NEVER AGAIN?

1999: 11,221,025 VOTES

Anti-Fascist Action
FRONT COVER: The picture shows Jews rounded up by the Nazis, watching their friends and neighbours being executed and knowing that they are next. As the 20th Century draws to a close with ethnic cleansing sweeping the fringes of Europe and with parties of the Far Right gaining over eleven million votes in the June European elections the statement “Never Again” becomes a question.

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The AFA Web Site is back on line at:
www.geocities.com/capitolhill/senate/5602

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
Anti Fascist Action

Contact the National Office for details of local activities / contacts

SCOTLAND

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 PO Box 421
 Edinburgh EH11 1QD

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 PO Box 180, Glasgow G4 8AS

THE SOUTH

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Colchester AFA
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17

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Please note that a number of AFA branches have had recent problems with their PO Boxes. When writing to an AFA branch please notify the National Office so we can check if mail has arrived.
Welcome to issue 22 of Fighting Talk. We start with our usual round up of news and views from the front line against fascism.

BNP LEADERSHIP ELECTION

At the time of writing the leadership battle in the BNP has just developed into open warfare. The contest is between Tyndall and Nick Griffin, one of the key ‘modemisers’ in the party. Tyndall has savaged Griffin in the August issue of Spearhead, accusing him of being a State agent, knowingly or not. His argument is based on (1) Griffin’s long record of splitting organisations he has been involved in, especially the post-Tyndall NF, (2) the timing of the challenge during the follow-up work to their Euro-election campaign, and (3) similarities to the FN split between Le Pen and Megret, which his claims was the work of the French State and/or a Jewish plot.

Searchlight, no strangers to intrigue themselves, have suggested the anti-Tyndall move is sponsored by an extremist right-wing group of Tories and ex-BNP activists called the Bloxham Forum, and Griffin in fact is only a front man being controlled by Tony Locombert and Michael Newland (the very busy BNP Press Officer). The idea that the extreme right-wing of the Tory Party should mix with fascists is given credence by the recent revelations that Tony Mowatt and other people with the Italian fascist National Alliance and Conservative Future (the present incarnation of the discredited Federation of Conservative Students) already has formal links with the National Alliance youth wing.

Whatever the truth is about the reasons behind the leadership battle, and despite the internal disruption it appears to be causing, one thing is certain: anti-fascists must not take their eyes off the ball. Like France, this feud will only do short-term damage. The overall political situation remains the same, and where no progressive working class alternative exists, the opportunities for the Far Right will remain. Dissolution with Labour is growing, as shown by their loss of Liverpool and Sheffield city councils in the May local elections. Any doubts about Labour’s abandonment of the working class should be quickly dispelled by remembering the working class’s total abandonment of Labour when they lost all their seats in the traditional Welsh stronghold of the Rhondda Valley. In light of this anti-fascists should take advantage of any internal fighting in the BNP by redoubling their efforts to prevent the fascists sinking roots in any working class community. The worst thing we could do is sit back and wait for the fascists to reorganise.

EURO ELECTIONS

In contrast to Searchlight’s description of the BNP’s 100,000+ votes in June’s Euro-election as “desoriey”, and the 11 and a quarter million votes gained by the Far Right in Europe as a “setback”, AFA’s analysis is that the threat from the fascists continues to grow.

In Britain the BNP managed to overcome all the obstacles put in their way to prevent them getting a TV broadcast, standing 79 candidates and raising over £300,000. The BNP’s verdict on their 102,000 votes was “Euro Mission Accomplished”, partly because they were able to finance and run a national campaign, but also by beating their main electoral challenge from the left of Labour, the Socialist Labour Party, in 7 out of the 10 regions where they were in competition. Curiously Searchlight compared the BNP’s Euro-election votes unfavourably to their performance in the 1997 general election; in fact in many areas the BNP doubled their percentage of the vote.

In the May local elections the BNP only stood a handful of candidates, but Steve Edwards’ 17.2% in Tipton showed the gains the fascists are making with their Euro-Nationalist strategy.

The BNP have pointed out the similarity between the Tipton result and the vote they got in the election before Beacock’s victory on the Isle of Dogs in 1993; they see their next breakthrough could be in the West Midlands.

Another feature of recent BNP election work has been on the media front. The Euro-election campaign was launched on the Internet, making it easy for journalists who are notoriously lazy, and avoiding the possibility of disruption.

There is evidence to suggest that the media as a whole are starting to take the BNP seriously, and it is undoubtedly true that the BNP take the media seriously. They claim to have fixed election material to 30% of local papers, and have challenged inaccurate stories promptly, forcing editors to make changes or carry BNP statements. Anti-fascists must respond with equal vigour.

THE ARCHIVIST
AFA ROUND-UP

TASK FORCE

In the course of the extensive media coverage of the nail bombs, it was announced that Searchlight supreme Gerry Gable was a member of the Metropolitan Police’s Violent and Racial Crime Task Force. The difference between AFA and Searchlight are not personal or sectarian - but political. It is impossible to develop an argument that the police have ever played a constructive role in fighting fascism, and now Searchlight are in a formal alliance with the very people who harass, intimidate, arrest and imprison militant anti-fascists. A contradiction too far.

REFUGEE RAZOR GANG SLASHED US TO PIECES

REFUGEES

When refugees attacked some local youngsters at a Dover fairground in August, the right-wing media went into a predictable frenzy. More significant was how the Left and liberal press presented the incident. Unless you deliberately want to pick a fight with the white working class at every opportunity, there is no point in trying to defend the indefensible. Stabbing children is wrong. The Guardian summed up the liberal dilemma when one of its columnists decided it would sound better if they altered reality and said in fact it was local stabbers killing refugees. It is easy for liberal commentators to say ‘refugees welcome here’ when they have no impact on their lives, either real or perceived. As working class communities lose more and more essential services through local and national government cuts, it is easy to see why people are concerned. It is right that Britain should accept refugees, but if they are to be housed in already hard-pressed working class communities then their arrival should coincide with an increase in local resources to cater for the extra demands. If local services improved as a result of the arrival of refugees it is hard to imagine that the racists and fascists who try to exploit the situation would have so much success. When the Left play the refugees off against the locals it makes a bad situation worse.

A few days after the Dover attack an event in Oxford was reported in the national press involving “masked men with axes” attacking a refugees house. Socialist Worker enthusiastically took up the story, referring to a “racist gang” using “iron bars, axes and bottles”. Local enquiries revealed that indeed there had been an incident when, during a game of football between locals and refugees, “a bed tackle provoked one of the refugees, and he hit one of the local boys who has a bit of a reputation.” (Oxford Mail, 17/8/89). As a result of that the refugees windows were put in that night. Was this a premeditated racist attack in the wake of events in Dover or was it a dispute over football? Only if you support the refugees against the working class is there any benefit in distorting or exaggerating incidents like these.

Refugees aren’t housed in wealthy areas like Mayfair or the ‘stockbroker belt’ where money is no problem, but put in working class areas where people are already under pressure. Is it possible that the decision makers know the arrival of refugees will serve to divide communities and deflect attention away from their inability to provide decent services in the first place?

RACE ATTACKS AND REFUGEES

OXFORD

Just before the nail bombings in London the Oxford Union (a student debating society patronised by the great and the good) invited BNP leader John Tyndall to take part in a debate on racism. The invitation led to predictable outrage from liberals and assorted left-wingers, who called on the police to ban the meeting.

In the context of the divided city that is Oxford, the combination of Tyndall and the Oxford Union was definitely a two fingered salute to the local population. The university and its students are not liked and the Oxford Union is a prominent symbol of wealth and establishment privilege. By inviting Tyndall the Union basically showed its contempt for the large working class, Asian and African-Caribbean population of East Oxford. As word of the visit spread a lot of locals were of the view that the meeting won’t ahead then it would be effectively a declaration of war and should be responded to accordingly.

Then the nail bombs went off. Almost immediately the police refused to provide security for the meeting, saying they couldn’t guarantee public order because of the climate created by the bombs and saying that there was a real prospect of serious violence on the streets of Oxford.

Not surprisingly, with the police unprepared to defend its insolence, the Union withdrew the invitation a few days before, then went on to whine in the local press about freedom of speech being denied by the threat of violence from extremists.

The ivory towers of Oxford are known for being completely insulated from the real world everyone else has to live in. The Union may venture to renew the invitation to Tyndall (or maybe Griffiths) in the coming academic year. If they want to inaugurate a new and unpleasant chapter in the centuries old tension between “town” and “gown” they could hardly do better.

SOUTH WEST

2000 AFA leaflets were produced and distributed at Post Office Delivery Offices by Bristol and S.W. AFA and supporters (including our friends working for the PO) urging postal workers to refuse to deliver fascist election material. The national CWU leadership attempted to obstruct this action by pressurising local officials of the union. Needless to say their efforts came to nothing. With hardly an exception we met with an approving response, the most encouraging coming from an office in Bristol where a known BNP member worked. We were approached and told that their presence and purpose had “made their day” and that “this is one in the eye for those anarcho inside there” (i.e. the BNP member and a lonely supporter).

The result was the non-delivery of BNP election material over large areas of Bristol and the South West and gaining coverage in the Bristol Evening Post.

One of the PO management’s strategies was to try to weaken the response by preventing collective discussion and decisions on the question of the ‘conscience clause’ agreed with the CWU. AFA’s activity went a long way to ensuring that individuals were not left isolated and that the issue had a thorough airing in the offices. In addition our activity has increased the isolation of BNP members working in the PO locally. There are now moves by anti-fascists working at the PO to expel the
BNP organiser (Cowie) from the union, AFA activists and supporters have ensured a growing mood amongst PO workers in support of such a move. This activity is not without it’s risks to our people, and the PO is attempting to minimise one of ours for their role in the campaign.

