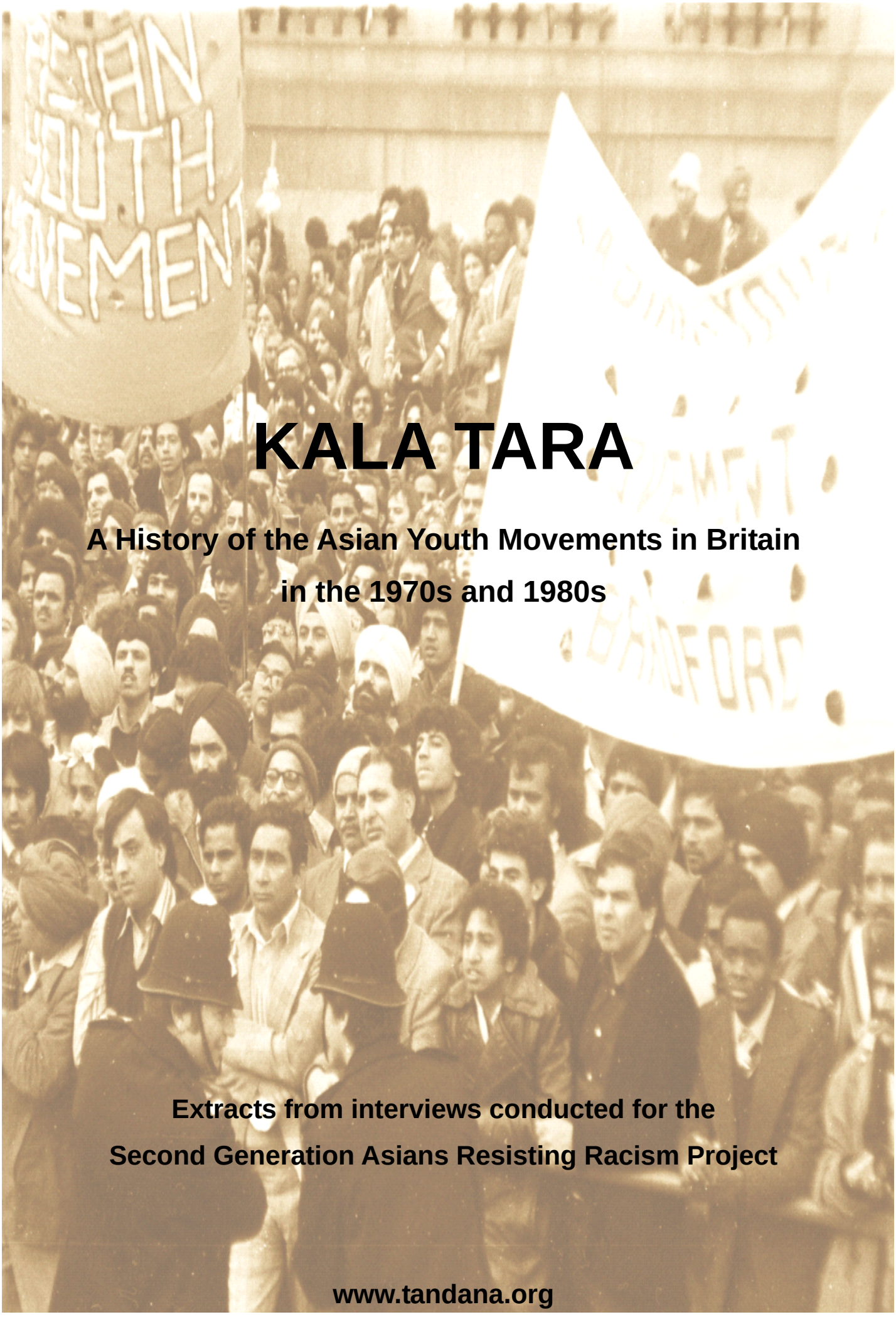


# KALA TARA

## A History of the Asian Youth Movements in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s

**Extracts from interviews conducted for the Second Generation Asians Resisting Racism Project**

**www.tandana.org**

# SECOND GENERATION ASIANS RESISTING RACISM

All the interviews that were carried out during this project were amongst individuals who were active anti-racists and many of them were instrumental in organising the Asian Youth Movements of the 1970s and 1980s.

This collection of memories and reflections about the 1970s and early 1980s have been put together in the belief that people should talk about and understand conflict. It explores how many young South Asians participated in a wider grassroots anti-racist movement.

Since the participants were young during the 1970s and early 1980s, the experiences that are discussed are less about working lives, but more about early experiences of living in a variety of towns across Britain and going to school or college here as well as how they made their voices heard.

The transcript version of the story is slightly more extensive than the DVD and it is hoped that this will enable a wider range of references to enable an exploration this history. Lesson plans and ideas for using these oral testimonies in education can be found at http:// www.tandana.org/pg/resources.

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Kala Tara: A History of the Asian Youth Movements in Britain
Booklet and DVD


This booklet and DVD were produced as part of the Second Generation Asians Resisting Racism Project,
which was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund

Copies of this booklet and DVD can be obtained by contacting info@tandana.org
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# KALA TARA

## A HISTORY OF THE ASIAN YOUTH MOVEMENTS IN BRITAIN IN THE 1970S AND 1980S

CONTENTS

# ARRIVING

**ANWAR QADIR**

I came to Britain in 1964. I think it was the next day after bonfire night, the reason I say that is I can still remember the smell in the air. I couldn't work out what the smell was until many years later, and that was the sulphur in the air from the fireworks

**....** My father came over here first. I think it wasn't so much the poverty that drove us here, I mean we were quite comfortable when we were over there, I think it was more, I suppose the people in the ex-colonies thought well we're going to get a better standard of education if we went to England, and that was the main reason why we came here. Well my father came and twelve months later we joined him.

**JANI RASHID**

My father was a tailor and he had quite a successful tailoring business in Ipoh which was in northern Malaya, or Malaysia as it's now known. And he did quite a lot of work for the Scottish Dragoon Guards, so he was linked to the British Army in some way, for many years. And my understanding is that in 1961, I think they suggested to him that it might be good for him to emigrate to England, because there was quite a lot of political upheaval in Malaysia, Malaya at the time, with the Communists coming down the South East Asian archipelago and that. So there was a lot of threat of instability to Malaya and it was suggested to him that he might want to come to England, which he did, and so we ended up in Thornbury in October 1961. It was just myself and my brother and my father that came first of all in October '61, and my mother came over a couple of years later essentially, so we lived, you know, just like father and sons for about 18 months before, you know, my mum arrived, basically.

**....** It was cold, [laughs] we came in October 1961, and, you know, I'd never seen snow before. It snowed that year, it was cold. I didn't really want to be here, I missed my mum and my sisters, and it was quite a shock in terms of you know, being in a totally different country.

**MUKHTAR DAR**

I came to this country when I was around eleven years of age, and the reason why I came was because my father had come here in the 60s and he'd worked in the steel mills in Sheffield, and a number of people from our village, from Rawalpindi in Pakistan, had come here, and they subsequently wrote back and the extended family and other people began to write, so from our village there's probably around 11 to 12 people that came to England, and so my father came and worked in the steel mills, and subsequently my mother, myself and my sister followed on.

