

WAPPING

THE STORY OF A YEAR OF STRUGGLE

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union
ASLEF	Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen
AUEW	Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (now AEU)
AWO	Association of Wapping Organisations
BDC	Biennial Delegates Conference
CP	Communist Party
EETPU	Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union
FBU	Fire Brigades Union
FoC	Father of Chapel (shop steward)
FTAT	Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union
GLC	Greater London Council
LCB	London Central Branch
LDDC	London Docklands Development Corporation
LMB	London Machine Branch
MoC	Mother of Chapel
NALGO	National Association of Local Government Officers
NCU	National Communications Union
NEC	National Executive Council
NGA	National Graphical Association
NI	News International
NPA	Newspaper Proprietors Association
NUJ	National Union of Journalists
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
NUR	National Union of Railwaymen
PLP	Parliamentary Labour Party
POEU	Post Office Engineers Union (now NCU)
PSU	Police Support Unit
RIRMA	Revisors, Ink Roller Makers and Auxillaries
SERTUC	South East Regional TUC
SOGAT	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades
SPG	Special Patrol Group
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UCW	Union of Communication Workers
WAM	Women Against Murdoch
WAPC	Women Against Pit Closures

BREAKDOWN OF SACKED WORKERS

(As at June 7th 1986 - Figures taken from the 'Wapping Post')

SOGAT

London Machine Branch	1,612
- Print Machine Branch	40
London Central Branch (distribution)	1,328
Clerical Branch	550
RIRMA	761

AEU

Engineering and maintenance	200
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NUJ

Journalists (freelance and staffed)	100(approx.)
(This figure includes those who left since the start of the strike for one reason or another)	

NGA

Hot metal & photo compositors	275
Lino operators	101
Machine room operators	171
Electrotypers and stereotypers	152
Telegraphists & electronic operators	22
Artists	11
Tone etchers	18
Engravers	4
Routers and mounters	6
Finishers	5
Litho camera operator	1
Designers	3
Studio artists	4
Small offset operators	2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to warmly record my thanks to the many people, without whom this work would not have been possible.

I am grateful to the many men and women I spoke to on the picket line for their valuable information and thoughts. Both 'The Wapping Post' and 'Picket' Newsletter were used extensively for facts and quotes, and I am indebted to both those publications.

Special thanks go to John Breen, John Clifford and Peter Fell of the 'News of the World' NGA Chapel who treated me so kindly and looked after me from the start of the dispute. To them I am eternally grateful.

And finally my heartfelt thanks to Jac, who first put the idea into my head, and gave both her encouragement and friendship; and to Jos for her constant support, her typing and for the fact that she put up with Wapping for a year of our lives.

INTRODUCTION

"The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace as long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organise as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system."

