

NEWHAM ON TRIAL

The fight goes on!

A MASSIVE campaign is needed not only in Newham but throughout the country to defend the Newham Seven. Asian youths from East London who face serious charges when they go on trial in September.

Let us be perfectly clear. What is at stake is not just the liberty and well-being of these seven brave young men. What is on the line is the liberty and well-being, indeed the life, of every single Asian in the country. When racist thugs terrorise our community; when our children are afraid to go to school; when we are afraid to go out to do the shopping; when our homes are vandalised and set on fire; and when the powers that be do not lift a finger to defend us there is only one thing that stands between us and the fate of the Jews in Nazi Germany. That is the courage of a growing number of our young people who are determined to fight back; who are determined to establish not merely our right to live here, but our right to live here with dignity and in peace.

White racist society cannot abide the militant and courageous fight-back of our youths and has tried to criminalise it by every possible means. This attempted criminalisation failed in the trials of the Bradford 12 and the Newham 8, not least because the community rallied to defend its defenders. But as we approach another test case, we must not assume that our enemies have not learned lessons from their defeats. We must organise as never before to defend the Newham Seven.

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NEWHAM 7 INNOCENT

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NEWHAM 7 DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

P.O.Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7. Tel: 01 555 8151

DEFEND THE NEWHAM 7!

Zafar Khan (18), Parvaiz Khan (17), Amjad Ali (21), Khan Bahadur (22), Jyoti Rajappan (17), Jamal Chaudhri (19), and Habib Mohammed (18) face affray charges for defending themselves and their community from racist attacks.

Once again our community is under threat from racist attacks and from the people who are meant to be protecting us from these attacks, the police. On Saturday 7th April 1984 there were a series of racist attacks on Asian people in the Upton Park and Forest Gate areas of Newham by white racist thugs in a car. These attacks included a particularly vicious incident where a partially disabled 16-years old Asian youth was dragged into a car and assaulted with a hammer. Other attacks included a family out shopping, an apprentice going home from work and an Asian woman. More attacks followed in the course of the day orchestrated by racist thugs drinking in the Duke of Edinburgh Public House. When Asian youths fought back in self-defence after being attacked by 15-20 racist thugs who came charging out from the pub armed with, amongst other things, gardening implements, the police arrived on the scene almost immediately and arrested one of the Asian youths. Over the next few weeks six more Asian youths were arrested. Five of the seven youths were denied bail, spending up to 7 weeks in remand because of flimsy excuses by the police who claimed that they were still preparing their case and in spite of the fact that charges against the defendants at that stage ranged from possessing offensive weapons to criminal damage, charges not warranting such periods of detention. In contrast, three white youths arrested in connection with the incident were neither remanded in custody nor faced bail objections by the police.

All seven defendants were subsequently charged with AFFRAY AND CONSPIRACY TO CAUSE CRIMINAL DAMAGE.

SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE!

The only 'crime' committed by these youths was that of defending themselves and the community against racist attacks. Again and again, from the case of the Virk brothers (Newham 1978), the murder of Ahktar Ali Baig (Newham 1980), the Bradford 12 and the Newham 8 (1982), we have witnessed a total failure on the part of the police to take firm action against racist attacks.

While the police concentrate on arresting the victims of these attacks we still wait for action to be taken against the perpetrators. To date, in spite of evidence provided to the police, none of the white racist youths in the car have been arrested. While those in 'authority' turn a blind eye to these attacks racist attacks both in Newham and throughout East London continue to increase. In November (1984) a 14-years old Afro-Caribbean youth was stabbed to death, in addition to numerous physical attacks, spittings and abusive language and whole families living in a near state of siege.

In the face of this growing wave of racial violence on one hand and total police inaction on the other hand, we have but two choices, either to submit to indignity, harassment, brutality and, ultimately, murder, or to defend ourselves.

By charging three racists the state is attempting to present the Newham 7 incident as one of 'gang warfare'. This attempt must be resisted. The Defence Campaign calls upon all anti-racists to give solidarity and help to the seven defendants, uphold the right to self-defence and make this just struggle a victory for us all.

BLACK COMMUNITY ON TRIAL!

The charges against the Newham 7 are a major attack on black people and mean much more than a question of legal issues. By ignoring the offences of the perpetrators of racial attacks while criminalising the resistance of those defending themselves from such attacks through the use of conspiracy and affray charges, the state is challenging our right to defend ourselves against racist violence to survive in this society. The challenge has to be met in an appropriate manner, by rallying to the defence of the Newham 7 on the widest possible basis. It was exactly the sort of massive community mobilisation in defence of our youths that maintained the right to self-defence in the Newham 8 case and was also responsible for the dropping of the conspiracy charge against six of the Newham 7 at their committal hearing.

The fight of the Newham 7 is also our fight. The Newham 7, our youths, stood for the community. We in turn must stand by them at this critical hour and give all possible support and assistance. We must demonstrate yet again, no matter how many campaigns we have to go through, that we cannot tolerate one single attack by racist thugs on our people and will defend ourselves if the need arises. Yesterday it was the Newham 8, today it is the Newham 7, tomorrow it could be you. It is important that the community mobilises to defend the seven youths for it is not just they who are in the dock ... it is all of us!

"UNTIL ALL ARE FREE, WE ARE ALL IMPRISONED"