

Leicester Anti-Fascist Defence Campaign

On the 20th April 1985 the British National Party held a local election meeting at Avenue road Junior School at which 9 protestors and 2 BNP were arrested. The BNP were opposed because they are a fascist party. They are not only racist but totally undemocratic. They would any kind of power given to them and use it to oppress all of us, black or white.

The LEICESTER ANTI-FASCIST DEFENCE CAMPAIGN WAS formed on 20th April by 8 of the 9 people arrested at Avenue road Junior School. We are committed to providing an adequate defence for ourselves and to widening opposition to fascism in Britain.

L.A.F.D.C. NEWS

Of the 9 protestors arrested on 20th April 1985 we have 5 results. One defendant, a student at Leicester, had decided to plead guilty as charged. He was taken into court without representation, though his barrister was in the building at the time. The court did not ask him where his barrister was and fined him £250+£20 costs for a non-violent offence. He had no previous record.

On 21st August 1985, the first of the 8 defendants to plead not guilty was tried Leicester Magistrates Court and found not guilty. He was awarded £150 costs.

On 4th September 1985 2 defendants were scheduled to appear in Court at 2.15pm. The first, Alan Horne, had his case adjourned to 12th September after a 3 hour hearing of the police evidence alone. The other defendant, James Jackson, had his case adjourned until 18th December, despite an attempt to arrange a special court before that date. Clearly the courts do not allocate adequate time for those who wish to defend themselves properly in these cases.

On 5th September, Shaun Moore, the 5th L.A.F.D.C. defendant had his case dismissed with no police evidence presented. Interestingly, the constable whose statement was to provide the basis for the prosecution case against Shaun was not the officer who arrested him. Since the police could not even decide who his arresting officer was, their case was tenuous, to say the least.

The 6th defendant, Martin Page, was convicted after a 3½ hour trial. He was fined £150+50 costs, for a first offence which normally carries a 6-month bind-over in "non-political" cases.

Despite certain inconsistencies in the police evidence, Martin lost his case mainly due to his lack of courtroom experience. He is appealing against the decision.

On 12th September Alan Horne appeared in court for the 2nd time.

In a case that lasted a total of 6 hours, he was acquitted. Although no expenses were awarded, the magistrates "expected the witnesses costs to be paid out of one public purse or another". The effectiveness of the defence case was proved by the fact that the magistrates spent 1½ hours deliberating before the not guilty verdict was reached.

Alan's victory on the 12th September was the result of extensive work on the part of Leicester Anti-Fascist Defence Campaign. We still have 4 more cases to win, spread out over the next 3 months. We still need active support to continue the campaign against fascism in Leicester: please support us in any way you can.

THE FASCIST CASES.

The 2 fascists also had their cases heard on 4th and 5th September. One had his case dismissed and the other was convicted and fined £100+£92 costs.

It is worth noting that the police evidence in this second case totally contradicted the already proven descriptions of the way the trouble began on 20th April. Indeed, at one point a senior police officer even declared that the room in which the meeting was held was only half it's actual size.

OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE

It must be pointed out that one of the arrested fascists lives in Manchester and the other in Birmingham. There were also many other fascists from Manchester and also London. By any other name the 20th April "public election meeting" at Avenue road Junior School was a national fascist rally; and those local citizens who attended to make their peaceful protest are having to pay the cost for this illegal event.

SUPPORT THE FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM.

The L.A.F.D.C. calls on anyone who attended the 20th April BNP meeting in Avenue road Junior School to come forward and provide information in relation to these cases. We contend that the arrests made on that day were totally arbitrary and had no relation to the real offence, which was the BNP's promotion of the worst kinds of hatred and ignorance within our city.

Also the L.A.F.D.C. calls for support from any Trades Union branches and organisations with positive anti-racist policies. Fascism can only be fought effectively by the working classes and their organisations. YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED NOW.

CONTACT ADDRESS: 25 Hipwell Crescent, Leicester.

OR PHONE: LEICS 531595 (Leicester Unemployed Workers Centre)

COURT DATES: Alan Horne; 12th Sept

S. McGann; 20th Sept

A. Haq; 21st November

James Jackson; 18th December

The 5th defendant still awaits trial at Leicester Crown Court.

The trial of the 12 people arrested during and after the BNP meeting in Bradford on the 13th April 1985 took place on Monday 9th September at Bradford Magistrates Court.

The cases were heard before a stipendary magistrate* brought up from London. On 6th September, proposals were made to the solicitors to drop the charges and impose bind-overs instead. Meetings were held by the Bradford Anti-Fascist Defence Campaign to determine what the response to this offer should be. Finally, the Defence Campaign decided that it was their role to obtain the best deals they could for the defendants. The results were as follows;
No evidence was produced in court and the magistrate gave out these acquittals and bind-overs:

	4	"	"	"	£500
(All bind-overs for 2 years)	3	"	"	"	£250
	3	acquitted			

The defence barrister challenged the size of the bind-over sum. An appeal is being heard against the magistrates decision on this matter.

*A stipendary magistrate is a paid magistrate who is a qualified lawyer and who exercises duties similar to those of a Justice of the Peace.

The second L.A.F.D.C. Public Meeting will take place at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre on Thursday 19th Sept. at 7.30 pm. Speakers will include a member of the Defence Campaign and a member of the South Africa Labour Education Project.

ALL WELCOME