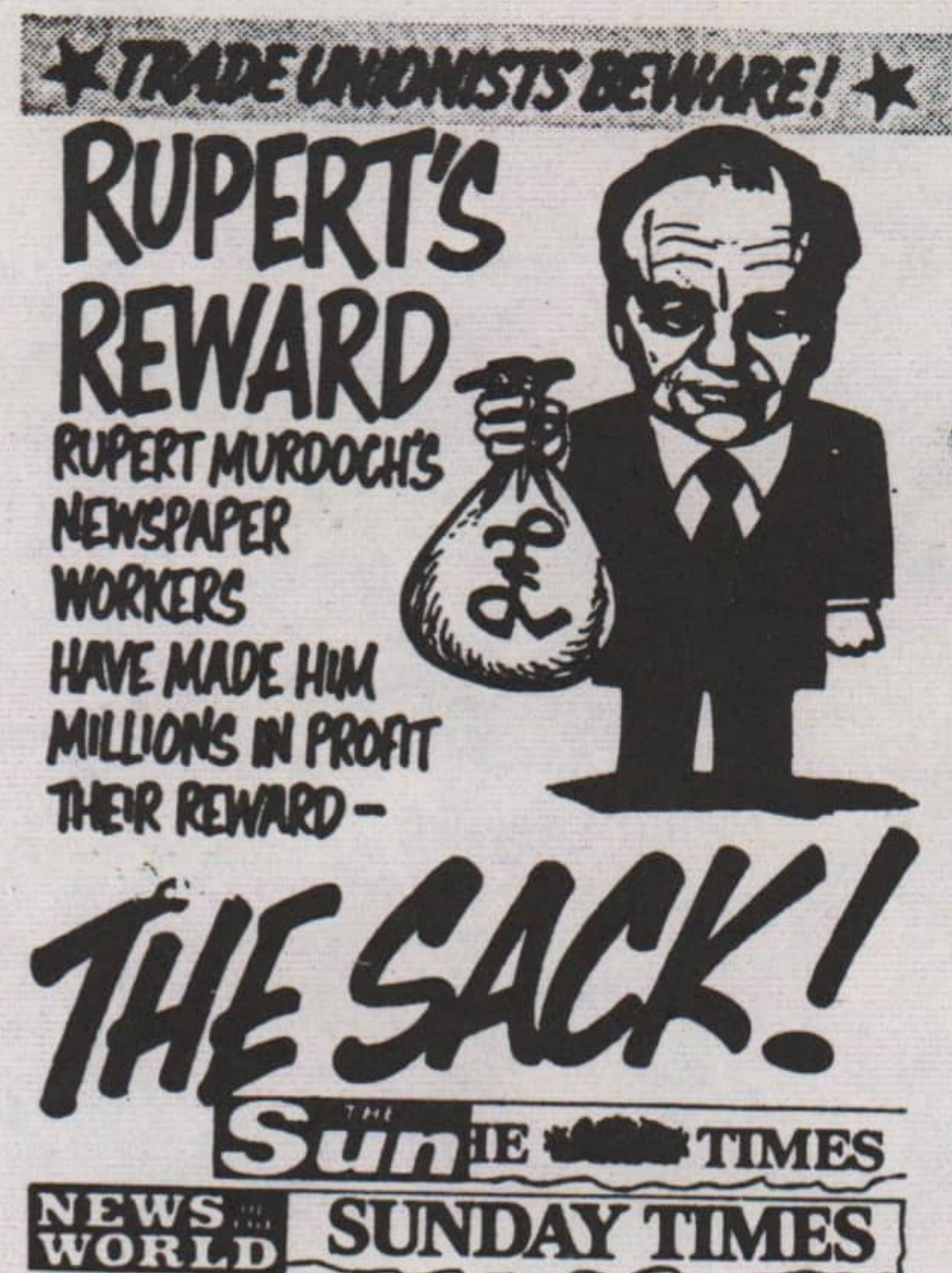
Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

At about a quarter to two on the morning of Sunday May 11th 1986 I found myself standing on The Highway in Wapping watching a large group of police officers in full riot gear, carrying shields and with truncheons drawn. They painted a frightening picture with the lights from the street lamps reflecting eerily off their helmets. It is doubtless a scene very familiar to anyone who went on the picket line at Wapping. The next moment I became a victim of those thugs in blue, when I was arrested and violently dragged away, being subjected to insults, kicks and blows to the head with riot shields.

It was, I suppose, the inevitable result of weeks of picketing and support for the workers sacked by Rupert Murdoch when he transferred the printing of 'The Times', 'Sunday Times', 'News of the World' and 'The Sun' from Fleet Street to his new printing plant in London's East End. Like many before me I was confronted by the full force of the state in its attempt to crush the working class. Those who claim that the class war is a thing of the past should have paid a visit to London's docklands and seen for themselves the naked class conflict taking place there.

Some of the things I witnessed at Wapping will stay with me for a long time to come. The treachery of the trade union leaders; the use of riot shields, truncheons and horses against the working class; the scabs hiding in their armoured coaches as they crossed the picket line; the razor wire surrounding the plant; the people of Wapping under a state of siege; unarmed pickets being ridden down by mounted police; friends beaten and arrested. It was sometimes difficult to believe that these things were happening on the streets of London. At times it was more like South Africa or some Latin American dictatorship.

What the printworkers were fighting for were basic trade union rights. Their fight was in a long tradition of courageous battles by the working class. We





have always had to fight for our rights, they have never been freely given. We've only made advances when we've been strong and organised, and we've had to fight all our lives just to hold on to those rights. What Murdoch and his kind are trying to do is take away all those things our forefathers and mothers fought so bitterly for, and in some cases died for.

In this fight, as in so many others, the real heroes were the men and women who so bravely held the front line. It was the rank and file who sustained the strike and showed real courage - not the so-called 'leaders' who used every opportunity to undermine the strike and sell the workers down the river. The likes of Kinnock, Willis and Dean will always betray the ordinary people because they have more in common with the bosses than with the workers. The only ones the rank and file can really trust are their own.

