

A MORNING STAR/UNITY! SPECIAL



CABLE STREET FOREVER!

The famous victory in 1936 is still felt today far beyond the East End, says LIZ PAYNE

THE ROUTING OF Oswald Mosley's black-shirted thugs and their police escort by 250,000 residents of London's East End in Autumn 1936 had significance way beyond the local streets or the year.

The Communist Party and YCL's rallying call (*Daily Worker*, 3 October 1936) read: "Against Fascism! For Freedom and Democracy! For the victory of the Spanish People! For the raising of the blockade which deprives them of arms!

For Peace and Freedom in East London!"

The Battle of Cable Street was integral to the international struggle to defeat the open terroristic dictatorship of fascism, a system intent on stamping out the struggle for socialism, and the hopes and aspirations of working people everywhere for a better life.

By 1936, fascism had already shown its true colours. Japan had invaded Manchuria in 1931. From 1933, a stream of

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ONLINE RALLY

2.30pm Sunday 4 October
See p8 for details and how to register

INSIDE: Jeremy Corbyn MP, Frances O'Grady (TUC), Patrick Roach (NASUWT) and more



Cable Street must inspire action today

Cable Street inspires us today

FROM P1: refugees bore witness to the nazi concentration camps, torture chambers and virulent racist horrors. News of Mussolini's undeclared war on Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia) from late 1935, told of a people bombed and gassed without mercy in their own land. Then came Spain. In mid-July 1936, Francisco Franco's forces, backed by the military might of fascist Italy and Germany, began their long-planned attack on the legitimate republican Popular Front government.

The terror began immediately, symbolised by the horrific massacre of thousands at Badajoz on 14 August. The town's inhabitants were rounded up and slaughtered in the bullring and surrounding streets, bodies left where they fell.

That autumn, young people from many countries set off for Spain to fight for democracy and freedom. They, who would form the International Brigades, knew how dangerous a fascist victory in Spain would be, as the clouds of war gathered across the world. The first of hundreds of British volunteers to die, Felicia Browne, was killed just six weeks before Cable Street.

By now, the Party had set to work organising medical and food aid, as well as recruiting volunteers, calling mass rallies and exposing the shameful policy of Britain in refusing to sell arms to the elected Spanish government. This was not neutrality; it was tantamount to direct support for fascism.

The British working class, with the Communist Party at its centre, knew it must challenge the ultra-right at home and in Spain. Workers totally rejected Labour's view that resistance to fascism only provoked it further and the best way to defeat it was by ignoring it.

In Britain, it was imperative to confront not only fascists on the street but their powerful backers in high places — reactionary, nazi-leaning sections of the ruling class, including the soon-to-abdicate Edward VIII, the landed aristocracy and big business.

At Cable Street united and concerted action, not only halted the Blackshirts on the day. The defeat prevented fascism from creating a mass base in Britain and another ally for the nazis and other axis powers. It was an act of true internationalism.

Liz Payne is chair of the Communist Party.

AS WE reflect on the historic victory at Cable Street 84 years ago, we must be ready to mobilise against anti-semitism, racism and discrimination again.

On 4 October 1936, more than 100,000 East Enders took to the streets to prevent Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists marching through the area.

The Battle of Cable Street was a pivotal moment in the history of the fight against fascism in Britain, and also in the history of the trade union movement.

Many trade unionists were among the countless thousands who stood up to hatred and drove out the fascists that day.

Irish dockers, railway workers,

by Frances O'Grady

working-class women and men — all joined forces with the local Jewish community to stop Mosley's Blackshirts in their tracks.

Eight decades on, I am still inspired by Cable Street. And it's still the trade union movement's historic mission to fight racism and anti-semitism, whatever form they take.

Anti-fascism is part of our DNA. Thousands of trade unionists joined the International Brigades to fight Franco's armies in Spain, including the former leader of the T&G union, Jack Jones.

Many more died during the second world war, resisting fascism across Europe.

More recently, unions led the mobi-

lisation against the National Front and BNP here in Britain.

Today the threat from far-right ideologies has shifted into the mainstream, and unions continue our fight in Britain and internationally.

Since 2016, there's been a shocking rise in attacks by far-right thugs and online hate against Muslim and Jewish people, the LGBT community, disabled people and migrant workers.

We've seen organised far-right groups recruiting on football terraces, rampaging through our streets, and targeting trade unionists. But we see the influence of the far right in other ways; in the demonising of migrants and the dog-whistle Islamophobia of politicians. Hatred which finds its way into communities and workplaces.

Like Mosley's Blackshirts in the 1930s, they claim to represent working people. But we know the truth.

These people don't give a damn about our values. They're against everything that our movement stands for: dignity for all, regardless of race, faith or sexuality. The far right only looks for a chance to exploit division, turning working people against each other and stirring up hate.

They say history doesn't repeat, it rhymes. This isn't the 1930s, or the 1970s. Today's far right isn't just organising on the streets but on Facebook and WhatsApp too, with its threads of hate worryingly woven into mainstream media and political discourse.

Far right activists are harnessing social media to spread hate and undermine our democracy.

So as we reflect on historic victories like turning back the tide of fascism at Cable Street, we must also look to the battles ahead.

That's why the government must crack down on social media giants letting their platforms be used to spread hate and speak out against discrimination and hatred whatever the source.

And we in the trade union movement must step up too. We can stop the far-right in its tracks by uniting working people across borders and standing up for a new deal for everyone.

