have also been criticisms that the fascists will be inspired by watching it (Hando likes to round off a good sex session by reading aloud from *Mein Kampf*). There is also a pitiful Oi! soundtrack (more of a skinhead *Spinal Tap*). If this film inspires individual fascists, and I'm sure that some fuck-wits will be inspired, then they are past the point of no return!

So, why has the film been so differently received by the ANL and AFA? In *Romper Stomper* the Vietnamese win the day. They do this by deploying the only thing the fascists understand and fear, physical confrontation. When the Vietnamese strike, they don't fuck about - this is no vanguard doing it for the people but the people doing it themselves, fighting back. The reactions of the fascists in this film mirrors real life: they don't know what to do with themselves; they are transformed into blubbing fools; they piss themselves and rue the day that they ever got involved with each other.

This situation will be familiar to many AFA members. We stand by the tactics of physical direct action as well as ideological confrontation, not because we are macho as is often claimed by our opponents, but because history - and our own experience - show this to be effective. The ANL leadership is opposed to physical confrontation which has led to the disgusting situation of new recruits being exposed to fascist tactics because their 'leaders' misguide them into believing that strong argument and a lollipop will deter fascist storm-troopers from kicking the shit out of them. This situation of 'the leaders' playing general with a (mainly) well intentioned membership is another example of the centralised and undemocratic politics of the ANL.





# FIGHTING TALK **BACK**

## GROPING IN THE DARK

Comrades,

There has been an increasing trend in certain AFA groups for isolationism. This is stupid, sectarian, and is hindering the building of AFA as a united anti-fascist organisation.

If AFA refuses to work with other anti-fascist groups, it is guilty of putting ideology over a dedication to effective anti-fascism, and reverting to the failed neo-Stalinist policies of past eras. "They who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

"Agree with us on everything, or we won't help on anything". That kind of attitude only makes the split grow wider. It is the fascists who gain comfort if the anti-fascist groups fight against themselves: the average person in the street is just pissed off and will end up either in a group prepared to work with others, or will become so disillusioned with politicians playing their little games with anti-fascism as a gameboard that they will join no-one and will be lost to the anti-fascist movement as a whole.

All true anti-fascist should support the unity demo on October 16th. It is likely to be the biggest British anti-fascist demo in the past ten years and an ideal way for AFA to put across our own politics. Anyone who does not support this demo (no matter what group they are in) is more devoted to petty party politics than effectively fighting fascism and has no place in a united front.

Yours for unity

A Birmingham Anti-Fascist

### FIGHTING TALK REPLIES:

*The writer states that AFA's approach to unity can be summed up as "agree with us on everything, or we won't help on anything." This is patent nonsense. Our position is a clear one: we say that it is impossible to fight fascism except through a twin-track strategy of ideological and physical confrontation. We see no point in giving our support to a paper unity which does not recognise this simple fact of life. AFA has never stood aside from those who are seriously set on implementing an effective policy of no platform for the fascists, nor shall we. But we will never lend our name to a fake unity which can achieve nothing.*

*As to the specific question of the October 16th demo, it is true that it will in all likelihood be a substantial demonstration, but it would be foolish to commit ourselves in advance to any course of action, especially when it is not known what the fascists plans are for the day. The comrade would do well to recall the events leading up to the famous Battle of Cable Street in 1936. The Communist Party had planned a massive demonstration in central London for that day: a far bigger demonstration than either of the two national demonstrations called for October 16 are likely to be. The plans for this demonstration had to be called off precisely because the fascists decided to use the opportunity to march in the East End.*

*Unity, yes, but unity that actually makes a difference. These issues are dealt with in greater detail elsewhere. in this issue of Fighting Talk.*

## GLORY DAYS RETURN TO THE BRIDGE

To whom it may concern,

Saw your posters at the Man United game (11/9/93), and I am very keen to know if you are able to supply me with a few posters and stickers. Also I'd like to know if you have done any T-shirts and, if available, their prices. This would be a great way of spreading the message at The Bridge, especially as over the last few weeks I have seen other "fans" displaying Chelsea Headhunters T-shirts.

