



**FIGHTING
TALK**

★ *SPECIAL* ★

**SPANISH CIVIL WAR &
BATTLE OF CABLE STREET
COMMEMORATION**

Programme of Events 4th - 5th Oct 1996 £1



INTRODUCTION

Anti-Fascist Action is proud to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street and the Spanish Civil War, and although the outcome of these events was very different, they both share one thing in common...the necessity of militant opposition to fascism.

At Cable St. over a quarter of a million people blocked the route of Mosley's march, and although some fascists were attacked on their way to their assembly point, the 'battle' only really started when the police were sent in to clear a path for the fascists. The police were fought with as much determination as the fascists would have been, and Mosley was unable to march through the East End. An undoubted victory and probably the turning point in the struggle against fascism in Britain in the 1930's.

For AFA the lesson is simple. The government wouldn't stop the fascists, the police assisted them, and anti-fascists had to stop them themselves. This wasn't a peaceful protest and there wasn't a 'lollipop' in sight, but it worked. Within those hundreds of thousands of anti-fascists who turned out there were tightly knit groups of activists "the hard-core of what we called experienced people", as one veteran described them, "if there was a weakness anywhere they could whistle-up twenty of the heavy mob".

In Spain the struggle was more intense and the fascist forces had to be met with military opposition. The fascist dictatorships of Germany and Italy openly aided Franco with troops and arms, while the capitalist 'democracies' refused to support the anti-fascists. Once again anti-fascist resistance was left to working-class militants, and we salute the courage and commitment of the men and women who joined the International Brigades to support the fight against Franco. The war was lost, but the resistance continued, and it is a sad fact that the post-war Resistance is not honoured in the same way as the International Brigades.

In both cases the state was part of the problem, not the solution, and militant resistance the only way to win. The fact that the Spanish struggle was lost takes nothing away from the key points that anti-fascists today must remember.

The final point to make in this introduction is that we are commemorating the bravery of people who literally fought the fascists. There are many on the Left of British politics today who lay claim to the traditions of 1936 while pursuing a pacifist or pro-state agenda. It is complete hypocrisy to praise the anti-fascist resistance of 60 years ago and yet condemn the often illegal or violent actions of militant anti-fascists today.

Anti-Fascist Action represents the continuation of the militant anti-fascist tradition.

Join Us !

Acknowledgments

Anti-Fascist Action would like to thank the following:

Roddy, Olaf and the boys; Charles at the Rio cinema; and the Camden Irish Centre.

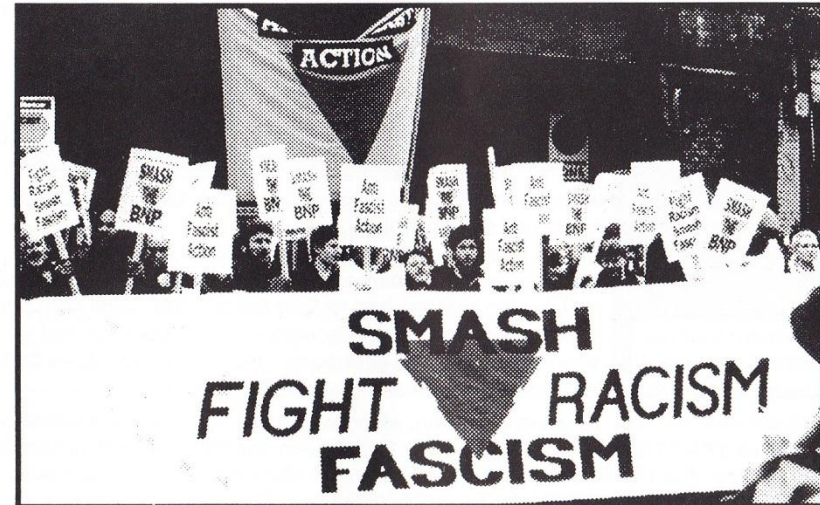
Special thanks to the following who all donated raffle prizes for the social;

Centreprise Bookshop, Kingsland Rd, Dalston; **Housmans Bookshop**, Caledonian Road, Kings Cross; and **Green Ink Bookshop**, (specialists in Irish books), 8, Archway Mall, N19.

RALLY



Militant Anti-Fascism The Tradition Lives On



**International Brigade ★ Cable St. Veterans
62 Group ★ Anti-Fascist Action**

Friday ^{4th} ~~5th~~ October 1996 Camden Irish Centre
Followed by Social (with late bar), stalls and videos.

Time: 7.30pm Price: Admission Free.

