



12 YOUNG BRADFORD ASIANS FACE CHARGES OF - MAKING AN EXPLOSIVE SUBSTANCE WITH INTENT TO ENDANGER LIFE OR PROPERTY - & CONSPIRACY TO MAKE AN EXPLOSIVE SUBSTANCE FOR UNLAWFUL PURPOSES. ALL 12 ARE PLEADING NOT GUILTY TO BOTH CHARGES.

Self Defence

— OUR RIGHT

The case for the defence opened last week with Tarlochan Gata Aura taking a clear and courageous stand on the need to defend the community on July 11th last year. He took sole responsibility for the making of the petrol devices. They were for use as a last resort, only in the extreme situation of a mass skinhead rampage through streets where black people lived. In that event, they would have been used "to erect a shield of fire in the middle of the road" to deter the aggressors and prevent contact between them and the possible victims.

Tarlochan described his horror when he heard of a phone call that coachloads of skinheads had been seen on the motorway approaching Bradford. Only days before, he had read of the fire-bombing of an Asian home in Walthamstow. A mother and three children had burnt to death. It had reminded him of the tragic massacre of 13 children and youth in Deptford. The weekend before, coachloads of skinheads had rampaged through Southall. Police had taken their time to come, and only spontaneous community defence had repelled the attack.



Demonstrators in support of the Bradford 12 protest outside Leeds Crown Court.

TRAGEDY

On Friday 14 May, Masood Malik's father - Mohammed Azim Malik, aged 53 - died, following a heart attack. The Bradford 12 Defence Campaign sends its deepest condolences for this tragic and untimely loss to Masood and his family.

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Rumours spread quickly that day within a community already terrorised by a series of racist attacks. Shops shut down, shutters went up and sections of the community came onto the streets. A state of seige prevailed. "In normal circumstances, we would have mobilised the whole community. But there was no time. It was a dangerous situation and I suggested the making of petrol devices."

Police had dismissed these rumours. But then theirs was not a record that inspired confidence. As Tarlochan put it: "My personal experience is that the police have never defended the community. There is an absence of the will to help..." It is a sentiment shared by many in the black community.

For those with any lingering doubts about the value of calling for police protection, will have had them shattered in the course of the trial. The twenty or so police officers who have given evidence have exhibited an almost blanket 'pig ignorance' of any fears in the black community of racial attacks: either on that weekend, or any other day. Such things don't exist in Bradford.

Never before has the case for community self defence been so powerfully put in the courtroom. And it has come from the police themselves.



Rumours of Rampage

Bradford was not the only city to reverberate to the sound of rumour and panic on July 11th. All over the country, hundreds if not thousands of black people came onto the streets, in response to "reports of imminent skinhead attack", in communities as far apart as Luton, Handsworth, Coventry, Tower Hamlets, Camden, Woolwich, Hounslow and Southall. Everywhere shops shut down and shutters went up, schools closed and children were sent home, often in response to police advice.

In Handsworth, large groups congregated on Soho Road, tense and expectant, armed with whatever came to hand. In Luton, hundreds of Asian and Afro-Caribbean youth gathered outside a mosque, itself the target of previous racist attack. Taxi drivers helped monitor streets and later in the day, police raided the mosque to search for petrol bombs. In Brick Lane, the scene of an organised skinhead rampage three years before, 400 people came to an emergency public meeting. Rumours of skinheads brought many to the streets in Woolwich. Everywhere, the talk was of community self defence.

Times had changed since Brick Lane 3 years ago. Black people had hardened to the grisley catalogue of taunts, beatings, arson and murder. Southall the weekend before had shown how to deal with skinheads. That day, every black person walked tall and proud - and applauded Southall.

We knew not from where the rumours came. Certainly the police did not dispel them, and in some cases helped to spread them. It is possible that it was as a result of inept, or preemptive police strategy. But when communities had warnings or rumours, they responded as a community - with whatever means - physical or organisational - at their disposal. It was a 'natural' reaction. A matter of survival.

And for this reason, black people everywhere applaud the actions of our brothers in Bradford. The more the police belittle and criminalise their action, or distort them to fit their pet 'copy-cat riot' theories - the louder and angrier shall be our response.

Frame-Up -

"This case has been blown up through stages into a state trialIt has been mounted simply to curtail the legitimate political activity of Tarlochan Gata-Aura and Tariq Ali."

"The control of this case lay with the Special Branch It has been a political case from the beginning ."

Thus responded defence counsel Edmund Alexander and Sibghat Kadri to claims by ex-Det. Supt. Holland that the Bradford 12 trial was a "criminal" case.

Earlier, detectives giving evidence in court had admitted that the names of most of the 12 were provided by the Special Branch at a briefing before any arrests were made. The prosecution had maintained previously that the names had been obtained from the defendants themselves in police interviews after the arrests.

Even Holland himself - who was in overall charge of the investigation - admitted the involvement of the Special Branch and a great deal of knowledge about the political activities of Tarlochan and Tariq before the first arrests.

Most of the police officers in the case have refused to answer questions about the Special Branch 'connection'. According to one D.I. Windle, however, this secrecy was unnecessary: the Special Branch was involved only because they believed this case to be linked to a wider "conspiracy by political activists" to stir up nationwide "riots" last July! Holland too conceded that the Special Branch was not under his command "it was their job to take care of the political aspects of this case."

So, here in Bradford, last July, the police and their masters had a perfect target for their theories. According to their "script", the Bradford 12 are "political agitators" who made petrol bombs to instigate a "copy-cat riot" in Bradford!

As defence counsel Paddy O'Connor explained, this theory was "a preoccupation and an obsession" which the police were determined to justify - through "voluntary statements". "If an accused man makes a suitable admission, then it becomes a straightforward matter for the police to resolve ... The objective of the police from the outset in this case was to obtain such admissions."

It is my belief that when a people are attacked, it is their right to act in self defence... We decided that an organised defence of our community was necessary. In my view, the defence of black people, of all working class people, who are threatened by the menace of fascism, necessitates the forming of defensive organisations. It was with this in mind that we did what we did.

Tariq Ali.



- - - by any means necessary

The right of the accused to remain silent posed a serious problem to this strategy. Or did it? Holland had placed a blanket ban on visitors and solicitors, according to defence barrister Helena Kennedy, simply to enable him to obtain written statements from the defendants before they saw anyone.

However, the very first statement that the police obtained was written by Tarlochan himself. It described the rumours in Bradford on 11 July last year concerning the possibility of a violent attack on the local black community by hordes of invading fascist skinheads and the need for self defence.

"This statement by Tarlochan did not turn out to be satisfactory to the police," suggested O'Connor. "And so the others were never given a choice ..with the exception in the case of Tariq, all subsequent statements were taken down by the police officers themselves."

The police have ensured that all of these statements - which are the mainstay of the prosecution case - admit the petrol bombs to be "for rioting against the police and large shops".....And just to be safe, they have taken the precaution of "verballing" the interviews of all 12 to bring additional "evidence" to the court.

All of this "evidence", as well as parts of the statements themselves, have been challenged by defence barristers, who suggest police fabrication, intimidation and physical violence against the defendants. The "admissions" have required bullying and cajoling. The statements in fact are made up of replies, with suitable omissions and additions, to questions put by the police.

And so, the police officers in Holland's team - 24 in all - have lined up to be summoned by Prosecutor Paul Kennedy to draw up an almost watertight case but not quite! Defendants and their lawyers have the habit of turning up in court with inconvenient truths. Try as they might, Holland and his gang could not erase the little matter of racist violence and self defence which persists in at least some of the statements. This was not followed up, they claim, because "it was not believed to be a genuine situation." If their story is to stand up then the reality has to be denied. "I was more concerned with the riots," explained one DC Irvine. So, as a fail-safe, they have decided to abolish all memory of the extent of racist violence in Bradford

or elsewhere! They have all agreed that there is no fear among Asians in Bradford about racist attacks, nor any need to investigate organised fascist activity.

This only goes to show that the Bradford police are guilty of sustained criminal negligence. Far from doing anything to stop racist and fascist attacks, these 'upholders of law and order' would appear to be more interested in hiding them. We, as black people, will take the right to defend our community against any form of racist violence we will take the right of self defence as a basic political freedom.

This basic right is part of our wider fightback against all forms of racism, from the immigration laws to police harassment. Our resistance, especially as expressed in the uprisings last summer, has increased the pressure on the authorities. The police and the media have attempted to run it all down as "riots" and "copy-cat hooliganism!" Our genuine anger and rebellion was crushed with paramilitary violence, CS gas, house to house raids and "special courts"..... And it was all blamed on "political agitators" and "mindless hooligans". The case of the Bradford 12 is being used here to illustrate this pet theory.