WORCESTER - NF

In the run-up to St. George’s day the Midlands press launched into a wave of hysteria on hearing that the National Front had applied to commemorate St. George’s day with a march through Worcester on April 24th. The NF, once dominant in Midlands fascist circles, are now on the brink of extinction, with only the resonance of their name and past notoriety to save them from total collapse. The media and ANL opportunists weren’t willing to let the truth get in the way of a good story though, despite protestsations from AFA.

The media predictably ignored AFA’s plea for objectivity, instead the circus gained momentum as the day drew nearer. Rumours ranged from bans, restrictions and cancellations, through to predictions of ugly street violence as hoards of hostile left-wing elements were planning to encroach on the town.

West Midlands AFA viewed the situation with caution from the outset. In light of the fact that NF demonstrations had been used by the police in London and Dover as means of surveillance operations against AFA. Any speculative notions of the NF being used as ’stooges’, unwittingly or otherwise, were made more plausible when two individuals from near Worcester were visited by Special Branch on the 19th April. Neither were AFA members, but both had contacted AFA some months before after being on the receiving end of threats and intimidation from local National Front members. Special Branch clearly saw the outermost periphery as the most likely weak link in the AFA chain, and were keen to find out AFA’s actual plans for the day of the NF march, as well as requesting names and other details of who was running, and running with, AFA. An understandable concern that AFA may end up falling foul of someone else’s agenda on the St. George’s march led to a decision to stand down the stewards group and deploy intelligence gatherers to assess the situation instead. Recklessness is not prerequisite to AFA’s reputation for madness!

AFA’s suspicions were confirmed on the day, when the sheer scale of the police operation became clear. Under POA restrictions the march had supposedly been brought forward to 8.30am. A large ANL counter demonstration was allowed to gather behind police lines nearby, through the large contingent of Asian youth reported in Searchlight was entirely fictitious. Nothing happened until 11am, when police told the ANL to disperse as there would be “no NF march”. Most of them left compliantly. This was the ANL “out of the NF that Searchlight described in their June issue.

Searchlight also proclaimed, incidentally without a shred of evidence, that the taxi drivers of Worcester had pledged to strike if the march went ahead. Another phoney victory in the phoney war.

AFA were meanwhile aware of 10 - 15 NF in a pub half a mile away, but what was most notable about the pub itself was the 20 or so police videos and cameramen in the vicinity, as well as a gang of young ’casuals’ that were deployed by the police to rub shoulders with the ANL, in order to glean information and identify ringleaders - a public order tactic that has led to several imprisonments in Worcestershire over the last twelve months, using buttonhole cameras and ’on the spot’ ID parades. When approached by AFA regarding the identities of these ’friendly’ casuals one of the remaining ANL organisers nonchalantly remarked: ’Oh, they’re with us...’ Two hours later the same ’casuals’ were spotted elsewhere by an AFA photographer, laughing and joking as they boarded a police car. None are so blind as those who want to be, still a recruit’s a recruit, isn’t it?

It’s arguable that with many of the ANL deliberately put off by the police these handful of NF could conceivably have been the honey-trap for the expected AFA mobilisation. Whether this operation was bait for AFA or a decoy on behalf of the NF is debatable. Thanks to AFA’s initial caution we’ll never know.

But while all this was going on the main NF contingent were reportedly stopped by the police preparing to march in Kidderminster, some 15 miles away. Searchlight reported in June that 20 NF took part, and then in July decided to double the figure, AFA intelligence, unlike the ANL, were there in Kidderminster too, and it’s fair to say that 40 or so NF took part.

However, the point is not the march itself, but the scale of the police mobilisation and their complicity with the NF. The march was overseen by a huge police operation comprising a phenomenal 20- police personnel vans, 4 dog vans, a large number of marked cars, several bikes and in the region of fifteen unmarked vehicles. This was a conservative estimate for Kidderminster alone.

Searchlight’s repeated calls for the State to get involved with ’anti-fasists’ certainly came to fruition across Worcestershire on the 24th April - rendering any sort of effective physical operation virtually impossible. Those anti-fasists determined that physical opposition is still the only way to operate should consider their options if such a zero
Tolerance attitude is to be applied by the State to such a noisy fascist mobilization. What will be the police position when the BNP return to the streets, as they increasingly will, only with a bigger mandate and much higher profile? The insurance policy of a twofold strategy thus becomes paramount.

**WORCESTER - BNP**

In July Searchlight released details, at 36 hours notice, of a BNP meeting to be held in a Worcester leisure centre on Sunday 18th July. The meeting was to incorporate a NF guest speaker - possibly heralding the predicted Midlands NF transition into the ranks of the BNP, which would effectively give the BNP a fascist 'monopoly' in the region.

However, as soon as word spread the venue management pulled the plug, leaving the Anti Nazi League safe to call for a silent demonstration 'in solidarity with the local community'. On the day an hour into the demonstration and still less than ten combined ANL and Trades Union Council had turned out to vent their muted solidarity with Worcester's working class, many of whom swarmed, worked out and played football in the centre, oblivious to this pitiful gesture.

The ANL were clearly not feeling sufficiently brave to unveil their placards, so deciding on a more overt approach, an ANL observation team amiably approached the placet to discuss the Searchlight issue. Unfortunately the Afghan NVA must have appeared uncomfortably working class as most of the 'demonstrators' dispersed like a shot to the safety of their cars and the inside of the leisure centre. The two or three thousand can only be compared to rabbits frozen in the glare of headlights. Despite the scouts iteration that they were in fact ANL, and a lengthy and articulate critique of dubious Searchlight policy, the ANL organiser nervously mumbled something about paranoia and he too hastily made for cover. Feeling somewhat ostracised and unfed, the BNP scouts left - consoling themselves that what had been a chaty affair for the ANL had truly been transformed into an eerily silent vigil by the scouts' presence. The ANL, by their behaviour, were as shocked as they were shocked.

The following day the Worcester press claimed that 'celebrations as BNP faded' - a claim made by the ANL and representatives of the 'gay community'. They went on to boast: 'Seven ANL supporters turned up with placards...despite (or because of) the management's decision to cancel the extremist luncheon rally. We did expect the BNP to turn up, so we brought placards to stage a peaceful demonstration. Fortunately none of them have turned up. There was a lot of publically saying it was canceled, so that's why the huge numbers of Worcester ANL we were expecting haven't turned up'.

Walter Carr, local BNP organiser, was at home, content that the political vacuum was safe for another day. Carr was cooler with the press, stating: 'We are law abiding citizens and propose to carry on within the law. Only next time, thanks to Searchlight's insipid press release, AFA intelligence will have to go through the time consuming and costly business of relocating the BNP branch again from scratch.

There's an old saying that you have to step back in order to step forward, which is a component part of AFA's longevity. However, Searchlight and the ANL leadership will proclaim another momentous victory, despite the facts. Searchlight's negligent disclosure of the BNP's monthly venue now, when they have clearly known for some time, is more proof that Searchlight cover the value of information, be it for financial or politically ambiguous reasons, for more than the cause of genuine anti-fascism itself.

**SOLIDARITY FEDERATION**

In May AFA was invited to speak at a benefit for a jailed Czech anti-fascist, organised by the Solidarity Federation. To AFA's surprise, an individual who had recently been expelled from North London AFA was also invited. This character was thrown out for grasping up a friend of several long standing members, and despite attempts to persuade him of the error of his ways, he insisted on going through with the court case. After a three day trial he was convicted of a not guilty.

In light of this known grass being invited, AFA decided not to speak and told him to leave. On the day out we got a couple of steps, which in the circumstances was light punishment. Most people have nothing but contempt for grasses, but despite the Solidarity Federation not sharing this view, they decided to spread a very inaccurate version of events around the anarchist scene. On being challenged by AFA, a letter finally arrived demanding that AFA condemn the actions taken by its members. Not only does AFA stand firmly behind the people who removed a self-confessed, lying grass from a political event, but asks the Solidarity Federation - WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE PLAYING AT?

"For me what was extremely worrying, even frightening, was that the percentage of votes for the fascist British National Party was up from 1997." (Arthur Scargill at the Euro-election results, August 1999.)

With the BNP polling over 100,000 votes in the Euro-election, and the Far Right picking up 11 and a quarter million votes across Europe, it is easy to understand Scargill's concern, even if it is somewhat belated. With the ANL dead in the water and Searchlight putting their faith in the police to deal with the fascists, the same police who enthusiastically attack anti-fascists at every opportunity, it is becoming increasingly clear that we need an organisation with a strategy to deal with the fascists' move away from street confrontation and into the arena of community politics. Not only is AFA unique in having that strategy, but also the ambition and commitment to implement it.

What we urgently need is the money to finance it. We appeal to our readers and supporters to take this issue seriously, because it would be criminal if our success is limited by a lack of funds.

As part of our effort to improve the efficiency of the organisation we have recently reorganised the national office. We need to raise £1,000 to cover the cost of essential equipment, including a computer, fax machine, photocopier and telephone.

Cheques/PDs should be made out to AFA and sent to BM 1734, London, WC1N 3XX. Please notify the office on 07000 - 669 569 of any donations sent through the post because mail does go missing!
FOOTBALL

LEVELLING THE SCORE

One Dead, One Shot And Still Counting...

The press across Britain was full of stories about Old Firm hatred after the last league match between Celtic and Rangers was marred by a "pitch invasion" (by four fans), and the injury to the referee Hugh Dallas after a coin thrown from the Celtic end struck him on the head. This followed some dubious refereeing decisions during the game and was compounded by Dallas awarding a soft penalty to Rangers immediately after the coin-throwing incident. That was the cue for the "invading" fans to attempt to get to referee Dallas. After the game, there were street clashes between groups of rival fans.

