"FASCISTS AND RACISTS GET OUT OF OUR TOWN!"
How a Community - Black and White, English and Irish, Young and Old - is getting organised! A Lead to all

Three of the four platform speakers...their message loud and clear and supported by the audience was "Fascists and Nazis out of Reading! Black and White unite and fight racism and fascism! No freedom of speech for National Front Nazis!" Martin Kaufman has written the article below.

IN MANY PARTS OF THIS COUNTRY workers and other progressive people are starting to see the need to organise against the twin threats of racism and fascism. There is a growing consciousness that especially in times of economic crisis the bosses and their state are increasingly looking around for ways to solve their problems by putting the whole burden of the crisis onto working people. More and more right-wing politicians and employers are reviving ideas first popularised by Mussolini and Hitler. One only has to read between the lines of articles in many newspapers and magazines to see evidence of mounting talk of one type or another of a police state; "Law and order", blaming the "black", the need for "a strong leader", and similar such notions are common currency in the media. There is no doubt that the bosses, under the guise of Parliament, and the implication is that "strong government" should replace elected M.P.'s and the House of Commons. To anybody who knows anything about politics all this can mean only one thing: powerful and privileged elements within the British capitalist establishment are seriously considering the possibility of bringing into being a fascist police state which would speedily stamp out the few democratic liberties possessed by the working class.

Racism
They could only achieve this if they were able to successfully con, fuse and divert a sufficiently large section of society, not only working people but members of the middle class, particularly those who are at present frustrated with their lot as they try in vain to make ends meet and find security. And racism is the principal means by which this fraudulent diversion is to be perpetrated. A LARGE NUMBER OF READING PEOPLE ARE DETERMINED TO PREVENT THIS AND HAVE LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN TO DO SO. The last thing that fascists want is a united working class allied with other progressive people and so they use racism to split the working class, as did Hitler in Germany. Racists like Enoch Powell and those in the National Front are well aware that if they can get white workers to place the blame for unemployment, housing shortage and other social problems on black or Irish workmates and neighbours, instead of on the bosses and their capitalist State which is the real cause of these problems, then workers will be well and truly divided.... and with a divided working class the reactionaries can do just as they please.

In Britain today, fascists and racists are getting organised. The "Voice of the People" has published many examples of how these enemies of the people are spreading their hate and lies. But they are not the only ones getting organised.... Anti-racist and anti-fascist groups are winning support for a militant struggle against the growing danger. One such organisation is READING PEOPLE AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM (RPARAF) which wishes to share its experiences with people in other parts of the country. The aim of this is one way of building a strong, nation-wide anti-fascist movement.

Campaign
Reading is a town of about 130,000 people. It has large Asian, Caribbean, Irish and other national minority communities. There are not many signs of open racist and fascist activities. On the surface, the community appears normal. But in fact in this town, as in towns like Reading throughout the country, the rats are coming out of the sewers and are sharpening their teeth. The Nazi National Front has stood candidates at parliamentary and council elections. The local press splashes "new" stories of fights involving black youth across the front page in order to whip up racial hatred. Unemployment is double what it was a year ago, and the racists are testing their ideas in our town to take advantage of this situation.

The people who started our campaign could see the spread of racist and fascist ideas in Reading. They decided not to wait to get organised until after the fascists had won a base of support through their lies. We believe that it is right to GET ORGANISED NOW, before the fascists are a great danger. We want to see the people of Reading prepared to deal with them, learning what organisations like the National Front really stand for, and not allow such organisations to grow.

Unity
Fascism and racism attack the working class more viciously than any other section of the people. BUT THEY ALSO ATTACK THE INTERESTS AND RIGHTS OF NON-CAUCASIAN AND SECTIONS OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE NOTHING TO GAIN FROM A POLICE STATE IN BRITAIN.... that is, everyone except the big monopoly capitalists and their closest supporters. We believe it would be wrong for RPARAF to mobilise only the working class in Reading. THIS WOULD GIVE THE FASCISTS A FIGHTING CHANCE TO DISUNIT EVERYONE ELSE. So one feature of our campaign has been to try to unite everyone who can possibly be united against racism and fascism, whether they be industrial workers, both in and outside trade unions, office and shop workers, teachers and professional people, clergymen, shopkeepers, and even anti-racist capitalists. Only the working class can provide the stable foundation and leadership for an anti-fascist movement, but many people can and must be won on the side of the working class in this fight. This can be achieved if they are approached in an honest and principled way. In order to do this we have set our sights on producing an ACTION PROGRAMME which will really unite all who can be united.

Programme
With an Action Programme, which clearly sets out what we stand for, what are our demands, and how we are going to achieve our aims, our campaign will grow, not by fits and starts, but in a planned way; not by drifting from issue to issue or jumping on passing bandwagons, but step-by-step, taking all things into account; not by imagining that we already know all the problems on peoples' minds, but by carefully investigating peoples' views and their social conditions. We completely rejected the idea of a small committee just sitting down and dreaming up a "programme". It would not be worth the paper it was written on. To produce a real Action Programme that deals with the real problems caused by fascism and racism in Reading, and will really win people to supporting the campaign, we need to mix with front people, find out what are the real problems and conditions, and then produce a programme and put it into action. Such a programme can only be given a proper and effective orientation if it takes into account the living way the historical experience and the lessons currently being learned by progressive people fighting racism and fascism in other parts of the world. For example, we get much from studying a book called "For The Unity Of The Working Class Against Fascism" by Georgi Dimitrov. These are the things we have been doing since the campaign began.

National Front
Our campaign began when the National Front sold their newspaper "Britain First" in Reading Town Centre for the first time in April 1973. The Reading "voice of the people" launched a campaign against the sales. For example, we got much from studying a book called "For The Unity Of The Working Class Against Fascism" by Georgi Dimitrov. These are the things we have been doing since the campaign began.

RPARAF has been working in several ways. We arranged to contact and visit about thirty organisations and groups of the national minor-

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ANTI-RACIST CAMPAIGN
continued from page 4

ities, such as black youth clubs, the continued from page 4

However, when we have managed to meet

ers. However, when we have managed to meet

large numbers of people, there has been a

problems inside the
to fight racism and fascism cause them , or of which they are

There were quite a lot of problems inside the

lish bodies, such as trade unions, social wel­

fought, and what they think of the campaign.

one exposing the nazi leaders of the National

for our public

story workers which we gave out before work

school children and other young people, and

in the dinner break, and one aimed at

people tell us about the problems that racism

On

hundreds of letters to

Security at the meeting was hand

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be put into practice.

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class wants a fascist state- the big capitalists­

important that previously there had been

example implying that only socialists could

they to take place up and down the counry,

socialists and the like -and it would be criminal

we deliver by hand hundreds of letters to

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significant of unity that

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and an

were some differences of emphasis on this or

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Ukranian and an

Leafllet

We have also been involved in mass publicity.

On two occasions in Reading town centre on a

One

referring to documents, we have produced four

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in distribution, mainly

in the town centre; there was one aimed at fac­

factories which we gave out before work

and in the dinner break, and one aimed at

we produced a leafllet aimed at Irish

When we got handling out these leaflet-

In Hindi, Punjabi

Finally, we delivered by hand hundreds of letters to

organisations and individuals outlining our

Meeting

More than a hundred people came to our first public meeting of the construction site of Engine­

This was probably the first

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reference to the campaign was very

as the case was with the
to our town: the numbers present were

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promised, and again it was at the good

we got when handing out these leafllets, in fact most people were pleased to take

and there were few hostile comments.

We also produced three different posters, each with one of our slogans, together with a poster in

anti-fascist lives with his wife

Future

But the campaign will not win, if we hope, from

strength. WE HAVE LAUNCHED INTO 1976

AS A YEAR OF ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-FASCIST

STUGGLE IN READING. We are working towards a second public meeting on 16th March, when our

democratic constitution will be put forward and a

finished ACTION PROGRAMME will be dis­

cussed after everybody's views have been studied.

Meanwhile we are carrying on popularising the

draft programme, investigating and meeting new

people. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY TO

BUILD. We reject the idea of just fighting fac­

ists in our own town and look to working with others who want a nation-wide campaign.

The start we have made must now be built upon.

Finally, our committee wishes to express a lot of
thanks to the "Voice of the People" news­

paper and the workers who produce it for having helped us in a number of ways: we know the VOP

has its own problems, but we also know that it will solve them only if it continues to

the working class and other progressive people in this

country.

One last note: anyone wanting to contact us can
doe so through the VOP (page 5, 6, 7, 8, Foundry Street, Reading, Berkshire, enclosing a

stamp). PLEASE: VOP will be reporting on the campaign in future issues.