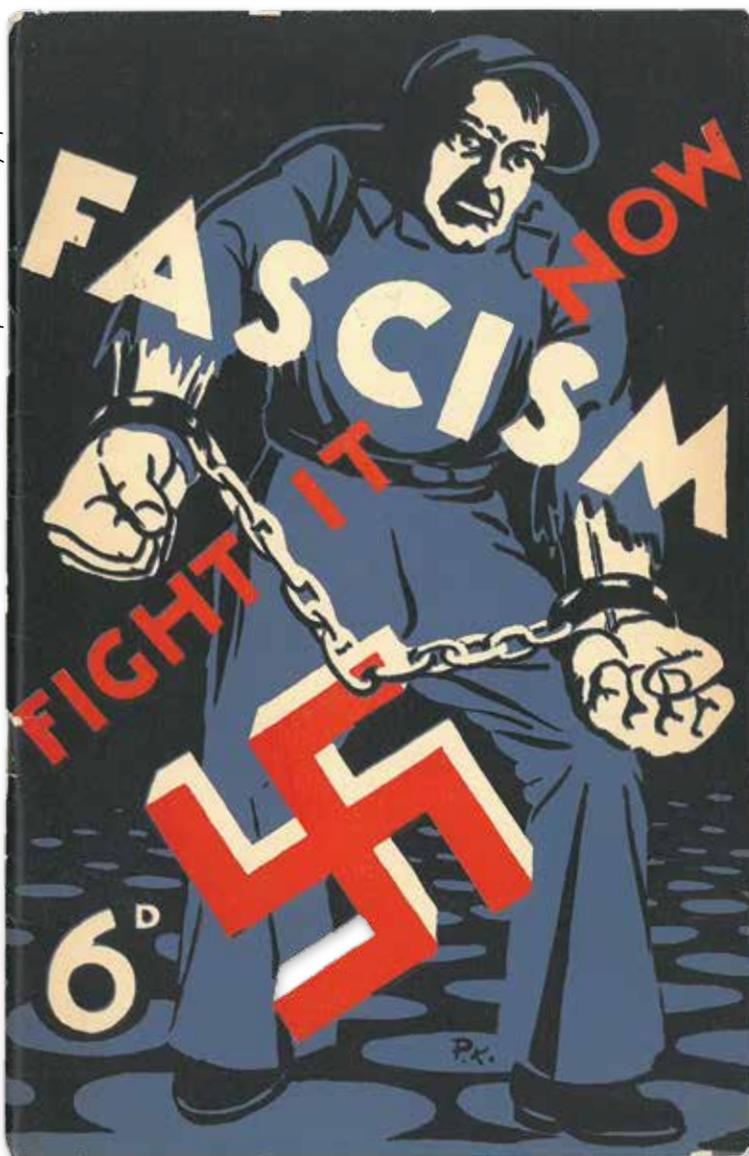
We must mobilise the strength of our six million members around our core values of solidarity, respect, equality and internationalism.

And we must work with our sisters and brothers across the world to win the fight against those — from Trump to Bolsonaro and Modi — who seek to pit worker against worker.

Frances O'Grady is TUC general secretary.

CLEAR MESSAGE: A 1937 Labour Research Department pamphlet

Reproduced courtesy of the WCML



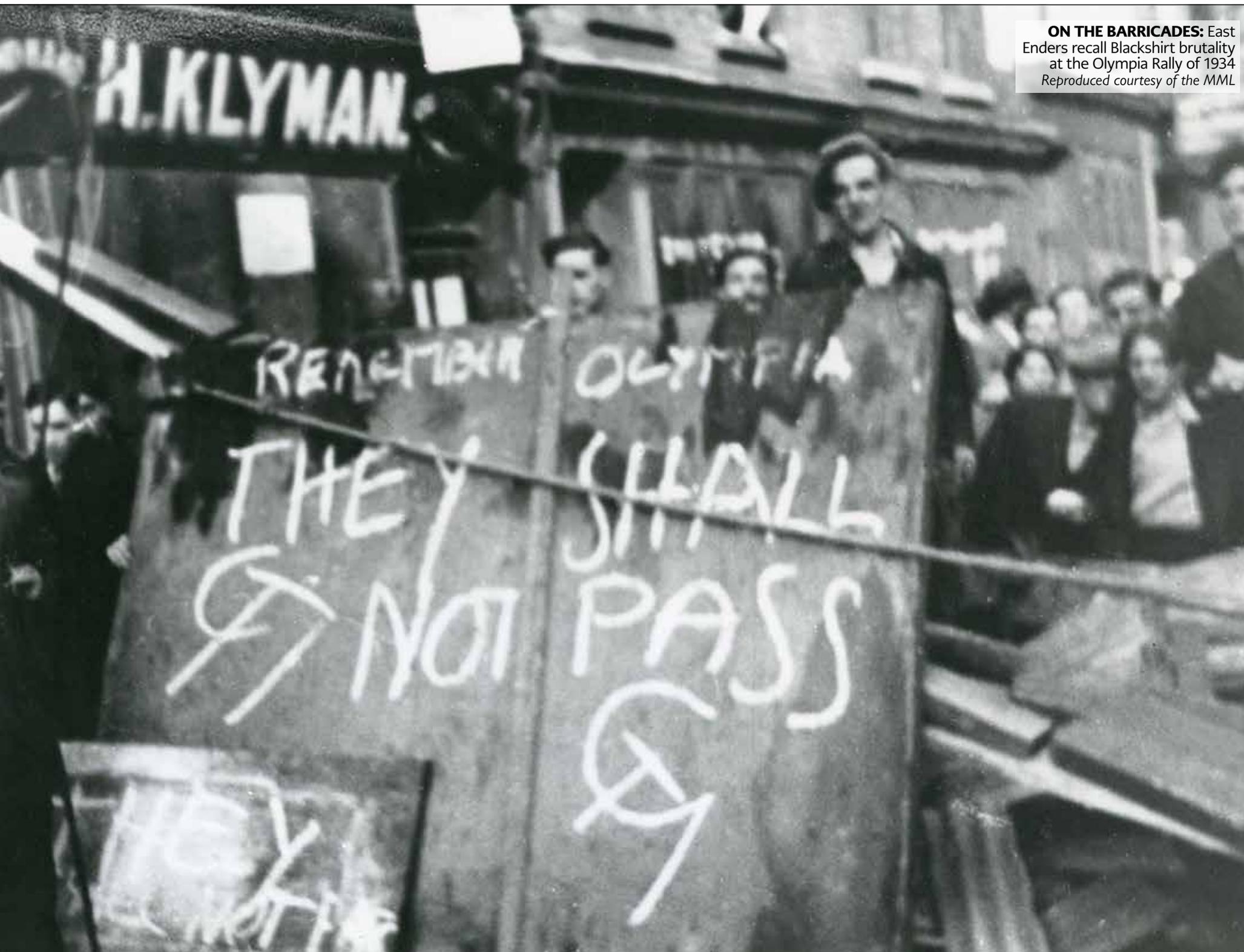
THE Battle of Cable Street has a deep personal significance to me. I learned all about that historic event from my mother, who was there herself.