..... My first memory was I think at first landing at the airport and standing there and looking up at all these different coloured people, you know, white people, African, Black people and such, and looking straight up into these people's eyes and seeing different coloured eyes and thinking that they were marbles because in the village I used to play marbles and the marbles had different greens and blues and whatever, and thinking that these people had

marbles in their eyes, and I remember, remembering that.

**JAYESH AMIN**

To see white people do the cleaning jobs and so forth was quite a shock I think. Because you're coming from Kenya, you're coming from Nairobi where you didn't see any white people working at all, where the only people working were black people and Asians, erm, so that was a big shock.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

My first memory of Britain was really...that I realised that I was going to leave my parents and I had never really left my mother before. I knew my grandfather from my father's side was really unhappy that I was going and I didn't know how far Britain was...the distance didn't make any sense to me..

**NILOFER SHAIKH**

I remember feeling very cold at the airport cos it was some time in March, early March I think it was when we arrived, and I think I was fascinated by the, you know, the vapour coming out of our mouths when we were breathing.

**KULDEEP MANN**

My absolute first memory was standing at Heathrow, an airport, .... being nervous, frightened and I had this gold necklace on, chewing this gold necklace that my Grandma gave me. And 45 years on I've still got that necklace, chewed to a state, sitting in the bank.

**SAEED HUSSAIN**

Actually ending up you know in Heathrow Airport, you know, it was quite overwhelming, the whole kind of number of people, the buildings, the atmosphere.

**MOHSIN ZULFIQAR**

I remember going into an Indian or Pakistani shop and I was really homesick, and it was as you know the Universities start around October and I was studying at the University of Nottingham. I went to the shop and began to talk to somebody, a Pakistani guy, and it was about seventeen days I had been in Nottingham, and the guy said 'I've been here for seventeen years', and I thought 'how the hell could this guy live in this country for seventeen years!'

**GURNAM SINGH**

I was born in the Punjab, in a village which is in the district of Jalandhar, in 1959, 16th July. And I came to this country at the age of two-and-a-half in 1962; I think it was in November. I have some kind of, very fragmented memories of that. I can remember ... We came straight to Bradford, exchange station. I can remember it being very cold and damp, and I can remember these huge, kind of cantilever roofs that the exchange station had, and its interesting that, those memories are kind of there, not just for coming, but kind of generally. That was Bradford you know?

# EARLY LIVING

**ANWAR QADIR**

I think life generally for people that came from the colonies was quite bleak, because it didn't matter what qualifications you had, didn't matter what skills you had, you were still given the jobs that nobody else would do, so, I mean my father was a businessman before he left Pakistan, and when he came here he started working in a foundry in the steel works.

**GURNAM SINGH**

I think the other kind of interesting vivid memories were how much that community was also integrated in terms of different religious groups and stuff. And, you know, people still kind of saw themselves as Sikhs, or as coming from Africa or coming from, you know Punjab, but there was lots of intimacy amongst Muslims and Sikhs and Hindus, which was kind of quite amazing really in those days you know. So I grew up, some of my best friends were some Muslim boys, and we just kind of, you know, just grew up together. I can remember there was one boy called Zahid and we used to go to his house. His mum used to, she was like a mum. You know, it was just like there was no distinction. So that was a kind of very interesting kind of time, and I think that sense of togetherness, that sense really did inform my politics at a later time.

**MUKHTAR DAR**

My father had bought a house and in the house there was a Sikh family, and so, , between the Sikh family and ourselves, we were sharing the house, and I'd grown up as I said in Pakistan, ... I was there in Pakistan when the war between India and Pakistan took place, and I remember my village being transformed and people beginning to dig air-raid shelters, and the hills surrounding the village suddenly had these big anti-aircraft guns because our village was very close to an oil refinery, and the oil refinery got painted, so there was a lot of nationalism, patriotism, you know, that I grew up in. India, I didn't know what India was. All I knew was India was this horrible place, which denied our very existence as Pakistanis.

So when I arrived in England I just couldn't understand why my father was staying with Indians and Sikhs, you know. Why this family who I had grown up to believe that these were the people who denied our existence and we were at war with, were staying with my family. So I remember having a fight with a young Sikh boy in the, you know, outside, and err, shouting all sorts of obscenities at him for being an Indian.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

Everyone of us came to the same house which was 7 Arnold Place.....really....we didn't find it strange that we didn't have separate rooms or we didn't have our own private spaces...it didn't really matter with things like that...lots of us were put into a room together...we were sleeping....in...the beds...What was strange was that there were shifts on who went into beds, who slept in which bed and that was a bit odd. And also I very quickly realised that we didn't cook like we used to cook in Pakistan, there were no women, that was the very first strange feeling....there were all men....and you know we

had rats in the cellar...it was .... we cooked once....you know, if you made tea...you didn't make tea in a cup, you made it in a great big pot. And you drank until it finished and the food was cooked and it had to be finished...it was just very very large amounts of food and we were all very poor so everybody was working...they weren't just working for themselves...they all had lots of people to support in Pakistan.

**BHOPINDER BASSI**

I was born here in Birmingham... my family would have been one of the first families with children defined as a full family, my mother and me being born here, you know and becoming a part of this new community in the sixties. ... My mum had four sons. We all had long hair and we all had ribbons in our hair like girls. And I remember, in my mid-thirties actually, cleaning my mum's attic out and finding a chest in there with an envelope with each of our names in and each envelope contained a lock of hair. And it was a significant event for my mother, cos, I mean, she still cries about it. But it was when she had to cut my hair and the hair of my brothers, because as a Sikh she had grown up, you know, in a village and never been in a situation where she ever contemplated that any of the men in her family, (she came from a particularly religious family), would ever have unshorn hair. .... So, those are early memories. And there are harsher memories like my mother going - I can remember, the markets in the early days where there were separate queues, even though there were no signs such as like South Africa and apartheid might have had. If you went to buy fruit at a market stall, the white people behind the counter or the fruit and veg boxes would always serve other white people first. And I remember as a child, you know, quite vivid memories of waiting, and waiting, until white people had been served.

# SCHOOLING

**JANI RASHID**

I was probably one of, in Bradford at that time, one of very few Asian children in the school,.... there were pleasant recollections of singing songs and things like this in assemblies, you know, which was, which was quite nice, but er ... my main recollection of that school was that having told the school that I was a Muslim and I couldn't eat meat because they didn't provide Halal meat at the time that on one particular occasion a teacher took sympathy with me, because I was purely eating vegetables, ... she took pity on the diet that I was on and decided to force feed me a sausage. – So that was, that was [laughs], quite a traumatic experience really because, you know, having been told by my dad that we couldn't eat meat and things like this that, I was force fed a sausage at the age of six in infant's school. Not quite the sort of things that you expect in schools these days, but I just couldn't understand her reasoning behind that, it just made me ill [laughs], you know, I was, I reacted quite, sort of, vigorously towards - you know, physically, so I was sick, because I was being, I'd been, force fed this sausage at school.

