

BLAGGERS I*T*A



Blaggers I*T*A describe themselves as hardcore leftist streetfighters and are currently the most important

band in Britain, in our opinion. The 7-strong gang practice the Anti-Fascist Action which they preach, through their energetic and infectious songs and heavy regime of gigging. The following interview was conducted on their recent UK tour.

How did you develop your unique blend of ska/rap/punk?

• I don't know about the ska. Loads of people have said there's ska in our music, but I can't see it myself. We're all into different forms of music and I like ska, like a lot of the band. We formed about 4 years ago and people described us as an Oi band.

Do you all come from London?

• We're all based in London. You can hear different influences in our music because everyone's into different styles, ranging from rap/hip-hop to soul, punk -the lot. It just all fuses together. We hope to have a unique sound, we don't want to sound like anyone else.

Recently you've had a lot of exposure in the national music press who have stated that your political beliefs are more important than your music. Do you agree with this?

• Yes, the whole point of the band is the politics. That's why we exist really: we are a political band • we are Anti-Fascist and that's just what we are about, which is far more important than the music. But I hope the music which we are doing is becoming more commercially viable. I don't know if that's the right phrase. It gives us the chance to get our politics across to a wider cross-section of people.

So there's no chance of the band watering down their political image in favour of selling more records?

• No chance whatsoever. There would be no reason for The Blaggers to exist then.

With the rise of fascism in Europe, have you experienced any trouble at gigs with Nazis?

• On this tour we played Blackpool and we heard a rumour that Skrewdriver and Blood and Honour were going to turn up to turn us over, as it's Ian Stuart's hometown. We had visible Anti-Fascist security as we do at a lot of gigs. People spotted a few fascists, but they didn't have a go. Also, another gig in Leicester was threatened. Concerning the secret Skrewdriver gig in London last year, they attempted to organise meeting points for it and we took them over. Basically a lot of fascists got battered and others had to be carried behind police lines. Less than half turned up for the gig, so it was a big victory for us. The difference between us and Skrewdriver is that we can advertise our gigs and play them relatively safely and Skrewdriver can't do that

• Ian Stuart says "The Blaggers cannot play in England, or they'll get run off the streets." I find that quite hard to believe as we're on a nationally advertised 25-date tour at the moment. It's a problem

when we play in Germany, but we link up with AFA groups over there for additional security.

• There's a strong fascist movement in Germany, but there's also a strong Anti-Fascist movement -but not strong enough. The only way it's going to be

strong enough is when fascists start to get shot.

The new LP contains a fair chunk of back catalogue. Is this in order to reach a wider audience?

• It's never been available on CD before and with the larger format, we can get more music in, so it gives people the chance to get Blaggamuffin, the previously released 12". It gives people the flavour of what we've done over the last 4 years, but we are moving on constantly, getting new ideas and developing them. The alleged bootleg gives people an idea of what we're like at the moment, and we should have some 12"s coming out in the near future.

Has there been any repercussions of bringing out the bootleg 7" without EMI's consent, when it was originally recorded for them?

• They're going to come down and tell us we can't put it out. EMI are going to turn up on our doorstep and tell us that we can't release a bootleg?

Are you signing to EMI, despite their dodgy connections?



• We'll see what happens. All major labels now have got dodgy connections. They're all into dubious things, as are all major conglomerates. There's not a lot that people can do about it, on that scale. We'll use it to our own ends, you don't let them use you.

• They know there's going to be no compromising our politics, because we've told them. The demo we recorded for them contained one song about ram-raiding and one was about the situation in Ireland, concerning human rights and hunger strikers. They know where we stand.

Have you got any plans to tour the U.S.?

• We'd love to. Although we'd probably have to change our accents as Americans wouldn't understand what we were saying. Obviously we'd like to establish our home market first - get the message over to the people on our doorstep. It's an international message which applies to every country, to differing degrees.

Are there any up and coming bands you can recommend yourselves?

• Slowlove from London. They haven't got anything out at the moment, but they've supported us. They're an extremely slow, high energy dance band. They do Demis Roussos covers. I think they're going to be big, with an extremely cult following.

• Bands like Ran, AOS 3, Blade. A lot of these bands have the same, positive attitude.

Anything else to add?

Support Anti-Fascist Action. We'd like people to set up A.F.A. groups in their own area if one doesn't already exist. ■

Since the interview took place the Blaggers

have signed to E.M.I. It will help them get their important message across. It is ironic though, that they will be doing so through a company who provided arms for the South African government, the most racist country in the world.

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The new LP is released on Words Of Warning Records and is available from:

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