The blacklegs in Wapping are the lowest of the low. There can be no excuse for crossing a picket line, it is perhaps the worst crime a worker can commit against their own. The scabs are the bosses' lackeys and they are under the illusion that they will be looked after. But, having done Murdoch's dirty work, they too are destined for the scrap heap. It's the age old 'divide and rule' strategy. And to their shame the scabs in the NUJ crossed the printers picket lines from day one to do Murdoch's filthy work and line their pockets on the backs of the sacked workforce. But worse was the role of the EETPU



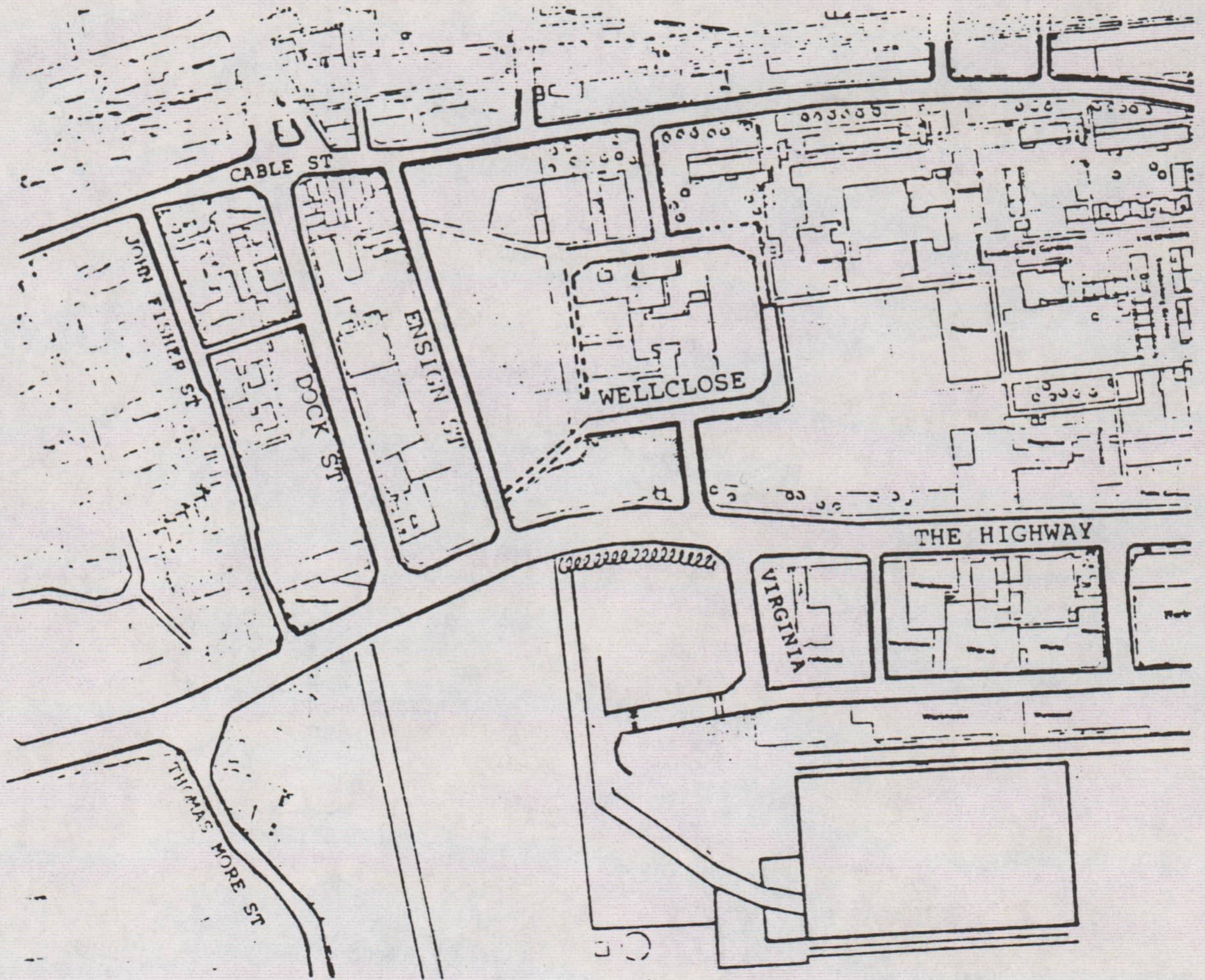
in actually colluding with News International in their union busting exercise, with the full approval of the electrician union's national leadership. As Jack London so succinctly put it: "When a scab walks down the street men turn their backs, the angels weep in heaven, and the Devil shuts the gates of Hell to keep him out."