THE VENUES...how to get there

Camden Irish Centre

52 Camden Square, London NW1
BY TUBE: Camden Town (Northern Line)

BY RAIL: Camden Road station
(North London Line)

BY BUS: 253, 29.

Rio Cinema

103 Kingsland High St., London E8
BY RAIL: Dalston / Kingsland BR station
(North London Line).

BY BUS: Nos. 67, 76, 149, 243, 236
BY TUBE: Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line) then BR North London Line to Dalston Kingsland.

★ THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

During the decade preceding the outbreak of WW2, the world witnessed the vicious onslaught of fascism. In Italy fascism was becoming firmly entrenched in society following Mussolini's victory in 1922. In 1933 Hitler triumphed in Germany, crushing all workers organisations in his path, in England Mosley's blackshirts were terrorising Jewish communities and in Ireland the Blueshirts were doing the same.

In 1936 Francisco Franco led a military coup against the liberal government and seemed set to establish a fascist dictatorship. He was ably assisted by the fascist governments of Germany and Italy who sent tanks, aircraft, arms, ammunition, troops and aircrew who participated in some of the worst atrocities of the war including the aerial bombing of civilians in the town of Guernica. Their intervention ensured a victory for Franco.

The Western 'Democracies' of Britain and France on the other hand refused to send arms to the Republican Govt. and though some were received from the USSR this meant that they directly undermined the Spanish people who were forced to stand virtually alone against the combined forces of European fascism.

As the working class of Spain organised themselves and fought back courageously, they were not, however, entirely deserted. They were assisted by anti-fascists from all over the world, who became known as the International Brigades; the volunteers, comprised mostly of the working class, came from 52 different countries. Over 2,100 men and women volunteers left these shores to fight in the International Brigades; many were wounded and maimed - 526 were killed.

The balance of forces, however, proved to be stacked too greatly in Franco's favour and in March 1939 the fascists finally triumphed. It has been estimated that up to 200,000 were executed by the fascists after the war but despite the terror, clandestine resistance continued throughout the decades of Franco's reign.

The rest, as they say, is history as Hitler's Nazi armies invaded Poland and plunged Europe and the world, into a bloody war that would cause the deaths of millions and witness the ultimate in fascist barbarism...the Holocaust.





★ **Anti-Fascist Action** ★

1936 ***The Tradition Lives On!*** 1996

THE CABLE STREET FUND



The Battle of Cable Street is obviously a potent symbol of militant anti-fascist history, an occasion where a large number of anti-fascists (over 80) were arrested and either fined or jailed.

Throughout history, to be effective in fighting the fascists usually means breaking the law and always means rejecting the power and legitimacy of the forces of law and order. Thus the actions of the anti-fascist streetfighters will always be seen as dangerously radical in the eyes of the State, especially when it involves a form of behaviour - physical violence - which the dominant culture condemns in everyday life on the part of everyone except the state itself.

AFA's attitude is that having encouraged people to adopt this strategy we will certainly not abandon people if they get arrested.

As the cutting edge of militant anti-fascism in this country for the last 11 years AFA has inevitably endured its fair share of jailings and fines. In the past we have responded to each occasion as it occurred, such as after arrests at the Remembrance Day demos or after the Battle of Waterloo, to name just a few.

But with what we in AFA believe will be an increasingly reactionary period following the next General Election and the continuing harass-

ment of AFA members by the Police and other state agencies; we have decided to put in place a permanent welfare fund that will collect money on an ongoing basis.

We will therefore be using the opportunity afforded by the Rally to launch 'THE CABLE STREET FUND' for AFA prisoner and defendant welfare'. The fund will initially be just London-based, but we hope to expand it in the coming months to cover AFA nationally.

As Tony Smith, a former AFA prisoner (sentenced to 4 years after being convicted along with two others of being involved in an attack on a leading fascist bonehead) who will be launching the fund, pointed out in a letter from jail...*"As a person serving a prison sentence for anti-fascist activity, I would like to let people know the need and importance of an effective support group. People who suffer at the hands of the courts, whether in the form of a fine or imprisonment, must receive both moral and financial support. From personal experience I can let people know how important this is to those who find themselves imprisoned. The financial support allows me prison luxuries such as radio, books, daily newspapers and toiletries which may not sound a lot to someone who has never experienced jail but to a prisoner it makes life bearable. I would like to appeal to people to help in any way they can not just for me, but for anybody who comes before the courts through anti-fascist activities"*.

Send donations to the Cable Street Fund c/o AFA, BM 1734, London WC1N 3XX



Police arresting anti-fascist during Battle of Waterloo

★ JOIN AFA!

