

FIGHTING TALK

Issue 18

Price £1.50



**Anti-Fascist
Action**

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Apology: The front cover of the last issue of Fighting Talk was awful. The person responsible has been disciplined and is now in exile.

AFA are on the Internet

<http://www.foobar.co.uk/users/ankh/afa>

APPEAL FOR INFORMATION

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

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 fascists - no meetings, no marches, no paper sales, no leafleting - 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 your local group for affiliation rates and activities.

AFA CONTACTS

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IN THE AREA

Welcome to Issue 18 of Fighting Talk, and we start with our usual round up of news and views from the front line against fascism. We have dropped some of our usual features from this issue to accommodate coverage of AFA's international conference.

The first fascist demonstration for several years was announced by the NF, who planned to march against East European gypsy refugees in Dover on Saturday 15th November. The NF only managed to attract about 60 marchers, but what was interesting was the handful of C18 and BNP activists who turned out with them. Presumably testing the water with regards to future public activity.

FT spoke to the Kent AFA organiser about the background to the march. He said: *"Dover has recently been the focus of attempts by the Far Right to whip up public hostility against Romany asylum seekers from the former Czechoslovakia. The Roma people suffer extreme racial-abuse in Slovakia and the Czech Republic at the hands of neo-nazi gangs. Once here, because of legislation passed by the last government, they are banned from leaving the town which was their port of entry, while at the same time they are denied the opportunity to work. This is one of the reasons that some locals believe them to be simply 'scroungers'."*

On the day itself there were two 'protest' demonstrations called, one by the Kent Socialist Alliance, the other by the ANL: both in the wrong place. A major police operation was launched with suspected anti-fascists being stopped and



*Broken glass?
Warren G.(left) and friend looking sick*



Dover and out.. C18 colour party leading the NF to disaster.

searched. Despite this, as the NF moved off AFA stewards managed to block the road and confront the march. Police reinforcements were rapidly called up and dogs set on the anti-fascists, but the imaginative use of firecrackers caused considerable confusion to the extent that the dogs ended up attacking the NF. The NF organiser Terry Blackham gave an entertaining impression of a demented puppet as he tried to avoid a firework, subsequently the highlight of TV news bulletins across the nation.

As the Kent AFA organiser explained, *"we employed a tactic of continual harrassment with individuals getting in behind the line of dog handlers. In this way we were able to slow the march to a snail's pace until the front of the march resembled an almighty scrum as more protestors began arriving. The riot police eventually managed to get the march to the main road but as the situation quickly deteriorated the NF's coach was brought up and they were escorted out of town."*

So successful was the AFA hit and run tactic that it took the NF one hour to walk less than 500 yards, and their original plan of marching to the immigration office had to be abandoned. The successful disruption of the NF march shows militant anti-fascists are willing and able to confront the fascists when they take to the streets, while bearing in mind that the main fascist threat still comes from the BNP who were forced to abandon this tactic 4 years ago.

Talking of the BNP, Tyndall was due to

address a BNP meeting in East London in September. It seems all the anti-fascist groups were informed of this and there was a general air of expectancy that 'something would happen'. This indeed was the case, and Tyndall got turned over by ANL supporters outside the pub where the meeting was. AFA members in the area were pleased to see new elements confronting the fascists - but what puzzles us is who was filming the attack and why?

And finally, a special AFA vote of thanks has to go to Atilla the Stockbroker and TV Smith for turning up at extremely short notice to play for AFA over the weekend of the international conference. The original gig with Red London and Skaboom had to be cancelled when we got banned from the venue, and despite an apology of a PA the gig was great. At a time when too many people look the other way as militants come under pressure its nice to know there are people who are prepared to stand up and be counted.

NORTH EAST AFA BENEFIT Saturday 20th December

RED ALERT
RED LONDON
THE JOCKNEY REJECTS
THE WRITE OFFS
ELLAS DUST

Newcastle Arts Centre
Westgate Rd.
NEWCASTLE

Starts: 5.30pm. Tickets: £5

CHAMBER OF HORRORS

Camden Council launches Labour's offensive against anti-fascism

The controversial banning of AFA's international anti-fascist conference by the Camden Irish Centre needs to be seen in political context. This is the first time in living memory that an anti-fascist event has been banned on purely political grounds. The public explanations and denials from the Irish Centre and Camden Council simply add insult to injury and cloud, they hope, the core issue, so it is necessary to put events in chronological order.

In April 1997 AFA booked the use of much of the Irish Centre for a series of events including the conference, a public rally and gig to take place during the first weekend of October 1997. The representative of the Centre we dealt with over the six month period was intimate with all our plans for the weekend and knew exactly who AFA were. This is because AFA had, as he freely admitted, "frightened the life out of him" by picketing a pub he once ran in Bethnal Green, an early 90's BNP watering hole called The Sun.

Late afternoon on Thursday 25th September, a phone call from the Irish Centre informed AFA that as a result of the AFA press release the event was now "cancelled as their funding was in jeopardy". At a meeting in the Irish Centre at 2pm on the next day, Friday 26th, AFA representatives were handed as proof of the threat a copy of the AFA press release that had been faxed, with hand written felt tip instructions, to the Irish Centre from Camden Council's Voluntary Sector Unit. It is this unit that deals with grants to voluntary organisations, including the Irish Centre. The time on the fax was 5.15pm. Less than 5 minutes after receiving it AFA was phoned and informed of the ban.

While not excusing either Camden Council or the Irish Centre it is clear there was a wider right-wing agenda at work. An article appeared in the Mail on Sunday (28/9/97) headed "IRA-link militants plan London recruiting rally" which is described as "a very worrying development indeed" by the Shadow Home Secretary Brian Mawhinney. Inevitably the journalist, one Daniel Foggo (who we are informed has "intelligence" connections), played to the

right-wing gallery by accusing AFA of "...12 years of bombings..." (1). The article ended with a quote from Camden Council saying "It's very worrying ... but we have no power to dictate to the venue."

This line of argument was continued in the Camden New Journal (2/10/97) where the Council "vigorously" denied an AFA suggestion that they had leaned on the Irish Centre - claiming it was "run entirely autonomously".

But Camden Council's claims of innocence are obviously undermined by the sending of the fax and subsequent phone call to AFA claiming the Centre's "future funding would be in jeopardy" if the event went ahead. An Irish Post report (4/10/97) emphasises the point, "the Centre fears that the event could jeopardise its funding and charitable status and insists that the rally is 'incompatible' with the venue."

Are we still expected to believe, as has been publicly and repeatedly implied, that the fax and ban are entirely unrelated?

Lets make one thing clear. AFA never at any time asked the Irish Centre or Camden's Labour Council for any political endorsement. Indeed we were paying well for the privilege of hiring the venue. Yet by the actions of the Labour Council and by the statements of the Irish Centre (statements dictated, no doubt, word for word) the first significant step has been publicly taken in this country toward establishing parity of esteem between fascism and anti-fascism.

Britain is a racist country, there are an estimated 130,000 race attacks annually. For over a decade AFA has been at the cutting edge of the resistance. Only recently a leading member of the BNP remarked that "if AFA can be persuaded to leave our leafletters, canvassers, and candidates alone - that is all we need to win." Well, Camden Council

have achieved what has up to now proved beyond the BNP and stopped us, if only temporarily. What political message does that send the race attackers and the BNP? Or, for that matter, their victims?

What Camden Council along with sections of the press have done is appoint themselves the arbiters of what constitutes anti-fascism. Camden Council can host the Anne Frank exhibition. This is deemed respectable because Anne Frank was a victim. They can, as they plan in November, place a plaque to commemorate the Irish Famine in the Town Hall next to one in tribute to those who fought in Spain in 1936. This is also deemed respectable because it is historic.

What do Labour think "fighting fascism" meant in 1936? In the context of Spain it meant killing people. In the context of Britain in 1936 (Cable St. etc.) it meant routinely breaking the law in order to be effective. It still does.

Fascism is not an either/or condition. Ironically one of the principle themes of



AFA picket of the Camden Irish Centre, 5th October 1997.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The nineties have been the decade that has seen the revival of the Far Right all over the world. Numerous countries have growing fascist parties that are close to the corridors of power and can exert influence over governments and set the agenda for politics as a whole. At the same time, fascists throughout the world have organised themselves across national borders.

Likewise, most European states are increasingly sharing information and cooperating together through forums such as Trevi, which lead to them pursuing more and more repressive policies backed up by laws limiting protest and high level surveillance. The Trevi Group was set up in 1976 by the then 12 European Community states to counter 'terrorism' and to co-ordinate policing in the EC. The group's work is based on inter-governmental co-operation between the 12 states, and is unaccountable and shrouded in secrecy. The name Trevi has been open to many interpretations, but is generally regarded as being an acronym for Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism and Violence International.