As far as the Tory government and their puppets in the courts were concerned the striking printworkers and all who supported them were criminals. Their 'crime' was that they dared to fight for a decent living and for a future for their children. As with the miners before them, the judges had simply criminalised a whole section of the working class. To adapt an old Irish Republican song: "Not for us a Judge and Jury, Not for us a trial at all. Being pickets means we're guilty, so we're guilty one and all."

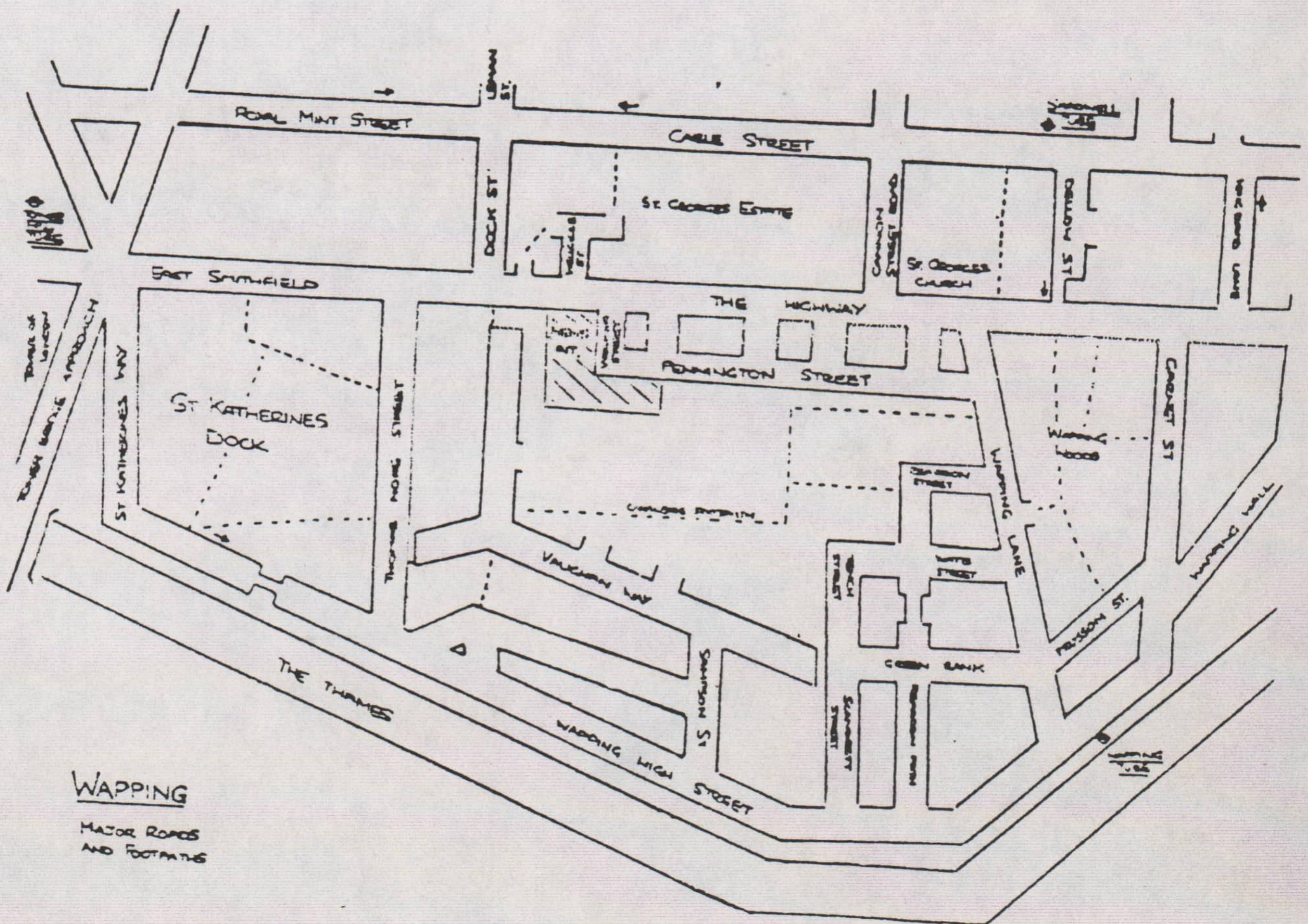
But if the courts thought they could stifle the voices of the workers by imprisoning them, they were mistaken. They will never imprison our minds and they will never destroy our beliefs or break our spirit. There burns within us a flame and it will take more than their truncheons and their prisons to extinguish it.

I make no apology whatsoever for the obvious bias of this work. The fight of the printworkers was one which I was very proud to be part of. They were fighting for my class and I hope that this goes some way towards telling their story. The Wapping strike lasted thirteen long and bitter months. It is the story of ordinary men and women who, through their courage and determination, gave hope and inspiration to working people everywhere. To them this book is warmly dedicated.

DON'T SCAB FOR THE BOSSES, DON'T LISTEN TO THEIR LIES
US WORKERS NEVER HAD A CHANCE, UNLESS WE ORGANISE.



MAPS OF WAPPING



CHAPTER ONE

THE ROAD TO WAPPING

The origins of the Wapping dispute can be traced back to the aftermath of the Stockport Messenger dispute. The introduction of new technology in the provincial press in the two years after the NGA's humiliation at Warrington became the backdrop for some of the most bitter inter-union fighting ever seen. This bitterness was illustrated during the lock-out of 74 journalists on the Portsmouth 'News'. In December 1984 the owners of the 'News', Portsmouth and Sunderland News Group, had signed a deal with the NGA which allowed for 3 former compositors to be retrained and transferred into the editorial department. This was traditionally an NUJ area and when the journalists found out about the deal they refused to co-operate in its implementation.

Although not against other union members being transferred, they insisted that the NUJ retain the right to represent such members in their new areas. The journalists policy of non-co-operation dragged on for six weeks until the company finally sacked 74 members of the NUJ. Even strike action in February by NUJ members on all of Portsmouth and Sunderlands 26 titles failed to stop the papers being printed. The situation was made worse when the NGA issued instructions to its members to cross the NUJ's picket lines, this was despite the fact that there was widespread sympathy for the journalists from compositors. The NGA's instructions effectively undermined the journalists action and doomed it to failure. In the end the NUJ settled for a shabby deal, accepting a small pay rise and ten redundancies in return for reinstatement.

The damage that the 'News' dispute did to relations between the NUJ and the NGA became very clear when 160 NGA members were suspended, locked-out and finally sacked by the West Midlands News Group for refusing to co-operate with new technology at the 'Wolverhampton Express and Star'. During this dispute not only

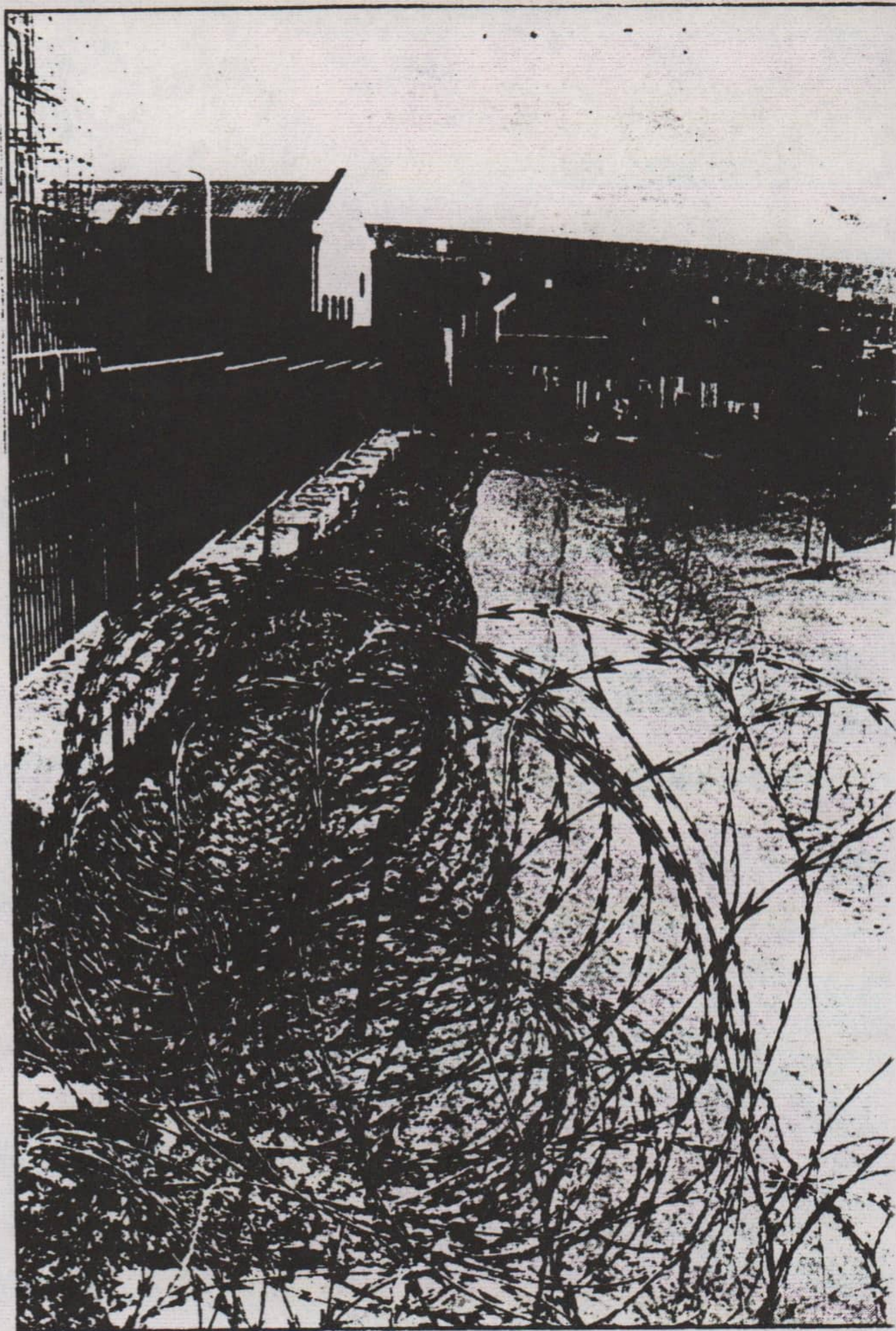
did the journalists cross the NGA picket line, but they actually signed a deal with the company which, when implemented, meant direct inputting by NUJ members, completely by-passing the composing room - an act which led the NGA to demand the NUJ's expulsion from the TUC.

