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Review: Offense and Animal

Offence Issue 1 £1.50 and Animal: The Football
Special Issue 2 80p

Anarchist Communist Federation

1998

Offence is the fanzine-style magazine of the Libero! Football Supporters Network which appears to be a campaigning group opposing the increasing authoritarianism and 'moral policing' found in professional football. The politics appear libertarian and anti-state, albeit with a nod to 'new laddism'. It contains several quite interesting articles, not least one which plays down the hard-line Loyalist and fascist tendencies which exist amongst Glasgow Rangers fans as "...the superficial appearance of religion and Ireland". Yeah, right.

We say appear because a (not too) closer examination reveals that the glossy and expensive (20 pages) 'zine' is in fact a product of the terminally dodgy Revolutionary Communist Party and the Football Supporters Network is their latest front organisation (like Workers against Racism, Irish Freedom Movement etc.). Why a football front? Well, having given up on the working class as a bunch of losers the RCP focus on middle class intellectuals (such as themselves) as the vanguard of the revolution. Seeing the influx of middle class -types into football it's an area that they obviously feel they can organise. Therefore,

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despite all the (accurate) criticism of the anti-fan activities of clubs, government and police, you will be hard-pressed to find any mention of class in the pages of Offence.

Unlike Animal, for whom class is number one on the agenda. Not surprising as Animal is produced by people involved in Class War and the Movement against the Monarchy. The Animal Football Special is a bit of a mixed bag including an article on recent football protests 'When the Fans Hit the Shits', an interesting piece on the Dublin Riot a couple of years ago by Larry O'Hara and an eulogy to Eric Cantona (!). An anarchist apparently (hmm...). Animal isn't a slick production and obviously isn't following any party line. Since this Football Special is a one-off, it begs the question if there's a need for a regular football fanzine with a working class anarchist perspective? The football fanzine explosion of the past 15 years has seen a number of 'zines with decent politics and attitude, perhaps there's a place for a revolutionary alternative to shite like Four Four Two et al.?

Offence isn't it, but it's worth a look. Just approach with caution. It's available from Libero! 1 Darwin Road, London N22 6NS. Animal Football Special is available from P.O.Box 467, London E8 3QX.