In the three-cornered fight between fascists, militant anti-fascists and the State, it has only been the militants who have not been organised internationally. Consequently, the latter have been isolated not only within their own countries but also between countries. As the AFA document for the conference put it: "The first step towards clawing back the situation is to recognise that across Europe and beyond, all the opponents of militant anti-fascism are organised. The Far Right, state security and the pacifists of the middle class Left network separately, and occasionally together, to sideline, criminalise, and ultimately crush the militant resistance. Though on the surface each is in pursuit of different objectives, it is undeniably the momentum of the Far Right that is setting the political agenda to which the others are forced to respond."

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL

AFA has spent many years developing contacts with groups all over the world, to combat the isolation, oppression and even criminalisation faced by militant anti-fascists. To develop our work with other groups beyond a simple exchange of publications we called an international conference for militant anti-fascists in London on October 2nd - 5th. Despite the banning of the conference from its original venue, 6 days prior to its start, (as explained elsewhere) the conference still took place and was attended by delegates from 22 different militant groups from Germany, USA, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Ireland, France, Spain and Canada. Other groups who were interested in coming to the conference were not able to make it, due to the cost of travel or other commitments. If militant anti-fascists are to make any impact in the coming years, we have to match our enemies' ambitions and organisation.

The main session of the conference was to discuss a document written by AFA, drawing up a list of 21 points which would be the basis of the proposed International Network of Militant Anti-Fascists. In a definition that got support at the conference, the role of militant anti-fascism was described as the ideological and physical confrontation of fascism. It was argued to general agreement that militants had to separate themselves from the elements of the liberal and traditional Left who believe that fascism has to be fought on the basis of cross class unity. On the contrary, this stance only allows the fascists to portray themselves as the true radicals. Similarly, militant anti-fascists were not fighting to preserve the existing status quo. As the AFA document rightly declared: "... the ambition of militant anti-fascism is not just to see the threat posed by the Far Right to the existing political order removed, so that the social

conditions that gave rise to the threat can once again be safely ignored. On the contrary, it is not for militant anti-fascism to argue that radical change is not needed; instead our primary role is to ensure that if a successful challenge to the Establishment is mounted, it comes only from the Left."

The discussion on the first day showed a great deal of common ground amongst delegates, but also a number of differences in emphasis due to varied local circumstances and traditions. However, there was more than enough agreement for delegates to be positive about both the ideas raised in the discussion and the rest of the conference. The second day of the conference was devoted to workshops, where the different experiences of international delegates could be shared. The sessions covered areas as diverse as football, music, propaganda, communications, state security measures and the media. The final session of the conference involved a short summary from each group about their own activities and the current situation in their countries.

In recognising the importance of organising internationally, the importance of organising nationally must not be underestimated. A strong national network/organisation is vital. Some of the groups in attendance were isolated as militant anti-fascists in their own countries, and left the conference determined to begin uniting other militants and developing their own national network. The weekend's events closed with a public rally with speakers from Sweden, Canada, Ireland, Britain and Germany.

The weekend was a very positive and productive start to developing our work internationally, with the discussion and exchange of ideas and experiences. The conference saw the first ever coming together of international militant anti-fascists and all those involved can be proud of what they have achieved so far. A fully functioning international militant anti-fascist network is well on the way to becoming a practical reality.

On the following pages are brief profiles of some of the groups who attended the conference.



The platform at the post-conference rally.



ANTI-FASCIST FORUM (CANADA)



A lot of what happened during the life of ARA was a response to fascists organising across Canada - particularly in the Toronto area where they've always had a stronghold. ARA successfully beat fascist organising and recruiting and shut them down, financially and politically - everything. The fascists were organising not just in working class areas but also in high schools and trying to build upon a white civil rights movement that came out of the ashes of the Klan in the 80's. They were putting on meetings and concerts and whenever they would hold these things the aim was to go and shut them down. Public organisation by the fascists soon became secret and closed as we smashed up a number of their events.

Anti-Fascist Forum came into existence just over a year ago, initiated by an anti-fascist working group in the Toronto area. All of us had been members of Toronto ARA (Anti-Racist Action) during its militant phase up until the beginning of 1994, when most of the militants also left the group. Some of us had been doing anti-fascist work before ARA came along. Our action-orientated work continued after the split from ARA, but we had no organisation in name. In fact the need for an action based group had diminished at the time. We collectively decided that we, and those aligned with us, had a militant history behind us and we would also be the first ones on the end of the phone if and when times of action kicked off again. In the meantime, we decided to build up our own structures and aim for being one step ahead. A number of projects were underway at the time of our departure from ARA, which hinged on the need to build new strategies to avoid becoming irrelevant. A long term plan was necessary. Anti-Fascist Forum is an info/networking group which is run by street activists. Our contributors from across North America are also of the same background. Our main aim is to get some unity amongst the militant tendency. When an AFA-styled group is necessary, the resources and structure will be in place.

Our peak action was an attack on the home of one of their organisers who was running a telephone hate line. This came after one year of attacks from them, vandalism, there was a murder and a couple of people hospitalised. It was found out where the individual lived and the house where the phone was. That house was attacked and it was a disciplined action. None of the other houses were smashed up. It was made obvious to community members what was going on and what led up to this action - what role their propaganda had in the attacks that came before. The following night they tried to get in a revenge attack in our drinking areas. With at least 3-1 odds in their favour, they attacked but were beaten back severely. Their leadership ended up jumping in because the situation was so futile and two of them got arrested and charged. Since then the conditions have changed a little bit.



anti-fascist forum

- information
- research
- analysis

To have our own voice and our own politics, we created a one off publication that dealt with a few issues we felt had to be dealt with. The idea came out of this to build on what we already had - and what our strengths were within the militant organisation, basically our connection with other like minded street activists. The response was a lot greater than we thought so we built on this platform. So its foundation is not something in itself but is part of a long term plan we have. Short term vision is what damaged our organising in ARA

HAMMER-SKINS?



HAMMER 'EM!!



They're not publicly active. Their court costs, the cost of the house and everything else put paid to an attempt to send Rahowa on tour across Canada. It dashed other plans for them too, like putting together a shop front and an office space. Since then the chance to meet them head to head on the streets has diminished.



MINNEAPOLIS ANTI-RACIST ACTION

Minneapolis ARA was formed ten years ago and is part of the Anti-Racist Action Network of autonomous groups across the USA and Canada. The network has only been operating for three years, but it has 50 chapters of varying size and is gradually getting stronger through better communications and co-ordinating actions on a regional level. The network is broadly united on 4 principles:

1. No reliance on cops or courts.
2. Fight racism, sexism, and homophobia.
3. Non-sectarian defence of anti-racists.
4. We go where racists go."

NO MORE



TOLERANCE

ARA defines itself as an anti-racist

rather than anti-fascist network. This is because of the situation with institutionalised racism in America, particularly the cops. Fascism in America does not manifest in political parties running for office but in Klan / White Supremacist / Neo-Nazi groups. Another area of concern to ARA is the Christian Right which is very influential in the mainstream.

They are also actively involved in a "Copwatch" program, challenging police harassment and racism on the streets. This currently takes the form of fortnightly mobile patrols, but the emphasis is on encouraging people to patrol and defend their own areas.



Minneapolis ARA consider their most successful action was their instrumental involvement in shutting down a neo-nazi rock concert which had been due to take place in the St. Paul part of the city. *"We out-organised the nazis, and brought out over 120 militant ARA members and supporters. We went door-to-door in the neighbourhood, with close to 300 of those folks coming out to oppose the show. We humiliated Bound for Glory and their ilk by turning a hoped-for 300 - person event into a 28-moron fiasco."*

Other recent activities of the chapter include the tracking down of the Long Beach branch of Blood & Honour, who have relocated to Minneapolis; *"Of course we're working on smashing them."* They have also travelled to Rochester (one and a half hours away) to help organise resistance to a violent white supremacist gang, who have been attacking the Somali immigrant community. They are currently organising a rap / rock anti-racist gig to bring together youth in Rochester.



ARA have a practical way of combatting sexism, which is to ensure women are an equal part of their "fighting crews" when out stomping on Nazis - as can be seen from the photo to the left.





PLATAFORMA ANTIFASCISTA ZARAGOZA

concentración
tod@s contra el fascismo
tod@s contra el racismo



SABADO 30 DE NOVIEMBRE
19:00 h. Frente a Capitanía
NO A LA INDIFERENCIA

Plataforma Antifascista de Zaragoza
Plataforma Antifascista Universitaria

The Plataforma Antifascista Zaragoza (PAZ) has been going for four or five years. It is a single issue platform with representatives from many other groups, autonomous anti-fascist groups, women's groups, anti-militarist groups and a university group. They campaign against Spanish and European wide racist immigration laws, as well as fighting fascism. They organise meetings, conferences and music events, which are usually well attended, and produce a regular newsletter plus propaganda and information on fascist activities. They also run "Radio Antifa" - an hour long slot every Saturday evening on a local pirate radio station called "Radio Topo" (The Mole's Radio). PAZ is in contact with 15 other anti-fascist groups across Spain, and are trying to build up a national platform.



