Abstract: Christos EFSTATHIOU

The Ideological Roots of the Battle of Cable Street

During the 'Battle of Cable Street' (4th October 1936) two different ideas of democracy were in conflict and tried to overcome each other: on the one hand, there was the old idea of bourgeois exclusivity and, then, there was the modern idea of pluralism. The paper will try to show the ideological differences between these two points; the ideological arsenal of the two camps; and the role of the government. Special attention will be paid to the ideological roots of the battle: how these two ideas of democracy came to be in conflict and how the new idea was articulated in revolutionary discourse and political practice. Finally, the battle of Cable Street will be placed in a more global perspective by tracing similar events that happened in Canada in 1933 (Christie Pits riot) and France in 1934 (February 1934 crisis). Beyond the usual interpretation of the 'battle of Cable Street' as an inspirational street battle, the event will be understood as one of the most important episodes in the fight for a modern ‘domain of common concern’ and ‘inclusivity’.

Christos Efstathiou, Birkbeck, University of London

csefstathiou@gmail.com