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• Press attacked for Vietnam protest scares

From JOHN GRITTEN

NEWSPAPERS printing stories of alleged preparations for violence during the demonstration against the war in Vietnam on October 27 are the real "irresponsible elements," declared Young Communist League national secretary Barney Davis, yesterday.

"We feel the vast majority will disregard these provocations and join the demonstration from political conviction," he said.

He was speaking at a Press conference in London given by members of the October 27 Vietnam ad-hoc committee.

The committee forecast that it will be the biggest demonstration against the war ever held in Britain.

50,000 posters

It says ad-hoc committees were mushrooming all over the country. Comparing present arrangements for transport with those prior to the March 17 demonstration, all indications are that the present ones are bigger.

Some 50,000 posters are being printed with the main slogans of the demonstration: Defeat US Aggression; Victory to the NLF and the Vietnamese Revolution; End Labour Complicity in the War.

The committee says the anticipated size of the demonstration "will be due to the increasing anger and frustration which more and more people feel about the Labour Government's support for the Americans in Vietnam."

It is intended that the march should start at 2 p.m. from the Embankment (Charing Cross) and pass the Australian High Commissioner's office, where it will "register our opposition to Australian involvement in the war."

'Police stay away'

It will then protest in Whitehall at the SEATO offices, Downing Street, and the Ministry of Defence, before marching to Hyde Park for a mass rally against the war.

"We would like the police to stay away from the demonstration and rally so that there will be no arrests and provocations," says the committee.

Mr. Davis told the conference that Press stories about the preparation of Molotov cocktails and takeovers of "strategic places" were creating an atmosphere which put the police psychologically against the demonstration from the start.

Peaceful rallies

Mr. Tariq Ali, Vietnam Solidarity Committee, recalled that there had been two completely peaceful mass demonstrations on the Continent because no police had been present.

Appeals had been made to the British police to keep away so that there would be "no provocative atmosphere" and he was convinced the majority of people would demonstrate peacefully.

Tariq Ali challenged the newspapers to produce evidence and names of those alleged to be plotting violence, and Mr. Alan Harris, of the ad hoc committee, charged the Press with ignoring the violence associated with American genocide in Vietnam.

Mr. Fergus Nicholson from the Communist Party student committee, said that a serious threat to the democratic right to demonstrate, on any issue, was being made as a result of the Press scare stories.

Turned down

Tariq Ali said a proposal to march to the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square had been overwhelmingly turned down. "The emphasis is on British complicity in the war," he said. "The demonstration will be an antidote to the virus of Wilsonism."

Mr. E. Tate, of the Vietnam Solidarity Committee, stressed that the growth of the ad-hoc committees was "a unifying force of the political Left and showed that united action against the war could take place."

Over a dozen organisations, ranging from International Socialists to Young Liberals, from the Radical Student Alliance to nine youth branches of Plaid Cymru (Welsh Nationalists) were mentioned as having joined the ad hoc committees in many towns and cities.

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