When I went to Farsley Farfield and you know, the most wonderful thing happened to me there because I was actually, welcomed and felt to be made one of the, one of the boys really, ... the headmaster at the time .... he asked me what I was called. I generally went by Jani Rashid ... and we wrote it out, spelling it J-A-N-I. The Head teacher decided that you know, the way that I pronounced it, it should be spelt J-A-N-I-E, and when he looked at it he, sort of, said, 'well, Janie sounds like a girl's name, maybe we ought to change that', so he changed my school records from 'Jani' to 'Johnny, so I became an English boy at that time, you know. ... But in hindsight you look at these sort of things and, and the *Goodness Gracious Me* sketch, you know, came to mind recently...
But you know, my whole, sort of, character was changed, you know, because he'd changed my name from 'Jani' to 'Johnny' when, you know, I was still six years old,

**ANWAR QADIR**

School, like most kids was always a challenge, meeting new people, constantly starting all over again. Not knowing the language, didn't actually help, and a lot of the times people, we got into fights I would say purely because we couldn't understand what was being said to us, verbally. But, I suppose, the body language said quite a lot to us and hence the reason there was quite a lot of violence around. And I remember whenever I got into a fight at the junior school I always took my shirt off because there was this thing about, well if I got my shirt dirty I'd get another crack at home, for coming back, you know, white, clean shirt going into school and coming back with all muck on it

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

We were very conscious of the fact that we had to be together because we couldn't get on the buses

....we were attacked as we were going on buses, we were attacked when we got off buses. And the only way we could survive was to meet lots of friends from other schools. Perhaps that's why so many of us are still in contact till this day.

**NILOFER SHAIKH**

I know we faced quite a lot of racism even the ones born in this country 'cos there was some girls who didn't want to sit next to us, things like that, but we just put it down to bad manners and sometimes we complained and sometimes we just let it go.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

You know...first very important...that not all white children were rogues...I think that many many white kids were forced into fighting their own friends. I mean that happened with a very very close friend of mine who really didn't want to join the white kids when we had a full-fledged battle in the school, it was virtually every white kid on one side and all the Asian kids on the other side and that happened in my school. All the netting was torn down and some of the fences were broken down.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

..and in our classrooms, I still remember very clearly I learnt to speak English and I was still learning English...I had to get one of my uncles...you know he said to the teacher, I could

speak English now, I could read it...why do I still have to remain in the stream learning English?

**BHOPINDER BASI**

I mean the only direct racism I had actually was from the institutions, the educational institutions, because I remember when there was a sudden influx of lads from India. Up to that point no teacher had ever decided that my English was significantly weak and that I needed any kind of extra tuition or remedial tuition. Suddenly all these Indian kids arrived and I was told, "Oh, you have to go with them. You need the ..", "But I speak English", "No, no, you have to go with them" ..... Amongst these children I learned how to play gulli-danda, to play korada kabaddi which is kabaddi without the wrestling. ..... And I learned to play marbles and so on with Indian rules, you know, and I would never have learned them if they hadn't sent me off to learn English.

**JANI RASHID**

And I noticed in Bradford that they had what was known as immigrant classes, and the first thing that happened to me was that I got put in an immigrant class as soon as I came into Bradford, and generally these were, you know, the children who had come from abroad recently and were all sorts of ages, so people in this class were in different chronological age, so there were much older children in the school in the same class, and essentially they put me in the wrong year group. When they looked at my report they just dumped me in this immigrant class, saying 'oh here's some other Asian boy that's come to school', type of thing.

**NILOFER SHAIKH**

Well most of the girls that I remember in my group were asked to not be involved in the O Level class groups, we were put in the CSE groups, even though you know, we felt and some of the girls parents that we could do O Levels, and I think that's when you started to become aware of the, that there was all this racism.

**NOORZAMAN RASHID**

Growing up as an eight year old in Bradford, some interesting things happened to you. The first thing that we faced was bussing, of course, and that was the education policy in the kind of late 60s early 70s to actually disperse Muslim communities because I was strongly in the Muslim community there, but it was really the Black or Asian communities at the time. And so I had a seven mile journey as a four and a half year old to school, which is unheard of today, and you could go up quite a famous road in Bradford, Lumb Lane, and could find something like fifteen buses that would bus literally hundreds of Asian children to all parts of Bradford.

**ANWAR QADIR**

I remember coming home one day after a history lesson at school and sharing the information with my father about what I'd just been taught that day and my father, sort of, corrected me, not because he was that educated in historical facts of India but - his own experiences. And I was taught in my history lesson how

good the Empire was for India, and 'we built the roads for the uncivilised people out there' etc. When I came and shared that with my father, my father says, 'well most of the roads were already there', right, 'some roads were built by the Raj, but they weren't built for the benefit of the Indians, they were built so that they could get the stuff out of India a lot quicker', right, 'and more conveniently', and as far as civilisation is concerned, you know, we were running around in silks when this lot was still in animal skins! So, I went back and shared that information with my school history teacher. I wasn't very popular with the teacher after that.

**SHANAAZ ALI**

I remember it was nearer Christmas and we were doing stuff in the class to make things and stuff for Christmas. One of the kids said to me, "Oh, go back to the jungle", or whatever. Something like that. And there was this teacher, and it was interesting, I don't remember any of the names of all the other teachers but I always remember him. On one level I was quite frightened of him 'cos he was always quite strict and red-faced, Mr Wilkinson, and I remember him, kind of making a really big issue of it … He stopped the class and he said that, "I'm not having any of that", and he said to this kid, this white boy who'd said it to me, he said, "Oh, you know when we were still in caves and we didn't have a language, Shanaaz's people were in silks and had languages and, you know, discovered all sorts of things, and you know, she doesn't come from a jungle". And I suppose that stuck with me because it was somebody standing up for me.

**JANI RASHID**

There was one particular guy whose name was James - was the sort of school bully basically – he decided to call me a 'monkey'. So first of all he started sort of calling me a 'monkey', and then he started calling me a 'Paki', erm, and then a 'blackie'. And being a bully, he'd sort of managed to get other school children, you know, to sort of, call me names and that culminated in a fight, eventually, and it was in fact a student teacher that stopped the fight, and you know, he'd obviously had problems with this bully as well, because his remark to me was, you know, 'next time I should hit him harder'.

**SAEED HUSSAIN**

Well most Friday afternoons, but particularly sort of end of term or holidays, last day before the holidays were the very common Paki Bashing days….

I think what maybe inspired us to change a little bit was that there was a particular English teacher … and he was saying he would be giving out certain things, you know, results. And we said, "Well, can't you give them out today? We might not be sort of here on Friday". And people were a little bit more open with him I think. And he said, "Well …" He took three or four of us to the side and said, "I know exactly what's going on, you know. And I know why you won't be here, but … You could ask why school doesn't do anything about it but I'm not …" "But I'm more interested in you, what can you do about it? ....

And I think that really, that really kind of inspired us that, "Well actually do we need to

take a different approach?" you know. And we did....

And I think that Friday afternoon we did go back to school. We didn't actually stay off school and there was about four of us who went to the local shop and he was on his own actually walking towards the shop. .... We kind of reached a point where we're literally a yard away from him and he stopped. And we stopped. And he did say, you know. "Get out me way you fucking Pakis". And we looked at each other and said, "We're not going anywhere. If you want to walk either through us or you can walk round us. It's your choice today." ... And he did, after about a minute's stare, he did walk around us and actually, sort of, you know, head down and just walked off. That was the most liberating experience I think. Something I will never ever forget.

# FORMATION OF THE AYMS

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

I began to understand that the world I lived in was really fundamentally unfair. I began to understand that this country was rich because we were poor and I also began to understand that we were here because they were there and I really believed in that.

.... I just couldn't get answers from the theoreticians within the Socialist Workers...i.e. IS. I wanted a socialist world because I felt that's our only future and I understood by socialism....things different to my white colleagues. And some of those things were that...could we build socialism in one country? For me, the ideas of socialism means that somebody didn't have to leave their mothers and go thousands of miles away, to have electricity, to have water, to go to school near where you lived and for all of you to have work, but we had all that in England, with struggle. I was thinking back home in my village and I said no, my concept would be to get what we've got here and it didn't make sense, to say no, it has to be global...

**JANI RASHID**

In 1976 the National Front decided to hold a meeting in a school in the heart of where we lived,

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

And the march, the big anti-fascist march led by sort of the leaders of that time ended in the city centre now we lived in Manningham, or lots of us lived in Manningham, we marched to Manningham...broke through police lines,

**JANI RASHID**

That was my first recollection of a riot in Bradford basically, you know, where police cars were turned over, paint was thrown at them, and being chased by police on horseback, you know, and that was basically because they'd allowed the National Front, I think it was Martin Webster at the time, that came to Bradford to hold a meeting in a school in Manningham. You know, so that was, I suppose, the first real campaign that I can recollect of any kind which was about defending our homes and our com-

munity basically, because that's where most of us lived. I lived on Lumb Lane.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

It was there that we really started thinking that we've got to get our own house in order, we can't have this, we can't leave our future in the hands of people like - what we hated were community leaders or the Labour Party types who would take control of our future. We can fight and we can win them and we were very confident that we had lots and lots of people with us and I think that that would have been the seeds of where the Asian Youth Movements began to be formed.

## SOUTHALL 1976
## MURDER OF
## GURDEEP SINGH CHAGGAR

**KULDEEP MANN**

I remember his death. I remember the shock in the community. Yeah, it was a very vivid personal experience for me. We went to the Dominion Centre, which was a big cinema in those days, and his body was laid out there and we all went to look at it. Marched passed it and the community was very united in its grief and people were feeling very angry. Young people particularly were. Yeah, that was a, you know, that was a turning point I think in my memory and for a lot of people in Southall as well. I know…

## 1976
## SOUTHALL YOUTH MOVEMENT FORMED

**BALRAJ PUREWAL**

In terms of the Afro-Caribbean youth, ... the link with the Afro-Caribbeans er, was *very* close, and they were part of the Southall Youth Movement, although later on another organisation was kind of set up called People's Unite, led by them, but throughout, the thing was kind of totally mixed.

## 1977
## INDIAN PROGRESSIVE YOUTH ASSOCIATION (IPYA) FORMED IN BRADFORD

**ANWAR QADIR**

It was almost a magnet pulling us all together, right, cos we were all coming from our, -well with our own experiences, but we were all coming together because we cared, right, because we were, in a way, a generation, right, who was expected to go in and do all the jobs where our parents had left off – but we were a generation that was saying no, we're not going to be doing that, right, life has a lot more to offer to us, right, than working in the foundries and the mills, and driving the buses and cleaning hospitals.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

There were also Communist organizers within the Indian Workers Association who set out to organize the workers and part of the process involved organizing the youth wing. So as a tactical point, you know lots of friends joined the Indian Progressive Youth Assn, I think it

was called at that time. And then there was this contradiction that we weren't Indians.
.... What we hoped to achieve by the formation of the AYM was very simple really, we wanted to be able to defend ourselves, we wanted to be able to unite our families that is many of us were divided by the immigration laws.

**1978**

**IPYA IS RENAMED**

**ASIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT, BRADFORD**

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

There were big debates...we should integrate and we said no. There's nothing to integrate into, the British culture that we loved and adored was the culture of those who were fighting against British capitalism, British colonialism and there were many of those, it's not like today

**BRICK LANE 1978**

**MURDER OF ALTAB ALI**

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

We had some form of youth organization developed already in Brick Lane,
this was round about whenever the "Rock Against Racism" concert was
**....** we found out that the fascists had planned, they were coming down the M1, they were going to come down the M1, they were mobilizing across London and they were going to attack Brick Lane. **....** It was really terrible because it was also the day, same day as they organized this rock against racism concert.
.... on Brick Lane we were worried that in case we were overtaken by the fascists, we thought we'd give 'em as good as we got, so what we had were youths at different points of Brick Lane constantly keeping in contact with a hub of a telephone. I was in the hub answering the phone or coordinating on a chart where people were.
.... we had runners as well, somebody would run physically and said, they are not at the top, they are coming down at the bottom,
.... you know we kept them off the streets. And the terrible thing was there were hundreds of people dancing to racism. And it did a terrible disservice to the struggle against racism but it was a harbinger of what was yet to come because they did that over and over again.

**1980**

**ASIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT, MANCHESTER FORMED**

**NILOFER SHAIKH**

I think we all probably felt that we did need something similar to Bradford Asian Youth Movement, you know, first of all there were so many deportations going on, ... mostly the people that were actually involved in doing anything within the Asian community were mostly older Asian community workers, but lot of it was the religious leaders, you know,. ... There was nothing for the young people.

**ANWAR QADIR**

Within the AYM we had, you know, Hindu members, Christian members, Sikh members,

Muslim members, we had Gujeratis, we had Punjabis, we had Sri Lankans, you know. For us that was the important bit, the important bit for us was to keep hold of our sense of being humans.

**MOHSIN ZULFIQAR**

One of the Mosques which is near Longsight was attacked by KKK type of attack and hooded people came up and smashed windows and so on, the interesting thing is in that particular incident was we gave a call for a meeting at the Mosque and the call for all the people to turn up, so of course the majority of the people who turned up were Muslims, but others also, especially the contingent from the Asian Youth Movement (Manchester) came in to support Muslims. I was chairing that meeting, there were a number of speakers, and of course you had other sections within the Muslim community like Jamat-e-Islami, Muslim Brotherhood who objected when I introduced one of the speakers by name who was a Sikh, and they said, you know, you can't have Sikh speakers in the Mosque, and of course it was like oh ho, should we have non-Muslims coming in, I had to intervene at that time and had a passionate plea that racists do not see whether you're Muslim, Sikh or Hindu, they're going to beat you up or kill you, and then I went for a vote on the basis of what I had said and everybody 'Yeah, yeah, let him speak, let him speak!'

## 1982
## ASIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT, SHEFFIELD FORMED

**JASBIR SINGH**

Basically, it was at that point in time the ... government, I guess started to discriminate or decided to put a different fee structure for overseas students to home students, it was almost 3 or 4 times the amount of… I could feel the direct pressure in terms of…my god…how am I going to pay all that additional money? So basically, organizations grew up. Sheffield was one of the first universities to go into occupation, we occupied the administration building, just to voice the protest,....

