

Satanic Verses book burning RETURNS in Bradford 30 years later after Rushdie's fatwa

From the [The Times](#)

A FURIOUS man set on fire a copy of the controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* in Bradford 30 years after the book burning demonstration in the Yorkshire town. When a BBC presenter returned to a public square in the city carrying a copy of the book to interview people for this week's programme, the hardback was snatched by a man who set it on fire. A furious youth proclaimed that the TV crew had entered a "Muslim, Prophet ghetto".

The *Satanic Verses* affair, when images of book-burning in Bradford evoked memories of the Nazi era, radicalised some British Muslims and made others a target for the far right, according to a documentary marking 30 years since the



fatwa. The author was forced into hiding for a decade and 59 people died in protests around the world as Ayatollah Khomeini, figurehead of the Islamic

revolution, issued a fatwa for blasphemy against anyone involved in the publication of the book. *Left, archive photograph from that period.* A Norwegian publisher was shot and a Japanese translator was murdered.

While the death threat itself was launched by late Ayatollah Khomeini, leader of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the BBC is now claiming Kalim Siddiqui, director of Britain's pro-Iranian Muslim Institute, was the person demanding it in the first place, as he visited the Iran shortly before the fatwa.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, a journalist working at the New Statesman at the time the threat was issued, claimed the fatwa would have not been issued if Mr Kalim hadn't made the trip. She said: "I knew because I interviewed both of them. Kalim was adamant till he died that he did go and he did what he did and it was the right thing to do."