The next game between the two teams—a few weeks later they met again in the Scottish Cup Final—featured the heaviest police presence around a Scottish football match for decades. Despite this police crackdown, however, "celebrating" Rangers fans were able to go on the rampage throughout Glasgow after the match. A number of Irish pubs in the south of the city came under attack from Rangers' hooligan gang, the ICF (inter-City Firm). However, the most disturbing aspect of the after-match violence was the high number of random sectarian attacks made upon Celtic supporters by large groups of Rangers fans.

One attack led to the stabbing to death of 16 year-old Celtic fan Thomas McFadden. Ironically, Thomas had not actually attended the Cup Final and instead elected to watch it on TV in a local Irish club near to his home. On his way back home after the match Thomas was attacked by Rangers fans and killed. There appears to be no other reason for the assault made on Thomas other than that he was wearing a Celtic shirt.

The murder of Thomas McFadden bears an uncanny resemblance to the murder three years ago of another 16 year-old Celtic fan, Mark Scott. Mark was on his way home from a match between Celtic and Partick Thistle when he was attacked by the Loyalist, Jason Campbell. Campbell cut Mark's throat from ear to ear and the teenager bled to death in the street within minutes. Jason Campbell is now serving a life sentence in a Scottish prison.

In the intervening period between the two murders there have been scores of attacks made upon Celtic supporters by Loyalists and Rangers fans. One young man from Knightswood, passing by the Loyalist Rosevale Bar in Partick was set upon by Loyalists and received 40 stitches to face and head wounds. The Rosevale Bar is a favourite drinking den of the Loyalist sympathisers who produce the "Follow Follow" Rangers fanzine. Another attack in the Yoker area left three Celtic fans (one of them a woman) hospitalized and traumatised. They were kicked unconscious by a gang of Rangers fans. One of them suffered a broken jaw and the others facial injuries which will mean that they are scarred for life. When the victims contacted the police they were treated with some derision and disinterest. After several
FOOTBALL

attempts to get the police to act on their complaint, they were informed by a
detective that if they could find out
themselves who carried out the attack
then maybe the police would take some
action against their assailants. Obviously
this is a new approach to detective work
on the part of the Strathclyde police - ask
the victims to investigate the crimes against
them?!

On the same day as Thomas McFadden
was murdered, another teenager, Liam
Sweeney, was stabbed by Rangers fans.
This incident took place within a stone's
throw of the McFadden murder as Liam
waited for an ordered in his local Chinese
Takeaway. Liam was not wearing any
colours but might have been identified
as a Catholic as a result of wearing his
name on the football order. He had a
half pint of blood - more than was in his
blood count - and could not explain his
attackers were not rough. More than a
mile away, half way on the
Toryglen district, another Celtic fan was
shot in the chest by a crossbow as he
left a pub in the Celtic district. Only a
half mile from the scene of the murder of
Thomas McFadden's murder and the
terrible attack on Liam Sweeney. The
Blackpool pub came under attack from
every gang of Rangers supporters who
arrived left was 25 or more. As a
large group of support they left on when
they arrived with a surprising, a Celtic
supporter who had defended the kid
from the attack was dragged out with
two Rangers fans who had part of the
attack that night. But the presumption is
doubt the police. Glasgow police believe
that these could be arrestable matters to keep the figure fairly
"even" between the two rival support.

However, the nature of sectarianism in the
Rangers Football Club and the
Loyalists who follow the club's
Vice-Chairman, Donald Finlay
QC, was captured on video following
Loyalist favourites of "The Sash" and
"The Billy Boys" with a song that pays tribute to
the Bridgeton-based fascist gang of the '20s
and '30s led by William "Billy Boy"
Fullerton. The song contains the
words "We're up to our knees in Fenian blood,
sunder or you'll die...". That night in
Glasgow, with the murder of Thomas
McFadden and the many other attacks
upon Celtic fans, it would seem that Mr.
Finlay's, and indeed the wishes of many
of Rangers Loyalist fans, came true. The
press were outraged that Finlay could have
displayed such insensitivity. Finlay was
outraged that the press, through the
collaboration of a video film supplied to
them by a Rangers fan who privately
taped the sing-song, should have the
tenacity to publicly expose him for being
a sectarian bigot. Indeed, the
Rangers fan who sold the Daily Record the
tape of Finlay's sectarian rant has himself
been the victim of violent threats and has
taken to sleeping in his car away from
his home after the "Follow Follow"
fanzine printed his name and address
in their first issue of the new season.

Since the Cup Final the Scottish press
have been whipped into line by the
outpouring of thinly veiled anti-Catholic
sectarianism which surrounded the speech
of the Education Minister, James
MacMillan. MacMillan's comments concerning
the traditionally Catholic part of the
Scottish society and his press release
in which he described Catholicism as the
"biggest single factor in this country"
were then either the murder of Thomas
McFadden or the bigoted of Donald
Finlay.

The sectarianism of the Scottish
Catholic Archdiocese, as MacMillan
knew, was campaigning of what he had been
saying. The reaction has been
illuminated in Scottish Labour's First
Minister of the new Scottish
government's band but his handle
the type of sectarianism is now different.
Sir James MacMillan was a member of the
Church of Scotland and the Scottish
Sectarian Party leader and also Member of the Scottish Parliament
(NMP). He is known to be a strong supporter of the Scottish
Socialists. His "tongue" is often heard in the
campaign against sectarianism. It
"predominantly a middle
chronicling of attacks by attacking
Celtic fans for being "bad" as Rangers
fans because what Rangers fans want
we're up to our knees in Fenian blood..." song is similar also sing-
badest version of the Irish
nation by containing the words
"there's the Protestant in us...". Not
surprisingly, Sheridan made no reference to the
sectarian attacks and murder of
Celtic fans or to the fact that the most
progressive elements at Celtic Park, as
represented by the TAL fanzine, Celtic
Fans Against Fascism and the
Campaign Against Sectarian Attacks,
have consistently attacked the minority
sectarian element among the Celtic
support. There exists no such element
at Rangers, whose fanzines and fan
spokespersons actually perpetuate
sectarianism and bigotry. The SSP's
own newspaper printed two articles
recently which whilst acknowledging the
existence (in the past) of institutionalised
sectarianism, dismissed MacMillan's
allegations, denied the existence of an
Irish Community ("...the Irish are now
Scots Catholics") and went on to
conclude that the energy of their readers
should be channelled into fighting the
greater evil of "racism". That being anti-
black and anti-Irish racism. There can't
be anti-Irish racism (only anti-Scottish
Catholic sectarianism, which in their view
is overestimates) if you deny the very
existence of an Irish community.

The fact is that many Celtic fans would
agree with much of what James
MacMillan said but nonetheless they
would expand his right to say it. There is,
however, much to what he says about the
institutionalised nature of sectarianism in
Scotland. Sectarian attacks remain unmonitored
and unacknowledged by the police and local
authorities - a point demonstrated by
some of the earlier examples are not
considered worth of investigation by the police. Sectarian top
terence are maintained and sectarian songs and
denied to court sectarian murderers and
who press and the rest see nothing
raken of the cost of Scotland's society. Just
the bishops view at least two sets of
supporters. Their rush to normally even
up to the scene on the courts and suspicious
the world. As long as this situation remains
the League, perhaps, help in the sand
in front of sectarian attacks, our
campaign will continue.
"FLabby Pacifism"

FASCISM - THEORY AND PRACTICE
by DAVE RENTON.
Published by Pluto Press.

At a time when the far Right have just polled over 11 million votes in the European elections in June, and the BNP more than doubled their vote in a number of parts of Britain, this book clearly shows the failure of the SWP/ANL to come to terms with modern day fascism.

Much of the book is an academic analysis of what other writers and historians have said on the subject since the 1920s, and is written in such a way as to be of little use to active anti-fascists, but when the author (a member of the SWP/ANL) deals with the current period the weakness of the ANL strategy is fully exposed.

It goes without saying that AFA is written out of history, and gross exaggeration is commonplace, but his comments on the BNP’s election victory on the Isle of Dogs (1993) draws attention to the flawed analysis. He scoffs at the BNP’s anticipation of further electoral success, based on the fact that Beckton lost his seat 8 months later, without saying anything on the significance of this episode. Firstly, despite considerable anti-fascist propaganda, Beckton’s election showed the limitations of just being ‘anti’ and the need to put forward a positive alternative; this lead to AFA developing the Filling The Vacuum (FTV) strategy. Secondly, there is no mention of the Left’s support for Labour (who won the seat from the BNP) when it was local disillusion with the Labour Council that caused the problem in the first place. This put the SWP/ANL in the position of defending the status quo, of anti-fascists being hostile to the working class desire for change.

Renton writes that “the revival of the Labour Party as an electoral force undermined the BNP and made it harder for (them) to pose as a viable alternative.” In fact it is precisely because of the election of Labour, both locally and nationally, armed with its anti-working class agenda that, in the absence of a genuine working class alternative, allows the BNP to pose as a very ‘viable alternative’. As he states later on, “if anti-fascists fail to use the language of class against capital, then they will not persuade working class or lower middle class people who are genuinely angry about the world they live in.” So quite how the SWP/ANL manage to resolve the contradiction between their support for Labour and their role as a ‘revolutionary socialist party fighting for the interests of the working class’ remains a puzzle; and by all accounts is starting to split the party.

According to Renton “Beckton lost his seat in May 1994 and since then the BNP have gone into decline.” This is absurd. Not only do the SWP/ANL ignore the writing on the wall after the Isle of Dogs election with regards to anti-fascist strategy, but basic reality is denied. Since 1994 the BNP have adopted the Euro-Nationalist strategy, so successful elsewhere, and have steadily built the necessary infrastructure to sustain it. Even the most basic knowledge of fascism in Britain would reveal that the BNP have grown in numbers, equipment, technical expertise, and the ability to exploit the media. On what basis can you claim the BNP has “gone into decline”?