This is what we say to the likes of Holland. We as black people will take such action as is necessary to defend our rights ... and we will fight against attempts to criminalise such action. We will fight against attempts to make those of us who take such action into criminals. The Bradford 12 trial is an attempt to "prove" that these 12 - some of the most "active" people in Bradford - organised the "riot" there. They have been framed, and the seriousness of the conspiracy charges leave no doubt that this is a show-trial. It is meant to intimidate us ... BUT WE WILL NOT BE SILENCED!

**Only Conspiracy is
Police Conspiracy!
Free the Bradford 12!**

From a supporter...

I first heard of the Bradford 12 and the trial through a friend who got hold of some leaflets. Then it began to be mentioned regularly on Fridays at the Mosque. I didn't know much about it then - just that life imprisonment was really harsh for an incident where noone was hurt. I remember reading in the newspaper that last summer when it all happened, two National Front men were caught with petrol bombs and they were arrested for stealing the petrol! So much for justice and equality of law!

Some people say that if they made the petrol bombs then they are guilty and that's the end of the matter. But it's not as simple as that.

Those 12 were picked up because they were known to the police as very active in our community. They helped to fight for the right of Anwar Ditta to be reunited with her children. They fought to free an innocent man, Gary Pemberton, who had been framed by the police. They fought for the right of Jaswinder Kaur, who faced deportation, to stay here. In all these campaigns, they won.

Just as the police watched them and kept files on them, they must know what the NF, BM and other fascist groups are up to. But nothing is done - even though the fascists boast about attacking black people and our homes.

My mum and dad were really shocked at the comments by the police witnesses. They refused to admit there was any such thing as a racist attack - they even said that the murder of Mohammed Arif, the taxi-driver in Bradford, by a BM member, wasn't racist!

I don't believe in violence. But when I think of what happened in Southall - when the fascist skin-heads attacked our people, homes and shops - then sometimes there is no other way.

We remember Southall. It took the police four hours to arrive, and when they did they protected the fascists as in the past. It was us - the young people, people like the 12 - who used force to drive the fascists out. We had no choice, we had to use violence in self defence.

The police use violence in self defence all the time, except they call it "reasonable force". It was really sick when those 2 policemen got off recently for murdering David Moore in Toxteth. There's a long list of people who were killed by the police: Richard Campbell; Barry Prosser; Paul Worrell; Blair Peach..... Nothing was ever done - just covered up.

We can't forget our treatment at the hands of the police, the way our families are divided, and our communities attacked.

That is why we, my family and friends, support the Bradford 12.

There is no other choice.

Jayesh Amin: FREEDOM AT LAST!

Jayesh Amin, aged 24, walked out of court a free man on Wednesday 26 May. Ruling on a submission made by defence barrister, Ed Rees, Judge Beaumont agreed that Jayesh had no case to answer against the evidence brought by the prosecution. He directed the jury to return verdicts of not guilty of both counts with immediate effect. He also directed not guilty verdicts on the first count (manufacture of explosives) for Saeed Hussein and Sabir Hussein.

These verdicts prove the innocence of at least one of the targets of this major police conspiracy. And yet, he has already spent five weeks in police custody and the rest of the long nine month wait for the trial under a strict house-bound curfew amongst other restrictive conditions.

Nevertheless, Jayesh's freedom represents a victory for the defence campaign. We have consistently demanded, and will continue to demand, that all 12 are freed for justice to be seen to be done!



Anwar Ditta on a march in support of the Bradford 12. Giving evidence for Tarlochan Anwar said: "With his help, we won our case. Without him, I don't know where we would have ended up. I respect him as a brother and he respects me."

On Wednesday 26 May, Jaswinder Kaur, Nasira Begum, Cynthia Gordon, Nasreen Akhtar and Pow Shien Leong joined the picket of Leeds Crown Court. Others still fighting for the right to stay in this country were also there: Najat Chafee, from London, and her young son; Pow Yean Leong from Leeds; supporters of Lim Kok Keong from Sheffield and of the Khan family from Manchester.

Support the Bradford 12!

- * Attend the daily picket of court and public gallery.
- * Attend the mass picket of the court on Weds. 9 June - if trial is still on.
- * Money is urgently needed. Please make collections, send donations etc.
- * Support in writing is still important. Send messages of support.
- * Raise the issue at work, with your friends, etc. Sell the broadsheets.