

SECURITY ALERT

We are advising all anarchist and anti-fascist/anti-racist militants, whether members of an organisation or not, to be on guard. There is a man who has been involved to various degrees in the anti-fascist movement for many years now, who is known to be a police informer and, by his own admission has contacts in the security services. He does not tolerate criticism lightly and resorts to smears and lies when confronted with evidence contrary to his own. He produces a magazine which devotes a liberal amount of space to attacking anti-fascists and anarchist/left wing organisations. His name is Gerry Gable, and his publication is *Searchlight*.

For many years now anarchists and some left groups and individuals, *Black Flag* among them, have understood the "other" role of *Searchlight* and Gerry Gable. Much of this is due to his own admissions and lapses, like the infamous memo¹ concerning his contacts in "higher places". Not surprisingly, those individuals, publications and organisations that have shown Gable for what he is have themselves come under Gable's *Searchlight*, resulting in blatant lies, innuendo and smears. We are not going to go into great detail, as most of his antics are well documented.²

Over the last few months Gable, sometimes using the Ray Hill³ column in *Searchlight* (which is written by Gable) has been accusing various individuals, specifically Tim Scargill, then of the Class War Federation, of being fascist plants within Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) and implying connections between some anarchists and known fascists. Apart from smears and hearsay, Gable has not produced a shred of evidence to back up his claims.

In response to the latest bout of lies, a pamphlet, *A Lie Too Far - Searchlight, Hepple and the Left*, has been produced to refute the accusations and back it up with evidence. Some of the evidence comes from *Searchlight*'s mole in the BNP, Tim Hepple, who also tried infiltrating groups on the left - for Gable, or the police, or both?

This article is not a review of the pamphlet, but our conclusions are similar. We need an independent anti-fascist movement that has nothing to do with Gable of *Searchlight* at all. There is a need for discussion among anarchists about our role in the anti-fascist movement given the increase in fascist attacks on us, and the seemingly fragmented anti-fascist opposition particularly in London, where the battle will be won or lost. London comrades need to get organised and go on the offensive, just as the northern comrades have.

Recently, a veteran anti-fascist from Brighton challenged Gable by letter⁴ to back up his claims about Malcolm Astells, formerly of the NF but now an active anti-fascist, who Gable asserts is still a fascist sympathiser. *Black Flag* has seen Gable's reply and it supplied no evidence whatsoever about Malcolm Astells, though we could speculate as to whether Gable has finally flipped.

In his reply Gable rejects claims that he is linked to the security services, citing the amount of help *Searchlight* has given AFA over the years: info, speakers, etc., just like all good state infiltrators do! (It happens in Northern Ireland every day.) For example, Gable passed on info to some anti-fascists concerning a fascist meeting in West London, knowing they would contemplate action against the fascists. Luckily they didn't for the proceedings were being filmed for a TV

programme for which Gable was a consultant. It doesn't take a lot of imagination to see the possible end results.

Gable is no friend of anti-fascists prepared for physical confrontation, especially anarchists, who he hates. But without the militant wing the movement would be useless which in turn would affect *Searchlight*'s perceived role as leading the struggle against fascism and racism. Gable needs the militants, but only if he can influence them. We say we don't need him and call for a boycott of *Searchlight* and Gable.

There can be no unity with those who collaborate with the state. It is disappointing then to see the attitude of AFA, the most militant and effective anti-fascist organisation. In the most recent edition of *Fighting Talk*, AFA's



magazine, a statement appears in support of Malcolm Astells, yet fails to mention the others smeared by *Searchlight*. People could be forgiven for thinking that perhaps AFA share *Searchlight*'s views on the matter. Or is AFA just showing its own brand of sectarianism? Over to AFA. If they have any evidence other than *Searchlight*'s to suggest these people are fascist infiltrators they are duty bound to bring it into the open.

The statement concludes "there is definitely a role for an anti-fascist intelligence magazine, but harassing genuine militant's certainly isn't it." What they could have added is that *Searchlight* can no longer fill that role, if it ever could.

The change in fortunes for the anti-fascist movement in London over the last eighteen months or so has been quite remarkable, especially as there are now more people involved and certainly more

organisations. The first step to unity in London is to gather together the militant wing of anti-fascism, however unlikely that might seem.

Without a commitment to physical confrontation, the anti-fascist movement is a meaningless facade, lowered to the level of protest and ultimately reliant on the state. That is not to say that physical confrontation is the be-all and end-all of anti-fascism. We are well aware that a wide range of tactics have to be used and that not everyone can or wants to engage in physical confrontation. An action should be judged not by whether it is violent, but whether it is effective in helping defeat the fascists.

