

# FASCISTS & RACISTS



**FREE SPEECH**

**WILL NOT**

**STOP THEM**



CONTENTS.

THE MOTION

RACIST AGITATORS

FASCISTS, A GROWING THREAT

FREE SPEECH

BUT WHAT ABOUT VIOLENCE?

NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS

ARE WE DEALING WITH SOMETHING NEW?

THE MOTION which angered the free speakers in Fleet Street and Westminster:

"Conference recognizes the need to refuse any assistance (financial or otherwise) to openly racist or fascist organisations or society (e.g. Monday Club, National Front, Action Party/Union Movement, National Democratic Party) and to deny them a platform.

However conference believes that in order to counter these groups, it is also necessary to prevent any member of these organisations or individuals known to espouse similar views from speaking in colleges by what ever means are necessary (including disrupting of the meeting)."

Student Unions are to:

"Prevent any racist or fascist propaganda being displayed, sold, distributed or propagated through meetings by whatever means may be necessary."

Executives of Student Unions are to:

" Refuse any assistance to openly racist or fascist organisations or individuals.

To give full support to any individuals who are involved in implementation of Constituent Organisations' policy as outlined above."

Accepted: 204,618 to 187,760. Abstentions: 51,685



Students have often put a stop to campus meetings which right-wingers speakers of various types were to address. A list would include racist Tory MPs like Patrick Wall, Enoch Powell, 'scientific' racist like Professor Eyesenck, scientists implicated in imperialist genocide like Huntingdon, a number of Monday Clubbers like Harold Soref and outright fascists like Martin Webster. Even one-time Labour Foreign Minister Michael Stewart had his meetings disrupted for his role over Vietnam.

This year the NUS has finally taken a decision to systematically exclude racists and fascists, and several of their organisations, from public activity on the campus.

What type of threat do these racists and fascists represent, and is depriving them of 'free speech' the best way to deal with it? And if so, how? These are the type of issues now under debate in colleges and universities up and down the country.

### RACIST AGITATORS - MORE EFFECTIVE THAN EVER BEFORE.

Over the past ten years, racist immigration laws in Britain have become more numerous and more repressive and institutionalised racism extended. A recent NUS press statement on the conference resolution points out the effects of legalised discrimination on overseas students alone: tuition fees have been raised to three times for those of home students; VAT has been imposed on hostels for overseas students; and Robert Carr, the last Home Secretary, was proposing to get college authorities to spy on their social and political behaviour. The NUS decision to campaign against these particular acts of racial discrimination in the educational system is a welcome move.

The most infamous racist legislation in recent years is the 1971 Immigration Act. It restricted the rights of entry of 'non-patrials', (polite term for blacks), and their families, established police supervision for new Commonwealth immigrants, and gave the police and immigration authorities extensive rights of deportation and removal.

Since the House of Lords ruling making the Act retroactive, thousands of black people became 'illegals' and dozens were held for months in prison or simply flown out of the country within hours of being picked off the streets. The retroactive ruling has now been repealed, but the whole structure of the Act remains. There is no doubt that new attempts will be made to extend police powers over black people.

The NUS resolution said that we can expect an 'era of austerity and the prospect of an accompanying period of repression.' Unemployment is expected to rise once again to over 1 million by 1975; the housing crisis continues to worsen; cuts in educational expenditure and welfare services have not been restored. Various representatives of the ruling class continually seek to shift the blame for these problems on to immigrants through their agitation. This has occurred in every European country since the 1950's. Because of the hold of imperialist and racist ideas over large sections of the population, including workers, this tactic is not without value to the ruling class.

In the immediate future we can therefore expect a higher volume of racist demogogy, further racist legislation, police harassment and physical attacks on black communities.



The twin results will be to further assist the growth of the extreme-right in British politics, including the fascists, and deepen the divisions inside the workers movement.

Groups such as the Monday Club, the Campaign to Stop Immigration, the National Front, and several figures on the right wing of the Tory Party, are among the most articulate and effective racist agitators, (though not the only ones). They organise racists into a political force, they seek to divide the working class through their speeches, they incite people to violence, and they agitate for the capitalist state to be used against black people. Their successes are there for all to see. The next few years offers them increased opportunity. The NUS is proposing to stop them using the campuses for their dirty work.

