

Full entry to Wapping, scabs out

Calling all good working-class people

Your support is needed at Wapping – any night or morning.

Good news, for eighty-two days now thousands of brave pickets, printers, young and old, men and women of the working class have withstood freezing cold, no money coming in, near total unpreparedness and charge after charge from the police strikebreakers, and fought back. Reinforcements are needed. Yes there have been many defeats, but also a few victories. We are strong, we are confident, join us at Wapping. Whatever happens printers will fight because there is no alternative, and together the class enemy can be beaten.

Printers and supporters have staked out the banner at Wapping. In this ex-docklands area support is strong. There are no neutrals. You're either with the workers or a thug or apologist for Murdoch. Join us at Wapping.

It is no accident that the bosses choose Wapping to stage a worker-bashing drive. Nor accidental that they choose to put scab distribution depots in areas the capitalists have blighted—the Rotherham area or at Motherwell in the ex-mining heart of Lanarkshire. They would have one in Maerdy but the pit isn't shut yet. It is never too late to rally, join us at Wapping.

It is no accident that 'outsiders' are used; Maxwell, Shah, Murdoch and Black. But they're as British as the bobby. The bosses and their hired thugs always rally. It is up to the workers to rally to the Wapping banner.

"Don't scab for the bosses,
Don't listen to their lies.
Us workers never had a chance
Unless we organise."

Join us at Wapping, any night or morning

Tuesday morning

The skeleton staff of scabs at Bouverie Street were given a warm reception by 300 tightly-grouped pickets who took up the pavement fifty yards either side of the main entrance. A number of soft white objects flew at the scabs across the street to supplement the crawlers' breakfast.

The heart of the picket was fifty or so women who arrived early, took up position right across from the main doors, and greeted scabs with loud chants and songs about what we were going to do with Rupert Murdoch "earl-ye in the morning". Scabs peering out from high windows were invited to join us in the street, but told to be careful which side of the road they landed. The strikebreaking clones in blue were clearly surprised by the strength of the picket and called up reinforcements, afraid perhaps that the strikers would walk into the building.

Byfleet depot halted

Congratulations to the 200 printers and fifty local supporters, who felt proud to be part of the Brookbank Park picket on Tuesday night, so organised and so successful. Police strikebreakers were made fools of and kept dancing all night. They were begging for mercy, even trying to exchange prisoners for vans. When the vans tried to move out police were trapped on the bonnet as the pickets surged forward. The dozens of white vans were kept in the depot all night.

An attempt was made to have an 'agreement' with the police. But you can't make deals with the strikebreakers who right away broke it in any case and pickets sealed up the depot tight.

This determined picket meant nothing moved and a great number of TNT staff were turned away. More of the same would soon end the dispute.

Wednesday night warehouse march

Some fifteen hundred Sogat Central Branch plus supporters marched from Tower Hill to Virginia Street. Police horses were lined up. The picket, though not successful in hampering distribution, showed the deepening mood of militancy amongst printers in the last three months. The class fibre of warehouse comes out more and more as pickets chanted "And the coppers are the biggest scabs of all" to the tune of I'd rather be a picket than a scab. Pickets displayed their rejection of any 'deals' with the police.

About 11:30 pickets decided to retreat from the road to Wellclose. The filth tried to nick a picket but he was rescued by the timely action of other pickets who moved in quickly. The police were met with a solid wall and knew they had a fight on their hands if they pursued. Maybe the strikebreakers in uniform would have won the fight, maybe not, at any rate the pickets were ready for them and the police retreated due to the action of the pickets to look after one of their own.



Thursday night

About 100 gathered in unusually cold April weather for a picket outside Pentonville prison. At the gates printers chanted "Maggie in" and "Larry and Ronnie out" in reference to two printers being held inside for a week. Protesters showed their support for the men being held as hostages by the capitalist jailers.

As one demonstration of the ranks increasingly taking the strike into their own hands, one picket climbed up to place a strike poster over the entrance sign. A screw who tried to grab the printer's leg had to give up.

As the strike enters its twelfth week the endurance through a very harsh winter is being transformed into the boldness of the strikers in hopes of better weather.



"Newspaper distribution was stopped in Canvey Island, Essex. Central London printers turned up at Menzies depot at Southend. Although one large van did manage to get into the depot, nothing left by 9.15am. Picketing by the workers had started at 2 o'clock that morning.

"The pickets charged the police, who were caught on the hop, with startling violence when a sergeant allegedly 'went berserk' and started lashing out at the workers.

Trouble flared as police went in for arrests and punch-ups which led to injuries to police, scabs and pickets. Strikebreakers' cars were damaged."

(Morning Star 12/4/86)

Friday morning

Lewisham printers' support group and Sogat members picketed the wharf of newspaper supplier 'Convoy'. Contact was made with drivers. The T&G stewards obstructed the picket and actively encouraged scabbing. There will be regular Friday pickets at 6:30am, New Kings St, Deptford.

Scabs caught by surprise

What a shock two journalists must have had one morning when they thought they were protected by the boys in blue. They threw copies of the Sun at pickets and gave them the two finger treatment. They did not realize there were more pickets roaming around. The look on their faces when they went down under a hail of fists!

79th Day of the picket

Saturday night some three thousand pickets moved into the Wapping area. A march of thousands was held from Tower Hill. Pickets stationed themselves at all the exit roads, with the largest concentrations at Glamis Road and Thomas More. Just after midnight riot police and horses moved in to block off sections of the picket from moving. A line of scab lorries came out through Artichoke Hill and up Cannon Street Road, protected by lines of police. The scab drivers think they are clever in their thievery, as one said to a picket at the gate, "I'm not stealing printers' jobs, I'm stealing railworkers' jobs"

Letter

Dear Picket, being an NGA member present on Sunday 6th April and most Saturdays previously, I must say that I strongly disagree with your account of the picketing for that evening. The violence on this occasion was the heaviest I've seen so far. But far from coming from the police, the trouble was started by the 400-500 extremely angry pickets that were still around after the first scab convoy came out. The police put up with 10 minutes of concentrated stone- and bottle-throwing (the local pub was cleared of them) and in response to this they used horses and riot police. On this occasion they got some back. As far as I am concerned this is only to be applauded.

A load of ballots

Thousands of printers who have picketed Wapping are confronted with an offer of £6.29 and an extra day's holiday (Newspaper Society). The price members will pay? "A new technology clause and a new disputes procedure to cover all issues including disputes over new technology". And no prizes for guessing who gets the biggest screw from these 'new procedures'.

These ballots *are* connected with efforts to wind down the picketing at Wapping.

Notes

- Correction: Picket 6 reported 2000 pickets on the night of Saturday 5/4/86. This was an exaggeration.
- When Samantha Fox's video was put on in the pub pickets booed and chanted scab until it was stopped.
- RIRMA strikers solved their DHSS problems by going to the offices in groups.

Diary

- Monday morning 7:30am Gray's Inn Road.
Mass picket organised by clericals.
- Wednesday evening 9pm Tower Hill to Wapping.
March organised by Sogat London Central Branch. All welcome.
- Thursday evening, mass picket Wapping.
- Friday evening, unemployed/unwaged night at Wapping

- Saturday night, 8:30pm Tower Hill.
Organised by Sogat/NGA/AUEW.

Income: Times RIRMA collection £2, mindsets 20p, 20p, f5, f5, 50p. Sogat machine member £5, misc. £1.40.
bookshop sales of Picket 3 (4-pager) £9.95, 'a worker' 50p.

Published by Sogat/NGA pickets not connected to any group or party.

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