

Workers' fight

5p

No. 89 — March 8th to 14th 1975



THE JOBS FIGHT

A MASSIVE demonstration of textile workers crowded through Wigan, in Lancashire, on March 4th, in protest at the announcement by Courtauld's that 350 workers would be sacked at the Empress Mill at the end of the month.

Of course, there have been bigger sackings than this in recent weeks. But the context of this was rather worse: Courtauld's have just put 5,000 people in the North West on short time working for the third time this year. And it is estimated that about 55,000 of the 80,000 labour force in the cotton and man-made fibres industry in the North West are on short time, as are 50,000 out of Yorkshire's 70,000 wool industry.

LIMIT

The march through Wigan was well attended by textile trade union officials and local MPs. But with one exception they all announced the same 'solution' for "the industry": import restrictions. Within two days, Lord Kearton — a close friend and political supporter of Harold Wilson and boss of Courtauld's — announced that the sackings would be deferred. This statement came after a meeting between him and a delegation from the mill and was in the form of a joint declaration. The deferment, it stated, was to allow time for further pressure to be brought on the government to limit textile imports.

Last week Workers Fight reported that Communist Party shop stewards at Ford's were pressing the same demand for the motor industry. And Merseyside Plessey workers (unlike their brothers in Portugal, who have sought help from Plessey workers in Britain in their fight against redundancies) have also opted for a purely nationalist line: the GPO, they demand, shouldn't buy from Sweden, it should buy British.

Likewise, much of the talk around the sit-in at Imperial Typewriters at Hull has been narrowly

DON'T BACK THE UNION JACK

nationalistic.

Those who many workers look to for a working class lead have done nothing to fight this nationalism. In Leicester, the site of the other Imperial Typewriters factory due for closure, the Communist Party has issued a leaflet saying "already Leicester has lost out to the Japanese and American corporations in the hosiery machine industry — soon we will be importing machines from abroad, while Leicester engineers remain jobless."

Conveniently for these people, this nationalist line chimes in perfectly with their "No to the Common Market" campaign — not to mention chiming in perfectly with the nationalist and racist

prejudices revealed during the strike last summer at Imperial Typewriters factory in Leicester.

This co-incidence means a real strengthening of nationalist ideas in the working class.

What does the demand for import control really mean? First and foremost, it means not fighting capitalism which is an international system on an international basis. Instead it means drawing divisions between the workers of one country and the workers of another.

When British boot and shoe workers demand that East European boots be kept out of Britain they are aiming at guaranteeing their own employment and standard of living. But what

they are aiming at and what they are hitting are two different things.

The chief beneficiaries of such a demand are the most immediate enemies of these poorly paid workers, their own bosses. And among the victims are East European workers who no less than British workers need jobs and improvements in their living standards.

The same is true of the textile unions' demand to keep imported yarn out of Britain. And the same is true again of the demand to keep US and Common Market goods out.

Protectionism, if it were to be adopted as a policy by the labour movement, would mean that movement losing any claims to be part of an international working class movement, and therefore with it any hopes of destroying capitalism, a world-wide system.

UNITY

The Wigan case shows this clearly. The outcome of a vigorous march calling for trade union unity (judging by the banners) was ... the unity of the trade unions and the chairman of Courtauld's — the company they started off fighting — in demanding special treatment from the government.

From a fight against Kearton and all he stands for, the whole protest was quickly turned into a "Save Courtauld's" exercise.

This is the reality of the import control slogan. It means an immediate turning aside from class struggle, and the adoption instead of class collaboration. And it is a short step from seeing a successful industry as a precondition for good wages and conditions, to accepting poor wages and conditions when the capitalists say that it is the only way to keep industry successful.

Import restriction, national protectionism, has ever been the motto of the most backward sections of capitalism. Socialists must see to it that it is not allowed to infiltrate any further the more advanced sections of labour.

The fight against redundancies, short time

CONTD. BACK PAGE

JENKINS' THOUGHT POLICE GO INTO ACTION

Six months for selling a poster

A man was sent to jail last week for 6 months and fined £400 for offering a poster for sale.

So much for those who thought that the 'censorship' clauses of the Jenkins Prevention of Terrorism Act were not going to be used.

So far, the aspects of the Act giving wider powers to the police to search, arrest and hold people, have been widely used. Massive dragnet 'fishing' operations have meant that ordinary Irish people have been arrested and held for several days, sometimes denied access to a lawyer, and then released because the police never intended to charge them with anything anyway.

The powers of exclusion have also been used, with men being sent to Ireland after having lived here for many years, forcing families apart or uprooting them. Again, without any charges being given, or any evidence being challenged in a court of law.

The case of Mr. James Fegan of Glasgow is the first under the 'censorship' clauses. These are loosely worded, but can mean that anyone selling or even just carrying anything that could be taken as a sign of support for a banned organisation (the IRA) can get a maximum of 6 months and/or a £400 fine.

James Fegan got both.

Demonstrate for Shrewsbury 2

NORTH WALES CHARTER DEFENCE SHUTS UP SHOP

THE North Wales 24 Charter Defence Committee has shut up shop. In a leaflet headed "final bulletin" the committee announced its desertion from the struggle to FREE THE TWO.

Tagged onto the end of the statement is the remark "the committee will still remain alive." But what meaning can be attached to this purely verbal concession to the need to continue the struggle to free Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson, when it appears after the declaration that "this bulletin will be the last written by this committee" and just before a polite notice that the books will be open to inspection should anybody want to see where the money went? There is only one meaning: even the deserters who have taken this decision have a sense of shame.

The formal notice states that "After careful consideration the North Wales 24 Charter Defence Committee has decided that this bulletin will be the last written by this committee. We are still faced with the fact that our two brothers remain wrongfully imprisoned, but even so the campaign has undoubtedly been a great success, bringing to light the dangers in the use of conspiracy laws against trade unionists in struggle."

This last "consolation" makes a mockery of the whole campaign. The campaign was and still is a campaign to FREE THE TWO and nothing less. Only recently WORKERS FIGHT attacked the Communist Party's attempt to drag the campaign in the direction of a change in the conspiracy laws. We pointed out then that while reforms in this area were, of course, desirable, the real aim of the Communist Party was to divert away from the most obvious and legitimate focus of the campaign — the release of Des and Ricky — and deliver the movement into the hands of the left MPs and trade union bureaucrats and away from rank and file action.

This is exactly what has happened. The CP, which dominates the North Wales 24 Charter Defence Committee, has ditched the fight just when it has become an issue known to millions of trade unionists. Just when the campaign (which has now been taken up by the T'GWU) to press the TUC to name the day for a general strike to free the Two has reached a high point, just when the TUC's shameful prevarications are being exposed to a large number of trade unionists — just now, the Communist Party leads the retreat!

There can, unfortunately, be no doubt that this desertion will be a signal for others. This committee, after all, was for obvious reasons the lynch-pin of the central campaign to free the jailed pickets.

But just as this committee was not the first to be active on the issue, it is not the last. Trade unionists will be staging demonstrations in Leicester and in Lincoln to protest the transfer to closed prisons in these towns of Des and Ricky, who previously were together at an open prison near Stoke. LEICESTER: march from Victoria Park, 12.30pm, to the jail for a picket.

