

THE GUARDIAN 18.3.68

Police repel anti-war mob at US embassy

BY OUR OWN REPORTERS

Britain's biggest anti-Vietnam war demonstration ended in London yesterday with an estimated 300 arrests: 86 people were treated by the St John Ambulance Brigade for injuries and 50, including 25 policemen, one with serious spine injury, were taken to hospital. Demonstrators and police—mounted and on foot—engaged in a protracted battle, throwing stones, earth, firecrackers and smoke bombs. Plastic blood, an innovation, added a touch of vicarious brutality.

It was only after considerable provocation that police tempers began to fray and truncheons were used, and then only for a short time. The demonstrators seemed determined to stay until they had provoked a violent response of some sort from the police. This intention became paramount once they entered Grosvenor Square.

Mr Peter Jackson, Labour MP for High Peak, said last night that he would put down a question in the Commons today about "unnecessary violence by police." Earlier in the afternoon, members of the Monday Club, including two MPs, Mr Patrick Wall and Mr John Biggs-Davison, handed in letters expressing support to the United States and South Vietnamese embassies.

More than 1,000 police were waiting for the demonstrators in Grosvenor Square. They gathered in front of the embassy while diagonal lines stood shoulder to shoulder to cordon off the corners of the square closest to the building. About 10 coaches filled with constables waited in the space to rush wherever they were needed and a dozen mounted police rode into the square about a quarter of an hour before the demonstrators arrived.

Slogans

About 2,000 spectators had gathered at the corners of the square to wait for the demonstrators, among them a few hundred Conservatives and Monday Club supporters who shouted such slogans "Bomb, bomb the Vietcong!" and "Treason!" when scattered knots of anarchists leading the procession marched past them.

When the demonstrators had broken through on to the lawn of the US embassy they started to tear up the plastic fence inside the hedge and uproot parts of the hedge. As they flooded on, with smoke bombs being thrown, a cordon of police held them back from the part of the square

closest to the embassy, but with a surge the crowd broke through. Isolated policemen continued to force a few back.

After the crowd had reached the hedge, some members started to tear up turf and make mud balls, which they tossed towards the glass-fronted building with pieces of stick from their banners and occasional police helmets. A detachment of mounted police jumped over the shattered fence and managed to drive back some of the milling crowd for a minute or two from the south corner of the lawn. As they were pushed back, one officer had his hat knocked off and was stuck continuously on the back of the head with a stick from a banner as he clung, head down, to his horse's neck.

For about 10 minutes, the men were pinned against the fence under a barrage of insults, sticks and mud until, with the help of a cordon of police on foot, they managed to clear the corner. In an attempt another officer, his nose already cut, had his hat knocked flying and his reins seized before his companions could rescue him.

None of the speakers—Vanessa Redgrave was among their number—who addressed an estimated 10,000 demonstrators in Trafalgar Square specifically urged the marchers to be peaceable; but there was no incitement to misbehave. The first indication that a conflict was expected came as the march went down North Audley Street, which leads into Grosvenor Square. The leading marchers slowed down and linked arms as though prepared to force an entry into the square, which some had been told had been sealed off by the police. Just before the march reached the square, a police inspector said “We are planning to let them march around the perimeter—but

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Motor Men in anti-war rally

Morning Star Reporters

With 400 marching behind the Birmingham Council for Peace in Vietnam banner, the city saw on Saturday the biggest demonstration yet staged here against the American aggression.

Marked by a new, broad unity of forces, thousands of shoppers had the full impact of a march embracing church and trade unions; students and apprentices, leading Labour, Communist and Liberal personalities.

Following the lead banner came that of the Tractor and Transmissions shop stewards and farther down the columns the almost battled-scarred banner of the Austin joint shop stewards. Also proudly being carried by shop stewards, the Austin Joint Shop Stewards' banner.

N.L.F. Victory

A group of students carried 'Aston University Socialist Society – victory to the N.L.F.'

Following a march through Birmingham city centre, the demonstrators held a meeting from the cathedral steps.

"Every day more people are expressing strong opposition to the support the British government is giving to the Americans in this war", said Peace Council chairman Mr G. White.

Bishop G. Sinker Provost, expressed "joy at having this great meeting in the cathedral grounds".

Ms Julius Silverman MP (Lab Aston) said; "The steps suggested by U Thant, the Labour Party conference, both the churches of America and Britain is the way to peace. Stop bombing North Vietnam." Speaking officially for the Birmingham Trades Council, which represents a quarter of a million of the city workers, the President Cllr W. E. Jarvis urged the maximum pressure on Parliament.

Over 70 people marched from Burslem to Hanley, in the Potteries, on Saturday demanding Britain dissociate from the U.S. Vietnam policy.

Headed by a girl in traditional Vietnamese dress carrying the flag of the National Liberation Front and leading a captive American "marine" by rope, a poster parade was held in Tolworth (Surrey) at the weekend.

MP 'greeted'

While at Chelmsford (Essex), Mr Gerry Reynolds, Labour MP for Islington North, was greeted by a demonstration organised by the town's Committee for Peace in Vietnam. He had come to speak at a meeting of the Eastern Regional Labour Party.

From a meeting yesterday of the London regional conference of committees for Peace in Vietnam an emergency resolution was sent to the Prime Minister.

It urged her Majesty's Government "to end its support for the U.S. military intervention in Vietnam forthwith."

The conference unanimously agreed that its main aim was to change Government policy.

Colchester (Essex) had a teaching on the war in which the speakers including Mrs Peggy Duff, Mr Williams Warbey, and Mr Roger Dililio, an American Rhodes scholar.

In Ipswich (Suffolk), a united demonstration of Quakers, Young Liberals, Young Communists and members of the Communist Party demonstrated their disgust with British policy on Vietnam.

Gifts of Blood

At a Medical Aid for Vietnam blood donor session at Crawley (Sussex) yesterday, 170 people gave blood and £100 was collected.

Three refrigerators were lent by the Crawley Co-operative Society, the Crawley Red Cross Committee organised a rota of nurses, and the Crawley Labour Party, the Communist Party and the C.N.D. made donations.

MPS-0746712/3

[Photograph]

There was much more police attention for a kicking demonstrator than for a constable injured in the fighting. A flour splattered superintendent used a rugby tackle (Right) to prevent one of the arrested getting away. It took the police about an hour and a half to restore order in the square.

[Photograph]

MPS-0746712/4

The Daily Telegraph, Monday, March 18 1968

The Battle for Grosvenor Square

[Photograph]

A police horse rearing up after being hit by stones thrown by anti-Vietnam war demonstrators in Grosvenor Square last night.

When the marchers stormed the square (Right) about 50 mounted police were ordered in. As they charged the surging crowd some officers were lifted bodily from their horses, thrown to the ground and attacked.

Fireworks, smoke, flour... [incomplete text]

[Photograph]

MPS-0746712/5

[Photograph]

Picture by SADJA DJUKANOVIC

A smoke bomb explosion in front of mounted police in Grosvenor Square as thousands of anti-Vietnam war demonstrators attempted to reach the United States Embassy yesterday.

[Other pictures – P16]

MPS-0746712/6

[Photograph]

Vanessa Redgrave, the actress, wearing a white paper headband – traditional Vietnamese sign of mourning – during the demonstration. She was allowed to hand in a petition at the American Embassy.

[Photographs]

Dazed by a stone, a policeman – still carrying his truncheon – is helped away by colleagues from the field of battle.

A casualty from the opposing forces.