#### FASCISTS, A GROWING THREAT.

The National Front, Britain's largest fascist organisation, was able to stand 54 candidates in the last General Election and gain TV time. This is no mean achievement and reflects a growth in its influence and its financial resources.

However, the unique contribution of the fascists did not appear on television. In January this year, NF members assaulted several members of a Maoist group in Brighton and smashed up their premises; a black student in Nottingham was beaten up and near blinded; a photographer who discovered a secret fascist meeting in Caxton Hall, was beaten up. In mid-April, the Manchester Martyrs Memorial March, which is held every year in Manchester to commemorate three Irish freedom fighters hung in 1867, was attacked by union jack-waving members of the National Front. Colin Jordans 'British Movement' recently announced the formation of a 'force of trained men, to carry out the duties that police are unable to do due to their non-political nature'.

Violence against black people, Jewish people and workers organisations is an essential part of a fascist movement. From the earliest days, Hitler and Mussolini did not wait until they were called on to form a government before launching such physical attacks. Without using violence, they would have never been able to grow. Only by showing themselves willing to crush what they conceived to be 'enemies of the nation' such as Jews, blacks, militant workers, communists, (yes, and social democrats too), were they able to attract support. It came from among those people who, while ruined by capitalist crisis, (small shopkeepers, farmers, unemployed, small bureaucrats, etc), or disillusioned by imperialist defeat, (ex colonials, reactionary soldiers and officers, veterans etc), could find nothing in the programme or actions of the workers movement which promised a solution to their problems. It also came from among the ranks of the big capitalists who saw in the fascist thugs a more flexible and reliable substitute for the police and the armed forces against the workers movement.

The fascists are not thugs without politics. On the contrary, they are highly political. The capitalists turned to Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco not simply because they didn't have enough useable force in the army barracks and the police stations, but because the army and the police can never be effective in really holding down the workers movement. For that you need a mass movement of ideologically committed thugs who are not going to be subverted by workers appeals and who play a political as well as repressive rôle.

The politics of the National Front, for example, are designed to unite a variety of social forces around a programme designed to restore the 'British Nation'



to its 'former glory'; withdrawal from the EEC, restoration of the Commonwealth trading system, support for the white regimes in Africa, expulsion of all black people, more defence expenditure, reinforcement of the family and military values, unity between workers and bosses and expulsion of 'saboteurs of national production' from the factory. None of these political points are unique to fascism. What is unique is that they seek to build an extra-parliamentary mass movement committed to para-military force to implement these policies.

The incidents of fascist violence we cited above may seem small, but the capitalist crisis means that there is material in plenty for the fascists to develop into a force capable of systematically harassing the workers and students movements. In this way they are becoming a real weapon in the capitalists arsenal. Even if today they are not capable of forming a government themselves, they could certainly act as one of the main back-ups to a Powellite strong government. They can, by their provocations, possibly create enough tension to shift a government to the right or introduce a military government. This pattern has been seen clearly since the end of the Second World War; fascist bombings in Italy 1969-74, fascist attacks in France 1956-58, fascist attacks and sabotage of production in Chile 1972-73.

#### FREE SPEECH.

Racists and fascists are among the enemies which we face today. This should be clear from what we have said above. The question is; what forms of struggle to use against them? How do we arrive at an answer to this question?

Most of those who have spoken against the NUS Resolution argue that our struggle against racists and fascists should stop short of curtailing their freedom to agitate for their views. We are told that it is necessary to allow 'free speech' for everyone in society, irrespective of what they may be fighting for or doing.

When the NUS took its decision, the editorialists of The Times, for example, told us that they could 'appreciate the strong and generous feelings' behind the resolution, but 'any move to restrict what may be talked about - in a university more than anywhere - is profoundly dangerous'. (16.4.74)

Yet, as it turns out, The Times doesn't actually adhere to this position itself. For on the same page, our lofty democrats were telling Mr. Eric Heffer that he should shut his big mouth over warships for the Chilean junta: 'He has grabbed for himself a freedom to sound off in a way that other more senior ministers may well have felt tempted to do, but have managed to resist.... out of respect for the solidarity of the Government'..... and of course out of respect for the 'future prospects for arms sales in Latin America'.