LINCOLN: picket of the jail starts at 1.30pm. For more details, ring 01-249-1207.

finger Prints

POSTERS of the Italian Communist Party calling for Italy's withdrawal from NATO have been taken down — as they no longer correspond to the Party's line.

Enrico Berlinguer, the Party's general secretary, has announced that there is no need for Italy to withdraw now from capitalism's chief international crime-gang. NATO, he claims, is not best undermined by the withdrawal of a nation like Italy but by means of "the continued process of detente."

Clearly the imperatives of "the historic compromise" — a place for the CPI in the Italian government — are eroding the traditional positions of the Italian Communist Party, faster than the Warsaw Pact is eroding NATO.



Berlinguer



DESPITE a flair for enterprise and self-advertisement that might have won its leader the Guardian's award for businessman of the year (and which is no doubt the envy of many lesser con-men), the "Workers Revolutionary Party" (formerly the Socialist Labour League) has not been noted for its contributions to Marxism.

On the contrary, its leaders have managed to associate in the minds of some socialist militants the trade marks of Stalinism — thuggery, organisational tyranny and systematic lying — with the name of Trotskyism. For the most part, however, such events have not attracted the attention of the bourgeois press.

But now, all the dailies are delighting in the story of Vanessa Redgrave's suit for the return of a £4,000 loan against Alan Thornett, the Cowley steward who led a 200-strong muddle-headed breakaway from the WRP.

The "r-r-revolutionaries" of the WRP who castigated socialists in the US for calling on police to defend blacks from being lynched in the recent "bussing riots" in Boston, don't bat an eyelid at calling the cops on a fellow revolutionary... so that one of the super-rich can get her £4,000 back faster.

When the descendants of what was a part of the Trotskyist movement are reduced to such rotten carrion, the jackals of the press come out to feed.

And a delicious meal they're making of it.



WE reported last week on how fascist thugs broke up a meeting called by Wandsworth and Battersea Trades Council on February 26.

Three days earlier, a different variety of racist thugs broke up another meeting, at the Conway Hall.

There, a film was being shown called "To Live in Freedom", about the plight of the Palestinians and their struggle to regain their homeland. But the film hadn't been showing long when about 30 members of the audience started shouting a hissing. They threw eggs at the screen, attacked the projectionist and broke the equipment.

This variety of racist thugs were Zionists, determined to suppress knowledge of their state's victims.

The film will be shown again this Saturday, March 8th, at the Co-op Hall, Seven Sisters Road London N 4

WHEN Roy Jenkins brought in the Prevention of Terrorism Act last November, he described its provisions as "Draconian". But as far as the police are concerned, the implementation of the anti-terrorism law will be little more than the application of the power they already have under the 1971 Immigration Act to another group of people.

The 1971 Immigration Act gives the police power to arrest people on suspicion of being illegal immigrants. This Act gave rise to a rather short-lived liberal outcry. What was thought shocking was not so much the powers given to the police, or the racist principles on which the Act was based, or even the fact that the Act abolished basic civil liberties for a section of the population, but that the Act was a legal oddity. It retrospectively classed as illegal immigrants people who had entered Britain clandestinely after March 1968 and who had not been asked to submit to examination by Immigration Officers, and hence had not until then been considered law-breakers.

Gesture

In other words people were to be punished for doing something which when they had done it had not been an offence.

The 1971 Immigration Act came into practice in 1973, and the Conservative government launched an all out witch hunt in the Asian communities of Britain. When Labour came to power a year ago, they were under pressure to make some conciliatory gesture to black people. To the delight of many white and black liberal organisations, Roy Jenkins declared an amnesty for those immigrants who had entered clandestinely between 1968 and 1973, just so long as they came out and declared themselves.

Trap

Of the 1,452 immigrants who have done this so far, only 588 have been allowed to stay, 219 have been deported, and the rest are still (after 10 months) being questioned by the Home Office. They are beginning to see the amnesty as a trap.

Immigration law is so complex that most people

For these people has become a Police State

by AMRIT WILSON

don't know whether they have a right to stay or how far the amnesty affects their position. What they do know about, with increasing certainty with the passage of each succeeding immigration law, is their own vulnerability.

Before 1962, no Commonwealth citizen could be deported; between 1962 and 1969, deportation was only possible for convicted persons resident here for less than five years; in 1969 this was extended to those who failed to observe conditions of admission.

The 1971 Act added
* deportation on grounds of general undesirability;
* unsupervised removal of 'illegal immigrants';
* a form of 'voluntary repatriation' to which people can be forced to submit

largely by economic pressures (e.g. unemployed workers).

As far as employment is concerned, the 1962 Immigration Act introduced employment vouchers without which people could not get into Britain; the 1965 White Paper discontinued the voucher system for unskilled labour, making it almost impossible for an unskilled black worker to enter Britain legally. The 1971 Act treats non-patrial (i.e. black) Commonwealth immigrants as 'aliens', thus making very clear the economic basis of this law as well as its obvious racism.

The idea is to use the immigrants as a manoeuvrable and easily disposed part of the labour force, whose social costs are kept to a minimum. This is why British

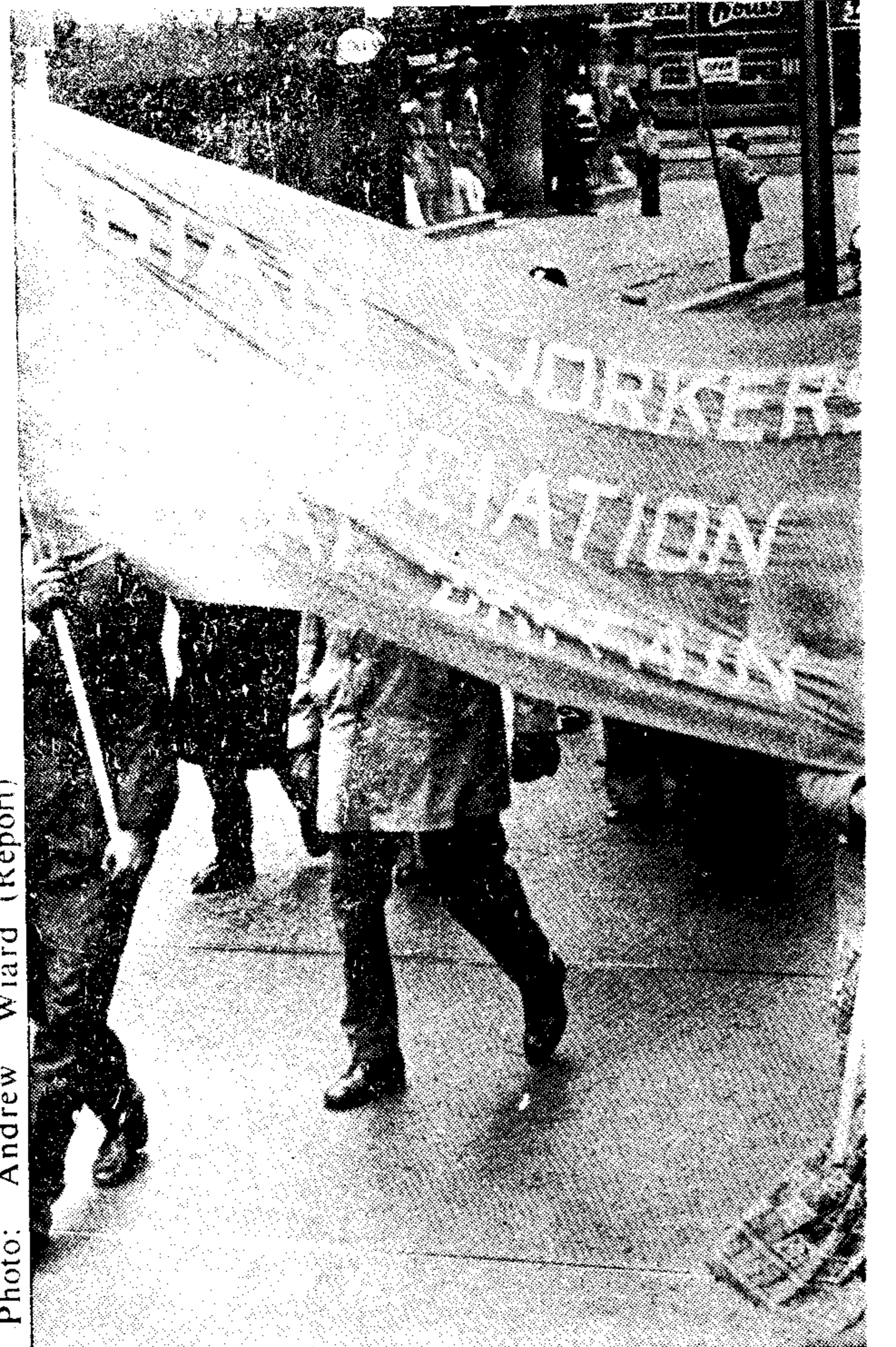


Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

governments have preferred 'aliens' to Commonwealth citizens. Aliens have no statutory rights to bring their dependents and are subject to a contract labour system. They are totally dependent on their employers to continue their stay here. In 1968, only 4,353 Commonwealth citizens were given vouchers, while 62,267 white 'aliens' were admitted. In 1969 the figures were 3,512 Commonwealth citizens, compared to 67,155 'aliens'.

So, despite what the media tell us, it is not numbers that

bother the government — partly social costs, and everything the desire to Britain as white as possible. Here their major problem is simply how to advertise racist measures to win approval of a largely electorate, at the same time denying that they are racist.

The licence given to police by the 1971 Act which assumes that rights are confined to whites with blacks treated as a class sub-group. If an Asian walking down the street policeman doesn't like face, the Asian can lose his most basic rights. If you are black you may be picked up on the minor charge like a drink offence or sometimes a charge at all, just suspicion, taken to a station and asked to

that you have a right to Britain. If you can't prove once, you may be well on way to deportation, or may be sent to Pentonville and kept there for months while the Home Office 'investigations'. No one knows for certain the number of 'illegal immigrants' held in Pentonville.

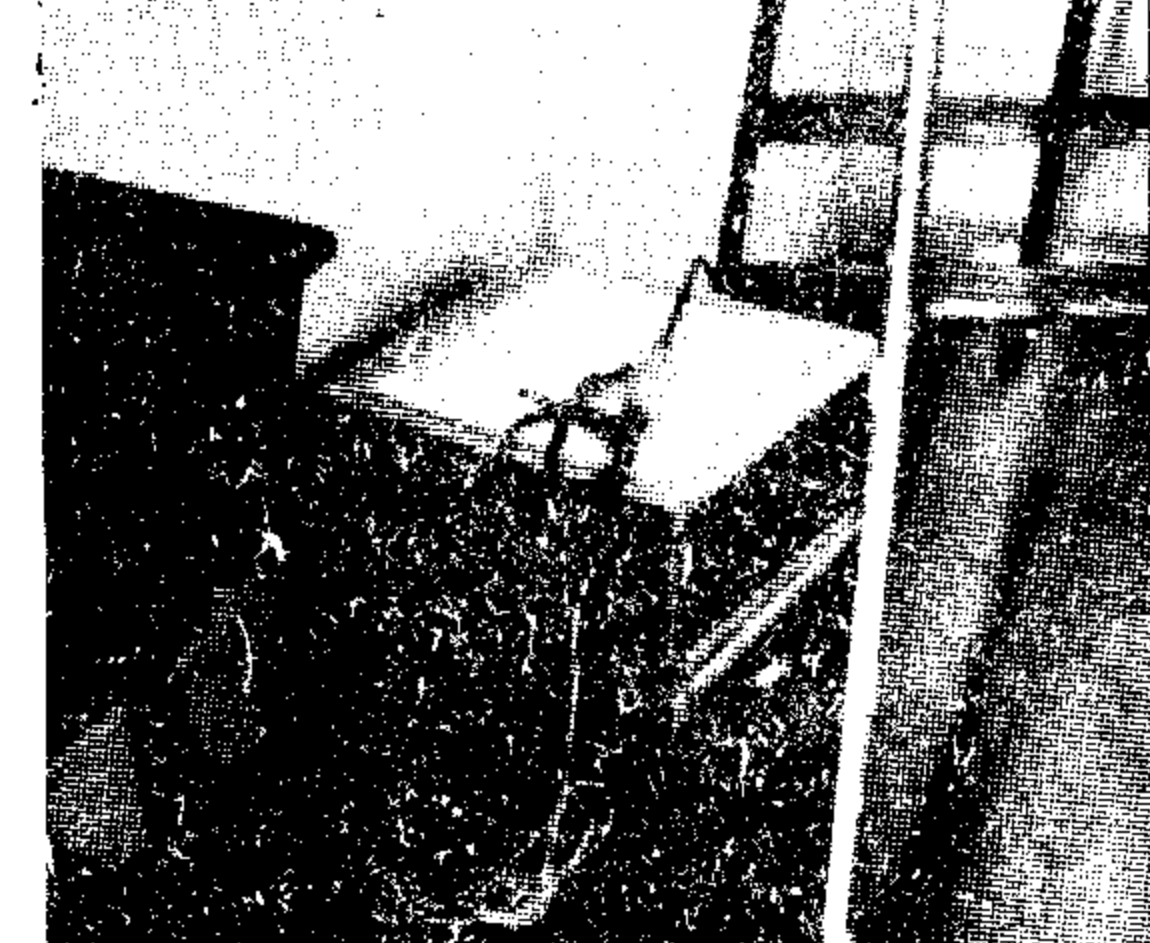
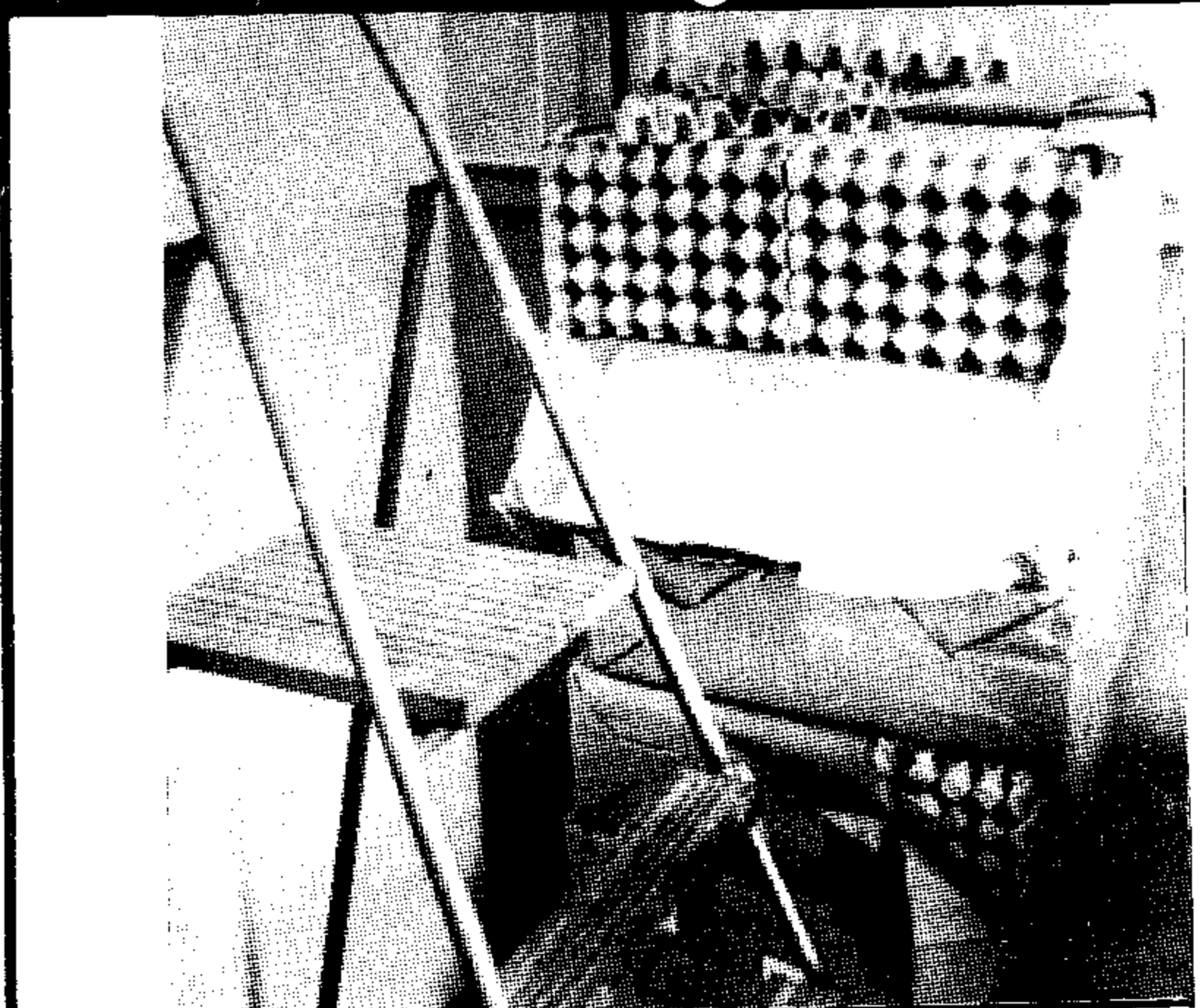
Bullies

If you are considered especially undesirable you may be taken to a detention centre in Heathrow guarded by Securitor. This is where incoming immigrants are also placed if they have been through harassment.

Of course there are a hundred variations of this. You may be dragged out of your bed at dawn, your police may come to you of work as they did for Malik. One of his work described what happened to him. "Malik was on afternoon shift at Pentonville. He was called by telephone to the police office. He found

TESTING FOR TORTURE?

College demands control over Sensory Deprivation Unit



Egg boxes and wadding for sound proofing, and a 'white noise' box — academic research? Or is the Government behind this 'silent room' being built at Enfield?

THREE weeks ago students discovered that a 'silent room' was being built in the psychology department at Enfield College, Middlesex. This discovery gave cause for alarm, since much of the equipment included in this project could be used for the furtherance of research into sensory deprivation techniques which have been increasingly used in the course of torture to break down the subject. SD techniques have been used in Northern Ireland and also over a long period in Germany.

The equipment for the 'silent room' is quite expensive. The 8-channel recorder, for example, which can be used to generate "white noise" similar to that which hooded internees were subjected to in Ireland in 1971, costs an estimated £200. Altogether, the equipment comes to at least £600, and in a period of massive education cuts it is indeed questionable why a college administration would spend such an amount on equipment with such dubious uses.

Research into Sensory Deprivation is clearly part of the Enfield psychology course. A subject in the MA Psychology degree is entitled 'The Process of Attitude Change', and one of the items on the reading list is 'Reaction Patterns to

Severe Chronic Stress in American Prisoners'

As far as the students know, no official backing for this project has been given. Although John Ives, elected chairman of the Psychology Department, was a former psychologist working for the Ministry of Defence, and has therefore been positively vetted by them, there exists no proof as to whether or not the Ministry or other 'security' agencies are backing SD research indirectly.

The college authorities could claim that this research is really quite 'innocent'. It can be argued that work on sensory deprivation can aid in alleviating stress for such groups as lorry drivers. Yet it is always possible for the research to further SD for interrogation purposes, against the left in this country and national liberation and revolutionary movements elsewhere.

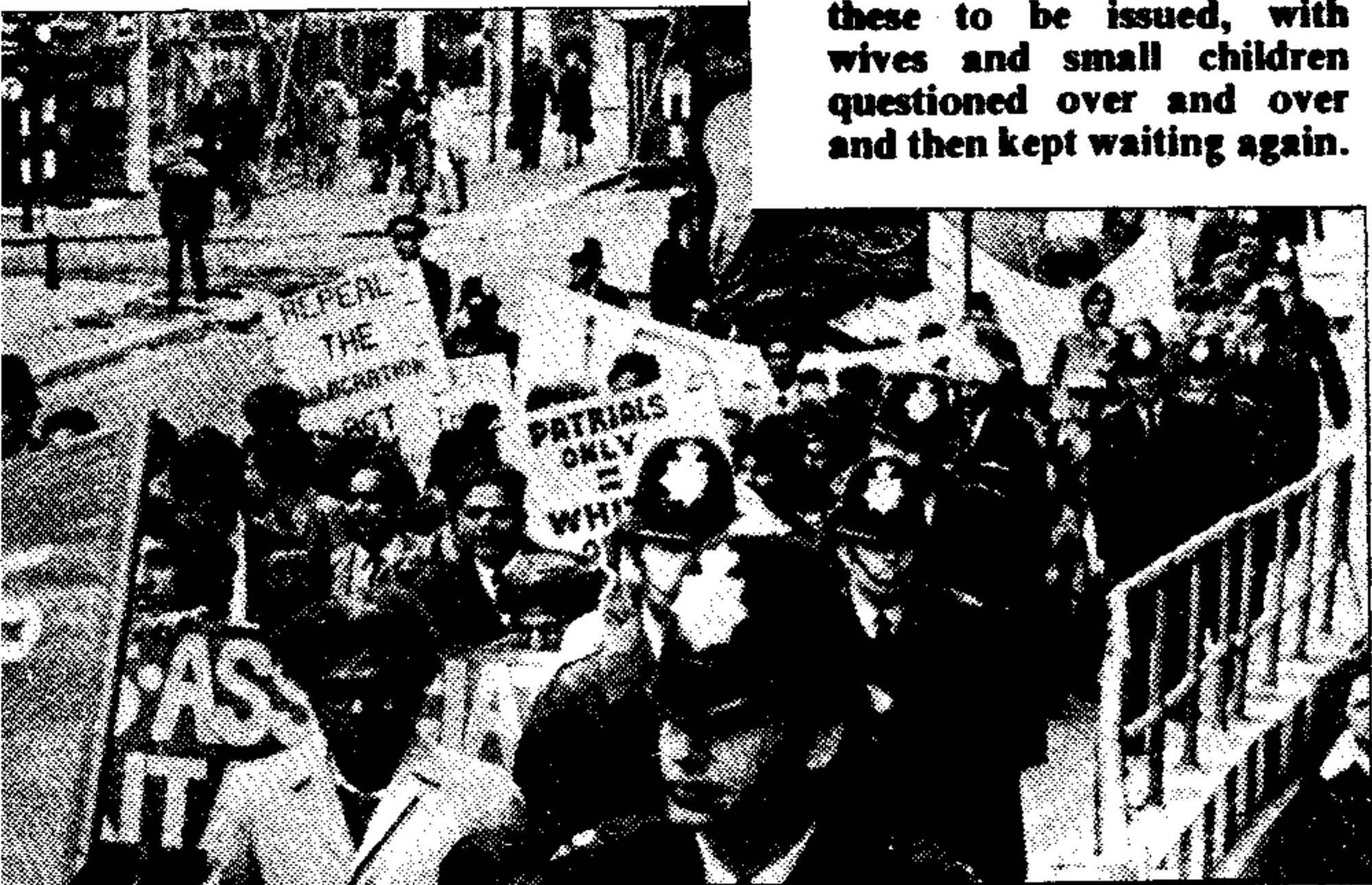
That is why the Enfield students have demanded full information on the financing of the project and on what uses the SD research will be put. They have also proposed that a joint ATTI-students union committee be elected with total control of any work done on SD in the college.

BASHARDY

Britain

to live port laws

BELOW: last Sunday's demonstration organised by the Indian Workers Association in protest against the immigration authorities' entry permits system. Entry permits have to be issued to people who under the Immigration Act of 1971 have a right to come to Britain to join relatives. It takes up to three years for these to be issued, with wives and small children questioned over and over and then kept waiting again.



ENOCH POWELL has returned to his old racist stomping ground with his Croydon speech of Tuesday February 27th. Harking back to the notorious "rivers of blood" speech that he made in 1968, he now 'warned' the Surrey Monday Clubs (and every racist in the land) of "an England rent by strife, by violence and by division upon a scale for which we have no parallel here and to which no ending that is pleasant to contemplate can be envisaged."

If anyone is doing whatever can be done to incite racial violence against the immigrant community, it is Enoch Powell. The Surrey Anti-Apartheid Movement is reported to be calling for the prosecution of Powell under the Race Relations Act. But call as these well intentioned people may, they will have no effect. The Race Relations Act is an Act that allows the likes of Powell to incite and justify race hatred, and with it, attacks on the immigrant community. His speeches, delivered in the pompous Biblical tones that this seedy hate-monger affects, have done more to confirm the prejudice of racists than the National Front fascists — who were among his audience on Thursday. In fact, everything they themselves have managed has been by courtesy of his earlier speeches, which opened the way for 'respectable' racism.

But who and what opened the way to Powell in the first place? It was none other than the Labour and Tory governments of the 1960s, with their racist Immigration Acts. These, and above all the 1971 Act, have done more to foster racism than all the speeches of Powell and all the leaflets of the Front.



Even passports have a different value — if you're black

policemen waiting for him. They interrogated him for two hours and then they took him to the police station. They took him to a special room and accused him of being illegal. They kept him there for three hours. Beat him on the stomach, back, private parts and legs and banged his head against the wall.

Malik's case is unusual in that he was able to get a lawyer and apply for Habeas Corpus and in the end he was allowed to stay. What happened to him in court is very significant. Malik's barrister Mr. Sigbhat Kadri maintained that it was up to the immigration authorities

to prove he was an illegal immigrant, and refused to try and prove that he here legally. The Home Office did not want a test ruling, so half way through the case the Home Office Counsel announced that the Home Secretary had decided to allow Malik to stay.

The effect of this was that the right of the police to demand proof of innocence has not been shaken.

As in many fascist countries, there is a special force for dealing with 'illegal' immigrants — the Immigration Officers. They are not confined, as one might think, to the ports of entry, but have quasi-police powers

Unfree trade unions? the Daily Mail should know about that...

"What revolting hypocrisy it all is", announced last Monday's Daily Mail editorial, commenting on "The TUC and the KGB". A good line like that would be put to better use describing the Mail's latest red-baiting campaign itself.

For a few days this sordid news sheet have given over its front page and at least one inside page to a campaign to get Alexander Shelepin, the head of the Russian trade union delegation, banned from entering Britain. The reason the Mail gives is that Shelepin took over from Ivan Serov in 1968 the leadership of the KGB, the secret terror police of the Stalinist regime, which he relinquished three years later.

Ready to jump on this bandwagon were Labour MP Greville Janner, who is secretary of the Committee for the Release of Soviet Jews, and many of his supporters. Some of them even picketed the TUC headquarters — the first time the vast majority of them will ever have concerned themselves with trade unions.

And ready to back up Janner were Labour MPs Tom Bradley and Paul Rose and Tory MPs William Clark and Peter Walker, none of them noted for their

interest in trade unionism. Most telling of all is the roll of trade union leaders that have added their voices to this campaign: Len Smith, 'leader' of the Leicester miners, whose members voted a motion of no confidence in him after he attacked them in the middle of the last strike; and Frank Chapple, professional with-hunter, whose members have been known to demonstrate against him wearing masks for fear of victimisation by their own union.

Yes, "what revolting hypocrisy it all is". This motley crowd gather to the skirts of the Daily Mail, the paper that supported Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s. They cry out in the name of democracy, and choose to do so through the columns of the paper that supported the total suppression of the German and Italian trade unions, and went on to justify Hitler's policy against the Jews. These people cry out for

the Jews of the Soviet Union and echo Chapple's words about Shelepin throwing trade unionists into jail: but they are people who couldn't give two hoots for trade unionists here or in the Soviet Union, and they boost the sales of the paper that made anti-semitism its banner.

Indeed: what revolting hypocrisy it all is!

But it takes a big rat to draw all these creatures out of the woodwork. And Alexander Shelepin is certainly that. Those trade union leaders who choose to make light of his record are not doing the Russian working class any favours.

But while Shelepin has been the focal point of the fire, the real point has been missed. The "trade union" movement Shelepin claims to head is not a trade union movement in any proper sense of the word. It is a part of the state apparatus pure and simple — a state apparatus whose prime job

is the defence of the privileges of the parasitic Russian bureaucracy.

That it is the 'right wing' who point this out — naturally as part of a foul-mouthed red baiting campaign — should not blind us to the reality.

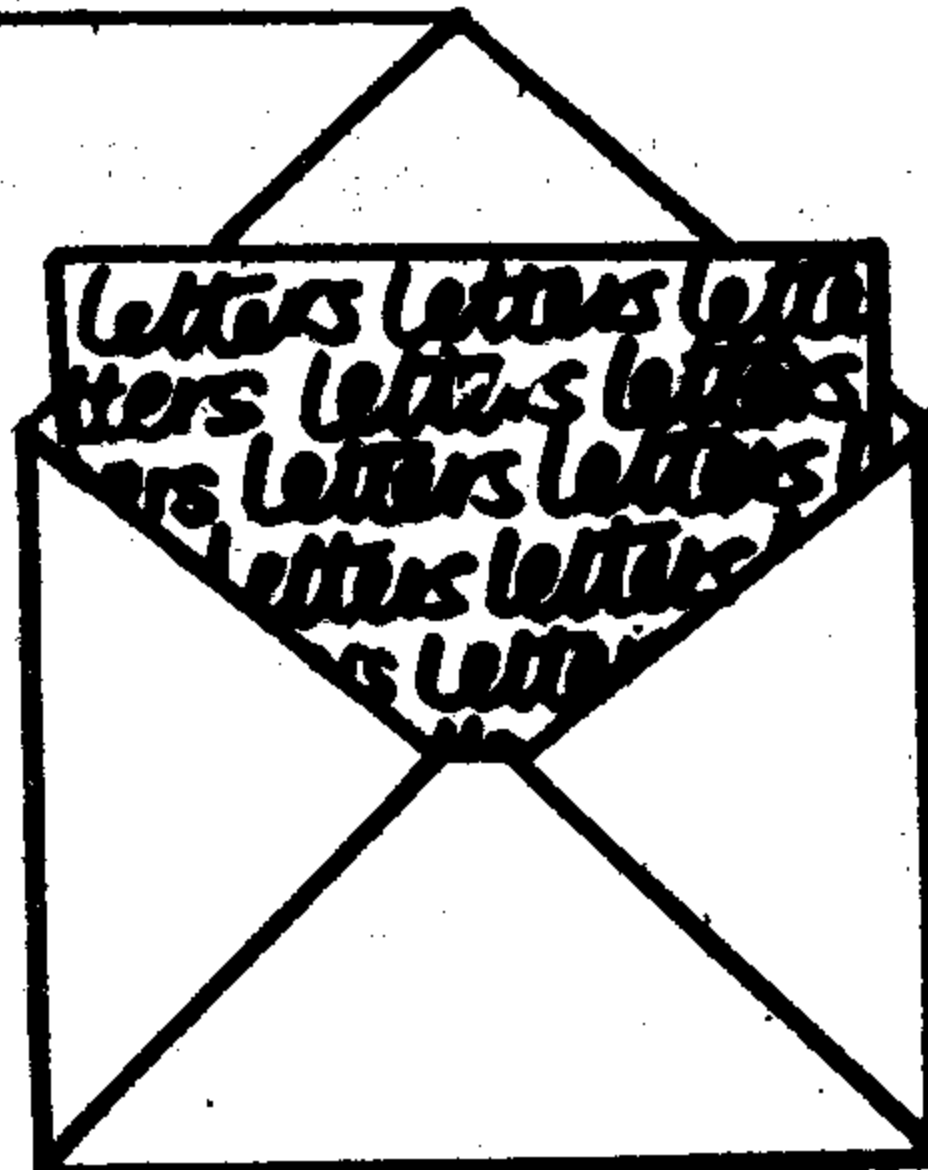
But here we come back to Greville Janner, Paul Rose and, latest to join the pack, Stanley Clinton Davis (Labour Under Secretary at the Dept. of Trade). For we should reject not just Shelepin, but also the whole of the Russian delegation, because they do not represent a trade union movement organisationally separate from the state. Like the Spanish "unions", the Portuguese "syndicatos" under Salazar, and the newly formed Chilean vertical 'unions', such organisations are nothing more than a straightjacket strapped into the working class to make it a more obedient instrument of state policy.

And by the same token we should not accept any visit here by representatives of the Histadrut, the Israeli "trade union" movement which is also Israel's biggest employer, and which Messrs. Janner, Rose, Davis et al warmly support.

These double standards expose the miserable hypocrisy of their stand.

Spilkie

'Don't knock progressives'



Comrades - As a chance reader of Workers Fight no.86 of 14th February may I make comment on two articles in that issue.

The main front page article on the Industry Bill headed "It's no threat to the bosses", correctly points out the weaknesses of the Bill but the article is spoiled by being wrapped in the framework of an attack on Tony Benn. The presence of Benn in the Cabinet is a concession won by the left, arising from mass struggle (especially against the Industrial Relations Act). His approach to the solution of Britain's economic problems is progressive and, insofar as he appreciates the failure of British capitalism to invest in its own industry as the key to the immediate crisis facing the economy, he is on the correct lines.

The Bill has several major weaknesses and there are dangers of worker and trade union participation leading to class collaboration, but it is necessary to learn how to carry the movement on to the next stage of struggle, while maintaining a socialist perspective.

Benn's plan is not "decisively a right wing one". Neither is he a right winger

with a "leftish mask". This is just infantile prattle, no more, no less. The problem is to develop the movement (the real not the imaginary one) to increase the differentiation within the Labour Party, enabling progressives and lefts, including Benn and Foot, to hold their positions or move further forward.

The main illusions of the workers are in relation to the Tories and the Right Wing Labour leaders and it is these that the Workers Fight should be concentrating on. The Tory press has been viciously attacking Benn for over a year and continues to do so, in spite of what the 'Observer' may say. The workers don't read the 'Observer'. Jack Price's article, to the extent that workers read it, can only spread dependency and despair and therefore help the Tories to do their job.

This unfortunate trend is continued and carried to extreme lengths by the article inside, "Difficult Questions for the Broad Left", which positively gloats over the defeat of Left candidates in the AUEW elections. There is no attempt to analyse the reasons for the defeats. Is WF not in favour of Left unity? How does it propose to fight the right

wing? Evidently by blathering about a "rank and file movement, organised in every area" and pretending there are no real left wingers holding trade union positions at any level. Are the only people worth supporting members of WF?

It is precisely this type of non-leadership that helps to perpetuate left wing divisions and makes it easier for the right. We have to learn to work together, to seek points of agreement not points of difference. By diverting us away from our national struggle, at the objective level reached, the discredited theory of permanent revolution disarms the movement and leaves it defenceless. -Revolutionary words cost nothing but unless they are related to concretely realisable objectives they are not just worthless but positively dangerous.

And by the way, is WF advising engineers to vote for John Boyd in the second ballot or can we vote for Bob Wright? The article didn't say. - Bill Ward, Bolton.

BUT THEY'RE NOT ON OUR SIDE!

JACK PRICE comments: The main difference between us and Bill Ward lies in this question: where is what Bill Ward calls "the real movement"?

We would say that the most vital, the most important part of the working class movement is to be found with those workers striking against the social contract, those workers occupying against redundancies, those workers fighting for some control over their daily work life and complete independence from the management. Benn, however much you call him "left", however much "better" you think he is than the Labour right wing, is in favour of keeping down wages under the Social Contract, is approving redundancies, and is in favour of schemes which even Bill Ward recognises involve loss of working class independence. Like it or not, in relation to the most militant struggles of the working class, Benn is found on the wrong side of the class divide.

That is why we condemn and attack Benn — because he stands with the capitalist class on decisive issues. But for Bill Ward, it seems, the "real movement" is that expressed by people such as Benn and Foot. The best that workers can hope for is not to

achieve anything (let alone socialist revolution, or, still less, the international extension of the revolution — the "discredited theory of permanent revolution") by our own efforts, but to persuade Wedgewood Benn or Michael Foot to bring in some 'progressive' measure for us: perhaps get British capitalists to invest a bit more in British capitalism.

Bill Ward speaks of "concretely realisable objectives" — but he seems to see this in terms of objectives "concretely realisable" within the present capitalist system. That way, socialism simply becomes a matter of the hopeful few "maintaining Socialist perspective", and presumably making speeches and having meetings about it every so often.

For us, every tiniest concession forced out of Benn and Foot (and concessions are won by force, not by telling everyone to be very polite to Mr. Benn) is just an indication that far, far more can be won if the working class has a revolutionary leadership. The working class need not fear to rely on its own strength, rather than on the crumbs dropped to it occasionally from Westminster.

We do not believe that

workers should be doped with falsely rose-coloured pictures. Yes, it is true that most workers don't read the Observer. Precisely for that reason the Observer can afford to speak honestly about the Industry Bill — and we think it is the duty of socialists to make known to workers exactly what estimate of things like the Industry Bill the capitalists really have, when they're talking among themselves rather than for the sake of propaganda.

Our analysis of the defeat of Broad Left candidates in the AUEW elections said that those defeats were due to the bureaucratic methods of the Broad Left officials and their lack of a clear political line. That analysis may be wrong or it may be right. But it is no answer for Bill Ward simply to say there is no analysis.

Yes, we do support voting for Bob Wright in the second ballot. We do favour unity of the left on specific issues where we agree. But it is no good ignoring the differences on the left. Hugh Scanlon and Ken Gill voted for the Social Contract at the TUC. We are bitterly opposed to the Social Contract. Twist and turn as you may, there's no way you can blanket over differences like that in a general 'broad left unity'.

NPSSC COULD TAKE LEAD IN DOCKERS' JOBS FIGHT

ON WEDNESDAY March 5th, the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union introduced Michael Foot to his National Executive members as the "heart, life and soul of the British labour movement".

Later that night, after failing to convince London dockers' stewards to buckle under to the employers' lock out, Jones called the mass of dockers jeering and catcalling him "gangsters".

It is Jones who is the 'gangster'; it was he who organised with Lord Aldington, head of the Port of London Authority, the 'theft' of over 10,000 jobs. It is Jones who has encouraged the Labour government, and Michael Foot in particular, to organise the great fraud known as the 'Social Contract'.

And it is Jones who has no answer to the present crisis on the docks, as the world downturn in trade has revealed the ongoing collapse of the industry since 1972. In London alone over 2,000 jobs have been lost, and at this moment another 600 jobs are threatened.

As the jobs have drained out of dockland, they haven't all gone to the container depots. In fact many of the jobs have disappeared altogether, with productivity increases. This fact underlines the need for a united fight by dockers and container men, rather than war between them.

The call that dockers should strike to get Foot to introduce legislation to ensure all dock work is registered dock work means

nothing when Foot has already laid down plans for a draft Bill to be introduced at the end of March. The crisis of dockland and the bosses' containerisation plans can only be met by a campaign that links the call for all work to be registered dock work with a call for a general cut in hours and the nationalisation of all the bosses' interests tied up in the docks and shipping industry.

The National Port Shop

Stewards Committee met last Saturday, and though it was unable to decide a definite course of action other than general sympathy for the London dockers, the NPSSC — the only organisation which provided a serious alternative leadership to Jones and the leading T&G dock officials in 1972 — could emerge as the national leadership yet again. But for that to happen the debate at the coming meeting, on Saturday March 8th, will have to go further than calls for extension of the 'registered dockers' scheme'.

Tom Ramsey



London dockers meeting to plan their fight

Students Union says 'NO' to the 'NO' campaign

AT A GENERAL meeting recently, Enfield College students adopted a Workers Fight resolution calling for abstention in the coming referendum on withdrawal from the EEC.

The resolution noted the chauvinist nature of the present

"Get Britain Out" campaign, and the fact that the EEC was just one form of capitalist rationalisation open to the British ruling class, withdrawal from membership being another, with no better prospects for the working class.

Bas Hardy, who proposed the

motion, condemned the left organisations who added their 'revolutionary' voices to the chauvinist 'Get Out' campaign. He said that the task for socialists was to campaign against chauvinism and for an internationalist outlook, rather than clamouring for withdrawal from the EEC.

Tom Cashman, seconding the motion, pointed out that the proposed referendum ballot paper did not have "United Socialist States of Europe" listed among its alternatives.

From the floor, Alan Duffield argued that advocating staying in or getting out of the EEC necessarily implied opting for one capitalist alternative policy against another. Just as workers should reject both cuts in wages and cuts in the workforce if employers offer them as alternatives, so also should socialists reject the choice posed by the capitalist government's referendum.

An amendment put forward by the International Socialists and the International Marxist Group, and supported by the Communist Party, called for a position of "No to the Common Market — Yes to a United Socialist States of Europe". It argued that staying in the EEC would mean that British workers' democratic rights were in danger, and therefore we should vote for withdrawal.

This amendment was defeated by about 12 votes in a meeting of about 150 students.

B.H.

VAUXHALL WORKERS REFUSE PAY OFFER

A MASS meeting of 1,000 T&GWU members at Vauxhalls Ellesmere Port on 28th February voted to reject Vauxhalls pay offer. It failed, however, to map out plans for action on the pay issue or on the proposed redundancies.

John Farrell, T&GWU convenor at Ellesmere Port, spoke first on the redundancies. Unemployment in the area is twice the national average, he said, and anyone going on the dole would do so for a long time.

Anybody accepting the redundancy payments would do so before there had even been any negotiation with the unions on that issue. Although 600 workers had applied for the redundancy payments, John Farrell said, many of them, after going to local employment exchanges looking for work, had returned and asked to opt out of the redundancy scheme.

A number of rank and file speakers coming after John Farrell recounted how they had

applied for redundancy and later withdrawn their applications.

A member of the 'Workers Revolutionary Party' spoke, pointing out the crisis of capitalism, its international scope, and the need for a fight against redundancies.

Un fortunately no concrete plans were put before the men, nor was a vote taken on the question of not accepting redundancies, voluntary or compulsory.

Speaking on the pay offer a rise of £2 every three months for the next year — John Farrell called for its rejection on the grounds of not being enough and having strings attached on the questions of productivity and manning. A speaker from the WRP spoke on the need for a threshold system, and the offer was decisively rejected on a vote, but no specific plans were worked out for action.

Len Collingwood

Union Jack from page 1

working, lay-offs and cut-backs cannot be a fight taken up alongside the employers, the very people we are fighting. It has to be taken up against them.

The key to this struggle is a policy of shorter hours without loss of pay — cut the hours, not the jobs! If the firms claim they cannot afford it, we must back up our claims with occupations

and calls on the government to expropriate these profiteers without compensation.

