

SEA PICKET JULY 9th NO. 6

June 30th

The day the strikers came to London. It's a pity a few others chose not to support the day. Thousands of leaflets were distributed and the 'left' press were informed. Some chose to cover the event, some didn't. Perhaps some feel that the stike is a lost cause or not trendy enough. The strikers proved that they are still willing to fight. We must still be willing to support.

The tactic of not informing the police proved to be correct. The 300 people who turned up, including 150 strikers, were able to hold a rally in Hyde Park before marching to P+O's headquarters in Pall Mall. Any prior discussion would certainly have meant that the demonstration would not have reached the building. The water was not tested as far as marching in the road was concerned but the opportunities were there.

At Hyde Park strikers spoke of their determination to continue the strike and solidarity was expressed from an ex Wapping striker, a striker from a Hackney housing association and various political groups. International solidarity was given by Iranian and Turkish workers and a letter of support was sent from Germany. There was noticeable presence by NALGO members from Newham and Haringey.

At Pall Mall there was plenty of stick for those inside the building and there was vociferous chanting and singing plus leafletting of passers by. Dennis Skinner came along to give his support to the picket. Eventually one of the directors of P+O 'allowed' a couple of the strikers into the building. He reckoned that P+O should settle the dispute. Well, he would say that wouldn't he? Perhaps the thought of pickets outside the building on a regular basis didn't appeal to him very much! There might have been more mileage in taking him hostage!

More and more demonstrations of this nature and also in Dover must be organised to keep the pressure on P+O and its backers the Tory government and to force the union into calling industrial action. This dispute can not be allowed to just fade away.

July 1st

Around 500 pickets arrived at the dock gate at 6am. The law were out in force ready to counter this early morning gathering. It is always hard to keep things quiet but it is not impossible. Too much is being said within earshot of the people in blue who lets face it are not on your side. It was very noticeable at the London demo. that news of the early morning picket was spreading fast. The police were amongst the pickets and couldn't have failed to pick up that information. There must be more caution when events are being planned. Despite all of this the picket was a good show of strength and caught the new timed early morning scab coach.

July 6th

Yet more attempts to call off the mass picketing. The union is given 19 days to call it off or face a fine that will "run into six figures". The judge was pleased enough to state that "The union is getting near to the stage of death". Well, the question needs to be asked. Are the T.U.C. going to allow a union to be killed off by the courts, or are they going to call for full all out support for the strikers? Even more worrying is the fact that the court ruling could be used to call off the strike over the heads of the strikers.

HERE WE GO!

At last the rank and file are taking control of their own strike. The letters to the other ports calling for support are being followed with flying pickets in an attempt to get strike action. This is one of the most significant moves in the dispute for ages. Industrial action is the only way and this move should lift the strike once again. Another demo at Dover, this time with 3 or 4 weeks notice, would not go a miss.

AGONY AUNT

How many times are supporters going to have to appeal to end this constant bickering between the different groups of strikers? You are all on strike and can't keep going around telling people to keep off "your patch" and competing against each other. You are dividing and ruling amongst yourselves and that is a disaster. One WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP FUND is needed, with the money then being divided out equally. Either you are working for yourselves or you're working for the strike. One way means you can get on with winning the dispute, the other means you will lose.

WHAT IS IT TO BE?

LETTERS

Bringing it to Britain

As a member of the Troops Out of Ireland movement I was amazed to see, at last weeks demo, strikers wearing the badges of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. (RUC) Perhaps seafarers do not know that strikers in Belfast were removed from their boats in May at gunpoint by these people. In addition the RUC is one of the most sectarian forces in the World. It has been used to shoot young Catholics in the back (unarmed) as the Stalker enquiry showed. Eventually these same things will happen to strikers here. They already have plastic bullets which they can use.

Mark, East London Troops Out.

NEW GROUPS

SOUTH EAST LONDON SUPPORT GROUP
57, Astbury Rd. Peckham S.E 15

BIRMINGHAM SEAFARERS SUPPORT GROUP
7, Frederick Street, Birmingham.

EDINBURGH SEAFARERS SUPPORT GROUP
12a Picardy Place Edingburgh AH1 3JT

NORWICH SEAFARERS SUPPORT GROUP
70, Gladstone Street, Norwich NR2 3BJ

QUOTES

The following are a list of quotes from Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley and Norman Willis in support of the strike over the past 6 months.

"....."
"....."
"....."

to GERMANY and BACK (2)

As last weeks copy of Seapicket stated one striker remained in Germany for another week. What follows is his report.

"I volunteered, after requests, to go to Northern Germany after spending the first part of the week in the Dusseldorf region.

"On Thursday June 16th I spoke to Red 8 in Kiel. This group consists of representatives from different left-wing groups and parties. A message of support was read out before last weeks demo in London. They actually raised £660 for the support kitchens, which was very good.

"Next day I did an interview for Red 8's paper, appeared on a local radio station in Hamburg and spoke to a meeting of 20 workers. All agreed to take the issue into their workplaces.

Where is the NUS?

"On the Saturday three German workers helped in the leafleting of the OTV (a public transport union) conference. We were refused access being told; - "Only officials from the NUS are allowed in." Sadly we hear that no official from the NUS attended throughout the week. Mind you it only lasted a week and only had 1,000 delegates there! (Stop press-we hear that two strikers from Deal got into the conference and although they were not allowed to speak a message of support was read out)

Metal Workers stewards conference passes resolution and promises support.

"After speaking to a group of unemployed workers in Hamburg and doing a article for a local community newspaper I attended and spoke at a Metal Workers (IGM Union) shop stewards conference in Rheinhausen. The 150 stewards took a bucket collection of £200 and passed a resolution expressing support.

Addressed to our striking colleagues at P & O:

Industrie-Gewerkschaft Metall
für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Verwaltungsstelle Duisburg

Duisburg, den 21. 06. 1988

You have been fighting against inhuman working conditions for more than 20 weeks now. 2.300 of you have been sacked as a consequence of this. The reactionary Thatcher government has sequestered your funds. Your fight has brought the lesson home to us that workers throughout Europe have to co-operate more closely if they want to advance the improvement of their working conditions and their fight against employers and reactionary governments. To underline this point we are sending you our greetings und assure you of our support.

R E S O L U T I O N

der 6. Vertreterversammlung der IG Metall Duisburg

The resolution which was passed at a 150 strong IMG stewards conference.

Teaching English

"On Thursday I was the guest speaker to a group of 20 twelve year olds who are learning English. I had been invited by the daughter of the people I was staying with. Many bought badges and I raised £7. Later I spoke to a meeting of F.A.U members. This is an anarchist organisation who were very supportive whilst in Germany.

"On June 24th and 25th I attended two meetings organised by the Marxist-Lennist Party of Deutschland. These were in Dortmund and Gelenskirchen. A very useful discussion on the need for concrete demands to be made, in order to win the strike, took place.

"I returned to Britain via Hamburg. The trip was useful in that it brought the issues to many workers who had not heard about the dispute. We also raised some money and there was the chance to discuss the need for workers to link their struggles internationally. P&O are an international company. If we are to fight them we must recognise that we have more in common with workers overseas than our British bosses."