Further evidence that the SWP/ANL strategy is built on sand is Renton’s assertion that despite the growth of the Far Right, there is also a “rebirth of radical white working class activism. Until the Left start to represent the needs of these communities the fascists will continue to grow.

The reason FT is reviewing this book in some detail is because the “final section proposes a strategy by which it may be possible to drive fascism, once again, beyond the pale”. So what is this strategy?

Renton starts off by arguing that the best way to defeat fascism is through the United Front - a strategy of working class unity. When Trotsky developed the theory in the 1930s he argued that the Socialist and Communist parties should unite to beat the fascists; in those days both parties were mass working class parties. Nowadays Labour (the equivalent of European Socialist or
Social Democratic parties) is not a mass party but a middle class electoral machine, and their standing in working class communities is well illustrated by the fact that they lost all their council seats in the former Labour stronghold of the Rhondda Valley in May’s council elections. Unity with Labour only serves to discredit anti-fascists and helps the BNP appear as a radical alternative. Similarly the Communist Party has all but disappeared and certainly the SWP are in no position to present themselves as a mass working class party. So the two central components of the United Front strategy, mass working class reformist and revolutionary parties, are missing. Hardly an auspicious start! And its worth pointing out that as far back as April 1990, when the BNP’s Rights For Whites campaign was launched, AFA wrote to the SWP inviting them to “join us to fight fascism”. Not only did they not reply, but two years later, having made no effort to fill the political vacuum created by AFA, they relaunched the ANL to try (unsuccessfully) to duplicate the work AFA was already doing. So much for unity. As for his claim that “the ANL was established as an orthodox United Front”, not only have we shown that the necessary components are missing, but the ANL’s cooperation with Searchlight and the Labour Party, who work closely with the police and intelligence agencies, in fact makes it a Popular Front in Marxist definition (ie an alliance with anti-fascist sections of the establishment) - or perhaps better described as an Unpopular Front.

Renton then goes on to say that “where fascism is already seeking to control the streets, the most important thing to do is to contain the fascists”. But when SWP 1980 the SWP have often tried to reduce militant anti-fascism to some form of gang warfare, having expelled their own squads, and while they deflected criticism of their abandonment of anti-fascism during the 80s by using this sort of smear, it takes on a new meaning in the present situation where the Far Right are growing, but largely invisible. Just because Searchlight have told them the BNP are in decline doesn’t mean its true, and in yet another contradictory move, it is in fact the ANL who insist on mobilising against the few remaining fascists of the dead-in-the-water NF while failing to develop a strategy against the real threat posed by the BNP.

This failure to address the political problems facing anti-fascists is matched by their inability to deal with the physical side of the struggle. Masters of the militant slogan “Smash the BNP!”, “Any Means Necessary” etc. their confusion is complete when contemplating anything more demanding than lollipop-waving. Renton advocates a militant No Platform position and urges “anti-fascists to go into areas where fascists seem strongest” but then argues that any “physical confrontation … must be primarily non-violent”. The contradiction is glaringly obvious, and any of the young students sent into the BNP ambush on the ANL’s first ever mobilisation (east London 1992) could testify to the serious injuries that are inflicted when security is ignored. It is no consolation for him to add “where fascism poses a significant threat, anti-fascists may have to defend themselves”, because if this isn’t organised it won’t happen.

Significantly, when he describes the success of the original ANL in the 1970s he mentions the leaflets, the badges and the carnivals … but not the squads. The success of the ANL was the combination of physical and political opposition, one could not have succeeded without the other. Not only were the squads used to disrupt fascist marches and meetings, sometimes with devastating effect, but when the police or papers attacked, fascist sales were targeted in retaliation to dissipate the NF from this course of action. And it worked.

In a bad attack of liberalism Renton says “for anti-fascists, violence is not part of their world view” and dismisses them as “professional anti-fascists”. The whole history of anti-fascism, in this
country and everywhere else, has involved the use of force - so why should revolutionaries be so keen to distance themselves from it? Should we be ashamed of the Italian Arditi Del Popolo, the German Red Front Fighters League or even the International Brigades? Is it because the middle classes see violence as right-wing, are they scared of upsetting their friends in the Labour Party (Peter Hain MP is the Chair), or do they simply not have the members with the stomach for the fight?

Whatever the answer, it has always been a dishonest position, putting 'mass action' against organised physical opposition, when in fact they are complimentary tactics. A similar argument was put forward by the leadership of the German Communist Party in the struggle for power with Hitler's Nazis, leading to a militant from the Communist Youth to comment, "we don't care for the idea that if we are murdered by SA (Brownshirt) men, a small part of the working class will carry out a hooligan protest, which only makes the Nazis laugh for having got off so lightly". And even Trotsky, the theoretical godfather of the SWP's anti-fascism, insisted that "fighting squads must be created". His strategy that "nothing increases the insolence of the fascists so much as 'labour pacifism' on the part of the workers organisations" and denounced the "political cowardice" of those who argue "we need mass self-defence and not the militia. But without organised combat detachments, the most heroic masses will be smashed bit by bit by the fascist gangs".

Apart from the obvious necessity of being able to defend your own activities, at present the need for the use of physical force against fascists is minimal. While this may only be temporary, it does call into question the No Platform strategy. Again Renton is found lacking in terms of understanding the current situation.

In the 1970s No Platform was an achievable objective, but in the late 80s, with the BNP withdrawing from public activities, it becomes less relevant. Even when the NF have held an occasional march, never numbering more than 500, the size of the police operation against anti-fascists has prevented any effective confrontation. And despite tampering with the numbers of candidates required to get TV broadcasts and the increase in the cost of standing those candidates, designed to exclude the BNP, the fascists have succeeded in meeting the new targets and gaining a platform. The media are prepared to discuss Euro-Nationalism quite favourably at times, but even so the BNP are developing their use of the Internet and video to ensure their propaganda can't be banned.

His coverage of European events shows the same gap between theory and reality, suggesting mass protests have stopped the growth of fascism. Activists on the ground have a very different view, leading an experienced militant from Hanoi to comment, "it is bullshit and this Dave Renton knows nothing about fascists and anti-fascists in Germany". He claims that the Far Right are very weak, an absurd assessment, particularly in light of the DVU entering regional government in Saxony-Anhalt earlier this year, and now Brandenburg as well.

Even if Renton's motive for writing this book was to challenge the views of right-wing historians, it doesn't alter the fact that it presents a strategy that doesn't work. The SWP/ANL have made no analysis of the changes in British fascist strategy and are sticking to a blueprint drawn up by Trotsky in the 1930s (but never implemented), which largely worked in the 1970s, but is redundant today. His closing comment is that fascism will only be finitely defeated when capitalism is overthrown, but with an anti-fascist strategy that makes no impact on the fascists, what chance have they got of overthrowing the capitalist State?

AFA verdict: This is not anti-fascism.
In this issue we look at BNP analysis of the Euro-elections in relation to their new strategy.

Generally speaking the BNP pronounced themselves satisfied with the results of the Euro-elections (Nick Griffin in July's Spearhead). More than 100,000 people voted for the BNP despite the adverse effect of the London nail bombs and the UKIP taking a lot of the anti-European vote. The BNP attributed the drop in its vote in London seats to the bombings but in many seats outside London the party doubled or even trebled its vote compared to the general election. Uxbridge, Bournemouth West and Cillingham all saw an increase of 200% or more. Whilst many might claim that 100,000 votes nationally is still small potatoes, the fact is the numbers are growing and are well in advance of those winning for parties of the conservative Left (e.g. SLP, see the quote from Arthur Scargill in 'In the Area').

Griffin provides a very upbeat assessment in July's Spearhead. He sees two significant implications of the collapse in voter turn out, a factor which the media wrung its hands over for a few days and then quickly forgot about. Firstly Griffin states: "Growing popular refusal to participate in elections does not mark a permanent loss of interest in politics ... it is simply the calm before the storm" (emphasis added). When turn-out of those registered to vote is down to 13% on some estates in this country, it is clear that none of the establishment parties have a mandate to govern any longer in those areas. Griffin recognises this not as a symptom of popular apathy but of popular disillusionment. This disillusionment represents a clear political opportunity (and an implicit rejection of the relevance of Europe to the majority of the British electorate), for anyone willing to put in the work.

Griffin's ambition is to seize this opportunity, through the expanding grass roots and locally relevant activities of BNP branches. And this is more than about campaigning on 'political' issues. Patriot and August's Spearhead report on a "Family Day" organised in the West Midlands in July, with over 150 people attending, half of them children, with games, food stalls and a magician. People may laugh at the idea that this represents anything at all, but the truth is that this kind of activity can reap significant rewards (see below). And how do you tackle this? Militant disruption of such an event is going to look rather bad in the local press and you can bet the BNP would ring every ounce of publicity out of it.

The second lesson concerns the first. The collapse in voter turn out, combined with the introduction of proportional representation and the likely establishment of elected regional assemblies means that any party standing for election which can turn out its supporters on polling day has a greater impact than the actual size of the vote cast warrants. To achieve 5% of the vote is easier when only 13% of the electorate is voting. Even in local elections we now regularly see councillors elected on 300 votes in a ward with 20,000 inhabitants. This "democratic deception" can favour smaller parties which are prepared to put in a lot of ground work in the area and which have a committed supporter base. We only have to look at Oxford where the Greens now contest seven council seats including two whole wards, much to the discomfiture of Labour. In the West Midlands one of the BNP's rising stars, Steve Edwards, got 17% of the vote and his wife got 13% in a neighbouring ward. This is the couple who organised the Family Day referred to above. So for the moment they have every reason to be encouraged with their current twin track strategy:

But electoral success is the BNP's long term aim. Their mid-term aim is to achieve respectability and they are well on the way with their new pro-active approach. The BNP Press Officer Michael Newland provides a diary of his dealings with the media during the campaign (June & July's Spearhead), which shows how committed they are to seizing every opportunity to push the message that they are a serious party with a serious agenda. The nail bombings in London may have represented a set-back but gradually, before our eyes, the old tactic of continually refering to BNP extremism and the criminal record of candidates becomes a hollow exercise. Even telling people that the friendly family faces and the comfortable slogan of "Freedom, Security, Identity and Democracy" conceal a fully fledged fascist ideology has little relevance when they see nothing to reveal what that actually means. As in Germany in the 30's or more recently in the South of France by the true fascists are in power and the reality of their politics is plain, it can already be too late.

Whilst awaiting the result of the BNP leadership contest, the campaigns being mounted by Tandy and Griffin confirm one thing we already suspected. The latest and most sophisticated magazine to appear in BNP circles, Patriot, has provided a forum for many of the rising stars of the Euro-nationalist camp to air their strategic and policy ideas. Now we learn that the first John Tandy knew of this new publication was when a copy of the first issue came through his door in a brown envelope. This confirms that the appearance of Patriot in itself signalled the beginning of a leadership challenge from a group discontented with Tandy's leadership and with Griffin as their front man. As anticipated. It is this group including Lemberg, Griffin and Newland and probably others as well. It was Steve Edwards who represented the real engine behind the new look BNP. Newland even informs us that in 1995 Tandy was advocating a return to the matching strategy!
During April, three nail bomb attacks targeting the black, Asian and gay communities led to a large scale police investigation. The intense media coverage was far from thorough and certainly not investigative in nature. Many stories remained untold and in our regular review of the media we examine coverage of events in April, especially with regard to the strategies employed by Searchlight and the State.

David Copeland was arrested at the beginning of May. Early reports in the media indicated that he had no link with organised fascism. However on May 25 The Mirror ran an exclusive story showing Copeland at a BNP activity in Stratford, East London during 1987. Photographs, supplied by Searchlight, featured in The Mirror show Copeland, Tyndall and other BNP members in the aftermath of brief clash with the ANL. According to Nick Griffin writing in the June edition of Spearhead Copeland was also signed up to the (ex-G18) National Socialist Movement. Events in April pose a number of questions worthy of investigation.

Question one, why did the police, Searchlight and the media dismiss G18 claims of responsibility so quickly?

The well publicised rifts in G18 have provided much material to chew over, particularly in the aftermath of the murder trial of Charlie Sargent and Martin Cross. Publications produced by both the Sargent and Browning camps are laced with accusations of treachery in general and collaboration with the security services and Searchlight in particular.

As the Searchlight editorial in April 1995 said: "The reasons for M15 wanting to establish another "honey trap" on the Far Right are understandable and possibly justifiable at the time. G18 was created, Stella Rimington had just taken over as director of M15. With the job came the responsibility for watching Ulster Loyalist paramilitaries in mainland Britain, whom Special Branch had neglected in recent years. It was in these years that sections of the Loyalist UDA and UVF, and their respective killer squads, had started to cooperate with fascists in Britain. Clearly M15 needed to know the extent of such joint operations. So Combat 18 came into existence."

In Browning Browning, a document produced by the Sargent camp, a Machiavellian plot unfolds, a story of double-cross and double double-cross. The story goes that Browning made contact with Searchlight in order to find them disinformation, in a sanctioned operation. However it seems that he may have been working to his own agenda, using his contact with Gerry Gable to undermine Charlie'sgermanship and enhance his own political profile.

Detail is given with regard to Browning's code name, money changing hands, meetings with Gerry Gable and so on. As we all know, the Devil mixes lies with truth and to separate the two out when reading through this material would be an impossible task. However one detail in the story rang a few bells in AFA's collective memory. We are told that the venue for meetings between Will and Gerry was a hotel behind Euston station. This provides some credibility for the story. Once upon a time a long time ago, AFA personnel would meet with Searchlight in order to exchange information. The venue: a quiet little hotel behind Euston station. Needless to say, those arrangements have not been in place for some time.

In Combat 18 information Bulletin #4 the Browning camp list lists on Charlie Sargent. Much of the document details events at Harlow police station after the murder of Chris Castle. We are told of Charlie's treachery and of efforts made by Special Branch to secure his release and tick Browning in the frame. The Special Branch strategy backfired and the bulletin goes on to reproduce some of Charlie's statements and describe events at the subsequent trial. An interesting detail emerges here: Detective Inspector Tony Farr told the jury that Sargent's court statements amounted to 200 pages! We only have access to his first 16 page statement and his second 7 page statement. Farr then went on to say that only 60 out of the 200 pages were relevant to his case and the rest were about 'other matters'. The Fat Grass? What's in them?"

Good question. As stated previously by AFA, it is a fairly safe bet to assume that..."
BRIXTON BOMB

He is described as white, aged in his late teens/early twenties, approximately 5' 8". 5' 9" with a slim build.

On Saturday, 17th April, 1999, he was wearing a white baseball cap and a dark zip up jacket and was seen in the Brixton area.

Tel. 0800 789 321

Charlie boy, amongst others, was a very low budget 007.

With regard to the media, coverage of events in April left much unanswered.

Not once, even though many articles in the mainstream press were clearly Searchlight inspired, did journalists refer back to the Searchlight editorial of 1995.

Not once was the connection made between the security services and C18.

We have shown the high level of State involvement in C18 and we know that Copeland was a member of the BNP and the National Socialist Movement, a wing of the C18 organisation which according to Searchlight is an MI5 project.

If C18 is a State run organisation then why did the strategy fail? Why were C18 dismissed as candidates for the bombings only for Griffin to announce later that Copeland was on the books?

Question two: What are the strategies employed by both the State and Searchlight?

Evidence suggests that State and Searchlight strategies may not only have produced a detailed profile of Far Right activity, but also that both the State and Searchlight have made calculated intervention in the area of fascist and anti-fascist political activity in order to influence events.

If the C18 organisation was a State sponsored honey trap primarily designed to pick up on contact between Ulster Loyalists and mainland fascist, how much collaboration was allowed?

What exactly was the bail? If intelligence on those fascist/loyalists contact was made, to what extent were they allowed to develop?

The News of the World (26/5/99) reports: "A former member of Combat 18 says the neo-Nazi thugs were taught how to make nail bombs by Ulster Loyalist terrorists. Matthew Collins, who turned informant against C18, told the News of the World that members acted as gunrunners for the UDA, in return for instructions for making bombs like the ones that ripped through Brixton, Brick Lane and Old Compton Street."

If one of the main objectives of the security services and Searchlight with regard to their anti-fascist activity is to prevent people like Copeland from acting on the bomb making instructions, hit lists and race war propaganda that circulates throughout the Far Right, then their strategy has failed.

Despite all the resources at their disposal, three bombs were placed before Copeland was arrested.

Exactly how does the honey-trap work? Is the State responsible for propagating race-hate material, and perhaps even bomb-making instructions and hit lists?

The north of Ireland has demonstrated that the British establishment's 'dirty tricks' department are adept at political intrigue, in providing justification for repressive State activity and the legislation to support it.

In the aftermath of the bombings, there have been many calls for fascist parties to be banned. However we can be fairly sure that any legislation introduced, supposedly to tackle the activities of the Far Right, would have much wider implications.

Larry O'Hara, writing in An Phoblacht/Republican News (29/4/99), says: "I hardly find it coincidental that the government has on the table, and has had since December, a consultation paper by Lord Justice Lloyd aimed at the permanent extension of 'anti-terrorist' legislation to cover domestic (English/Scottish/Welsh) groups unrelated to Irish matters. The most prominent group featured in the paper are animal rights activists, and 'terrorism' has a far wider definition than previously."

Question three: Whose hand was strengthened most by the bombing campaign?

There is a murky world inhabited by Searchlight and the security services. Activity that appears superficially to be aimed at curbing extreme right-wing activity shrouds another agenda, not for public consumption. The second agenda is to destabilise, harass and undermine progressive working class elements who have adopted a militant anti-fascist strategy, those who prefer to rely on the resources available in working class communities to tackle fascism rather than the British State's dirty tricks department and their friends.

A widespread, media led backlash against the Far Right certainly will not improve the prospects of those fascist elements attempting to swim in the mainstream, although the BNP still got over 100,000 votes in the Euro-election. However, the security services will now be justified in applying more resources to the various projects under their supervision and those who seek to advance reactionary legislation through the liberal smoke screen will find an easier path.

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

A new front has been opened up in the fight against fascism, and it is being fought in the media. Through consistent work over the last few years the BNP have now reached the stage where many journalists now take them as a serious political party - part of the Euro-Nationalist strategy of trying to enter the mainstream. It is a matter of priority that militant anti-fascists take up the challenge and ensure their views are opposed from informed working class points of view.

Equally AFA must show there is an alternative to the failed policies of liberal anti-racism and the conservative Left.

On this page we reprint some recent letters and articles that have appeared in the press as an encouragement to others. After all, a letter or article in a local paper with a circulation of 30,000 saves a lot of leaflets and shoe leather. Any stories you think may be of interest to AFA, please contact the National Office on: 07000 569 569

TOP LEFT & BOTTOM RIGHT: AFA letters in Time Out magazine and the Camden New Journal. BOTTOM LEFT: a half page review of FT in “Weekly Worker” which describes the magazine as “thought provoking, intelligent and well worth reading...”

