S.B. No. 1 (Plain)

Special Report

Subject Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Reference to Papers

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CONFIDENTIAL
METROPOLITAN POLICE

24th day of March 1968

During the past few months agitation by various extreme left-wing organisations, pacifists and student bodies, including some from the Continent, against American aggression in Vietnam and the British Government's association with U.S. policy, has increased in intensity.

As was to be expected, the demonstrators in the main have focussed their attention on the American Embassy, Downing Street, the House of Commons and Dow Chemicals Ltd., Wigmore Street, W.1, an American company which produces the napalm bomb.

Some of these demonstrations have taken place without serious disorder but others, particularly the one held on Sunday, 17th March 1968 and organised by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and the Vietnam Ad Hoc Committee, have developed into clashes between police and demonstrators. Many arrests have occurred and both police and demonstrators have suffered casualties.

On Sunday, 24th March 1968, yet another demonstration took place. The organisers on this occasion were the Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 5 Caledonian Road, N.1, supported overtly by the Communist Party and Young Communist League.

From the outset, in all their dealings with police, the organisers expressed their intentions to hold a peaceful demonstration and to this end, arranged for a large number of marshals to control those taking part.

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The Communist Party, too, through the columns of the 'Morning Star', appealed to its members to join the peaceful demonstration which it described as "D - DAY - Dissociate from U.S. in Vietnam".

The march from the Oval Station to Trafalgar Square was orderly throughout, but during the meeting at Trafalgar Square and later in Whitehall, there were six arrests, and one other person was reported for process. (Full details are given on Appendix 'A')

The demonstrators began to assemble at Kennington Park, near the Oval Tube Station at about 2 p.m. Through loud hailers, they were given instructions for the march, meeting and the presentation of petitions at No. 10 Downing Street. Some 1,150 persons began the march at 2.40 p.m., accompanied by uniformed police.

Various slogans such as "Hey, Hey, L.B.J. How many kids have you killed today", "N.L.F., N.L.F.", and "Yankee murderers, out, out, out." were shouted during the march. As the procession passed Rhodesia House in the Strand, there were shouts of "Smith out, Smith out".

Details of the banners and placards displayed are given on Appendices 'B' and 'C'.

T.V. teams accompanied the marchers and were in strength at the Square and in Whitehall.

Details of the literature which was sold during the demonstration form the subject of a separate report.

The route taken to Trafalgar Square was as follows:-

Kennington Park Road,
Newington Butts,
St. George's Road,
Westminster Bridge Road,
Bayliss Road,
Waterloo Road and Bridge,
Lancaster Place,
Strand, and
Charing Cross.

The head of the procession arrived at the Square at 3.45 p.m. and the meeting commenced a few minutes later. At its maximum, about 3,000 persons were assembled in the Square.

The meeting was chaired by Alistair BUCKNELL, and the speakers were Lord Anthony Maurice GIFFORD, Vanessa REDGRAVE, John RYAN, M.P., Adrian MITCHELL, Janice OGG, Marc ELLINGTON (an American), Dr. Amicia YOUNG, and Dick NETTLETON.

The speeches were delivered through loud speaker apparatus from the North side of the Square, but were very distorted and inaudible at times.

BUCKNELL opened the meeting with a few words to explain that the object of the demonstration was to mobilise sufficient support from the British people to force the Government to dissociate this country from the American war in Vietnam.

Lord GIFFORD, described as the youngest member of the House of Lords, spoke of the bitter resentment he felt at the policies being carried out by the Government in the name of the British people. It was particularly galling that the majority of the latter were completely opposed to those policies. He called for greater unification of effort to persuade the Government to dissociate Britain from the aggressive actions of the Americans in Vietnam, and to initiate campaigns to create an atmosphere of peace, for instance by demanding the withdrawal of British Forces from NATO. Only in this way could a happier world be created.

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Vanessa REDGRAVE recalled that at his recent birthday party, the Prime Minister had invited those who were vociferously criticising the Government's support of the American Vietnam policy, to consider the alternatives. She suggested that, having done so, the British people would realise that for the sake of humanity, there was no choice but to dissociate from the American war. It must be admitted that there was only one Vietnamese race, whether they lived North or South, and therefore the American war must be against the whole Vietnamese people. The success of the Vietcong June 10th offensive proved they had the support of the majority of the Vietnamese.

The Americans were using the same arguments to support their presence in Vietnam as did the Germans in occupied countries during the last World war. The British Government did not support the Germans then, nor did they support the French Government when it was attempting to subdue the Algerian people. The only difference between Algeria and Vietnam was that the Algerian war affected only the two countries involved, whereas Vietnam was affecting the economy of the whole Western world.

REDGRAVE said that Harold WILSON's only choice must be to align this country with France and Sweden, dissociate from President Johnson's policy, and to call on him to withdraw his troops from Vietnam.

John RYAN, Member of Parliament for Uxbridge, who addressed the audience as 'Comrades', claimed that the meeting, in condemning American actions in Vietnam, was in fact agreeing with the majority of Americans who were against the war. People from all sectors of American life were expressing opposition to Johnson's policies. One might expect the young people at the universities, and perhaps American Liberals, to disagree with the military action, but there was also considerable criticism being voiced by bankers on Wall Street, although, of course, it must be admitted that their reasons were principally financial. The recent gold and dollar crisis was directly attributable to the expense of the Vietnam operations.

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He wished that the British Government would accept the democratic decision of the people and the Labour Party that the Vietnam war was immoral and wrong, and take positive steps to end hostilities by exercising Britain's not inconsiderable influence. For instance, Senator McCARTHY's campaign for the American Presidency could be given a 'shot in the arm' if Britain openly supported his stand on the Vietnam issue.

Adrian MITCHELL recited one of his own poems, the meaning of which was largely unintelligible, but which appeared to be an ode to the American dead.

Janice OGG called for more and larger demonstrations to inform the people of the facts of the war in Vietnam. Although millions agreed that the fighting should end, there was little positive action, except by a minority, but this could be changed if the general public were made fully aware of the issues at stake. Unfortunately, this type of demonstration cost a great deal of money to organise, and she called for generous contributions to finance the day's proceedings and future activities. She hoped that a great measure of support would be forthcoming for the Easter Monday demonstration, and for a campaign demanding the withdrawal of Britain from NATO, and for unilateral disarmament.

Marc ELLINGTON said he was an American who had come to this country to avoid the draft. So far this country had no policy on American draft avoidance, but he sincerely hoped that it would decide to provide asylum for any American whose conscience forbade him fighting in Vietnam. He then accompanied himself on a guitar in a rendering of a folk ballad with the theme "We shall overcome".

Dr. Amicia YOUNG, Secretary of the British Council for Peace in Vietnam and of the National Vietnam Campaign Committee, said that the young trade unionist who had asked the Prime Minister in Oxford why this country was supporting the American aggression in Vietnam had been told to write to Downing Street if he had a solution to the problem. She hoped that everyone present would write or sign a letter to Mr. Wilson setting out their opposition to the war. Public opinion really could be effective if sufficient numbers of the public expressed their views forcibly. Even President Johnson was capable of being influenced as was

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evident from recent decisions to withdraw General Westmoreland, and not to send any further troops to Vietnam for the present.

She asked all young people to canvass in the streets, and within their organisations for support for the campaign to end the Vietnam war, remarking that even members of the Young Communist League could probably persuade their seniors to give more active support. She complained of the lack of publicity in the National Press for the Council's Declaration, and said that only the Irish Times had bothered to refer to it, probably because that newspaper was outside the jurisdiction of the British Government. She ended by calling for renewed efforts to show Mr. Wilson that he could not ignore the electorate, by continuously writing letters and sending telegrams and petitions to Downing Street.

Dick NETTLETON, general secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, congratulated the Y.C.N.D. for providing the opportunity for the British public to protest at their Government's connivance at the war in Vietnam. He said that opinion polls showed that in December 1967 63% of persons questioned advocated British neutrality in Vietnam; in January 1968 66% voted against U.S. Vietnam policy; and last week 87% wanted talks to be opened. Only 7% thought that the war should continue. Moreover the British Council of Churches, the T.U.C., the Labour Party, and United Nations Association had all declared themselves against the war in Vietnam, and he called on the Prime Minister to take heed of his own party's wishes.

He continued that the Prime Minister must also accept three facts. Firstly, so long as there were U.S. troops in Vietnam, the people of that country would resist; secondly, there could be no peace talks until the National Liberation Movement in Vietnam was recognised as representing the majority of the people; and lastly, there could be no negotiations until the American bombing ceased.

NETTLETON called on his audience to continue to demonstrate on ever increasing scale; to raise the matter in trade union branches, women's organisations, and in correspondence columns of their local Press, and lastly, to support the Easter march of the C.N.D.

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Janice OGG asked those who intended to deliver a protest letter to the Prime Minister to follow the directions of the marshals and ensure that the demonstration remained peaceful and orderly.

was seen with a group of four people in Trafalgar Square, and although I was quite close to him, at no time did I hear him utter any words of incitement. His remarks referred to the difficulty in hearing the speeches which, as previously stated, through faulty amplifiers were very distorted. As far as is known, he did not go to Downing Street.

At 5 p.m. the meeting ended and the demonstrators, in orderly fashion and accompanied by uniformed police, marched along Whitehall, the traffic in the meantime having been stopped. Those wishing to present petitions formed a queue on the west pavement near the entrance to Downing Street. Then at intervals, in groups of six, they went to No. 10, handed in their petitions and made their way back to Whitehall.

Vanessa REDGRAVE and Marc ELLINGTON, whilst at No. 10, attempted to sing but were quickly moved on by police.

Approximately 4,000 demonstrators, many of whom had preceded the marchers, were gathered in Whitehall near the entrance to Downing Street. Police moved the crowd back to the east pavement and to a point about fifty yards along Whitehall, and placed strong cordons in front of them. It was quite obvious that these demonstrators had no intention to present petitions at all.

Noticeable in the crowd was a group of about a dozen teenagers under a banner bearing the words 'Kilburn Anarchists' who led shouts of "Ho Chi Minh" and "N.L.F.". Other officers recognised Communists and Trotskyists who joined in the general shouting.

Several minor scuffles occurred resulting in three arrests. Pennies, two fireworks, a smoke-bomb and a bottle of red paint were thrown into Whitehall. Many placards and a few banners were left in the gutter.

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Although the mounted branch were on hand in Downing Street, they were not used. The police cordons were not broken and at no time did police lose control.

At 5.40 p.m. it began to rain heavily and this precipitated the departure of the majority of the demonstrators. By 6.15 p.m. the last of the participants had dispersed, and traffic was running smoothly again.

The names of the persons mentioned in this report and those recognised during the demonstration are shown on Appendices 'D' and 'E'. Their respective are quoted.

A further report will be submitted when the owners of the motor vehicles used in the demonstration have been identified.

Superintendent.

for

Chief Superintendent.

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APPENDIX A

DETAILS OF PERSONS ARRESTED DURING Y.C.N.D. 'DAY OF DISSOCIATION' MARCH AND MEETING ON 24th MARCH 1968. TO APPEAR AT BOW STREET MAGISTRATES' COURT ON 25th MARCH 1968.

Name/address

Hartley DAVIES,

Alan HALL,

George MADASDY,

Walter Charles STEVENS,

Robert TISO,

John Robert Edward TOLE,

RELEASED FOR PROCESS.

Gerald Hallard WOOD,

APPENDIX 6 of 24th March 1968 concerning
"Dissociation Day"

Banners displayed by organisations taking part in march.

National Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
Southampton Area Peace Action Committee
Highgate Y.C.L.
A.E.U. New Malden
Sutton Y.C.L.
Surrey Y.C.L.
Reigate and Redhill Committee for Peace in Vietnam
Merton Committee for Peace in Vietnam
Kingston and Surbiton C.N.D.
Kensington Y.C.L.
Dorking Y.C.N.D.
Hants and Dorset Communist Party
Southampton C.N.D.
Hants. and Dorset Y.C.L.
Lambeth C.N.D.
Camberwell Arts Students Commitee for Peace in Vietnam
London District Committee of the C.P.
West Lewisham Y.C.L.
Harrow Y.C.L.
District Committee of the London Y.C.L.
Wales Y.C.L.
Hampstead Y.C.L.
Bath C.N.D.
Havering Y.C.L.
Highgate Y.C.N.D.
Hornchurch Young Liberals
Sydenham C.N.D.
Kent Council for Peace in Vietnam
Peace Pledge Union
Greenwich Y.C.L.
"Stop it" Campaign
Stepney Y.C.L.
Gillingham Anarchists
South Essex District Y.C.L.
Hadioner Hertzar Zionist Youth Movement.

Appendix 'C' to report of 24th March concerning "Dissociation Day"

[redacted]

Posters Displayed during march.

Britain must DISSOCIATE from U.S. war in Vietnam
Harlow for Peace and Freedom
Ban Napalm
Stop Destroying Vietnam
Youth demands an end to war in Vietnam
Tell Wilson to end war in Vietnam
Tell Johnson to stop the bombing
World Festival of Youth July 26th to August 6th
Biggest International Vietnam Protest.
Britain condemns America
U.S. get out of Vietnam
Youth demands end of Vietnam war
Youth demands that Britain leads for Peace.
Support U Thant; Not Johnson
Free Saigon Buddhists
If we kill our brothers - with whom shall we live?
End the dictatorship in Vietnam
Does Britain have to support U.S.A.?
Peace in Vietnam
Youth Unite for Peace in Vietnam
Wilson - condemn bombing of civilians
End the American war in Vietnam
Stop the U.S. Brutal war in Vietnam.

APPENDIX 'D'

TO PERSONS MENTIONED IN REPORT
CONCERNING Y.C.N.D. MARCH AND MEETING ON 24th MARCH 1968

Alistair BUCKNELL

Marc ELLINGTON

Lord Anthony GIFFORD

Adrian MITCHELL

Dick NETTLETON

Janice OGG

Vanessa REDGRAVE

John RYAN, M.P.

Dr. Amicia YOUNG

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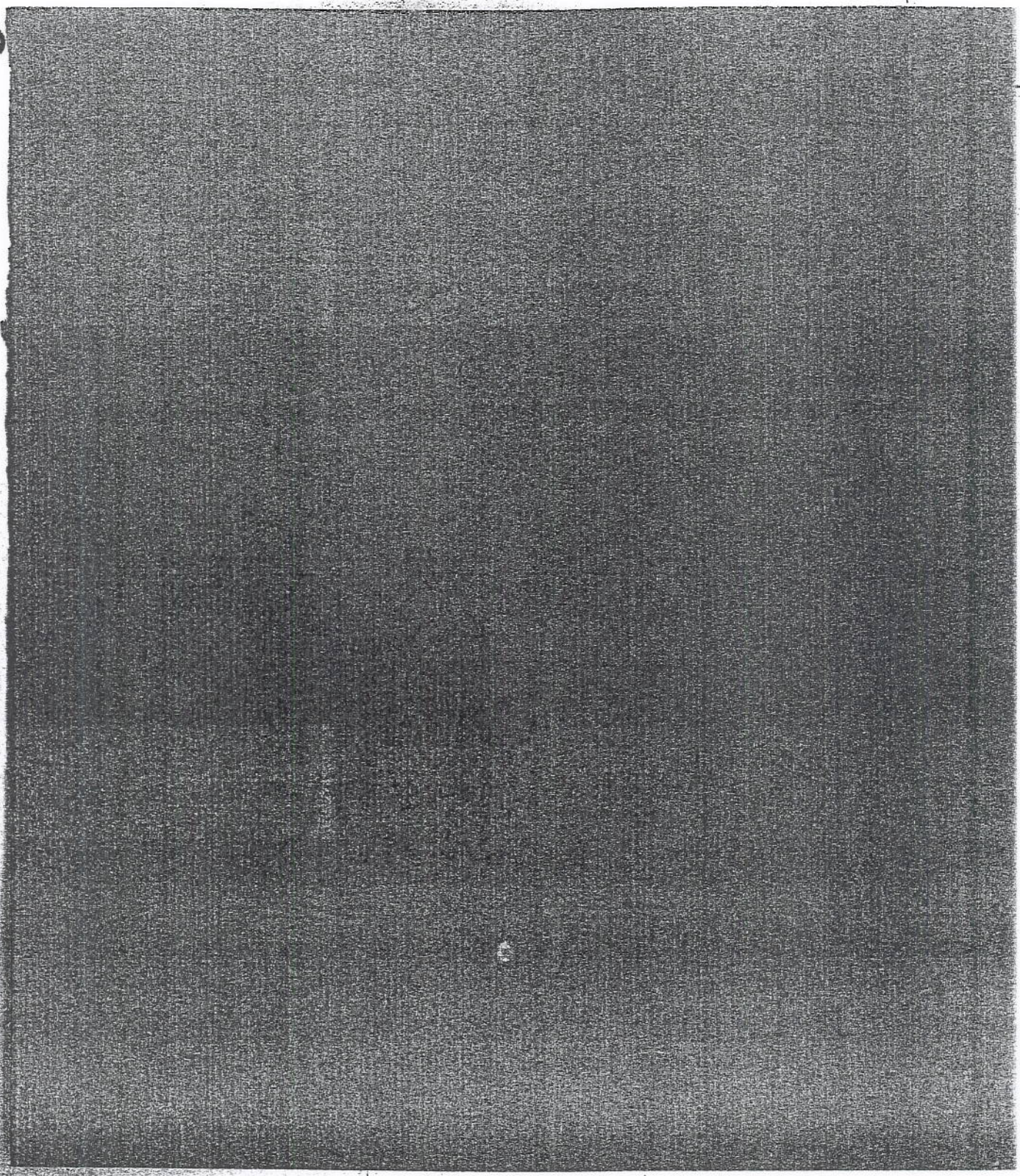
APPENDIX E

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