Things need to change. NEAF are not interested in empty gesture politics. When we say “smash the fash”, we mean exactly that. We are looking to improve the level of anti-fascist organisation in the region, and we have plans for a number of meetings and events to help achieve this.

The NORTH EAST ANTI FASCISTS

What brings us together is fascist & Nazi attacks on the working class, & the need to defend ourselves. We work with all who oppose bigots & racists.

POINTS OF UNITY

North East Anti Fascists consists of people from different backgrounds, with different viewpoints. What we all agree on, however, is the following:

We go where they go. Whenever fascists and Nazis are organising or active in public, we get there. We don’t believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the Nazis have the street!

We don’t rely on the police, courts, politicians or ‘community leaders’ to do our work for us. This doesn’t mean we never go to court, but the cops uphold the status quo. Often when it matters the police protect the fascists, they attack us and everyone who resists oppression. We must rely on ourselves to protect ourselves and stop the fascists.

Non-sectarian defence of other anti-fascists. North East Anti Fascists have differences. We don’t agree about everything and we have a right to differ openly. But in this movement an attack on one is an attack on us all and we stand behind each other.

Join the North East Anti-Fascist Facebook page, and email ne-antifascists@riseup.net to get involved.

http://neantifascists.wordpress.com/

North East Anti-Fascists Open Letter to the movement

The murder of soldier Lee Rigby in Woolwich unleashed a backlash of racial violence. Built upon years of media scaremongering, fascist and racist street thugs have taken to the streets, indiscriminately attacking Muslims, Asian property and mosques. Without being at all alarmist, we need to recognise that a change in the situation has occurred. The “pogromists” have also directed aggression towards the Left too, as the fascists seek to reassert themselves as a political force, following long term decline.

We are not over-exaggerating the capacity of the fascists to carry through their attacks: we are entering a difficult and dangerous period, and there is an urgent necessity for an anti-fascist response which is up to the task.

The increase in fascist actions and violence continues, and represents a serious threat to individuals, to civil society and our movements’ future.

North East Anti-Fascists argue that the threat from the fascists requires a concerted and coordinated response. In each area, activists and organisations should link up and build unity with the aim of self-defence against attacks on communities, mosques, meetings and campaigning activity. We must aim to make “an injury to one is an injury to all” real, and we must aim to maximise our effectiveness in responding to fascist attacks.

The big question is, unity on whose terms?

There is actually a major problem with broad coalitions: it means that for the sake of sharing a platform with them, we must allow the tactical agenda to be dictated by the most timid and conservative elements in it. For specifically anti-fascist coalitions it also means that the analysis of fascism is de-fanged and neutered. There are crucial differences between the liberal and socialist analyses of fascism. While liberals like to portray fascists as mere ignorant, racist thugs, socialists recognise that fascism is actually a response to the failures of capitalism and liberal democracy. This means recognising the role that Labour have played in alienating and disempowering the working class. It means getting to the root of the problem by developing a serious anti-capitalist agenda and by working to develop a vibrant autonomous working class culture to rival the pull of nationalism. It means, in short, recognising that liberals are actually part of the problem. Let’s just say that when the Nazis came to attack Jewish areas these IDIOTS who think we
can fight them by being 'better than them' are NOT those being attacked by stones, bottles or petrol bombs (Grimsbys) - the entirely sensible response here to fascist attacks is the formation of democratic and public workers self-defence squads by those who are actually concerned about protecting our communities.

activists is still haunted by one conversation he had with a group of lads on a Sunderland council estate, when he told them he was against Nazis and they asked, "What, so you're against the Germans then?". Neither is it enough to hope that words like "racist" and "thug", or 'criminals' even carry enough stigma to scare and reverting to street action. That calls for a different anti-fascist response. When fascists are mobilising with the aim of taking control of the streets, anti-fascists need to disrupt and challenge their organisations. You don't do that by going along with a police-approved march that keeps you well away from the fascists. You do it by disrupting their travel arrangements, their meeting points, and physically blocking the streets. That may entail civil disobedience. It may even entail violence. Circumstances will dictate which is more appropriate. But it is plain that this sort of effective action, which has been repeatedly shown to work in the past, is not going to occur when we allow people who are committed to strictly legal actions to dictate tactics.

We do not think ‘Alliances of convenience’ between the Labour Party, trade union bureaucrats and the Socialist Workers Party front, within Unite Against Fascism or its localised committees such as Newcastle Unites, are doing the work necessary. As an electoral party, Labour isn’t going to support anything that might conceivably stray outside the bounds of the law. Ditto the union bureaucrats, who aren’t going to risk their well-paid managerial jobs. The SWP, on the other hand is supposed to be a revolutionary organisation. The fact they’ve signed up with dyed-in-the-wool reformists is symptomatic of how badly isolated they’ve become not only from the working class, but the rest of the Left.

A couple of years ago when the big threat on the far-Right was an electoral breakthrough by the BNP, there was some sense in keeping things fluffy and peaceful. To use direct action against a party, no matter how repulsive, that was aiming at bourgeois respectability would be counter-productive: it would merely make the poor fascists look like the victims of extremists. It needs to be recognised however that the EDL have no electoral pretentions. They are 100% about physically controlling the streets, using violence and intimidation to beat down their opponents. In the face of this, a failure to reassess tactics amounts to willful sabotage. The EDL are not going to be shamed into backing down by chanting “Nazi scum, off our streets!” at them, from a couple of hundred yards away, through multiple lines of riot cops.

It is worth pointing out that despite the police and the Newcastle Unites stewards, liberals on the recent UAF march in Newcastle were left vulnerable by the police and stewards not doing their job and keeping the EDL morons away from the march. In the case of the police, they are not on our side to begin with, but the NU stewards were so preoccupied with keeping tabs on militant anti-fascists that they weren’t there when EDL got past police lines and attacked anti-fascists. It was militants with the North East Anti Fascists (NEAF) who correctly recognised what was happening and moved to deal with it, effectively. It needs to be recognised that collaboration with the police is not what makes for successful anti-fascism. From their point of view, they have a legal obligation to facilitate peaceful protest, no matter how ugly and wrong-headed the protestors. As anti-fascists, our task is to destroy fascism. That doesn’t mean tolerating it behind a police cordon every now and again, while between demos, fascists are free to spread their toxic ideas in our communities. It means combating fascism wherever it is found: politically in our communities, ideologically in the media, physically in the streets.

Fascism has been defeated before, but never by people who oppose them with their hands tied behind their back. In the 1930s, Oswald Mosley and his British Union Of Fascists were politically broken by people taking to the streets en masse and physically preventing them from marching - as in Stockton, for example, in 1933 when 2000 antifascists chased the BUF out of town, or again at “The Battle Of Cable Street” in 1936 when anti-fascists broke through police lines to stop the fascists from marching through the East End of London. That is exactly what is meant by “No Pasaran!” - “They will not pass!”

We are not making a fetish of violence here: non-violent civil disobedience can be every bit as effective as throwing bricks. We are merely stating that effective anti-fascism generally involves doing what’s necessary rather than doing what is legal.

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Newcastle Unites?