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NOTTS ANTI-FASCIST ALLIANCE

united against racism & fascism

P.O. BOX 179,
NOTTINGHAM
NG1 3AQ.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL

This is the first NAFA newsletter since the London demonstration in mid-October in Welling. A very large number of NAFA members attended one way or another. The views of those who went on the demonstration vary immensely. Some were horrified at the fighting with the police, others took part in it. Many, including this writer, left the demonstration as we felt that little more could be achieved by staying. What was common to all was the belief that the police were very provocative, in particular by blocking for some time all routes away from the demonstration and in the violence they were inflicting on the crowd. One of the few articles to appear in any large circulation which reported this was in the *NEW STATESMAN*. The editor had his finger broken by the police who deliberately attacked him.

It must be said that the ANL stewarding decisions which were made in advance were appalling. There were too few stewards, without an adequate chain of command, no communication between stewards and no legal or medical support. All the positive proposals put up by the YRE were voted down by the ANL.

On the positive side the Welling demonstration was huge, some 40,000 or so - and largely young people. The ARA event on the same day was very small and Marc Wadsworth who leads the ARA was appalling in his remarks condemning those in Welling. The local ARA now seems to have disappeared. We regret that the promise shown at their 200 strong launch meeting, which NAFA helped build, has been thrown away.

Looking to the future, this Saturday sees representatives of some of the independent groups throughout the country meeting in Leicester to discuss our common problems, an idea floated here in September but taken up by Leicester Anti-Fascist Alliance. A report will follow. We also print a leaflet from the Jewish Socialists' Group which is very similar to the NAFA leaflet put out at Welling. At the NAFA meeting post-Welling it was agreed to approach the other anti-fascist groups in town (Women Resisting..., Youth Against Racism in Europe and Anti-Fascist Action) other than the ANL (which members felt would be impossible to work with) to organise some large Unity event next year. watch this space.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The two NAFA public meetings in October went exceedingly well with over 80 people attending each. At the first the mild mannered elderly Morris Beckman described tales of derring do fighting the fascists in the 40s. At the second Tony Robson from *Searchlight*, deputizing for Ray Hill (whose wife is seriously ill) described the development and current state of play within the far right. The decision to have very visible security at the events paid off as a group of nazis from Leicester were spotted scouting the scene by car at the first meeting but there was no interference, and no sign of them at the second. *Thanks to those men and women who did the stewarding, especially those who stood in the rain!*

BENEFITS

Too late to mention in the last newsletter was a benefit for the Kaur family at the Indian Centre, organised by NAFA and APNA ARTS. This raised about £200 towards their legal costs. Enclosed with this newsletter is a leaflet about the next Kaur family benefit. Please do try to attend as our costs at this are high and we need at least 200 people to break even. NAFA has agreed to support the Kaur case, and we are pleased to be again working with the APNA Asian Arts group. Also enclosed with this newsletter is a leaflet for the ANC benefit.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to new members, this newsletter is now going out to over 160 addresses. The good news for those joining in or after October is that your membership runs to the end of 1994. Other members are due to renew in January, and notices will go out then - start saving now...

GET INVOLVED

While NAFA has a large and growing membership and can turn out the numbers for big events we have difficulty in dividing the work up and drawing on members' interests and abilities. Some members will only ever be just subscribers, that's fine - but it would help us enormously if those who were willing to do a bit more could return the form. This will be sent to all new members from now on.

NAFA MEETINGS

The last NAFA meeting of the year is at the International Community Centre on Mansfield Road on Monday 13th December, 7.30 and the first of next year is on the 10th January at the same time and venue. All members welcome.

YOUTH WORK

The work of the youth work committee is proceeding merrily, collecting resources, making contacts etc. An

approach is being made to the County Council to ask them to second a youth worker at least part time to the group. Three trial runs of drama performances are being put on in youth clubs in the north of the county before Christmas, by some of the professional drama workers involved. A national comic publisher has reacted favourably to an anti-fascist comic and a local cartoonist is working to this end. On Wednesday 15th of December, 7.30 at the ICC the group has Robyn Thomson from our Tyne and Wear equivalent talking about their work in schools and with young people. This meeting is open, but only really for those who wish to be involved in the project.

THE FABULOUS FOUR GO TO COURT

The four BNP members up on serious assault charges for attacking a solicitor in Mansfield finally come to trial on December 13th, in **Leicester**. Members will remember that one of the group was found to be in possession of a Combat 18 hit list of Nottingham Jewish students. NAFA and other groups have picketed their three previous appearances at the Nottingham courts, and some members will be going through to Leicester for the morning of the 13th to join the picket organised by our Leicester colleagues. If you can take the morning off please ring Ross on 582506.

