

India's help sought to free 12 Asians in UK

LONDON, September 22 (PIT).

A BRITISH civil rights group has sought Indian support in freeing the 12 youths—all of Asian origin—seized by the west Yorkshire police in a series of raids on Bradford's Black community last July.

The July 11 action committee, which takes its name from the date on which the youths allegedly 'conspired to damage or destroy by fire or explosion property and lives of others', in an appeal, said urgent international pressure on the charges framed by the police carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

The appeal urged the Indian government to cancel this winter's MCC cricket tour as a show of protest against the assault, oppression and humiliation of Asians, West Indians and Africans in Britain.

The appeal said that at a time when the democratic rights of the Asian immigrants were being steadily eroded through racist legislation, discrimination in areas of employment, housing and education and racist murders and arson attacks were rising, it was shocking that the Indian and Sri Lankan governments were preparing to welcome the MCC cricketers.

It pointed out that the 12 youths were all political activists of the United Black Youth League (UBYL) formed to advance the struggle of the Black community against British government's oppression.

At the time of their arrest the youths were engaged in organising campaigns against the proposed deportation of three local Black. They were also engaged in conducting an investigation into the fire bombing of two Asian premises in Bradford—an investigation that had already revealed the connivance between extreme rightwing forces and the west Yorkshire police.

The committee charged that 'these activities and the fact that the UBYL was the fastest growing Black youth organisation in the area prompted the state to launch this blatant act

of political repression'.

It observed that to date 'the 12 youths had appeared in Bradford magistrates' court six times and on each of these occasions the magistrates have refused to grant them bail. Yet white racists involved in the fire bombing of Asians premises have been granted bail by the same court.'

The committee said that the charges against the Bradford twelve were all unfounded as they did not possess any petrol bombs or had any plans to undertake any destruction or attacks.

The west Yorkshire police, it said, was notorious in framing innocent people by forcing them to sign bogus confessions. Recent examples of this was the case of George Lindo, a West Indian worker who in 1978 was convicted on the basis of such a 'confession'—a conviction which was later quashed when it was revealed that one of the officers investigating the case was found fabricating statements.