The rank and file printers, perhaps better than their leaderships, realised the effects new technology would have on them and their jobs. All the old demarcation lines that had



existed were fast disappearing. But there was a new mood in Fleet Street. Warrington had been a severe blow to the confidence of the printing unions. They were more reluctant to stand and fight, preferring to make one compromise after another with the employers. As one SOGAT member put it "Dean wants more members. But she won't face up to looking after the ones she's got".

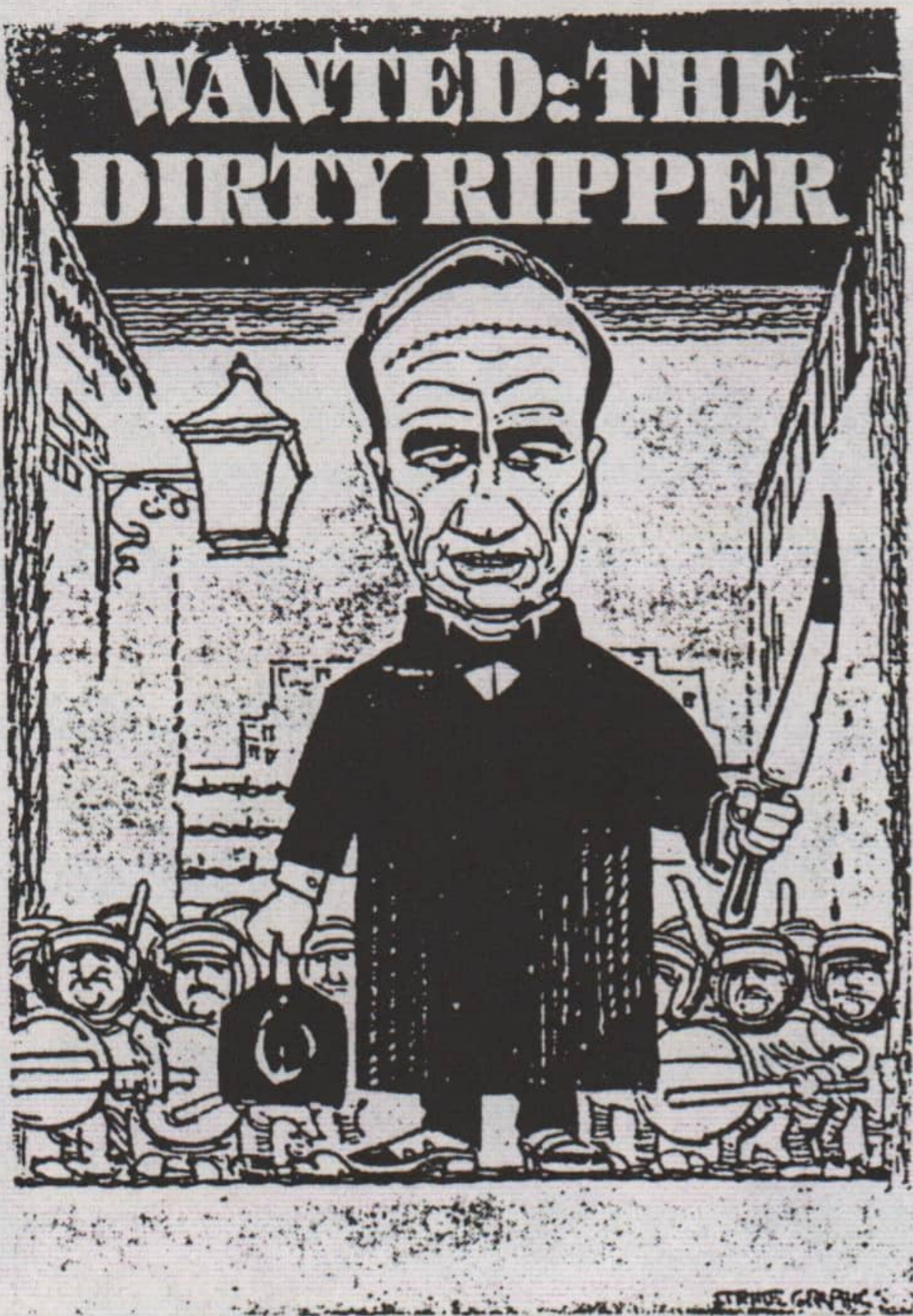
This new technology, used so effectively by Eddie Shah to smash the NGA at Warrington, consisted mainly of single keying, where journalists keyed their copy straight onto a computer which then typeset it. It also meant that pages could be laid out on the screen thus eliminating the hot metal process jobs and the 'paste up' jobs. This technology was quiet literally taking away the skills of the trained compositors. As one NGA compositor put it, "I spent 5 years learning my skills and now they aren't worth anything".