LETTER

Was it worth it? The demonstration on October 16th was supposed to "close down the Nazi BNP". In fact it just resulted in scores of anti-fascists being injured and arrested by the police and lots of adverse publicity for the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement.

Before the demo everyone knew that there was no way that we would be allowed anywhere near the BNP headquarters, yet the leaders of the ANL and the YRE encouraged the marchers to believe that this was possible. Brave young people battled for hours with truncheon wielding riot police but to no avail. The police were organised and prepared but we were not. If we are really serious about shutting down the BNP bunker then this is not the way to do it. A much smaller number of people with suitable equipment but without advance publicity could easily do the job. so why don't the leaders of the ANL and the YRE not organise such actions?

The answer is that their primary aim is not to really defeat the racists and fascists but to recruit members to the Socialist Workers Party (ANL) and Militant Labour (YRE). After all, they latched on to the new wave of anti-racist/anti-fascist struggle after other people had got it moving but then refused to unite with others.

People who are rallying to the anti-racist/anti-fascist movement should not be put off by the antics of these opportunists. we should concentrate on mounting actions,

including very forceful ones, which are really effective rather than being truncheon fodder for the SWP and ML.

Ron Green

Eds. note: letters are welcome on this and any other relevant subject, but they should be short - the above letter was cut - and should be typed or legibly written.

UNITY NEWSLETTER

The second issue of our public newsletter is in hand and copies will be sent out in the New Year. If you or your group wants bulk copies let us know now so we can adjust the print run. Copies of the first issue are still available, please send an sae.

SPEAKERS AT MEETINGS

NAFA speakers are available to address meetings or to lead discussions at other groups. This month a NAFA speaker led a discussion with a group of senior citizens on the far right and next month we have a speaker at the Green Party. Ring Ross on 582506 if you want to organise a speaker or to discuss this further.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

This is the last newsletter of the year, so whether you celebrate Diwali, Chanukah, Christmas, The Winter Solstice or none of these - best wishes and see you next year.

TAKE UNITY FORWARD AFTER 16 OCTOBER

The Jewish Socialists' Group is proud to be marching on this demonstration today, since it will express the unity in action that we and many others have been fighting for in a divided anti-racist and anti-fascist movement.

Today we are uniting around a common platform to drive out the fascist BNP. Wherever the fascists can secure a foothold, they pose a direct threat to ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, trade unionists and people active in progressive politics. The BNP's recent local election success in Millwall merely underlines how important it is that we unite now.

The fascists will not be intimidated by a series of small scale demonstrations each called by a different group. But a massive united mobilisation will show our determination to fight the BNP until they are forced out and it will provide and inspiration for anti-racists and anti-fascists up and down the country who are sick and tired of the sectarian squabbles plaguing our movement.

Of course the divisions cannot be reduced simply to clashes of personality and organisational rivalry. There are serious differences of philosophy and perspectives. but we must create enough room to argue these issues out inside the movement, while uniting unconditionally, whenever possible, in common actions against the fascists. the more that democracy and mutual respect exists within our movement, the stronger will be our unity in action. Each group has its own distinctive perspective but we must all recognise that none of us will defeat the fascists on our own.

Our unity must not end with the demonstration on October 16. We call on the sponsors of the unity demonstration to establish a coordinating group open to all anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations to continue to build a united opposition to racism and fascism. We urge other organisations to add their voices to this call.

The Jewish Socialists' Group has actively united with others opposed to racism and fascism since its inception in 1974. Our members are most directly threatened by antisemitism, which remains central to the ideology and practice of the various fascist groups here and elsewhere. but we have always recognised that antisemitism is as much an issue for non-Jews as for Jews and also that we cannot respond effectively to antisemitism in isolation from fighting against other forms of racism and fascist oppression. The fascists recognise no "hierarchies of oppression". We are all their enemies.

We hope that today's march and protest will be a successful demonstration of unity in action and that it will strengthen the demand from the grassroots for the formation of one open active and united anti-racist and anti-fascist movement.

JEWISH SOCIALISTS' GROUP, BM 3725 LONDON WC1N 3XX

NAFA relies on it's members active involvement to achieve it's aims.

Help is needed NOW in the following areas. If you can do ANYTHING at all to contribute, please fill in this form and return ASAP to

**NAFA
PO Box 179
Nottingham
NG1 3AQ**

Thank you!

☐

leafleting

☐

fundraising

☐

establishing contacts
(e.g. with other groups,
getting invitations for
speakers into schools,
trade unions, clubs etc)

☐

helping out at
information
evenings

☐

helping on outdoor
information stalls

☐

resource development
(collecting newspaper cuttings,
magazine articles etc.)

☐

contributing to
newsletters

other suggestions _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____