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# THE OBSERVER

14 DECEMBER 1969

IN TODAY'S 80-PAGE  
**COLOUR**  
MAGAZINE

## S. African Test tour worries county officials

by PETER WILBY and ROBERT CHESHYRE

DESPITE the unanimous decision of the Test and County Cricket Board that the South African cricket tour should go ahead next summer, most county secretaries are still very doubtful whether staging the matches will be practicable. Fears that the games cannot be played, widely expressed before the Lord's meeting, have not been allayed by what took place. The secretaries are the paid officials responsible for running the game, but when it comes to a major issue such as this it is not their word that counts.

Such decisions are taken by county club committees. Each club has one vote on the TCCB normally exercised by the committee chairman, though the secretary advises. The chairman is mostly a well-known county figure.

They came to Lord's last week determined, whatever the practical objections, to give the tour the go-ahead. A county secretary said yesterday: "This was their opportunity to apply all their dislike and loathing of permissiveness, demonstrators and long hair. Staging cricket matches is their chance to make a stand against these things."

The view of some secretaries is that both sides are set on a self-defeating course. Cricket will lose money and the demonstrators public sympathy.

This determination to back the tour made the issues at Lord's comparatively unimportant. Detailed questions about finance, protection of grounds, and even the possibility of curtailing the tour, and altering venues, were disposed of by the creation of a secret sub-committee to look at the practical side.

Already it is believed that the sub-committee will have to recommend the cancellation of the tour. Two games to be played on open grounds. When all the problems have been examined, the euphoric unanimous decision may prove to have been wildly optimistic.

The chairman believes they are not going to face anything like the astronomically high public bills that are being quoted. Right clubs have only been paying a fraction of the true cost of police protection.

At Manchester, where the total police cost for the Springboks' game last month was £7,500, the club was only charged £333.15. For 100 police inside for a mere two hours, even on the basis of a three-day first-class match would cost the clubs nearly £2,000. The minimum police bill for the whole tour—for what most secretaries consider inadequate protection—would be well over £80,000. It has been charged the true cost, up to £7,000 a day, the tour would be utterly ruinous.

In addition, security firms will have to be hired for days, and nights before, to protect cricket grounds, which are immeasurably more vulnerable than rugby grounds to attempts at sabotage.

## 1,500 join Springboks protest

from our Correspondent

CARDIFF, 13 December. ABOUT 1,500 anti-apartheid demonstrators held an orderly march through Cardiff today before the Cardiff Springboks match.

At Cardiff Arms Park, where streets were cordoned off by some of the hundreds of police on duty, chanting pickets shouted "Springboks No" and "Cardiff Shame" at rugby enthusiasts entering the ground.

Few demonstrators got inside for the all-ticket match, which the Springboks won 17-3. When some of them tried to climb a barbed wire fence between the enclosures and the pitch they were stopped by police and play was not interrupted.

The marchers had included clergymen, university lecturers, school teachers, representatives of the Labour Party and Young Liberals and a number of trade unionists, including a large contingent from the National Union of Mineworkers.

## 'Red alert' for influenza

BIRMINGHAM'S regional hospital board has issued a "red alert" for influenza. It has ordered a four-hospital groups in the city after 150 cases and staff have been hit by influenza. Admissions is being kept at a minimum.

Under the control of the board, the populations of France and Italy are reported to have become victims of Asian flu, and the epidemic is spreading in Austria, Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland.

## Angry farmers stop traffic

More than 100 farmers brought traffic to a standstill yesterday at Newton Abbott, Devon. They arrived on 50 tractors and protested for an hour against the leadership of the National Farmers Union.

This was the first time that a group of farmers has staged a protest against the National Farmers Union. The group was led by Mr. J. H. Jones, a farmer from Newton Abbott.



LAST SHOW

## Russians put new pressure on Israel

from DEV MURARKA: Moscow, 13 December

THE RUSSIANS have decided that greater pressure should be put on Israel in an attempt to force a peace settlement in the Middle East.

This has become apparent after the high level talks between the United Arab Republic and Soviet leaders in Moscow this week.

Because of the need to use pressure against Israel short of full scale war, the Soviet leadership is now openly giving its blessing to the Palestinian guerrillas.

This is not a decision taken on the spur of the moment. It is the result of a long process of thought which began in October this year when a speech in Budapest by Mr. Shelepin, the Soviet trade union leader and Praesidium member, gave the first official hint on the back to the Arab guerrillas.

It is no secret that the Russians have been critical of the guerrillas until recently because of their extremism.

The Soviet change of attitude is therefore deliberate and is partly based on Russian recognition of the growth in the stature of the guerrillas, who have proved that they have to be reckoned with by the

aircraft he wanted, the Israelis would face a grave dilemma—so grave that the risks of a pre-emptive Israeli strike could not be ruled out and this could precipitate a crisis of great magnitude.

Vigilance round UAR airfields could be intensified and underground hangars built to protect the aircraft from such an attack.

The Russians cannot permanently embargo the supply of missile-carrying aircraft because it will not only offend the Arabs, but undermine the belief in Soviet support to their cause.

The talks held here have obviously gone over this ground. The tone of general satisfaction generated by the communiqué indicates that the Egyptians have not gone away disappointed and the question is still open.

For the Russians the decision will be a momentous one, as announced as the first supply of Communist arms to Egypt in September 1955. But it is difficult to see, unless a political solution is found in the intervening period, how in the long run Moscow can avoid responding to the Egyptian request positively.

OUR DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT writes: Russia's dilemma over supplying long-range weapons to the Egyptians is heightened by current deteriorating relations between the Egyptian forces and Soviet advisers in Egypt.

Egyptian officers have complained both of the "patronising" attitude of Soviet advisers and of the failure of the Soviet Union to supply badly needed spares and ammunition for weapons delivered since the Suez war.

In some cases this appears to be direct administration of the hand in other, it seems to be part of the Soviet policy of keeping Egypt short of the supplies that would enable its forces to undertake a major (and probably suicidal) new offensive against Israel.

Reports have reached London of leaflets circulating in Cairo and Alexandria urging Egyptian officers to rally to the defence of five of their comrades accused of causing the death of a Soviet colonel called Konolov.

He is said to have died during an Israeli attack from the sea, after refusing to give an Egyptian missile crew the fuses necessary to fire surface missiles at the Israeli ships.

Whether or not the incident really occurred (clandestine pamphlets in Egypt can have many sources) there is no doubt that the Russians are under pressure to give more active evidence of support for Arab militancy against Israel.

It is unlikely, however, that Moscow will be stampeded into risking a new Middle East war that could embroil Russia and the United States.

**My Lai battle**  
AMERICAN troops killed 53 Vietcong in heavy weekend fighting only one mile from the village of My Lai, scene of an alleged massacre of civilians 21 months ago. —Reuter.

**£25,000 winner**  
THE weekly £25,000 Premier Bond prize, announced yesterday, was won by BT 980590. The winner lives in Bristol.

**Street dancing**  
The crowd cheered and danced in the streets, waving their banners and bicycles in the air.

RAI flagging operations at F. Aden will be transferred to Aden in Cyprus.



VICKY HAWKINS

## First jumbo jet crash

RENTON, WASHINGTON, 13 December

A BOEING JUMBO jet being delivered to Pan American Airways crash-landed here tonight in the first accident involving the new giant aircraft.

No one was injured but the 350-seater Boeing 747 was badly damaged and gouged up most of the runway after its wheels hit the embankment at the end of the airfield.

One engine was ripped off and another left dangling from its pod as the plane touched down at the end of a ferry flight, without passengers, from the Boeing plant in Seattle.

Earlier today Pan American took delivery of another Boeing 747 Jumbo, its first. It is expected to go into service on the transatlantic route in January or February. Flying from New York to London and Frankfurt.

**Hi-jack plane lands at Addis**  
ADDIS ABABA, 13 December.—The Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 707 which survived a hijack attempt over the Mediterranean on Friday night arrived in Addis Ababa today with the bodies of the two would-be hi-jackers, who had been shot by security men on the aircraft.

The plane was going from Madrid to Addis Ababa when the attempt was made. The passengers were left behind in Athens.

Propaganda leaflets for the Moslem separatist Eritrean Liberation Front, which opposes the Ethiopian Government, were found on the men. According to official sources here, the men were Ethiopians.

**60 crashes in M6 fog**  
BOTH carriageways of the M6 near Wigan, Lancashire, were closed for a time yesterday to allow some 60 vehicles involved in crashes to be removed. Fifteen people were injured, none seriously, in the series of accidents, which occurred as drivers hit dense fog.

One policeman said: "They just won't take their feet off. They think it won't happen to them—and then—bang!" More fog was forecast. Beating the fog: Page 18

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**Financial scandal in Bulgaria**  
by LAJOS LEDERER

EIGHTEEN leading officials of the Bulgarian Government and Communist Party have been dismissed and will be brought to trial in what appears to be the Communist world's biggest financial scandal. High-ranking Russian officials may be involved.

Gross irregularities in at least three Bulgarian Ministries—Foreign Trade, Transport and Finance—have been alleged after an investigation ordered by the Prime Minister, Mr. Todor Zhivkov. They are said to have caused enormous damage to the economy of Bulgaria, Russia's most loyal ally in the Eastern bloc.

The scandal involves the two largest state trading organisations, the Bulgarian Merchant Fleet and the economic group Pirm, which are predominantly engaged in trade with the Soviet Union.

As a result of the investigation, which has been carried out in great secrecy since early October, the Minister of Transport, Mr. Marin Vachkov, and leading officials of Pirm and the Merchant Fleet have been sacked. They include the general director of Pirm and five of his deputies, and the Merchant Fleet general director, Mr. Georgi Naydenov, and six of his colleagues. Communist Party representative with both groups Mr. Ventslav Naumov, has been dismissed and expelled from the party for lack of vigilance and unsoundness.

All these men will be tried for corruption and violation of State and financial discipline inflicting great damage to the State.

Nothing like it has happened before in a Communist State. The belief that high-ranking Russians may be involved arises from the arrival in Bulgaria last week of the Soviet security chief, Yuri Andropov, with a large team of KGB men.

Bulgarian and Soviet official announcements said that Andropov had come at the invitation of the Bulgarian Minister of the Interior, Mr. Angel Solakov, and that he was received by the Premier and Party

## INQUIRY

from NEAL ASCHERSON in Milan, and MICHAEL DAVIE and FRANCES CAIRNCROSS in Rome

## 480 held in terrorist bombs hunt

IT WAS the black Saturday of young Italian radicals. In the wake of Friday's bombings, the police fell on the whole extra-Parliamentary opposition of Milan and Rome, right-wing and left. In Milan at least 400 have been arrested. In Rome the total is about 80 so far. Police wagons carried off the files of dozens of student groups and political youth movements.

Meanwhile, anxious groups stood about on street corners in every town in Italy discussing the situation, while the flags on the town halls are at half-mast. There is anger, fear, but above all there is the shock to the fundamental humanity of Italians. The 14 dead of Milan, most of them elderly farmers and cattle breeders from Lombardy, blown up when a bomb exploded in the Agriculture Bank in Milan, will have a majestic funeral on Monday in Milan Cathedral. The Prime Minister, Senor Mariano Rumor, will fly from Rome to attend. All Italy pays its respects in different ways.

The nation's favourite television programme has been cancelled. The Scala in Milan is shutting. The trades unions have put off the beginning of the strike of railwaymen and civil servants until Wednesday.

While the great police drive against the 'sects' goes ahead, the Minister of the Interior has banned Sunday's political meetings. He has his eye on the all-Italy rally of neo-Fascists due in the Olympic stadium at Rome.

So far, however, nobody knows whether the synchronised bombs were left off by Left or Right. A Milan judicial spokesman said that all the evidence pointed to leftists, to anarchists or to the Workers Control People. But the Milanese police are on this: only a few weeks ago they lost a man brained by somebody unidentified in a clash with Maoists, and a mutiny in police barracks followed.

The Left in Milan argues, plausibly, that the bombs were a fascist provocation: the anarchists, and a new letters would neither bother to defile the Unknown Soldier in Rome (the monument was damaged) nor give their average intelligence and quality about bloodshed—commit massacre.

The detectives, at least, obviously have an open mind. One of them flew to Geneva on Saturday to look into a 'tribune de Geneva' account of Greek threats to wreak havoc in European cities when Greece was thrown out of the Council of Europe. The Observer's revelations about Greek plots with the Italian far Right, still echo on. The Communist daily 'Unità' hinted that the colonels might have had a hand in the Milan outrage, while the police in Rome turned over the pro-colonel Greek students with the others.

A little more is emerging about the bombs themselves. The first Milan bomb was a 'crucially huge charge, something like a stone weight of dynamite in an aluminium container, concealed in a briefcase. The second bomb, which was put in the lift of the Commercial Bank but failed to explode, was even bigger.

The terrorists used a 10-second fuse with the bomb that did go off, sliding the case under the big eight-sided table which stood in the centre of the bank's concourse. The bank was full, mostly rich farmers and dealers settling up the week's accounts before a last drink with friends when the bank shut.

Those writing cheques at the central table were simply torn to pieces.

**Steel men strike in Wales**  
from BEATA LIPMAN  
CARDIFF, 13 December  
ALL IRON and steel making at the huge Spencer works at Llanwern, Monmouthshire, was stopped early today by an unofficial strike of 250 blast-furnace men.

The management will start announcing lay-offs on Sunday and 9,000 jobs are threatened. The strike, which is in defiance of union instructions, is in support of a bonus claim.

The motor industry, which gets 35 per cent of its sheet steel from the works, will feel the effects almost at once.

Blast-furnace men voted overwhelmingly for the strike—against expectations, because their action will mean hardship just before Christmas.

A world shortage of steel means that the British market will be hit hard, especially since a similar strike at the Abbey works, Port Talbot, in July and August has meant that production there is still not back to normal.

**60 crashes in M6 fog**  
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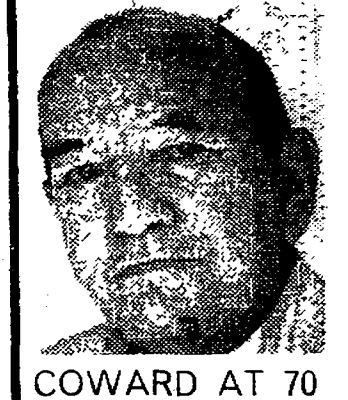
As a result of the investigation, which has been carried out in great secrecy since early October, the Minister of Transport, Mr. Marin Vachkov, and leading officials of Pirm and the Merchant Fleet have been sacked. They include the general director of Pirm and five of his deputies, and the Merchant Fleet general director, Mr. Georgi Naydenov, and six of his colleagues. Communist Party representative with both groups Mr. Ventslav Naumov, has been dismissed and expelled from the party for lack of vigilance and unsoundness.

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COULD THE WAR HAVE BEEN WON A YEAR SOONER?  
HOW TO BUY A GENUINE PICASSO WITHOUT GOING BANKRUPT  
AGATHA CHRISTIE: FOR WHOM CRIME ALWAYS PAYS  
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Warrant Officer Borlase.

## Hunt for soldier

by ANDREW WILSON  
our Defence Correspondent

SECURITY experts have joined the Army's Special Investigation Branch in inquiries into the disappearance of Warrant Officer Eric Borlase, a Royal Engineer at NATO's Northern Army Group headquarters at Rheindahlen, Germany.

Borlase, 35 and unmarried, had access to operational secrets and a penchant for long-distance walking. He was last reported seen in uniform at breakfast on Monday.

A search of his room showed that he had left his uniform behind and had apparently changed into his civilian outfit.

German newspapers will today print appeals asking anyone who may have seen Borlase to report it. Hospitals have been asked to scrutinise their casualty lists.

The SIB is puzzled by Borlase's appearance at breakfast. He was recognised by a German waitress in No 1 Garrison Sergeants' Mess. But there was nobody else in the dining room and she could have been mistaken.

Borlase's duty involved classified staff work in the Engineering Division of Northern Army Group HQ.

The Army Group is operationally responsible for the defence of NATO's most important front, stretching from the Baltic to Bavaria.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence said in London: "It is almost 100 per cent unlikely that he would have handled anything classified above 'Confidential', which most of us deal with in the Defence press office every day."

# Greek exiles hope US will get tough too

from ROBERT STEPHENS and ROY PERROTT

PARIS, 13 December. THE EXCLUSION of Greece from the Council of Europe is regarded by Greek opposition leaders as only the first step towards a wider international boycott of the colonels' regime.

They see Greek membership of NATO as the next target and believe the chief importance of the council's resolution lies in the hope that it will influence the United States to take a less indulgent attitude towards the junta.

But short of new, strong public pressure on them, the European Governments concerned are likely to disappoint such expectations. Even yesterday's watered-down resolution was taken only with considerable difficulty, and the attitude of most Governments altered only after a gesture that would satisfy public opinion without committing the Governments to any further action.

Not even the Scandinavian members of NATO have any intention of raising Greece's position within the alliance. The Danish Foreign Minister, Mr Paul Hartvig, told us yesterday that Denmark, which is the only country so far to have referred even obliquely to the Greek situation at a NATO council meeting, had no intention of questioning Greek membership of NATO.

A spokesman of the West German Government, whose decision to press for the suspension of Greece was a clinching element in the Council of Europe's discussions, said afterwards that the exclusion of Greece from the council would have no effect on Bonn's relations with Athens in other fields, particularly in NATO or EEC.

Economic and cultural relations between Germany and Greece would continue as before. This is also the position of the British and French Governments. France was in any case only a belated and lukewarm supporter

of the exclusion of Greece from the Council of Europe.

Although Greece has been excluded from the political activities of the Council of Europe, she remains legally and for administrative purposes a member of the council until the end of next year and a signatory of the Convention on Human Rights for the next six months.

This has, theoretically at least, one advantage. It means that Greece is still legally bound by the rules of the council and of the Human Rights Convention. It gives the council a legal basis if it wishes to continue to concern itself with the situation in Greece, including the report of the European Commission on Human Rights.

Leaders of the Greek opposition in exile, interviewed by the political committee of the Council of Europe in private session, gave an assurance that they are ready to form an all-party transitional Government on the departure of the junta.

There is now a genuine sense of co-operation among the parties, from the right wing to the moderate Left; and they are willing to serve under the premiership of the former Prime Minister, Mr C. Karamanlis, who now lives in exile in Paris.

This was the first time the exiled leaders had been able to make such a formal declaration of intent and willingness to co-operate.

The three ex-Ministers interviewed were: Mr Andreas Papanastasiou, Mr Constantinos Mitsotakis, and Mr George Mylonas. All three said there was no chance of a compromise solution with the colonels.

The news of the junta's withdrawal left opposition leaders moderately happy. The Greek people, they thought, would feel encouraged that a European majority had taken a stand on their behalf. They would feel less isolated and let down. The time for a stronger passive resistance from the people at large has now come, Mr Mylonas told us.



Anxious Milanese crowd round barriers outside the bank where 14 people were killed in a bomb explosion.

# Italy: Fear of revolt returns

(Continued from page 1)

pieces when the bomb went off. The clerks around the counters were blown through the wall. A chandelier disintegrated into shrapnel. The terrible pictures in the Milanese Press renew the terror of the nihilistic bombing wave of the nineties. The old description of the nihilistic bomb as 'the infernal machine' suddenly displays its meaning.

Something like this happened here in 1922, when three anarchists killed 20 people with a bomb in the Teatro di Diana. On Saturday night crowds still waited outside the heavy old palace near the cathedral which housed the Agricultural Bank. The trusty iron shutters were down; workmen carried out hods of debris. There was not much to see. But for the Milanese, who stand there bitterly accusing one another's political leaders of cold-blooded murder, their city has been dealt a scar which will not fade away.

In Rome, after Friday's bombings there, police were guarding broken glass and stones at the base of the colossal Victor Emmanuel monument. In the gutter, trampled flysheets advertise the

## INQUIRY

neo-Fascist rally boldly planned for today in the huge Olympic sports stadium. Nearby, another bomb has shattered three windows of the church above the Forum where Gibbon heard the bare-footed friars singing vespers when the idea of writing 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' first started to his mind.

The question is whether the three broken windows may be harbingers of the decline and fall of Italian democracy.

In any other European country, the events that have shaken Italy in the past few weeks, culminating in Friday's brutal bombings, could be interpreted as the certain prelude to some monstrous national convulsion.

In the case of Italy, no one can be sure. The one evident fact is that the bombings have added a sudden, unforeseen and alarming air of crisis to a country already irritable and jumpy.

For three months Italy has been experiencing every type of civil commotion: strikes, sit-ins, lock-outs, *contestazioni*, a

police mutiny, riots leading to deaths. This week, those on 'strike' have included school-teachers, telephone workers, employees of the Ministry of Finance, tax collectors, Government auditors, the Merchant Navy.

Yet, despite the formidable amount of civil unrest and the diffused but general anger about the urgent need for reform of hospitals, schools, universities, the tax system and the Byzantine bureaucracy, the feeble central Government seemed to be over the worst.

Almost every one of the country's 20 million or so workers had struck as their contracts ran out; but most of the big pace-making contracts had at last been renegotiated and the rest were beginning to fall into line. It seemed that Italy had come through the hot autumn singed but intact. Then came the bombs.

Who had an interest in bringing the crisis to the boil again? Possibly the extreme nihilist Left, though the co-ordination of the explosions seems beyond their muzzy patterns of action. The theory making most headway so far is that this was recognisable far-Right terrorism, but that even the 'moderate' Right stands to gain from it.

Nobody is crazy enough to blame President Saragat for the bombings. But the entire Left is saying today that his 'strategy of tension' indirectly encouraged the far Right to go over to terrorism.

It was in July that Saragat brought about the split of the Italian Socialists. The famous 'Centre-Left' coalition collapsed, leaving Mariano Rumor and his Christian Democrats alone in a minority Government and steering into the hurricane of the 'hot autumn' wage demands.

Saragat's motives in creating the split were evidently subtle. He was trying less to influence his own Socialists than to shift the Christian Democrats to the Right. The calculation was that Rumor's Government would be brought to its knees by industrial uproar, that a crisis election would be held in the New Year, and that fear of Communism would wipe out at the polls the strong Leftish wing of the Christian Democrats. This would rule out any chance of a coalition with the Communists.

But the forecast did not work out. Those who made it had underestimated the caution of the Communists. Far from encouraging chaos the Italian Communists have emerged as the 'party of order'.

The parallel with 1968 in France is haunting. This year opened with wild revolutionary outbreaks among workers, peasants and students throughout Italy, a sort of prolonged 'Paris May'. Gradually, as in France, the Communist Party turned this wave of energy from a call to 'smash the system' into a massive, orderly wage demand. Now comes the reaction of public shock and exhaustion which won de Gaulle his election. But can Saragat hope for the same?

For the whole political line-up on the Right, from the Saragat Socialists to the neo-Fascists, the unexpected mildness of the 'hot autumn' threatened to puncture the fear of revolution they were counting on. Those who planted the bombs have brought that fear back to Italy.