... And in 78 or 79, a couple of friends of mine who were involved….I didn't know them then but they became friends… who were involved in some of the work here in London…came up …there's a guy called Pal Luthra, this was in 1979 and he came up and he started talking about racism…started talking about …those kind of issues with me and we formed a Black Consciousness Group (laugh) up in the University. And we produced ….produced newsletters and slowly started having workshops on understanding racism and so on and so forth…and became quite a big voice in the University itself …We then realised that this, in the confines of the University just didn't get us anywhere. You know…er…..it was at that point in time that I started to going out to the local Pakistani community,

**MATLOOB HUSSAYN ALI KHAN**

I remember coming across Raj a few times, and Mukhtar who came up in 1982. I never met them but they were more involved in the Bradford Support Group, people like Sultan in 81 and 80...so when these meetings happened, there were youth workers...'cos I was a youth

worker in 82, I was a volunteer from 1979, I was a voluntary youth worker ... I was working in engineering, doing this as unpaid work. At the same time, I was working in SCAR.
I think SCAR was a more oriented towards the trade union movement .....I think they were a paper organization...you can affiliate and I think they didn't do much...it wasn't a....combative organization, that's what the AYM was... .. and I left Scar --- once I got involved in AYM.

**MUKHTAR DAR**

I was at the Polytechnic and I was studying Fine Art, and what happened was that, … it was in late winter, and I was walking through the corridors and I saw a poster about the Bradford Twelve, and it caught my eye. I stood there and looked at it. I was brought to tears. It said 'Until these Twelve are free we will all forever will be imprisoned'. I took the poster off and rolled it up and decided that I was going to do whatever I could to support these twelve.
.... I think it was that, it was, you know, I realised that what I'd experienced in terms of the racist abuse and racism, the insecurities I experienced, a sense of not belonging, that was shared by a whole group of individuals, and it was not unique to me, as a people's, as a community, and suddenly that inspired me and I found a collective support and strength in that.
.... We formed Sheffield Bradford Twelve Support Group. As we were doing that, as we were focussing round the Bradford Twelve, we organised a public meeting,
..... And then seeing my brothers, who were there, I mean chairing the meeting, stewarding the meeting, you know, suddenly we were taking control of our own lives, our destinies, and then when the attack took place on the restaurant I think that made us realise that we needed to have a permanent organisation.
..... the restaurant workers and the owner defended themselves and the racists went away, came back much more organised and smashed the windows, and a fight took place. They grabbed the till, quite a few of the restaurant workers got beaten up and when the police came, lo and behold it was the restaurant workers who were arrested, and subsequent meetings took place, and as a result of that the AYM was born and we campaigned for the release and for justice for Ahmed Khan.

## 1981
## ASIAN YOUTH IN BIRMINGHAM BEGIN TO ORGANISE

**BHOPINDER BASI**

Our slogans defined us, you know. When we started with such simple slogans as, "Here to stay. Here to fight". We meant that. Our parents may have entertained some myth of going back to the *pind*, but we didn't.

**SHEERA JOHAL**

I mean the thing is when you are that age you don't really, you really don't understand real politics. You know? I mean there's always some councillors here and there, I mean they talked about the Labour Party. But eventually we did realize that the Labour Party's the same on deportation and immigration bills...

# THE IMMIGRATION LAWS

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

We organized individual campaigns with a very clear cut objective of exposing through the plight of the individual the plight of the community, We didn't think we were social workers, we weren't paid to do this.

**ANWAR QADIR**

We were virulently opposed to the Immigration Laws....I think it was in 1980...we organised massive movements of people to the demonstration in London, to a point, you know, where, I think, we took about thirty coaches from the area, and we always had a slogan, you know, 'Labour/Tory both the same', you know, 'both play the racist game', you know. And the situation's not changed really, situation's not changed.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

We were giving leaflets out, knocking on doors, organizing demonstrations, petitions, going down to London and doing whatever really, to cause problems and bring the plight of these people out into the open.

**MOHSIN ZULFIQAR**

I think AYM must have supported well over two or three dozen campaigns in Manchester, because we began, what did they call it? A Campaign Centre of Britain in relation to the immigration laws; but Anwar Ditta's campaign was very significant.

**....**The Anwar defence campaign was important in a sense that it began to attract huge attention from all over, and Anwar Ditta was invited to go to a conference in Europe, and me and Qabir spent the whole night in my office printing leaflets for her to take it, so we managed to not just make a national impact we internationalised the defence campaign in Europe and elsewhere.

**ANWAR DITTA**

I was born in Britain. Birmingham. Lived in Rochdale and Manchester. My parents separated: they were divorced. The children were given to the mother by court, but my father, you know like my mother gave my father the daughters and my father sent us to Pakistan. I was about 11. And when, we both … My mother didn't know that we were going to go to Pakistan. I got married in '68. I got married in '68. I was 14 then. I was 14.

And after I got married, my husband and me, we lived in Jhelum. Kamran was born in 1970, Imran was born in '72, Saima was born in '73. My husband he went to Kuwait. From Kuwait he went to Denmark, Germany. He couldn't find work. He ended up in England. And then I came here in 1975. And after that it was just one thing after another. It was very hard. Looking for a house. Staying in one bedroom, you know, one room. And then when I went to the solicitor that you know, my husband's an overstayer, they said, "You have to get married, because your Pakistani marriage in 1968 , it doesn't count". So we went down to the registrar and that was the beginning of my hell life where we put down spinster and bachelor. And that's, you know, where the mistakes started and when I applied, went for the children … the

answer was that, “These are not your children”. Then there was a public meeting about Nasira Begum’s deportation and I went down to that public meeting... and there was a question at the end of the meeting, “Has anybody else got a problem”. And I just stood up and told them “Yes, I have got a problem. I’ve got three children that were born there, and they’re not allowed.”

People from that, Nasira Begum meeting came to Rochdale.

... and from there the defence committee was formed.

… The first ever picket we did was in front of the Conservative Party, on Drake Street. And from then on it was just non-stoop. The campaign just grew, and grew, and grew. I was just an ordinary housewife. I was. Didn’t know anything from outside, or what was going on, or how to do things. But it was all the support. From everybody. It wasn’t just like one sector of the society. You name it – it’s like from Labour Party, Tory Party, Liberal Party, Asian Youth Movement, Revolutionary Communist Group. And I’m still really grateful to them. I can never forget.

Oh, it was a long struggle. .... What actually happened the first time was that I lost the case in Islamabad. I was told to do an appeal. I was interviewed for about four hours. My husband was interviewed for about an hour and a half. The result of that was that, “We don’t believe her. You know, whatever she’s saying, we don’t believe her”. Then I was given a right of appeal. .... Basically the Home Office was saying, “There’s two Anwar Dittas. One that married Shuja in Pakistan, and one that married her in England”. And we had to prove, you know, that I was the same one. So that was a big task to prove. By that time my dad got involved. He came to give a statement as a witness. My aunty gave a statement that, you know, “I went to Pakistan. Anwar was there”. I had to get a signature test, gave fingerprints to the police to verify an identity card that I had made in Pakistan. Photographs had to be tested. We gave that. Then I had to err, give a medical internal examination; had to go through a gyno, had to prove that I’d given birth to more than one child. You know, all these sort of things are very hard to forget. It’s very hard. [CRYING] And then I was told that, you know, I had to give blood tests. So we said, “We’ve got nothing to hide”.