MANIFESTACION ANTIFASCISTA



CONTRA LA
EUROPA
DEL RACISMO

MIERCOLES 20 NOVIEMBRE
20 HS. GLORIETA SASERA
Plataforma Antifascista Zaragoza

In Spain at the moment there are two main fascist groupings, which encompass a number of smaller outfits. One is the A.U.N. or National Unity Alliance, which comprises some of the more radical and dangerous groups on the Far Right, who go in for the "Keep Spain White" sort of line. The other is Democracia Nacional which is more representative of the traditional Far Right in Spain, for example the Falange and CEDA. They are engaged in the official political process, though at present they don't attract much electoral support. Despite the right wing government in Spain making it easier for them, by legalising fascist demonstrations, there is not much opportunity for confrontation on the streets. There was a fifty strong fascist demonstration in Valencia, which anti-fascists turned out against but the only confrontation was with the police. But they're not organising that way in general. However, some of the younger fascist elements have been involved in attacks on people (such as the homeless, immigrants and gays), including a number of fatal stabbings. These tend to be random rather than organised, but you see the same element attending the meetings of the A.U.N. etc. In addition there is more of a right wing presence in the football stadiums, and there's probably more supporters groups with that allegiance than those from the Left.

ACCION ANTIFASCISTA



Every year in Spain on the 20th of November, Fascist groups rally to commemorate the death of Franco. The biggest rally takes place in Madrid, with people from Germany, Portugal, Belgium, Italy attending. Anti-fascist groups regularly turn out to oppose the rally, but most of the confrontation that happens is with the police. However, in other towns and cities where smaller rallies or commemorations are held, the anti-fascists have more success in bashing the opposition.

**ACABEMOS
con los grupos
FASCISTAS**





ULTRAMARINES BORDEAUX



Ultramarines Bordeaux are a supporters group established in 1987. Originally non-political they have shifted position because of the growth of the Far Right. They have members who are from the Left, anarchists or environmentalists but many are still not interested in political things. They also take part in community schemes and have links with the Occitan organisation in Bordeaux, active in reviving the Occitan language and culture in South West France and opposing the dominance of the French state. They came over to see the game against Aston Villa and a group travelled down to take part in the conference. They are now hoping to set up an Anti-Fascist Action group.

We asked one of the Ultramarines what importance they attached to forming links with like minded supporters groups at home and abroad. "We have met Villa fans from Villa Fans Against Loyalism and Fascism and are very happy with the great hospitality shown to us. We had some contacts before with Celtic fans and have met them and Man.Utd. fans at the conference. All the people we meet are very very interesting and I hope we increase this relationship. There are not a lot of strong supporters groups in France, its very different to England. There is some friendly contact but nothing more than the normal. We are very close to Spain and in the past have had very close contacts with San Sebastian supporters".

How many people are involved in the Ultramarines? "There are two numbers to remember. There are about 400 people but a core of 50 or 60 who are closely involved. Our job is to increase this number. In France a lot of people coming to the stadium are very young and many get married, and drop all other activities after they're about 25. But we've been going for ten years and in that time we have seen many "generations" come and go but at this time, I can say, more and more people stay with us so this number will be increased. But we must be very patient, we must take our time..."



Passée cette première saison d'activité le groupe enregistra une baisse constante de ces effectifs pour n'atteindre que 36 cartes vendues en 90/91. Ce déclin s'explique pour plusieurs raisons.

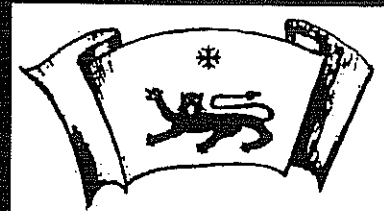
D'abord et avant toute chose le manque d'ouverture dont nous faisons preuve était presque suicidaire. À cette époque il était très dur d'entrer dans le cercle très fermé des ULTRAMARINES.

De nombreux jeunes l'ont compris avant nous et ainsi naquirent les BLUE DEVILS ce qui nous porta un coup assez dur mais pas assez, en tout cas pour nous détruire. Cette scission gardera d'ailleurs toujours un goût amer puisque le fondateur des BD s'était vu confier des responsabilités au sein des ULTRAMARINES suite à notre détermination nouvelle d'intégrer des jeunes, cette attitude eut pour conséquence de nous priver de toute une génération désormais estampillée du terme DEVILS.

Do the Ultramarines organise any activities away from the Stadium, like gigs for example? "We organise gigs with groups from Bordeaux, but its very difficult because we've got a bad image. When many people see that we are the organisers they don't go! In fact, at the first gig we put on, some Redskins came to see if there were some fascists there. We said, 'You're crazy - we're anti-fascists'".

Is there much of a fascist presence in Bordeaux? [It has traditionally been a very conservative city, boasting as its mayor Alain Juppe, who as Prime Minister was responsible for introducing huge public spending cuts]. "No, not really. But now we must change a little our attitude. At the beginning we were totally apolitical because we think that sport and politics are nothing to do together. Now, although we still won't support specific political groups, we do want to say No to certain political ideas, which are bad ideas". What about the Front National? "I'm sure that there is some presence because the stadium is a microcosm of society, but they don't speak. And another point is that if 25% vote for the Front National its not necessarily because 25% of people in France are of the Far Right, but because they are disgusted by our system because there is a lot of corruption..."

One of the difficulties encountered is in trying to work with other groups. Away from the stadium, political groups, anti-racist groups look down on them because they are football supporters: "In France people are very sectarian, even if many people think the same thing that isn't a reason to be together because there can be some other difference. People are very individualistic and there is no facility to come together. I don't know how it can change".



If the current government in France fails could the FN have its chance? "It could be but I am optimistic and I think that since the beginning of the new government there is some good signs, they are more clean than the others, there are some people who were not well known before who have become important people with good ideas, new ideas. I didn't agree with the man who spoke at the meeting saying the Left was dead. I don't think so, not necessarily. Perhaps in some countries but generally I think that there is some hope".





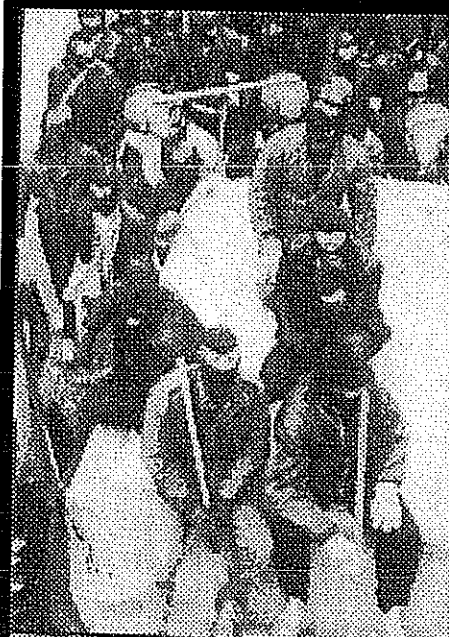
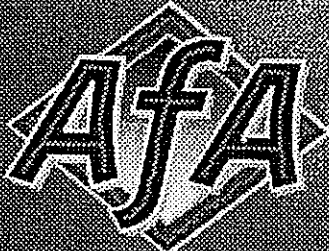
A.F.A. SCANDINAVIA



There are Anti-Fascist Action branches in Sweden, Norway and Denmark and they work closely together in a Scandinavian network as well as in their own national networks. Delegates from Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen attended the conference.



Sweden has 15 AFA branches and has had a big problem, particularly around Stockholm, with fascists. The main area of fascist activity has been around the music scene. During 1993-1995 they put on a lot of concerts. There were three main outlets for Nazi music, the two in Stockholm were closed down by AFA by the end of the summer of '95. The one in Gottenburg was like a bunker - but it burned down in June '97. Since 94/95 the fascists have abandoned moving demonstrations and just hold rallies. Their music scene is also in difficulty, mirroring the C18 / Resistance split.



In Norway there are AFA groups in almost every town and city. Oslo AFA, which was founded in 1993, work closely with many of these groups and there is widespread co-operation. All the groups are autonomous, and work freely without any agreed political programme apart from their opposition to racism, homophobia, sexism, and capitalism. While this means there are many political differences between the groups around activities and methods, Oslo AFA think that the network functions very well.

The Nazi problem in Norway is not as great as that in Sweden, although the autonomous centre in which Oslo AFA is based was bombed in 1994. There is a major problem with the Far Right entering the political mainstream. The "Progress Party", which is extremely racist and very similar to the FN in France and the Freedom Party in Austria, got 17% of the vote in September this year and is now the 2nd biggest party in the country. This makes them a high current priority for AFA in Norway.



Oslo AFA also produce a regular magazine "Antifascistisk Aksjon", with international news coverage of anti-fascist, anti-capitalist struggles and history, research on local fascists, etc.

In Denmark, Copenhagen AFA helped set up an Anti-Racist Network in the city, made up of about 15 groups. Two recent actions show their ability to use different methods to achieve the same results - driving fascists off the streets!

