

Picket

No. 1, 5th March 1986

STRIKERS STAND FIRM -- TUC GO TO HELL

The TUC traitors and various components, hangers-on and pressurizers continue to try to contain the dispute in order to kill it. They feed lies that strike-breaking electricians are dissatisfied at being conned. Picket lines mean don't cross. Open shops mean hands and arms cuaght in machines.

Praise is due to the warehouseman who follows rat Hammond about, picketing and yelling "thief" wherever Hammond seeks to find a dupe to hold hands with.

41st DAY OF THE PICKET

Ten times now at Wapping there have been days with marches and thousands of pickets out to blockade the scabs. The picketing has been built up by members and supporters putting in long hours and coming down off their own backs to establish the presence at the top of Virginia St. Through thick and thin, the picket has built itself up, especially through the loyal service of the vanworkers. It is the ranks of pickets, the dogsbodies, who are the real leaders and hold the only hope for the future.

37th DAY OF THE PICKET

On Saturday March 1st the picket at Glamis Road was a lot livelier than the previous Saturday. When the police tried to clear the road they were snowballed, and when the pickets started singing the Hokey Cokey in unison during the push-and-shove, the police became confused and eventually fell back without clearing the street or arresting anyone.

Another large picket blocked The Highway at the top of Thomas More St., but this Saturday the lorries came up one of the smaller streets leading off Pennington St. onto the Highway. From there they dog-legged north up Cannon Street Road, between the two main groups of pickets. Later there seemed to be the possibility of a push being made for the main gate of the plant. But the police brought up horses and reinforcements. Besides, as usual a lot of the picketers played safe and stayed behind the railings on the far side of the road. When a particularly fat and nasty-looking Plod pushed a photographer to the floor, deliberately and in full view of the pickets, nobody made a move.

36th DAY OF THE PICKET

Friday 28th February saw a four-hour march to Wapping. The march started at midday from Clerkenwell Green. It was organised by machine assistants chapels. Up to 1500 pickets took part, down Grays Inn Rd. past the old Times building to chant scab at those inside. Along Holborn and Farringdon the march made its presence felt. A TNT truck caught in the traffic was hastily evacuated by the police before the march could reach it. Along Fleet St. the demo halted to jeer drinking journalists. Past Bouverie St. where police blocked the way to the old Sun building. Then turning at Temple and along the embankment. Farther on the police made a stand to divert the march from going through the city. The determined procession pushed through the police line. One picket was arrested then released to continue in the march. Finally past Tower the march reached Wapping at 4p.m., cold but determined.

35th DAY OF THE PICKET

Thursday evening, 27 February, there was a spirited clerical march. One thousand pickets marched from Tower Hill to Wapping. A brief rally was held just past Cannon Street Rd. and the march joined the picket at the top of Virginia St.

30th DAY OF THE PICKET

On Saturday 22 February there were big pickets at the top of Glamis Rd. and Thomas More St. At the Glamis Rd. exit, the pickets blocked the road most of the night and the police didn't try to move us. An official with a megaphone bored the pants off everyone with constant snippets of "good news". He wanted us to lie down in the road like "that little man from India". If he meant Gandhi, wasn't there something about him starting up a scab union among textile workers and threatening to burn himself alive if they went on strike?

At Thomas More St. the police eventually cleared the road and at about 10.30 the first of two convoys came out.

The police were able to take a low profile all night, but earlier on it is rumoured that this meant some of the pickets had been able to harrass small groups of police down Thomas More St. without too much risk of getting themselves arrested.

ENTHUSIASM

One of the best nights of picketing so far was Thursday February 13th, when the pickets broke through the police line and got down to the Pennington St. gate. The lorries were held up for over an hour while the police reorganised. This picket succeeded because some "enthusiastic elements" -- football supporters and others -- decided to really have a go. Everyone else piled in behind them. Such people should be welcome at pickets, not told to keep away or go to the back.

THE OPEN SHOP OFFENSIVE

Printers are faced with an open shop offensive by the bosses. The bloodsuckers want to get rid of the most experienced printers because of the higher percentages in ruining young bodies. Thousands of police are organised in military formations for strikebreaking. That is the reality of our working lives and not the puerile boycott campaign which deliberately disperses the activists among millions of newspaper readers, not the myth of the good boss, not the deceit of "voluntary" slavery, not the crawling attempts at a sell-out...

The bosses have been planning an open shop in the docklands for years, we have not been prepared. This is our reward for doing our bit to help break the miners strike by printing strikebreaking lies. Financial support is nice but picketing is the key to winning. We should have gone out with the miners from day one. But better to fight today than never. Now the capitalist enemy are bloated as they prepare to extend the open shop while we work on. We are being deceived that our jobs are "safe". As long as we "voluntarily" push our teachers out to pasture, allow untrained youngsters to cut work conditions at a fraction of the rate etc.

The Times/ST/Sun/NoW strikers have taken the correct stand. This is our dispute too.

--March Wednesday 5 March Leaves Gough St (behind times building.) Organised
by SOGAT Machine.

--Womens March Saturday 8 March 5.30pm from Tower Hill

--Last Tuesday's march advertised by Tower Hamlets Trade Council was cancelled due to a little bit of rain.

This is No. 1 of a picket-line newsletter. It was written, printed and paid for by two NGA members in the general trade. We met at the picket line, hate capitalism and see the need for a regular bulletin containing accurate reports on picketing actions --from the picketer's point of view-- and also space for pickets to put forward their opinions about the strike and how the picketing might be strengthened.

We would have liked to see such a newsletter started by some of the strikers themselves, but we hope it will be taken up by people at the picket line as a useful way of spreading information and putting some of the discussions about this situation into print.

At first we could produce the newsletter on a weekly basis, depending on the response to this one. But if the idea takes off it could come out more often, maybe even daily. Any contributions, cartoons etc. would be welcome.