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The lone struggler, held down by police, surrenders while groups look on from the street corner and more police wait for the next attack.

# We were going home, but police put the boot in...

By KEVIN MURPHY and JEFF EDWARDS

THE man who died in the Southall riots was kicked, punched and hit with police truncheons, eye-witnesses said today.

Some of them alleged that Blair Peach was beaten up by members of the Special Patrol Group.

Mr. Parminder Atwal, 24, of Orchard Avenue, said: "I saw this man being hit by the police with truncheons. He sat up against a wall of a house opposite.

"Then the police came along and ordered him to move. He was badly hurt but he managed to get up and try to cross the road. He was shivering. He saw me standing in the garden of my home and came towards me.

"He dropped into my garden. I held him and asked my sister to get a glass of water. I gave him the glass but he couldn't hold it.

"He couldn't move his hands. His tongue was stuck to his upper jaw and the upper part of his head was all red as if he was bleeding inside.

"I cradled him in my arms—but I got pretty scared. I could see it was serious. He could not speak. I picked him up and carried him inside by the heater.

"I put some more water in his mouth and he couldn't take it. Somebody else called for an ambulance and I 'traded' him in my arms until it came."

Mr. Yaqoobmasih Bhatti, 47, said: "Two van loads of police came down the road after some demonstrators. The police jumped out and started beating people with their shields and truncheons.

## He collapsed

"They beat this man to the ground and he crawled across the road and collapsed beside a garden wall.

"After a few minutes when the crowd had dispersed the policemen came over and forced him to move. He was sitting against the wall with his arms above his head."

Martin Gerald, like Peach, a teacher and member of the Anti-Nazi League, said: "About 20 policemen merged from two blue vans. They were all carrying riot shields and truncheons.

"They ran from the top of Northcote Avenue, across the Broadway and into Beechcroft Avenue. Two further SPG vans arrived from the western end of The Broadway and turned right into Beechcroft Avenue. The police emerged and started to attack the anti-racist demonstrators indiscriminately with truncheons. They just generally laid into people.

"At the junction of Beechcroft Avenue and Orchard Avenue, Blair was hit twice on the head with police truncheons and left unconscious.

"He was taken into a house in Orchard Avenue and from there to Ealing Hospital.

"Most of us were trying to get away from the police. We were on our way home. It looked as if we could go home, but a number of police forced us into a side street. Blair was with us.

Then the second Transit van came. The police, who were SPG, were wielding truncheons and riot shields.

## Sergeant didn't stand a chance

POLICE sergeant James Edinborough, injured in the riot, described his ordeal. Speaking from his bed at Ealing New Hospital, he said: "I was hit by a bottle. I fell to the ground and was kicked all over. I couldn't see anything. My truncheon was still in my pocket and I could not defend myself. I didn't know how long the kicking went on, but obviously somebody came and rescued me."

Sergeant Edinborough, married and living in Isleworth, was called to the scene by other officers fighting anti-Nazi demonstrators and found himself surrounded.

He said: "This doesn't make me want to leave the force. Of course I was worried for my safety but this sort of situation has to be policed."

"It was a case of the boot just going in. There was no attempt to arrest anybody."

Miss Amanda Leon, who went with Mr. Peach to hospital, said: "I was with him as we walked up the side street. When the first attack came from the SPG I was split from him.

People were scattered and I saw him hit once—but I understand from other people that that was not all—and the reason I did not see any more was that someone else in front of me was being attacked and hit in the testicles by three police with their truncheons. This was in Beechcroft Avenue, and that was when Blair was killed.

"Another man was on the ground. He was being systematically kicked by policemen.

"I shouted to him to stop and one of the police came over to hit me with his truncheon though not very hard. We tried to run away but police with riot shields came from the opposite direction, so I was sandwiched."

Miss Leon, who lives in Ealing and is also a teacher, said: "I got bruised and battered like hundreds of others. Blair only wanted to go home. We were all trying to leave. Blair was frightened like everyone else but he knew it was right to stand up against racialism."

Mr. Gerald, whose home is in Southwark, said: "He was a very gentle person. He was somebody we'll all miss. Blair was frightened like everyone else but he knew it was right to stand up against racialism."

Mr. Gerald, whose home is in Southwark, said: "He was a very gentle person. He was somebody we'll all miss. Blair was frightened like everyone else but he knew it was right to stand up against racialism."

He said: "I saw police with truncheons hitting people on the head and kicking, punching and pushing them. The police were pushing back the demonstrators. Then a few youngsters picked up stones and threw them. The police pushed again until the people ran away."

"Later the crowd started pushing forward but there were police vans blocking the road. The police brought in more men and I saw a group of policemen grab one man by the hair. They were punching and kicking him.

"He had been left behind when the crowd ran away. He ran down Herbert Road and dropped outside

a house in Orchard Avenue. I was told later that the man was called Peach.

"The police were just lashing out with their truncheons, beating people. I brought some of them into my house to treat them. Most had injuries on the back of their heads.

"It is wrong for a crowd to throw stones at the police but it is also wrong for the police to push-beat and kick people."

Another of Blair Peach's friends, remedial teacher Mrs. Charlie Rosenberg, said: "When the Special Patrol Group arrived they seemed to go wild.

"They were pulling people out of the crowd and several times I saw about five of them hitting one person. I was appalled.

"I wasn't actually with Blair. I was with his wife Cella but then got separated."

A trainee accountant who lives in Herbert Road and refused to be named said: "All the Asian demonstrators came running down Herbert Road into Orchard Avenue and the coppers started following with riot shields.

"During the fighting, the police and demonstrators were kicking and punching each other. There were police helmets flying all over the place. The police kept shouting to residents to stay behind locked doors."

Just off the main road about 100 yards from Southall Town Hall, where the National Front held their meeting.

## Dedicated anti-Nazi

Trouble flared when thousands of Asians—many of them youngsters—gathered outside the hall to demonstrate. By the end of the night, one man was dead, another critically injured, at least 40 needed hospital treatment and 240 people were arrested.

Thirty-six policemen were hurt, three were today seriously ill.

Blair Peach was a founder member of the South Hackney Anti-Nazi League branch and president of the East London Teachers' Association.

Married with two daughters, aged 13 and nine, he taught at the Phoenix School for Delicate Children in Mile End Road, and was a member of the Socialist Workers' Party. He had worked for many years against racism.

A New Zealander who has been in Britain 12 years, he lived in Lavender Grove, Hackney.

Lecturer Miss Judith Hamilton, a close friend said: "He was always a very positive Socialist and consistently worked to try and undermine racism.

"Twice he had been attacked in the streets of Hackney by National Front followers. But he had an enormous credibility among fellow teachers and fellow Socialist Workers' Party members."

One of Mr. Peach's colleagues, Mr. Bernie Regan, 36, said: "Blair was a member of Rank and File, the left-wing branch of the NUT. He was a dedicated anti-Nazi."

In one of the attacks on him, Mr. Peach received black eyes, cuts and bruises and one of his fingers was badly bitten.

Doctors also feared at the time that he had received permanent damage to one eye.

Mr. Peach said that National Front members had attacked him on his way home from school last November.