You have the power to ruin Britain, immigrants are told

Evening Mail Reporter

ONE-DAY strikes by all the coloured people in Britain could ruin the nation's economy, Mr. Roy Sawh, a leader of the British Black Power movement, told nearly 1,500 immigrants in Birmingham.

He was speaking in Birmingham Town Hall at the first conference held in this country of Black Youth — a junior version of Black Power —though the average age of the audience, mainly Asians, was probably over 30.

The combined power of 1,000,000 coloured people in Britain was a valuable weapon, said Mr. Sawh.

He did not like the word strike, but if a million people "took a day off," the effect would be tremendous.

"Buses would not run, and a lot of people would die on their hospital beds," he said.

"Because it is a capitalist society one of the biggest ways we can gain independence is to get down to the economy and ruin the economy."

Three of the speakers at the Town Hall meeting — seated, left to right Mr. Roy Sawh, Mr. Tariq Ali and Mr. Minir Gupta.

ONLY MAO

Mao Tse-Tung, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party was the only national leader who had openly supported the black man's struggle for equality, said Mr. Sawh.

"And Chairman Mao has stated: 'If you want power, it does not lie in the ballot but in the barrel of a gun.'"

Mr. Sawh went on to forecast that the wholesale deportation of coloured people from Britain would begin in 1971.

Mr. Mihir Gupta, a Birmingham schoolteacher and leader of the Indian Association of Britain, was chairman of the conference.

As he and others spoke from the rostrum, two attendants in dark glasses and wearing black gloves stood at either side.

"We must take over the ghettoes," he said. "The schools in the ghettoes must be controlled by the parents whose children attend that school and not by white liberals who wish to do our thinking.

"So go out and take interest in the communal affairs of the ghetto. Ghettoes need you. Make them respectable. They are your home."

Everybody eligible to vote should ensure that he was on the voting register, he said, and if there was no trade union catering for the black man, then it was their duty to form one.

"If a white man slaps you, slap back. Brothers and sisters, Christianity is now obsolete and so are those religions which advocate that we must turn the other cheek.

"The days of turning the other cheek are over. We have done so for the last 300 years. Now is the time to slap back. No-one can give back your lost dignity. You have to snatch it back."

'JUST SLAVES'

Earlier, Mr. Gupta said that most British people regarded coloured immigrants as second-rate citizens, people without feelings or emotions.

"To them," he said, "we are simply black people who have come here to remove their bedpans and run their buses.

"In other words, we are just slaves 20th-century version.

"But those of us who are born here with the accent and attitudes of our place of birth find the colour discrimination most frustrating.

"This poignant despair and quiescent bitterness in us all is the main theme of this conference."

Black power would enable immigrants to break the economic shackles of slavery.

INTEGRATION

The word "integration" had caused a great deal of fear among white communities, he said.

"To me and I am sure to many of you here, the policy of integration means the policy of live and let live.

"What we want is that the white man should leave us alone to our culture, our language, our music and our religion.

"I do not want my son to marry his blue-eyed blonde, nor do I wish his son to marry my daughter.

"What we are asking for is the right to be ourselves without any fear of being rejected because our image does not fit into the existing national patterns."

CUT WRANGLING

Tariq Ali, the student leader, told the conference: "I was told not to come to speak here because Mr. Gupta was a moderate. If the speech he made was a moderate speech, I would be very pleased to hear other speeches like it in Birmingham and elsewhere."

One of the attendants, wearing dark glasses and black gloves, who stood on either side of the rostrum.

He urged the audience to "cut out the petty wrangling and come together to set up genuine black unity."

About 20 policemen patrolled outside the Town Hall during the three-hour meeting, but there were no disturbances.

A SHAMBLES

Mr. Gerry Archer, of the West Indian People's Union, said that when his countrymen started coming to Birmingham in 1953 it was "a broken-down, bomb-damaged shambles of a city."

"Today we have the second most modern city in the country," he said. "Whose labour built this? Ours.

"What do we hear from the racialist Birmingham City Council? 'We will put up check points at the entrances to see that no more immigrants arrive in the city.'

"That is a good thank you for what we have done for them!

"They have taken over our country and they don't want us in theirs. That's what it's all about."