I know I’m Black. I know I’m Asian. I know I was born here, but I was never accepted. Otherwise I wouldn’t have had to go through what I was going through. So every time they turned me down it made me more stronger with the campaign. People supporting me, backing me. And that is something that I’ll never forget in a sense that people believed me. Government never believed me, but people believed me. And they stood with me side by side, despite what the newspapers said or the Government said.

At that time Granada television, World In Action got involved, and there was a reporter called Jane Layton. She did all the research and, you know, she came to me and said, “Look. World in Action is willing to do a film, a documentary. They’ll go to Pakistan. They’ll do all the research. And we want you to tell us the truth. Are they your children? We’re still

going to show the documentary. If they are not your children, if you are telling lies, we still going to show that documentary." And I says, "I've got nothing to hide. They are our children". ... So, they went to Pakistan, they saw the midwife who delivered my children, saw the priest who married me in 1968, met other people in the street, filmed the children, got blood from my sister-in-law and my brother-on-law, and then they got blood from my three children that were born there. At the same time we had to give blood in the hospital in London; me and my husband and the youngest daughter that was born here. ... World In Action got the (blood test) results, from the London Hospital, and the programme was shown. Joe Barnett (MP) came to see me, he phoned me first and said Anwar, I want to come to see you, got some good news... and he brought the letter from the Home Office, and he said to me that, you know, Anwar, you know, you've won the case. You know the children are allowed.

....

Universities, college, err, law centre meetings, law society meetings, public meetings, demonstrations, student union meetings. There was support groups everywhere in England – you name it. And I used to go everywhere. ...My husband used to come back from work, make the dinner, go in the car, feed him while he's driving, going down to Liverpool, speaking at the meeting there. You name it, and you know, I've been everywhere. ... The campaign changed me ... one thing is that I became much stronger. ... Until today, I do support a lot of campaigns, and I still want people to fight for their rights, and not to give up. ...If I would have stayed in the four doors, nobody would have known about Anwar Ditta, or my children, I would never have my children here. And that's the same thing I want to say to people, that if you are telling the truth, you go through a struggle, don't stay inside. Go out and tell others, there's a lot of people there that would support you and help you.

...Every time they turned me down it made me more stronger with the campaign. People supporting me, backing me. And that is something that I'll never forget in a sense that people believed me. Government never believed me, but people believed me.

**RUTH BUNDEY**

In terms of my immigration work around the same period, we strove I think in those days to personalise the cases as much as possible, and of course cases such as Anwar Ditta, a mother separated from her children, was very easy to personalise and became a very emotional and distressing case, and Anwar herself was such a strong woman that, like many of those who I've dealt with over the years, strong men, strong women, they insist on one hundred percent attention to their cause, and quite rightly so, and they direct, in a way, a tireless response. They have to and all credit to them for doing it. I always say that I've learnt more from my defendants or people at the centre of immigration cases, than from any book.

The facts behind the Anwar Ditta case were these: Anwar had been born in this country, I think somewhere near Birmingham, and when she was a teenager she was sent back to Pakistan by her parents to have a bit of an upbringing there, which was fairly normal, and when she went back, again still fairly young, she met

and fell in love with Shujah who became her husband, and they had children in Pakistan, and later, maybe when they were in their twenties, I think, Shujah applied to come over here to work and successfully obtained work over here, quite properly, and then quite properly sent for his wife Anwar, who in fact didn't have to particularly come as his wife because she had been born in Britain and she had the right to be here anyway, but she came to join him and then, perfectly naturally, they applied to be joined by the children that they had had in Pakistan. Whilst waiting for that process Anwar had a fourth child, but there were three children left behind. The Home Office said that these were not the children of Anwar Ditta born in Britain, but there must be another Anwar Ditta in Pakistan who must have been Shujah's first wife by whom he'd had three children or they were somebody else's children entirely and this was a sort of falsification of trying to bring over children that were not children of the couple. It was a complete and totally reprehensible and racially stereotypical set of assumptions, and quite, quite wrong. *World in Action* became involved and financed a team, small team of a presenter and so on to go to Pakistan, I went with them and we tried to trace every aspect of Anwar's period of time when she'd been in Pakistan to authenticate that time, and the fact that she'd had children, and we traced the midwives, for example, who had helped her give birth and we took affidavits from them. We traced the Imam who had married Shujah and Anwar, and the final piece, and I can't even remember all the different pieces of evidence, but one final piece of evidence that we found was her identification card in Pakistan which has to bear a thumbprint, which she'd left behind because she didn't really need it in England where she'd been born but it happened to be still in her family home, and of course it was still her thumbprint, so in a way the Home Office case, the more you analysed it became absolutely farcical, that Shujah would have had to have discovered in Pakistan not just another young woman by the name of Anwar Ditta, but another young woman who had happily been born in Britain and who had an identical thumbprint to the one who was now by this time back with him in Rochdale, and the whole was nonsense and thanks to *World in Action*'s funding, they charted a small plane and took to the British High Commission I think it was Rawalpindi then rather than Islamabad, the Imam who married the couple who came with his goat and the midwives and everybody else, and they all came with these sworn affidavits, which they laid on the desk of the British High Commission, and all this was filmed, and then we arrived back with other bits of evidence, and then the *World in Action* programme was finalised and it was shown on television and it just gave the lie to such a ridiculous nonsense on the Home Office part, and the morning after the programme was shown there was an announcement that Anwar's children could now come, which they did.

Now these days, of course, it is so much more difficult because with asylum cases we now have bodies of law which define persecution, which define this, which define that, in so many different ways that the personalisation of an individual and the way to try and humanise an individual plight somehow gets lost, and you get stuck with Court of Appeal decisions, and

House of Lords decisions, I'm thinking of the present plight of the Zimbabweans, for example, where you have to struggle to get an individual through in any kind of humane way, but in those days, these kinds of cases were not, were not so numerous and lent themselves, I think, more to individualisation.

# THE BRADFORD 12

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

It was July the 11th, 1981 and that was the day where there were lots and lots of riots up and down the country, in lots of different places. And we heard rumours that the NF, or skinheads...the fascists were coming to Bradford and the police had gone round and said that and they told everybody to stay indoors. Now we took the view that it's totally wrong. We're not going to stay indoors, we're going to get out and we're going to organize people.

**SAEED HUSSAIN**

The previous weekend Southall, sort of, other cities had been attacked and it was clear from the police response in those cities that the Asian communities really in the end had to defend themselves. And we took the decision that we would not let a similar situation arise in Bradford where fascists would walk in and actually destroy part of Bradford where Black communities lived.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

And we...lots of different groups took different areas, the IWA took the Leeds Road side of Bradford, we decided to protect the Manningham area. And I.....I think we must have met Marsha and all the other AYM people as well. ...in Manningham in one area I think, some women came out and fed us all. Or gave us food as we were going through ... samosas or whatever they had... It was a bit of festival really.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

I did ask one of my friends, Tarlochan, you know at that time, telling him that you know we should make petrol bombs, store them in a safe place....and if need be, we'll use them. We didn't actually plan much more than that, we just thought about that because at that time petrol bombs had been used in Southall, a pub had just been burnt down, you know we didn't really have much else, you know we really did believe that if the skinheads came, it would be a pretty nasty battle and we were not going to let them get through.

