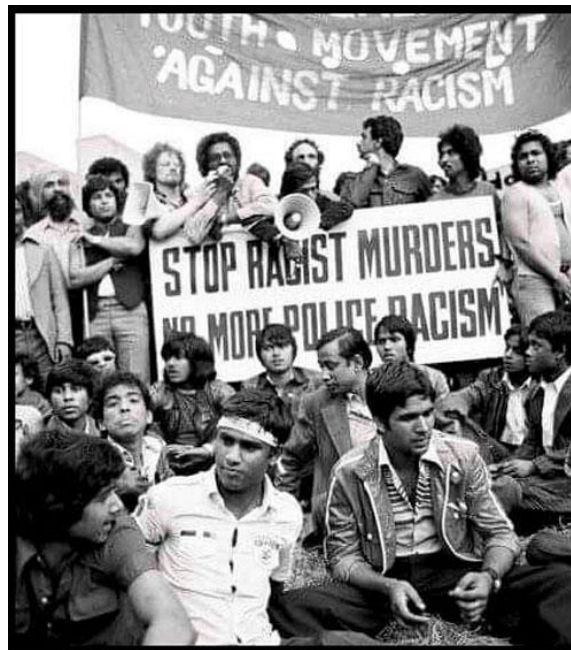


The Battle of Brick Lane 1978

Jalal Rajonuddin



In the 1970s, Jalal emerged as the leading youth activist in East London. He was the founding Secretary of the Altab Ali Foundation and is currently a prominent anti-racist campaigner.



Context and brief history

- The history of migration is entwined with **empire and colonialism**
- We were brought here to "**build** the economy and you went there to **exploit**"
- **Powell gave momentum to "paki-bashing" after his "rivers foaming of blood speech" in 1968**
- **Thatcher** gave political legitimacy to racism in 1979 by declaring that the UK has been "swamped by people of different cultures"
- **Poverty was rife** in places like East London and the white working class used to blame the "migrants for taking their jobs, homes and women". They ignored the role of capitalism in dictating their fate!



The community under siege

- The Bangladeshis were victim of **racial attacks** on a daily basis. They were not safe in their homes, streets, schools and work places
- **The police did not used to take action** against the racists and instead harass, arrest and criminalise victims of racist violence
- **The public figures, authorities and services** were not interested in the plight of the Bengali community
- **The NF** was based in Hoxton /Bethnal Green and they used to agitate against the migrant communities and **sell their racist rug in a stall**
- **The migrant workers used to be scapegoated** by the racists on the streets/community and officially by the establishment



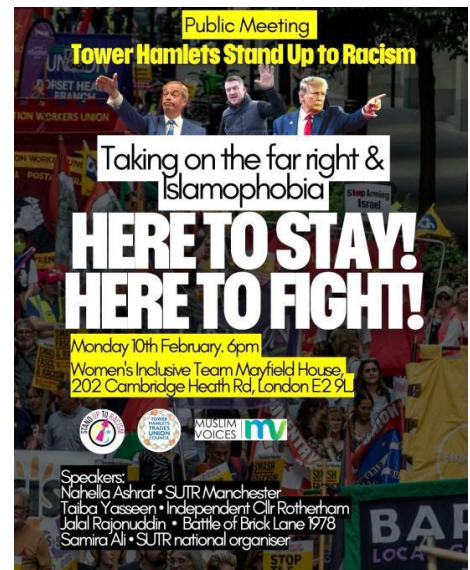
Community resistance movement - "the turning point" and "summer of discontent"

- **After the racist murders of Altab Ali and Ishak Ali, the youth declared "enough is enough" and "here to stay and here to fight"**
- First national demonstration in 1978 attracting ten thousand people
- **Anti-racist and self-defence activities** everyday against the racists
- **Sit down protests** against the NF on the streets / police stations
- Public **meetings, rallies and patrols** in neighbourhoods against racists
- HTDC organise the **first one day strike** against racism
- The movement was **led by Bengali youth**, but supported by the left in the form **of the ANL and SWP**
- **The NF were defeated decisively and relocated to Welling in Kent**
- **The next chapter begun- community, political and economic empowerment**



History is repeating itself - racism and fascism made respectable

- **Brown and Black politicians like: Patel, Braverman and Badenoch** now speak in the language of racists
- **The Labour leadership** has been busy appeasing the racists for votes
- **Trump, Musk, Farage and Robinson** are flaming racist propaganda by promoting "islamophobia" in the name of "free speech"
- The **far right** in Europe is creating momentum for the fascists [AFD in Germany and Brothers of Italy]
- People are no longer ashamed to use **racist rhetoric in the UK**
- **Racist politics has been made acceptable, popular and respectable**



The battle goes on

- Apathy prevails and we have **not** taken the racist threat seriously
- **We have been timid** and have not mobilised adequately
- Many people feel that **somebody else will protest** for them
- Others believe that the **police will protect us** from the racists
- Some believe that **social media action is sufficient**
- We need to wake up again: **BANKSY "make humanity great again"**
- **We are the many and they are the few**, let us remember our proud legacy and prepare to defeat the racist and fascist forces

