

RACISM AND THE POLICE

Vishnu Sharma writes: The role of the police has become a central issue of anti-racist politics. Such questions as the constant harassment, and sometimes open attack on black communities, the police reaction to racist attacks, the actions of the SPG, police training, police liaison schemes, 'community policing', the use of SUS and associated laws, the new 'ideological' importance of statements by police chiefs, trade union rights for the police, the crucial issue of democratic control and accountability — these, and more, loom large in any serious discussion of 'institutionalised' racism and how to combat it.

To help forward understanding on these questions, and in particular to assist the process of drawing up clear proposals for which the labour, democratic and anti-racist movements can campaign, the National Race Relations Committee of the Communist Party is calling a National Conference on Saturday, 31 January.

The preliminary thinking is that there will be two main sessions, with a break for lunch. The first, which Stuart Hall has agreed to open, will place the question of the police and racism in a broader political context. The suggestion is that there should be special, prepared contributions to this session from a number of experts and activists, reflecting amongst other things, some of the key struggles, eg, Southall, St Paul's.

The second session we propose should centre very specifically on what demands the movement should be making. The suggestion is that Dave Cook will put forward for discussion some proposals on behalf of the Communist Party's National Race Relations Committee.

We are inviting a wide range of black people's organisations, political parties, anti-racist, civil liberties and legal organisations, labour movement bodies and individuals. If you are interested in participating please write to me at 16 St John St, London EC1.

VIETNAM

David Yuille writes: This year 1981 celebrates 30 years of solidarity and friendship for the British working people with Vietnam.

In 1951, the Britain Vietnam Committee was set up to aid the struggle against French colonialism. In 1969 the British Council for Peace in Vietnam (BCPV) was formed to lead the struggle in Britain against US neo-colonialism in Vietnam.

With the historic victory of Vietnam in 1975 and the defeat of the US aggressors, the BCPV was dissolved and the Britain Vietnam Association was formed to carry on the



political struggle to aid Vietnam, and counteract the lies and distortions of the media about this valiant country.

On September 27-28 1981, we hope to bring together all past supporters of Vietnam in a grand 2-day celebration.

Many of you will have pictures, posters, films of marches, pamphlets or songs relating to the Vietnam war. If so, please contact the BVA Secretary, Mrs Joan Yuille, North Downs, Bluebell Hill, Rochester, Kent, ME5 9RA. Tel 0634 61575.

HISTORY WORKSHOP 14

Rodney Mace writes: For the first time in its life, History Workshop met outside its traditional home at Ruskin College Oxford. Despite fears that its move to Brighton would cause a fall in numbers, nearly eight hundred people attended the *Language and History* weekend 14-16 November.

Divided into five separate groups (Learning and Language: Language of Socialism, Class and Ideology: Language, Power and Resistance: Language and Historical Change: Experience and the Language of History), nearly sixty 'papers' were presented.

Making choices as to what to go to was difficult, and people who just treated it like a cultural supermarket made continuity of discussion in some of the groups a little hesitant — a problem shared with CUL. Important to the development of the Workshop were the two mid-weekend discussions on the future: *what* and *how* should the Workshop discuss, and *where*. Many people felt it was about time that it went north.

However, as History Workshop 15 (1981) organisation needed to start straight away, it was generally agreed that this also should be in Brighton, with HW 16 (1982) moving north; initial preparations for which could begin soon. Anyone interested in participating in the planning of HW15 should contact Andy Durr, Brighton Polytechnic, Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 2JY.

WOMEN, POWER AND POLITICS

Alan Booth writes: The liberation of women is a fundamental necessity of the revolution, the guarantee of its continuity and the precondition of its victory'. Yet just how far has this been achieved in countries which have begun the-process of socialist change? This question is taken up in a new discussion booklet published by the Communist Party's Education Department.

The contributors examine and assess the extent to which the liberation of women has been achieved in four socialist countries at different stages of development: GDR, Soviet Union, China and Cuba. The final section looks at the contribution of the Women's Liberation Movement to the struggle for socialism. This is considered in the context of developing a broad democratic alliance to challenge the present power structures of capitalism.

The booklet's aim is to promote discussion and debate. It should, therefore, be particularly useful for discussion among communists, socialists and those active in the labour movement and the feminist movement.

Copies of *Women, Liberation and Socialism* are available from Education Dept, 16 St John Street, London EC1 (65p incl postage).

THE SECOND BOMBING OF COVENTRY

Sally Townsend writes: CND marks 40 years since the first bombing of Coventry — the blitz of 14 November 1940 — with the publication of *The Second Bombing of Coventry*, written by Mark Harrison.

The first bombing killed more than 500 people and caused extensive damage to the city's community and economy. The city survived and today is known for its post-war commitment to international reconciliation and social advance. *The Second Bombing of Coventry*, illustrated with maps and official data on weapons effects, looks at why a nuclear attack might be made on the city, and what form it might take ... in a nuclear war Coventry's experience of 1940 would not be repeated, under most circumstances the city would be destroyed as a community; under direct attack, almost everyone in it would die.

The pamphlet argues that the dangerous effects of nuclear weapons lie not only in their ability to deter attack or fight a war. More importantly, they are a possible cause of war — they create extremely strong incentives to pre-emptive aggression.

The Second Bombing of Coventry is available at 15p per copy (plus IOP postage) from: CND, 2 Lime Tree Avenue, Tile Hill, Coventry.