The logo you are using is great and it would be nice to see Chelsea fans, especially with our reputation, joining other British and European clubs condemning fascism, not just in football but in society. The recent BNP activity in Brick Lane serves only to highlight this.

A lot of people know of the efforts across Europe of FC St Pauli, mainly through their large campaign of awareness, so look forward to hearing from you and helping in our own area.

A Chelsea Fan.



*FT: This was one of a number of letters we received from Chelsea supporters. The stickers and posters are getting results in a variety of ways (was that really Charlie Sargent ripping down Chelsea Anti-Fascist posters outside Stamford Bridge after the United Game?). More importantly the group of Chelsea supporters who turned up at the Reading pre-season friendly wearing the stickers really seemed to cause a stir. Keep up the good work lads!*

*For too long the fascists have been allowed to organise at football unopposed, and we are pleased to see groups of anti-fascist football supporters getting organised at grounds around the country. It goes without saying that where there are fascists there must be anti-fascists.*

*We would like to hear from any football supporters who are organising at their club, and we welcome any information on what the fascists are doing at football.*



## Greetings from Göttingen

Dear Comrades from AFA,

1993 is the third anniversary of the so called "reunification", for us no reason to party. The dire consequences are increasing nationalism and rising fascism. Fascist attacks against refugees and leftists are a normal state after the swing to the right in the new "greater Germany". That's why we gonna march the evening before that national celebration. This is an invitation to join us, anti-fascist solidarity knows no boundaries!

It's also the third time we organize this antifascist event on the 2nd of October and we're expecting about 2000 people to turn up and join in the demo. Over the whole day there will be agit-prop happenings in the town centre of

Göttingen. During the agit-prop actions we will show a massive "pyramid of power and oppression" together with 5 coffins were we gonna "bury" capitalism, nationalism, militarism, religion and patriarchy. All this will be explained on leaflets and by speakers to the public. In the evening will be the demo, led by militant antifascists.

This is our day, for any possible provocations and resulting escalations bears the police the full responsibility. This is our day and we gonna march. The demo was planned and is supported by numerous local groups. The press is informed, because one of our aims

is to show, that there is resistance against the "new Germany". Comrades, we hope for your support and looking forward to welcome a delegation from your organisation/group on the 2nd of October in Göttingen. See you soon, international antifascist solidarity!

Autonome Antifa (M), Sept. '93

*FT: Full report in the next issue.*



## OVER THE HILL AND FAR AWAY

Dear Fighting Talk,

In the September 1993 issue of Searchlight magazine, Ray Hill claimed that "...It comes as no surprise to see the same old racist thugs hanging around again outside grounds like Rangers, Hibernian, Leeds, Portsmouth, Shrewsbury and Mansfield." Whilst I can't comment on the accuracy of Hill's allegations about the other clubs - except to confirm that the BNP are selling papers at Rangers again - I can state categorically that Hill is way off the mark to suggest that the fascists have been anywhere near Hibernian's Easter Road ground. Whilst it is true that some Hibs fans were influenced by Nazi groups in the past, most "Hibeers" nowadays want nothing to do with the fascists. The BNP's pro-loyalist stance has destroyed any hopes that they might have had of recruiting from supporters of clubs like Hibs and Celtic. At the recent derby game between Hibs and Hearts, both sets of supporters were leafleted about racism on the terraces by the Supporters Campaign Against Racism (SCARF) assisted by members of Edinburgh AFA. The leaflet was jointly written by a Hearts fan and a Hibs Casual.

Instead of printing misinformed and potentially damaging statements, it would be wise for Ray Hill and Searchlight to check their facts with anti-fascists on the ground for the real facts about fascism on the terraces in Scotland.

By an anti-fascist Hibeer.

## Essex and proud of it

Dear Fighting Talk,

Firstly I would like to say I admire your magazine and the work your organisation does. However, one slight moan. I noticed on the letters page a reference to "Essexmen". This kind of stereotyped, bigotted, ignorant remark made by someone who doesn't live in our working class communities is totally out of order.

