

## **The best way to oppose Fascism.**

Violence between the extreme Left and Right has been a recurring theme in British politics for nearly fifty years, with some of the most vicious outbreaks occurring in the 1930s. More recently there have been the punch-ups between supporters of the National Front and their leftist counterparts, and although these have died down lately we can expect fresh eruptions in the not too distant future.

In pre-war days the leftists were squaring-up to Sir Oswald Mosley and his Blackshirts. Then their declared intention was to "smash the fascists" and a so-called United Front was formed to bring this about. They failed and all that the violence achieved was to attract thousands of fresh recruits into the fascist ranks. The Mosleyites continued to march, hold meetings and contest elections until the outbreak of war.

Someone claimed that the lesson of history is that people never learn the lesson of history. Obviously this is untrue (otherwise there could never have been any progress, social or technical) but such a cynical view could be justified if it was based on the antics of the leftists, because they never learn. Now many of the current crop have formed themselves into the Anti Nazi League and are determined to re-stage the same useless battles that were fought long ago.

A glance at history shows that ideas which have some roots in existing social conditions cannot be stamped out by force. For example, in Hitler's Germany, the Social Democrats and the Communists suffered twelve years of being killed and jailed yet both those organisations re-emerged at the end of the war. Nor has more than sixty years of mass murder and repression eliminated the various nationalist and other dissidents in the USSR. More significantly, despite the killing of millions, of fascists- during the 1939-45 war and the vilification of fascism by Hollywood and the rest of the media for over forty years; the growth of fascist organisations and activity in Europe is front page news today.

So the notion that fascism can be destroyed by violence has not a shred of evidence to support it. Everywhere the leftists have tried this tactic it has failed disastrously - what happened to their "street fighters" in pre-war Italy and Germany is proof of this.

Ideas are rooted in the material conditions of life; people are influenced by the economic and historic situation they live in. It is no accident that fascism flourishes whenever capitalism is in one of its periodic slumps. Then fascist demagogues, by blaming problems like unemployment and bad housing on the failure of democracy and the presence of blacks or Jews, are more likely to be listened to. Fascism feeds on poverty, insecurity and fear and since these are inseparable from capitalism then fascist ideas will persist as long as capitalism] lasts, no matter how many heads are cracked or meetings broken up.

The claim made by the "Anti-Nazis" that they are defending freedom by preventing the National Front and similar organisations from holding meetings are absurd. Free speech can only exist when it is open to all and it cannot be defended by those who in fact abolish it. Not only does political violence not preserve existing democratic rights, it positively weakens them by creating a situation in which the authorities may restrict or ban many forms of political activity. This much is certain: the chances of getting the socialist case across in such an atmosphere of intolerance will be considerably lessened.

The only way to deal with fascists is to demolish their obnoxious, anti-working class ideas at every turn. We would welcome any opportunity to confront them in open debate before an audience of working men and women. We have nothing to fear and everything to gain from this because we are confident of the workers' ability to understand the socialist case and of our own ability to present it. Of course, this will not sound exciting enough for leftist hot-heads looking for trouble, but whatever the right method of dealing with fascists may be, theirs is absolutely wrong.

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