

Picket

no. 41

Friday 16th January

Scab Murders Wapping Resident. Printers were grieved to learn of the deliberate murder of Mike Delaney on Saturday night. He and friends were on the footpath just after crossing the road at Butcher Row, when he was struck by a TNT lorry escorted by police. The convoy sped away. As Delaney lay in the road, police prevented assistance, and he died several hours later in hospital.

Saturday 3rd January. Campaign Against Police Repression March. Public Order Act just passed and already being used against print pickets. Fifteen hundred youth took part in the march from Clock Tower Place, North London. There were banners from unemployed groups, housing groups and gay printers. It was a high spirited demonstration by young workers largely outside the trade unions. Down Caledonian Road, where copies of the *Sun* were strewn all over the road. Then on to Grays Inn Road to scab off the Times building where pickets on duty were well chuffed.

Then along to Holborn, where the march stopped to shout at a Macdonalds restaurant. A lot of animal rights activists were present. Rallied at the Law Courts on the Strand. From there, several hundred decided to go to the South African Embassy, where there was a sit-down in the road. Some went off to Downing Street and to the police station to protest against arrests.

Saturday Night 3rd January. Wapping. 1,000 marched from Tower Hill in the first march of the New Year. Later, attention of pickets was concentrated on the police drive to clear the Highway round midnight. Ranging themselves in a semi-circle round the entrance to Wellclose Square, units were directed by a cop with a megaphone. As they pushed the crowd back, a congestion formed in the middle. Double and triple lines of police pushed the pickets to Wellclose.

Release Shirfield and Hicks.

Most Strikers Don't Know Bob Shirfield. Bob Shirfield: my first recollection of him was one of complete friendliness, and a seeming desire to put any person he came into contact with, completely at their ease. We first met when he was FOC at StudioTypesetters. I was just starting with this firm, and as usual, was going through the "new boy" anxieties, which even the boldest of us have suffered at one stage or another. Bob approached me, shook hands, and explained the set-up at Studio, in a "no nonsense" manner, which immediately put me at my ease. Bob has a respect and sensitivity to others, which make him a good friend and a top-rate FOC and TU member. Now he is serving a nine months sentence for "malicious wounding". The case was a shambles. Police evidence was cobbled together, and they never really got their act together. Out of the three journalists who were supposed to have been attacked by Bob and two others, only one positively identified him. Which was done with Bob coming up the escalator at Kings Cross, among other members of the public. The three journalists stood at the top, and were asked if they recognised anyone. One picked Bob - hardly surprising, when one considers that these witnesses had worked at the *Times* and *Sunday Times* with Bob, so he wasn't a stranger to them. The guv'nor of the pub where the attack took place wasn't sure that Bob was the attacker; his barman however said that Bob matched the description. In all, only two prosecution witnesses were sure. The police stated that six policemen had visited Bob at his house. When asked why so many, the sergeant intimated that Bob may have been violent. They admitted that the suspect was not violent when questioned. They were asked to produce notes of the interview, but informed the court that none of the six had taken notes. Bob had four witnesses, who stated that he was not drinking in the pub where the attack took place, but was in fact in the "Calthorpe", another pub a good quarter of a mile away, and at an earlier time as well, stating that they remembered Bob had left the Calthorpe to go home early, one of them saying that he had seen him nearby at Kings Cross, which is a mile from either of the pubs. It was stated by the judge that all of these witnesses, and in fact Bob himself, were of previously excellent character. The judge, when summing up, put the prosecution case first. The jury, with their built-in belief in the truthfulness of policemen, found Bob guilty of the lesser charge and he received his nine months, leaving his pals to help his pregnant wife and his young son. "Justice" had been done, and so had Bob!

Saturday Evening Surprise Picket. 10th January. Scab traffic came to a halt at 5.00pm as hundreds of pickets arrived suddenly at the main gates to the Wapping plant. Security guards hastily put a chain on. All told, about four hundred pickets were moving in from different directions. Packed solidly in front of the scab gates, scab traffic was closed down for one and a quarter hours. Chanting "I'd Rather Be a Picket than a Scab" and "The Coppers are the Biggest Scabs of All". The exit from the gates was ragged. Two or three were arrested.