Pictures by BECK ANTHONY MASHALL and SADJA DJUKANOVIC

Daily Telegraph 18.3.68

POLICE WIN BATTLE OF U.S. EMBASSY

ANTI-VIETNAM PROTEST

DAILY TELEGRAPH REPORTER

HUNDREDS of police fought with groups of violent demonstrators outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square yesterday at the end of the of an 8,000 strong anti-Vietnam war rally.

About 300 were arrested and many people, including 90 police officers, were injured.

In a 90 - minute battle mounted police were hurled from their horses and attacked. Demonstrators using banner poles as battering rams charged police cordons.

But despite this and a hail of stones, sticks, fireworks, smoke bombs, turves, paint and flour bombs, the double solid lines of foot and mounted police kept the mob from reaching the embassy steps.

HOTEL ATTACKED

Windows broken

As the demonstrators, many of them from overseas moved away from the embassy and turned their fury on the Europa Hotel nearby. Several windows were broken. The management and porters barred the glass from the inside as the demonstrators tried to get in.

Twenty-eight of the injured policeman were taken to hospital. Most were released, but six were detained with head injuries. A police superintendent who was taken away for treatment returned to the square and could be seen bobbling about. Eight police horses were injured by demonstrators.

Arrests were also made before the demonstration started. Coaches carrying students Trafalgar Square, to hear Vanessa Redgrave, the actress and other speakers were stopped by police outside London.

The rally began peacefully in Trafalgar Square, but by 6.30p.m. when the demonstrators had gone to Grosvenor Square there had been many incidents ranging from scuffles to "battles" in which several arrests were made.

In Grosvenor Square the mob broke down fences and hedges, trampled in the flower gardens and threw policemen's helmets in the air.

The police almost lost control of the situation but with the arrival of the mounted police they were able to prevent the crowd from breaking right through into the embassy itself.

In several parts of the gardens, the chanting mob were in hand- to -hand fighting with police and several retired with bleeding noses. The police did not draw truncheons, even when demonstrations used banners as weapons.

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MPS-0746712/8

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[Photograph]

Actress Vanessa Redgrave - a simple band of crepe paper round her hair – the traditional sign of Vietnamese mourning - as she appeared yesterday at London's massive protest.

MPS-0746712/9

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[Photograph]

A section of the great anti-Vietnam war demonstration stretching from pavement to pavement, blocking Charing Cross Road, on its way to the U.S. Embassy in Grosvenor Square.

MPS-0746712/10

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The scene outside the U.S. Embassy when demonstrators clashed with police.

[Photograph]

THE MORNING STAR 18.3.68

Vietnam Protest: 200 arrests

BATTLE AT THE US EMBASSY

Morning Star Reporters

A two hour battle raged last night in Grosvenor Square. Several times it had appeared that anti-Vietnam war demonstrators were going to rush the U.S. Embassy.

But the Embassy, protected by three – deep cordon of police remained intact.

Fifteen thousand anti-Vietnam war protestors, who had marched from a grand Trafalgar Square rally were driven back only after repeated full scale charges by mounted police, led by senior officers.

Helmets flew, truncheons and batons were drawn, smoke and flour bombs were thrown, and the poles of demonstrators' banners were used as battering rams. Between 200 and 300 people had been taken to various police stations by the time the demonstration was over.

The square itself looked a write-off, churned by the hooves of the horses, and torn by demonstrators pelting the police with turf.

As police moved demonstrators out of Grosvenor Square, hundreds attempted to storm Europa Hotel but the hotel staff barred the plateglass doors from inside. Several hotel windows were broken.

Demonstrators soon appeared outside Hilton Hotel, Park Lane. The staff locked all the doors and blinds were pulled across the windows.

In the Grosvenor Square clashes, one policeman was toppled down from the horse, and his colleagues dragged him away.

The St. John Ambulance brigade treated 16 people for injuries. Fifty were taken to hospital.

A girl at the centre of the fighting was battered to the ground.

CLIMBED TREES

She was carried away bleeding in an ambulance which had forced its way through the crowd.

Demonstrators climbed trees waving South Vietnam National Liberation flags. One was struck from a black mare taking away arrested demonstrators.

In the confusion, it was impossible to do more than pick out some of the names on the banners — with no guarantee as to how representative they were.

The motto of the march seemed to be a quotation from Che Guevara, which many were carrying, “The struggle of the Vietnamese people is our struggle.”

At one point during the battle a fire engine, sirens blaring, tried to make its way down North Audley Street to the Embassy. But demonstrators, apparently fearing that hosepipes might be turned on them, barred its way for a time.

Several policemen had paint splashed on their uniforms, and some were taken away in ambulances.

Marching from Trafalgar Square to Grosvenor Square, the demonstrators swept past stationary cars and busses, immobilised by the procession.

SOLIDARITY

They came from a wide variety of political groups. Young Liberals, Young Socialists and Young Communists joined with young people from Leftists groups whose banners and posters were much in evidence.

Thousands came from the universities Oxford, Cambridge, Sussex, Exeter, London and many others were represented. Fifty students came from West Berlin.

In Oxford Street hundreds of the demonstrators staged a 15-minute sitdown, completely blocking the road.

At the head of the vast procession strode actress Vanessa Redgrave wearing a bright orange mini-length cloak and carrying the message she intended to deliver at the Embassy.

“I am not anti-American in any sense of the word. I have many dear American friends whom I love and admire,” it said.

“Some have sons already in Vietnam or who will shortly have to go to Vietnam if your President continues this war.

“In taking part in this demonstration of solidarity with the Vietnamese people who are trying to liberate their country, I know that I am both supporting their struggle and supporting...
[incomplete text]

[Barely legible text]

IN VANGUARD

[Barely legible text]

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'Foreigners came for the march'

A number of those taking part in the anti-Vietnam demonstration in London on Sunday tried to provoke the police into violence, Mr Callaghan, the Home Secretary, told the commons yesterday. He quoted a Guardian report which said that some demonstrations were determined to do this.

He said there was "no doubt that there was a great deal of international preparation behind demonstrations, particularly those in relation to Vietnam". A number of foreigners had come to Britain specifically for the demonstration.

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Non – violence urged by NCCL

Damage to the gardens in front of the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London, will cost the Ministry of Public Building and Works £2,500 for trampled plants, smashed fencing and turf pulled by Sunday's anti-Vietnam war demonstrators for missiles.

At the embassy, 20 windows were broken compared with 17 during the October anti-war demonstration, and will cost about £1,000 to replace.

Mr Mike Martin, a leader of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, which organised Sunday's protest said: "We think it was a big success in terms of the number of people who took part – between 25,000 – 35,000." Of the violent end of the march, Mr Martin said: "This was completely contrary to the policy of the demonstration; responsibility for this rests with the Government for endorsing American policy." There are as yet no plans by the Campaign for further demonstrations in Britain.

Dossier

Complaints were coming in all day yesterday to the National Council for Civil Liberties about police violence. The council were in to prepare a complete dossier on the Grosvenor Square incident based mainly on the evidence of the 25 observers. Mr Tony Smythe, general secretary took the preliminary view that the situation was basically similar to the last demonstration in October – the police were badly provoked and yet seemed to have acted with remarkable restraint under difficult circumstances.

"The horses created great chaos—it is a mistake to use horses for crowd control because they are in themselves a provocation and are intrinsically unstable," said Mr Smythe. Truncheons, in his view, were too quickly drawn in some cases. "Already complaints are coming in about beatings up around the corner" said Mr Smythe. Last Friday, the council had a reply from the Home Office to its complaints over the October march. Horses were used to prevent the foot police from being overrun and had been invaluable in maintaining order."

It seems likely the council will urge more positive non – violent emphasis by demonstration organisers and more coordination between organisers and police.

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Two jailed—and fines imposed of up to £50

Morning Star Reporter

WHEN the first cases arising from Sunday's Battle of Grosvenor Square were heard yesterday prison sentences of up to three months, and fines of up to £50, were imposed.

Overall more than 220 people have been charged and are appearing in court this week on charges which include assault on police, having offensive weapons, threatening behaviour, obstructing the police and obstructing the highway.

One of the 12 who appeared at Bow Street, Michael Colin Brown, 21, was sentenced to two months imprisonment after pleading guilty to assaulting a policeman.

Mr Brown, unemployed, of Highbury, told Mr. Frank Milton, the chief Metropolitan magistrate: "I have never done anything like this before. I just sort of got carried away."

'Bullying'

Mr. Milton told him: "Whatever one's views on the wisdom or the rightness of the demonstrators, I think there should be only one view as to the rightness or wrongness of attacking police officers trying to do their duty."

A young wife charged with obstructing the pavement in Grosvenor Square, said that it had been empty except for police when she and her husband were arrested.

"I don't like this bullying by the police. If the demonstration had been for the Queen, this would not have happened," she said. She pleaded not guilty and was remanded on bail.

A commercial traveller, David Kreizman, was fined £25 and given a three month suspended sentence after pleading guilty to assault. He was said to have dived at a policeman's legs, causing him to fall on his back.

One man was fined £5 for throwing halfpennies at the Europa Hotel. Four men were remanded and others were fined between £5 and £8.

At Marlborough Street, where the magistrate, Mr. Edward Robey, heard cases involving 24 men and two women, one demonstrator was sent in prison for a month.

He was Sidney Gordon James, 21, of Compayne Gardens, West Hampstead.

Giving evidence in his own defence, Mr. James said that he had linked arms with other demonstrators to resist a police cordon pushing them back.

“A policeman kneed me between the legs. I was dragged out of the crowd and I was beaten up by a number of policeman. I fell and as soon as I got up I was pushed into a police van,” he said.

The magistrate said that on his own admission the defendant had tried to stop the police and he was satisfied with the police evidence that he had committed “a quite unwarrantable assault” on an officer who had suffered a cut lip.

Another defendant, Mr Cameron Worrall, who pleaded not guilty to using threatening words and to assaulting a police officer, complained to the magistrate that he had not been able to contact a solicitor while he had been in custody.

“I have not been able to make any contact with anybody in the outside world and I do not know why,” he said.

He alleged that he had not been permitted to telephone his place of employment. He was remanded on bail to appear on March 28.

An American

Bail was also granted to Mr. Jackson Birdson, aged 21, said to be an American studying at Oxford University. He will appear on April 4, charged with obstruction and possessing no fire arms certificate.

At Marylebone, John Lewis, a 24-year-old electronics engineer, of Bushey (Herts), was fined £25 with ten guineas costs for assaulting a policeman, fined £5 for damaging his raincoat, and ordered to pay £8 17s 7d compensation.

When a student teacher was remanded in custody charged with assaulting a police inspector, it was stated there would be a further and far more serious charge of assault against another police officer who was in hospital with a suspected fractured spine.

Another man—Peter Lumsden, of South Villas, London, S.W. —was fined £10 with £5 5s costs when he pleaded guilty to insulting behaviour.

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PROTESTERS WHO HAD PEPPER FINED £115

Morning Star Reporter

THREE would-be peace demonstrators were fined a total of £115 by Hendon, London, magistrates yesterday. Another man was remanded for three weeks on bail of £50.

Chief Supt. Charles Dave said the four were found in possession of offensive weapons on Sunday when coaches taking them to Trafalgar Square rally against the Vietnam war were stopped in Watford Way, Hendon.

IF ATTACKED

Alan Green, 20, admitted having a glass cutter, two cans of pepper and two bags of red liquid.

Tew Bunnag, 20, pleaded guilty to possessing a can of pepper and a bag of marbles. John Millett, 19, admitted having a can of pepper. All three are Cambridge students.

Ian Phipps, an 18-year-old Coventry postman, denied carrying a knife as an offensive weapon and was remanded for three weeks.

Millett told the court he was carrying the pepper to use against police dogs if he was attacked. Green said he was given a bag containing the weapons but he did not inspect its contents.

Green was fined £50 with the alternative of one month's imprisonment. Bunnag was fined £40 or one month's imprisonment. Millett was fined £25. All were bound over for three years.

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No bans

TORY M.P.s who are enthusiastic supporters of Johnson's violence in Vietnam yesterday demanded restrictions on the right to demonstrate in London, because of Sunday's battle at the U.S. Embassy.

All democrats should react vigorously to these demands and insist that there must be no further infringement of the rights of free speech and assembly.

The Morning Star does not agree with the political position of some of the organisers of Sunday's protest.

But the thousands who took part in it did so because of their disgust at Johnson's Vietnam war and the British Government's support of it.

Any worker who has been involved in an industrial dispute will know what value to place on the American Embassy, Tory and Right- Wing Labour tributes to "our wonderful police," and will understand how police provocations can exacerbate an already explosive situation.

The Labour movement should be on guard against any attempts to take away democratic rights which have been won in the course of bitter struggles.

There should be still more demonstrations against the Vietnam war. Next Sunday's London march and other such protests should receive the widest support.

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Horses in square: MP seeks debate

AN M.P. who said he was very disturbed by what he saw at Sunday's demonstration at the American Embassy announced last night that he would seek an adjournment debate on the matter.

Mr. Peter Jackson (Lab. High Peak) was speaking from a couch in a London School of Economics building where he was one of the first to give blood for Vietnam at a special donating session for M.P.s.

He considered the use of mounted police against the demonstrators as "provocative" and was collecting information from observers.

Others attending the session — held by the Medical Aid Committee for Vietnam — included Mr. Stan Orme M.P., Mrs. Renee Short M.P., Mr. Russell Kerr M.P., and Mr Frank Hooley M.P.

CND's CONCERN

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament last night expressed its concern of the Home Secretary's Commons statement yesterday on the participation of foreign nationals in demonstrations.

Many British citizens had taken part in demonstrations abroad, including leading members of the Labour Party, the C.N.D. statement said.

London Young Communists said that the Minister's implied threat against demonstrations "will not stop all those feel strongly about the U.S. aggression in Vietnam from exercising their right to demonstrate."

(Tory attack on protest rights: p.3)

THE TIMES 19.3.68

Police bitter about Vietnam demonstration

By NORMAN FOWLER – Home Affairs Correspondent

The Police Federation, representing about 100,000 policemen in Britain, yesterday strongly attacked the behaviour of the demonstrators in Sunday's anti-Vietnam-war protest in London. They called on university authorities to take notice of what was happening "under their noses" and to expel students convicted of violent criminal offences.

The protest reflects some of the deep resentment felt against the demonstrators, particularly by the Metropolitan Police. It is estimated that 10,000 people who took part in the demonstration. The police used about 1,300 men, including 800 in Grosvenor Square.

Casualty figures given yesterday by Mr. Callaghan, Home Secretary, in a Commons statement show that 117 policemen and 45 demonstrators received medical treatment. Mr. Callaghan said that proceedings were being taken against 246 demonstrators, mainly on charges of assaulting or obstructing policemen, using threatening behaviour, and being in possession of offensive weapons.

In their statement on the demonstration, the Police Federation said that the violence was not spontaneous but fully planned.

Some notices about the demonstration asked those taking part to "come armed". The organizers of the demonstration have denied all knowledge of the notices and the matter is being investigated by the police.

Another instruction circulated in the north said: "Each policeman has a number. Chant it together when provoked".

Police who intercepted some parties of demonstrators on their way to London by coach found marbles and pepper for use against police horses, and imitation blood which could be used to try to convince the television cameras of police brutality. An even more serious find yesterday was a number of unfired .22 cartridges amongst the debris in Grosvenor Square.

In his statement on the demonstration Mr. Callaghan said that he greatly regretted the outbreak of violence. He added: "There is no doubt that the police showed commendable restraint and self-discipline in the face of severe provocation".

From the Opposition front bench Mr. Maudling said the violence had shocked and scandalized the whole country. If there was evidence that foreign nationals resident in Britain either as visitors or students had been helping to stir up violence they should be deported.

A similar point was made by Mr. John Hynd, Labour M.P. for Sheffield, who said who said there was a synchronization of violent demonstrations in Britain and other parts of Europe. In spite of cries of “no” from some Labour backbenchers, Mr. Hynd asked for a full investigation into these demonstrations.

In reply, the Home Secretary said: “There is no doubt that there is a great deal of international preparation behind these demonstrations, particularly demonstrations in relation to Vietnam. We must rely on the good sense of the British people and the forces of law and order as expressed by the police to ensure that these demonstrations do no damage.”

In its examination of the disturbances the Home Office is likely to ask the police for information about the number of students from other European countries involved. So far it is known that student leaders from West Berlin, the Netherlands, and France attended the demonstration.

The Home Secretary told the Commons that prohibiting meetings would lead to tension. After talks with the police he was convinced that it was possible for London policemen to keep control by traditional methods.

Could any of the violence have been avoided? At a press conference at West End Central police station, Commander John Lawlor, who was in charge of the police forces on Sunday, said that the responsibility lay with the organizers—the Vietnam Ad Hoc Committee—who had been unable to control the marchers.

He said there had been a meeting at Scotland Yard with the organizers before the demonstration took place. The organizers had agreed to a route from Trafalgar Square and there was no intention that the marchers should stop for another meeting until they reached Speakers’ Corner at Hyde Park.

Commander Lawlor said: “There was no police brutality. If a policeman is being violently attacked and being hit with a stick he is entitled to defend himself.”

During the demonstration no general order was given for the police to use truncheons. The decision was left to the policeman’s discretion. Commander Lawlor himself gave the order to use the 30 police horses—eight of which were injured.

Commander Lawlor said horses became necessary when the violence began to flare up. Without them the police would not have been able to contain the crowds. He added: “If the horses had not gone in there would have been far more casualties”. Thirty horses were used, eight of which were injured.

Like the Home Secretary, the commander saw no call for new methods of crowd control. Asked about the possibility of using tear gas and horses at any similar demonstration in the future, he said: "This would be a bit foreign to us. We should be reluctant to do this."

But Mr. Tony Smythe, general secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties, said the police had failed to learn the lesson of the last Grosvenor Square demonstration. The same cordon system had been used and there had been little attempt to keep the demonstration on the move.

Mr. Smythe added: "It is as well to recall that the violence committed on demonstrations bears no comparison to the violence perpetrated by the United States and condoned by Britain."

Conventional politics in Britain gave little encouragement to sincere and relevant protest. Those who abhorred events like the Vietnam war might feel that they had no alternative to militant action when politicians failed to respond to public feeling.

Generally, there has been overwhelming praise for the police in the way they handled the demonstration. Many members of the public had telephoned to either Scotland Yard or West End Central police station to pledge support, and the same spirit was caught in a motion tabled in the Commons.

This said: "This House wants to record its respect and admiration for the officers and men of the London police and in particular for the conscientiousness and commendable restraint which they displayed when dealing with the extremely violent 'peace' demonstration in London on Sunday, March 17".

The question that remains is whether the violence on Sunday was an isolated example or the beginning of a long summer of demonstrators battling with the police. One guide to this point will come next Sunday when there will be another rally in Trafalgar Square to demand that Britain should dissociate herself from United States policy in Vietnam.

Leading article, page 9: Parliamentary report, page 12.

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Protesting with planned violence

There was evidence that “a not inconsiderable number of people” organise and go to political demonstrations with a view to provoking violence, Mr Callaghan, Home Secretary, said yesterday in a statement on the anti-Vietnam demonstration of Grosvenor Square outside the American Embassy on Sunday.

Concerning preparations that might have been made for violence, charges were now being preferred.

The route to be followed had been agreed between the organisers and the police. “The route was by North Audley Street, then around the three sides of Grosvenor Square not occupied by the US Embassy with an exit from the square by way of South Audley Street.

“But the organisers were unable to keep control of the march and it is estimated that at one time up to 10,000 people were gathered to in the square. Demonstrators broke into the gardens opposite the embassy.

“It was true that a number of foreign nationals came to this country for the purpose of taking part in the demonstration.”

Provocation

Mr Peter Jackson, (Lab. High Peak): “Would he agree that the use of mounted police is provocation?”

Mr Callaghan: “I have discussed this matter this morning with the officer in command of the police. He tells me that he was very reluctant to use mounted police, and held them in reserve, but because of the developments the situation became so difficult—and he is the man on the spot who has to decide—he reached the conclusion that if he had not used mounted police there would have been greater damage and greater injuries.”

Mr Peter Bessell (L. Bodmin): “Demonstrations of this sort are utterly repugnant to the British people in view of the fact that many people came armed and were more interested in communism than peace. Will you take action against the organisations concerned?”

Mr Callaghan said that the demonstration in Trafalgar Square was peaceful and, “I think we should be very reluctant to discourage demonstrations of that sort.”

Sir David Benton (C. Huntingdon) asked whether Sunday's disturbances could be described as a "riot."

Mr Callaghan: "I do not know the legal definition of the term 'riot,' and I would not care to give my definition of it without notice. The Commissioner of Police, before the demonstration, believed he would have sufficient means of handling the demonstration. "They did succeed in preventing an attempt to get at the American Embassy, and to that extent they did hold the situation in control."

Syneronisation [sic]

Mr John Hynd (Lab. Attercliffe) spoke of a synchronisation of violent demonstrations in Europe. Was not the time for a full investigation?

Mr Callaghan: "There is no doubt that there is a great deal of international preparation behind these demonstrations, particularly demonstrations in relation to Vietnam. We must rely on the good sense of the British people and the forces of law and order as expressed by the police to ensure that these demonstrators do no damage."

Mr Gordon Campbell (C. Moray and Nairn) asked if Mr Callaghan would consider the possibility of restricting the size and scope of demonstrations in London.

Mr Callaghan said that there would be very great difficulties involved in proscribing a matter of this sort. A great deal of tension would be created as a result.

Mr Eric Heffer (Lab. Walton) asked what weapons had been apart from flour bags and marbles.

Mr Callaghan said smoke bombs were also used, and ball-bearings as well as marbles. "Everyone knows the purpose for which ball-bearings can be used."

He told Mr John Boyd-Carpenter (C. Kingston-upon-Thames) that he was convinced that it was possible for London policemen to keep control by traditional methods.

Air Commodore Sire Arthur Harvey (C. Macclesfield): "A similar demonstration may take place next Sunday. What precautions have been taken to ensure that further violence does not take place?"

Mr Callaghan said that the organisers were in touch with the police, and "I hope the necessary arrangements will be made to see that it is as peaceful as possible."

THE GUARDIAN 20.3.68

Sir,—I have just returned from the Vietnam rally in Trafalgar Square and I feel it is such a pity that our young people allow the effective edge of their protest to be blunted by their inability to refrain from turning the whole thing into a student rag. Those of us who are at our wits' end to know how best to demonstrate our concern at the injustice and brutality of the Vietnam war must have returned sadly from the rally.

It isn't justice to obstruct the police and arouse apprehension in those passengers in cars and buses caught in a sea of chanting demonstrators. It seems to me that there must be better ways of demonstrating our concern for Vietnam than this. The police deserve our support and appreciation for the way in which they handled the situation.

I hope that those who feel angered by this letter will be challenged to work out a more effective and disciplined way to bring this concern, which so many of us have, to the notice of the Government.—Yours faithfully,

Ann Race

London E1.

THE GUARDIAN 20.3.68

Grosvenor Square demonstrators plan legal fight

BY OUR OWN REPORTER

Sunday's demonstrators against the war in Vietnam may continue their fight—but this time in the law courts and to save their own reputations.

At a press conference yesterday, Mr Tariq Ali, chairman of the committee which brought together a hundred organisations to stage the demonstration, said: "Some newspaper reports have been extremely libellous. We are considering a number of statements which have been made about organisations and individuals in several papers, and are considering taking legal action. We are not being intimidated one little bit."

Mr Mike Martin, secretary of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, said that the campaign was also asking its supporters to prepare written statements about being beaten or attacked.

Mr Ali, who is 24 and a former president of the Oxford Union, tried to excuse and dissociate himself from the violence. He said that once the demonstrators reached Grosvenor Square, the American Embassy "acted as magnet."

When he was asked whether some of his supporters would have liked to have sacked the embassy, he replied: "Yes, I think some of them would, and that is very upsetting."

Improvement hope

He said that he wished the organisation was well enough established to prevent its members bringing in weapons. "I hope the organisation improves," he said. "We don't have any way of keeping in touch with activities all over the country. I wish we had."

Mr Ali said that the police casualties reported to the Home Secretary were "about as accurate as the war casualties reported by the Americans in Vietnam. Many of the demonstrators did not report their injuries," he said. "They were treated by or taken home by their friends."

Mr Pat Jordan, chairman of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, said that broken promises on the part of the police had resulted in confusion and violence. Before the demonstration, he said, the police had permitted letters of protest from the groups represented to be presented at the embassy.

"When we attempted to deliver the letters, we had difficulty in getting Vanessa Redgrave through. The police absolutely refused to let her through."

The campaign say they will meet again soon to plan demonstrations which will be larger and more aggressive.

THE TIMES 20.3.68

Student's view

Sir,—I was at the anti-Vietnam demonstration yesterday but I am a Conservative who while not agreeing with the American position in the war has very little sympathy for the Vietcong. I went along because I was interested, and throughout the afternoon I made every effort to sympathize with and understand the actions of the police, who are certain to receive much public support, on the whole quite justifiably.

However, I feel a few points must be made. First of all, it is no good dismissing the students as rowdy extremists as many of them, far from being communists, were just young people who wanted to protest against a war which they regard as wicked, and it is their right to protest.

Secondly, these people had no wish to be violent and along with the great mass of demonstrators they stood well away from the police cordons where the more violent elements gathered. They did nothing but shout, although turf began to fly when things warmed up, and they, as I myself, had not idea of what was happening at the front. Therefore when the mounted police began charging quite viciously, into the crowd 20 yards in front of us tempers were naturally lost and violence provoked.

[Some text appears to be missing] as there seemed to be no good reason for these actions.

Finally I feel that I must protest at the behaviour of the mounted police as the park was being cleared. I twice saw policemen charge quite strongly at very few demonstrators who were doing absolutely nothing and both times people were heavily clubbed over the head, while one of my friends saw a girl being viciously clubbed for no reason at all.

There is no reason for me to be biased about this, but amidst of all of the accusations which are certain to be brought I feel it is necessary for me to say that there is no doubt that the police became unnecessarily violent, as I saw it myself.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN SCARLETT

Magdalen College, Oxford, March 18

MPS-0746712/23

THE GUARDIAN 20.3.68

Sir,—May I, as one of the “mob” concerned in Sunday’s anti-Vietnam war demonstration, find room in your columns to add to, or clarify, reports of those events.

A general consensus of opinion sees the events to have been an ill-considered, angry, and vicious succession of outrages wilfully and savagely acted out by “irresponsible students,” “anarchists,” “hippies,” “Left-wing agitators,” and “hooligans” (such a common front is broad indeed). What has not been mentioned, for the obvious reason that few, if any, reporters can have walked among the demonstrators throughout the afternoon, is the solidarity, compassion, charity, and good sense under pressure which the marchers showed in their serious concern for one another, and, whenever they were allowed to, for the police and onlookers.

In Grosvenor Square, when events were at their most impassioned, there was immediate and sensible response to the changing situation. The injured were carefully helped to the rear; the police who were isolated and overcome were not beaten up when they were helpless.

Allegations of police brutality as of hooliganism are tiresome, perennial adjuncts of events like this. They should not require fresh discussion, but of course they do. On Sunday the police were not so conspicuous for their brutality as for their stupidity. Whenever scuffles occurred it was because attempts were made to break the marching column into segments even if, as happened outside Trafalgar Square, children had to be knocked down to do so.—Yours faithfully,

Michael Robinson.

London NW 1.

THE TIMES 20.3.68

BIGGER VIETNAM PROTESTS PLAN

Police blamed for violence

By PHILIP HOWARD

The organizers of last Sunday's violent demonstration against the Vietnam war outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square said yesterday that they planned to hold bigger and more militant demonstrations in the future.

They blamed the police for Sunday's riot, saying that a promise to allow demonstrations to deliver letters to the embassy had been broken.

Mr. Pat Jordan, a bookseller and chairman of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, Mr. Michael Martin, full-time secretary of the Campaign, and Mr. Tariq Ali, impending author and freelance journalist, said it was hypocritical of the press and the Government to complain about the violence of the demonstrators when there was more violence in five minutes in Vietnam.

Mr. Jordan told reporters: "In the past few days you have given us publicity which would have cost us at least £1m." Tariq Ali said: "You people are pandering to violence, by concentrating on the violence in Grosvenor Square instead of reporting the speeches of the supporters of the National Liberation Front."

The organizers of the demonstration denied responsibility for the smoke bombs, cartridges, ball bearings and other missiles carried by some of their supporters.

They claimed that casualty figures for the riot were inaccurate. At least 95 demonstrators were injured, some seriously, but they had nearly all been treated at home.

The demonstration cost £400, most of it spent on 250,000 leaflets, stickers and posters. The organizers said they took no responsibility for the message "Come armed" which was stamped on some of their leaflets. They said they were considering legal action against three newspapers which reported that they had planned a violent confrontation with the police.

Mr. Ali said: "We regret this violence, and are sad both that demonstrators got hurt and that police got hurt."

For the future, the organizers promised "to counter-escalate and intensify our opposition to the Government's support for the Americans."

Whatever they decide, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign say that Sunday's affair was "only a beginning of our campaign."

MPS-0746712/25

The Morning Star 20.3.68

Govt may act on demonstration

Attorney-General Sir Elwyn Jones said, in a written Parliamentary answer yesterday, that he asked the police to report to the Director of Public Prosecutions any evidence for him to consider in relation to possible proceedings following last Sunday's Grosvenor Square Vietnam demonstration.

He was replying to a request from Tory M.P. Sir Derek Walker-Smith for prosecutions under Section 2 on the Public Order Act, 1936.

SUNDAY TIMES 24.3.68

The startling facts behind the failure of a demonstration

The battle of Grosvenor Square, March 17

THE POLICE are preparing to deal with at least 2,000 anti-Vietnam protestors on two "rival" marches in London this afternoon.

Unless violence breaks out again like last Sunday, the police will allow the largest group of marchers, which is being organised by Youth C.N.D and the Young Socialist League, to hand out protest petitions in groups of six at No. 10 Downing Street. This march starts at Kennington Park and moves to Trafalgar Square where the speakers will include actress Vanessa Redgrave and Lord Clifford.

The other march will consist of about 200 women who have chosen Mothers' Day to make their protest. They will hand in their letters of protest to the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square.

By Alexander Mitchell

A CAREFUL analysis of the March 17 demonstration, the largest and most 'militant' anti-Vietnam war rally yet held in this country, shows that the National Liberation Front (VietCong) arranged the timing; David Robinson, an obscure but fiery New Zealander, was the key organiser; the demonstration failed because it lacked positive leadership and any clear objectives.

The organisers were able to mobilise 15,000 people chanting "Victory for the N.L.F."—but did not know what to do with them. And because there was no statement of objectives the rally in Grosvenor Square degenerated into a series of wild skirmishes between police and demonstrators.

In the days just before the demonstration many participating groups pressed the leaders to announce what the rally aimed to achieve. Would it culminate in front of the American Embassy with the lodging of protest notes? Was there to be a mass vigil? What about an attempt to take the embassy by force?

The immaculately organised students from West Berlin were particularly incensed by the lack of information. At a meeting in Kingsway Hall on the eve of the demonstration they heckled Mr Tariq Ali, chairman of the ad hoc committee which organised the march.

On the day of the march I asked scores of demonstrators as they surged up Charing Cross Road and Oxford Street what was planned in Grosvenor Square, “I don’t know,” was the stock answer.

The chief reason objectives were not announced lies in the experience of the early 1960s when the Committee of 100 and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (C.N.D.) were disrupting Trafalgar Square and Whitehall with massive demonstrations. Police singled out leaders for arrest; court sentences became tougher and tougher.

And only last May, after protests at the Greek Embassy, Terry Chandler, Mike Randle and Del Foley, all veteran demonstrators, were given jail terms up to 18 months, while the remaining 38 defendants were fined or given conditional discharges.

As one member of the ad hoc committee said: “There are few enough militants left in the movement without creating martyrs. It would have been insane if one of us had stood up at Trafalgar Square and said that the object of the march was to storm the embassy. He would have been charged with incitement, possibly conspiracy, and that means a long stretch behind bars.

“I must admit that we relied rather too heavily on spontaneity. We left the decisions for direct action too much in the hands of the marchers. And you can’t let the mob take on this sort of responsibility.”

An examination of the origins of this undeniably popular movement reveals why it has such a nebulous leadership. It was Ralph Schoenmann, the driving force of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, who first set up a Vietnam committee to devote itself to arousing the British public on the Vietnam issue.

Hence the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign was formed under the sponsorship of the Peace foundation. With the appointment of David Robinson, a bespectacled, bearded New Zealander, as organising secretary, the VSC became totally committed to victory for the National Liberation Front. To gather support for a demonstration last October 22 Robinson set up an ad hoc committee and invited anybody and everybody to join providing they would accept the slogan “Victory for the N.L.F.”

The institutionalised peace groups—the Committee of 100 and C.N.D.—were appalled by the V.S.C.’s policy and refused to associate with *ad hoc* committee. But by the day the demonstrations marched into Grosvenor Square, Robinson could boast the support of 24 groups.

MPS-0746712/27

The demonstrators regard October 22 as a day of “victory.” Thousands of marchers flung themselves at the police cordons and they came within an ace of battling up the embassy steps.

But Robinson’s elation was short lived. Within days the Peace Foundation decided to withdraw financial support and the V.S.C. was told to quit its premises in Rivington Street, EC2, to make way for the Foundation’s Anti- University, a fee- paying college which teaches everything from flower power to revolution.

By this time a message from the N.L.F, via Cambodia and the United States, indicated that mass demonstrations should be organised throughout Western capitals during mid-March.

At times it looked as if the demonstration would never get off the ground. Without the money from Bertrand Russell, Robinson found it hard to support his wife and family, let alone run a nationwide protest movement. Finally he was forced to register at the Finchley Social Security office for national assistance. In the official forms he labelled himself “an unemployed political activist.”

And Mr Pat Jordan, chairman of the V.S.C. was trying to live on the meagre earnings of his Nottingham bookshop. Mid-way through the campaign Robinson decided to return to New Zealand. He sailed on March 3 telling friends that he had become totally disillusioned with the British political scene. He fancied a few quiet years setting up a bookshop.

The immense task of organising secretary went to Mr Michael Martin, a relatively inexperienced campaigner, who never quite knew what was going on. The whole impetus seemed to flag in February with indecision about posters and lack of drive in propaganda but about this period, Tariq Ali inspired new enthusiasm. The former president of the Oxford Union had been touring extensively in England, Scotland and Wales preaching the gospel of March 17 and in a trip to West Berlin he clinched the support of the extreme left wingers of West Berlin University.

Because the ad hoc committee is structurally archaic decisions are not totally binding and delegates needed only to subscribe to the slogan. Hotheads of various Maoist, Trotskyite and anarchist groups started to arrive at Toynbee Street, new headquarters of the V.S.C, with hair-raising schemes; throwing petrol bombs at the Embassy, squirting water pistols filled with ammonia at the police horses’ eyes, using heavy wooden poles to charge the Embassy’s glass doors.

The fate of two schemes can be recorded. A few nights before the march a group of darkly-clad militants went in Grosvenor Square with cans of highly toxic defoliant material similar to that used by the Americans in the Vietnam jungle. They discovered, however, that the trees had already been stripped of their foliage—by the natural processes of winter.

Another delegate seriously suggested that marchers should come to the rally armed with slices of bacon on the end of pieces of string. On reaching the Embassy steps they should swallow the bacon and then pull it out of their throats thus hurling vomit on the steps. The rehearsals of this proved revolting. The idea was scuttled.

But a voice of moderation was now being heard from the London American community's Stoppit Committee and Australians and New Zealanders Against the Vietnam War whose members appear more ideologically pitted against the war but who avoid acts of political delinquency.

The decision not to attempt to invade the Embassy was taken in the final week before the demonstration. Delegates felt it was "impractical." It was also decided to hold a last-minute meeting at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on the Sunday morning to discuss tactics. At this meeting delegates agreed that after Grosvenor Square the demonstrators would march to Park Lane and try to take over the Hilton Hotel.

The speeches in the Square were delivered without incident and according to plan. (It is worth noting that such is the disarray in the VSC leadership that the much heralded visit of Rudi Dutschke, the West Berlin student leader, never materialised because everyone thought he was coming but no one actually got around formally to invite him.)

But in Grosvenor Square, the lack of leadership was reflected in its inability to control the thousands of marchers. At the front demonstrators anxious to attack the embassy shouted in vain for leaders. Tariq Ali tried to switch the actions to the Hilton but his ineffective appeals ("We're invited to tea at the Hilton") failed to get through to the mob which was now being subjected to action by mounted police.

Only the German students, who jogged relentlessly forward with their arms tightly linked, made an impression on the police cordons and the police dispersed the mass of people by 6.30p.m.

Last week the V.S.C. leaders conducted endless post mortems. Views widely differed. Most felt the police acted properly, although there was not much sympathy for the mounted section. Some claimed the publicity had boosted anti-Vietnam war feeling; others said the violence had alienated potential supporters.

But the most alarming outcome is the widespread opinion that this will not be the last anti-authority clash. Mr Ali said: "Two days before the demonstration the Left of the Labour party wrote in the Times expressing its support for Mr Wilson. People with any political energy are driven to more excessive means of protest in a situation like this."

Another spokesman was more direct: “We have succeeded in making the American Embassy in London a fortress. This being the case we will continue to assail that fortress until we have taken it.”

MPS-0746712/28

THE GUARDIAN 27.3.68

Sir,—It has been proved to me beyond the reasonable doubt, that it is possible for a person of exemplary character to be convicted of assault in London. As a former magistrate I feel it is a grave situation.

One case will illustrate. An inoffensive student of exemplary character and integrity standing same distance from the police, taking photographs, was set upon by four policemen shouting “Let’s get this one!” He was dragged into a van and told not to use his camera or he “would not see it again.” Next day he was charged by his assailants with assault and was summarily convicted. No opportunity had been given him to use a phone or to contact his parents. At no time before or after his arrest had he done anything which could be remotely construed as an assault!

E. Appleby.

3 Mill Lane,

Winlaton Mill,

Blaydon-on-Tyne.

Daily Telegraph 29.3.68

Yesterday in Parliament

'KEEP DEMONSTRATIONS BRITISH EVENTS'

ALIENS NOT WELCOMED

By our Parliament staff

WESTMINSTER, Thursday, Mr. Callaghan, Home Secretary, spoke disapprovingly at question time in the Commons today of foreign visitors who come to Britain to make it a cockpit for demonstrations as happened recently in Grosvenor Square.

When Mr. DIGBY (C., Dorset, W.) said there was a resentment for over their activities, the MINISTER replied: "I think that is a fair statement." The number of students known to have come here for that purpose was "small—about 100."

A large number came on an architectural tour, "I'm not sure what sort of architecture they were to study."

USE OF HOSES

Continental methods

There was an outburst of laughter when Mr. GRESHAM COOKE (C., Twickenham) urged that these demonstrations should be "British events only." But if bands of students were coming with weapons to join in they should not object to Continental methods such as having hoses turned on them.

Mr. CALLAGHAN replied: "I would be reluctant to lower the tariff barriers to allow Continental methods to be introduced in this particular field. We should not make too much of one major and serious demonstration of this sort. We should continue to rely on traditional methods."

No separate record had been kept of passengers who declared to immigration officers on arrival that the intended to take part in demonstrations. None of those who took part had been deported.

Some cases were still to be heard and further proceedings might be instituted.

EASTER PLANS

No special preparations

Questioned about the proposed Easter demonstration by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Trafalgar Square, Mr. Callaghan said he was not making special preparations. This was a matter for Sir John Waldron, Acting Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

“He tells me that discussions have been held with the organisers on arrangements for the meeting and he will have regard to recent experience in formulating his plans.”

Mr. MARTEN (C., Banbury) said it would be better if demonstrations were held in a central part of Hyde Park, to lessen damage to property and risk to people. Mr. CALLAGHAN replied that Trafalgar Square was traditionally a meeting place. Demonstrations had been held there from time immemorial.

“I don’t want to be in the position that because of unruly behaviour on one or two occasions we undermine our traditional privileges. I don’t believe the situation is by any means out of hand and I don’t think the police believe that either.”

PREPARATION PLEA

Nine police horses hurt

In a written answer, Mr. CALLAGHAN stated that the full cost of replacing all items of police uniform and equipment lost or damaged in the Grosvenor Square demonstration on March 17 was about £1,150.

Nine police horses were injured. Eight were back on duty. One, with a puncture wound in its neck, was recovering.

Students from Germany, Holland, Sweden, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Persia were seen at the demonstration. It was impossible to estimate the extent of participation of students from British universities.

Mr. OSBORN(C., Hallam) asked him to introduce a law “to provide that those found guilty of disturbing the peace, causing wilful damage to public and private property—or failing them the organisers of demonstrations causing this—should make full payment for the repair of such damage which would otherwise be met by the taxpayer and rate-payer.”

Mr. CALLAGHAN replied: “The Advisory Council on the Penal System is examining the question of reparation by the offender and I shall consider the need for further legislation in the light of its recommendations.”

Daily Telegraph 5.4.68

POLICE 'BRUTAL AT RALLY' CHARGE BY MP

Police control during anti-Vietnam demonstrations in Grosvenor Square last month was criticised by Mr. Peter Jackson (Lab, High Peak) during an adjournment debate in the Commons last night.

He quoted reports by "accredited observers" of the National Council for Civil Liberties and said attempts by mounted police to disperse the crowd were a provocation.

Mr. Taverne, Under-Secretary, Home Office, said he did not believe that anyone would have guessed from Mr. Jackson's description that three times as many policemen in Grosvenor Square were injured as demonstrators. It was the loss of control by the leaders that led to the disturbances.

MORNING STAR 6.4.68

Mounted police 'seemed to lose control'

Morning Star Reporter

STRONG CRITICISMS of the use of police horses and truncheons in the March 17 Grosvenor Square demonstration against the Vietnam war are made in a report sent yesterday to the Home Secretary.

Serious injury could have occurred, says the report, as mounted police seemed to lose control of their horses during the repeated charges.

The report—prepared from eyewitness accounts of 25 observers sent specifically to the square—was sent in Mr. Callaghan by Mr. Tony Smythe, general secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

Policemen who drew and used their truncheons without permission from a senior officer should be reprimanded, says the report.

Such actions, it warns, could well lead to demonstrators at future rallies arming themselves in retaliation.

The leaders of the march also come under fire for “deliberately refraining from organising in the latter stages of the march.”

Quite wrong

“In future they should communicate their objectives both to participants and to the police. There were no clear instructions to marchers, no stated objectives and no marshals.”

Mr. Smythe stresses that it would be quite wrong for the Home Office to try and prevent demonstrators from aboard entering the country.

“We empathise this point because we fear interference with aliens wishing to come here for the C.N.D Easter march this year.

“The causes which provoke demonstrations find support in many countries and international cooperation has become an essential feature of such activities.”

Police barrier

In a Commons debate on Thursday night, Mr. Peter Jackson, Labour M.P. for High Peak, said that accredited observers of the council saw police “kicking demonstrators as they lay defenceless on the ground.”

Mr. Jackson said a very great degree of congestion was brought about by the police barrier, and he thought this was to a very large extent responsible for what happened later.

Mr. Jackson said he had heard from a witness that a policeman had “charged at full gallop” toward a 20-year-old girl who was “doing nothing.”

“Had she been hit head on, she would have been dead. Luckily she was merely knocked down and got up soon afterwards.”

THE GUARDIAN 9.4.68

Anatomy of the Vietnam protest

By our own Reporter

Another dimension to last month's "battle of Grosvenor Square" was added yesterday —the alleged mishandling of demonstrators during and after they were taken into custody.

This emerges in an anatomy of the March 17 anti-Vietnam war demonstration by the National Council for Civil Liberties based on reports by its own 25 accredited observers and on other written statements.

Another report—by the police themselves—has led Sir Elwyn Jones, the Attorney-General to decide against taking action under the Public Order Act of 1936, it was announced in the Commons yesterday. Nearly 250 people have, however, been charged with other offences.

In its report, the first of its kind, the NCCL generally endorses the newspaper and television consensus at the time of the Grosvenor Square incidents that:

- (1) "The major blame for the violence may be attributed to the demonstrators of their organisers";
- (2) "The presence of a large number of police horses provoked missile throwing. This would not have happened if no targets existed."

German students

More liaison between police and march organisers, more marshals and use of loudhailers are recommended as future action by the NCCL which itself offers "to promote better communications."

Details of what the NCCL considered to be undue police force, or force of a vindictive kind, have been sent to the Home Office with the names and addresses of those who saw it.

In the Commons, Sir Elwyn said that one or two incidents were being investigated but he recalled that 171 police officers had been injured and 42 civilians received hospital treatment.

Replying to Sir Peter Rawlinson, the Conservative spokesman on legal matters, he said one disturbing feature of the demonstration had been the conduct of what appeared to be an organised group of German students. There might be cases in the future in which individuals would not be allowed into the country.

THE GUARDIAN 18.4.68

Demand for inquiry strikes no fear into demonstrators

[First column of text is cut short]

THE chairman of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign Mr Pat Jordan [illegible text] yesterday by Conser... [missing text] MPs' demands for a ... Office investigation... his organisation which... have ... raged foreign militants... to Britain for...

... were investigated by... Branch after the... Square demonstra-... the Attorney-General... a report, the gist of... that we operated in a perfectly legal and normal manner" he said.

Mr Jordan was at an East End office furnished with piles of pamphlets, a duplicator, three typewriters, and shelves stacked with boxes of duplicating paper. They had, he agreed, a list of about 2,000 potential sympathisers in America, Scandinavia, and the Continent built up painstakingly from correspondence.

But the MPs suggestion that the organisation by this means was seeking to import trouble makers was, he thought, "a rather hysterical way of describing anything what are the quite normal activities of organisations, and which even non-political groups indulge in as an everyday affair." Rose-growing societies and women's knitting clubs had their own mailing lists.

Two MPs, Mr Richard Sharples (Sutton and Cheam) and Mr Bernard Braine (Essex, South-east), are asking the Home Secretary what steps he is proposing to take. Mr Sharples has put down a question asking for "an inquiry into the organisation of the kind of demonstration we have had in the London area, in particular to look into the question of demonstrators from overseas." He said yesterday: "I think it is significant that we should have had a demonstration against a German newspaper in Britain. There is a threat to freedom of speech here, as if this sort of thing goes on, we are inevitably going to get a reaction to it."

"Following these latest demonstrations over Easter, I think there is a certain amount of urgency about this. People are worried about it and sympathise with the police, who are having to turn out weekend after weekend and have things thrown at them."

Mr Jordan said foreign demonstrators must have come because they knew Easter was a time for protest marches. The demonstration had been requested by a German student organisation, and with only three days' notice there had not been time to notify anyone.

The campaign, he said, had two aims—solidarity with the Vietnamese people, and opposition to the Government's complicity with the Americans. A lot of supporters, "though I wouldn't say a majority," would believe in revolution.

"I am a Marxist," said Mr Jordan, and when pressed about whether the Communist Party's noticeable coolness to the campaign meant it was Trotskyite, he said, "I consider Trotsky wrote a lot and did a lot of relevance for Marxism."

The campaign secretary, Mr Mike Martin, said it was on a broad front, including Maoists, Trotskyists, Anarchists and Labour Party Young Socialists.

A student supporter of the campaign suggested that members of the old C.N.D or Committee of 100 had moved on... it. Students with time to discuss were the core of the movement and the activists. They must continue with trade unionists.

Neither Mr Jordan nor Mr Martin seemed to accept much responsibility for what went on at demonstrations. Of Grosvenor Square, a map of which hangs on the wall with the Embassy marked with a Vietcong flag. Mr Jordan said: "It is pretty impossible to control demonstrators when police have behaved in a very primitive manner."

And Mr Martin said: "It is very difficult..."

[Final column of text is cut short]

THE GUARDIAN 30.4.68

German demonstrators 'were invited'

No evidence has been received by the Attorney-General, Sir Elwyn Jones, that any organisation in this country "sponsored" the arrangements for German students to take part in the Vietnam demonstration in Grosvenor Square on March 17.

Sir Elwyn gave this reply to Mr Stephen Hastings (C. Mid- Bedfordshire) in the Commons yesterday and added that it appeared that the German students had been "invited" to take part by the Vietnam Solidarity Committee, the organisers of the demonstration.

In reply to other questions, the Attorney-General repeated an earlier ministerial statement that in future steps would be taken to see that individuals should not be allowed to into the country for demonstrations if it were thought they would abuse the facility to foment disorder and cause damage. He added:

"Students who come here for peaceful purposes to take part in peaceful demonstrations should not be prevented, but if there is evidence that they come to cause mischief of the kind I have indicated, they are to be kept out."

Mr Hastings asked if the Vietnam Solidarity Committee paid, or had something to do with the payment, of the German students' travel arrangements. Surely, he said, there must have been some organisation on the other side of the Channel: was not the true source in East Germany rather than in West Germany?

Sir Elwyn replied he had no evidence that the students were paid to come, or that their fares had been paid. He had no information as to any organisation that sponsored the visit in that sense. In answer to another question he said none of the German students lived here, or stayed after the demonstration: "They came expressly for the demonstration and went away immediately afterwards."

Sir Peter Rawlinson (C. Epsom), a former Solicitor-General, asked if no inquiries had been made that would have shown that these students had arrived to cause trouble. Sir Elwyn replied that such a conclusion was not obvious.

Mr Ben Whitaker (Lab. Hampstead) asked if it were not the case that the South Vietnamese Embassy in London had spent money, unsuccessfully, to organise a demonstration in Trafalgar Square, and whether it were right for a diplomatic mission here to spend money in this way? Sir Elwyn replied that this point did not arise out of the question he was answering.

MORNING STAR 30.4.68

Grosvenor Square bogy walks again

Tory M.P. Stephen Hastings tried to resurrect in the Commons yesterday the idea that an international plot was behind last month's Grosvenor Square battle.

Mr Hastings, M.P. for Mid-Bedfordshire, suggested that the German students' contingent when took part in the demonstration was organised and financed from East Germany.

But Sir Elwyn Jones, the Attorney- General, told him that the Government had found no evidence that the German students were paid to come or that their fares were paid.

"It appears they were invited here by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, the organisers of the demonstration," he said.

THE GUARDIAN 5.4.68

Entry ban on protestors likely

By our own Reporters

The Home Office is expected to refuse entry in future to some of the foreign visitors who took part in the Vietnam demonstration outside the American Embassy in London on March 17.

Mr Dick Taverne, Under-Secretary of State, the Home office, went further in the adjournment debate in the Commons last night than the Home Secretary did a week ago when he calmed the feelings of the House.

Mr Taverne said: "I would not like to call all those who took part in this (demonstration) as little Red Nazis, but there were individuals who were noted and there may be cases in future who would not be allowed into the country."

The admission of foreign nationals was in the discretion of the Home Secretary "and in light of recent experience the Home Secretary will not hesitate to exercise his powers in a manner which the public interest requires."

The reputation of the police had, Mr Taverne said, risen by their faith in traditional methods rather than hoses to control the demonstrations—"because it would have been a very short step from this to the use of tear gas, and from that steel helmets."

The whole nation could be proud of the way in which the police had handled the demonstration.

On March 28 the House was told that the number of foreign students known to have come to Britain for the rally was 100.

'Arbitrary' arrests

Mr Peter Jackson (Lab. High Peak) said he believed people were arrested in a "very arbitrary manner," and he claimed there were "systematic attempts made by the police to destroy photographic evidence."

He added: "I was present and felt that the vast majority of the police acted in a most exemplary way, but I do not think we should attempt to whitewash what a minority of the police did."

Commenting last night on the Grosvenor Square demonstration, Mr Pat Jordan, chairman of the Vietnam Solidarity Committee, said, half in jest: "We should aim at a demonstration three, four times as big. If it gets any bigger, maybe we'll start a revolution."

He was addressing 100 members of the committee who jubilant at the public impact of the March 17 demonstration.

The promised follow-ups are not planned until the autumn. Last night's meeting was to chew the cud of March 17, a process which will continue at a two-day conference next month.