One was a demonstration in the small village of Kværs, where the German Nazi, Meinholf Schönborn (from the Nationalistische Front) had tried to set up a secret printing press and hideout in the summer of 1993. Copenhagen AFA called for a national mobilisation in the village, but had to tread carefully. Amongst the villagers, their reputation as violent, masked maniacs from Copenhagen who would come to destroy the village, was cause for concern. They leafleted every home in the village and made the necessary links with local people.

"We arranged buses to the demo and when we arrived we were welcomed as kind of heroes - no kidding! The village people were already on the street, and small fights with the cops had broken out. But when we arrived, everybody acted very disciplined, and both the cops and the press were very surprised, and we won a lot of credit. We went back to Copenhagen the same evening, but the village people had been so encouraged by the demo, that they took the situation into their own hands, and literally stoned the nazis out of the village the same night. We are convinced that had we done the same thing in the afternoon, it would have been condemned by almost everyone, but now, because it was the local people themselves, it was described almost as if the wartime resistance movement had come to life again".

Copenhagen AFA were also involved in organising the international anti-Hess march in Roskilde in 1995: "... we were able to separate the "official demo" from the illegal actions. We made it possible for everyone to join the kind of action/demo that they wanted to: a big, broad, and peaceful demonstration, and small militant action groups around the city, working on different levels. The absolute greatest success was when the main part of the official demo decided to join the militant groups. The result was ... that the nazi demo was attacked and hunted out of the city."

Copenhagen 5th June 1995 - a Swedish bonehead wishes he'd stayed home!





AUTONOME ANTIFA (M) GOTTINGEN



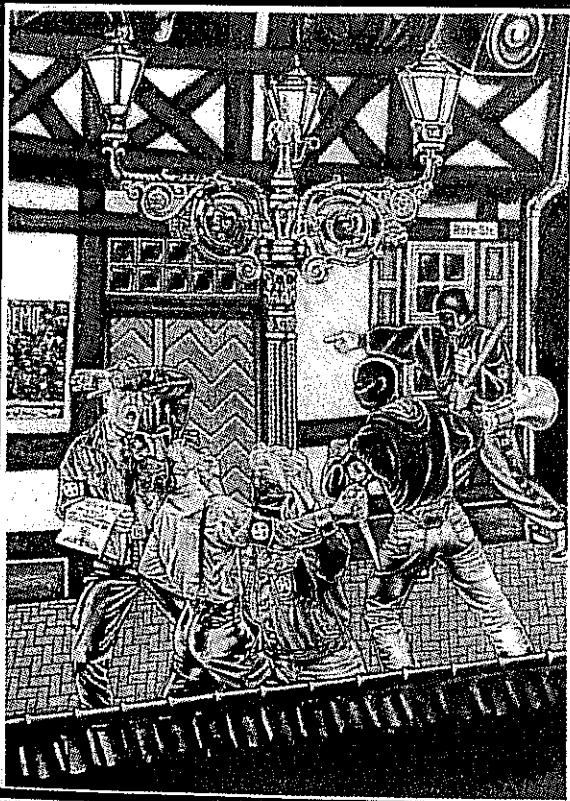
Autonome Antifa (M) based in Gottingen in southern Lower Saxony, will be well known to regular readers of Fighting Talk. The group, formed in 1991, grew out of the autonomist movement of the 1980's with the aim of breaking out of the isolation of the leftists movement, to go beyond single issue politics and to bring revolutionary anti-fascism into the mainstream of society.

Autonome Antifa (M) place a strong emphasis on historical / awareness raising work - using Agit Prop Theatre and striking visual propoganda. But they are most often associated with direct action and large coalition demonstrations against fascist training centres. Lower Saxony has been a focal point of activity for the Fascist FAP (Free German Workers Party) since the mid-80's and there have been many confrontations.

The FAP received their first big blow in Gottingen on March 20th, 1987. A party meeting, disguised as a harmless youth group party, was attacked by autonomen and the "party guests" beaten up. Following this there were conflicts in Gottingen every weekend, with an unsuccessful attack on JuZi, an autonomous centre, by a well organised group of 30 fascists. Several hundred anti-fascists turned out in response and the Nazis were only saved by the intervention of the police. Meanwhile the apartment of a well known FAP activist was stormed and completely destroyed. After this the FAP switched their attention to nearby Northeim.

The first of many large coalition demonstrations was against the FAP training centre in Mackenrode in May 1988. Then in October 1991 a group of 40 autonomen turned up outside the house. Fifty FAP members came out and were immediately attacked. With the advantages of surprise, crash helmets and sling shots, the autonomen were able to inflict a serious defeat on the opposition, with many fascists requiring hospital treatment for serious head injuries.

A characteristic feature of the large coalition demonstrations was the so-called "black block", where participants are masked up or wearing crash helmets.



Autonome Antifa (M) was one of the founder members and instigators in 1992 of the Antifaschistische Aktion / Bundesweite Organisation - the Anti-Fascist Action / Nationwide Organisation.

Autonome Antifa (M) was put under investigation by the German security services in 1991, leading to charges being brought against 17 members of the organisation under Paragraph #129 - for being members of a criminal organisation. Under this law an individual defendant does not have to be proven to have committed any particular crime, but just has to be proven to be part of the group charged. Historically the law has been used against leftist groups, to build up political pressure against them and to depict political actions as unpolitical "criminal acts". After a number of mass demonstrations against the searches, arrests and prosecution, the situation was resolved by an agreement that no further action would be taken by the state, whilst the "suspects" had to make a donation to a Holocaust memorial charity.





R.O.T.K.A.P.C.H.E.N.

ROTKAPCHEN is an anti-fascist youth organisation organised in over 20 locations in East Germany and Berlin. They are part of the BDA network (Association of Anti-fascists), which was founded in the former GDR by veteran anti-fascists, and maintain close links with militant anti-fascists in West Germany.



The name ROTKAPCHEN is the German equivalent of "Little Red Riding Hood"! It seems this refers to a theatre performance put on at a congress to illustrate the situation on the streets in East Germany today to older anti-fascists. The show transported the Red Riding Hood story into the 1990's. We assume the bloke with the axe represents the appropriate way to deal with the fascists.



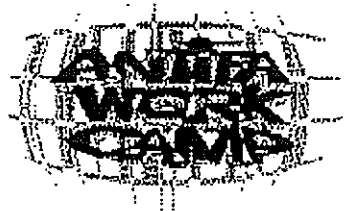
*Tickets please!
Anti-Fascists in action at Hellersdorf*

The strength of the Far Right varies greatly in the different towns where ROTKAPCHEN are organised. But they reckon the largest and most dangerous group is the Grey Wolves, the Turkish fascists who are very powerful in Turkish parts of Berlin. Although they confine themselves mostly to fighting Kurds and Turkish Communists, you see people wearing their emblems everywhere and their merchandise is openly on sale on street markets. The presence of the Grey Wolves shows the misunderstanding of fascism by the politically correct Left, "No one thinks Turkish people can be fascist" and when anti-fascists contest this they get accused of being racist!

ROTKAPCHEN are involved in direct action against the Far Right, including actions against public meetings by the official fascist parties and dealing with groups of fascists who turn up at the sites of concentration camps. They also took part in the successful confrontation with the Young National Democrats (youth wing of the NPD) at Hellersdorf station in Berlin last year. Hellersdorf is an underground station, where the fascists were congregating for a demonstration. Pickets had been organised by the local council and trade unions. But it was the militant anti-fascists who steamed into the opposition on the platform - resulting in a victory which has been christened the German Waterloo!

"Militant actions are necessary and useful because we fight as communists against the fash as well as against this state, and if we don't, there will be a vacuum which is usually filled by the right-wing as experienced all over Europe at the moment."

Another main area of work for ROTKAPCHEN is organising annual work camps at the sites of Nazi concentration camps like Buchenwald where there are memorials for what happened there. They work together with Holocaust survivors and anti-fascists from the 30's and 40's. The work camps are part educational, part practical. Young anti-fascists see it as important to preserve the camps as memorials to the true nature of fascism. There are many groups in Germany that would like to re-write history, coming up with ideas like making the camps into memorials for "victims of war" - including the SS guards killed by Soviet forces, partisans or inmates when the camps were liberated! The work camps mean that there is a physical anti-fascist presence at the sites to contest and challenge this revisionism. They extend an open invitation to other European anti-fascists to come and help them out with this work.



We asked R.O.T.K.A.P.C.H.E.N. whether the situation differed in East Germany because of it having been a communist state which claimed anti-fascism as part of its historical and cultural heritage. They felt that, while it provided a different context, in practical terms there was little difference. If anything the older generation understand anti-fascism as the state's responsibility and consequently are opposed to physical confrontation and are very much concerned to stick within the law and work with the state. So not very different to the situation with the conservative Left in this country.