She told me how she joined tens of thousands of people from an incredibly diverse range of community organisations, faith groups, trade unions, the Labour Party, left-wing groups and others who had come together against the planned march by Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists — and the police guarding it — through a heavily Jewish neighbourhood.

Communities joined together to support each other with one simple aim: to stop the fascists marching through the East End and determinedly say they wouldn't let them pass.

Barricades were erected to halt the march, and so it was eventually abandoned in a great victory for the anti-fascists.

My mother Naomi stood alongside so many others because she wanted to live in a world, as we all do, free



ON THE BARRICADES: East Enders recall Blackshirt brutality at the Olympia Rally of 1934
Reproduced courtesy of the MML

Tackle racism head on

from xenophobia and free from hate.

As I said at the tremendous event to mark the Battle of Cable's Street 80th anniversary in 2016: "The principles that brought those people on to the streets runs through my DNA."

Those who stood there in Cable Street, all those years ago, did so as an act of defiance and an act of principal, and we walk in their shadow.

We must never forget their enormous service to the whole country and its future. They showed us without doubt that unity is strength and that in today's increasingly dangerous world — with both the far-right and racism again on the rise in many countries — we must stand united and strong again.

We should be pleased to live in one

by Jeremy Corbyn

society with many cultures and side by side in a multi-faith society.

As Gary Lineker's recent brilliant Fish and Chips video showed, many things we regard as essential to British life wouldn't be as they are without refugees and migrants.

London and Islington North, which I have the privilege to represent in the House of Commons, has always been, and should always be, a melting-pot for people from all over the world to make it their home and make their contribution. We must celebrate our diversity, which makes the capital great in so many ways.

In recent months, we have again seen a rise in those who wish to scapegoat and blame migrants for the problems we are facing as a country and a society.

In particular in the last few weeks we have seen a notable increase in hostility towards refugees, including a wave of negative and misleading media stories encouraged by the Tories and their allies.

These are just the latest examples of the age-old right-wing divide-and-rule tactic — it is an approach straight out of the Trump playbook.

As we approach a massive unemployment crisis, as socialists we have a duty to say that this — alongside other issues such as housing shortages, NHS under-funding and many more

besides — is the fault of a decade of ideologically driven austerity and this Tory government's wrong priorities; not the fault of migrants or refugees.

To put it simply, these economic and social problems are the result of a rigged and broken system that needs to change.

Indeed, a lot of these problems would be much worse without the contribution migrants, their children and their grandchildren have made and continue to make to our economy and society, not least to our public services including our beloved NHS.

This means that we must never turn our back on those values that bring us together, and we must never stop standing up to those who seek to

scapegoat some of the most vulnerable people in our society and drive a wedge between different communities.

The only way to defeat division and hate is to confront head-on those who fan the flames of racism and xenophobia.

It is not enough to just declare our strength of community and unity on anniversaries like this; it is about our ability and willingness to do that every day, all the time, if we want to live in the decent non-racist society that we all crave.

And it also means we need to offer people hope — hope for a better, fairer and more equal future in a world of unity and peace.

Jeremy Corbyn is Labour MP for Islington North.

People's pressure

PHIL KATZ traces the Daily Worker's role in rallying anti-fascist support

THE front page of the Daily Worker of Monday 5 October is now iconic. "MOSLEY DID NOT PASS: EAST LONDON ROUTS THE FASCISTS." The headline echoed around the world. But what of the days leading up to the battle? Here we review the build-up through the pages of the worker's daily.

On Friday 2 October, the headline read: "East End rallies against fascism," with a subheading pointing out that four mayors, representing Stepney, Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Hackney and Poplar had visited the Home Office to seek a ban on the march.

There's a trend among quick-quip liberal historians to state, without any evidence, that the Communist Party only blocked Mosley reluctantly or because it came under pressure from its London district.

The heading of the main article of the day tells a quite different story. Under the announcement "Youth Meet Transferred" an article points to the "militarist nature" of the fascist operations. The fascist command HQ would be at 222a Bethnal Green Road under the command of Sir George Duckworth King.

Through the paper, the CP called on "all Londoners" to demonstrate and promised speakers such as the legendary Tom Mann and Isabel Brown, Dave Springhall and Willie Cohen. There is also an announcement that the Saturday edition in London, will carry an extra anti-fascist supplement — "the right stuff to rally the masses against fascist provocation."

Tension was already high as Mosley announced his squads would march in military formation and uniform. They would be inspected by the "Leader" at the assembly point in Royal Mint Street.

But in the surrounding streets, hundreds of youth were already knocking



door to door to canvass for a petition launched by the Jewish Peoples Council calling for a ban. The London communists warned Mosley was trying to provoke civil war.

On Saturday 3 October the Daily Worker carried the front-page news that the Jewish Peoples Council petition had reached the 100,000 signature mark in just 48 hours.

A delegation of local MPs, priests and London Trades Council officers visited the Home Office to restate the case for a ban.

A leader of the local council said "the population in East London, consisting of different races and creeds, had lived together in peace and harmony for generations until the organised fascist provocation of race against race."

On the same day — "left" historians note — the ILP issued its only leaflet calling on workers to join the counter demonstration. By then the Communists had established spies in Mosley's camp,

had medical units formed, agreed with local builders to let them use materials as barricades, met with its members driving trams, one of whom later left his vehicle to block the path to the fascists and allocated different vantage points to its London branches. Mosley was not coming through.

The Daily Worker's graphic artists had also been at work, and the 3 October supplement carried a detailed map for those who didn't know the area.

The paper declared: "No liberty for the assassins of liberty," adding: "Let Gentiles and Jews unite in defence of freedom."