**SAEED HUSSAIN**

Nothing did happen in a sense that the fascists didn't attack Bradford.

... And then decision was taken that since no attack has taken place we would actually destroy the manufactured Molotov cocktails and as far as I was aware that was to be done and carried out and that was the end of the matter really. It was and I don't actually remember the day, I think it was about three weeks later, I got a phone call to say that comrades had been arrested.

**SHANAAZ ALI**

I was the only one that was there that didn't get charged. And I don't know whether they made

a decision because when they picked me up, you know, in my shalwar kameez, I was fasting as well, they tried to offer me tea and coffee, but I said "I'm fasting". [LAUGHS] you know, so I don't know whether they thought, "No, this isn't going to go with…". You know, because at least they could call the twelve of them sort of 'yobbos' or 'fanatics' or whatever but having a girl, a nineteen year old girl there as well was… [LAUGHS].

**JANI RASHID**

We held a meeting, we, you know, various people came together, in terms of the Black community, and the Asian community, and members from the sort of white left, and I sort of seemed to recall, er, that one of our members, actually, you know, parents, owned the Arcadian Cinema, which was at the top of Inglebury Road at the time, and there was a huge meeting, it was absolutely amazing how many people turned up in that meeting, and basically agreed that we should have a campaign, to support the Bradford Twelve,

**JANI RASHID**

The important thing for me, really, was that, you know, here was a group of people that wanted to defend the city against any sort of threat of extreme right-wing groups coming into the city, and they had prepared some petrol bombs, which they didn't use, nothing really happened in Bradford, and, you know, I believe that self-defence is no offence, which was what the campaign, - which was the campaign slogan, and which was basically how they won the campaign. But I think that the important thing for me was that the support was there for the Bradford Twelve, you know, the continuous picketing of the prison and at the hearing, and the sort of mobilisation of people sort of going to those pickets

**RUTH BUNDEY**

I became involved with the Bradford Twelve defendants, in particular two of them, because I knew them already, because we had worked together in a campaign and legally on another case, that of Anwar Ditta, who was separated wrongfully by the Home Office from her children in Pakistan

.... then all of a sudden they end up as defendants charged with conspiracy offences, very, very serious. Conspiracy to make explosive substances, to endanger life etc., which would have carried life imprisonment if they'd been convicted,

**....** Now the marvellous thing about the case was the support that it engendered from every section of the Bradford Asian community and indeed the Black community. In terms of age group, I remember going to one very, very early meeting when, all the defendants, including Tariq and Tarlochan were locked up in Armley prison, and there were Sikhs in their seventies and eighties and elderly Muslim parents, a whole range of support saying, in a sense, these are our children, support them, defend them, and that's something that over the years I have never quite seen again.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

The fact that there was a campaign affected the way that prisoners related to us, affected the way that prison officers related to us.

**JANI RASHID**

The pickets were organised by various groups, you know, that came together and there was quite a lot of people that, sort of, that supported the pickets outside the courts or the demonstrations outside the courts and things like that, so you know, there was, there was always, - I think what we'd done, and I can't remember this for sure, but what we used to do is have rotas so that people could attend, and to ensure that there was, you know, a certain number of people that were attending. It wasn't always that, that there was masses of people there, but the important thing was keeping the campaign going, and ensuring that there were people there at some point during those, sort of, during the hearings at the time.

**AMRIT WILSON**

People were shocked because of the scale of the charges, ... you know, this was really an attack on a community, .... and I think that's why people came in those large numbers, ....

They represented a kind of unique development, which was an organised collective response, ..... People you knew were your friends, you know, who had obvious vulnerabilities had been placed in this position, I mean that's how we saw it. And then soon after we learned that Tariq wanted it to be the broadest based possible campaign, which we thought was very good you know,

**HARJINDER GATA-AURA**

My family, my mother was absolutely gutted, I mean she went through terrible phases, terrible, but my father's been very strong. He's always maintained everything will be okay ... Father and mother they kind of, in their own way they were religious, they're

... a lot of moral support was given to my mother during the campaign because everybody used to go to see her. You know she, I remember she used to literally burst out in tears in front of everybody and she used to say, well thanks for giving me that support because without that I think she would have been even more demoralised. But that helped her come to terms with it, with the fact everybody used to say, well whatever he's done its okay, right he did it for everybody.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

The most important area where I remember the trial, you know of the campaign, are the big demonstrations in our support. It was the daily ones outside the court room. See if we didn't have a campaign, I believe the barristers played up to the campaign, it became very important to the legal team. Because we had a campaign, we became united inside, we weren't cutting each others' throats up just trying to get out on whichever technicality each one could. And also the campaign gave certainly, gave me the courage, to say well all right, you know, if I got to go down, I'm going to go down in my own words. I'm going to fight the case and I haven't committed the crime. I'm not a criminal.

**DAVE STARK**

We had a little team....we went through a lot of stuff in the library, we went through newspaper reports and *TNA*....went to London and did the stuff there....

Because it was 'Self Defence was no Offence' ...we obviously had to show that they

were justified in terms of the extent of the racist attacks, and it was not just Bradford, it was West Yorkshire and as I say with the back up of nationally,.. by saying look...how can anyone deny that things like that were happening in Bradford, when the government put out a report saying that 81,000 Asian people are attacked every year.

**RUTH BUNDEY**

One of the issues in terms of the relationship between the legal defence and the campaign, ....they were not told specifically what the defence was going to be, and so they, they had to run a campaign as best they could without that actual knowledge, now I know that this was difficult for them but the thing was that the police and the prosecution believed until the very beginning of the case that the defence was going to be based on denial of any involvement in any activity to do with the making of petrol bombs,

**...** the actual defence being, 'yes we did this, yes we were proud to do it, we believe we had to do it, it was a defence of necessity, and when the National Front never came to Bradford, fine, we never had to use these preparations that we had got together

**...** that element of surprise I think was tremendously important because the defendants then just took the courtroom by storm really, and the jury listened very, very, very carefully,

**SAEED HUSSAIN**

Yes we actually won the trial but the real victory was that the Black communities actually demonstrated that they had a right to defend themselves. And I guess that was taken up by other parts of the country as well. Sadly I think that no longer is the case. I think we've moved to a new era, a new way of doing, a new level of oppression I think as well. But the principle I think still exists; it's still there.

# EDUCATION

**ANWAR QADIR**

It was reading, writing, arithmetic and racism, right, these had to be the four Rs in education, and once you get the racism bit in there as well, once you start teaching history as history is or was, right, i.e. factual, right, rather than make belief and value orientated, right, and oppressive and discriminative, unless you do that you're always going to have a situation where communities are going to sort of say well we want our own schools.

**JANI RASHID**

It was in 1983 that the Council developed multi-cultural policies, some of which was based on the, the recommendations that we had made, in our article. These were issues about, sort of, acknowledging people's religious requirements, so they had to address religious issues, they had to address linguistic issues, they had to, sort of, have a better understanding of the modes of dress, for example, of children from different religious backgrounds, so, that, that was one of the things that we said that was important, but we never asked

for multi-cultural education, and, and I'd have to say that I still don't believe in multi-cultural education. You know, what we were demanding was anti-racist education, in actual fact, but

I don't think that the authorities were very comfortable with that, so they developed multicultural policies to address issues of racism in schools that we were complaining about, which we felt were more important than having segregated schools.