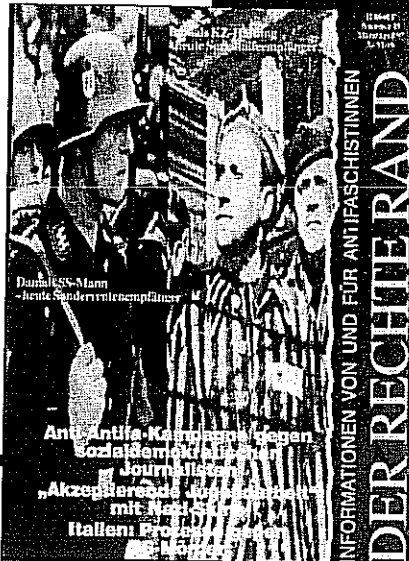


HANNOVER AFA



Hannover AFA was set up in 1983 when the Far-Right skinhead movement became strong in Hannover and they made links with organised fascists in the city. Before this the fascists didn't play a big role in Hannover but when the skinhead movement became strong they got together with the fascists and attacked youth centres where left-wing people used to go.

Hannover AFA started off as something like a self-defense organisation, but after a few months of defending centres against fascist attacks the group started to go into their areas and attack them. In 1984 there was a major success for the group when the FAP (Free German Workers Party) tried to organise in Lower Saxony (Hannover is the capital of Lower Saxony) and there was a big united front demonstration against the setting up of the FAP in Lower Saxony. A big group of anti-fascists from different parts of the Left, from Communists to Trade Unionists and militant anti-fascists, stood in front of the pub where the fascists were going to meet and they couldn't get in. They went to another pub 1 or 2 miles away and they were followed by a group of militants from Hannover AFA and there was a very successful attack against the pub where the fascists were. They were all badly injured and it was 2 years before they tried to organise in Hannover again.



At the moment groups of fascists are active in smaller villages around Hannover, but they don't often come to Hannover. They go to the football but you don't hear much about attacks in the city itself. You hear a lot of things in the area around the city and its the same all over Germany since 1989 when the wall came down. The whole Left was very disillusioned and a lot of people left their organisations and stopped all political work, and when you speak about sub-culture in the 70s and 80s it was always left-wing. Today there is a big right-wing sub-culture. For a lot of young people it is fashionable to wear flight jackets and have short hair and to be right-wing. The fascists have managed to organise a lot of them.

The State was worried about the fascist movement growing stronger and banned some organisations, but they just changed the names of the organisations or went into an organisation that wasn't banned by the State. A lot of the militant nazis have joined one of the oldest German fascist parties - the NPD. We are confronted with this new situation and we want to bring together the old fighters and new people to take up the fight against the fascists, but its hard work because most of the Left don't want to fight. They see the fascists on TV and the police banning them, etc. but its very dangerous to believe in the State. When the fascists are needed by the State they're allowed to operate - if they're not needed they can be held back. They haven't been smashed by the police, only militant anti-fascists can smash them.

Every time they went on the street they were attacked by militant anti-fascists and also young Turkish immigrants, this lasted for 3 or 4 years but by the beginning of the 90s you didn't see fascists on the streets like in the 80s. Then the militant anti-fascist movement in Hannover ran into problems - because there were no fascists on the streets a lot of people got involved in other areas of political work or dropped out.

In the 90s we had less people in the group but we were still active. One example of Hannover AFA's activity is when we had a mole in the fascists and we heard about this activity that they had planned. They were going to put up posters on the walls of a refugee hostel - it was at the time when there were a lot of attacks on refugee homes in Germany - and we knew exactly when they were going to come out and put the posters up. Militants waited for them and it was a very effective action and after this night this group of fascists didn't do any activity in Hannover for years!

We want to have good international links and if the links become an international network that will be good for all militant anti-fascists. In Germany militant anti-fascists don't have one organisation. It was a good experience for us to see the situation in Britain where there is one national organisation for militant anti-fascists. We have to bring this experience back to Germany because if a nationwide organisation can be built then it is easier to build an international organisation. I hope this network will grow but there are many difficulties to overcome.

We produce a magazine called Der Rechte Rand and its a research magazine for all anti-fascists. They can get serious information about different fascist organisations and the influence of fascists in right-wing conservative parties, some religious sects, and so on. What they do with the information is up to the people who buy the magazine. There are people involved with the magazine who are not militant anti-fascists - people in the German Communist Party or the Green Party - but they are all specialists in researching what the fascists are doing.

For the last year the State have been putting pressure on the magazine because they are very worried about our work which doesn't only deal with 'Hollywood' nazis but also with the right-wing of society. The magazine was mentioned in the yearly report of the German equivalent of MI5. In our magazine there are a lot of photos of nazis and right-wing conservatives at rallies where they work together and they say we make them targets for militant anti-fascists, and they say we produce lists of fascists and they might be killed so they are trying to criminalise us.





HAMBURG / NÜRNBERG

Anti-Fascist Group Hamburg is part of the Anti-Fascist Action / Nationwide Organisation (AABO) and works with other groups in Hamburg as part of a city wide network. Following state bans of fascist organisations from 1993 onwards, the fascists moved off the streets but now they are returning. There is an urgent need to confront them.



The Hamburg Group has only been going since the summer of '96. Their first and most succesful action to date was mobilising against a rally by the fascist NRD (National Democratic Party) at the time of the September '96 local elections. The Far Right had brought up the theme of "internal security" which was then adopted as an election theme by the Social Democratic Party and all the other mainstream parties, except the Greens. The AFGH was involved in calling a demonstration against both the fascist rally and the racist election campaign. Theirs was the only public voice of opposition during that campaign. Over 4,000 people turned out for the demonstration. The fascists didn't show up at all.



Also in Hamburg is the Antifa Jugendfront, a militant anti-fascist youth group who publish a variety of pamphlets, posters, stickers, and magazines in addition to their more direct activities against the Fascists. They do a free broadsheet of which three thousand copies are distributed at schools etc.



Rote Antifa Nürnberg are also part of the A.A. / B.O. We can't tell you much about them because we didn't get a chance to interview them. But we do know they've been involved in massive protests against rallies by the Far Right party, Die Republikaner, as for example on the 30th April 1994 when 2,000 anti-fascists occupied the square outside the Lorenzkirche in Nürnberg (see photos). We also know that they don't get on at all well with the Bavarian riot squad! But then who would?



ROTE ANTIFA NÜRNBERG

Antifaschistische
AKTION
EINWISSENDE ORGANISATION

Büro: jeden Mittwoch 18-19.30 Uhr
Archiv Metroproletan/KOMM



ALL OR NOTHING

In 1994 the BNP announced that there would be "no more marches, meetings, punch-ups." Mainstream anti-racist opinion was quick to reassure us that this was merely a ploy by the BNP to court respectability for the duration of the election campaign. Thereafter the fascists would revert to basics. Some in AFA were not convinced and began to speculate on the consequences for militant anti-fascism of the Far Right permanently abandoning the 'march and grow' tactic in vogue since the '70s. What, we asked ourselves, would be the consequences if instead they adopted the Euro-Nationalist strategy of Haider and Le Pen?

In the pages of Spearhead leading articles have explained the current BNP mindset: "Twenty years ago or so, we could make our point to the public with large scale marches, meetings in public halls, and similar activities. More recently though, bans by the authorities, police pressure and surveillance, and violence from the State's licensed boot-boys have all combined to make such tactics largely ineffective. Since the opposition actively seeks confrontation, it follows that we must continue with the policy of avoiding it wherever possible, putting our efforts into grassroots campaigning rather than high-profile public activities announced long enough in advance to allow our opponents to mobilise against them." If AFA can be 'persuaded' "to leave our candidates, canvassers, and leafletters in peace - this is all we need to win."

When Martin Webster predicted that the NF would kick their way into the headlines he didn't fully anticipate that the opposition would be doing most of the kicking. Predictably they got tired of it before we did. While celebrations might be in order the harsh reality is that we too must change. It is that or become a footnote in history. Essentially the BNP's new Euro-Nationalist strategy means putting votes before principles in order to attain the power needed to put principles into practice.

In the General Election in May the BNP put the new strategy into effect and

received over 8,000 votes in adjacent wards in East London. To fail to turn that vote into one or more council seats next May would certainly be careless. A BNP councillor or two, in for a full 4-year term, and the political landscape which we now occupy will be altered in a major way.

It is obvious that if we cannot get to them we cannot stop them. So what do we do? Well, let's first outline what we must not do. For the last seventeen years the cry of the conservative Left has been "get the Tories Out!". Now that Labour are elected the same unity of purpose will be demanded to "keep the Tories Out!" and so on ad infinitum. As the situation on the continent has shown, that strategy is a proven disaster. Primarily because it forces the very people who want change, the bottom 40%, the natural constituency of the Left, directly into the arms of the radical Right. In Europe it is predominantly under nominally socialist regimes that the Far-Right has made most ground. Today it is this very constituency, so badly mauled under the Tories, that Labour is in the business of cutting politically adrift. And while the call for cross class unity has an attractive simplicity it is really a siren call on to the rocks.

