

SEA PICKET

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No 11 Aug 20th

August 6th

Around 1500 people turned up for the 6th month anniversary demo at Dover. Those who headed for the Eastern Dock where the march was supposed to start from found just a couple of pickets who informed that the starting point had been changed.

It soon became obvious that the demonstration was not going to be allowed anywhere near the picket line. Instead we set off uphill, on the hottest day of the year, through a residential road and away from the picket line. Who decided on this route?.....Well it does not take much working out does it? The Union was due back in court and didn't want to upset P+O and the courts, and the police, who all seemed to be from Surrey, wanted a quiet day. Between them they came up with a march that would have tested someone from the Australian outback!

The attendance would have been even better if more time had been given to get leaflets out to let people know it was on. Still it was noticeable that many of those that had attended were people that had been contacted by those who have been called 'militant' because they have been critical of the way the dispute has been run.

At the rally an attempt was made to play the new record. Because of the poor sound system it sounded more like a pub on a busy day. Perhaps that's where Sam recorded his bit.

The speakers offered lots of support and it was left to Arthur Scargill to really raise the spirits. He suggested that demands should be put on the T.U.C. The T.U.C. at the moment is about as useful as a chocolate fireguard. If the strikers hang around waiting for them to do something then they will wait a long time. Ask all the miners and printers who watched the T.U.C. trying to do deals behind the scenes rather than giving full support to the people they are supposed to represent. Still if they were all like Arthur things might be different.

Finally Sam spoke. How he was even allowed to be there amazed many. He blamed everybody except himself, said that he liked whisky and then sat down! The sad thing is that he got away with this.

The support for the strikers is still there. Lots of these supporters would like to have seen more of the seafarers on the march rather than in the pub but they are still giving their time and money to the strike. More demos and more time to organise for them would be welcome.

PS. Perhaps the most disgusting thing about the demo and rally was the actual breakdown of the speakers. Where were the women speakers?

August 9th P&O foresee another 'Zeebrugge'

The internal memorandum which has offered scabs a new insurance scheme is the clearest indication yet that P&O envisage another Zeebrugge disaster occurring.

How else can anyone react to the news that the scheme, costing £3.40 a year, will cover legal services offering guaranteed cover in "defending criminal prosecutions, Health and Safety, leaving bow doors open, etc."

P&O know that their current manning levels, untrained crews and long hours is going to produce another Zeebrugge. It is simply a matter of when it occurs not if.

August 11th 'Send him to Scotland'

Terry French is given bail by Her Majesty's 'respected' court. However in order to be allowed out he has to agree to go and live with relations in Scotland. The result is that a leading political activist has been lost from the strike. In addition how many other 'democratic' countries would impose similar bail conditions? Defending Terry French means defending all our rights.

August 15th

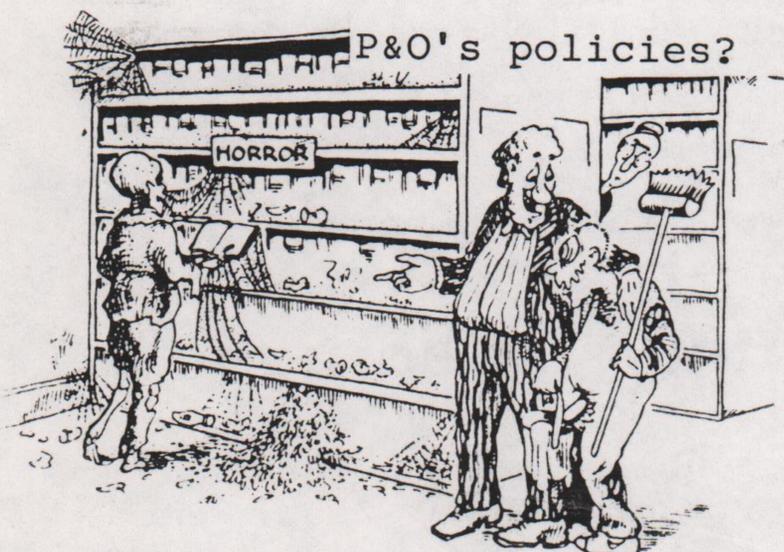
The courts decide that they have made the N.U.S. grovel enough and let them have their money back. This will do little for the strikers as the Union officials will be falling over themselves to make sure that they are seen keeping their distance from the strike.

Coastguard stations cut

The Government continues to show its contempt for safety. As well as allowing unsafe ships with untrained crew to sail on ferries, they now intend to cut back on coastguard stations. This will mean the loss of life in return for a cost cutting exercise. Following the Herald, Kings Cross and Piper Alpha another disaster is on the cards. There is only one word for it ...MURDER.

SOLIDARITY GREETINGS

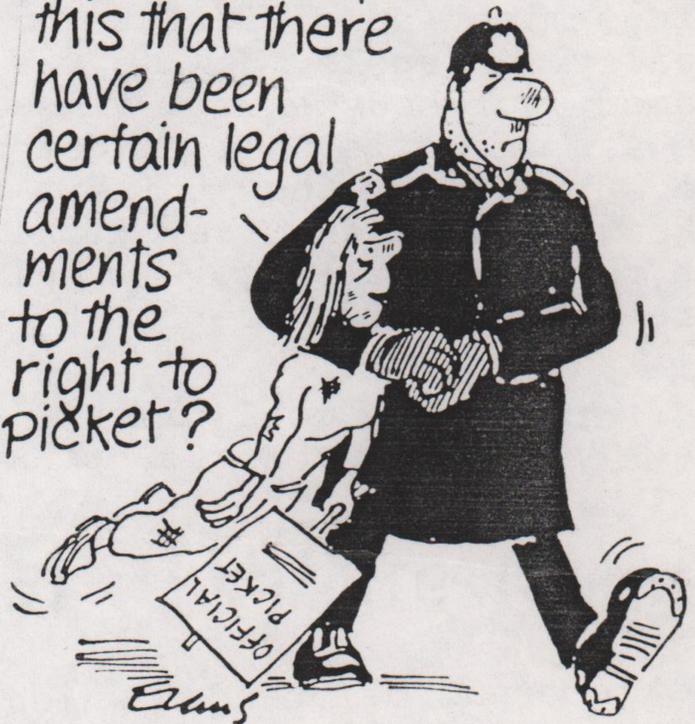
'Supporters of the Seafarers' recently met 4 strikers from the Vickers shipyards in Barrow. 12,000 workers have been on strike for 10 weeks. John Swainton, APEX senior steward said;-"We offer solidarity greetings with seafarers. We hope that both of us can win our common struggle with our employers."



'SO, IF YOU'RE LOOKING TO CUT CORNERS...!'

'Whistle while you walk?'

Can I take it from this that there have been certain legal amendments to the right to picket?



AFTER 6 MONTHS ON STRIKE HOW ABOUT A FEW JOKES TO CHEER EVERYONE UP?

Sterling and Sherwood were having lunch.

"There are Hundreds of ways of making a fortune, but only one honest way."

"What's that?"

"How should I know?"

Old Sam was sitting down on a bench one day moaning with pain.

"What's the matter with you, Sam?" asked one of his friends.

"I'm sitting on a nail."

"Why don't you move, then?"

"It's all right. I'll soon get used to it."

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

We understand that at the meeting on August 16th of the Womens Support Groups 'Seapicket' and the writers of it were accused of being 'militant.' We further understand that there was some discussion as to whether strikers should continue to 'work out of' Hackney Trade Union Support Unit. 'Seapicket' welcomes the chance to answer the charges of 'militancy.'

Solidarity Network

Members of 'Seapicket' are part of a much larger group of people organised around the country in what is called the 'Solidarity Network.' This network was established during the Wapping Dispute when activists saw the need to organise outside the traditional bounds of trade unionism. Wapping strikers were disgracefully 'sold down the river' by their trade union leaders. The same has happened in your dispute.

The 'Solidarity Network' exists to provide support for all groups of workers in struggle. Many of its members have raised thousands of pounds to keep support kitchens in the Dover region going. The majority of people who attended your recent demo from outside Dover came not as a result of the NUS or the TUC's publicity but because the 'Network' circulated leaflets as widely as possible.

Political ideas

We will continue to give practical support however long the strike goes on. However this in itself will not win the strike. That requires a political understanding of how to fight multi-national companies such as P&O. Through 'Seapicket' we have tried to offer ideas as to how to fight. This has been done because we want you to win.

It's ours

'Seapicket' members believe that workers should actually own the means of production. This means Seafarers, as a body, actually own the ferries. They run them and they make the decisions about the best way to do so.

International support

Furthermore we believe that workers whatever their colour/sex, or wherever they live have more in common with each other than with their bosses. The term 'British jobs for British workers' is a nonsense. 'British P&O' have shown how they are prepared to treat British workers.

Ruling class collaborators

We believe that the full-time Union officials are linked to a system of exploitation. They are there to negotiate for part of the profits you have made. Their role and their very good lifestyle depends on maintaining this role and stopping workers getting all the profits they have earned.

On the Police, we have no illusions. You will never get a Policeman or woman to stand shoulder to shoulder with workers on a picket-line. They are there to assist strike-breakers. Their role is defined by the ruling class.

Controlling our lives

We do not believe that these things are militant. Rather we believe that the capitalist system must be destroyed and replaced by one where working-class people control their own lives and destinies.

Clearly many seafarers will disagree strongly with these views. If that is so then we ask you to drop us a line. Even if you do disagree we will continue to give our unqualified support to you in your struggle.