

Workers' fight

3p

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WHAT A VICTORY!

SIR John Donaldson's savage fine on the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers may have been meant to see to it that the National Industrial Relations Court, to be abolished by Labour shortly, went out with a bang. But the national strike by the AUEW which hit most areas of British industry and caused panic amongst the bosses has sent the NIRC running.

In fact Donaldson is probably a sincere fighter for the judicial tradition of the rule of law — the Industrial Relations Act is still law — in a period when the law has become a football in the class struggle. His court tried to impose a ruinous fine on a union which defended its striking and victimised members. It tried to award tens of thousands of pounds at the union's expense to a scab firm which was condemned by a commission set up by the NIRC itself for its refusal to recognise a trade union.

It tried to rub the union's nose in the fact that, under either a Labour or a Tory government, the law is the law. It tried to use the scandalous delay between the LABOUR GOVERNMENT PROMISE TO SCRAP THE NIRC and the day of action to deal one final hefty kick below the belt to the union that has refused it even grudging recognition.

LINE OF FIRE

It tried — and failed miserably.

After a single day of paralysing strikes — strikes that would probably have spread very quickly, way outside the control of the AUEW — the court allowed some anonymous fairy godmother to act "for" the AUEW and pay the £65,000 fine.

It wasn't the AUEW that was got off the hook. It was an undignified scramble by the NIRC out of the line of fire, extricating itself and the bosses it has, however ineptly, tried to serve.

The role of the Labour Party here has been one of awful and despicable flabbiness and helplessness in face of the power and majesty of the law. Michael Foot abused 'trigger happy' Donaldson in the House of Commons — but angry language was a substitute for action. If Donaldson was trigger-happy, the Labour Party in Parliament was shown to lack any weapon against the NIRC more powerful than angry words. It was unprepared to deploy any muscle on the workers' side more powerful than whatever it is that makes Foot's tongue wag so eloquently and irrelevantly.

This is all the more ridiculous now when this latest piece of legal jiggery-pokery exposes the law once more as a convention and a

NOW BURY THE NIRC

convenience, not something sacred and above society. The court had pledged all its dignity on forcing the union itself to come cap in hand to pay over Donaldson's counter.. then gratefully welcomed the lucky arrival of the 'anonymous donor'.

Law is class law in general, and the setting up of the National Industrial Relations Court was class law epitomised. It could work or fail, rule or perform ridiculous contortions — entirely depending on the state of the class struggle.

The workers, in struggle after struggle, have been powerful enough to reduce it to a piece of paper. The bosses and their state have not been able to impose the Industrial Relations Act against the determined opposition of even one strong union. Concerted union action could have stifled the Act at birth, and should have done so.

Scanlon says it was not a victory for anyone. He is wrong. It was a victory for the power of the working class. It is a testimony that, although the Labour government has

managed to salvage Phase 3 for the bosses, it has not sapped the basic fighting spirit of the working class.

When the bosses yet again now ask "who rules Britain?", the answer is unfortunately — "You do". The bosses dominate our lives, ruin our prospects, and attempt to make us pay for their problems. But they are not strong enough to impose their will if the working class mobilises.

HUMILIATION

It would be a mistake, though, to be complacent. Under the present Government policy, the Industrial Relations Act will remain active even after it is repealed. Outstanding cases will not be dropped — they will go to the High Court.

In July there will be the final hearing on the General Aviation Services (G.A.S.) case. The NIRC has already ruled that the T&GWU is liable to pay G.A.S. compensation for losses caused by industrial action, and fixed a formula for

calculating that compensation. The fine could amount to hundreds of thousands of pounds, if not the £2 million that once seemed possible.

In the light of the AUEW's humiliation of the NIRC, the T&GWU's policy of cooperating with the Court appears as not only unprincipled, but also foolish. T&G militants must start fighting now for the T&G to adopt the same attitude as the AUEW.

But the AUEW's victory is only temporary and partial. And we have to look at why.

The farcical comings and goings of the 'Official Solicitor' to bail the Tories out and free the five dockers jailed in 1972, — that was a victory for the strength of the working class. So is the 'miraculous' donation of the £65,000. But with a Labour government in power such antics are an expression, also, of the political weakness of the labour movement.

The Labour government did not dare defy the law, and regarded the legal legacy of a

Huge march in support of Chilean resistance



PHOTO: JOHN STURROCK(Report)

THE WORKERS FIGHT contingent on last Sunday's demonstration in London in support of the Chilean resistance.

FRENCH ELECTIONS: 700,000 votes for Trotskyists

THE most significant result of the first round of the French presidential elections was the 689,000 votes for the two revolutionary candidates.

This was 2.7% of the total poll — compared with 2.1% for the revolutionary candidates in the 263 constituencies where they were standing in the legislative elections of March 1973, and 1.1% for a revolutionary candidate, Alain Krivine, in the presidential elections of 1969.

Far from the reverberations of 1968 dying away, the influence of revolutionary ideas is clearly still expanding — less spectacularly than in 1968, but expanding nonetheless.

Arlette Laguiller, candidate of Lutte Ouvriere and a leader of the recent bank workers' strike, gained 595,000 votes and Alain Krivine, candidate of 'Rouge', 94,000. One conclusion that follows is that Lutte Ouvriere was right as against 'Rouge' in the dispute that led to two opposing revolutionary candidates being

presented (thus reducing the impact of both campaigns).

'Rouge' originally proposed Charles Piaget, leader of the Lip factory occupation, as a unified revolutionary candidate. Lutte Ouvriere objected on the grounds that Piaget, good militant though he might be, was a member of a semi-reformist party, the 'Parti Socialiste Unifie'. The PSU, in any case, refused to allow Piaget to stand, and supported Mitterrand.

Lutte Ouvriere then proposed Arlette Laguiller as the unified revolutionary candidate, and noted that they had supported 'Rouge's Alain Krivine in the 1969 elections. 'Rouge' objected that this simply amounted to asking other revolutionaries to support Lutte Ouvriere's campaign. Obviously, however, Laguiller's candidacy has made an impact on hundreds of thousands of workers receptive to revolutionary ideas, and not just on the particular sympathisers of L.O. Martin Thomas

militant Tory government as more sacred than the interests of engineering workers. Just as it regards Phase 3 as sacred. Just as it keeps six trade unionists in jail.

Con Mech, whose chairman in the Daily Express boasts of his "fight for freedom" — to be a scab-herder — have not only got their blood money, they also defeated the strikers and the victimised stewards. Why were they allowed to? Why is the government allowed to keep trade unionists in jail for militant picketing? Why does the labour movement bow its head under continuing wage restraint?

The mixture of tremendous strength, displayed occasionally, and weakness when it comes to systematic solidarity and a clear political offensive, will continue until we organise a militant rank-and-file industrial movement and a revolutionary party — a party which will not only settle with the NIRC and the Donaldsons, avoid needless defeats like at Con-Mech, and make it unthinkable that the Shrewsbury 6 should be jailed — but will go on to mobilise the working class to finish once and for all with the source of these evils — capitalism — and build a socialist society.

RACISM is a deadly and widespread virus for the working class. The organisation of a struggle against it is of major importance.

Marx wrote that labour in the white skin would never free itself while in the black skin it remained branded with the mark of slavery. That 'brand' today remains, long after slavery has ended. The colour of the skin has itself become a brand.

