

BLACK FREEDOM MARCH

Statement by the organisers. Asian Youth Movement, Bradford, 266 Lumb Lane, Bradford 8, West Yorks. Telephone Bradford 499310.

Black people in Britain are suffering one of the worst crises in their history in this country. On the Immigration front the Tory proposals have tightened the 1971 Immigration Act, an act which itself is a fundamental attack on the rights of black people nationally and internationally. A new Nationality Bill is being prepared. We can only speculate as to its contents at the moment however there is no doubt that whatever it contains will be detrimental to the position of black people.

On the economic front the position is equally as disastrous. Unemployment is rising rapidly, manufacturing industries, especially the older ones, are in decline (in Bradford for example the textile industry is in a virtual state of collapse). Black workers are the first in line for unemployment. As jobs become scarcer open and overt discrimination increases as the available jobs are given to white workers.

The state has made its intentions clear as to what it holds in store for black people if they dare to protest. The events of Southall and the subsequent show trials are a direct warning to the black community.

The present situation is bad but the future holds a massive increase in racism. Already the rate of black youth unemployment is running far higher than that for white youth. The prospect of black workers being unemployed and subject to increasing racist attacks and state harassment is by no means a far fetched idea.

The fightback by the black community has been and still is fragmented. A major political weakness of black people in this country is the lack of a national militant black organisation. Notwithstanding this the fightback has to be continued and escalated and a national black organisation has to be fought for.

The Asian Youth Movement Bradford is taking the initiative in organising a march from Bradford to London (The Black Freedom March) in June/July 1980.

WHY BLACK FREEDOM

By black freedom we mean more than just black rights. Black freedom does incorporate these rights however it is more general than that. Black freedom to us refers to the general exploitation of black people and the whole concept of our dignity as black people. In general agitational terms it means freedom from immigration restrictions, freedom from police harassment, freedom from racist attacks, freedom from racism, freedom to organise ourselves and the freedom to live with dignity.

WHY A MARCH

What is needed in the present situation is anti-racist activity on a national scale. Isolated demonstrations have not proved adequate weapons as means of fighting back. We feel it necessary that an action takes place which focuses the attentions of the black community nationally, an action which brings to the surface a national fight back against racism.

ISSUES TO BE RAISED BY THE BLACK FREEDOM MARCH

The march itself is a march against racism in general. However that generalisation will be broken down to tackle specific areas of racism.

1) The primary objective of the march is opposition to the Immigration Laws. We feel that these laws are of overriding

importance to us as they threaten the whole basis of our existence in this country. If we do not act with determination now we will probably be laying the basis for increased harassment and possible expulsion in the coming years. We hope to make it known through this march that "We are Here To Stay, Here To Fight". Our position in principle is quite clear on these laws and is summed up by the slogan "End Racist Immigration Laws, All Immigration Laws are Racist". However from this general position we will be fighting for concrete demands:-

Stop detention without trial

No arrest without warrant

Release all the deportees

Stop all deportations

End sexist and racist laws

From this primary and overriding issue there will be other issues to be taken up.

2) On the economic front we will take up the issue of unemployment, especially unemployment of black youth, which at this moment in time is far higher than for white equivalents. It is also an important issue because the present Tory Government policies are designed to increase unemployment and black workers will take the major brunt of this in proportional terms as the old manufacturing industries requiring unskilled labour decline.

3) Southall. Southall is an issue which cannot be left on one side and forgotten about. The Southall community was amazed by the police in a situation of virtual civil war in an attack unprecedented before in England. The facts of what happened in Southall will be brought up in all meetings that are attended during the march.

We say:

Unite to defend Southall

Release the political prisoners of Southall

Barnett Trials are Show Trials

Disband the SPG

SPG murdered Blair Peach

4) **Police Harassment & Sus Laws:** Police harassment of black people and especially black youth is increasing and bound to increase even more. The Sus Laws are one of the main weapons legitimising this harassment. The initial fightback against sus laws has receded but we hope to bring it back to prominence.

We call for:

End the Sus Laws Now

No imprisonment under these laws

5) **Bussing:** Bussing of black children from the areas they live in to schools in white areas continues. This practice is a racist practice, depriving them of hours of education, forcing them to travel long distances, and taking away their dignity as black children. The only justification for this is that they will learn English better from a school predominantly white.

However it is an excuse not to put resources into black areas and build schools there. The question of resources is even more vital now under the present cuts.

We say:

End Bussing of Black Children Now

More resources for Black Areas

We demand that schools are built in black areas to cater for the needs of black children, needs which have been so badly neglected.

c) **The 1981 Census:** We are entirely opposed to the questions on race in the census and we call on black people to boycott them. We will not be catalogued like cattle.

DETAILS OF THE MARCH

The march will leave Bradford on the 28th of June and culminate in London on the 19th of July with a demonstration and rally.

The provisional route so far:

Day 1 Sat. 28th June — Bradford - Huddersfield
Day 2 Sun 29th June — Huddersfield - Rochdale
Day 3 Mon 30th June — Rochdale - Oldham - Manchester } *

* It might be necessary for a group of marchers to come from Rochdale - Manchester - Sheffield instead of the main body of marchers crossing the Pennines.

Day 4 Tues 1st July — Manchester - Sheffield
Day 5 Wednesday 2nd July — Sheffield - Alfreton
Day 6 Thursday 3rd July — Alfreton - Derby - Burton-on-Trent
Day 7 Friday 4th July — Burton-on-Trent - Walsall
Day 8 Saturday 5th July — Walsall - Birmingham
Day 9 Sunday 6th July — Birmingham - Coventry
Day 10 Monday 7th July — Coventry - Leicester
Day 11 Tuesday 8th July — Rest Day
Day 12 & 13 Wed & Thursday 9th & 10th July — Leicester - Market Harborough — Northampton
Day 14 Friday 11th July — Northampton - Bedford
Day 15 Saturday 12th July — Bedford - Luton -

the rest of the route is being finalised

The March will take 22 days in all. Between 50-100 Marchers will take part passing through, where possible, major areas where black people live.

A demonstration and public meeting must be organised in every town with the possibility of marchers joining us in the towns we pass through.

BLACK FREEDOM MARCH SUPPORT COMMITTEES

It will be necessary for the march to succeed to have these support committees organised in every town we pass through and even those we do not pass through.

Tasks of the Support Committees:-

- 1) To collect finance
- 2) To arrange accommodation and food
- 3) To arrange a demonstration and public meeting or rally
- 4) To undertake propaganda work preceding the march against racism. One of the most important aspects of the march is that an opportunity will be given for anti-racists to have a major campaign against racism in their locality based on local issues and where appropriate based on the issues raised by the march.
- 6) To provide marchers.

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEES

These committees must be on a delegate basis and their sole purpose is to work for the march and to do anti-racist work. We do not expect these committees to become split because of any particular group trying to dominate and push its own 'line' to the detriment of the march by sowing discord. We hope that the committees will become living examples of Unity in Action.

STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEES

The Committees will be linked to and registered under the central organising body the Asian Youth Movement Bradford. The Committees will be expected to be under the political discipline of the organising body whilst they endure.

STRUCTURE & DISCIPLINE OF THE MARCH

The march will be organised on a tightly disciplined structure for reasons of security. People who wish to march must inform us as soon as possible. All marchers must accept the discipline of the organising body. Marchers wishing to join the main march on route must inform us well in advance. People who have not informed us will not be allowed to join the main march once it is in progress although when we are passing through towns people will be allowed to march with us.

WHO CAN MARCH?

All black organisations who accept the aims and discipline of the march are welcome. White organisations who wish to send marchers as an act of solidarity will not only have to accept the structure but also certain other conditions. They will not be allowed to distribute their literature, leaflets, sell their papers to the main body of the march. They will not be allowed to recruit or promote their organisations on the main body of the march.

FINANCE

We estimate that it may take up to £15,000 to finance the march. We may have to financially compensate some marchers for severe financial hardship during the march. The Central fund raising body will be the AYM. However, the funds must also be raised by every support committee as well as from sympathetic organisations and individuals. Organisations sending marchers must try to sponsor them fully or to some extent.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE MARCH

It is hoped that when the march culminates in London there will be international pickets and demonstrations in various parts of the world outside British Embassies in support of the Black Freedom March.

If you can help and wish to participate or want further information, contact:

ASIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT BRADFORD
266 LUMB LANE
BRADFORD 8

Telephone: Bradford 499310

N.B. Send all cheques and P.O.s payable to *The Black Freedom March* account at the above address.

PART 2 OF STATEMENT

What do we hope to achieve by the March?

It has already been stated that the March will become a national focus against racism in this country. The raising of the political consciousness of the Black Community is a central point of the March. Although the march itself will not harm the British State, the march will publicise racism in Britain abroad.

However, the most important net result of the March is expected to be the formation of a National Black Organisation in Britain. The basis for this will be laid down because of the unity in action that will be necessary from so many black organisations if this march is to succeed.

Secondly the Black Freedom March support committees it is hoped will remain as coordinators of black organisations involved in them and will become immediately the rudimentary framework of this National organisation albeit purely on the basis of their support for this one action.

After the march discussions will take place with those black organisations in order to call a conference to establish a National Black Organisation. The whole ideological basis of that organisation will be decided then.