Since The Times makes it quite obvious that it doesn't believe in freedom of speech, on what criteria does it decide what 'may be talked about'? Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that The Times is in favour of arms sales to the Chilean junta. The Times is in favour of those willing to supply the junta with the means to kill workers and peasants, speaking out for that position, but against those who disagree with it making their voice heard! And The Times has the nerve to talk about 'free speech'!

On what basis do the government and the press of the capitalists decide what may or may not be said during strikes? On the basis of free speech for everybody irrespective of their point of view? If that were the case, we would have difficulty in explaining the fact that day in and day out, the Government and the press feels quite free to attack strikers as 'wreckers', 'saboteurs', and so forth, yet reacts strongly when Mick McGahey decided he was going to speak freely to the soldiers of the British Army about the role they were being asked to



play in breaking the miners' strike. The notion that everybody should have equal access to the means to speak, that everybody should have effective voice, is not exactly an ideal which the capitalists are striving to put into practice. That is why they don't turn over the pages of their newspapers and the facilities of their print shops to workers who want to express their side of the story. That is why they seek to systematically exclude the population who suffer the consequences of their decisions from access to comprehensive information by a cloak of 'commercial secrecy' and 'interests of state security'.

They do not make decisions on the basis of 'free speech of everybody' but on the concrete needs of their struggle to defend their class interest. Why should we make decisions on the basis of moral formulae?

### But What About Violence?

The bourgeois press has correctly pointed out that the NUS resolution to stop fascists and racists 'by any means necessary' including 'disrupting of meetings' almost certainly involves at some stage the use of violence. The NUS has since said that while it is prepared to 'plead guilty' to limiting freedom of speech, it is opposed to violence: 'we are not going to send round a 'heavy squad' to break up meetings'. In other words, instead of using 'any means necessary', the NUS is advising us to stop the racists and fascists solely in a peaceful manner - presumably by depriving them of a platform solely through the exercise of managerial prerogative (room bookings and the like).

Do our enemies approach the question in the same way? Do the fascists say: we should stop the blacks from organising public meetings, but only in a peaceful manner? Presumably blindings and petrol bombings are peaceful tactics? Do the police say: We have to go along to Oxford university to ensure that when the bulldogs evict students from the Indian Institute, they do it peacefully? Presumably, standing by while bulldogs attacked students with hammers, and then joining in with them as the students were being driven out, constitute peaceful tactics and respect for law and order.

On what basis do the capitalists decide on a military coup, on whether to allow the workers' movement to retain its freedom of assembly (in Britain), to send in the Special Patrol Groups against pickets, on whether the special branch should encourage bombings and robbery, on whether 13 defenceless persons should be shot down in Derry to teach the republican population a lesson, on whether millions should kill or be killed in an imperialist war, on whether to commit genocide in Vietnam...? On the basis that 'peaceful solutions are best'? No, they decide these questions on the concrete needs of the struggle to defend their interests.

### No Platform for Fascists.

We have already discussed who the racists and fascists are, what sort of threat they represent, and the damage they have already been allowed to do. The question boils down to this: how best to stop them going any further?

The fascists are out to inflict violence irrespective of the state of the law. How can we best defend ourselves from it?

Can we for example place our hopes in the police? This is an old question, and history provides certain answers. In Italy and Germany, the fascists drew much of their support from these very forces of law and order. In Germany, army officers were a bastion of fascism. The same was true in Spain, and in Chile today. For it should be obvious that the police have no great love for the workers movement, and even less for the targets of fascist attack, such as black people. Magistrates and judges are hardly neutral either in these matters. This natural antipathy is



reinforced as the fascists begin to gain finance from sections of big capital. Sooner or later the state operates hand in hand with the fascists - a recent example is the bombing at the Bank of Agriculture in Milan in 1969, in which 16 people were killed: several members of the MSI (leading Italian fascist organisation) were charged and released by police chiefs (who were later found to be covering up evidence) while anarchists were held in prison for years awaiting 'trial' on the flimsiest of evidence: in France the uniformed Ordre Nouveau and the French police marched side by side in June last year: in Chile, the Patria y Libertad movement assassinated leftists and union leaders and helped organise the sabotage of production; today they operate hand in hand with the military junta.

All this means that we have to rely on being able to defend ourselves against the fascists. We must seek to build a united front now of all those forces, in the workers and students movements, who are prepared to take concrete steps to stop the fascists.

But do the needs of self-defence extend to stopping fascist meetings? How can we do it otherwise? The fascists incite their followers to violence and stopping this agitation is vital to any effective self defence. In fact the more successfully the fascists carry out all their activities the more realistic their strategy of political violence appears to potential supporters among the middle layers. And a fascist movement which cannot even organise publicly without continual disruption from us, is not going to attract much active support from the big businessmen whose money the fascists are after. The only way to defend ourselves against fascists is to drive them off the campuses and off the streets. As Hitler said in 1933: 'Only one thing could have broken our movement - if the adversary had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed, with the most extreme brutality, the nucleus of our new movement'. In contrast to the German workers this is exactly what the workers in Britain did to Mosley.

We are not saying that the struggle to defend ourselves and to crush the fascist threat is only done by disrupting meetings, stopping their agitation, physical struggle etc. Of course we do need to expose their ideas, but it doesn't follow from this that we should debate with them. We will not win them over by debate. Somebody who is convinced of the need to crush you can only be stopped by making this aim impossible through self-defence. Instead by proposing to debate them, we will only give them a further platform for fascist agitation and incitement. The way to combat their ideological influence is by conducting a continuous struggle against racism and national chauvinism among their potential supporters (hence the importance of the other aspects of the NUS resolution) and by the workers movement showing that it is able to provide practical solutions to capitalist chaos other than the persecution of minorities, national chauvinism and sacrificing its militancy and combativity. But these tasks must go hand in hand with the job of directly putting a stop to fascist activities.

### Is it necessary to stop the racists too?

There are of course many racists who are not themselves fascists. Enoch Powell is a prime example. But they should be stopped too. Like the fascists, racist agitators are responsible for attacks against black people, however indirectly. When Jim Merrick, leader of the Campaign to Stop Immigration in Bradford, offered a reward for the longest list of illegal immigrants, he was consciously inciting racists and especially fascists to hunt down black people and intimidate them. When Enoch Powell agitates for 'voluntary' repatriation, he may or may not be aware of his effect in stimulating skin-heads to beat up Pakistanis and Indians, or that he is giving others a respectable cover. Regardless of intention, racist agitators stir up social violence against minorities. When any racist agitates, he may or may not be aware of the fact that he is encouraging the state to crush black people through ever more vicious legal means or the fascists through illegal means. When he agitates, he may not or may be conscious of the effect he is having in deepening the divisions inside the workers movement. The same goes for Eysenck and those of his ilk. We will try to enlighten them. But we will also stop them before they do any more damage.



Are we doing something new?

By making its decision, is the NUS stepping over a line which others have not crossed? Are we pioneering something radically new?

It isn't necessary to talk about the sort of measures which workers organisations take against employers associations and bourgeois political parties, when making socialist revolution. A workers state ensures that the employers and their representatives have just about as much effective voice as they allowed the workers when they were in the saddle! But let's look at some less dramatic examples.

Trade unionists usually manage to deter their employers and Tory MPs from attending their meetings; print workers have occasionally been able to interrupt the free flow of editorial slander against strikers by refusing to print certain editions of newspapers. When Mr Godber, former Minister of Agriculture, went to Birmingham to do a public relations job for Tory price policy, he was driven off the street by angry housewives. At Cowley recently, militant wives of strikers disrupted the founding meeting of a new strike-breaking organisation, Mrs Millers' National Housewives Association'. Hounslow Labour Council have successfully denied facilities to fascists and racists.

In the thirties, the Mosleyites were stopped by battles at Cable Street in Sheffield and elsewhere. All these actions have been against 'free speech' and contained a good deal of violence, but they were necessary to defend the class interests of the workers movement.

Let's implement the NUS policy. Let us join the ranks of those workers who fought against fascism in the 30's and not forget those who died.

NO PLATFORM  
FOR  
RACISTS  
&  
FASCISTS!