Black people are certainly discriminated against. The education system is biased against them. They are victimised by racist thugs in police uniform — so much so that whole black communities up and down the country have reacted collectively against the police. The unspeakable jailing for 3 years of a boy of 15, and two others, a few weeks ago is only a more prominent and scandalous incident in the general treatment of blacks by the courts, often on perjured police 'evidence'.

Toxic

Black people are abused, 'raped' and violated by the imposition of cultural values permeated with racist assumptions — as is indeed the whole culture of the West, in which capitalism itself grew and developed for a whole epoch largely on the basis of the savage trade in black Africans. Because of this, our society for centuries accumulated rationalisations, justifications and prejudices like a toxic substance in all its cells and pores.

A decade or so ago, concern with "the race problem" was the preoccupation of fascist groups and miscellaneous cranks. Since then, a succession of progressively less shame-faced and more openly racist laws have been enacted, culminating in the Tory 1971 Immigration Act. Under the terms of this Act, post-1971 black immigrants can be deported or deprived of renewal of work permits for such things as militancy in a strike. Police can at will stop any black person in the streets, demanding identification, proof of residence, etc. Just this week, The Guardian reports that "immigrants obtaining health cards and social security documents were often being asked for their passports". And "in London in recent weeks a West Indian has been asked for his passport when stopped for a minor motoring offence, an Asian woman who asked a policeman for directions was in return asked for her passport, and a Jamaican bus conductor who called the police after a fracas on his bus found that the policeman was more interested in his passport than the fracas."

Murder

Nor has the Race Relations Act made any appreciable difference: symbolically the first jail sentence under this Act (and one of the very few) was meted out to a black man. Naturally, the capitalist courts cannot be expected to fight racism.

Certainly this shameful tide of racism is pandered to and promoted by the press and the media. But they do not create it. It is the product of the whole history of the positively cannibalistic treatment of black people by white 'civilisation' for centuries, and more directly the product, for a large part, of Britain's colonial wars of this century. Mass murder in the colonies in the service of imperialism inevitably builds up racist contempt for the victims, whether they be Africans or Vietnamese.

It is no more than 20 years since the British Army and police slaughtered up to 10,000 Africans fighting to reclaim their stolen land in the famous Mau Mau uprising in Kenya. (Literally only about half a dozen white colonists lost their lives, providing the

SUPPORT SATURDAY'S LPYS DEMO AGAINST RACISM

Fight the poison of racism!

BY JOHN O'MAHONY

propaganda excuse for the holocaust of African lives.)

It was here that the military theorist of organised violence by the British Army against the labour movement in this country — Frank Kitson — got his early training. But those who actually carried out these acts were mainly working class conscripts.

The complicity of the working class in the crimes of British imperialism has helped to ripen the old seeds into a destructive, divisive, potentially suicidal racism.

This is one of the major facts that socialists must face up to: the fact that racist feeling is wide, deep and rampant in the working class itself, and in sections of the trade union movement. It shows itself daily and hourly, in muted form, in sneers and 'jokes' at the expense of black people; and every now and then, it comes out shouting into the open, as when the dockers marched through the

expelled from the Union (the T&GWU)! Indeed, some of the scabs that the firm recruited to break the strike, after sacking all the strikers, were duly received as union members.

Incidents like these only dramatise the grim reality of widespread racial prejudice in the British working class. They also define the problem that socialists face in fighting racialism.

The record on racism of the Labour Party is a shameful one indeed. Labour opposed and fought against the first of the 'modern' racist Acts, brought in by the Tories in 1961. But between 1964 and 1970, the Labour government had itself enormously strengthened the laws prejudicial to black immigrants. It is often forgotten that Powell's notorious first speech 'on race' in 1968 only expressed more explicitly, more brutally and in 'militant' language those attitudes which found their

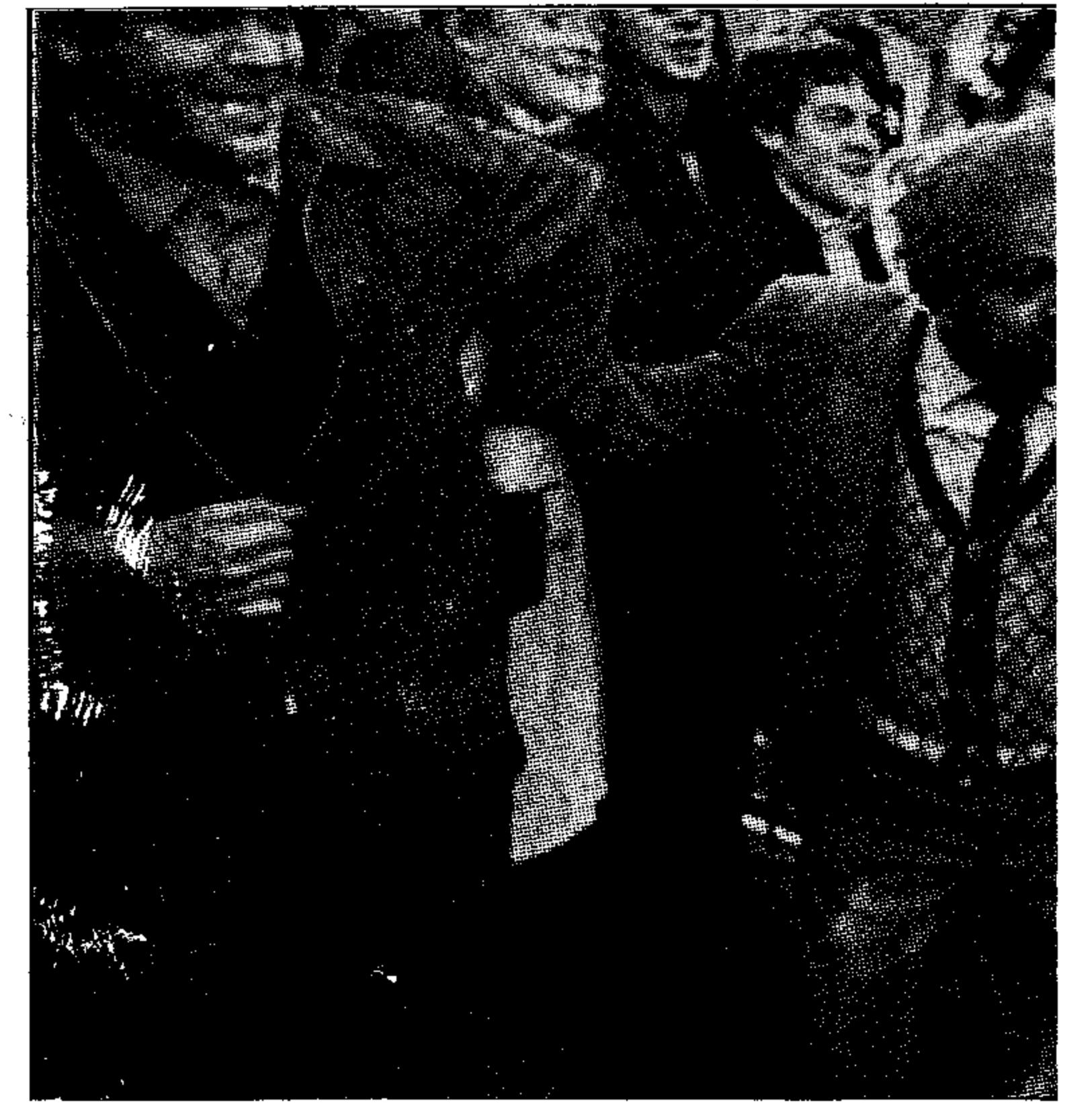
claims of the fascists, and have been the biggest factor in the growth of groups such as the National Front.

There can be no neutrality on a question like this. You either confront and fight the racist poison right down to its mildest expression or, by default, you assume responsibility for it. In the words of an old slogan, if

you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem! Unfortunately the Labour Party is a very big part of the problem, and not merely by default.

Socialists often say that racism is a danger to the working class. This is an important point to make, especially in arming the labour

movement against it. But it risks the charge of crass insensitivity and of a myopic concern for the narrower trade unionist self interest: it can even be read that, within certain limits, so long as working class unity is not disrupted there is a 'tolerable' level of racism which we may have to, or at least be able to, live with.



BEHIND THE 'RACE'

WITH THE withdrawal of its colonialist claws, imperialism entered a new phase of exploitation. Its garrisons had gone, but it had not the slightest intention of leaving its residences and plantations, its forts and factories, simply to be "overrun by the natives".

To hold on to and even extend its holdings and investments, imperialism had to develop new methods and institutions — "aid" programmes, IMF loans, military and technical scholarship programmes — to march ahead of (and if possible instead of) armed intervention.

As Mr. Sivanandan points out in his pamphlet, "Colonialism needed racism to justify exploitation, but neo-colonialism, needing to ally with the native bourgeoisie, finds racism a handicap." In 1952, the Royal Institute of International Affairs spawned one of the typical institutions of the new type that neo-colonialism demanded, the Institute of Race Relations (IRR). This and other "independent, academic research bodies" were to be the eyes and ears of imperialism, the tongue to sense out where the teeth could bite.

VALUES

Additionally the IRR was to train third world intellectuals whose ideas, connections and lifestyle would be a conductor of imperialist values. The determined capitalist bias of the use to which research was put came out most clearly when the IRR's Tropical Africa Project resulted in the setting up of the Africa Private Enterprise Group, with the IRR's Director as its chairman.

Behind the facade of "disinterested research" were the directorships of Barclays Bank DCO (four directors were on the Council of the IRR), South African mining and plantation interests and funds from the Portuguese government that was (through the Gulbenkian Foundation).

With the Notting Hill riots in 1958, the IRR was shaken into taking notice of the "race relations problem" in Britain. Of course, identifying such a thing as a "race relations problem" meant identifying blacks as a "problem", and harmonisation (integration, loss of separate social and cultural identity) as the solution.

UNBIASED

Consequently, the 'unbiased' IRR went on to support (with reservations, of course!) the Tories' 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. When Labour took the Tories' place in 1964, it immediately dispatched Lord Mountbatten to India to try to get the Indian government to limit immigration to Britain.

With his failure, Labour introduced the 1965 White Paper, whose solution was approved by the IRR's director, ex-colonial administrator and by now chairman of the Africa Private

Enterprise Group, Philip Mason... "we are determined to cut down sharply the number of fresh entries until this mouthful has been digested." A good metaphor for the gutless!

In time, a whole variety of boards and organisations were set up to police and professionalise the operation of government sponsored racism. The IRR became — while still protesting its virginity — the common ideological whore of this set: Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, Equal Rights, Race Relations Board, Runnymede Trust, Society of Labour Lawyers....

Now the IRR had added to its neo-colonial support activities in the third world, support for the government's soft-pedal racism at home...with a grant of £25,000



ABOVE: Sir Frederick Seebom, Chairman of Barclays Bank DCO, and a member of the IRR Council. Other members included a Director of Unilever; Harry Oppenheimer, Chairman of Anglo-American (South Africa), Director of Barclays DCO, Chairman of Rand, De Beers, and Charter Consolidated (the richest man in Africa); David Sieff, Director of Marks and Spencers; and Gordon Richardson (Bank of England), Vice-Chairman of Legal and General Insurance.

At a meeting between the IRR and the Institute for Strategic Studies, the ISS party included US, Israeli, and French military attaches, members of the British war office and Air Ministry, representatives of Shell International and Standard Bank of South Africa, and Brigadier W.F. Thompson, the Daily Telegraph military correspondent.

from the Home Office!

The whole cosy nest, however, was disrupted when in 1971 Robin Jenkins, a research staff member, publicly complained about the ruling class bias of the Institute's major survey, "Colour and Citizenship". The resulting row led to many of the "professional race relations experts" decamping for less demanding institutions.

Under a new director, the staff now gathered confidence to push against the Council. Led, according to Sivanandan, by the library staff who were conscious of being used to provide the "objective" facts for prejudices of policy, a staff collective now pushed forward to what he calls the "Palace Revolution".

This battle won, the task became to release RACE TODAY from the Director's control. Commenting on all this in the Financial Times, one of the Council's intimates Joe Rogaly wrote "the IRR has been infiltrated by would-be revolutionaries and radicals who have sought, with some success, to turn it into a machine for propaganda against the government and capitalism."

By the end of 1973, the staff had won hands down, and the new set-up was trimmed to the needs of developing "an insurgent sociology and an insurgent politics". 1972-74 was a period of reorganisation and reorientation. Under the leadership of the Rev. Wilfred Wood, the Council — now largely composed of individuals active in community work — and the staff, worked in harness to obtain untied sources of revenue (such as the World Council of Churches) and to move to premises more relevant to the Institute's work than St. James'.

RESEARCH

In March 1973 the Institute moved to its present premises in Pentonville and swiftly set up a political wing in **Towards Racial Justice**, the publishers of **Race Today**. Very little typifies the change more than the fact that Race Today's present Editor is Darkus Howe, one of the successful defendants in the Mangrove 9 Trial.

In documenting the victory, Sivanandan raises important issues: methods of neo-colonialism, the role and assumptions of research, the role of capitalist institutions, racism and immigration, the limits of liberalism, etc. More needs to be said, however, about the question of black control and the problem of "our way of doing things", which seems to have been behind the split between Robin Jenkins and the other, black, staff members.

Further, the second half of the pamphlet does not situate the struggle at the IRR clearly in the setting of the social changes that were generating a stronger state, a more radical black community and stronger revolutionary tendencies amongst white workers and students. Because of



Black workers' sit-in strike at Stanmore

streets supporting the racist ravings of Enoch Powell.

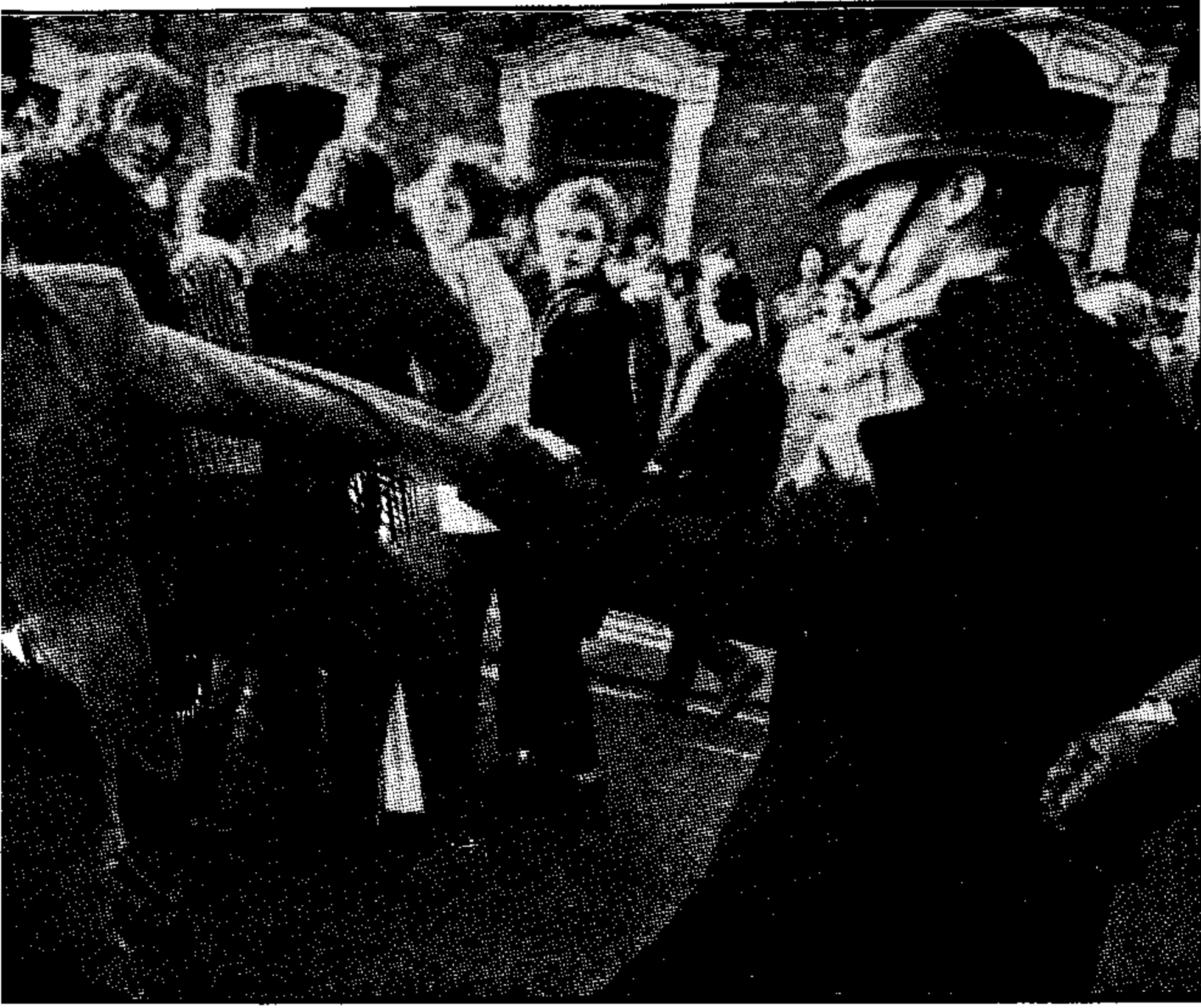
Unity of blacks and whites in industrial struggle is, of course, still the norm: immigrant workers do not, with rare exceptions, scab in strikes. They play their part in the struggle. In fact, on the showing so far, it can be confidently predicted that black and Asian workers will be in the vanguard of the big class battles to come.

But, while immigrants have not scabbed, strikes by immigrant concentrations of workers recently (in the hosiery and iron foundry industries, for example) have seen immigrants striking alone — and being scabbed against by their white fellow workers. The Art Castings (Nuneaton) dispute, which ended in defeat a couple of months ago, was an official strike: yet most white trade union members scabbed on the Asians — without being

expression in the actions of Home Secretary Callaghan, who bowed to the shameful clamour against the Kenya Asians.

And now Labour is operating the 1971 Immigration Act, for which it paved the way with its own legislation. And there has been no promise to repeal this Act.

It is not a matter of whether or not the leaders of the Labour Party are personally racists. Because they pander to racism, they bear responsibility for the poisonous cloud of racism which has enveloped Britain and, in one short decade, achieved full political respectability. The laws on the subject today, enacted by both Tories and Labour, are based on and enshrine assumptions and attitudes which were the openly held views of only the crank extreme right less than a dozen years ago. These laws in fact put the seal of approval on



Such has been the practical attitude of whole sections of the labour movement. We must fight to make it clear that there is NO 'tolerable' level of racism, because a 'tolerable' racist joke in one situation can lead to open scabbing on black brethren in another situation. Racism of any sort, reducing human beings to zoological

classifications and scorning the culture and history of whole sections of humanity, is alien even to the spirit of a consistent liberal humanism. Socialism places Man, in his many varieties, strivings and world history, at the centre of its philosophy. The conquest of power by the working class and the full subordination of nature

to the rational control by the working class of the whole world — this, and nothing less, is the goal of socialism. To socialists, racism is a leprosy symptom of capitalist society which has led to some of the most terrible events in human history — of which the Nazi holocaust, though probably the most calculatingly monstrous, is by no means the only example.

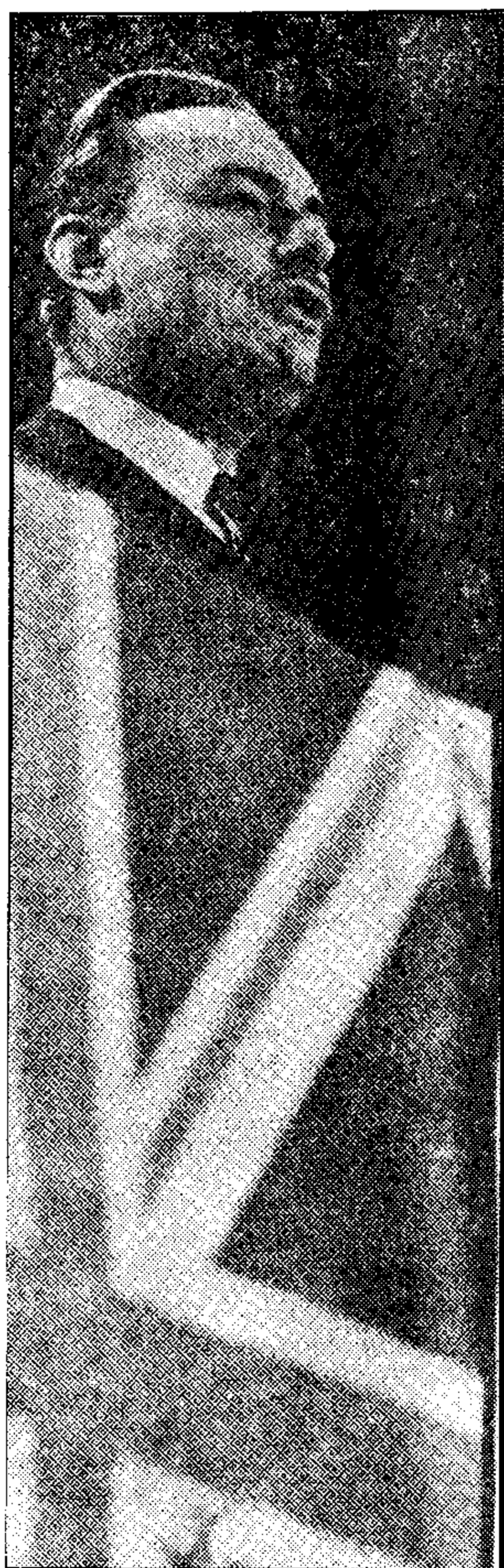
The unity of the working class, black and white, is of cardinal importance — unity in action, unity in struggle. But how do we attain and strengthen that unity? Surely not with a purely mechanical unity seen as unity inside the trade unions. This is of course desirable and necessary and it is also attainable. But real unity needs much, much more than this. Racism exists within the trade unions. The strikers and the scabs at Art Castings and at Mansfield Hosiery were members of the same union. Were they therefore united?

Disunity

Clearly mechanical formulae and organisational frameworks are not enough to achieve a real, fighting unity.

What is needed is a vigorous struggle against racism and for the truly equal treatment of blacks and Asians. Racist assumptions within the working class must be confronted head on. And white socialists and militants must vigorously champion the black section of the community.

And we must also fight for the right of 'disunity' within the trade unions — that is, for the right of organised separate black caucuses where black workers themselves think it necessary. (Socialists believe in international unity. To attain it we must insist that it is real and



voluntary: therefore socialists support movements of oppressed nations for national independence. The analogy should not be taken too far, but it explains much: the black workers are especially, doubly oppressed, oppressed both as workers and as blacks. They have, as black workers, special problems. Therefore militants and socialists must champion their RIGHT to organise black caucuses and sections if they think it necessary as the real way to get real equality and real working class unity.)

The following are some guidelines for fighting for real unity:

- a) No discrimination at work or within the unions (including social clubs).
- b) Campaigns to recruit immigrant workers to trade unions (using leaflets in the immigrants' own languages).
- c) Full equality in pay, conditions, status, grading, training and further education, access to skilled jobs and promotion opportunities.
- d) Support for demands which black or immigrant workers make for educational and special religious rights (holy day paid leave, religious dress, the wearing of turbans, etc). Whilst some such demands (eg against co-educational schooling) may be reactionary in themselves, it is a common and hypocritical form of racial discrimination to demand of black people that they be more progressive than society in general. As long as convent schools and single sex schools exist, why single out immigrants as being any less enlightened and progressive?
- e) Support for black caucuses within unions and factories, especially given the close relationship between black and immigrant workers and their communities, which such caucuses can help to foster.
- f) Against all immigration laws and controls or discriminatory legislation.
- g) Opposition to the offshoots of such laws — the contract labour system, voucher system, deportation and police harassment.
- h) For the physical defence of black workers under attack.
- i) For automatic endorsement of industrial action by black and immigrant workers whether they are in the majority or not.

INDUSTRY

this, a certain self-congratulatory tone spoils this part.

Still, this pamphlet should be read by socialists and all those working in the institutions which, to use its author's phrase, lend credibility to power, perpetuating the power of those who make our histories.

Race and Resistance: the IRR story. By A. Sivanandan. 30p inc. postage from RACE TODAY, 184 Kings Cross Road, London WC1.

AS this review goes to press, the library of the IRR prepares for its eviction. The capitalist backers have withdrawn their funds. The liberals have deserted. Those who have a price have long ago been bought off. And the bailiffs are at the door demanding money which isn't there.

On behalf of the Institute, we ask ... brother can you spare a dime? Send any donations to the RACE TODAY office.

THE May Day masses in the streets of Portugal have not treated their great demonstration as a mere token. It has served as an expression of the tremendous organisation of the new trade unions, factory committees, and political parties.

Already the unions — their old state-appointed leaders thrown out of office and replaced by the workers' nominees Caetano refused to accept — are busy drawing up calms for wages and conditions. They are demanding higher pay, 30 days paid holiday per year, a shorter working week, and the right to strike. These demands are being tabled in scores of firms throughout Portugal.

Strikes

At the same time, in an effort to stop the extreme right-wing bringing about immediate economic chaos, as in Chile, the junta has imposed foreign exchange controls and set limits on capital outflow.

But the workers are going much further than the junta wants. And they are backing up their demands with strikes and with occupations.

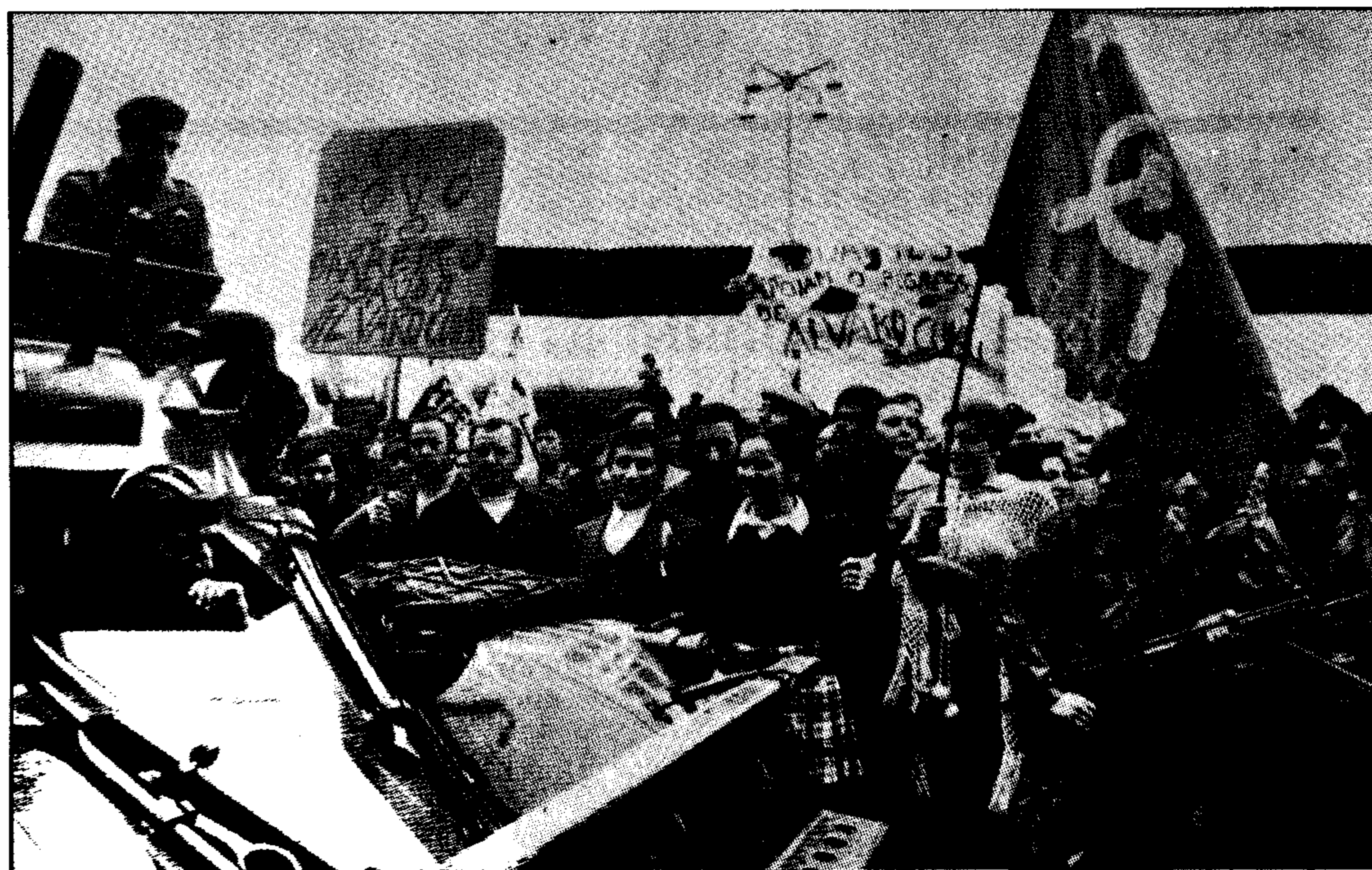
In this situation the task of revolutionaries is clearly to support and extend every aspect of the workers' mobilisation and organisation. But what, in fact, is the largest organisation claiming to be revolutionary actually doing?

The Communist Party of Portugal has been hard at work trying to head off a strike — successfully, it must be added — planned in the national steel works across the River Tagus from the capital.

Democratic

This was one of the first direct acts of the "party of order" in collaboration with the Spinoza junta. But all this was completely foreseeable. On the day after the coup of 25th April, for instance, the British Communist Party's paper "Morning Star" demanded "immediate ending of the colonial wars and the

PORTUGAL'S C.P. OPPOSES STRIKES



Communist Party supporters demonstrate for Cunhal against strikes again.

establishment of democracy in Portugal".

The usual false scenario of "communist" parties has once again been dredged up: first the democratic stage, which must continue until it has been utterly exhausted; and then... and then a little more of the same thing till the counter-revolution gets you. Greece! Spain! Chile! Endless examples!

This was confirmed on the 29th by the Morning Star's announcement that "Portugal's Communist Party yesterday called for the creation of a provisional government representing all democratic and liberal forces in the country". In other words: a government with Spinoza and the CP! like the government of de Gaulle and the CP in 1945, with the "party of order" campaigning

At this point even the Socialists had not decided to go so far... though they were soon to do so. All the time, however, the workers' own initiatives were outstripping the actions of the Socialist and Communist Parties. So by this time, the Communist Party started calling for an end to "adventurism" and talked of "agents provocateurs".

Mass

Reporting the May festivities, the Morning Star went further: "An end to the colonial war was something everyone demanded time and time again (in the May Day demonstration). This remains the chief difference between the democratic parties and the junta of General Spinoza".

Even the liberal 'Guardian'

was critical here. "It is a measure of the political confusion here that the only difference between the extreme Left and the junta at the moment has arisen on the question of the African policy".

No one can deny that this question is of supreme importance. Differences on this question are by no means irrelevant. But they do not touch the question of who will rule in Portugal.

The tie-up on other political questions is the greatest barrier now to the Portuguese masses whose leaders in the Communist and Socialist Parties set their sights on national unity.

Meanwhile Spinoza roots about among the ruling class to find a base. Perhaps the absence of a rightist party will be made good by a new

grouping under the leadership of ex-minister and present-day banker Franco Nogueira. Should it fail, the left parties will be happy to provide the bourgeoisie and the junta with a mass base.

But not for nothing. For a seat in the government, of course. And more: "General Spinoza has", according to the Guardian, "promised the recently returned Communist Party leader, Senhor Alvaro Cunhal, that his party alone will be allowed to operate on the extreme Left, provided that such groups as the Maoist MRPP (Proletarian Revolutionary Movement) are 'controlled' by the Communists". This offer has delighted the Communist Party.

So while the Portuguese workers move forward preparing to make great social conquests beyond the establishment of bourgeois democracy, the CP undermines this movement. (The British CP, incidentally, has not reported one single strike or workers' action. Instead it published an account of strikes before the coup!)

Revolution

Thus the dramatic return to Lisbon of Alvaro Cunhal after many years of exile has turned into the sourest parody of Lenin's arrival at the Finland Station at St Petersburg.

When that great revolutionary leader descended from the train that had brought him to Russia he too was met by cheering crowds and a delegation of petty-bourgeois democrats. But he turned his back on them and their pompous words of moderation and to the crowds announced the slogans for socialist revolution. Caps were thrown into the air and cheers drowned out all other sounds.

And Cunhal's message after he had accepted the warm embrace of Socialist leader Soares? He called for an anti-fascist front. A few cheers break out. No caps are thrown into the air. Then there is silence.

HOSTEL LIKE A PRISON CAMP

Dear Comrades,

I was pleased to read (WF 49) that Women's Liberation groups are helping battered wives. But I was a bit disturbed about one thing in the report from Rochdale: a woman with four children, who had been thrown out by her husband, agreed to go into a hostel. If that hostel is anything like the one I was sent to in Liverpool, she'll be glad to escape from it.

My husband had left me with our baby son to look after. One day when I was out, there was a fire in my council house. Some of the furniture and the floor and walls were damaged. The police phoned the Welfare, then took me to a hostel for unsupported mothers for the night. I planned to go to my husband for help the next day.

But the following morning the matron told me that if I left I could not return, and could end up walking the streets. She was very unpleasant.

SERVANTS

I soon found out the place was run like a prison camp. All the inmates were woken up before 7.30am. After having a tiny breakfast and feeding our children, we were put to work. We had to tidy our rooms, scrub floors and rables, clean out the toilets, etc. We took it in turns to look after all the children in the nursery room, and to cook the meals. And when those jobs were done we had clothes to wash. Some of the women were pregnant, but that didn't mean they were given lighter work. According to the Matron the tasks helped to make us "proper mothers".

When we had finished all our jobs, some of the women could go outside the grounds, but others of us weren't even allowed out. A couple of the 'trusties' took my son for walks for me. We could sit in the TV lounge, but the television was only allowed to be on between about 6.30 and 10pm. Or we could sit in our rooms — but we had to be in bed by 10.30. Visitors were allowed in the grounds but not in the building itself. But as the Police and the Welfare hadn't bothered to tell anyone where I was, I had no visitors.

There was no trained cook or nurse, only the Matron and her Deputy, and a woman who sometimes looked after the nursery; they just bossed us about and treated us like servants.

The cost of this imprisonment and slavery — for those who paid for themselves — was £19 a week for a woman with one child, £21 for a woman with two children!

We should in fact be demanding a public inquiry into the running of such hostels (and I am assured that the one I experienced was not untypical) and an end to these workhouse conditions. What is needed in such places is better facilities, a fully-trained and 100% unionised staff, professional cooks and medical and nursery staff — and an end to petty, arbitrary and degrading rules.

Fraternally, Kathleen Donnelly.

RELUCTANT STREAKER

More news of the Manchester action for battered women, which should please our correspondent. Some weeks ago, a number of wives who had recently been beaten and thrown out of their homes by their husbands, got together with the local Women's Liberation group and started squatting in an empty house. The husband of one of the women had hanging around the house for days, and one day attacked two of the women using a stick with nails sticking through it. A few days later he appeared again, and this time was invited in. "When we had him inside five of us beat him up and we stripped him completely naked and then threw him into the street. ... Anyone who comes causing trouble here will get the same treatment."

THE final report of the Jones-Aldington Committee ends two years' work of slashing jobs, reducing manning scales, pushing down dockers' living standards, weakening the National Dock Labour Board, and raising employers' profits.

What Devlin could only partly achieve in the way of pruning the number of dockworkers and the increasing productivity, the Jones-Aldington partnership took very much further.

The Jones Aldington Committee of employers and trade union officials, led by Jack Jones and Lord Aldington, came together in early summer 1972. It was this committee which ended the 1972 national docks strike. As the Final Report claims, it "helped to stabilise what had become an extremely difficult situation". Difficult for the employers, the dockers looked like winning!

The national docks strike had exploded over the issue of the large numbers of men on the Temporary Unattached Register, and the failure of previous action to end the use of non-Scheme ports and unregistered men to "stuff and strip" containers. The upsurge over five dockers jailed in

JONES-ALDINGTON REPORT

A warning to all dockers

Pentonville helped to forge a fighting spirit amongst dockers. This was reinforced by the active leadership of the National Ports Shop Stewards Committee, with its four demands:

1. No redundancies.
2. Abolish the Temporary Unattached Register.
3. Maintain the National Dock Labour Board.
4. Stuffing and stripping to be done by registered dockworkers.

However, failure to outflank Jones's manoeuvre of increased severance, promise to abolish the Temporary Unattached Register, and promise of enquiry into "stuffing and stripping", saw the docks strike collapse and agreement on the employers' terms.

The call for peace by Jones got an angry response from dockers, but the offer of higher severance was effective. Nearly 8,000 dockers accepted the money and left their jobs. With this massive loss of men the Temporary Unattached Register disappeared (though probably only temporarily).

The field was then wide open for the most vicious attacks on conditions and living standards that dockers have experienced for

a long time. But even the disappearance of the T.U.R. was used against the dockers, for when there were insufficient men to work the docks the employers brought on 'casuals', men with none of the protection of regular dockers. A bitter rear-guard fight was lost, and 3,000 casuals appeared on docksides all over Britain.

The most serious attack, and by far the most successful, began with the employers re-organising and consolidating themselves. The aim was to push through greater modernisation and get higher productivity. In Liverpool and other ports the smaller employers were phased out, and replaced by a new boss employing over 80% of the men.

Following this, the employers did two things: invest money in new equipment, and raise productivity by cutting manning scales. One of their tactics was to divert cargo and ships away from

the port, and then ram home the message that the bosses were in control. It worked. On a scale previously unknown in the docks the leading stewards have co-operated with the drive for higher productivity. The Jones Aldington Committee had begun to pay off.

Alongside this reorganisation of the port employers came the expansion of the new 'container' (non-Scheme) ports with trade, ships, and money flooding from the older ports. Thus profits rose higher and higher, and the non-Scheme ports remained as a 'fifth column' in the case of national strikes.

One side-effect was that the National Port Shop Stewards Committee declined in influence and effectiveness. The dominant but non-militant role of Communist Party members must be held responsible. The hard-built unity between ports began to disintegrate and thus a further



JACK JONES

step towards the undermining of the National Dock Labour Board was achieved.

Under the National Dock Labour Board, set up in 1947, hiring and firing is controlled by a board made up of equal numbers of representatives of employers and of dockworkers. The Jones-Aldington Committee recognised how the National Dock Labour Board blocks the employers from more serious assaults on conditions and wages. Thus it is still the central aim of the employers to eliminate the National Dock Labour Board.

Jack Jones cannot initiate any open attack on the NDLB — on this question he has absolutely no room for manoeuvre. It is probably for this reason that the Jones Aldington Committee is being wound up.

The final recommendations of the Committee are worthless to

dockers. They would have been officials and a... any commitment... conditions... recommendations... calls for more... flexibility of all types of... dockworkers' tip...!

If there is still a problem of casual employment by September 30th, 1974, the Committee wants the Government to take action in the same way. The Government is planning to deal with the question of the 'lump' in the building industry. Ask the building workers what they think of that idea!

But possibly the dockers should set the same target date of September 30th for the Labour government to implement the official policy of the Labour Party and of the T&GWU: nationalisation of all ports and wharves. Labour must also include all ports and wharves in the National Dock Labour Board.

The Final Report tries to offer to the investors and employers some hope of guaranteeing higher profits — but it knows very well that severe economic storms are ahead. For further large-scale investment to take place, they want to get rid of the National Dock Labour Board.

Thus dockers must take the Jones-Aldington Final Report as a warning. It is urgent that the National Port Shop Stewards Committee should begin to re-organise, drawing in new ports.

Tom Ramsey

ACTION TO FREE THE BROCKWELL 3

THE Defence Fund for the Brockwell Three has now topped the £1000 mark, with donations coming from supporters throughout the country. Tulse Hill School, where one of the victims, Robin Sterling, is a pupil, collected £180. Of this, £30 was collected by the students themselves. Such is the feeling of outrage in the community against the savage sentences imposed two months ago on three black youths who had the misfortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The arrests at Brockwell Park Fair took place quickly in an atmosphere of confusion. As a result, the Black Students Action Collective, who initiated the school students strike on April 6th, mounted a leaflet campaign in the area calling for fresh witnesses. Even when the leafleters pointed out that, as far as they would, they would provide protection from police harassment, still those approached were reluctant to come forward. With Horace Parkinson still recovering from head wounds received in the police van immediately after his arrest, you can hardly blame them.

At last, four witnesses were found to come forward to give statements. These statements have been submitted to the court of appeal, and the transcripts have been requested so that bail may be applied for. So far the transcripts have not come through.

In the meantime, though, there is still plenty to do. Bring the matter up in union meetings. Follow the example of those NUT branches that have donated to the defence fund. Anyone who thinks this was a fair trial should be reminded that Sterling's school report was not accepted for evidence.

Donations and messages of support to the Black Students Action Collective, 1 Gresham Road, London SW9.

MOVE AS A COMMUNITY. The inside story of the jailing of the Brockwell Park Three. Plus: Black People in Jail; Asian workers' north London struggle; interview with a Chilean worker. Race Today 15p from a few good bookshops. Or £2 annual subscription from 184 Kings Cross Rd, London WC1.

Pickets now harassed in Jail

THE need to demand the release of the six jailed pickets, and the dropping of the charges against all 22 (of the 24) found guilty, has been re-emphasised by the way that Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson are being victimised in jail.

Des and Ricky have been kept in an ordinary prison (at

STEEL JOBS 'Wastage' also swells the dole

THE Real Steel News meeting in Teesside on 3rd May was not well attended — less than a dozen people there — despite extensive leafletting of all the main steel works.

Arthur Affleck, a member of the International Socialists National Committee, turned up to defend his line of calling for a government inquiry into jobs cut in steel on Teesside (see last issue of WF) and his refusal, as chairman of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, to organise any action.

The discussion was valuable, though not decisive given the relatively small attendance.

The latest development is an announcement that there will be no redundancies. 1000 jobs will still be lost — through 'wastage', though. This 'wastage' is cheaper for the employer — no redundancy payments are necessary — and can boost unemployment and weaken union organisation just as effectively. The announcement does not justify the lack of fight.

If no decisive steps have been taken yet, at least a number of new supporters have been gained for Real Steel News.

T.D.

Stafford) whilst the other four were moved to an open prison. They suffer, like the other prisoners at Stafford, from bad conditions, bad food, and lack of quiet and educational facilities (see WF 53). But in addition to that, they are being harassed by being singled out, against their wishes, as ringleaders.

Last week Ricky Tomlinson got three days in the punishment cell — for an "offence" which would normally be punished by four days' loss of association and a fine of 20p. The time in the punishment cell just happened to be... when MPs that Ricky was hoping to see were touring the prison.

What's more... Audrey Wise, Labour MP for Coventry South West, told the May Day parliamentary lobby on the Shrewsbury victims that Des Warren was being treated as shop steward by fellow prisoners, which could be used by the authorities to further harass him.

We must take up the plea of Mrs Elsa Warren, made to the 27th April Charter conference, to get Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson moved to an open prison. But at the same time we must not lose sight of the main need to get all six released — and to try to get action by rank and file workers, without relying on union officials and Labour MPs.

