

COMMITTEE OF 100

OPEN LETTER



TO AN

OLD BAILEY COURT

This pamphlet is published and produced by the Committee of 100 from its offices at 13, Goodwin Street, London, N.4.

It is written in the form of an open letter to an Old Bailey Court. It is intended for the attention of the Judge, the jury and the public.

At the end of this pamphlet are the signatures of a number of individuals who take especial responsibility for its contents.

First Edition - November 1963 - 1,000 copies printed.

Cover Photo - Demonstrators crossing Green Park towards Buckingham Palace on Tuesday July 9th.

'Our tradition' - PM

From Hansard, June 27.

Mr. Driberg: While we all hope that Their Majesties will not be physically molested, as the Home Secretary has confirmed did not occur on a previous occasion, has the Prime Minister warned the Greek Government that there will be demonstrations on quite a substantial scale and that Her Majesty's Government will have no right whatsoever to stop these demonstrations if they are peaceful?

The Prime Minister: We all hope for the success of this visit, which marks a very long and close alliance between Britain and Greece in two wars. . . We have told the Greek Government that while we will take every precaution to see that there will be no incidents that will give rise to personal molestation, the ordinary rights of peaceful demonstration are, of course, part also of our tradition here.



PUBLIC BUILDING AND

MINISTRY OF WORKS

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Our reference: AF 6745/1

21st June, 1963.

Your reference:

Dear Sir,

I am replying to your letter of the 13th June in which you asked for permission to hold a meeting on Trafalgar Square on Saturday, 6th July.

The Minister has considered this request but has decided that it would not be in the public interest to allow such a meeting to be held.

Accordingly, I am to say that the permission required for this meeting under the Trafalgar Square Regulations cannot be given.

Yours faithfully,

(A. E. COULES)

T. Chandler, Esq.,
Secretary "Save Greece Now",
13, Goodwin Street,
LONDON, N.4.

OPEN LETTER TO AN OLD BAILEY COURT

Conspiracy Trial

Peter Moule and Terry Chandler, Secretary and Field Secretary of the Committee of 100, have been committed for trial at the Old Bailey on a number of charges including "conspiracy" and "incitement" because of their part in the organisation of demonstrations during the Greek State Visit last July.

This Pamphlet

We are taking the unusual step of publishing this pamphlet, giving evidence which we have the strongest grounds for believing will be excluded concerning two related issues:-

1) Evidence which will prove that the prosecution is being brought for political reasons; that Peter Moule and Terry Chandler are being made scape goats because the demonstrations during the Greek State Visit were such a serious embarrassment to the Governments of Greece and Britain.

2) Evidence which will show that Ministerial and Police powers were gravely abused in an attempt to prevent peaceful demonstrations.

Why ?

Our fear that this kind of evidence will be excluded is based on our previous experience. The last time that members of the Committee were on trial at the Old Bailey was in February 1962, when six members of the Committee, including Terry Chandler, faced charges of conspiracy to commit an offence under Section One of the Official Secrets Act by organising a demonstration at Wethersfield Air Base. The prosecution alleged that the demonstration was prejudicial to the safety and interests of the State. The Judge refused to hear evidence that the demonstration was not prejudicial even though such distinguished men as Sir Robert Watson-Watt, the inventor of radar, Doctor Linus Pauling, double Nobel Prize winner, Bertrand Russell, and Archbishop Roberts were prepared to give evidence to that effect.

We are determined to ensure that a similar miscarriage of Justice does not occur again. We are sure that you will understand the need for the Court and the public to have a full knowledge of all the relevant facts.

WHY WE DEMONSTRATED

- 1) Last Easter, the Greek Government banned the anti-nuclear Marathon-Athens march. 2,000 people were arrested, and the British contingent was deported.
- 2) Last May, Gregory Lambrakis, an independent Greek M.P., member of the Greek nuclear disarmament committee was murdered as he left a public meeting in Salonika. A few minutes earlier, the police and Government had refused him protection against those who had threatened his life. A number of senior police officers have since been indicted for moral complicity in the murder.
- 3) A State visit is a political demonstration of friendship between Governments. Our concern was to re-affirm the need for friendship between peoples. At the request of the Greek peace movement we decided to act with them against the tyranny in Greece and against the British Government's supporting such a regime.
- 4) Both Britain and Greece are members of the N.A.T.O. nuclear alliance. We wanted to show, in common with the Greek peace movement, our opposition to all military alliances.
- 5) We wanted to show solidarity with our Greek friends in prison, to protest against the Greek Government's responsibility for the murder of Lambrakis, and to demand that freedom of assembly and speech be allowed to all peoples.

We therefore decided to demonstrate during the Greek State visit.

DIPLOMATIC REPERCUSSIONS

The news of the planned demonstrations caused a political crisis in Greece. The Greek Prime Minister, Mr. Karamanlis, wanted, to call off the visit and he resigned in protest when Queen Frederika and King Paul insisted on going ahead with it. In his letter of resignation, Mr. Karamanlis specifically mentioned the planned demonstrations.

The success of the State visit became a matter of prime political importance both for Greek Royalty and for the British Government which was responsible for inviting them to this country.

GOVERNMENT REACTIONS

Ministry of Works

On June 21st, the Minister of Works refused to allow the Committee of 100 the use of Trafalgar Square for a meeting arranged for Saturday, July 6th, three days before the state visit started. Assurances had been given by the Committee that there would be no call for Civil Disobedience and that the meeting would follow the traditional form of public meetings in Trafalgar Square. The Minister, however, decided "that it would not be in the public interest to allow the meeting" and persisted in this decision even after two M.P.s - Anthony Greenwood and Joyce Butler had made representations to him.

The political nature of the Minister's decision is underlined by the fact that, on several previous occasions, the Committee of 100 had been allowed the use of Trafalgar Square after the same assurances were given that the Committee gave on this occasion. A Ministry spokesman will be called by Peter Moule and Terry Chandler to give evidence that, on these previous occasions, the meetings had been completely orderly and that the Committee have stood by their assurances.

All the evidence, therefore, suggests that the Minister gravely abused his power by preventing demonstration, which he knew would be peaceful and orderly simply because it embarrassed his government.

Special Branch Raids

On Monday, June 24th, at 5p.m., officers of the Special Branch raided the offices of the Committee of 100 and the homes of a number of Committee members, including Peter Moule and Terry Chandler. The Official Secrets' Act was used to obtain the search warrants and in addition to the material dealing with a forthcoming demonstration at Porton "Germ Warfare" Centre, papers and documents referring to the state visit were also taken.

Macmillan's Assurances

On Thursday, June 27th, Mr. Macmillan assured the House of Commons that the ordinary rights of peaceful demonstration would not be interfered with.

Police Commissioner Acts.

Mr. Macmillan's assurances proved valueless. Abuses of Government and police power followed. (On instructions from whom?) First, the City of London police made any form of demonstration or leaflet distribution in the City illegal. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Joseph Simpson, followed suit a few days later by invoking the Metropolitan Police Act of 1939 to ban demonstrations in practically the whole of Central London.

The police used their extensive powers to make illegal in London any pickets or protests, any procession or demonstration - even the wearing of black sashes in memory of Gregory Lambrakis was banned by the authorities. The Committee of 100 was warned by the police that anyone distributing leaflets anywhere within five miles of Charing Cross could be arrested for illegal advertising. One person, Jane Buxton, was not only prevented from distributing leaflets, but was also warned by the police that wearing a black sash with a nuclear disarmament sign on it constituted wearing a uniform and was, therefore, illegal. It was at this stage that Terry Chandler and Peter Moule were warned that they might face serious charges if the demonstrations went ahead.

The stage for the State Visit was now set....

You could welcome but not protest.

THE DEMONSTRATIONS

Committee
Goes
Ahead

In spite of this intimidation and abuse of power the Committee went ahead with the demonstrations. If the Government and the police had not interfered there would have been no more inconvenience to the public, no more obstruction than on a May Day Rally, a State Opening of Parliament, or any other procession or demonstration. The Committee did not plan to stage any sit-downs unless the police completely blocked the road and prevented the marches and vigils that were planned.

The
Demonstrations
Planned

The plans for the demonstrations were briefly as follows:-

Tuesday, July 9th.

12 noon - demonstrators with posters and black sashes to meet the royal couple at Victoria.

4.30p.m. - Delegation from Committee to lay wreath at tomb of unknown warrior in memory of Gregory Lambrakis.

7.30p.m. - March from Trafalgar Square to Buckingham Palace for a silent vigil.

Wednesday, July 10th.

7.30p.m. - Vigil at Aldwych Theatre with posters and black sashes.

Thursday, July 11th.

7.30p.m. - March from Trafalgar Square to Claridges for silent vigil.

The Committee planned to make use of the traditional freedom to demonstrate which the Prime Minister had assured the House of Commons would be preserved.

POLICE STATE WELCOME

Victoria Station

The Royal Visit began on July 9th with a massive police swoop on Milton Road, near Victoria Station, where demonstrators were due to assemble to greet the Royal couple. Thousands of police cordoned off the area, closed up Woolworth's store, and interfered with the free passage of hundreds of ordinary citizens. The State Procession drove from Victoria to Buckingham Palace, and effectively blocked three miles of London's streets. A number of demonstrators were arrested for obstructing the "free passage of the highway".

Trafalgar Square

The same evening the Committee called for an orderly march from Trafalgar Square to Buckingham Palace. We planned to hold a silent vigil there in memory of Lambrakis. Police cordons blocked the way wherever we went; horses were used against us; police motor-cyclists drove their machines into the crowd; 90 of us were arrested.

Guildhall and Aldwych

Next day the King and Queen had lunch at the Guildhall. Special 12-foot high barriers were erected to block the streets. Several demonstrators - standing quietly with posters - were arrested for obstructing the highway. In the evening the Royal Party went to the Aldwych Theatre. Every seat in the Theatre was booked by the Foreign Office. Three lines of Police kept the demonstrators away.

Claridges Hotel

Demonstrators on Thursday night were obstructed in their march from Trafalgar Square by numerous police cordons which were erected, so blocking streets throughout the West End. Opposite the Mayfair Restaurant there were fifty people clapping and waving Greek flags. They were allowed to stay there. Further up the road hundreds of peaceful demonstrators were "dealt with" by police on motor bikes, police on horseback, and police on foot.

Some of the demonstrators were, in fact, much noisier and angrier than they would have been, had there been no interference. The Committee did everything possible to minimise rowdiness, even in face of considerable provocation by the police, and condemns it where it did occur.

AFTER THE DEMONSTRATIONS

Arrests

So indiscriminate were the police in the arrests they made that large numbers of those arrested were released without charges being brought against them. Many of these were tourists and others who had no part in the demonstrations. Of those charged with disregarding the Commissioner's Regulations, very few were warned when arrested and policeman after policeman gave perjured evidence.

Magistrates' Court

At Marlborough St., at the hearing on Wednesday July 10th of those arrested on the previous night's demonstration, the magistrate, Mr. Edward Robey, remanded in custody for two days those who pleaded "not guilty". He refused all applications for bail, when the maximum penalty faced was a fine of 40 shillings. Many of those who did plead guilty were sent to jail if they could not produce immediately the fines and costs demanded of them, (time to pay being refused). Other courts imposed heavy costs and bindings-over.

Brick Cases

Eight people were taken to West End Central Police Station and presented with half a brick each, then charged with carrying offensive weapons. One of them, Donald Room, was lucky enough to be able to pay £180 for his defence. He was acquitted but refused costs. The others were found guilty and fined. In order to fully clear his name, Donald Room instituted proceedings against the police officer concerned. Since then, the police officer has entered a mental home; compensation of £1,600 has been offered to Donald Room and three of the others, and an enquiry is now taking place into all eight cases. There have been requests in the House of Commons for a full public enquiry into West End Central Police Station and into the whole handling of the Greek State Visit.

George Clark

On September 10th, George Clark was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment for alleged incitement. Thirteen defence witnesses testified that George Clark had not been seen to commit anything in the nature of incitement. Committee of 100 organisers confirmed that he had in no way been involved in the organising of the demonstrations. The court saw fit to ignore this evidence in favour of that of two police officers. The Court of Appeal quashed the conviction on the grounds of misdirection of the Jury but George Clark had already been in prison for ten weeks.

Frank
Adler

Frank Adler was also charged with incitement. He too, was found guilty on very doubtful police evidence and sentenced to be bound over for 3 years in the sum of £500. He is appealing but the appeal has not yet been heard. He has photographic evidence which will show conclusively that, once again, the police have perjured themselves.

Henry
Brooke

On Tuesday, July 9th, whilst moving the second reading of the Public Order Bill, Henry Brooke, the Home Secretary, said in effect that he would clear the streets of "Fascists, communists, the self-styled Committee of 100 and all other extremists." He also said that the police had their powers, and where necessary, they would, in consultation with him, use them..... "I most strongly hold the view that the way to stop disorder in the streets.....is for a court to be able to impose an exemplary sentence and then the deterrent does its work." Later, during the State Visit, Henry Brooke said that he was "furious" with the demonstrations. This is understandable as he had failed to prevent the demonstrations and his police through exercising their powers had provoked considerable disorder. Perhaps he now hopes, using this trial, to obtain his exemplary sentences.

Government
Fails

The Government failed to suppress the demonstrations. It is important to insist that it was the Government which tried to suppress them; it was the Minister of Works who refused to allow a traditional public demonstration in Trafalgar Square before the State Visit had started, and it was the Police Commissioners, acting under Home Office authority, who made, not only public demonstrations, but even leaflet distribution and the wearing of black sashes illegal. We ask you to imagine what would happen if the Government and the Police made habitual use of these powers. Any political demonstration could be suppressed at will.

Summing Up

We are sorry that this has had to be rather long. Here, in brief, are the main points:-

- 1) The Government and the police abused their power to suppress demonstrations that were a serious diplomatic embarrassment and had already brought about the downfall of the Greek Government.
- 2) Those who took part in the demonstrations were willfully disregarding the Commissioner's Regulations. But these regulations themselves were improperly used with the aim of preventing even such normal activities as distributing leaflets and selling newspapers sympathetic to the aims of the demonstrators.

3) The indictment of only two of those responsible for the demonstration is a piece of victimisation. The two are **accused** of conspiring "with others unknown". Many of the undersigned will declare that they are amongst those "others unknown", and share responsibility for the demonstrations.

4) We are issuing this pamphlet because we know, from past experience, that the court will rule irrelevant much of the **vital** evidence contained herein. But these rules were established to ensure impartiality. In this political prosecution impartiality can only be ensured if the Judges' rules are broken and the court made fully aware of the context in which the charges are brought.

5) We appeal to you to remember that when the verdict is brought in it will not only be a decision as to whether Peter Moule and Terry Chandler go to prison, perhaps for several years, it will also establish an important precedent. The verdict returned in this case may determine whether, in future, demonstrations in London are only permitted if they are approved by the government, or whether the "ordinary right of peaceful demonstration" is to be allowed to continue.

FREEDOM ON TRIAL

Free speech, free assembly, all the liberties that men have fought for since the days of Wat Tyler and the Peasants' Revolt are ours only as long as we fight for them. During the Greek state visit the government sought to deny us these basic rights. By insisting on their right to demonstrate, Chandler, Moule, and thousands of others fought to retain them.

This trial is not just the trial of Terry Chandler and Peter Moule, but also of our basic concepts of freedom and of your own liberty.

Every time bailiffs throw a family onto a street, everytime troops are used to break a strike, every time the Official 'Secrets' Act silences the press and stifles opposition, every time states-men threaten to blow us up with H-bombs, the frontiers of freedom are at stake.

TODAY YOU CAN DEFEND A SMALL PART OF THAT FRONTIER.

You may not agree with Terry Chandler and Peter Moule, but if you allow them to lie in prison for saying what they think, then the freedom and dignity of you and millions of your fellow men will be depleted just a little.

Freedom and dignity are too precious to throw away like that. It is your responsibility. You must not allow them to be convicted.

we, the undersigned, accept special responsibility for the contents of this pamphlet. We reaffirm that no one of us is any more or less involved than any other:

Peter Lumsden
Nicholas Bohm
Chris Cowley

George Melly

Wynford Hicks

Nicholas Watter
Rudolf Walter

Michael Pober
David G. Meyers

John Papworth

David McEllen
James C. Marshall
James Higgins
Cyril Seal
I. G. Rappaport
S. J. Wells

Ray John Williamson

Brenda Jordan
Ken Weller

Magnus

Diana Shelley
Nic Raboh

P. Sheave

Cynthia M. Taylor

Jongles Brewood

R. Scott

Rob Davis

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Philip Pearson

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Chris Peart

Annis K. Gould

Mary Tinker.

Gwyneth Owen
Wyn Gardner

Andrew Papworth

Elizabeth Gray

John Bannard

Kiranda Walker

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Alan Clark

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