

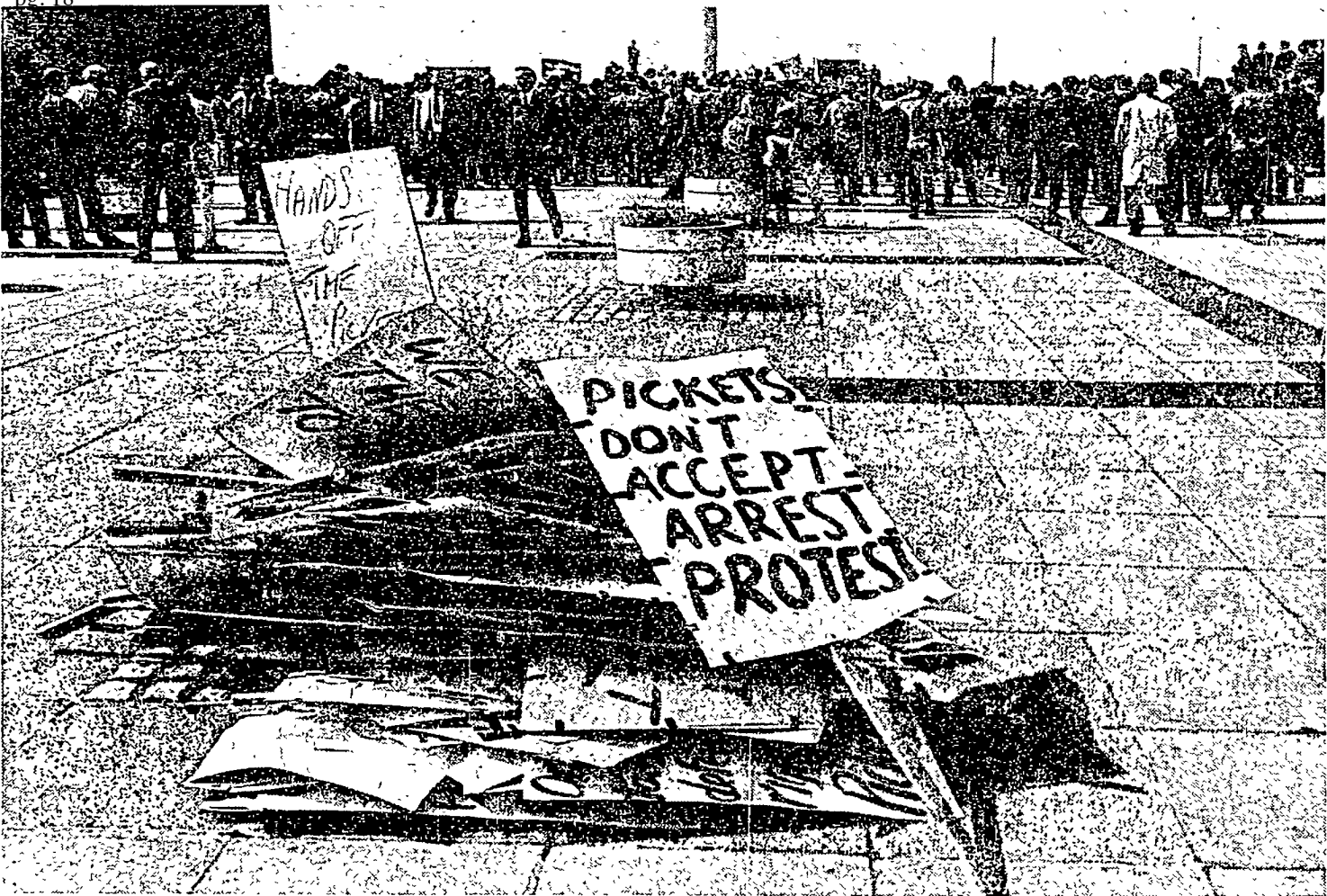
Dockers ignore strike pickets' protest march

Dewhurst, Ernest

The Guardian (1959-2003); Aug 25, 1970;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Guardian* (1821-2003) and *The Observer* (1791-2003)

pg. 18



Protest placards stacked on the ground during the meeting of trade unionists at the pierhead, Liverpool, yesterday

Dockers ignore strike pickets' protest march

More than 3,500 trade unionists from South-west Lancashire and Cheshire staged a one-day token strike and a march and demonstration rally in Liverpool yesterday. They were protesting, in particular, at the arrest in July of pickets on building sites at Ellesmere Port and, more generally, at the Government's proposed trade union policy.

But surprisingly, most of the 11,000 Mersey dockers, who are

By ERNEST DEWHURST

usually prepared to support other trade unionists, ignored leaflets which appealed to them to join. Most Merseyside firms reported that staffs were working normally.

The demonstration was called by the joint shop stewards committee at the Stanlow, Burmah Oil, and Carrington sites in protest at the recent arrest of 45 strikers who had been picketing the Shell and Burmah Oil refineries' sites in an unofficial strike over a pay

claim. The men are to appear on remand at Chester on Thursday and Friday, and workers plan to be outside the court.

Yesterday the strikers marched through the city centre, led by four men carrying a coffin labelled "Democracy." Supporting placards carried such slogans as "Defeat Tory legislation" and "We demand the right to picket."

Representatives from Pilkington glassworkers joined the march, and Councillor John Potter, the secretary and treasurer of the breakaway Glass Workers Union at St Helens, addressed the rally at the pierhead. He pledged full support for the construction workers and said:

"Your protest is our protest. We cannot afford to allow this loss of our longstanding rights under harassment by the police backed by the establishment. Our forefathers fought for, and won, these rights under threat of transportation."

Delegates will report back to a meeting at the construction works this week, and another demonstration is to be staged in St Helens on Monday.

Construction work at the two refineries has been almost at a standstill for six weeks because of the unofficial strike. Some 1,600 contract workers from the Burmah Oil and Shell refineries at Ellesmere Port refused to go back until they get 3s 6d more an hour, making a basic wage of 15s an hour. Spokesmen from both companies said yesterday that site extension programmes were seriously delayed.