The cosmopolitan nature of the East End allowed communists to draw many parallels between the situation on local streets and events abroad. They took the opportunity to hammer home the links between Mosley and Hitler's concentration camps, the destruction of Badajoz and Irun in Spain and the gassing of innocents in Abyssinia.

Little did they know then that Mosley would fly straight after the rout to Germany to be married in the home of Goebbels, with Hitler, the bestial dictator in person, among the guests.

Many defenders of east London's streets took such parallels literally and adopted the same slogan as the defenders of Madrid: "They shall not pass." According to one article, this was chalked on every pavement in east London.

The centre pages were filled with a telling montage of photos proving the headline: "Fascism brings war, misery, death — democracy asks for peace, life." Overleaf it carried an expose of the "men, money and menace" behind Mosley.

The Daily Worker deserves much respect for the campaign it waged

against anti-semites in this decade. In the Saturday edition it explained, "fascism attacks the Jews in order to conceal its real aims — the attack on the workers, on socialism, on trade unions, on every democratic liberty, on peace."

It quoted fascist spokesman William Joyce, later executed as a traitor: "We make no apology for saying we intend to destroy democracy and to obliterate the word from our vocabulary." He was hanged but his boss was to escape the noose.

The Young Communist League announced it would march from Stepney at 11am on the Sunday, with the aim to "bar the way to fascism." The YCL's original plan for the Sunday was a march on Trafalgar Square, donned in blue overalls (a kind of worker's uniform used by Republicans in Spain) to protest against Franco. Instead it would march in the East End. The call to wear blue overalls remained in place.

The slogan for the march would be: "Spain's youth bar the way to Franco's troops — East London youth bar the way to fascism."

The Ex-Servicemen's National Movement Against Fascism took out an advert: "Stand side by side as in 1914-1918, with old comrades against Mosley."

The Worker also encouraged readers to buy a new book by Georgi Dimitrov, leader of the Communist International, The Working Class Against War & Fascism.

The scene was now set for the biggest political confrontation of the 20th century and the people, guided and largely organised by the Communist Party, won.

On the streets of the East End in the week that followed, sales of the Daily Worker had never been higher.

Phil Katz is CP centenary project officer.



THE ONSET of the financial crisis in 2007 had differing political ramifications across the world — developed capitalist countries, post colonial states, along with newly emerging countries (BRICS).

In short, left and progressives are having to engage with the differential fallout of the financial crisis. To this has been added the pervasive environmental crisis and the outbreak of a global pandemic.

This backdrop has seen the emergence of authoritarian regimes all over the world bent on playing the nationalistic card under the guise of ethnicity, faith or geographical specificity.

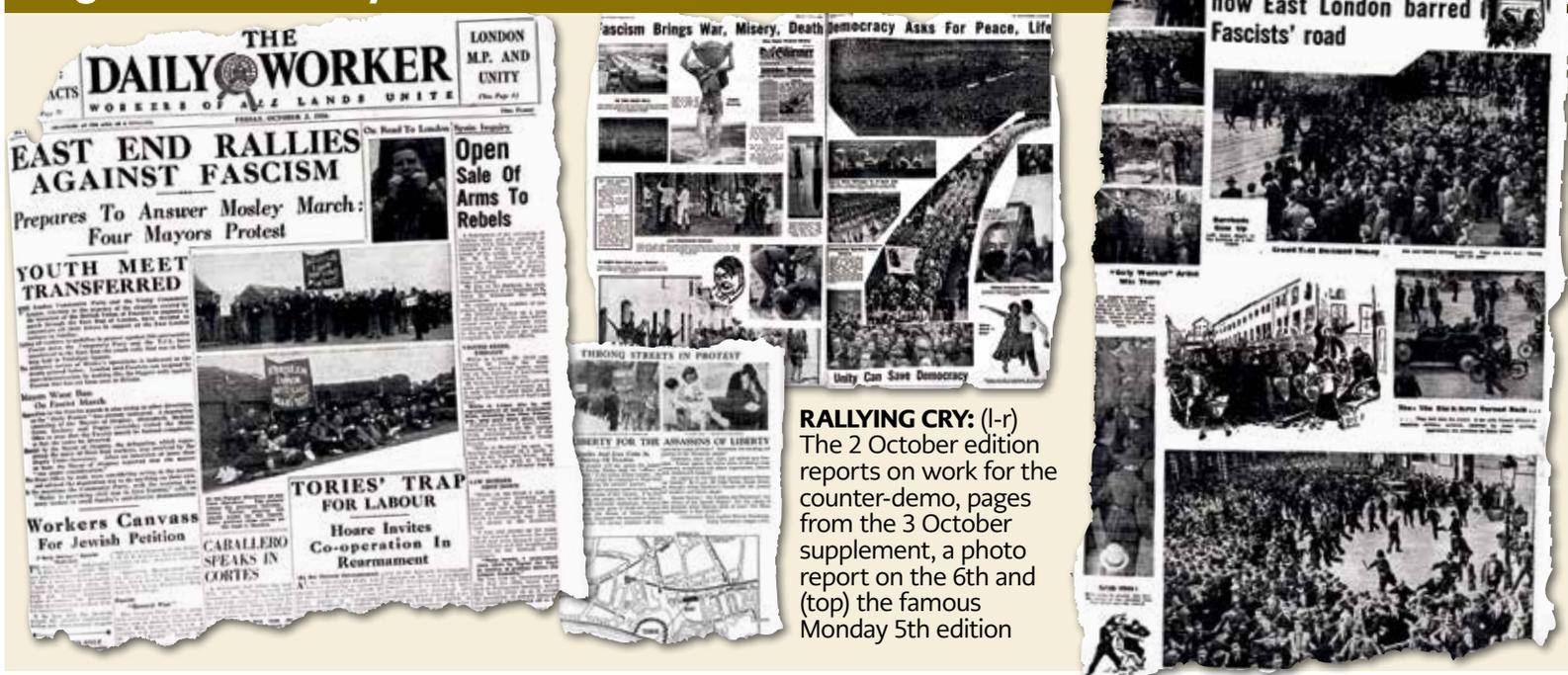
Tied to this cocktail of anti-democratic tendencies is the fear and scapegoating of the "other" — refugees, migrants, Muslims, Jews or whoever — as a rallying point to whip up hatred and unite a mythical besieged indigenous community.

Some of these characteristics are eerily similar to the scene in the 1930s: a deep-seated economic recession, a crisis of democratic institutions, military rearmament, the decline of social democracy, the emergence of ultra-right forces and hostility against minorities.

What can be the relevance of the Battle of Cable Street today as the left faces the challenge of moving forward politically at a global, national and, most importantly, at a local and neighbourhood level?

The battle could not have taken place without an initial building of alliances between different sections of the community, based on shared principles. The key is the importance

Pages from history





ALWAYS FIGHTING: East Enders, including Cable Street veteran Max Levitas (in suit and tie) mark the 75th anniversary of the battle and (front page) and fellow veteran Hetty Bower at the celebration

An injury to one is an injury to all

by Nisar Ahmed

of grass-roots community work allied with links to the labour movement and other left political forces.

The groundwork for the extraordinary mobilisation of the 1930s lay in the tenants' struggle, anti-racist movements, confronting the fascists and joint work with trade unions. This was led by the local Communist Party.

The second element that determined the success was the unity forged between the Jewish residents and their mainly Irish neighbours.

Again, this followed on from the solidarity struggles that linked the day-to-day struggles of the local community with the bread-and-butter issues of trade unionists.

Finally, we saw the forging of the broadest possible unity between different elements of the local population which thereby strengthened and hardened the resistance against the Blackshirts.

In 21st-century Tower Hamlets the big battalions of the working class such as the dockers are no longer present. The Jewish community with its strong left-wing tradition is absent.

The physical "regeneration" of the former docklands along with the area bordering the City has seen a recomposition of the demographic profile in terms of class and age.

The post-colonial migration of an ethnically distinct Bengali community with Islam as their predominant religion has largely replaced the Jewish community. In such changed circumstances how do we reconstruct the Popular Front of Cable Street?

The question can be legitimately posed: how do we transfer the lessons of the 1930s to the new and changed conditions of the 2020s? In other words how do we construct an anti-racist and anti-fascist coming together of the local population in today's Tower Hamlets? What concretely needs to be done in the present East End?

The starting point has to be the defence of the local communities against the attacks of fascist forces such as the EDL.

We have to adopt the slogan of the 1930s: they shall not pass. We also need to respond to the present by boldly proclaiming: no ifs and no buts, victims of fascism and racism must be defended.

This has acquired greater urgency as the ruling class tries to drive a wedge between the diverse sections of the local population: Muslims v non-Muslims, yuppies v workers, residents v public-sector workers.

Above all we need to be continuously vigilant and wage an uncompromising ideological battle against anti-semitism and Islamophobia. We need to boldly proclaim that an attack on a Jew is an attack on a Muslim, a desecration of a Mosque is tantamount to vandalising a Synagogue.

Under no circumstances should the problems in the Middle East divide the local communities that are the targets of fascists and racists.

The memory of Cable Street and subsequent anti-fascist struggles of 1978 and 1993 needs to be passed on to the new generations.

An annual celebratory event on Cable Street should be initiated to continue the work started on occasion of the 75th and 80th anniversary of Cable Street in 2011 and 2016. Only in that way we can ensure permanently that They Shall Not Pass!

Nisar Ahmed is an economist, community activists and Communist Party executive member.

Lessons to learn

by David Rosenberg

THE FAMOUS battle took place in October 1936 but the British Union of Fascists' war on the Jews had already moved into a menacing new phase in February that year when Mosley added three words to his movement's name: "and National Socialists."

This small addition signalled a shift from a more "disciplined" fascism modelled on Mussolini's authoritarian regime, to one incorporating the wild, unrestrained anti-semitism of the nazis.

Street corner gatherings of Mosley's Blackshirts, which had four large East End branches, increasingly encroached on the area's crowded Jewish enclave.

Their speakers continued to describe Jews as greedy landlords, cut-throat businessmen, and vice racketeers, but their propaganda was increasingly littered with references to zoology and disease.

Waves of anti-Jewish street violence, unchecked by police, forced even MPs in their Westminster bubble to take notice. In both March and July 1936, Parliament debated fascist terror in the East End.

Local MPs provided sickening testimony of brutal attacks. The home secretary's feeble response though was to ask "everyone on all sides" to "behave reasonably."

In another West End bubble, the Jewish community's "official" leaders looked away, refusing to believe that vicious anti-semitism could emerge in Britain's "fair" and "decent" land. Working class Jews under siege felt neglected and isolated and looked for local solutions.

Politically minded younger Jews joined anti-fascists in the Young Communist League and the Labour League of Youth.

In July 1936, the Workers Circle — a socialist friendly society formed in the East End by Yiddish-speaking immigrants — called a conference. Nearly 200 delegates from 87 local organisations attended: trade unions, youth groups, friendly societies, ex-servicemen's groups and synagogues.

A militant grass-roots body, the Jewish Peoples Council Against Fascism and Antisemitism (JPC), was born that day. Its steering group included several Communists and trade union activists.

Its role in the week before the Battle of Cable Street was crucial, but its key principles and methods should also inform conversations about how we tackle racism and fascism in 2020.

The JPC targeted both Jews and non-Jews. It urged Jews to fight both anti-semitism and organised fascism.

The JPC argued that Mosley's movement used anti-semitism as a tool not merely to incite hatred but also to advance fascism. This threatened all who supported democracy, so it urged

non-Jewish anti-fascists to challenge all anti-semitism too.

Mosley's movement incited Irish Catholics against their Jewish neighbours. The JPC understood that fascism could only be stopped by uniting working class communities that the fascists sought to turn against each other.

The JPC's campaign goal was to cement a local anti-fascist majority that would create a hostile environment for fascists and antisemites.

In practical terms it published propaganda leaflets, and held indoor and outdoor meetings — always addressed by both Jewish and non-Jewish speakers. It deliberately held street meetings close to fascist platforms to expose listeners to counter arguments.

When Mosley announced plans to invade the East End's mainly Jewish streets with thousands of uniformed jackbooted fascists, the JPC drew up a petition to the home secretary calling on him to ban the march. But they had a Plan B up their sleeve.