Learning from the fascists

Racist attacks are not just work of the far right
Dear Fighting Talk,

As a regular reader of FT the first column I read is Leveling the Score. As a Cardiff fan I would like to mention the recent arrest of Millwall goalkeeper Tony Warner, for public order offences. The opening game of the season for Cardiff was Millwall. There has been a long history of violence between the two clubs dating back to the early seventies, and this is the first time we had played in the league since 1984. On that day there were large scale disturbances, mainly involving Cardiff fans and the police.

Millwall chairman Theo Paphitis accused the police of inflating the violence in the build up to the game and on the day itself. Paphitis also comments that "Tony had to endure 90 minutes of racial abuse and was showered with cans and coins". The statement that Warner was subjected with racial abuse throughout the game is outrageous. There was violence before, during and after the game which included players from both teams being hit by missiles thrown by both sets of fans, which I don’t condone.

At one point Warner picked up a plastic bottle and threw it back into the crowd, which is the basis for his arrest. I sat behind Warner’s goal for the second half and I can assure people that there was no barrage of racial abuse that the Cardiff fans were accused of. Warner and the rest of the Millwall team were given loads of stick, none of it racist, as is customary at football grounds up and down the country week in, week out, despite it upsetting the sporting spirit of the game being forced upon us by the new middle class ethics of media dominated football.

Cardiff has been accused of racism and fascism in the past by the Searchlight magazine, on one occasion in particular when Cardiff fans attacked the police at Fulham they were accused of racism, when in fact the main chant that day was "There is only one Colin Jackson", the black athlete from Cardiff who had won a gold medal the day before.

It is the usual case of liberal/conservative thought that equates all violence to fascism. The game was nothing more than a straight up row between Cardiff and Millwall, with no political involvement, facilitated by the football league putting the two teams together on the first game of the season, the build up by the media in the days before. Cardiff does have a large hooligan following known as the Soul Crew, but there is no dominance or influence by Far Right groups which is the case at some other clubs.

I am not trying to claim there are no racists or bigots at Cardiff, there are, but thankfully these people are isolated and are rejected by the vast majority of Cardiff supporters.

Yours,

Richard Lewis

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Dear AFA,

Congratulations on your comment concerning Hillsborough families in FT 21 - our campaign also includes survivors, and we hope the AFA presence on the National Civil Rights Movement steering committee argues for our inclusion in such a group. Your observations are spot on, and hopefully we will be able to discuss this further.

Yours for Justice

Mick,

On behalf of the Hillsborough Justice Campaign
134 Oakfield Road
Anfield
Liverpool
L4 0UG
INTERNATIONAL

All this means, for us, that it is impossible to fight fascism as a means of defending the present "democratic" system. The choice that presents itself is not between an increasingly intolerable "normal" state of affairs and fascism, but that of "socialism or barbarity".

A chance for revolutionaries, or a chance for the Nazis?! The increasing repression and exploitation mean that the Germans are no longer well fed, sunburnt and content. The former East Germans in particular are losing their new-found loyalty to the middle class system that gave them their freedom, and there is a general feeling of indifferent, unchannelled anti-capitalism in the air. This is hardly surprising, given the 20-25% unemployment and ever-worsening social situation in eastern Germany. And this seething dissatisfaction is searching for a form of political expression. But who benefits from all the frustration and aggression? Certainly not the Left! Right-wing and openly fascist parties like the NPD and DVU appear to embody a real opposition to the capitalist system, with slogans like 'revolution is possible! and 'the real alternative'.

Recently, a former RAF defence lawyer, Horst Mahler, formed his own new-right organisation, the 'National Movement', once a symbol of radical rebellion in 1968, he has gathered many influential people under his banner.

And the radical Left continues to form alliances with the very groups that are discredited in the eyes of the working class - trade unions, Greens, PDS... It is no wonder that the Nazis come across as the only real alternative.

Out of the political ghetto...

One of our 'reasons for existing' as a revolutionary organisation has always been to move anti-fascist politics in Germany out of the so-called political "scene" where we could only preach to the more or less converted, and into the real working class world. Perhaps due to the misguided belief that the German working class has been annihilated by post-war prosperity, many 'ghettoes' of squats, demonstrations and vegan cookery, or working in alliance with middle class representatives such as the Greens, the SPD or the East German PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism).

There are two dangers in this kind of alliance. Firstly, working with non-revolutionary groups, we can only achieve half-measures - that is the destruction of openly fascist parties and organisations, the defence of the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, etc. But
INTERNATIONAL

there is obviously no way to fight the roots of fascism and exploitation side by side with the SPD or the Greens, who are now fully integrated into the system. The motivation behind such alliances can only ever be a more or less radical humanism and the defence of the status quo. The second danger is that anti-fascism itself is then associated with the moralising brand of politics practised by such alliances and no longer taken seriously by the people it ought to be reaching the working class. Anti-fascist alliances such as in Rostock last year, where the Church and local do-gooders distributed butterflies stickers bearing the message "bunt statt braun" (multi-coloured not brown), or in Hamburg more recently where a fascist march was forced to change its location, prompting the comment, "Today is a good day for Hamburg, but a bad day for Bergedorf." do nothing to get those involved taken seriously by potential recruits of the Nazis. In fact they can do more harm than good.

Our only chance

It is our job to be part of the everyday class struggle, to get involved wherever people start to fight the system, as a catalyst trying to lend a revolutionary perspective; and get people feeling in the first place. This means connecting the various issues: clearly naming the class nature of fascism and its role in maintaining the balance of power; making it clear that there is another alternative apart from fascism. We cannot continue, as anti-fascists, to concentrate purely on classical anti-fascist issues.

We must understand anti-fascism as a part of the class struggle, a part which can only be effective in connection with other class issues: - unemployment protests, the fight for decent pay and housing, against deportations of refugees, and so on. And we must get to these issues before the fascists succeed in taking them away from us.

"... openly fascist parties like the NPD and DVU appear to embody a real opposition to the capitalist system, with slogans like 'revolution is possible' and 'the real alternative'..."

Practice

Any theory will inevitably fall on deaf ears until it is put into practice. Despite the fact that several German anti-fascist groups have expressed interest in AFA's militant anti-fascist manifesto, there has been no sign that it has been put to the test in a practical sense. Someone has to get the ball rolling, and 'it's not us then who?" The basic co-ordinates of our campaign are clear: no co-operation with discredited middle class organisations, a radical, working class community orientation, whilst making it clear that there is no way out of the capitalist system but revolution.

We have started off in the East Berlin area of Treptow. An industrial area since the turn of the century, the fall of the Berlin Wall brought rationalisation, shut downs, unemployment, misery and racism. Nazis from the West moved in, forming the 'Kameradschaft Treptow' with locals, a non-party organisation of hard men who have planted bombs in the flats of local politicians and have good contacts with the NPD (their most notorious member is Kay Diesner, who in 1995 shot the leg off a local left-wing bookseller owner and then went on the run, killing one police man and injuring another, before being brought to bay by the German version of Special Branch, who showed remarkable self-control in dealing with a 'cop killer', only kidney-capping him. But then the German justice system has always been notoriously blind in the right eye). The Kameradschaft's aim of converting the borough to a 'national betrayed zone' (national liberalized zone) has been partly achieved - racial violence in the form of arson attacks and throwing people out of moving trains has led all tourist guides to issue a strict warning: Stay away if you stand out.

Working with other local left-wing groups we formed the campaign 'So oder os', meaning roughly 'either one or the other'. Our aim is to break the increasing right-wing hecatomb by moralising about how bad the Nazis are, but by highlighting the everyday problems and getting people active! Our first step was a series of posters to remind people of the alternatives: poverty and unemployment or fighting exploitation, racist division or fighting together and nazi terror or anti-fascist resistance, hence the motto: "Betera". We have since brought out a newspaper highlighting local issues, which so far has brought only positive reactions, and staged the first ever anti-fascist gig in Treptow, which was a modest success among the local punks and skinheads. Despite the provocative motto 'No go area for Nazis', we were not bothered by anyone but a few carloads of Nazis, who drove past, saw our security and obviously thought better of their plans for the evening! A public meeting on the latest SPD attack on the unemployed was unfortunately less well attended. We plan further open meetings and attention-grabbing actions, as well as a demonstration in the autumn under the slogan, 'Against fascists and fascists - build resistance from below'.

All in all we have got off to a good start, but there is much more to be done. We need more contact with the man and woman on the street, to the kids in the youth clubs. We need to continue making our presence felt and talking to local people. We need to offer a real alternative to the Nazis, and alternative solutions. And hopefully other anti-fascists in Germany and Europe will sit up and take notice, instead of constantly losing political ground and credibility to the fascists. We certainly don't claim to offer any pat solutions - every situation is slightly different but the problems of the working class are similar everywhere. It is our job to work on real alternatives.
TACKLING THE BEAST IN BRUM
Fascism and anti-fascism in the West Midlands

The West Midlands, heavily populated and industrialised, has long been an important target of the Far Right. In the pre-war years the British Union of Fascists (BUF) attempted to establish themselves in Birmingham. After the war immigration from Asia and the Caribbean became the primary focus of fascist groups, especially as the boom turned into decline and working class areas took the brunt of the State’s divisive social and economic policies. The effects felt in the communities of Birmingham and the Black Country were acute, and were inherited by AFA from its inception years later. It’s against this backdrop that we investigate a few examples of the opposition to fascism that came from within the same ranks the Far Right sought to dominate - a tradition that continues to this day.

The BUF was launched by ex-Birmingham Labour MP Oswald Mosley in 1932, and soon after opened up its first office in Stratford Rd, south Birmingham. The BUF quickly gained much interest and support from members of the media and the establishment. Hitler and Mussolini were being keenly observed and admired by influential figures in the British state quo, hence the growth of the BUF to a visible organization of government was not inconceivable.