In this struggle, which could so easily be shattered by the employers moving production from one factory in one country to another in another country, international links at trade union and, most important, combine shop stewards level, will be crucial. And they are hardly going to be built with the co-operation of workers whose products you are calling on the government to keep out.

LEACH'S: INQUIRY SIDES WITH WORKERS

After a joint enquiry by the employers and the building industry unions, the sub-contractors at Leach's site in Mitcham, Surrey, were declared at fault on a number of counts: defacing N.I. and tax records, and refusal to give details of wage rates.

Before this enquiry the trade unionists on the site had been out to get rid of the lumpers and win 100% trade unionism. In the earlier strike, the police had enforced a four man picket line rule, but had allowed thugs (some of whom were suspected to be connected with the National Front) to escort scabs through the picket line.

The Labour controlled Cleveland County Council has overturned the decision of Stockton Borough Development Committee and Cleveland's planning committee (both also Labour dominated) to convert Norton Grange flats into a private nursing home and clinic.

But instead of openly putting forward the working class principle of opposition to such private schemes, the Labour Council preferred to shirk the issue by rejecting the development "purely on planning grounds". They bragged that "we don't want to bring in politics". This attitude, of course, only adds fuel to the arguments of the Tory supporters of private medicine, who are raging at Labour's hypocrisy.

It is vital to organise a local ad hoc committee against private practice, involving medical workers, other trade unionists, and anyone in the labour movement willing to take a principled stand for a free and comprehensive National Health Service.

Pete Conlan

The Liverpool City branch of NALGO, which for several years has supported lump sum annual pay claims rather than the usual percentage claim, has now set up a Working Party to campaign for this policy locally and nationally. Under the percentage claim, last year, a member earning £837 got £135 increase, one earning £5637, £600.

The Working Party has now issued a 'Call to Action' to other branches, based on £500 claim for every member plus continuation of threshold payments.

Meanwhile the Lewisham and Newcastle branches have called a special national conference, with the support of 40 branches, for an interim claim of £5 per week, to make up for the increase in living costs since last year's agreement and the end of threshold payments.

J.S.

Owing to a last minute change of heart by the NUT bureaucrats at Hamilton House, last Tuesday's meeting on the covering issue had to be switched away from union headquarters and into a local pub. The meeting had been called by NUT branches from two Islington schools and the sudden refusal to allow the booking to go ahead shows the contempt that the NUT bureaucrats hold for any attempt at grass roots mobilisation.

The issue of no covering for absent staff is a crucial part of the fight for a water tight teachers' contract of service. In order to break the isolation that many schools feel in this fight, a coordinating committee has been set up to extend the campaign. Information, speakers, etc from Richard Cleveland at 01-524 4757.

I.H.

GREATER LONDON REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE LABOUR PARTY

The politics of good intentions

LAST weekend the Greater London Regional Council of the Labour Party held its 8th Annual Conference.

ON THE Shrewsbury 2, a motion from Greenwich Labour Party called for the release of the pickets, the repeal of the Conspiracy laws, and an end to the lump system. Unfortunately, there was not one word in the resolution about action to secure these demands.

One speaker, proposing a resolution in favour of the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act, cited the case of Franco Caprino and the fact that he was not released through well meaning resolutions but through mobilising rank and file trade union support. But generally the theme of the conference was good intentions and little idea of how those good intentions were to be made reality.

For example, a resolution was put forward by ASTMS concerning the inquiry into the five Hackney teachers instituted because they attended the TUC demonstration for the Shrewsbury pickets. The motion called for the suspension of the inquiry and a reassurance that it would not occur.

The Conference accepted the resolution unanimously — all well and good — except for the fact that the leader of the education committee, present at the Conference, failed to utter a word on what would follow from this vote.

The resolution also failed

to mention the case of John Warburton, the gay teacher victimised for discussing homosexuality in class (see WF83)

One of the most interesting debates was the one on housing. Many delegates felt that empty houses should be taken over by the council and given to homeless families. The Housing Committee stated they were drawing up a plan to carry this out. But 'unfortunately it would entail a lot of work' — meaning with any luck it will never see the light of day.

Many speakers, also, counterposed a 'socialist housing plan' and the nationalisation of the land to the action of people who have actually been taking matters into their own hands, occupying empty premises and organising against landlords and the government.

The guest speaker was Michael Foot, who went to great lengths to explain what a good thing the social contract is. Michael Foot has his answer to the capitalist crisis — make workers pay for it! It is more than unfortunate that this Labour Party conference failed to come up with any alternative answer in terms of working class action.

Pete Smith

Working Women's Charter focus of conference

THE "Sexism And Education" conference in Nottingham on March 1st was useful in opening up debates and bringing together people working on different aspects of sexual oppression in the education system.

A variety of topics were discussed in the workshops, including sexism in the classroom, sexist books, gay teachers, the working women's charter, higher education, women in the NUT, and sex education.

Some concrete results came out of the discussion when ways of taking up these issues through the NUT were considered. Because of an existing paper support for the Working Women's Charter already in the NUT, we felt the need to take up the Charter by organising nationally within the NUT, while working with local Charter and 'Rank and File' groups where possible. This resulted in a decision to organise a meeting in the summer to prepare for a

conference in the autumn. (Send information or addresses to circulate to Catherine Young, 58 Wishford Point, Inglesham Walk, Hackney, London E9 5NF).

It is important that we use the structure that is being set up to coordinate work in this area and to initiate a national campaign round the Charter in the NUT in the time leading up to Conference. Otherwise the Conference will merely be an excuse for doing nothing.

The workshop on sexist children's books decided to organise a picket of the NUT conference, where sexist books will be on display. The workshop on women in the NUT discussed the problems of underrepresentation of women on the Executive, and agreed that campaigns around women's rights could best be taken up round the Charter. Discussion on whether the formation of women's caucuses would be a useful part of the Charter campaign came to no conclusion.

Sally Owen

JARROW FITTERS SAY 'WE STOP IN OCCUPATION'

On 28th February 36 fitters at Tube Investments, Jarrow, occupied the plant, welded the gates, and placed £20,000 worth of machinery directly behind the gates.

Their action followed a complicated series of developments. In December 1974 Tube Investments closed the Jarrow factory and threw 280 men onto the dole queue, but they promised that they would soon reopen the site to operate a different process. On 10th January the fitters were taken on to instal the machinery for the new process.

At 12 noon on the 28th, however, the local management informed the workers that they were to be sacked and gave them just four hours notice. Tube Investments, they said, had decided that in the present conditions of world recession the new process was not sufficiently profitable.

It was then that the workers decided to occupy. The Convenor, Hughie Nichol, said "We are staying in until the place is reopened". The men do not intend to negotiate redundancy pay or redundancy settlements, and they have over half a million pounds' worth of

equipment in their hands as a bargaining counter. Please send messages of support and donations to: Occupation Fund, 92 Northbourne Road, Jarrow, P.S.

MEETINGS

London Workers Fight meeting. The Struggle in Kurdistan — film "Pesh Merga" and a speaker from Kurdistan. 8pm, Sunday 9th March, in the Senior Common Room, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Road, London SW7.

Liverpool Workers Fight meeting. Unemployment and how to fight it. Speaker: Sean Matgama. 8pm, Wednesday 19th March, at the Grosvenor Hotel, Dock St, Ellesmere Port.

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