

1987

NEWHAM 8 campaign

PUBLIC MEETING 1st AUGUST

7p.m. Wesley House, Highfield Place
London Rd, Sheffield 2.

8 ASIAN YOUTHS AGED 15-21 ARRESTED FOR DEFENDING THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITY FROM RACIAL ATTACKS HAVE NOW BEEN CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY TO ASSAULT PERSONS UNKNOWN.

The youths, arrested on Friday 24th September 1982, after incidents involving plain-clothes police officers were originally charged with offences ranging from threatening behaviour to actual bodily harm. In December an additional charge of conspiring to assault persons unknown was laid against all eight defendants. The youths were arrested after a series of violent attacks upon Asian schoolchildren by racist white thugs. Asian schoolchildren at Little Ilford School (Newham) were attacked by armed white youths on no less than three occasions in the week leading up to September 24th. In one particular incident 60-70 white youths with iron bars and sticks went on the rampage in the East Ham and Manor Park areas of Newham looking for Asians to beat up.

All eight youths were subjected to racist abuse and harassment by the police and one was hospitalised for several days as a result of his being beaten up by the police.

BLACK COMMUNITY ON TRIAL!

Racist attacks in Newham are almost an everyday occurrence.

In the face of this growing racism what has been the response of the guardians of 'law and order'? - absolutely nothing whatsoever! But when black people, for whom the fight against racism is a question of basic survival, try to defend themselves from racial attacks, the state criminalises them by charging them with conspiracy.

WHOSE CONSPIRACY?

The only conspiracy is a police conspiracy - conspiring to let increasing racist violence against black people go unchecked. Both in Newham and around the country we see black people being attacked and murdered on the streets, whole communities being terrorised and homes and places of worship burned to the ground. We wait in vain for the perpetrators of such attacks to be arrested and conspiracy charges brought against the murderers and firebombers who speak openly of organised violence against black people.

On the other hand, when Asian youths defended themselves against violent racist attacks at the Little Ilford School the police framed them.

When some youths gathered to escort the younger Asian schoolkids back home in response to threats from the racist thugs that they would be coming back, they were set upon by three armed white men, who were actually plain clothes police officers who had not declared their identity. When they defended themselves, uniformed police appeared on the scene immediately, and arrested the youths.

HERE TO STAY, HERE TO FIGHT!

The charges against the Newham 8 are a major attack on all black people and mean much more than a question of legal issues. By charging the eight youths with conspiracy the state is challenging our right to defend ourselves against racist violence to survive in this society. The challenge has to be met in an appropriate manner, for it is not just the Newham 8 who are in the dock it is all of us!

The defence campaign calls upon all opponents of racism and fascism to give solidarity and help to the eight defendants to make this just struggle a victory for us all.

NEWHAM 8 ARE INNOCENT!

SELF-DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE!

Newham 8 Support Group

C/O Commonground,

87 The Whicker,

Sheffield.

Dear Brothers/Sisters,

We are holding a public meeting concerning the Newham 8 issue where a speaker will be present from the Defence Campaign to give an up to date account of the situation.

This issue highlights that every time black people defend themselves against racist attacks, the state criminalises their activity. The response of the state and police to people who organise themselves is not isolated to the black community but it also concerns the whole Labour Movement, since it is the same police force brutalising black people that harrasses workers on trade union disputes.

For this campaign to be succesful it is essential that the black communities and trade unions throughout the country mobilise. After the public meeting we will be organising for the mass demonstration on 24th September. In the meantime it is crucial that all organisations affiliate to the campaign, send messages of support and pass resolutions through trade union branches and other organisations.

In Solidarity.

Newham 8 Support Group,

Sheffield.

Sponsored by:

Asian Youth Movement

Anti-Racist Co-ordinating Committee

Sheffield Campaign Against Immigration Laws