Even before the bombings, general public despair over any hope of political remedies had helped to bring about more and more unorthodox action outside the regular political context. Last year was the year of the students. This year has been the year of the workers. The Communists, fearful of being outflanked to the left, have taken to the streets with Maoists and Catholics not simply to add urgency to their wage claims but to protest about social issues—housing, schools, hospitals—while knowing with absolute certainty that the present Government is too weak to meet their grievances.

At the same time, the Right has been talking more and more confidently about extra-parliamentary 'solutions'.

There has been talk of right-wing action groups, and of right-wing citizens' committees of public safety. The strength of the far Right in the Chamber of Deputies is 61 out of a total of 630.

Most calm observers here—especially so now that 15 million Italians are down with flu—regard the Italian Right simply as part of the unpleasant underworld of democracy: poseurs and romantics lost in violent day-dreams and capable of attracting

only the type of student skinhead who joins the student neo-Fascist organisation of FUSN, some of whose members wear broad bells with detachable bicycle chains concealed inside.

These observers dismiss the possibility of any type of right-wing coup. The Italian Army has no tradition of political action, and is in any case a conscript army, full of men who were workers yesterday and will be workers again tomorrow. Nor, they say, is there any solid evidence that the police harbour political ambitions.

None of this reassures the Left, who for months have been nervously expecting a counter-attack from the Right against the growing influence of the Communists.

This is the volatile situation into which fell first the reports of Greek plotting in Italy (reported in THE OBSERVER last Sunday and subsequently taken up, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, by the Italian Press) and then, far more serious, the multiple bombings of Friday.

Before Friday, the official figures for the past 18 months were 23 left-wing bombings and 28 right-wing bombings.

These and other acts of violence had already begun to provoke the beginnings of a backlash from the lower middle class and the *petit-bourgeois*.

But politically, at the moment, these people have nowhere to go. They, above all others, feel themselves cut off from the politicians, regarding them as petty and corrupt men interested in nothing except place and patronage. Thus the dominant characteristic of the Italian scene has been that virtually everyone wants a change of some sort, and knows that the present system can scarcely totter on; yet no one has the power, or the opportunity, to act.

Already our political machiners is beginning to sense the public urgency and to respond. Conservation may soon become the leading domestic issue, thanks to the students.

# Pollution is latest campus cause

from JOYCE EGGINTON

NEW YORK, 13 December. AMERICAN student protest movement is taking an unexpected new direction.

The students' deep, overwhelming concern now is to prevent the advance of technology from destroying the earth's natural systems. Towards this end they have begun to form action groups with odd new names such as 'Ecology Student Association' and 'Students for Environmental Control'. The movement is spreading at a tremendous rate, from campus to campus across the nation. Originating in California—where students are involved in battles to save some of the world's most magnificent open spaces from the encroachment of power plants and automobiles—it is now beginning to reach the East Coast.

The immediate issues vary from one university to the next. At Columbia, in the heart of New York City, student protest is directed against the project to activate a nuclear reactor which was built on the campus for teaching purposes. At the University of Texas, law students are enthusiastically investigating means of bringing court actions against despoilers of the environment. In Boston, a student group known as Ecology Action, mockingly presented its 'pollution award' to local power company. At the University of Illinois, a body of conservation-conscious students went out in freezing weather to remove six tons of refuse from a river.

Michigan students have been organising the construction of small parks on waste land.

Professor Barry Commoner, Director of the Centre for the Biology of Natural Systems at Washington University, St. Louis, predicts that by next spring all these various protest groups will have come together as a major political student movement.

Professor Commoner—a leading conservationist who had been addressing audiences of students and politicians across the country—has himself warned that, by disrupting nature's chemical balances, technological advance in the United States is approaching the point of no return, and that this suicidal course 'must be reversed within the next generation.'

From my knowledge of what is happening in universities in California and across the Mid West, he said, 'it is clear that we shall soon have a new political movement among students which is based upon the crisis for survival. They, more than any other group, are sensing that this is an age of ecological catastrophe. And in the next two months they will grow to represent not merely a coalescence of environmental concern, but a spearhead of national political activity.'

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