While the EETPU has been stealing our work for the last 12 months, Captain Bob has been planning his own campaign, behind the smokescreen created by the dispute. As well as trying to break the power of the London Central Branch by having the paper distributed by Scabs, he has now stopped all Casual work in the *Mirror*. This means that the work of the casuals has been stolen by the regular workers, with no resistance whatsoever. It seems pointless to tell the *Mirror* Workers that they will end up getting the sack with no compensation, and the question must be raised: should we be picketing the *Mirror*?

Countdown at the *Mirror*. From the 14th January "Printing World": "The Odhams factory in Watford, abandoned by BPCC in 1983, will be used as the main printing plant for the *Daily Mirror*... Once completed, the factory will accommodate up to 12 of the MAN Colorman presses ordered... The first two presses have already been delivered... The NGA's branch secretary in Watford, Alan Robinson, says... several people have said they have jobs..."

"The first dummy editions of the *London Daily News* are to be printed this week at West Ferry Printers."
The seeds were sown in Official Strikebreaking in November 1985 *Mirror* and January 1986 *People* strikes.

Saturday Night, 10th January. Wapping. 2,000 printers and supporters took part in the march from Tower Hill. Passing some flats opposite Thomas More Street, women formed a picket line across an alleyway leading to pubs. The temperature was bitter cold, below freezing, as the wind chilled. Marked a massive display of hardened attitudes.

● Frederick Dye not a scab. *Evening Echo* report (printed *Picket* 40) false. Dye works in *Observer*.

● **Seamen (continued):** The Judas representatives of the Cunard scabs who recently sold their jobs for the same amount of money as Murdoch offered to us, are due to meet management in London shortly, to tie up the final details of their despicable betrayal of colleagues in the shipping industry. A P&O convener commented: "These shit-bags have kicked open the door to a massacre of our jobs as well. You can bet we'll be next under the cosh." Cunard is delighted, but even Sam McCluskie of the Seamen's Union has been moved to say that the QE2 will find itself blacked when it returns from its nice patriotic refit in a West German yard. Meanwhile, the emergence of Gibraltar as a flag of convenience has cost the lives of the allegedly uninsured crew who were drowned in the Christmas-time foundering of a tanker off Scotland. These poor souls are typical of a growing band of seafarers who sail in jeopardy thanks to Cunard who are helping many shipping lines back to the days before Samuel Plimsoll.

● **Southampton:** More information from disgruntled Coliseum and Marchwood coach drivers who are getting pretty pissed off with being scabbed up all over the South (remember only four men are prepared to do the Wapping run). They report several encouraging developments. Firstly, scabs who asked the Works Council for a pay rise were told that sacked print workers would give anything to have their jobs so, sorry, no cash. Next, there is fighting and brawling going on among different factions, with enmity at its zenith between Milton Keynes and Southampton. But, best of all, comes news of an enormous shortage of staff, approaching 100. Scabs who have left or been sacked are being invited back in letters signed by a gentleman called Reg Limb, Production Director.

● **Southampton:** Printworker reps from Wapping attended anti-apartheid demos recently, where the injustices against jailed pickets were brought to public attention. As one is incarcerated on the Isle of Wight, the story about our jailed colleagues has been in local media and aroused amazing levels of public interest.

● **Wapping. New Year's Eve.** A good turn-out, considering. Everyone was in good spirits as we made our way towards the Scab plant. As we neared the World Trade Centre, one sergeant Plod decided to stop the march by grabbing hold of one of the banners. He was in for a shock. We weren't going to let one Plod stop our march. He was quickly surrounded when a Knees Up Mother Brown started. He backed down, looking really annoyed, and the march carried on to Wapping. Once we arrived outside the Scab plant, people stopped, and started drinking and generally having a good time. Plod didn't like this, and forced everyone onto the pavement. Midnight, everyone drinking and wishing each other a Good New Year and another year to fight against Murdoch. Fireworks were let off. Plod didn't like this either, and tried to get into the crowd with brute force (as usual), people getting thrown around and one of our most dependable woman pickets being knocked down and needing hospitalisation (she's OK now). A few arrests were made, and then Plod backed away. A few minutes later a picket came through the crowd with a copper's helmet completely flattened, to cheers from the crowd, and gave it to a Plod, much to the amusement of the pickets. All in all, a good time was had by one and all. *Suns* redistributed into puddles at local tube station on the way home.