It was quiet evident that following the wholesale offensive by the employers in the provincial press it would only be a matter of time before the crunch came in Fleet Street. The management in the Street had put considerable effort into preparing the ground for a full scale offensive against the unions, and they had learnt the lessons of the past. There would be no repetition of the 1978 'Times' dispute. At that time the paper was owned by Thomson Newspapers who tried to introduce new technology and push through the redundancies it would entail. After talks broke down most of the 4,000 workforce were locked-out and told they would only be reinstated on management terms. But after 11 long and bitter months they were forced to take the workers back. Thompson Newspapers had simply not been prepared for such a long dispute. This was a mistake Rupert Murdoch would not make. For years the likes of Murdoch and Maxwell had been biding their time, itching to take on the unions. Shah had shown them it could be done, and now, with the unions at each others throats the time seemed right. Armed with the dual weapons of new technology and the Tories anti-union laws, Rupert Murdoch finally made his move.

THE GATHERING STORM

Way back in May of 1985 the first signs of what Murdoch was really up to started



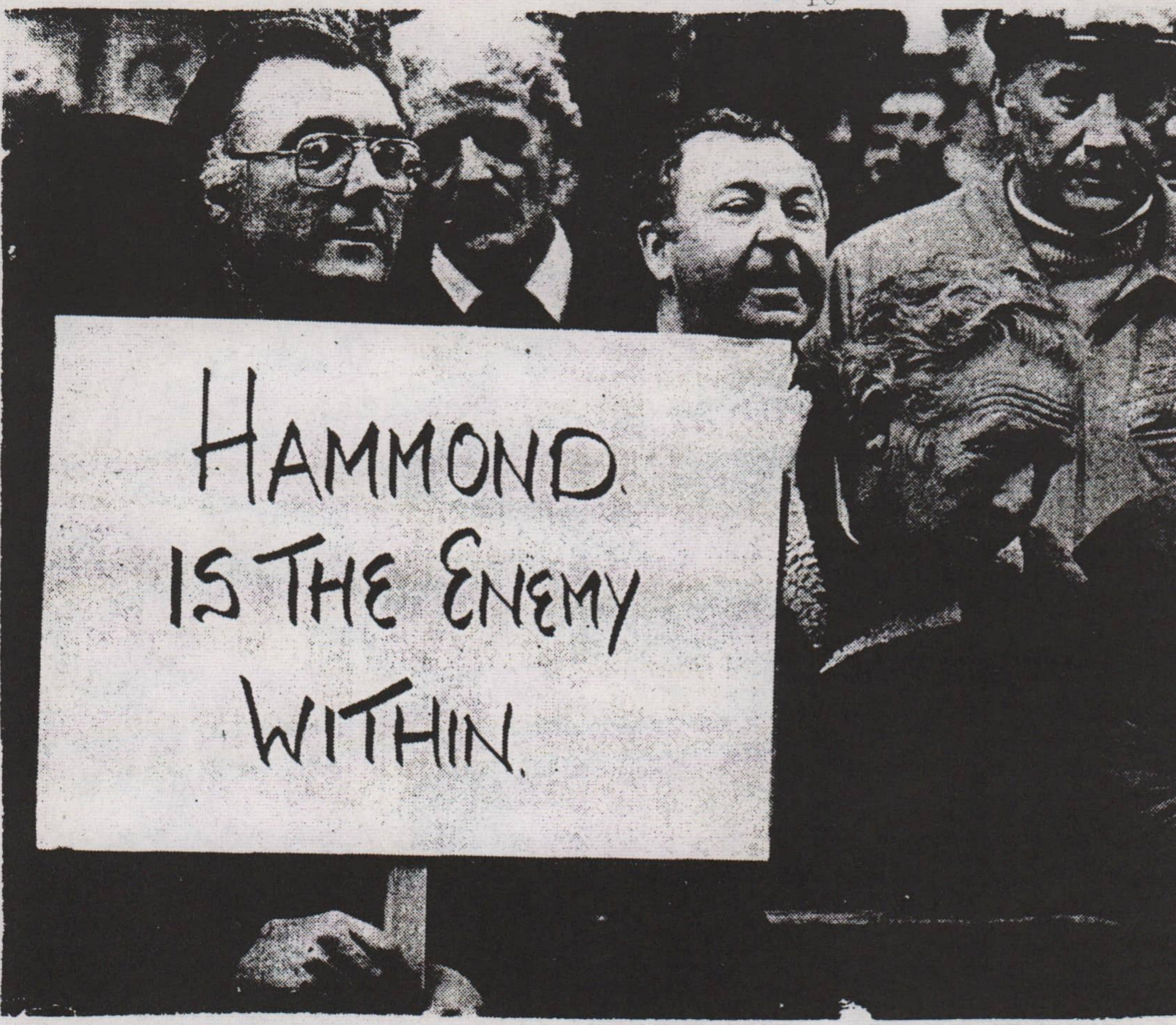
to become apparent. In that month Murdoch appointed Christopher Pole-Carew as his new technology consultant, supposedly for the 'London Post'. It clearly showed that Murdoch was prepared for an all out battle with the print unions. Pole-Carew is a notorious union buster who gained notoriety during the NUJ's dispute at the 'Nottingham Evening Post' in 1979. He advised management at the 'Post' that if they were able to prolong the strike for 3 months, the hire-purchase companies and building societies would be on the backs of the strikers. He has since offered the following advice: "I have always tried to drive a wedge between union officials and their members. I have always done