After 18 months or so of infighting amongst the anti-fascist/anti-racist organisations, the all too familiar calls for unity are once again being heard. Usually, they come from those who have proved themselves to be the most sectarian bastards going. What are we to make of this? And what price unity?

Unity of aims and tactics, while desirable, is unlikely. What is a more pressing topic for discussion is the independence of the anti-fascist movement. Independence from the state,



and also from control by any one party, group, faction or publication. The nature of organisations like the SWP and Militant who set up their own fronts rather than get involved in existing organisations, make the prospect of a unitary anti-fascist movement well nigh impossible.

Unfortunately, where there was unity in the militant wing, epitomised by AFA, there is now mistrust and fragmentation. This is unfair to the Northern Network, who are doing fine work fighting those fascists who dare to show their faces in public. The situation in London is a different matter, which is unfortunate as parts of London are where the BNP are most active.

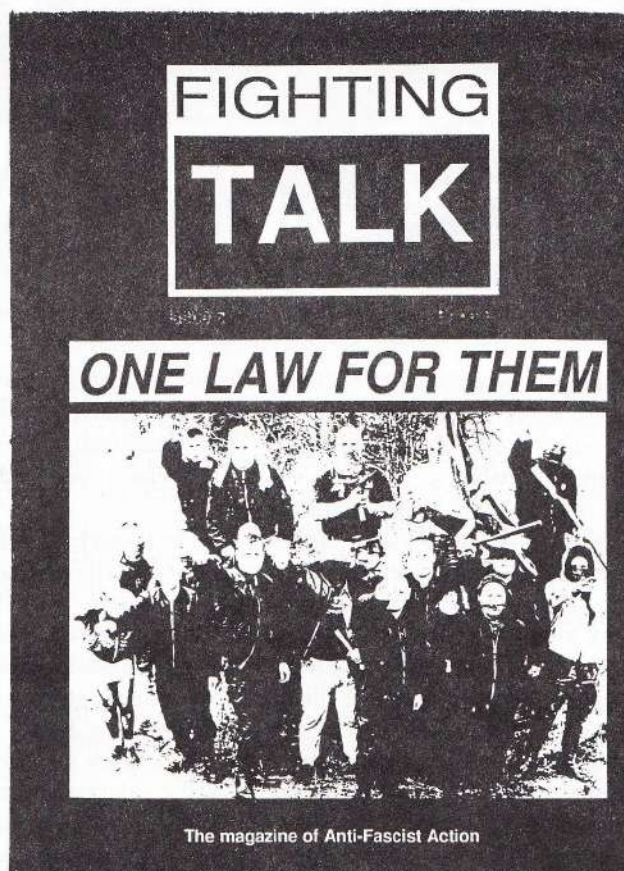
There is a section of the left who like to pass themselves off as intellectuals, who argue that fascist groups like the BNP are no more than a distraction and that the real problem is state racism. While not denying the very real effect of institutional state racism on people's lives, we feel this argument comes from ignorance. Those who advance these arguments are usually middle class, and lack understanding of what life is like in working class areas - the tensions, cynicism and apoliticism. The fact that such leftists have usually given up on the working class may be a blessing in disguise.

While it is true that the BNP have no chance of taking power, even at a local level, it would be criminal to ignore them. The facts of life are that people don't necessarily look to the left when looking for a political alternative. A radical right-wing party, with working class membership, could grow in parts of London, particularly where racism is rife, like the East End. As we go to press, the BNP are running second in polls for a council by-election in Millwall, East London, with 35% of the vote. Anti-fascists should always remember that fighting and winning on the streets is just the beginning.

It would be unwise and naive to keep pushing the line that fascists are the tools of the bosses. They certainly were and possibly will be again, but they do have their own agenda. An organisation like the BNP can have an effect at a local level out of all proportion to their membership. A good example was when they mobilised hundreds of local residents in Bermondsey, South London to oppose a predominantly black anti-racist march. Could any left wing group today have similar influence in a similar area? Fortunately, they failed to capitalise on this, but that may not always be the case. A genuine, working class alternative is

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purporting to represent a minority.

In the 19th century Irish nationalism struggled against British imperialism. Eventually it won, and because it did, like every single other nationalism, turned sour, creating a new capitalist nation under its own flag with a government as reactionary as the old. In Northern Ireland the denial of civil rights to Catholics and immigrants from the South, accentuated a demand for civil rights twenty years ago. This led to a massacre, causing an upsurge in Nationalism which takes its ideas, history and structure from the past. It takes no account of what has happened since 1921 and so it cannot even sell out or compromise as the leadership now wants.

