

# BLAGGERS ITA

How far can too far go? someone once said, not far enough comes across the Blaggers message. They've been big news now over the last 12 months, mainly for their militant stance with regards to fascists and their support of Anti Fascist Action along with Anti Racist Alliance and the recently reformed Anti Nazi League, but more with the first lot as the difference between AFA and the latter two is where ARA & ANL are justly fighting the disease on the media front, AFA like to take their message directly to the streets and where necessary with violence and proud with it!

With their messages firmly up front, whether you agree with them or not, all they really needed was some mass exposure. After several months with the majors running around after them they finally opted for everyone's favourite EMI. The first question obviously revolved around that and the big one...why?

OK, It wasn't a snap decision to sign to EMI. We thought about it long and hard. Their A&R men saw us back in September '92 and we didn't sign until February '93. I still haven't a clue why they wanted us so badly, maybe it's so they can get some credibility back or seem right on, or maybe it's just that because of the recession they think angry political bands will become trendy, so when an offer like this comes along you've got to think it. Apart from the chance to get our message across to the

unconverted (I'll talk about that in question two) One of the main reasons that we signed was for MONEY!! We all have to get by somehow. Some

of us sign on, some of us work, some of us sign on AND work. Some of us squat and some of us pay rent. Most of the BLAGGERS have 9-5 jobs. This makes it difficult to get enough time off to tour as much as we'd like to and when we do any recording, it's got to be late night sessions and weekends. Trying to hold down a full time job and be in a successful full time group is a major headache, the money and we're talking between 10-15 thousand a year will each pay our rent, food, clothes and bills so that we can give all our time to writing songs and touring. We're not talking about flash Italian suits and K-reg BMW's there, but the chance for us to work as a band properly.



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IN A RECENT 'ZINE INTERVIEW, THE INTERVIEWER FINISHED OFF WITH AN UPDATE ON THE BAND SAYING IT WAS IRONIC THAT YOU'D BE GETTING THE ANTI-FASCIST MESSAGE ACROSS TO PEOPLE THROUGH EMI, WHO PROVIDE ARMS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT, THE MOST FASCIST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THAT?

Well first off EMI are a record company they sign up bands and release records. It's THORN who do all of the dodgy business. Thorn make light bulbs and fire extinguishers and also do some other things which aren't so nice. The BLAGGERS wanted to get a major deal as we saw it, it was the best way forward for us, it's just we thought hey! all the other record companies are cool, it's just EMI who's fucked up. Then we did some research into the major companies investments and found that they're all dodgy as fuck.

Back to the Planet slagged off EMI in the music press, but London Records who they're signed to are even dodgier than EMI. So we thought what's more important-what they do or what we want to do? We've got an extremely important message and the only way we can get our message across to people is to have the exposure and publicity that EMI can generate. I was talking to Paco (ex Conflict) who apart from supporting us said the first Conflict single sold eight thousand copies. There's no way we could sell that many now and we're probably one of the best known punk bands in the UK. I'm sure everybody's thinking that EMI won't let us be political any more, well that's bollocks!! all I can say is just wait and see. If we can't increase public awareness about fascism then it's 'cos they didn't want to know. We are using the establishment to fight back against the establishment!

PERSONALLY WHY DO YOU THINK BANDS LIKE SKREWDRIVER HAVE STILL GOT SUCH A FOLLOWING?

Don't know really, the music is shit! I guess it's 'cos they're the only totally white music left, apart from heavy metal. The barriers of music are being broken down all the time, so what's a dumb bonehead gonna listen to?

WE ALL KNOW OF THE RISING PROBLEMS IN GERMANY, BUT HAVE YOU HAD ANY TROUBLE IN FRANCE, AS THEY SEEM TO HAVE AN INCREDIBLE SUPPORT FOR 'LE PEN' AND THE FRONT NATIONALE PARTY NATIONWIDE.

We've never played France before, but I'm sure we will. We'll play a country if we know we can get adequate security at our gigs. We've been asked to tour France before but haven't been able to get the time off to do it!

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION OF PEOPLE WHO STEER AWAY OF YOUR POLITICAL ISSUES AND ARE ONLY AT THE GIGS OR BUYING THE RECORDS SIMPLY FOR THE MUSIC AND VICE VERSA?

We can't hope to turn all our fans into anti fascist activists, but I would say that in my opinion most of the folk who come to see us regularly aren't stupid. they know what's going on. We really haven't met that many people who disagree with what we've got to say. The only thing that we've found some people don't like is our support for the armed struggle in Northern Ireland, but most people say we've got a right to our own opinion. There hasn't been a major anti fascist demo since Waterloo, so it'll be interesting to see how many people show up at the next one.



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DO YOU THINK BANDS WILL JUMP ON THE ANTI FASCIST MOVEMENT BANDWAGON. THAT'S NOT SAYING THAT IT'S A FAD, IT'S JUST MORE PEOPLE WHO ARE GENUINELY INVOLVED, THE MORE SOME PEOPLE WILL THINK THEY WILL HAVE TO WAVE THE FLAG AS A MATTER OF CREDIBILITY!

Well some already have and the press have picked up on it. We've asked some well known bands in the past to play AFA benefits and they've said they're not interested and now they mention anti fascism in their interviews and stuff. If anybody saw the issue of NME 17/4/93, we had a full page "advert" for us and AFA. It says we hope anti fascism will not be just a trend and the bands and journalists will still be into it in time to come.. When a band signs to a major label, the label usually has a party for them or gives the band money to celebrate the signing. We told EMI instead of pissing hundreds of pounds up the wall we'd rather have a page in the press to say what we want and they agreed. There's plenty of acts out there who are genuinely anti fascists and practice what they preach. We're not the only ones!

HOW MANY COPIES OF THE RAMRAIDERS SINGLE DID YOU PRESS?

It was done by people who run a mail order service called Aural Response. Their record label is called Fluffy Bunny Records. They printed 1000 copies. They intend to repress it as it's almost sold out.

IT'S BEEN DIFFICULT TO GET HOLD OF, WHAT'S THE DEMAND FOR IT BEEN LIKE?

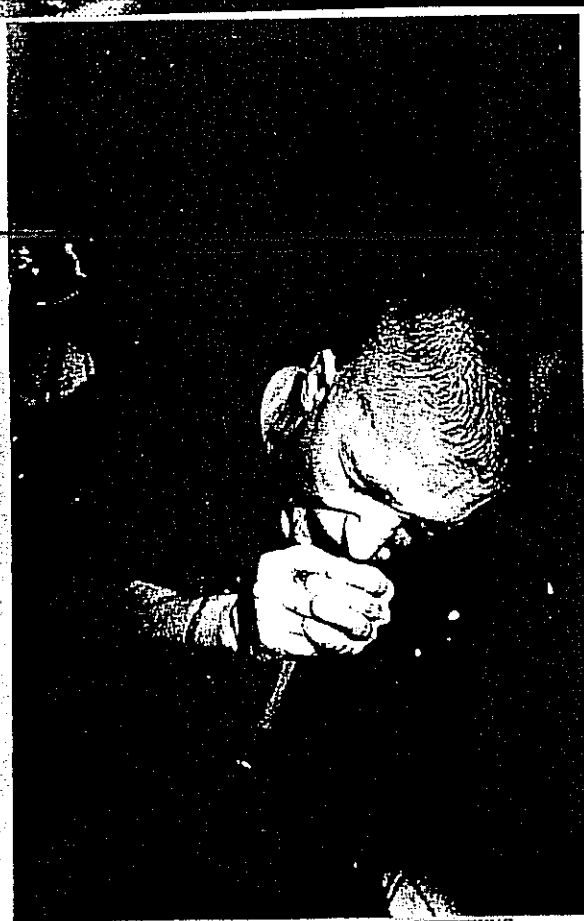
Don't know since we aren't selling it. It sold extremely well on the January 93 tour.

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY REPERCUSSIONS OVER IT WITH EMI?

Everything's OK, they weren't too happy at first, but they're really not bothered now. We didn't think we would end up signing 'cos we wanted a certain amount of money that they weren't prepared to match. We turned down two offers and then figured they wouldn't want to know anymore so we thought let's release it, then at the end of our January tour they made the final offer which was what we'd asked for.

DOES HAVING SUCH A HIGH PROFILE WORRY YOU AT ALL WITH EXTREMIST GROUPS?





prepared to use all means available to stop the fascists. What the BNP and others say is go out and knife someone 'cos they're black or petrol bomb that Asian house. Whenever the "Fash" have been allowed to speak to the public racist attacks have gone up in that area. The way to stop them is to control their propaganda machine, to not give them the chance to spread their filth.

IF THE BLAGGERS FINISHED TOMORROW, WHAT THAT YOU HAVE ACHIEVED WITH THE BAND ALREADY, WOULD YOU BE PROUD OF?

We'd feel actually that we would have blown the chance to make a difference, but we have helped to generate interest in anti fascism. Also we've had some great times, played some great gigs both here and abroad and met a load of nice people. We've put anti fascism on the political agenda and hopefully we've saved the punk scene in Britain by getting more people back into it. Although we have many different influences we still feel we are punk rock, '90's punk, not the US hardcore influenced eighties or the bum tit bum tit stuff of the early eighties or anything before. We hope our exposure will have a knock on effect for the rest of the scene.

All we've had so far are threats. Almost every gig we do now is threatened but that's all that's happened. If we were ever attacked they'd need a pretty heavy mob 'cos people don't take shit like they used to and we always have good security at gigs. Who knows? We might have to move addresses one day, but somebodies got to stand up and be prepared to put their necks on the line. You don't get results unless you try!

AS A TOTALLY EXTREME AND HYPOTHETICAL VIEW AND SOMETHING I'M NOT SIDING WITH, BUT ISN'T THE ACTION OF THE AFA ETC... AND THEIR DOCTRINES OF FIGHTING FASCIST PARTIES BECAUSE OF THEIR VIEWS IN ITSELF FASCIST?

Not at all. People say you have to give them freedom of speech, but we feel it's wrong to give people freedom to say what they want when if they got into power they would lock up everyone who wouldn't agree with them. It's dangerous to let them have their say 'cos what they preach is race hatred. What AFA say is that they're



MOSHABLE 11 ( 3 ) Lars Krogh, 9008 Aalborg 8, Denmark

Helmet, L7, Mudhoney, Bad Religion, CMX, Sister Double Happiness amongst others, a high standard as always, glossy cover, excellent photos and plenty of reviews. send US dollars or if you can get hold of the Danish equivalent!

CONVULSION 3 ( 1.50 ) 153 Dalkeith Road, IF2, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH16 5HQ.

L7, Prong, Pavement, Ice T, Sheep on Drugs, Fugazi, Swans and dozens more. This really is turning out to be an excellent mag, a definite recommendation, articulate, witty, thoughtful and very well presented, buy, buy, buy!

SINK OR SWIM 1 ( £1.62 ) St. Johns Road, Hipswell, Catterick, North Yorkshire, DL9 4BQ.

36 Pages, ints with Citizen Fish, Back to the Planet, Rhino, Momento Mori (the UK mob) and several others. Clean cut, quite large type, could really have been a little more compact. Also repeats a lot of the same questions in most interviews but a reasonable first attempt.

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## CONTINUED...

YOU'VE RECEIVED A LOT OF FAVOURABLE PRESS RECENTLY, HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY BAD STUFF OF LATE?

We've had about three letters telling us we've sold out and a bad review in the NME, but apart from that the response to what we're doing has been amazing. Loads of people from zines, other bands, punters who we thought would slag us off have been very supportive. Everyone's been patting us on the back, congratulating us and wishing us well. A lot of people want us to do well 'cos they see us as carrying the flag for them as well. Everyone has got to face the fact that punk rock in Britain is on the ropes. It needs a real good kick up the arse. Bands now sell a fraction of what they used to. There's no way we could sell anything like what the bands like

and sell nothing and EMI drop us people will laugh and probably say we told you so. We're not naive about this. We're not expecting to be the next U2 or REM, but all the exposure will get more people coming to the gigs which is where we really show what we've got. We're on tour in May with Fun-da-mental and rapper Blade and our first 12" is out 1st of June, it's also available as a coloured vinyl 7" for 99 pence! and a five track CD. We've also shot a video which hopefully will get on the telly. OK that's all, thanx to Michael for the interview and you for reading it.

Jason-Blaggers ITA.



Conflict, Subhumans, Exploited. Grass used to. If we flop

mind-state. Smoking does so much the only thing I have in my life, besides really hot food that can alter my "Not yet. Not now. I will, but not now. (laughs) Not with days like this. I've "You don't want to? "No."