Around 60,000 Jews lived in the East End. Within two days, nearly 100,000 East Enders signed the petition, delivered by local mayors.

But the home secretary decided that the right of Mosley's fascists to threaten, intimidate, menace and abuse immigrants (dressed up as free speech) over-rode the rights of the community under siege to live free from fear.

Just one day later the JPC distributed a new leaflet appealing to "Citizens of London" to take to the streets. Communists, socialists, trade unionists, masses of Jewish people and their Irish Catholic allies, united to block it.

My grandfather's cousin Harry pulled down the shutters on his shop at 27 Cable Street which his family lived above. But the masses on the street kept it safe.

Had I been there, I would have signed the petition calling for a ban, but actually I'm glad that the home secretary cared so little about the Jewish community under siege, because he unwittingly enabled a massive peoples victory over the fascists.

We celebrate all who organised to stop the fascists that day but we must recognise the particular relevance of the JPC's strategy to today's struggles, when the Black Lives Matter movement is growing, Islamophobia is rampant, and anti-semitic conspiracy theories are reviving and multiplying.

The organic growth of anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations within targeted groups must always be embraced, and no single targeted group should bear the brunt of fighting back alone.

David Rosenberg is active in the Jewish Socialists Group and is the author of *Battle for the East End and Rebel Footprints*.

Communists were central to the Battle

You can't write the CP out of history, says MARY DAVIS

REMARKABLY, the roles of the Communist Party and the Jewish community has been wilfully unremarked upon by sections of the left in their clamour to claim Cable Street as an anti-racist victory spearheaded by undefined socialists. History teaches us otherwise.

Alone in the labour movement, the Communist Party was at the forefront of the fight against fascism in Britain.

Anti-semitism was the essential feature of 20th-century fascism: a fact readily understood by communists and Jews. Mainly centred in London's East End, the Party's membership among Jews was out of all proportion to the size of the Britain's Jewish community, accounting for around a tenth of total CP membership.

Stepney alone had over 1,000 members in the 1930s. In 1947 the Stepney CP Borough Committee reported that it had "the highest proportion of party members per capita in Great Britain — one member per 175 of population," most of whom were Jewish.

From 1935, the British Union of Fascists (BUF) directed its anti-semitic propaganda at workers, encouraging them to blame Jews for economic hardship.

The BUF therefore concentrated its activity on working class areas, especially the East End, home to a high concentration of Britain's 330,000 Jews — that figure a tiny 0.8 per cent of Britain's total population.

With police protection the BUF attempted to stage a number of marches and rallies, the most provocative and infamous being the attempt to march through the East End in October 1936 culminating in the battle of Cable Street.

The official Labour Party and trade union leadership took no part in such activities, indeed they discouraged them. This line was enthusiastically endorsed by the Stepney Labour Party, which ran the council but was itself influenced by the Catholic church, then profoundly anti-communist and anti-semitic.

Thus it was that the Jewish community in the East End saw the Communist Party as the only form of defence against the BUF.

The Party in Stepney saw its main focus as working within Jewish organisations like the influential Workers Circle, the Jewish Cultural Club and the East End branches of the furniture and tailoring unions most of whose

members were Yiddish speakers. Communists like Mick Mindel were central to the work in trade unions.

The fight against anti-semitism and fascism concentrated on two fronts: directly through the establishment in 1936 of the Jewish Peoples Council against Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JPC) and indirectly in 1937 via the Stepney Tenants Defence League.

Communists were initiators and activists in both these organisations. Jack Pearce was secretary of the JPC and Issie Pushkin edited its paper *Vigilance*, both were communists.

The Jewish Peoples Council serves as a model for a broad front anti-fascist organisation. It was formed of 86 Jewish organisations, including most East End synagogues, Zionist organisations, Workers Circles, trade unions and dockers. This body, led by the Communist Party, organised the victory at Cable Street in 1936.

The CP decided to make housing a major focus of its work locally, linking it to the fight against fascism. The Stepney Tenants Defence League employed three full-time paid organisers. It is impossible to assess the extent to which this kind of activity fulfilled the aim of winning away potential fascist sympathisers from the BUF. It is certain though that the prestige of the Communist Party was greatly enhanced. Phil Piratin, a Jewish Communist, was elected to Stepney Council in 1937 and by 1945 there were 12 Communist councillors, seven of whom were Jews. Piratin was elected as MP for Mile End in 1945.

For the Communist Party's National Jewish Committee (NJC) the fight against anti-semitism in Britain did not cease with the battle of Cable Street.

The BUF remained active after Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939, despite Britain's formal declaration of war against Germany by the Chamberlain government.

In 1940, after the fall of Chamberlain, Mosley and 700 BUF members were arrested and imprisoned. They all received "velvet glove" treatment.

Mosley and most BUF members were released from prison by the end of 1941 on the orders of home secretary Herbert Morrison, who was regarded by Jews as an anti-semitic.

Amazingly the BUF was allowed to continue to hold anti-semitic rallies during World War II. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the Communist Party called for anti-semitism and fascist propaganda to be made a criminal offence, as

it was in the Soviet Union. The Jewish Chronicle supported this demand.

Aware of this home-grown fascist anti-semitism, the CP published Willie Gallacher MP's pamphlet *Anti-Semitism: What it Means to You* written in 1943.

Its opening sentence spoke of "the most insidious Nazi propaganda... finding its expression in the form of anti-semitism" the spread of which was growing. Its purpose was to denigrate the war effort branding it as "the Jews' war."

During the war, the NJC waged an unrelenting campaign to open a second front and linked this with support for the Soviet Union which was bearing the brunt of the Nazi onslaught.

For Jews support for the war went hand in hand with the fight against anti-semitism and because of this, the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Chronicle supported the Soviet Union after 1941.

Chief Rabbi Dr Joseph Hertz was a patron of the Jewish Fund for Soviet Russia, an organisation founded in 1942 by the communist Simon Blumenfeld.

