

# 'Free Bradford 12' chants at court

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from MICHAEL NALLY in Leeds

WATCHED by pairs of wary police officers, groups of young people of varying races stamped up the steps of the Victorian Town Hall and court building in Leeds to protest that the authorities are staging what the protesters called a 'political show trial' inside.

The groups' chant—'Police conspiracy, free the Bradford 12'—was heard in No. 2 Crown Court, where the trial will enter its fourth week tomorrow.

The 12 are Asians, aged between 12 and 26, and all plead not guilty to charges of conspiracy and making petrol bombs with intent to endanger life and property.

There are too many of them for the dock, which seats only five or six, so the rest sit on benches with defence counsel and solicitors. One of them, Mr Tariq Ali, 24, a former mill worker, is to the fore because he is defending himself.

From time to time the protest on the steps is echoed in the public gallery. Judge Christopher Beaumont did not hesitate to order out a young white man who alleged that police witnesses were lying.

Police evidence caused concern in the well of the stuffy court when defence counsel and Mr Ali challenged officers in the witness box about their note-taking procedures, handling of suspects and awareness of racial conflict in Bradford and elsewhere. Some exchanges were abrupt.

Mr Ed Rees, one of the defence counsel, asked Det. Sgt Brian Proctor: 'Did you have any difficulty remembering an answer that comprises 16 typed lines?' The officer replied: No.

## Bond winners

The £100,000 prize in yesterday's Premium Bond draw was won by the holder of 3K2 170090, who lives in Lincolnshire. The £50,000 winner (11AL 346098) lives in Dorset and the £25,000 winner (11KK 776055) in Lancashire.

And Mr Rees said: 'You are a liar.'

Mr Ali challenged a reference to himself allegedly talking to officers about 'coloured people less intelligent than yourselves.' And he asked: 'Are you trying to tell the jury that I would use those words about my people?'

He complained that after his arrest last July he was put into a cell with 'a fascist skinhead,' and taunted by officers at the door. The police witnesses denied knowledge of that.

Mr Ali is trying to comply with the conventions of the Bar. He is uncomfortable with its mannered courtesies and phraseology. There were a few smiles and asides on the prosecution benches when he floundered or provoked judicial rebuke.

Mr Paul Kennedy, QC, leading for the Crown, told the court that the charges arose from the discovery of two crates containing 38 petrol bombs made from milk bottles. They were found in Bradford in July, a week after disturbances in the city.

The decision to make them had been taken at a meeting organised by Mr Ali and Mr Tarlochan Gata-Aura, another of the accused, according to the police.

The meeting was held under the name of the United Black Youth League, which campaigns for Asians and blacks in Bradford, and the accused would say that the bombs were needed because of a threat of trouble from skinheads or the National Front. Another view was that they would have been used against the police or property.

Mr Kennedy added that Mr Gata-Aura had wiped the bottles to remove fingerprints, but forensic scientists had found some, including his own. Police replaced the petrol with tea and kept watch on the find, but nobody came.

The 12 were arrested at the end of July, four of them having been held earlier. The police case rests partly on confessions which some of them allegedly made.

Det. Insp. Brian Sidebottom, second-in-command of the investigation, told the court that he had interviewed Mr Gara-Aura after his arrest. He said the accused had spoken of 'the need to defend our community from fascists.'

Defence counsel pressed the officer about racial conflicts, and he replied that he knew nothing of attacks mentioned.

He was unaware of activities or publications of extreme right-wing movements. Nor had he read the report of a Home Office inquiry into racial attacks, published last year after study of selected areas, including some in West Yorkshire.

# What with

## Today's weather

Showers everywhere, heavy and prolonged in W and N. Bright intervals, especially in E. Temperatures near normal.

London, E Anglia, SE, Central S, E and Central N England, E Midlands, Channel Islands: Cloudy, rain in places. Becoming brighter with scattered showers. Wind S, moderate, becoming W to NW, moderate. Max. 18C (64F).

W Midlands, NE England: Showers, bright intervals. Wind W to NW, light or moderate.

Aberdeen, Glasgow, Central Highlands: Showers, some prolonged, bright intervals. Wind NW, moderate becoming variable, light. Max. 15C (59F).

Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: Rather cloudy, showers or longer periods of rain. Wind NE, moderate becoming variable, light. Max. 12C (54F).

Argyll, NW Scotland: Showers or longer periods of rain. Wind N to NW, moderate or fresh, decreasing light. Max.

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