

June 1982

# SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE

"In view of what had happened recently in Southall ..... and other areas where black families had been petrol-bombed and murdered..... in Deptford where black youth had been burnt to death, we took the news that coachloads of skinhead thugs were coming to Bradford very seriously. It is my belief that when a people are attacked it is their right to act in self-defence. The nature of that defence depends upon the nature of attack... 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 facism, necessitates the forming of defensive organisations."

Statement by one of the defendants while in police custody, July 1981.



## Free The Bradford 12



From the start of the political trial of the Bradford 12 the police conspiracy has become even clearer.

- \* Statements by police officers put forward in court were all made more than a month after the actual events took place. All their original statements have been 'lost'!
- \* Two of the four new statements make identical claims that shouts of "we want a riot" were made. Yet this statement was not written down in any police notes made at the time.
- \* None of the officers could name any other officer on duty at the time. A convenient circumstance that makes it somewhat difficult to verify their statements.
- \* One police officer, Benn, claimed in his second statement that there was a violent struggle when arresting Sabir Hussain. Yet there is no such comment in his notebook, written at the time.

Ellis, the Acting Superintendent for Bradford Central Sub-division, had supervised the police up to the arrest of Tarlochan Gata-Aura, Tariq Mahmoud Ali, Sabir Hussain and Giovanni Singh. He claimed never to have heard of most of the campaigns the Bradford 12 had been active in, including that of Anwar Ditta! He claimed not to have known Tarlochan by name or by sight despite the fact that Tarlochan had spoken to police many times in the course of his political activity. Yet in other police statements it has been made clear that after being arrested members

of the Bradford 12 were questioned about the development and founders of the United Black Youth League and its relationship to the Asian Youth Movement. Dossiers on some of the defendants were used. Why, then, the claim in court of ignorance of the Bradford 12's political activity? Because, of course, how else do you pretend this is a non-political trial?

### CONSPIRACY'S RULES

The special rules of evidence in conspiracy cases, and the political basis for them, were clear in police evidence. Detective Inspector Sidebottom for instance, made a point of stressing that Tarlochan had "a large number of Left-wing books and periodicals", mentioning the New Statesman (!), Race Today, H-Block Literature, KAR and CARR. This showed that Tarlochan "was a man of extreme views". Such evidence is supposed to allow the jury to 'infer' that Tarlochan was therefore part of a 'conspiracy'.

### A Jury of Peers?

#### No Chance

The Trial is not being held in Bradford where the community is aware of racist assaults and of police racism. It is being held in Leeds. The Jury Panel of 75, selected by the state, from which the 12 jurors were to be picked, contained ONE black person who was eligible. After several days it was agreed to amalgamate two Jury Panels; still a mainly white jury. On questioning potential jurors, the prosecution claimed that if jurors were to have good friends in the National Front this would not be a case for rejecting them!

### COMMUNITY READY TO DEFEND

#### ITSELF

It is true that the Bradford Asian community were prepared in July to defend their community. Strong rumours were rampant that coachloads of skinheads were about to attack the community. Southall, where this had already happened during the previous weekend, was in the forefront of people's minds. Some events during that time serve to demonstrate the real threat that existed.

- \* On July 10 an Asian man was stabbed and robbed.
- \* On July 11 the window of the Pakistan Consulate in Bradford was smashed.

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#### POLICE CLAIM NO RACISM IN BRADFORD!

In court Superintendent Ellis denied any knowledge of rumours of a skinhead attack and claimed that he was "proud of 'race-relations' in Bradford". Det. Inspector Sidebottom was asked if he knew of a recent Home Office report on racist attacks. West Yorkshire was one of 13 areas investigated. It said that Asians were 50 times more likely to be attacked than whites. He claimed never to have heard of it!

*"The liars are those who say that there was no racial violence in Bradford that week end. I am charging the police with criminal negligence."*  
Sibghet Kadri, one of the defence lawyers.

All the police agree. There are no racist attacks happening in Bradford. Manning, one of the officers, regularly on duty in the area, claimed never to have heard of any attacks, nor of Anwar Ditta, Gary Pemberton or the United

Black Youth League. He is a white Rhodesian who left Zimbabwe in February '81. Perhaps he couldn't stand the new government there. It is overwhelmingly black.

Detective Inspector Sidebottom was asked: "Has any incident room ever been set up in Bradford to deal with the problem of racist attacks?" He replied: "No, it is not considered to be a serious problem." Detective Constable Prosser, when asked "Are you aware of any incidence of such attacks?", replied "No, there aren't any." "Not a topic the police think relevant?" he was asked. "No."

Having magicked away the real situation in Bradford, the police are trying to claim that the Bradford 12 were planning a 'riot' and intended to attack shops and police in the area. The lies build into a pattern - a conspiracy by the police to put away national minority political activists.

The Anwar Ditta campaign, which they have never heard of, to bring her children to Britain made such an impact that it led to TV programmes on the case. Some of the Bradford 12 were centrally involved in the campaign.

Gary Pemberton was a local man who had assault charges

#### Funeral Fund

*The father of Masood Malik, one of the 12 defendants, died on Friday, 14th May. The Judge refused to adjourn the trial despite an appeal by defence counsel. In opposition to this cold-blooded judge, the Bradford 12 campaign has asked sympathisers to donate funds to allow Masood's mother and elder brother to accompany the body to Pakistan. Cheques should be made payable to the Bradford 12 Defence Fund and donations addressed to Box JK, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds 2. Cheques should be marked on the back: 'For the Masood Malik Family Appeal'.*

brought against him. After a campaign, again with the central involvement of some of the defendants, he was acquitted of the trumped-up charges. And the police officers had "never heard of him"?

#### NO RELIANCE ON RACIST POLICE

The Bradford police deny any racism in Bradford. They refuse to investigate or stamp out racist attacks. The Communities say now: "We will defend ourselves". The police round on them with a viciousness equal to their apathy when it comes to racist attacks.

The issue of the trial is clear. The national minorities must fight back. They are fighting back. They will not be intimidated by the racist state.

#### SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE! INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Last month "Class Struggle" reported that the Belgian paper "Concret", produced by the Party of Labour of Belgium, had carried an article exposing the trial of the Bradford 12. In Canada, "The Forge", newspaper of the Workers' Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) similarly attacked state racism in Britain and supported the Bradford 12. The Sri Lanka Communist Party (Left) wrote to the British High Commission The letter said: "We feel that these are the most serious - and the most blatantly political - charges to be brought in the wake of the uprisings which shook over 30 towns and cities in Britain last summer .... in effect the trial of the Bradford 12 represents a trial of the entire black community for its growing spirit of defiance to oppression. We demand all the charges against the Bradford 12 be dropped immediately." Long extracts of the letter were printed in "Saturday Review", 'the only regional English paper in Sri Lanka'.

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- \* On July 14 an Asian youth was attacked by 40 white youths with a petrol bomb. Two were arrested and charged - with stealing petrol and assault! No 'conspiracy' here!
- \* On July 24 two Asian homes were gutted by firebombs. Two white men were charged - and released immediately on bail. No 'conspiracy' of course.

- \* On August 23 the West Indian Community Centre was firebombed and gutted. Remembering Deptford, police claimed it was an 'accident'!
- \* On September 25 local papers carried reports that black people were being attacked late at night from cruising vans.
- \* On November 20 Mohammed Arif, a taxi-driver, was murdered by a Nazi.