Us Essex working class people get enough abuse from the big papers and tabloids without taking it off other working class people. I wouldn't expect you to put anti-semitic, anti-black or anti-asian abuse in your magazine and I don't

## WARNING

To all anti-fascists,

On 29th June 1992, 3 AFA members were arrested in Dewsbury during protests against a BNP/Holocaust revisionist rally in the town. AFA later learnt that the Campaign Against Fascism in Europe (CAFE) had been handing out leaflets requesting that donations towards the defendants costs and fines should be sent to the CAFE PO Box.

CAFE never sought permission to do this from the defendants or from Manchester AFA, who the defendants had appointed to deal with the defence campaign. CAFE continued to collect money in the name of the defendants, despite requests from both AFA and the defendants themselves that they desist.

expect to read anti-Essex working class abuse.

Yours in solidarity,

F.K. (Essex working class and proud of it)  
Essex Community Resistance Network  
c/o PO Box 212, Ilford Essex IG3 8TY

PS - Can you send info about how we can affiliate to AFA

*FT: A fair point in a lot of ways, all we'd draw your attention to is that the text referred to was a letter, and as such not necessarily an expression of the views of the editorial board of Fighting Talk.*

CAFE later claimed that Leeds AFA had given them permission to collect money, which is a lie. Worse than this, more than 16 months after the arrests, CAFE has not sent a single penny towards the 400 pound accrued in fines and expenses.

We demand to know from CAFE whether they received any money in donations to the Dewsbury defendants appeal, and if so how much. We further demand that they reveal what was done with any money they received.

CAFE is itself an irrelevancy to the fight against fascism, but this case needs to be cleared up. Until the matter is settled, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that CAFE has taken the money for itself - which is nothing less than theft from other anti-fascists.

Manchester AFA



# ANTI FASCIST ACTION IN THE AREA

AFA BM Box 1734 WCIN 3XX

KENT ANTI-FASCIST ACTION  
COMMITTEE

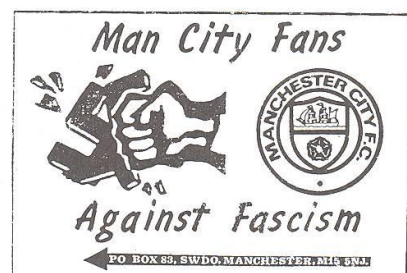
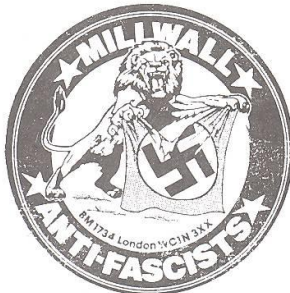
FIGHT RACISM

SMASH FASCISM

KAFAC, PO BOX 88, ROCHESTER, KENT ME1



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## Join AFA

In the fight against fascism in Britain, Anti-Fascist Action has a record that is second to none. Our unique combination of physical confrontation and ideological struggle has produced results time and again.

We say no platform for the fascists - no meetings, no marches, no paper sales, no leafletting - and we mean it, as the fascists know only too well. Our aim is to cause the maximum disruption to fascist activities.

But that doesn't mean that AFA only needs street-fighters. Far from it. Everyone has a role to play in AFA, whether they feel confident in physical confrontations or not.

None of our successes in physically confronting the fascists would have been possible without the contribution of non-combatants. From legal observers to scouts, from leafleters to people who can write articles or speak at meetings, AFA needs people with a whole range of skills if it is to continue to succeed.

There's a lot to do, so don't wait around. Join today.

Contact you local group for affiliation rates and activities.

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 PO Box 426, Bath, Avon

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 c/o Manchester AFA

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**ANTI-FASCIST ACTION**

**WANTED**

**INFORMATION ON  
FASCIST (BNP-NF)  
ACTIVITY IN  
YOUR AREA**



**WRITE TO**

**BM 1734, LONDON WC1N 3XX.**

**ALL INFORMATION TREATED IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE**