

● One law for all? Don't you believe it. Try getting arrested at Wapping and see the double standard for yourself. Let's start with your arrest. At Wapping you are always assaulted on arrest. The mere touch of a policeman's hand on you is assault. If not, why is it classed as assault the other way round? You try pushing a policeman or holding his arm. They do you for assault, for obstructing the police. A rule for them and a rule for you?

You are then given a date to appear in court. Try not turning up at the appointed hour. A warrant for your arrest is issued. The police, they suit themselves, maybe turn up, but with pickets more often than not they do not. No warrant is issued for their arrest. You just come back another day that suits them. A rule for them, a rule for you.

Evidence is not ready the day you appear, tough luck, come back another day. Witness this case at Thames. A Picket has made his fourth appearance this week. They want to use a Video as evidence, but they haven't sorted out yet who is responsible for showing the Video in court. The police or the Prosecuting office. Tough luck, come back at a later date. To suit them. You try telling them you have forgotten your evidence or you don't know who is responsible for showing it. You would be laughed at all the way to Pentonville.

If you are unfortunate enough to have a record, that is read out in court, even though it may be irrelevant to your case. But a policeman is taken as an honest, truthful man, regardless of whether he has already been proved a liar in previous cases. Or been up on disciplinary charges. You are not afforded that information. A rule for them, a rule for you.

The most blatant is the famous notebook. The police can confer with other colleagues making their notes. After them, copy from someone else's notes. Add bits on, days after the arrest. All accepted in court. You are stripped of all your possessions, dumped in a cell, and a year afterwards try to remember everything that went on. There is no exaggeration here – people have been on remand for years. We have pickets arrested in March, still not dealt with. You are released after arrest, usually in the early hours. A bit confused, normally worried about the family etc. By the time you get home, most of the information you want in court is forgotten, but old Plod is alright – he has his notebook. A rule for them. A rule for you.

Saturday Night, 25th October: Wapping. Two or three thousand die-hard supporters of the strike attended the 103rd march to Wapping, thoroughly rebuffing fainthearted whinging (desertion) that the strike is over. After last week, the evening is relatively quiet. Large numbers of pickets quickly make their way to patrol round Commercial Road, where scabs come and go under massive police protection. Despite that, a number of scab artics and vans are done.

Tuesday 29th October: March from Peckham. About seven hundred assembled for the march, happy at going a different route to Wapping. The march proceeded through Southwark, with much support for the printers' strike, but also frequently stopping to disillusion someone reading the *Sun*. Police attempts to harass marchers were repulsed. The speech of the day came from a young girl of about six who spoke through a loudhailer and made a lot of sense. Among the several print banners which floated proudly in the wind, there was the new Times Revisers banner about Bob Tetaur's six months in jail, and numerous chants about David Payne, another printer with six months in the class enemy's jail. As the march passed Borough cop shop, it stopped to jeer the pawns for a while in a crystal clear demonstration of the maturity gained by print pickets in the last several months.

On Tower Bridge, the march stopped again, as one copper made trouble for himself by trying to stop a picket putting stickers on lamp posts and passing vehicles. As one hundred printers immediately crowded round, the copper decided it was really alright for him to put up as many stickers as he pleased.

The march arrived at Wapping as usual in the rain, about three hours after the start.

Wednesday Night 30th October: Tower Hill. Another march approaches. A couple of dozen or more women (WAM) have marched from Blackfriars across the river. They are joined by more women, in all about sixty, plus say one hundred men following along for a march to Wapping. On arriving at the picket line, the police assault the women, to clear the road. The women defend themselves as best as possible, and one arrest is made.

Meanwhile, a larger march, about one thousand, goes out from the back of Tower Hill tube station towards Aldgate. As it passes the bus shelter where a few weeks ago a police assault was driven off, a certain warmth is felt in the heart. No scabs are sighted because the march doesn't stay long enough in the area. At Commercial Road and Cannon Street Road, marchers want to continue East, but stewards set up a route South to the Highway and masses of waiting coppers. Just a few minutes after leaving Commercial Road, three scab artics go through. At any rate, the march reaches the Highway, where about 500 stop for an hour till 12.00 am, demanding the release of the one person arrested, undeterred by hundreds of coppers, including six mounted Kinnocks on three sides, with a fence on the fourth. Meanwhile two women from the luxury flats at Virginia provoke pickets in the Highway at Wellclose, and three more women are arrested while the main body is a few hundred feet away. Many move up but it is too little too late. The whole march, now joined by about twenty of WAM who had marched up to the rest, now moves over to Wellclose for a bit. Then two hundred pickets go to Leman Street Scab HQ where pickets have previously been assaulted and moved off when trying to demonstrate. Lines of scabs form a semi-circle round the sty as pickets demand the release of the prisoners and chant "Jump" at police in the windows. Finally at around 3.00 am, one by one the three women are released. They're chuffed at the sight of fifty pickets who have stayed to greet them. Two have been charged with obstruction, and one who is bruised now has two assault charges.

