

SHARROW ACTION

BULLETIN OF THE SHARROW ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST RACISM/FASCISM May 1989

C/O Horsa Huts, Mount Pleasant, Sharrow Lane, Sheffield S11 8AE.

11th February this year saw the biggest and liveliest demonstration against racist attacks in Sheffield for over 5 years. On that day over 800 black and white people, led by Asian youths, joined together to march from Sharrow to Burngreave, to show that the fightback against racism and Fascism is still very much alive and kicking in Sheffield.

The march took place against a backdrop of increased Racist and Fascist activity in many areas of Sheffield.

In Sharrow particularly, many Asian homes and shops had Racist stickers and graffiti daubed on them, windows had been smashed and death threats from the National Front were coupled with excreta pushed through letterboxes of Asian homes.

In the City centre, at an Asian restaurant, a restaurant worker who lives in Sharrow was viciously attacked by a gang of 5 racist white youths, who beat him unconscious with a baseball bat, then left him for dead in the middle of the road.

It was the anger of the Black community over these and other similar incidents throughout 1988, that led to the formation of SACARF-

the Sharrow Action Committee Against Racism and Fascism in December of last year. The

aim of the organisation was and still is to

a) raise the issue of increased racist attacks to the wider community,

b) to expose the Police and Council's inaction over Racist attacks.

c) to build a strong community based organisation that will actively fight back against racism and fascism.

We believe, since our inception in December 1988 we have raised the issue prominently in Sheffield, successfully uniting many sections of the community, in the process we have also helped to expose both the Police and the Council for their inactivity over racist attacks. Despite this progress though, we still need to build an active anti-racist movement in Sheffield, that can take up the issues of racism people face in the area.

For that to be successful we need more people to be involved. This is where you can help, why not join us? help us fight the racists only together can we beat them!.

You can write to us at the above address,

«COMMENT»

Recently there have been many radical sounding statements made by both the City council leader, and his friends the Police on Racist attacks in Sheffield. On the surface these may seem to be progressive, but on closer inspection, his (Betts) remarks resemble nothing more than verbal diarrhoea at its worst. Betts's speech making lines are feeble attempts only to grab votes from the Black community, just like his predecessor did, without changing anything for the community. In a nutshell his remarks are hollow and without substance, we are not fooled!.

The Police meanwhile are saying they will not change (more verbal diarrhoea) their policy on racial harassment. This statement begs the question - did the Police ever have a policy against racial harassment?, as far as we know the only policy they

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have is for racial harassment, a policy that criminalises Black people in their homes, on the street, or in restaurants, or taxi's. According to the Chief Constable-Peter Wright, (who has masonic lodge connections) "there has been a general decline in the number of racial attacks in the last 3 years". This may be the case for Mr Wright, but he should remember, while ever his officers are taking part in 'gun pranks', and spending too much time on 'paperwork' (fiddling statistics) then you will obviously get a decline. It was only under sustained pressure, and the unpredictability of an attack on an Asian councillors house, that prompted these statements, but as can be seen they both dispute the reality and deny racial motives. The Police's use of the 'special ethnic minority liaison officer' in Sharrow is also worth a mention. His statements (backed by other Police in the area) have sought to divide the community. By saying SACARF are exaggerating the number of Racial attacks and their seriousness compared to the Asian Welfare Association's stance. We reject totally these divisive comments, and condemn the 'ethnic surveillance police' as trying to split the unity felt by the community over the issue of racist attacks. In the final analysis, no matter what the Police and the City council say or do about racial attacks, history has shown us that their words are empty, and they provide no substitute for grass roots action and self reliance by the community.

Below is a brief questionnaire, to help us gauge the activity of racists and fascists in the local area, - activity that we can counteract, with enough information. All answers will be kept in the strictest confidence,

1. Have you seen any racist graffiti around the area in the last 2 months ?

If so what did it say; and were any symbols like NF or BNP visible ?

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b) Did you ever report it to the Council or Police ? YES NO

c) If you did what response did you get ?

2. Have you, any friends or neighbours been subjected to any form of Racial abuse or threats in your area in the last 6 months ? YES NO

a) if so what happened ?

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b) Did you report it to the Police or any other agency ? YES NO

If so what was their response ?

3. Have you, any friends/relatives or neighbours been physically attacked by racists ? YES NO

a) If so where ?

b) What happened ?

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c) who did you report it to ?

d) What response did you get ?

4. Have you or anyone else you know had their property attacked or vandalised by racists ? Yes NO

a) if so what happened ?

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b) Did you report it to the Police etc ? YES NO

c) If so what was the response ?

Finally what kind of activities would you like to see happen to combat racism in your area ?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND HELP