This was further rubbed in by the May Day lobby, when building workers, including two members of the North Wales 24 defence committee, held a meeting in the House of Commons. 50 MPs are said to be "on the side" of the 24 — but only a handful attended the House of Commons meeting. And the lobbyists were told... the Lord Chancellor is taking action.

We can still only rely on rank and file direct action to free the six.

Cynthia Baldry



DOCTORS PROTEST FORCE-FEEDING

AS 15 Labour MPs called for the transference of the four hunger strikers (Marian and Dolours Price, Hugh Feeney and Gerard Kelly) to Northern Ireland, a group of 38 doctors picketed the London offices of the British Medical Association to protest against the torture of forcible feeding.

Their statement pointed out that "Forcible feeding is medically dangerous, psychologically damaging and ethically unacceptable... Since vomiting often occurs, the process may need to be repeated. All four prisoners are actively resisting each stage of the procedure."

The British government, with all its armed might, is afraid of the

will of these prisoners — a will they cannot break. Not now after 175 days — or ever.

In addition to supporting their demands for transferal, socialists must insist that ALL Irish political prisoners are accorded political status.

This important point was emphasised by Maire Drumm, a leading member of the Provisional Sinn Fein, in a speech at the Conway Hall on Friday, May 3rd.

The Irish Political Hostages Committee, one of the two committees campaigning on the issue, organised a picket of Transport House on 8th May, following their participation in the Chile solidarity march the previous weekend.

THREATS TO TEACHERS AFTER LONDON LOBBY

MILITANT London teachers who took action over the NUT Salaries sell-out last February have received threats from their employers.

On the February 4th after hearing about the NUT Executive's "change of mind" over the 25% claim — reducing at a stroke to 7% in line with Phase 3 — many schools sent delegations to lobby NUT members of the Burnham Salaries Committee and to show their disgust at the about turn.

In a letter sent by Dr Briault, Chief Education Officer of the Inner London Education Authority, dated April 22nd, he calls this action "a serious breach

of responsibilities" and warned against any "repetition of such conduct in the near future".

Coming as this letter does at the same time as London teachers are mobilising over the London allowance and a strike ballot is taking place, it must be seen as an attempt to intimidate militants.

It is an interesting sideline that many letters were received on the same day as Ashley Bramall, Labour leader of ILEA, marched on the teachers' demonstration, thus endorsing their half day strike. Perhaps Mr Bramall should maintain a stricter control over his employee Dr Briault.

Clive Bane

STAN LEE

Like all the other friends and comrades of Stan Lee, we were greatly saddened by the news of his accidental death on Saturday, 4th May, at the age of 31.

Like most working class youth on Teesside, Stan left school when he was 15. Starting as a copy boy in a local paper, he grew tired of sitting behind a desk and went to work in the steelworks. But he never lost his talent or enthusiasm for writing.

Stan started his political life in the Young Communist League. It was there that he developed a great love for Russian culture and history. But this never blinded him to the crimes of Stalinism and, in time, he came to question the reformist theory and practice of the Communist Party.

In 1967 he joined the SLL (now WRP), breaking from that sectarian blind alley in 1971, when he joined Workers Fight, then organised as the Trotskyist Tendency within IS.

In the steelworks, Stan was known as a militant and associated with the paper he helped to produce, Real Steel News. From 1971 until his death he was a supporter of Workers Fight, and his comrades will remember him as a man of humour, independence of judgment and firm class instinct, always striving to develop his knowledge in the face of much personal adversity particularly his deafness — the better to fight for a socialist future.

LONDON Workers' Fight meeting. Clive Bane on "Portugal and the Future" 7.30pm, Sunday 12th May, 'Golden Lion', Britannia St, near Kings Cross.

MANCHESTER Workers' Fight. Stephen Corbishley on "Workers and the Labour Government". 8pm, Monday 13th May, 'Castle', Oldham St.

LIVERPOOL Workers' Fight forum. Paul Barker on the Labour Party. 8pm, Wednesday 22nd May, Stanley House, Upper Parliament St.

TEESSIDE Troops Out Movement meeting. 8pm, Wednesday 15th May, AUEW Hall, Borough Rd, Middlesbrough.

Constituency Labour Parties' conference to support CLAY

NOTICES

CROSS Saturday 8th June, 11am to 5pm. Central Hall, Westminster. Details from Charlie Bunting, 7 Lynam Close, Clay Cross, Derbyshire.

RALLY AGAINST RACIALISM Organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists. Assemble 1.30pm, Saturday 18th May, Lumb Lane/Westgate recreation ground, Bradford. Coach leaves from Pancras Rd, near Kings Cross, 8am.

HORNSEY LPYS and Pat Arrowsmith Defence Committee, joint demonstration in solidarity with Pat Arrowsmith. Meet Finsbury Park gates, 2.30 on Sunday May 12th. March to Holloway Rd.

TROOPS OUT Movement conference. 10.15 to 6pm, Saturday 11th May. Collegiate Theatre, 25 Gordon St, London WC1. Speakers will include David Bolton, vice-president of Scottish area NUM, and Mike Cooley, ex-president of TASS. Credentials 50p from T.O.M., 28 Lamma Park Rd, Ealing, London W5.

MANCHESTER conference against racism and fascism. Renold Theatre, 10am to 6pm, May 18th. Details from Manchester Anti-Fascist Committee, 27 Thatch Leach, Chadderton, Oldham, Lancashire.

Published by Workers Fight, 98 Gifford Street, London N.1. Printed by voluntary labour. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.

ANGRY NURSES DON'T WANT SYMPATHY

NURSES are once again "raising the roof". Angry at the insulting pay settlement of £2.25 for junior nurses (to be paid out in June) and at the increase in the lodgings charge by 5% (to be paid now), nurses have organised canteen boycotts, demonstrations, and protest meetings.

Delegations have been sent to the Ministry of Health and a national lobby of the Houses of Parliament is planned for next month. In Scotland thousands of nurses are planning overtime bans, while 800 nurses in the Greenock area are threatening strike action. Nurses at Starthes Hall Mental Hospital near Huddersfield walked out on strike. It was only for an hour, but it was the first stoppage of its kind.

Why the fuss all of a sudden? The answer is simple.

For years people have said that they "sympathise" with the nurses and that "they deserve decent pay". But like Hospital Ancillary Staff, nurses have found that you can't live on sympathy, and like the Ancillary Staff, they have started campaigning themselves.

Also, if the truth be known, the organisation which claim to represent nurses have in the past just not acted in the nurses' interests. For years "professional" bodies like the Royal College of Nurses have negotiated pay deals that have given by far the biggest rises to senior staff. The new offer from Foot of £18 million for 365,000 nurses makes the situation worse for student and junior nurses. The offer is only to ward sisters and staff nurses in the range of 7 - 10%. The ordinary student nurse and auxiliary has been left at the bottom of the heap again.

Many nurses, however, have said that enough is enough. They have become sick and tired of being palmed off with paltry increases and are demanding a better deal. They are getting organised into real trade unions and are fighting to achieve just demands. And they are quite correct.

The only way that real improvements will be made to nurses' pay and conditions will be by nurses uniting and demanding that improvements are made. Unless there is a show of strength by the ordinary rank and file nurse, they will be sold down the river as in the past.

Strongly organised workers such as dockers should take solidarity action with the nurses. The nurses themselves must demand this solidarity action. It happened in the '60s, it must happen again.

Jack Sutton