Saturday Night 1st November: Wapping. The 283rd day of the strike. 2,500 are present for the march. 'Allo, there is a new stall present from WAM, sweet down the belly too, and Special from the Fantastic vanworkers. Several hundred to a thousand Tartars move up to Commercial Road to stalk the vermin. News passes round of how another picket has been beaten up by the police during the week. Also there is word of four scab juggernauts who have been sighted removing their own windscreens to hear the pickets' truth. In Commercial Road, van-load after van-load of uniformed strikebreakers go by every few seconds. Only one scab coach is sighted for hours.

The Escapade. Thursday night's escapade in East London came to an abrupt end for me when the Transit pulled up and half arrested me. It was the beginning of one of the funniest farces you are ever likely to see.

We were supposed to be on a secret mission, but the whole of London seemed to know about it. We left in convoys for an undisclosed destination, and stayed in convoy, dodging around back streets, by this very act drawing full attention to ourselves. We arrive, jump out of the motors, about 60-80 of us, and in a pack move off to some point about a quarter of a mile away. Have you ever seen about 80 men all hustle and bustle in the dead of night? Let's face it, it don't look like a picnic or a come to prayer meeting, does it. So up comes Plod and stops my particular quartet. Let me tell you, we were carrying everything - I mean, like World War 3 was about to begin. The noise of scaffold tubes, iron bars, bags of bricks, 30lb weights, being dragged as we tried to walk on must have woke up half of London.

So they have us up against the wall and ask what we are doing. "Going home," came the reply. "Wiv all that scaffold," says Plod. "That ain't ours, guv'nor... it was already there, we just tripped over it." "Where have you been drinking," asks Plod. "In the Crown and Anchor," chips in the Bomber. (Hold your breath, this pub is a hundred yards up the road and it has been closed for a year at least.) With that, the Bomber drops a black widow catapult from his belt. "Right," says Plod, "you are under arrest." "But it ain't illegal to have a catapult, guv'nor," chirps the Bomber. "I know that," says Plod, "but you lot are up to something, and I'm going to do you for an offensive weapon." We all start looking at our flies, but Plod is not amused.

He is getting frantic now, because no help has arrived. He is holding the Bomber and trying to watch Dip and Do, who keep moving about. (Plod likes you to stand still when he is talking to you.) He is questioning us about a gang fight. We don't believe our luck. "The disguise has worked. We don't look like pickets." We ain't got our badges on. He asks me to turn my pockets out. I tenderly pat my sides and tell him I have a few weights for my job. "Why have you got gloves on?" "Cos my hands are cold." "Do you always go for a drink with gloves on?" "Yea, 'course I do if me hands are cold." Let me tell you, I must have had 14 to 20lb in each pocket in iron alone. He carries on questioning about a gang fight. I mean, I am 50, I haven't been out for a gang fight since I was 16 or so. He tells me and Dip to stay put, while he takes the Bomber round the corner. Dip goes with him, which he didn't like. It gives me a chance to unload me iron. I throw it over a wall and demolish some poor sod's outside loo. But Plod is deaf. He doesn't hear it. Now I am full of bounce, having got rid of the evidence. I start to get bolshie with Plod, and he tells me I can go. Not without the Bomber, we say. Oh alright then, but don't take me for a mug... I know you came over here for trouble." (You wouldn't think so. There is all this debris on the pavement which he has seen us drop. Iron bars, bricks, bottles, etc.) But has he guessed? That Hendon training gets you every time. Just to make his day, we own up to the gang fight. He is over the moon. He not only gives Bomber his catapult back, but his ammo as well. I bet we could have asked for the bricks as well.

Imagine my surprise on Saturday when walking up to Tower Hill to join the march. Plod is acting as a human barrier across Cable Street. "Hello," he says, "remember me from last night?" "The Crown and Anchor, eh," he says, with that knowing look. "Nice to see you, officer," I says. "Yes," he says, "Nice to see you too." And gives me a puzzled look. The Tower is full of pickets and police at this time. And he is trying to work out what the leader of "The Wanderers" is doing here. Funny old night, ain't it. I hope he stayed on for Commercial Road afterwards. He must have thought it was the biggest gang of all time. I hope nobody told him and spoilt his day.

● With regard to Saturday night. Bet some of the pickets felt like Pickets again, didn't you, marching here, marching there, dodging Ploddy everywhere. Brick them here, brick the bastards anywhere. A bloody good night's work for a change. Beats standing at Wellclose drinking tea and being policed in a pen. Keep moving pickets here, there and everywhere. Plod don't like it, Murdoch don't like it, and you can be sure them scabs don't like it. Let's heck it up, Pickets on every exit route, Whitechapel, Burdett, Commercial - both ends - and the middle. More radio contact; as they move one lot on, another lot take their place. We can win and will. Keep thinking and acting. Don't wait for leaders, lead yourselves.

Income: £5.47 casual NGA minder; £5 working NGA minder; £5 *Mirror* worker; £30 *Sun* SOGAT machine chapel committee.



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