To say the Protestants are descended from Scots male settlers 400 years ago (most of whom came without women) and are therefore immigrants and not real Irish (an impossibly racist idea) overlooks several things. The fact that they are there, that they have their own gurus and their own firearms and that they represent a solid majority of the workforce are all ignored. Nor does their so-called Loyalism preclude them from countering violence against them by violence of their own against the Catholics or against the State to which they are supposed to be loyal.

Ruling out military and political solutions, what hope is there? There simply has to be a social one, namely that people in Northern Ireland live together as Irish people do everywhere else, whether in the Republic or in emigration, differing in politics but not bothering too much about one another's religion. That is a simple thing to ask yet seems impossible. But the IRA (not the Unionists) accepted this only a generation ago and has got from defending civil rights into a military impasse. The way to achieve it is through a working class movement, - even a reformist one if that's all the province can aspire to, but never divided on denominational lines. James Connolly saw that quite clearly but while his name is invoked, his ideas are forgotten.

The IRA's "socialism" (as distinct from its nationalism) is more reformist than the British Labour Party. Its nationalism stopped at the events of 1921. Its opponents the Loyalists stop farther back still, at 1688. Lefties abroad swallow the fiction of it being a national and working class struggle when in every single other country irredentism (a racial or religious minority in a country separated and wanting reunion with the motherland) is dismissed by them as fascist (like the Volksdeutsch in Eastern Europe), whether it is so or not.

It is senseless to place much hopes on peace talks between the various factions. If one lot breaks down another lot will start with equal lack of conclusion, because what else is there for politicians to do bar order shootings? If Ministers, police, military and paramilitary, political and religious leaders fought it out themselves to the finish, it might be a solution, but they will never do that. No peaceful compromise is possible until it is understood class struggle unites working people, and patriotism, loyalty, nationalism, religion and political allegiance divide. Yet the tragedy is that many do understand. The problem is that the dead command.

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needed to fight for hearts and minds, opposing the fascists as well as the established system.

While fighting the fascists on the streets remains the lynchpin of the militant anti-fascist movement, it seems that militant anti-fascists have yet to come to a consensus on what terms the movement is to be "unified" on. For our part, we openly state there can be no unity with known liars and police collaborators like Gable and *Searchlight*. The fact that he is spreading disunity is reason enough, never mind his well documented past.

The counter argument to complete disociation from Gable goes as follows. Yes, Gable is dodgy, but he occasionally passes on useful info about the fascists, helps publicise AFA, etc. He may well want to wreck AFA but arguing for disociation just plays into his hands. *Searchlight* supporters in the Northern Network have publicly disowned allegations against Malcolm Astells, which shows unity is possible.

But for how long? Gable is an expert at playing people against one another. And why is he doing it? If he is not the agent of the state that people claim, why does he spread lies about anti-fascists, knowing it spreads disunity? The sad fact is that many people recognise this yet still tolerate his presence within the anti-fascist movement. His failed attempt to set up *Green Anarchist* shows him to be the scum that he is. It's not the first time he has tried setting up people, especially anarchists, and it won't be the last. It may be possible that his latest attacks are just the tip of the iceberg, and he's after a bigger set-up.

Gable's lies are not confined to anarchists and anti-fascists. He also lies about the fascists. *Searchlight* rarely has an issue without some bollocks about armed fascists about to unleash a race war, linked to just about every nationalist, right-wing, anarchist or pro-PLO group under the sun. Doubtless it helps sell his magazine but its effect on the movement is there for all to see.

Given all this, shouldn't anti-fascists and revolutionary groups on principle have nothing but a hostile attitude towards him?

Notes:

1. The 'Gable Memorandum' in which he mentions his 'friends' in various state security services.

2. Such as: 'Destabilising the decent people', *New Statesman* 15/02/80; 'Shining the searchlight on Gerry Gable', by Sniper, *Anarchy Magazine*, 1986; *Black Flag* issues 15/156/160 and numerous others.

3. One time active fascist in Britain and South Africa, turned *Searchlight* 'mole'. His name is put to a regular column though actually written by Gable. Hepple claims that he still occasionally phones BNP leader John Tyndall 'for a chat'. Whether this is true or not, many people still believe he is 'well dodgy'.

4. Letter to Gable dated 24/06/93