Since the Anti-Nazi League was closed down by the Socialist Workers Party in 1981, there was no national organisation to co-ordinate anti-fascist opposition, despite the increasing number of racist attacks and on-going targeting of left-wing activists.

AFA was formed in 1985 to coordinate the isolated groups of anti-fascists that were still active and draw in new people. Initially the alliance of 'liberals' and 'militants' in AFA achieved results, certainly anti-fascism was put back on the public agenda and victories over the NF at Stockport (1985) and Bury St. Edmunds (1986), followed by the successful campaign to finish off the NF Remembrance Day parades in central London, showed our ability to disrupt the fascists and gave anti-fascists increasing confidence.

By 1989 AFA started to define itself as the militant wing of the anti-fascist movement. We moved away from protest actions and calls for the government and police to lead the fight against fascism. We made it clear that we were not fighting fascism to defend the status quo but because fascism is reactionary, ultra-conservative and anti-working class.

AFA's objective was to clear the fascists out of working class areas and create the space for a progressive alternative to be built. Armed with this new strategy, AFA started to grow rapidly. However 1992 also saw the arrival of the 'Left' into the anti-fascist arena with the launch of the ANL, YRE and ARA. Despite having abandoned anti-fascism for over 10 years, these groups now decided they would 'lead' the movement. Their access to large amounts of money and sections of the media allowed them to 'flood the market' for a while, but in traditional 'left-wing' style, once the money and the recruits dry up they jump onto another bandwagon. They have done considerable damage though, for where AFA challenged the traditional 'left wing' stereotype (both politically and physically) they have simply presented soft targets and soft politics. Their support for Labour in places like East London where Labour has presided over the area's decline for years, while not promoting any challenge from the left has merely helped the BNP present themselves as the 'radical' alternative.

The inability of the BNP to stage public events without severe disruption has led them to declare there would be: "... no more marches, meetings, punch-ups ..." (1994 Spearhead). This change of tactics by the BNP has presented AFA with a new challenge, for if the fascists have withdrawn from the physical arena, new forces need to be created to challenge them politically. The space that AFA has made hasn't been filled and if it isn't filled by the left, it will be filled by the Right.

While the BNP adopt a low-key electoral strategy at present, the threat of fascist violence has been taken up by C18. The exact nature of this threat remains to be seen, but they have taken control of the nazi music organisation, Blood and Honour. Blood and Honour tried to operate openly but were smashed by AFA at Hyde Park Corner (1989) and theamous Battle of Waterloo (1992), and so now their gigs are highly secretive and therefore less effective. AFA has also used music to spread the anti-fascist message, initially with Cable Street Beat, the Unity Carnivals (1991-93) and more recently the club-based Freedom of Movement.

AFA is well organised, controlled by the activists, has experience and ambition, and above all a plan. Join us.

SUBSCRIBE TO FIGHTING TALK

The quarterly magazine for militant anti-fascists

Every issue carries articles with AFA's in-depth analysis of the fight against fascism and a list of regular features including:-

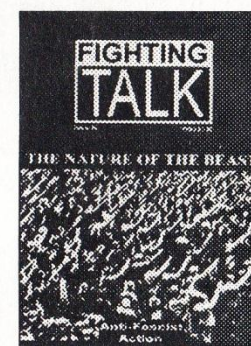
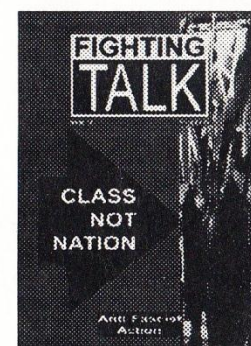
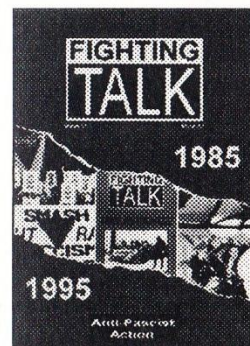
- ANTI-FASCIST HISTORY** - rediscovering the militant tradition.
- A VIEW FROM VALHALLA** - an inside view of the nazi music scene.
- BEHIND ENEMY LINES** - a look at recent fascist propaganda.
- IN THE AREA** - AFA news and views from around the country.
- LEVELLING THE SCORE** - building Anti-Fascist opposition at football

PLUS readers letters, reviews, merchandise, and much, much more!

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Individual and bulk orders

Available from London AFA - £1.50. Bulk orders £11.25 per each 10 copies. Back issues available at £1.50 each

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