# TRADE UNIONS

**MOHSIN ZULFIQAR**

I think Imperial typewriters Strike actually signifies kind of industrial turmoil taking place in the Midlands and some other cities, which is basically that in factories where most of the South Asians were employed you have a two-tier system, Firstly that most of the workers used to do the night shift, ... Apart from that they were paid less than white workers, so there was the different [position] between the salaries as well, wages. I think third issue for us which led for many people from the communities getting involved in the struggle is that unions were mainly led by white workers who saw us as a threat, or Asian workers as a threat in terms of, you know, if they get more then the disparity between the wages will disappear, then what is the point, yeah? And in many of those struggles and disputes, if you look through it, trade union basically opposed the strikes. So there was no option but for us to mobilise the communities to support the strikers, and Imperial Typewriters was one of the best examples of, what I call community action – cum industrial action because we used to raise huge amount of funds, people used to come and give us food for strikers, and so on and so forth.

**JANI RASHID**

The main [campaign] really, I suppose was the Aire Valley Yarns when, basically textile workers were not, you know, given their particular rights. I can't remember much of the campaign at the moment but, we did help them in their campaign and to sort get support basically from the Trades Council So we ended up organising pickets in Aire Valley Yarns which was basically, it wasn't actually Bradford based as it were, but it was on the periphery of Bradford, and the workers were largely Asian and they were being, sort of, not given the same rights as other white staff in essence, so that campaign, you know, lasted quite a while. They didn't win anything, at the end of the day, the trades unions didn't support them.

**MUKHTAR DAR**

When the miners dispute happened we were very, very involved, you know, we used to go along to Orgreave to the miner's picket lines. We used to knock on the windows, get our members out in the morning, and get in the minibuses and take them every single day down to the miner's picket line and similar with the Irish issues and all that, so it was very much about, you know, we were learning about other people's oppression, you know, class, race and imperialism all those things came together for us.

**MUKHTAR DAR**

I remember on one occasion this disgruntled young lad that I had woken up at six o'clock in the morning, when we arrived there, one of the miners, not all of them, but one of the miners turned round and said, 'what the hell are these

'Pakis' doing here?' So this young lad turned round to me and said, 'thank you very much, right, for waking me up at six in the morning only to get racist abuse'. To which my response was, 'brother you've got to recognise that, you know, we can see the bars and some of them can't'. But I think the miners for us, you know, some of the mining communities that we went and stayed with, the way that we were treated, the humility, the humbleness of the miners, the hatred that we had for the police and the siege that we experienced in our communities, and the way we were being treated by the police, I saw that echoed by the mining families, and the anger, the passion you know, and the way they were seeking to organise.

# INTERNATIONALISM

**MOHSIN ZULFIQAR**

There were a lot of activities in support of the liberation movements, across from Ireland on one side, we are talking about at that time if you remember Zimbabwe, Azania, South Africa, Palestine, Eritrean struggle, so there would be a range of meetings

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

We saw the struggle in Ireland, the struggle in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Palestine, as different aspects of settler colonialism,

**...** by the time of AYM, we felt that Zionism truly was the enemy of the Jews, we felt that it had to be destroyed, that there was no compromise that could be made because we were anti-racists. We did not understand or accept how a Jew born somewhere

in the world had the right to return to a place he had no connection with or she had no connection with. Yet Palestinians who were born there had to live in refugee camps.

**MUKHTAR DAR**

Birmingham had a large Irish community, and Birmingham AYM members worked with those Irish comrades. Somewhere along the line some of them said well, you know, we'll organise a delegation to Ireland, so Sheffield, London, Coventry and Birmingham, I think about three minibuses of us went to Northern Ireland,

... It was the first time we saw army on the streets, and murals, as an artist seeing murals there and people singing Republican songs and, you know, those connections were really useful, and also the discussions

... cos the inner cities had erupted in '81 and in '85, and so the Irish Republican youth were telling us about, you know, 'you can't have spontaneous riots, you have to be organised and you have to do this, you have to do that', you know. So there was a lot a parallels.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

There was a meeting in Manchester, and we mobilized to come to the meeting, it was during the Lancaster House of Agreement. And Eddison Zvobgo spoke. Some white people had been killed in Zimbabwe, something like that had happened. And all that time, the Zimbabweans, particularly ZANU PF were projected as terrorists. Always referred to as terrorists.

... I remember he said, they called us terrorists. If fighting for my people's liberation means I

am a terrorist, so be it, I'm proud of it. And he listed a whole series of injustices that were taking place to Africa, and against Africans in Zimbabwe. About the denial of land, about the usurpation by white people of Zimbabwe and if trying to get those back through the use of arms meant he was being called a terrorist then he was proud of it. And I remember that the room was just electric every time he said I'm proud to be a terrorist because we were shouting we are all terrorists or whatever words we could think. But our ululation and our screaming and shouting really were the fact that, yes we were all proud to be terrorists. And isn't it so strange today that you know, almost the same language is back.

# REFLECTIONS

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

The first point, I think I learnt then was to anchor yourself in the history of those who have struggled before you and that was exactly what we were doing as well. ....

And also that the powers that be would divide us along whatever lines they could and some of the ways they would divide us is on colour or on money or on religion or something like that.

**JANI RASHID**

There is a movement out there of extreme Right-wing sympathisers, if not members, that is in existence, and, you know, I fear, that racist attacks are going to be on the increase, and therefore if anything of a legacy I hope that people will recognise that, that they need an organisation like the Asian Youth Movement, that, sort of, brings the people, you know, the Asian youth together from different religious backgrounds, from different backgrounds, and also the other Black and white communities and new white European communities together,

**ANWAR QADIR**

I would say to the youth of Bradford, erm, 'don't listen to the politicians, don't listen to the Council and its officers', right, 'organise yourselves'.

**MOHSIN ZULFIQAR**

Manchester AYM took a very principled stand that we won't accept any State funding, but the State funding came indirectly. Especially, Manchester City Council took a decision to provide coaches for immigration cases, so the coaches were coming free; so you just informed them, you know, we want to take a coach to Birmingham, and the number of people began to fall going to demonstrations. I remember a time when coaches would have eight or ten people going to Birmingham or London or Bradford for demonstrations. So it means that that element which, when you're trying to get the money yourself to take a coach you do much more work, now the only work was that, publicise the coach, -'hey the coach will be going from Longsight at such and such time, and no work was done.

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

The lesson that I would; like to sort of say is that if as a political organization or as an organization fighting something that we truly believed in, then there's no way that we get money from those we fight against .... If we made an application and they gave us money, they have bought us out.

**MUKHTAR DAR**

We've lost those independent grass-root community organisations. That self-reliance, you know, I think was one of the key features of Asian Youth Movements, and I would encourage you know, those generations today, that we have to continue to organise. You know, Franz Fanon once said, 'every generation that comes into being faces an historic task, it either subsumes itself to the forces before it or it actively takes up the struggle to move it forward.'

**TARIQ MEHMOOD**

When we fought we opened the legalities and created new things and when you fight back, you always find an answer. That's what I learnt through, whether it's an immigration campaign or self defence. If you fight back organized and have people supporting you, you'll find the answer and you will win.


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