

"DAILY MAIL" 29-10-68

41 arrests in march

FORTY-ONE people had been arrested last night by the end of the great anti-Vietnam war protest.

Mostly it was a good-tempered march after 30,000 set off down the Embankment from Charing Cross at 2 p.m.

But there was some provocation from demonstrators.

Before the march began vandals daubed obscenities and insults to the police on a war memorial on the Embankment.

And along the route an occasional firecracker was thrown or insult hurled. But all the time the police played it cool, keeping tempers calm.

To a woman and her husband wheeling a baby in a pram a policeman said: 'He's a bit young, isn't he?'

And the wife, 23-year-old Mrs Sheila Whitby, from Australia, looked at her six-month-old daughter, Lisa, and said: 'She'll survive—as long as you're with us.'

When the long, straggling column turned into New Bridge Street, Blackfriars, and then into Fleet Street, more fire-works were thrown and there were shouts of 'Fascists.'

The demonstration seemed to be an opportunity for every political group in Britain.

There were anarchists, Vietnamese protesters, Communists, Socialists, Liberals, Biafrans, and even rent protesters.

At Trafalgar Square, where the militants broke off from the main march to go to Grosvenor Square, all went peacefully.

But there was an ugly moment at the Cenotaph in Whitehall when the main body stopped and a strange silence fell as four pall-bearers carried a coffin to the base of the memorial.

In the coffin was a 'body' in bandages. A banner on it said 'To unknown Vietnamese.'

Solemnly the demonstrators laid the coffin on the first step of the Cenotaph. Police just stood by.

But worse provocation followed. A group of demonstrators ripped Cenotaph wreaths to pieces and set fire to Union Jacks.

In Park Lane there was another ugly moment when breakaway demonstrators dashed up towards the Hilton Hotel with oncoming traffic bearing down on them.

They beat on vans and cars with their fists and made towards Grosvenor Square.

But calmly and still joking

with police the main marchers made their way to Hyde Park Corner. There, there was a 'talk-in' on Vietnam.

Thousands of them lay about on the grass brewing up tea and coffee on primus stoves.

It was in Grosvenor Square, target of the militant marchers, that the police were given a rough time—though they kept command of the situation.

Here the aim of the demonstrators was to break through the police cordons, and get to the U.S. Embassy. But for more than three hours the cordons held.

Half an hour after the first group of trouble-makers arrived 3,000 marchers were crushed in the square. More and more arrived, to face 2,000 police.

Police ranks were repeatedly rushed, as a hail of banner poles, jagged pieces of metal, bicycle chains, smoke bombs and fire-works fell on the lines of blue. Police helmets captured were hurled in the air. But the police lines never broke.

The most determined charge against the police came at 5.55 p.m. From somewhere in the crowd systematic clapping to the chant 'Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh' began. Then a voice shouted 'Now.'

The bulk of the crowd who had been inched out of the square by police into South Audley Street turned and, like a demented Rugger scrum, punched and kicked their way forward towards the U.S. Embassy. The police ranks bent almost to breaking point, but reinforcements were rushed in and the crowd pushed back.

About six demonstrators got through and walked into the arms of policemen who arrested them. One demonstrator covered in blood shouted hysterically: 'It's real blood.'

More and more demonstrators gave up and by six o'clock were leaving in their

BEFORE the march moved off, Tariq Ali was delayed for five minutes by a Welsh evangelist who lectured him on the Second Coming.

hundreds. But the streets remained thronged with clapping, chanting demonstrators.

At 6 p.m. a cheer went up from the demonstrators as they



C.I. Dixon, e to see

S.B.(R)

P.A.



for Ch. Bur

30 OCT 1968

Stars and Stripes on the top of the U.S. Embassy was lowered. Then more trouble flared as bottles were hurled into the police lines and smashed in the road.

Despite the incidents the police remained mostly in good humour. One front-line constable said: 'It's not a bit like the last time.'

Then, things began to get a bit naughty when the demonstrators actually got on to the square and threw clods of earth.

'This time they were not allowed on the square at all, and there has not been nearly so much violence.'

Now and again demonstrators, bloodied and dazed, were

A WOMAN with a toddler in a pram proclaimed: 'Babies aren't made, they happen.'

passed through the ranks to ambulances waiting behind the police line.

Many fainted in the crush and were dragged out by friends while others were taken out by a fleet of 'ambulances' which ranged from vans to minicars.

Casualties were taken to a demonstrators' 'hospital' set up at the London School of Economics.

By 7.30 p.m. there was no doubt as to who was in control at Grosvenor Square — the police. They had pushed the crowds back 200 yards. At no time had the demonstrators been nearer than 50 yards.

A diversion was the sudden appearance for a short while of a crowd of teenagers who carried a U.S. flag and shouted 'We're for Enoch Powell.' and 'Up with L.B.I.'

Looters used the demonstration as a cover to make smash-and-grab raids on West End shops. One grabbed a £900

A DEMONSTRATOR who refused to move along was picked up by police and good humouredly dumped where he wouldn't block the way. Onlookers shouted: 'Smack his bottom.'

carpet from a shop in North Audley Street, just off Grosvenor Square, after a window had been smashed. A man was taken away by police.

The demonstration eventually spluttered to an indecisive halt beaten by thousands of middle-aged onlookers. The onlookers crowded the pavements and intermingled with the demonstrators to such an extent that no co-ordinated attacks on police cordons could be made.

Among the crowd at Grosvenor Square was Mick Jagger, of the Rolling Stones. He was surrounded by a group of friends. Asked if he had joined the demonstration as a spectator or a marcher he refused to comment.

Mr Tariq Ali, who led the march to Hyde Park, said: 'I am very pleased that the demonstration passed without incident. The main reason for this is that the police accepted our suggestion to stay away and not interfere with the marchers.'

'Another reason was that the marchers imposed revolutionary self-discipline.'