In 1943, the Party's Jewish Committee organised a three-week visit of two prominent Russian Jewish Yiddish-speaking communists. Shloime Mikhloels (director of the Moscow Yiddish State Theatre) and poet Itzik Feffer came to England to raise money for the Soviet war effort. They spoke at mass meetings — Hertz attended the last one and was moved to tears when Feffer recited his famous poem, *Ich bin a Yid* (I am a Jew).

The Party's National Jewish Committee, sadly disbanded in 1964, was very active and influential for most of its existence. It was a sub-committee of the International Affairs Committee headed by Palme Dutt.

In the 1945 general election, the NJC urged that special attention should be paid to the cultural and communal needs of Jewish people and again demanded that anti-semitism be outlawed as a criminal offence.

As the numerical strength of Jewish communists waned within the Party, so did their influence. The Party's robust and singular understanding of anti-semitism and the fight against it gradually declined.

Nonetheless, the record of the CP over almost 20 years remains as a proud achievement worthy of both serious study and emulation today. Anti-semitism persists, this period in our Party's history serves as an object lesson in how to fight it.

Professor Mary Davis is a labour historian and TUC gold badge holder.



WANTED: Unions that can combat racism in society and at work

Our unions must listen to Black workers to make real progress, argues ROGER MCKENZIE

EDUCATION:
Teachers
demonstrate
against pension
changes in 2013



Racialised pandemic shows fight goes on

by Patrick Roach

AS TRADE unions, there is no more important time for us to be redoubling our efforts and organising activities to address the scourge of racism and the fight against the far right.

The racialised and deadly impact of the coronavirus pandemic continues to disproportionately affect the lives of black communities and individuals, amplifying the racial injustice already embedded in the social, economic and cultural fabric of our society.

As trade unionists we need to reflect and learn from the battles which have been fought throughout history for race equality, but also commit to even greater action by our unions, our members and activists today.

This is why I am proud to be chairing the TUC's new anti-racism task force.

This task force, involving general secretaries and other senior leaders from across the trade union movement and civil society will lead the development of an action plan to tackle racial inequality at work.

It will be taking forward a wide-ranging programme of action to tackle racial discrimination and ensure fair-

ness and decent treatment at work.

But this must not be a paper exercise. We must empower trade union members to take action in their workplaces to challenge the systems and practices which hold back talent or put workers at greater risk of illness or injury because of the colour of their skin. As trade union leaders we must call out racial injustice and institutional racism wherever it exists.

The trade union movement has a long and proud history of opposing racism and fascism. More than 50 years ago we fought back against the hate-filled rhetoric of Enoch Powell as the first legislation was enacted to outlaw race discrimination in the workplace following campaigning by trade unions and other civil society organisations.

But the fight goes on. The threat from far-right activists and neonazi thugs has not gone away and with the transition period after Britain's exit from the EU due to end on 31 December, this could further bolster attempts by racist, anti-migrant extremists to whip up division and hatred in our communities.

Such groups have already retrenched in opposition to the heightened promi-

nence and authority of the Black Lives Matter movement and it is imperative that as unions committed to equality we are part of that move for change as we act for racial justice on our streets, in our communities and in our workplaces.

In being part of the change trade unions need also to examine their own institutional structures and practices and undertake an open and honest assessment of how they can ensure they are inclusive and reflective of the workplaces and workers they serve.

Our union movement will ensure that our own democratic structures are representative and support black members to be empowered in their workplaces at local and national level and that our trade union movement is at the forefront of actions to tackle racism and bargaining for workplace justice.

In turn, we will hold a mirror up to ourselves and ask where we can do more and go further.

The NASUWT is committed to that challenge. For our members that means us continuing to speak out about the disproportionate number of covid-19 deaths among frontline black workers.

It means demanding that employers

and government recognise and take seriously the concerns of black teachers about their health and safety in the workplace.

More broadly, it means continuing the fight for concerted and determined action to end the injustice of systemic and institutional racism which continues to stigmatise, exclude and oppress black children, young people and communities — the disproportionate use of stop and search and school exclusion of black boys and the failure of schools to tackle the overt and covert racist abuse experienced by black pupils and staff.

Trade unions have historically been in the vanguard of progressive social and institutional change.

Many of the basic workplace and human rights we have today are the result of trade union struggle and collective action.

Racism is a scourge on our society and on any school or workplace where it exists.

We must recognise tackling racism as central to our collective trade union values, together with the fight for good work, fair pay and decent working conditions.

Patrick Roach is general secretary of teaching union NASUWT.

TO SAY THAT trade unions have an important role in combatting racism in society and in the workplace is something of an understatement.

What is really important is that the anti-racism work of trade unions shouldn't be based on it being the latest fashion or simply thinking that you might look bad if you don't do anything. Trade unions must be solidly committed to anti-racism for the long term.

Trade unions have come a long way from the early 1960s when the TUC passed a resolution protesting immigration while at the same time being content to accept the membership subs of Black workers.

A long way from the days in the 1970s of the Imperial Typewriters dispute, where some trade unionists collaborated with both the far right and the employer or even the much fabled Grunwick dispute where, in the end, strikers held a hunger strike on the steps of Congress House after being abandoned by trade unions.

Also a long way from trade unionists marching in support of the racist Enoch Powell.

Trade unions have raised their game considerably in the fight against racism and fascism but I'm sure that none would say that there isn't a long way to go both in terms of their bargaining

agenda and within their own structures.

Many years ago when I worked for the TUC, I was the secretary to the Stephen Lawrence Task Force. The task force helped to bring about a rule change at the TUC to make it a condition of membership for unions to demonstrate a commitment to all areas of equality.

Unions would be required to complete an equality audit every two years to show their progress in all aspects of their work.

This process does expose trade union work on equality to a wider gaze but I can't help thinking that we need to reinvigorate the process to force the pace of change because we know from Black workers that things are not changing fast enough in workplaces where racism is still too much a fact of life.

I have always believed that the main catalyst for trade unions to combat racism is the strength of Black self-organisation within our movement.

I think that if we are to provide more momentum for trade unions to create a truly anti-racist movement then Black self-organisation will once again be the key. To be clear: I'm not talking about race equality or race relations committees within unions, which have important roles to play, I'm talking about Black self-organised structures within, across and outside

of the official structures of the trade union movement.

The work that can and should be carried out within the main structures of unions is vital. That is one of the ways that there can be a direct impact on union bargaining strategies as well as altering the still extremely white leadership of trade unions.

Although some progress has been made the fact remains that Black leadership of trade unions, whether at general secretary or assistant general secretary level is a very rare thing indeed. There have only ever been three Black leaders of TUC-affiliated unions in this country, with Patrick Roache of NASUWT being the only current one.

Black trade union leadership is important but Black trade union

RESISTANCE: A Black Lives Matter protester this year

activism across the movement is even more so.

A socialist Black voice within and across trade unions will be decisive in the development

of a radical Black agenda for unions to adopt as part of their anti-racist strategies. It will also keep unions on their toes to ensure that anti-racism does not become a seasonal affair rather than a movement.

A lot has been said about hoping that Black Lives Matter becomes a movement rather than a moment. That's all well and good but fails to recognise that Black workers have been calling for racial justice for many a long year and this didn't just start with the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor or the lynching of Ahmaud Abernathy.

Neither is it a phenomenon restricted to the US. Black workers in Britain have long protested and organised for race equality on these shores. We don't expect British unions to win the fight for equality for us. However, we do expect them to listen to our voices, don't make excuses, include us and to stand up and organise alongside us.

Roger McKenzie is a candidate to be the next general secretary of Unison.



Want to find out more?

Working Class Movement Library

THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT LIBRARY holds an important collection of fascist and anti-fascist pamphlets and leaflets, spanning a broad range of organisations and campaigns — from the birth of domestic and continental fascism to the present day.

There is a small number of leaflets from Britain's first fascist party, the British Fascisti (1925-34), revealing the organisation's anti-Bolshevik fears of Communist Sunday Schools and other "subversive" native political developments.

Well represented are pamphlets of Oswald Mosley's "pre-fascist" New Party (1931-32).

The Communist Party's impassioned dialogue with the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress, unsuccessfully attempting to build a united front against the fascist menace, is also documented.

In the post-war period, material

by **Lynette Cawthra**

records the splintering of British fascism and its re-emergence in the 1970s with the birth of the National Front and its successful rival, the Anti-Nazi League.

The WCML also holds an extensive collection of Spanish Civil War material, particularly relating to the International Brigades.

This consists of books, pamphlets, journals, archival material, artefacts and tape recordings.

It includes an impressive archive of letters written by men from Greater Manchester, some of whom died in Spain, including Ralph Cantor, whose diary the library holds. Our collection also covers Britain's Aid For Spain Movement

Artefacts such as ceramics, International Brigade caps and identity cards, posters, and paintings by International

Brigader Syd Booth, can be found in the hall display cabinets and in the library's International Room.

With a plaque crafted by Sol Garson on the door, this room serves as a fitting tribute to all those who risked their lives in the first epic battle against fascism.

The library is free for everyone to use and, while it has now re-opened its reading room by appointment, it is also emphasising what it can offer remotely to people — see www.wcml.org.uk/explorefromhome.

Its recent enforced five-month closure of course led to a major drop in income, and one-off donations would be hugely welcome — www.mstar.link/WCML. Even better would be if you felt able to sign up to regular giving at www.mstar.link/RadicalReader to help us in our mission to "explore the past, change the future."

Lynette Cawthra library manager of the WCML.

Marx Memorial Library

THE MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY was born out of the struggle against fascism in the 1930s.

In 1933, 50 years after the death of Karl Marx, Europe was in turmoil. Fascism was on the march.

While books were set alight in Berlin, our founders sought to create and preserve a library and archive of Marxist literature and disseminate these ideas through a workers' school as a bulwark against this reactionary tide.

We started with a library of just a few hundred volumes; today we have a collection of over 60,000 including internationally significant archives on the Spanish Civil War and Peace movement.

The Battle of Cable Street was a stark reminder that fascism had to be beaten in Britain and well as in Europe.

It also showed what could be achieved through a broad popular front alliance between communists, trade unionists and anti-fascists standing alongside communities under threat from anti-semitism and reaction.

Faced with this united opposition, the British Union of Fascists and police were forced to abandon their march.

The lives of many of our founders were shaped by this international struggle, with some making the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefields of Spain.

Mathematician and philosopher David Guest, one of the earliest lecturers at our workers' school, was shot by a sniper at Gandesa. Ralph Fox, who

by **Meirian Jump**

attended our founding meeting, was killed at the battle of Lopera.

Our archives are a testament to the fight against fascism at home and abroad.

There are many lessons to be learnt today. Our pamphlet collections includes 10 Points against Fascism, produced by the Young Communist League in 1934, a re-poste to BUF leader Oswald Mosley's 10 points of Fascist Policy produced the same year.

Our Phil Piratin archive is rich with press-cuttings, printed ephemera and reflections on the anniversaries of the battle. Moreover, our 150-box collection on the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War includes memoirs and correspondence of volunteers describing their experiences and motivations.

Communist Charlie Hutchison completed a survey in 1985 summing up his political activity prior to joining the International Brigades.

Outlining his motivations for volunteering, he wrote: "The terrible warmongering of Hitler. The Understanding that Socialism could be a more humane way of life. A belief that Spain Would go down that road. I am half black. I grew up in a national children's home and orphanage. I knew Fascism meant hunger and war."

Meirian Jump is archivist and library manager of the MML.

CABLE STREET
NO IFS, NO BUTS - NO TO RACISM AND FASCISM
FOREVER!

100

ONLINE RALLY:
 2.30pm Sunday 4 October
 All welcome!
 Please register in advance to attend, just visit
www.comunistparty.org.uk/cable-street-forever

Roger McKenzie Unison assistant general secretary (personal capacity)
Marlene Sidaway president of the International Brigades Memorial Trust
David Rosenberg writer, activist member of Jewish Socialists Group

Nisar Ahmed Communist Party executive
 Prof **Mary Davis** historian and CP activist
Farhana Zaman union officer and member of Bangladeshi Workers Council
 Chair: **Ruth Styles** anti-racism activist and CP vice-chair