The idea is to demonise the Far Right; isolate them by offering support to whatever candidate is best placed to beat them: Anyone But Fascism. The logic of the strategy demands cross class unity, involving the whole of society against the evil of fascism. Instead of ostracising the fascists in working class communities it just as often provides them with a radical and robust political complexion. While in contrast, the prostituting of anti-fascism by corrupt politicians fatally tarnishes a noble tradition in the eyes of the working class public. Those who believe that in opposing fascism it is sufficient to scream "Never Again!" without addressing precisely why there is a resonance for their arguments, draw ridicule on themselves, caricature the anti-fascist struggle and diminish us all.

Invariably over a period of time the outcome of this kind of anti-fascist

agitation is to forcibly drive those who want political change into the opponent's camp out of sheer desperation. Fascists are not born, they are made. Today in France we can see the consequence of a ten year strategy of collaboration sponsored by Mitterand and championed by the Left to isolate Le Pen. In 1983 the FN got its first councillor and the Left responded with that old favourite 'ignore them and they will go away'. When the Front was ignored in the past 15 years its influence, unopposed, grew. When the centre-Right co-operated with them, hoping to draw their sting, the opposite has happened. "People" as Le Pen remarked "tend to prefer the original to the copy." When the Front was denounced by both Left and Right, its preoccupations with race and national identity and Socialist Party corruption were placed centre stage, and its influence continues to grow. Now the FN is the biggest working class party in France and a Far Right agenda is being implemented, without the embarrassment or inconvenience of fascism actually taking power.

Those who only equate fascism with the Holocaust are right in their moral condemnation but mistaken in their sense of sequence. Fascism is not an either/or condition. The danger in France and elsewhere lies not in right-wing terrorism, or the cataclysm of the putsch, but in the insidious political drift.

Today in Britain as in France in the early 1980's, we have just elected a nominally, or formerly, social democratic party. For those that support Labour this means a shift to the Left but for the rest of us it is either a continuing drift to the Right or merely a new administration replacing an old administration. One way of looking at it is that we are now governed by a single party, with two Right-wings: one ideological and one pragmatic. The latter is now in government. If we have learned the lessons from France, it is the duty of militant anti-fascists to confront fascism not by lining up with the pragmatic wing of the Establishment, but by lining up against it.

And our responsibility does not end there. It will profit us nothing in the long run merely to take up the correct and principled position to Labour if this strategy is not implemented in working class areas or if mainstream anti-fascism continues to be identified in the public mind with the antics and stance of the ANL, Searchlight and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. It is expected that Peter Hain, the honorary president of the ANL, will soon be in the Cabinet. It is not right that anti-fascism is so closely identified with the ruling party. It is not

right that in the name of anti-fascism people collaborate with the security forces. It is not right that anti-fascism is seen as an apologist and cheer leader for the status quo. It is not for anti-fascism to argue that independent working class candidates might split the Labour vote. It is not for anti-fascism to argue that progressive change is not necessary.

If through the propaganda of the ANL a centre-Right party like Labour is allowed or encouraged to hitch anti-fascism and anti-racism to its own anti-working class agenda then despite all AFA's efforts the working class will be alienated from us. The only way to prevent this happening is for our version of anti-fascism, real anti-fascism, to become the dominant political brand. Being politically and operationally independent, being in touch with working class concerns and remaining loyal to working class interests are the fundamental lessons that are there to be learned from the situation in France.

The electoral and political threat from an organised Far Right must not be our only concern. In May the New York based Human Rights Watch produced a report that revealed Britain has one of the highest rates of racially motivated crime in Western Europe - a situation the report insists is "as desperate as that experienced by minorities in Germany." Humanitarian concerns apart there is also a vital tactical consideration. This is the sea in which the organised fascists swim. A failure on our part to address this issue now will see pockets of organised fascists emerge from within these communities sooner or later. Following an electoral breakthrough anywhere in the country the natural progression from violent racist to organised fascist is for this strata both natural and inevitable. And as we have seen that breakthrough could be as early as next May.

The government proposes new legislation that it says will make those sentenced for attacks motivated by racial hatred serve an additional term of imprisonment. Race attacks are a symptom of a wider problem that cannot be dealt with in isolation, and certainly cannot be solved by legislation. Particularly when the proposed remedy will be in the hands of a police force rightly condemned in the same report as "vicious and racist". Hand wringing liberals, fully aware of the contradiction, suggest that this inherent and vicious racism can be eradicated by better training. Better training? What are they saying? That the police are not already aware that killing black working class people is against the law? Even worse, as these mini-pogroms are politically motivated - the objective to make an area white or keep it white - legislation designed to criminalise

already criminal behaviour will at best prove ineffective and at worst offer a huge propaganda gift to the Far Right. Race attacks are an issue that needs to be tackled head on and are certainly within the militant anti-fascist remit. Indeed they should be made a priority. Race attackers are a legitimate target, but the idea must be to quarantine them, stamp them out, not make, as Labour propose, political martyrs of them.

Meanwhile if the Home Office wants to get to the source of the problem they might look a little closer to home. The responsibility for two of the more infamous race murders in the 1990's can be laid at the feet of a political organisation, but it is not C18 or the BNP - but the Labour Party. In Camden in the late 80's Labour in their wisdom decided to close a youth club used predominantly by white kids, at the same time as opening a youth club intended for the exclusive use of Asian youngsters. Had the motives been impeccable the application was still cretinous and the racial tension generated later cost Richard Everett his life. In Thamesmead in south-east London a couple of years earlier they did exactly the same thing. Again only a half wit would have been blind to the backlash. This time a black youngster, Rolan Adams, was the victim.

There is an evangelical zeal behind some Labour anti-racist initiatives that clearly see working class communities as territory to be pacified. This colonial trait is something we must guard against and actively combat, and as militant anti-fascists must be seen to do so. It cannot be left to the Far-Right to organise the resistance to Labour in working class communities. To allow the likes of the

BNP the opportunity to graft racist solutions on to legitimate working class grievances would be fatal. As a counter point to the Far Right winning council seats in their strongholds as early as May, we need to begin the work of politically developing our own strongholds.

With the Tories in government Labour locally could blame them for everything. Now that alibi has been removed, so for the first time in 18 years Labour councils will be faced with the consequences of their own actions. What is equally certain is that the political beneficiaries will not be the previous government. The millions of disenchanted people will have to find another political home. The implications for us could not be more clear-cut.

That said, here in Britain the playing field is more or less level. Circumstances are presenting Right and Left with the same opportunity: to organise in working class communities without much interference from the major parties.

This is a battle for working class hearts and minds that cannot be ducked. To lose this battle is to lose the war. Alternatively, if we ignore the gauntlet and shrink from the responsibility we are finished anyway.

Across Europe the clear ambition of the fascists is not to protest but to govern. Likewise for us. There are no half measures. It is all or nothing. Either working class rule or working class subordination. And, as things stand, we can still be the difference. Our destiny is in our own hands. The choice is ours.

(This article is an edited version of the main AFA speech given at the October Rally.)



BEHIND ENEMY LINES



Bill Gothrocks has been at it again, and he's been reviewing some fascist magazines as well. In his final offering for a while Bill finds the BNP being nice... Oh yeah - pull the *otter* one.

The British National Party are having a recruitment drive at the moment. After their successful election campaign in May, Tyndall obviously feels its high time the BNP showed its more 'caring' side, and it wafts rather luridly from the pages of *Spearhead*. He wants to project the BNP as considered, respectable, middle class even, and sights his claim to a growing number of 'quality' recruits from 'virgin' areas. While others in the BNP, and notably Griffin, still see the value (indeed the necessity) of organising stout working class types, old 'Meat' has set his sights on fairer game:

"...there is absolutely no justification for the middle classes to believe in the media-engendered 'disreputability' of the BNP. They are presumably intelligent enough to be able to tell truth from propaganda, and if they are in doubt they only need to contact us to examine us close-up to see for themselves what we stand for and what sort of people we are."

That's right John, there's nothing at all disreputable about inviting potential new recruits to *examine* you close-up to see what you *stand* for. In the next breath he can't help an attempt at a macho analogy, and just a few digs at the middle-classes, as he obviously felt he had been too nice to them so far (or maybe he has slipped into denial...)

"It suggests that a great many of them are self-centred, materialistic and cowardly, that they are rather like the respectable citizens of the town in High Noon....and that should someone cast in the role of 'Marshal', as happened with Gary Cooper in the classic Western, attempt to put an end to the outlaws hegemony and thus draw the latter's fire, many of these respectable citizens will resent the Marshal even more than they resent the outlaws!..."

I suppose that's something to tell yourself when everybody hates you.

Staying in 'nice' mode, the same issue finds James Thurgood attempting to wipe the slate clean with the French, who he says - while they may not be nice - are as bad as us but just in a different way. Confused? Well at least you didn't have to read the whole bloody article. Against his cliched 'beer swilling lager louts' (the English abroad) he relates the more passive rudeness of the French...