Mosley made an attempt at a breakthrough in Birmingham a year or so later, when the BUF organised a rally in the Digbeth area. The meeting was plagued by scenes of disorder, as anti-fascists fought with BUF stewards. Mosley returned to the Birmingham area the following January, when the BUF hosted a large rally at Bingley Hall. Clearly conscious of the BUF’s weakness, Mosley decided to place no less than 2,000 Blackshirt stewards on duty for the event, drafted in from across the Midlands, Liverpool, Manchester and London. 6,000 people attended in all, but the heavy security presence prevented any serious disorder within the meeting. Outside though there were a number of clashes between anti-fascists and Blackshirts as Mosley left, quelled only by large numbers of police.

The right-wing press reported on Mosley’s keynote Bingley speech in favourable detail. Birmingham papers the Mail and Gazette endorsed Mosley, printing what amounted to lengthy policy statements on behalf of the BUF, praising the general organisation of the rally, and presenting overt endorsement of much of what was said from the platform.

Despite considerable press sympathy, including the newspaper baron Lord Northcliffe, Mosley’s movement was still struggling to strike a chord with the Midlands working class. Hence in the summer of 1934 G.K Chesterton was drafted to Birmingham as officer-in-charge of Warwickshire and Staffordshire BUF, in an attempt to shape up and reorganise the local movement.

In May 1935 there was another large Mosley rally at Birmingham town hall. Proceedings were disrupted throughout by crowds of anti-fascists involved in hand to hand clashes with Blackshirt stewards all around the hall. Arthur Mill, BUF organiser for Birmingham, was amongst the injured. Mosley told the press that the disturbance was the most serious he had seen for two years, except that at Olympia. Members of our movement were violently assaulted by mobs in the audience’, he said, and that anti-fascists had come ‘organised for violence. At ten o’clock the meeting was closed down and Mosley made off, flanked by his Blackshirt minders.

Attentions turned to Spain in 1936, and anti-fascists rallied in Birmingham’s Bull Ring. 71 volunteers from the Industrial Midlands joined up to the International Brigade against Franco. Some never came back and many more were injured. Colin Bradforth was a doctor from Birmingham who became battalion medical officer. His bravery during some of the worst fighting at Jalama was exemplary - tending the injured and dying under heavy gunfire until he was shot himself. He still continued dressing and treating the injured, despite his own wounds.

As concern about fascism in Europe grew, there were a number of demonstrations at the town hall, and also in Neville Chamberlain’s Edgbaston constituency, against what were seen as the Liberal government’s pro-fascist policies. In February 1937 a socialist ‘United Front' was set up in Birmingham to promote the defence of working class interests against fascism at home and abroad. The following year Chamberlain, in an unconvincing appeasement speech at Birmingham town hall, vowed to ‘eat his hat’ if war broke out.

During 1940 the BUF tried to set up a new headquarters and bookshop in Grove Lane, Handsworth. In less than a week local women forced its closure - threatening that the shop would be smashed, as would the local organiser. The BUF in Birmingham had become a spent force.

After the war there began a huge influx of immigrant labour to Birmingham and the Black Country. Hence during the 50s and 60s racial conflict became the catalyst for resurgent fascist activity. Successful governments manipulated the economy, declared war on the unions and gradually wound much of the traditional industry down. The result of this overall labour and social policy brought hardship,
unemployment and urban decay - and the immigrants who were initially shipped in to do much of the menial low-paid work were now resented by many of the white working class, spurned on by the institutionalised racists of the middle classes and the establishment. Even the unions played their part - in the late 50's, for example, Birmingham TGWU leadership objected to immigrant bus workers, on the grounds that white women would not be safe.

Racial violence in the Black Country was a feature throughout this period. In Dudley the mid-60's were marred by three consecutive nights of some of the worst anti-immigrant violence the Midlands has ever seen. 'Paki bashing' became a sport amongst many white gangs in Wolverhampton, activities further 'legitimised' when Wolverhampton MP Enoch Powell gave his 'rivers of blood' speech in Walsall. Smethwick too became a national focus during the early 60's, where colour-bans were openly enforced in pubs, clubs and even on barbers' shops - leading to the Toxley crush which Labour in the 1964 council elections under the slogan 'If you want aigger for a neighbour, vote Labour'. Birmingham Immigration Control Association and the Racial Preservation Society threw all their resources at the areas of Handsworth, Smethwick and West Bromwich, with fascists coming from far and wide to whip up racial conflict. Race was rapidly overtaking class as a primary grassroots' political focus. The stage was set for the National Front's forthcoming campaigns right across the West Midlands.

By the mid-70's the National Front were successfully raising their electoral profile. One union had responded to a 1974 appeal to oppose the NF stating, "Our organisation is not here to protect coloured people but to protect whites from competition for housing and jobs." The NF also used the IRA pub bombings of the same year to stir up a wave of antipathy and attacks against Birmingham's large Irish community, further bolstering their potential support. For the next five or six years the NF would stand candidates in virtually every election contested in the West Midlands, polling some 6,000 votes in the 1977 County elections in Wolverhampton town alone.

In 1976, 3,000 took part in a counter-demonstration against the NF in Stetchford. The march was called by Asian and black organisations and set out to remain in the immediate area where 1,000 NF were marching. The Trades Council insisted on calling their own march of 500 for the same day which was to be a show of strength in the city centre, safely out of way of the NF. The Labour Party opposed any counter-demonstration against the Front. The gravity of the situation would only be remedied by more urgent tactics.

The following August, three days after heavy violence inflicted on the National Front at Lewisham, they had another taste of 'red terror' at a by-election meeting due to be addressed by John Tyndall in Birmingham's Ladywood constituency. 120 fascists were bussed in from Bolton and, incited by a mob of 5-600 anti-fascists, armed with bricks, clubs and bottles, and fierce fighting erupted. The police came under heavy sustained attack as they did their utmost to protect the NF, dozens of police were injured. At the meeting closed a crowd of about 300 anti-fascists smashed a police roadblock, and attacked Thornhill Rd police station in an attempt to free anti-fascist prisoners. The Times report reflected the new militancy of the protests: "A police bus bringing reinforcements from the meeting more than a mile away ran a gauntlet of missiles and had all its windows shattered. Several officers, including a police woman, were helped out with blood streaming from their faces." The NF still took third place out of ten, but Ladywood marked a turning point for all sides.

During the election campaign three Labour Party headquarters had their windows broken, owing to their election agent, Peter Marriner, being forced to resign over allegations that he had previously had extreme right-wing associations (Marriner resurfac ed three years later attacking a Bloody Sunday commemoration in Birmingham, as regional organiser for the British Movement). The National Front's by-election headquarters in Broad St. were also attacked and ransacked by anti-fascists a few days before the election. At the count there was further trouble, culminating in Anthony Reed Herbert, the NF candidate, getting punched in the face and having his glasses broken by Raghib Ahsan, the Socialist Unity candidate. Ahsan and other anti-fascists were ejected by police, but he later told the press, 'I did it and I am proud that I did it. I would do it again if I saw him.'

Reed Herbert announced his resignation from politics less than a week later, swayed by increasing violence and a glut of telephone and written threats. The jewel in the crown that week though was a shotgun attack on the family antique shop in the East Midlands, in which his brother escaped a bullet in the head by no more than an inch or two. Reed Herbert, like many other Front officials across the country at that time, could not cope with being both outmanoeuvred and out-terrorised by the new strain of uncompromising opposition.

In February 1978 the Young National Front returned to march through the Digbeth area of the city, amidst more scenes of militancy from anti-fascists. Some 400 NF gathered at Digbeth Civic Hall, countered by around 7,000 anti-fascists.

The Birmingham Post described the initial outbreaks of violence: 'The main body moved right, but a group of about 50 remained there was no police force preventing them from moving towards Digbeth. Youths aged between 15 and 18, black and white, many wearing football scarves, ran to a demolition site in Floodgate St. to collect bricks, stones, bottles, spade handles, sledgehammers and broken paving slabs to throw down on the police...'

Riots broke out that cost the city in the region of £1,000,000, and although the NF meeting went ahead the Bingley...
Anti-fascist history

Digiteth was another bitter blow to the NF. The Lord Mayor of Birmingham called for the reintroduction of the birch in the aftermath of the rioting. The Trades Council, who had helped organise the counter-demonstration, attempted to distance themselves from the more militant elements, as they did at Stetchford nearly two years earlier. Ironically they again distanced themselves along racial lines, telling the Birmingham Post: 'There were several hundred people, including black and Asian youths, who broke away and became involved in a confrontation situation with the police.' The inference was that violence was 'beneath' the Left, and the presence of black youth had inflated the situation. Not surprising then that 18 months previously Bill Jarvis, then head of Birmingham Trades Council, had capitulated to the "race not class" lobby by calling for a temporary halt to immigration.

At the end of April 1979 the NF held another pre-election rally at Cronkhill School, West Bromwich, an area where they'd enjoyed good electoral support in the early seventies. There was fighting inside the venue, between the NF and 150 or so opponents, broken up by a hundred police forcibly entering the hall. Outside youths split away from the ANL march and clashed with some of the 2,000 police present on West Bromwich ringway. Sashnighlth man Dave Roberts, in the guise of ANL assistant secretary, was on hand to blame the violence on the NF and rogue elements. He commanded the police on doing 'a very good job'.

The Tories stole the NF's anti-immigration thunder at the '79 election but fascism didn't entirely disappear. Irish events were systematically attacked throughout the 80s, which in part led to the formation of Midlands AFA as the decade drew to a close.

Not so well documented is the significant role of youth culture - both in aiding the growth of fascism and combating it. There were many clashes at punk and ska gigs, as well as between street gangs. The growing influence and strength of black and Asian youth on the streets played a vital role in helping to stem the tide, outlined in this recollection:

"Around the Black Country there were a number of clashes between skinhead NF supporters and the opposing Rude Boy gangs, which were racially mixed... The NF came a couple of times to the school distributing 'Bulldog', their youth magazine, to kids on their way home. The NF made out they were for the whites but what I ask myself now is who was for the working class? My elder brother became involved with the Front. Only a year later he'd buy Socialist Worker and other left-wing papers outside work - like everyone else he was looking for a voice, an outlet, not that he would've found much joy there either but, I can see how he thought now in hindsight. A sister of mine also fancied herself as a skinhead girl, though not in the slightest bit racist, more to do with the kudos of being associated with lads who were seen to be something. It was almost like a Robin Hood scenario, being seen to stand up and reject the establishment - a sense of identity, even if it manifested itself in a reactionary way, such as supporting the NF. But circumstances dictated to provide the NF with support from the worst off."

National Front 'suites' apparently came to the pub at the top of our road to address a NF meeting, comprised mainly of the teenage 'Oakham Skins', who had by now adopted a reputation for violence. Irrespective of the fact that many of the black kids and the Rude Boy elements, including the Asian contingent, were fast becoming the hardest and most feared 'crew' in the area. Further afield, a male or so away in Tipton, I was told how the NF had suffered heavy casualties when a gang of Brummate punks had teamed up with Tipton residents to smash an NF meeting. Yet the NPs ability to maintain a fearsome reputation was unabated. From the Oakham meeting a group of skinheads left, equipped themselves and burnt down an Asian shop in nearby Wolverhampton, killing one family member. Some of the perpetrators would've been off our estate. A family friend at the bottom corner of our road went out with a black brolly, and woke up one morning to find her da's house daubed from top to bottom with painted swastikas and NF graffiti. The Indian shop at the top of a relative's street in south Birmingham was attacked. Racial street attacks, particularly towards the more vulnerable, seemed commonplace. Retaliation did take place though, with a fair degree of organisation. Ultimately I suppose it came down to who could instil the most fear and get the situation under their control. Looking back now the fascist skins lost it physically, the climate was such that they couldn't operate."
HELLO NAZI, GOODBYE NAZI

In May an article appeared in the NME which attempted to chart the "dubious history of fascist style and politics in rock". "Hello Nazi!" by Tommy Udo sought to examine this history by charting pop stars and their exploits with Nazi imagery as examples. At the time Cable Street Beat sent in a response to this article, which sadly was not published. Therefore in this issue of Fighting Talk we have decided to incorporate this letter into the following article.

Rather than trying to comment on the rise and fall of pop stars who have used Nazi imagery in pop music we have decided to examine some of the views expressed by Udo as arguments and excuses for these actions. Journalism of this type cannot go unchecked or free from comment, especially when you consider the apolitical readership.

Udo begins by stating that "everyone who dresses as a Nazi isn't necessarily to instigate the next holocaust". He goes on to explain that pop stars have always tried to shock, tracing it back to the 1950s of people like Elvis and Cliff Richard. Apparently they have always tried to "scare the world that they are evil mothers" and that "part of the music package of teenage rebellion is about striking fear in the hearts of right-thinking citizens". It is certainly true that everyone who has flirted with Nazi imagery isn't necessarily an active fascist but why should we tolerate these idiots and poseurs. The excuse that it is merely teenage rebellion is almost as immature as the people who use this kind of imagery to make themselves seen way out, shocking and radical.

Udo paints these antics as an acceptable way to shock middle class suburbanites, a place where he seems comfortable. His belief is that "rock n' roll has a proud history of driving parents to drink, tabloid journalists to self righteous lather and jolly C of E vicars into the black pits of despair." He seems to excuse these celebrities by making them into James Dean type figures who set out to shock their middle-class parents. He remains safely in the realms of the "twarching net curtains of suburbia".

At a time when racist attacks are running at two a day to three thousand a week (according to British Crime Survey figures), fascist mail bombs exploding without warning across London and the Far Right stronger across Europe than at any other time since the Second World War, this is hardly the image to float with. If you play with fire you get burnt, so any band who toy with fascism becomes a legitimate target for anti-fascists. If you want to shock there are plenty of ways to do it without flying a swastika. In our opinion taking an openly militarist anti-fascist position would be quite refreshing and it would certainly shock us!

Udo continues in this vein, but moves on to Brian Jones (Rolling Stones), describing how he posed in SS uniform, he excuses this by saying that they were taking an "inevitable step, identifying the Stones with history's all-time bad guys".

The only possible explanation being that the band had run out of ways to shock and appearing like this was the only option left open to them. Well if that's the only way to attract attention it would probably be a good idea to quit or suffer the consequences. If you feel the need to associate yourself with the Nazis then it is quite reasonable to assume that your audience will not always be sympathetic.

In Udo's world we would stand idly by watching these celebrities goose stepping up and down. It would be acceptable to find their antics distasteful, sure, but we would realise that "it was just dressing up" a bit of immature but harmless fancy dress!

One person left out of the hall of fame is Eric Clapton, the man who made a fortune out of playing the blues, but came out in support of Enoch Powell at a gig in Birmingham in the mid-seventies, a time of growing electoral support for the NF. In fact it was this and Bowie's fascist outburst which led to the launch of Rock Against Racism. Udo does mention Bowie, explaining that his behaviour was "more sinister" than his Nazi imitating predecessors. Bowie told it a "fast too far" - no shit! Udo sweeps this one under the carpet, after all Bowie put it down to a "cognitive induced psychosis". Admittedly Udo makes a few tutting noises when it comes to Bowie's behaviour but it really wasn't worth him mentioning the stars excuses. It's very easy making around acting like an idiot and then lamely saying it wasn't my fault, I was too drugged up to notice.

Udo moves on to punk and the NF's exploitation of "punk's youthful gullibility". Or was it a "lack of artistic compromise", a statement made by Siouxsie and the Banshees after they refused to apologise or explain why one of the lines in their song included "too many Jews for my liking". Allegedly "jews" really meant "businessmen" yet another chance for Udo to comment on the stupidity and extremely questionable politics of the band, surprisingly enough not even a squeak is heard from the journaliste - or is it just his lack of artistic compromise?

One area of fascism in music which Udo does try to address is the allegations made by the media when they try to link Marilyn Manson and the Denver massacre carried out by Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris. Although we admit that it is the taking the argument too far to directly link their reverences for Hitler with pop stars, equally it is extremely crass to say that they "took the showbiz Nazi stuff far too seriously". To Udo it's just a bit of harmless fun.

Well he doesn't think so when it comes to Skrewdriver. While the press' fretting with fascists need a short sharp lesson in reality, the other category - the Nazis using music to spread the Aryan gospel require organised opposition. The article mentions Skrewdriver, leading lights of the neo 'Blood and Honour' movement, who really were fascists and actively sought to recruit through their music and gigs. They were stopped from being able
to operate openly after the sustained campaign of Cable Street Beat and Anti-Fascist Action culminating in the Battle of Waterloo in September 1992. When concerned with Skrewdriver Udo yet again fails to hit the target.

He moves swiftly on explaining that ‘rock ‘n’ roll will continue its flirtation with Nazism because, quite frankly, it’s such a comfortable fit’. He goes on to compare mass Nazi rallies with pop concerts nowadays, light shows using dry ice and lasers attempt the very same thing. This is a very tenuous link, just what is he trying to say, that before the Nazis there were no big rallies which sought to impress those present?

It’s very difficult to imagine why Udo wrote this article. It certainly wasn’t to put across any political opinion onto questi on the actions of the various pop stars who have used fascist uniforms and insignia to gain some sort of reaction from people. Equally it was not even written to condemn these people for their pathetic attempts at notoriety and increased fame. This is not an area where one can remain quiet. To sum this article up it was yet another wasted opportunity to say something sensible.

Cable Street Beat would like to thank “The Chirpin Punk’s”, “Combat Shock” and “Dag on a Rope” for their support at a gig in High Wycombe recently. We were able to raise funds at the gig which without their help we would not have been able to do.

STAGE STRUCK

‘Metal’ band, Pitchshifter recently provoked a bad reaction for being unpatriotic after a performance of their new track ‘Un-United Kingdom’. For one patriotic member of the audience this particular track went down like a lead balloon. So incensed by the song, at a gig in Eastbourne, he felt compelled to get on stage, proceeding to hit the lead singer, Jon, in the face. To add insult to injury, the assailant’s mother then got on stage and began to rant at the band, saying that they had brought it on themselves because of the song’s content.

It is no more than the song itself, it’s not going to be one of the anti-fascist classics after all, but the ensuing moments which we feel should be commented on. After the incident the assailant was able to walk from the gig unhindered, what exactly does that say for the assembled audience?

No band should be put off expressing their views. Although Anti-Fascist Action cannot possibly ‘police’ all gigs, if any band are finding that they are having particular grief from the far right then we would be interested in hearing from you. Please either write to your local branch, or ring the office number.

GIG REVIEW

In May, AFA held two successful hardcore benefit gigs in Manchester and Bradford. The Manchester gig was a resounding success. Regular flyposting and leafleting of gigs ensured that it was well publicised. Spy Vs Spy, Withdrawn, Sodank and Grover (some of the best bands in the British hardcore scene) played in front of a packed house at this highly politicised gig. Despite a lack of local publicity, and clashing with the European Cup Final, the Bradford gig was also a success. AFA raised a decent amount of cash, and more importantly raised our profile in relatively new musical territory. We plan on holding future events to establish a significant base of support within the scene and are looking into putting out a benefit CD.

If you have anything that you can contribute please contact Manchester AFA.

Below: Grover on stage in Manchester.
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