

PO BOX 179
NOTTINGHAM
NG1 3AQ

MARCH/APRIL NEWSLETTER



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THE NOTTINGHAM DEMONSTRATION

Magnificent! That was the general verdict on the February 26th Nottingham demonstration. The turnout, generally agreed at 1,000 (confirmed by the man from the City Council who looks after all the events in the Market Square), was particularly good given the weather. Indeed at the time of the stewards' meeting on the Forest at 10.00am the first four arrivals were feeling very sorry for themselves. Just after 11.00 several of the stewards were meeting to decide whether the march should go or wait another five minutes, having agreed it was time to go they found that the march had moved off and the fog was so thick they hadn't noticed!

By the time we got to Waverley Street the fog was behind us and the march picked up numbers all along the way - the large banner "Nottingham United Against Racism and Fascism" and the splendid percussion of Nottingham School of Samba gave a lively and effective presence. The rally got the best of the day's weather, the rain only hitting us at the end. All of the speakers kept themselves to five minutes and the excellent voices of Helen MacDonald, and the Clarion Choir, kept the good mood going. Kelly's Heroes had been playing in the square to gather the crowds and entertain those who had gone straight to the square rather than march, and the music was finished by a hip hop band playing to what was by then a thinning and wet crowd at the end.

In many ways this was NAFA's march as all of the donkey work had been done by our members - including negotiating with the police, chairing, organising the speakers (many of whom were NAFA members wearing "other hats"), persuading the City Council to provide the stage and public address, designing and distributing over 500 posters and around 20,000 leaflets, making banners and placards, speaking to the press, organising musicians... and many more tasks. Big pats on the back all round. We should also thank the City Council greatly for without their help we would have struggled financially - as it was the collection covered all the other costs. AFA and the Northern Network ensured that there was no possibility of fascists disrupting the event and their presence was re-assuring and welcome. Many of the other co-sponsors put a lot of time and energy into supporting the event.

What we can say is that the demonstration was a fine example of what unity in action can achieve.

GOING FORWARD...

Enclosed with this mailing are details of the TUC demonstration: please, if you are going, get your tickets as soon as possible. At time of writing two double decker and one single decker coach have been booked in addition to those for the GMB, the NUT, the Hosiery workers and the T & GWU.

Also enclosed are details of the NAFA public meeting with the Newham Monitoring Project which will give us a first hand account of the situation in east London and the fightback against the fascists organised by groups like Youth Connection. Newham Monitoring project have been in existence for many years and are a very active black organisation opposing the far right and state racism.

NAFA's AGM is on the 14th March. Please note that I will be stepping down as secretary after two years and that this meeting will also be looking at our structure and at the possibilities for the year ahead. It is a good opportunity for people to take on specific tasks and is the one time in the year we have biscuits at the meeting. The annual accounts will be available at the meeting. There will also be a specific proposal to change our meetings to monthly, allowing working groups to meet on the alternative fortnight. However unless you hear from us to the contrary the meetings will continue on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at the International Community Centre, Mansfield Road. The meeting with the NMP is an extra meeting.

AND GOING BACK...

In an earlier edition of the newsletter there was a letter attacking the role of the Youth against Racism in Europe (YRE) for their role in the Welling October demonstration. The YRE provided a full reply but due to a variety of circumstances this did not go out in the mailing. It is now felt, and the YRE concur, that it would be inappropriate to circulate the reply so long after Welling. The YRE do however say that they took particular objection to the accusation that they had used demonstrators as "truncheon fodder" when in fact the YRE stewards did all they could to minimise risk to demonstrators, including standing against the mounted police assaults on the crowd. The YRE (with which this writer has no connection, not least on grounds of age) have played a very constructive and non-sectarian role in the Nottingham anti-fascist movement and their reply should, on reflection, have been printed in the same newsletter as the attack on them.



Public meeting
**Fighting Fascism,
Fighting Racism.**

Speakers from
NAFA &
Newham Monitoring Project

The NMP is a black led community based campaign. It came out of anti-racist struggles in Newham. It monitors racist attacks and police harassment and supports local anti-racist struggles.

International Community Centre
Mansfield Rd

Monday 21st March
7.30pm

What is Nottingham Anti-Fascist Alliance.

Local and Independent.

NAFA was started over 2 years ago, after public meetings saw the need for a broad-based anti-fascist/anti-racist alliance in the city. **We are a local, independent anti-fascist/anti-racist campaign.**

We re local because a campaign like ours needs roots in local communities, organisations and union branches. But we value our links with a growing network of independent groups across the region and nationally. We want an anti-fascist /anti-racist movement based on co-operation between different initiatives.

We're independent because we are not allied to any one political group and we want to be an open campaign that invites people to participate .

No Platform.

NAFA are against allowing fascists the space to organise: 'by any means necessary'. This might mean physically turning out to stop fascist marches and events. And we support community self-defence against fascist and racist attacks.

But the key thing is countering the ideas of fascists and racists: by leafleting areas where they're active, exposing them in the press and in our newsletters, organising demonstrations and public meetings, getting support from other organisations and offering guest speakers. Our campaign work led to closure of the Red Lion in Heanor, where fascists had met and drank for two years. We recently set up a youth educational and arts project.

Of course, there are different strategies we can use in this struggle.

The state won't get rid of racism or the far-right and we support struggles against state racism. We've organised against both the Asylum Bill and deportation.

The struggle against both fascism and racism starts with encouraging ordinary people to oppose them - where we live, where we work and on the streets.

Unity.

Racism divides us: black from white. Far-right groups threaten us all: whether we're black, Jewish, women, workers, gay or lesbian, disabled, trade unionists, left wing or people with a 'different' lifestyle. This is a potentially powerful coalition of forces. Out of it we need unity.

The demand of black people and other groups to organise independently in the struggle against racism and fascism is beyond question. We're not asking for everyone to be in the same organisation: but what we do want is mutual support.

Interested in getting involved? Fill in the slip below and send it back to us.

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I'm interested in finding out more:

name:

address:

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NAFA. PO Box 179, Nottingham NG1 3AQ