● **Picket Part 5** now available. Send 50p in cash or stamps only to address below, or available at Housman's Books. Part 5 is a 32-page booklet covering 8th October to 21st November; includes *Picket* numbers 29 to 35 inclusive, plus other coverage of the strike.

● **Wednesday 7th January.** 800 printers and supporters made the 133rd strike march to Wapping.

● Incident with a picket in front of the TUC building. Noticed a waddling figure inside the glass doors, which turned around and fled out the back. Gave chase and given verbal, the kind of which some of our readers may feel unprintable even though fully appropriate. Willis uttered some sort of whine.

● **Correction** to Saturday night article in *Picket* 40. Said police arrested first four pickets they came to. This is not entirely accurate. Also correction to Saturday evening 6pm report. Said arrests were made while leaving, not before.

● **Income:** 16p change; £3 working member; £11 nobody; £4.65 NGA strikers; £20 Corby; £4 Leicester; £5 Claimants Action Group Edinburgh; £10 Catalyst; £2.44 Unattached.

● From January NGA *Print* journal:
Expelled from NGA for scabbing:

For infringement of Rule 41, Clauses 7 and 8
LONDON REGION: Aldous A.P. (A03404); Aljar R.J. (A03165); Allen B.M. (A02969); Anderson D.J. (A04141); Attewell M.J. (A03047); Badcock C.L. (B24857); Banyard G.A. (B22873); Barnard V.E. (B22877); Berry W.J. (B14457); Birkett A. (B25307); Booker J.A. (B10660); Bower J.A. (B09824); Bradford C.P. (B10338); Broxnan M. (B25604); Browne E.H. (B25626); Burbridge P.W. (B14463); Catchpole R. (C9456); Chamberlain T.J. (C08451); Clark S.J. (C07538); Cooper P.O. (C09061); Craddock B. (C19584); Cutler B.L. (C08460); Davenport K.G. (D04415); Davies G.H.A. (D6101); Dell W. (D09733); Dennis M. (D04951); Devemish V.J. (D4525); Downer F. (D04629); Dunham R.F. (D9731); Erwood J. (E2157); Fergusson J.M. (F3522); Figg D.R. (F3664); Fisher L.F. (F08812); Frame C.W. (F10467); Godmark I. (G09750); Gomm D.A. (G06758); Goodwin C. (G5383); Gowland L.W. (G07823); Hannam D.A. (H18839); Hart D. (H20719); Harvey C.R. (H5906); Herbert T.R. (H10647); Hornett W.G. (H11945); Horrigan B. (H10050); House H.J. (H10382); Hudd G.G. (H18840); Hughes E.C. (H21191); Hurt A.R. (H11729); Kelly R.L. (K2357); Kennedy J. (K02366); Kenward R.C. (K2713); Knight R. (K10096); Lamey J.A. (L9487); Larden L.G. (L10351); Leith B.R. (L03465); Lincoln G.J. (L04089); Maslen B.E. (M17432); McCormick V. (M08369); Miles F.D. (M07998); Newman L.O. (N01720); Pettitt D.R. (P05568); Plunkett M.P. (P07747); Richards J. (R10586); Rosen E.B. (R11897); Rowland J.P. (R11924); Scicluna A.E. (S10107); Service B.A. (S9135); Shelley E.A. (S10125); Simms J.G. (S18892); Skelsey D.W. (S19578); Slater M.T. (S18893); Smart H. (S09684); Songest D.R. (S12035); Struthers I. (S23562); Thorpe B. (T4791); Turvey F.A. (T07394); Wakeman K. (W18876); Walker R.D. (W09135); Weeks D.W. (W08220); Welch G.A. (W17328); West B.J. (W8393); Winyard A.D. (W17327).



24th January
One Year On March
4.00pm Temple Tube
SOGAT/NGA/AEU

24th January
8.30pm March
Glamis Road
Initiated by
local residents.



Published by picketing print union members.
Picket, c/o Housman's Books, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX.