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METROPOLITAN POLICE

Special Report }

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SUBJECT

Ad Hoc Committee  
for the 27th  
October Demonstration

Reference to Papers

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About 100 supporters of the Ad Hoc Committee for the 27th October Demonstration gathered at Toynbee Hall, Commercial Street, E.1. at 7.30pm today to discuss tactics for that event. Tariq ALI took the chair and began by explaining that the proceedings would not follow a formal pattern, and that anyone would be free to speak.

The remainder of the evening was then taken up with a succession of short speeches from the floor interspersed with badinage and frequent interruptions. During the first hour most of the contributors confined themselves to conducting an elaborate post-mortem on the failures and short-comings of previous demonstrations, and it eventually became apparent that the audience was split into "hawks" and "doves" over the question of violence. The chief spokesman for the "hawks" was Albert MANCHANDA who stressed, time and again, that although he did not seek violence he felt it would be inevitable. He was strongly opposed by Ernie TATE who retorted that the machinery of the state was too powerful, and the odds too great, for any truly revolutionary situation to arise from a single demonstration. His line was that the struggle for socialism was a continuing process, and that although the October demonstration was of great importance it had to be seen in the larger framework of a world-wide revolutionary process.

Privacy supported MANCHANDA and contended that sheer weight of numbers would compel the Labour Government to move against support of American action in Vietnam. Other speakers rose to praise the behaviour of Communist Party members at demonstrations and the evident discipline they displayed, but the Trotskyist factions represented at the meeting would have none of this and there followed a long argument on doctrinal lines. When this in-fighting petered-out MANCHANDA and TATE again put their respective views at length, being supported by their adherents and

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becoming much involved in cross-argument. By 10pm, when the meeting ended, almost every person present had put his views, some favouring a peaceful demonstration and some hinting darkly that there would be widespread disorder. A speaker who suggested that they should consider occupying government buildings received little support: it was generally agreed that Grosvenor Square should again be the arena where the anti-American forces of the left would confront the forces of imperialism. It is noteworthy that there was almost universal condemnation of the violence used on the 21st of July - partly because it was purposeless, but chiefly because anarchists had been responsible.

Some persons of influence present chose not to speak. Pat JORDAN, the eminence gris of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign had nothing to say, and Privacy a leading VSC official, was silent. Privacy the student agitator from Cambridge, had travelled from that city to attend the meeting, but made no contribution. Tariq ALI was not his usual extrovert self and concluded the meeting by merely observing that what they had heard gave them "food for thought". A collection had been taken during the closing minutes, and it was announced that £7 10s had been raised. Some individuals lingered to talk to ALI when the meeting ended, but most of the audience had dispersed quietly by 10.15pm.

At one stage during the evening it was revealed that Ed GUTTON was the secretary of the Ad Hoc Committee and that it had offices at 120 Commercial Road, E.1. I took the opportunity of examining this address the same evening and found it to be three floors of empty offices above a sewing-machine shop. A "To Let" sign still hung there, and there were no signs of life. It would appear the Committee has acquired the premises, but has not yet moved in.

*Comad Dixon*  
Chief Inspector.

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CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT