

# Alienation as a means to an end

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IT IS a relief to find a majority of Asian community groups in Sheffield rallying to the support of the city's police-community liaison panel.

This panel is under attack as "a sham" by the more political groups, the Asian Welfare Association and the Asian Youth Movement.

It was not, apparently, a member of the Asian Youth Movement who spoke on Monday of a Brixton on the streets of Sheffield. But that foolish comment was in line with the tone of the meeting, and suggests an element of political mischief-making.

A liaison panel is part of the system, a monitoring unit is outside it. In the minds of some who want it, one may surmise that it is seen more as a weapon to attack the system with, than an instrument for the protection of the innocents in the community.

The idea that police behaviour somehow justifies Brixton-style violence is preposterous and dangerous. Alienation does not excuse the inexcusable.

This is doubly so when the alienation becomes almost a matter of policy and, in the minds of a clever minority, a means to an end.

If the AYM and the AWA have real evidence of improper behaviour by the police, let them bring it forward. The fact is that they cannot even convince the majority in their own community that they have a case.

It would be surprising if there were not difficulties sometimes in relations between the police and a community that has historical and present reasons for sensitivity and anxious insecurity.

But it is certain that these difficulties will not be resolved by a unit that is, by its very existence, anti-police, and open to a suspicion of political manipulation.

They might be solved, given goodwill and commitment, by sincere and unprejudiced co-operation on the panel.

On existing evidence the county council should certainly not consider funding any monitoring unit.

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