

Cover Sheet

METROPOLITAN POLICE

SPECIAL BRANCH

Special Report

19th day of April 1979

SUBJECT

1. This is an assessment of the proposed demonstration due to be held under the auspices of the Indian Workers Association - Southall on Sunday 22 April 1979. The demonstration has been called as an expression of protest at the letting of Southall Town Hall to the National Front for an election meeting, and will take the form of a meeting in the car park of the Dominion Cinema, Southall, followed at 2pm by a march to Ealing Town Hall, where a petition will be handed in. The organisers have claimed that attendance will reach 10,000.

Reference to Papers

2. A number of meetings have been held in Southall over the past few days, each with the aim of formulating policy to combat the supposed threat to the community by the National Front election meeting, and information tends to suggest that the discussions have resulted in the formation of two groups. The ultra-left obviously favour a direct, confrontationalist approach as part of their bid to 'drive the National Front off the streets'. The alternative view, and one which appears to be in the majority as far as the Asian community is concerned, is the peaceful, 'Ghandi style' non-violent protest. With this second view being predominant it is only natural that the Asian community would want to stage their own demonstration, rather than be subservient to the control of the white left in a violent confrontation, not of their choosing. It is for this reason that the IWA-S have called the Sunday demonstration - which will be essentially Asian supported - and will probably only offer minimal support for the anti-National Front demonstration proposed for the following day, Monday 23rd, which they see as an event organised by the white left. (The assessment for Monday 23 April is the subject of a separate report.)

Indian Workers Association - Southall

400/78/78

3. Enquiries indicate that the demonstration has been well organised by IWA-S and is intended to be peaceful, although large. It is known that Vishnu Dutt Sharma (President of the IWA-S) has stressed privately that the event should be non-violent and to this end, although welcoming support from any quarter, has stated that he wants nothing to do with the ultra-left. (It is true that Sharma is also involved in the organisation of the following day's events, which will presumably be less peaceful, but this should not be seen as a contradiction, rather it enables him to wear two hats - one as the responsible Asian community leader and the other as the committed Marxist activist.)

4. Several separate sources have indicated the possible support for the demonstration at around 3,000 to 5,000, almost entirely Asian. Information has been received that IWA-S have

asked for support from Indian communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom, but to date, with the exception of East London, there is no evidence to suggest that support will materialise from these areas in significant numbers. (A large anti-National Front demonstration in Leicester on the previous day may affect the numbers willing to travel from the Midlands.) Yet another source, confirming the nationality content of the demonstration, considers that the white left will constitute only 5 per cent of the total, thus placing the non-violent approach well in the ascendency.

5. Contact is being maintained with informants and further information coming to hand will be submitted.

[REDACTED] 1

[REDACTED] 2

Detective Sergeant

Submitted:

[REDACTED] 3
GREENUP
Chief Inspector

[Signature]
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

[REDACTED]