"I hitch-hiked around Europe in the late 1950s and early 1960s with a back-pack sporting a prominent Union Jack. I found I had much less of a wait for lifts in Germany than in France. I have often wondered whether that told me something?"

He never directly answers that looping rhetorical question, but it's something to think about isn't it? I came up with three solutions: 1) The French are less inclined to give lifts to English fascists in leiderhosen with big prominent Union Jacks, 2) the Germans are more inclined, 3) the French are more passively rude than the English.

Later in the article we are offered the 'real' explanation. Its 'that' war again:

"The French, in my experience, have more national pride than we do. As proud people they no more liked British and American troops in their country than German troops. And some of them even dare to suggest... that the latter were better behaved!"

The real reason that the French don't like the English then, is that we behaved worse than the Germans, in WW2! "Bloody English bastards, invading our country after we had invited those nice Germans to come and stay. The German Army had been such nice people, always so polite with lovely polished boots and big helmets. I remember one day, after they had been executing some of our villagers, nice General Von Fascisthausen making polite conversation with my father - such a cultured man, he never swore and absolutely never told jokes." Are we to expect a Front National government to demand an apology from Britain at the UN?

In the same issue, a report from over a different sea displays the same 'cunning' distortion of reality. East London BNP have been out and about in the Six Counties, and attended one of the annual Loyalist parades in Ballymena:

"Contrary to the media image of these Sunday parades as a display of 'triumphalist' bigotry, they all commence with a religious service and the bands play nothing but hymn music for the entire walk. Wreaths are laid at the local war memorial in honour of Ulster's dead in two world wars (who, of course, included many loyal Catholics as well as Protestants), following which there is another service before the parade returns to the Orange Hall. The BNP group saw that there is no 'hatred' in any of this, just an honourable and proud display of a people's love of their distinctive local culture and British heritage."

I think the Orangemen must have blushed with embarrassment when they read this. Saying that, it is true that anti-catholic pogroms and ethnic cleansing are indeed a direct result of the religious and cultural heritage of Ulster Loyalism. And right again, it's not about hatred, its cold-blooded and its about politics. But what about WW2 and British troops in this context? Ah well you see, its different innit.

Last but not least, did you know that the bloke who wrote *Tarka the Otter*, Henry Williamson, was a fascist? Here's a pearl of wisdom from Ian Buckley, reviewing Williamson's life and works in *Spearhead*:

"Tarka tells us that life is an eternal struggle against hostile forces, as indeed in truth it is, for man as much as for otter."

What can I say?

Spot the Gothrocks



One of these men is the real Bill Gothrocks, but can you tell us (in no more than twenty words) which one and why? Get your entries in early to ensure a chance of winning Bill's Mystery Star Prize and send them to:

Spot The Gothrocks,
BM 1734, London WC1N 3XX

FIGHTING TALK BACK

KEEP IT TIGHT

Dear FT,

Issue 17 contained an inaccuracy in the ANL conference story. The ANL has not closed its London office and the staff have not been sacked. What is the reason for this scurrilous piece of reporting? Another long repeated inaccuracy contained in your publications and publicity material is that the ANL was not present at the 'Battle of Waterloo'.

S.A. (ANL and AFA supporter)

FT Reply: Its hold your hands up time. The ANL has reduced the size of its office and the SWP has 'transferred' some its full-timers, but the office is still there. As for Waterloo - we've never said there were no ANL members there. There were a few - there should have been more. But what pisses us off is when the ANL say they organised it. We did.

INTO THE RING

Dear FT,

The majority of the Left and anti-fascist movement have failed to appreciate the implications of proportional representation. Blair is making fundamental changes to the British Establishment to ensure its long term survival. A devolved Scotland and Wales, a favourable settlement in the north of Ireland, modernisation of the monarchy, abolition of hereditary peerages, state funding of political parties and a system of proportional representation. All are either in place or in the pipeline.

What is interesting are the possible realignments on the Right. Europe and the single currency will be a defining moment for the Right in this country. A split looks on the cards. Members of the Tory Right, the Referendum Party, UKIP, etc. may well be looking for a new home, and PR might convince them they can make serious inroads into British politics with a well-funded Far Right party. It was only the other week that prominent members of the Tory establishment argued that ethnic Britons be made to take the 'cricket test' and suggested that the 'Irish question' could be solved overnight with the murder of 600 people.

C. Cooke, London.

BARE-FACED CHEEK

Hello FT, Eddy Brimson here,

Since Dougie and I wrote our first book many things have been written about us. The majority of what has been written has been total bollocks but you soon learn to ignore it and get on with the job in hand. However comments in your publication can't go unchallenged, labelling us as racists is something we just won't let lie.

Let me give you some background information. Since I was born in 1964 I have only ever joined 3 organisations: 1. The Watford FC supporters club. 2. The Toyah Wilcox fan club, and 3. The Anti Nazi League.

In our books we have allowed the Fascists to voice their view because, unlike many clubs we won't pretend they have gone away. People need to know they are there in order to do something about it. It is the same method we employ when dealing with the violence that still exists within the game. Yes we have said that the 'Kick Racism Out Of Football' campaign has become counter productive because we believe people have become immune to it, therefore taking away its effect. If you don't agree with our approach then that is your prerogative, but please don't brand us racist for trying something new.

We made the decision early on to be totally honest in our writing, in the views we express and to ourselves. We have found out that honesty is something many find difficult to handle, usually because they have something to hide themselves. We have had to live with

plenty of threats from the fascists since the publication of our first book (I am sure you know that this is a particularly strong area for them) but the comments in your publication hurt big time. Someone at Fighting Talk has taken it upon themselves to brand us racists without having a clue as to what we have been trying to achieve behind the scenes, both now and in the past. That is nasty. Dougie and I can handle most things but being branded racist is not one of them.

Yours,

Eddy Brimson

FT Reply:

Right. Let's get this straight. We have reviewed two books written by the Brimson brothers and we have slagged them both off for being "boring", "nonsense" and "shit" - but not for being racist. In fact, in our review of their first book we point out that "the authors make it clear that they abhor racism."

The Brimsons claim to be "totally honest in our writing". Hal Despite the offer of two interviews with AFA to get across the militant anti-fascist viewpoint these two jokers preferred to invent an AFA interview in their second book, taking the piss out of our politics in the process. Totally honest, eh? And for someone who is so proud of having once been a member of the ANL is it really acceptable to provide an uncritical platform for fascists in both books?

Racists - no. Arseholes - definitely.

Between the Sheets

with Elvis Mondallant



Given the resurgence of fascism across Europe and the dramatic increase in racist attacks it is alarming the way the media report on these matters. A story appeared in October in the East London Advertiser featuring the recently formed Sir Oswald Mosley Klavern of the Ku Klux Klan, illustrated with a large photograph of sword carrying men in sheets and pillowcases. Under the dramatic headline "Race Hate Klan Lures East End Thugs" it is dominated by anti-fascist comment supplied by Searchlight; routine stuff such as "violent, racist thugs", "very very violent people who've been involved in violence for 20 or 30 years" and the suggestion that they may ship over guns from the USA.

While it is perfectly valid to inform people of genuine developments on the Far Right, this sort of sensational coverage deflects attention away from the real threat that is posed by the BNP, especially in East London where they could well win a couple of council seats in May. Indeed the Advertiser first came to AFA's attention in the early 90s with its uncritical coverage of the BNP's 'Rights for Whites' campaign. So while they are prepared to give plenty of column inches to the 'respectable' BNP they can claim their anti-fascist credentials by exposing the 'violent' KKK.

From the sensational to the ridiculous. A strange and somewhat absurd article was carried in The Observer - "Tea and Loathing on Dover Seafront" - the day after anti-fascists had confronted the National Front at Dover. The NF had organised a march to demonstrate against the arrival of Gypsies from the former Czechoslovakia.

The journalist in question, John Sweeney, seems to have found the whole affair fairly amusing. It may seem strange to some readers that a paper like The Observer, which a few years back was carrying in-depth coverage on neo-nazi attacks on refugee hostels in Germany, should carry an article of this nature.

Sweeney has a laugh at the expense of fascists and anti-fascists alike. He compares the "ugly" NF with "not very pretty" elements amongst the anti-fascists, reducing the whole situation to the level of a meaningless street-brawl as "the NF and the counter-NF fed off

each other's hate." Then in some contradiction to his earlier observations has a dig at the two sides for not engaging in a full-blooded punch up. The whole scene is set from the perspective of the Churchill Tea rooms.

The resurgent fascist activity in Germany did not kick off with events like Rostock, it began with relatively low profile and somewhat mundane activity very much like the NF march at Dover. The NF's activity around this issue is designed to propagate hatred and violence against a vulnerable group of people who have been forced to abandon their homes and take refuge in this country. AFA have no objection to a little humour in politics but John Sweeney relegates the serious problem of fascist activity, and the equally serious efforts of anti-fascists to deal with it, to a childish piece of journalism designed to tickle The Observer's middle class readership. Perhaps he could have taken the time to ask the refugees who had just fled from fascist violence in their own country what they thought?

Above we have seen examples of how the problem is misrepresented and dismissed, but in early November something serious happened which the media chose to completely ignore. The French lorry drivers strike got plenty of coverage over here, and then on 6th November an incident took place - "in southern France the first serious violence since the strike started on Sunday flared when a dozen masked men wielding iron bars and baseball bats attacked drivers manning a barricade. The pre-dawn assault put one striker in hospital with serious head injuries. Two others were slightly injured." (The Guardian, 6/11/97). And where was this? Vitrolles - the most recent town to come under FN control.

Maybe libel laws prevented journalists from pointing the finger, maybe it was nothing to do with the FN, but don't you think the possibility that this was a fascist attack should have been considered? 'Fascism' was born in Italy in the 1920s where it was used exclusively to attack the organised working class. The FN have gradually started to introduce their Far Right policies in the towns under their control, this attack should serve as a warning of what is to come as Fascism starts to reassert itself.

"Anti-Fascist Action (AFA), a bunch of crewcutted hardnuts who believe that fascist violence should be met with anti-fascist violence." (Observer, 16/11/97)

Obviously not meant as a compliment but absolutely true - and more importantly it worked. The NF were stopped in Dover.

"The police set their dogs on the AFA crew, expecting them to move, but the AFA hunkered down: bitten but not shy. There was something homo-erotic but weirdly impressive in this acceptance of pain." (Observer, 16/11/97)

Having spoken to the AFA activists involved in the Dover confrontation I can confirm that this says more about the personal fantasies of the journalist than what was going through the minds of the people being bit.

"Clare Short, British Minister for Overseas Development ... was quoted in last week's Sunday Telegraph saying that Orange Order marchers should be treated like those of 'the Ku Klux Klan and Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts.'" (Irish World, 10/10/97)

Clare Short has subsequently denied saying this, which is a shame really because it sounds very similar to AFA's analysis of the reactionary nature of Loyalism.

"In the long run only a political solution will halt the BNP." (Searchlight, November 1997)

Absolutely true - but not exactly consistent. In the past it has been more legislation, bans, MI5, special police squads, ...

"Our firm is pure Aryan and there is, thank God, not a single drop of Jewish blood in it. Heil Hitler." (Swedish businessman writing to German trading partner, 21/2/1941)

Recently discovered documents reveal that during the war firms in 'neutral' Sweden ran a Jewish blacklist so they didn't jeopardise their profits made from trading with Nazi Germany.

REVIEWS

'A GREAT HATRED'
Channel 4 - October 97.

A recent episode of 'Witness' on Channel 4 featured Sunday Times journalist Simon Sebag Montefiore. The purpose of the programme was to put Sinn Fein in the frame for anti-Semitism.

Montefiore traces his family roots to Limerick and the programme begins with an attempt to link an anti-Jewish pogrom that occurred there in 1904 with Sinn Fein, a party that was barely established then. One fact that is established is that the pogrom was propagated by a Fr. Creagh who was later shunted off somewhere very quiet by the church hierarchy.

Montefiore could have spent his time well, investigating anti-Semitism in the Catholic church, however the programme continues with a set of stories of the same ilk as the opening one, mostly involving collaboration between Irish republicans and Nazi Germany.

Although some of the stories had a basis in fact, they were exaggerated, taken out of context and in part invented. The truth is that the Irish republican movement has a proud and militant tradition of confronting fascism.

In August 1933 armed IRA volunteers mobilised to confront a march on Dublin by the fascist Blueshirts. In Kerry, again in the 1930's, at a fascist public meeting, the Blueshirts' leader Eoin O'Duffy was hit on the head with a hammer and his

car set on fire. Later an unexploded bomb was discovered at the site of the meeting. Again it was IRA volunteers that played the key role.

In 1934 Frank Ryan of the IRA helped establish the Republican Congress, an organisation that had opposition to fascism amongst its stated aims. Ryan later led 300 volunteers to serve in the International Brigades during the Spanish civil war. 59 died fighting fascism. In the programme Ryan is presented as a friend of fascism.

There was no attempt by the programme makers to tell any of these stories. Montefiore's programme ends with a shot in the Falls road "where Sinn Fein imposes its will", a swastika is shown daubed on a wall. This is ridiculous, the inference being that there is a connection between modern Irish republicanism and fascism. Anyone who has shown even a mild interest in Irish politics will know that today's fascists are supporters of, and have well established links with, the Loyalist reaction. When a Loyalist spokesman claims that the Protestants in the north of Ireland are in a similar position to that of the Jews in the 1930s reality fades away.

There was no attempt at journalism here in any serious sense. Montefiore and others of his kind are not motivated by journalistic principles, but rather by a hard-right political agenda. This 'documentary' was black propaganda in the best traditions of the British Establishment's dirty tricks department, poison in the well of the peace process in Ireland.

**TUBTHUMPER
CHUMBAWUMBA
CD ALBUM -**

"I get knocked down, but I get up again"

A return to form ... After the terrace chant-like 'Tubthumping' forced their mutated punk/pop onto a new generation of fans, this latest offering arrives. It appears that Chumbawumba certainly have 'got up again' with a return to the pop sensibilities of 1994's Anarchy. Tubthumper is their usual melting pot of entertainment and politics now using (not being used by) the mainstream pop machine as their platform. If anything the music is more polished and the politics still prominent.

More of the same please.

STOP PRESS

In November three people connected with Green Anarchist were jailed for 3 years each. They were found guilty of "conspiring to incite persons unknown to commit criminal damage". This 'conspiracy' consisted of reporting animal rights actions, carried out by other people, in their paper. Despite serious disagreements with Green Anarchist, AFA can see the threat this poses for many radical groups. A full report will appear in the next issue.

'The Spanish Civil War: The People's War Against Fascism'
Exhibition - Marx Memorial Library;
25/10/97 - 8/11/97

The Marx Memorial Library on London's Clerkenwell Green may not be that well known to many anti-fascist activists from this generation, but it can be a valuable source of radical history. Of particular interest to anti-fascists is the International Brigade archive. Last month, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War, a large amount of the material was exhibited; with much of it going on public display for the first time.

As the publicity explained, "The exhibition will present the Spanish Civil War in terms of people's stories. Cameos of Brigaders - soldiers, nurses, doctors, ambulance drivers; people at home raising solidarity funds through the Aid Spain movement; Basque

children who came to Britain for safety - the ordinary men and women who struggled against fascism."

The exhibition succeeded in its aims, using a vast array of photographs, letters and other artefacts from the period, including video showings. As a member of the present generation of militant anti-fascists who I met there said, "Its inspiring isn't it, you can see they were just ordinary men and women."

It would be good to see the exhibition taken around the country, but in the meantime I would urge anti-fascists to drop into the library and see the stuff that is on permanent display.



On the front line during the Spanish Civil War

Anti FASCIST ACTION



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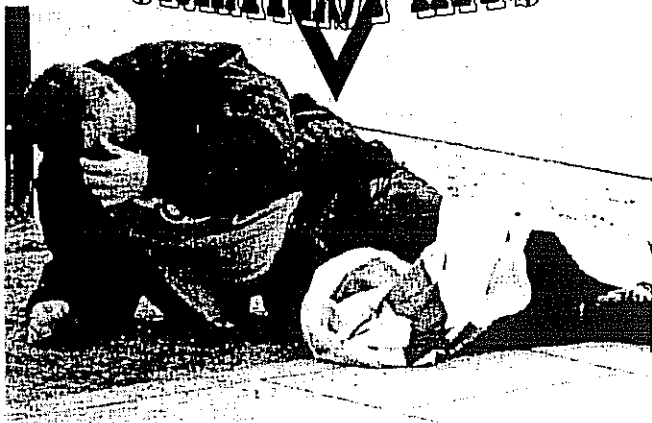
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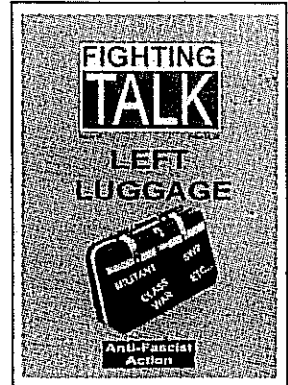
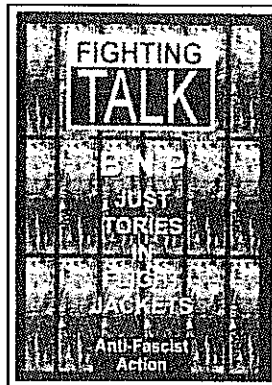
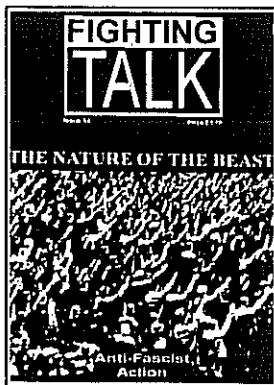
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