my best to humiliate and discredit them. If a union official comes to see me I will always make certain he stands throughout our discussions. When the battle was won we did everything to impress on the unions that we were the victors. We did this in a two week reign of terror."

Among Pole-Carew's other recommendations were petrol bomb threats against union officials, the organisation of advertisers and members of the public to 'bully' strikers, and the intimidatory driving of heavy lorries through picket lines. With the employment of Pole-Carew Murdoch's intentions became crystal clear. Pole-Carew wasn't the type to negotiate with unions, he was more interested in smashing them.

By September the signs were coming thick and fast, and it didn't need a crystal ball to show that they all pointed to Wapping. In the first couple of weeks of September new bolts suddenly appeared on all the main exits to News International's building at Bouverie Street, where 'The Sun' was printed. These bolts were clearly designed to prevent large numbers trying to get into the building, giving rise to the suspicion that preparations were under way for a lock-out.

At the same time rumours were rife about a dummy run of newspapers printed at the new plant at Wapping, without the unions even being informed. When this turned out to be true the rank and file printers were aghast, but rather than building on their anger, both the NGA and SOGAT instructed their members at News Group (who print the Sun) not to take any action! In return for a promise from Murdoch that he would meet the unions at the end of September to discuss the planned move to Wapping, the unions agreed to allow him to continue testing at his dockland plant, despite the fact that it involved the use of non-union labour. And for all the talk about Wapping being used for the printing of the new 'London Post'



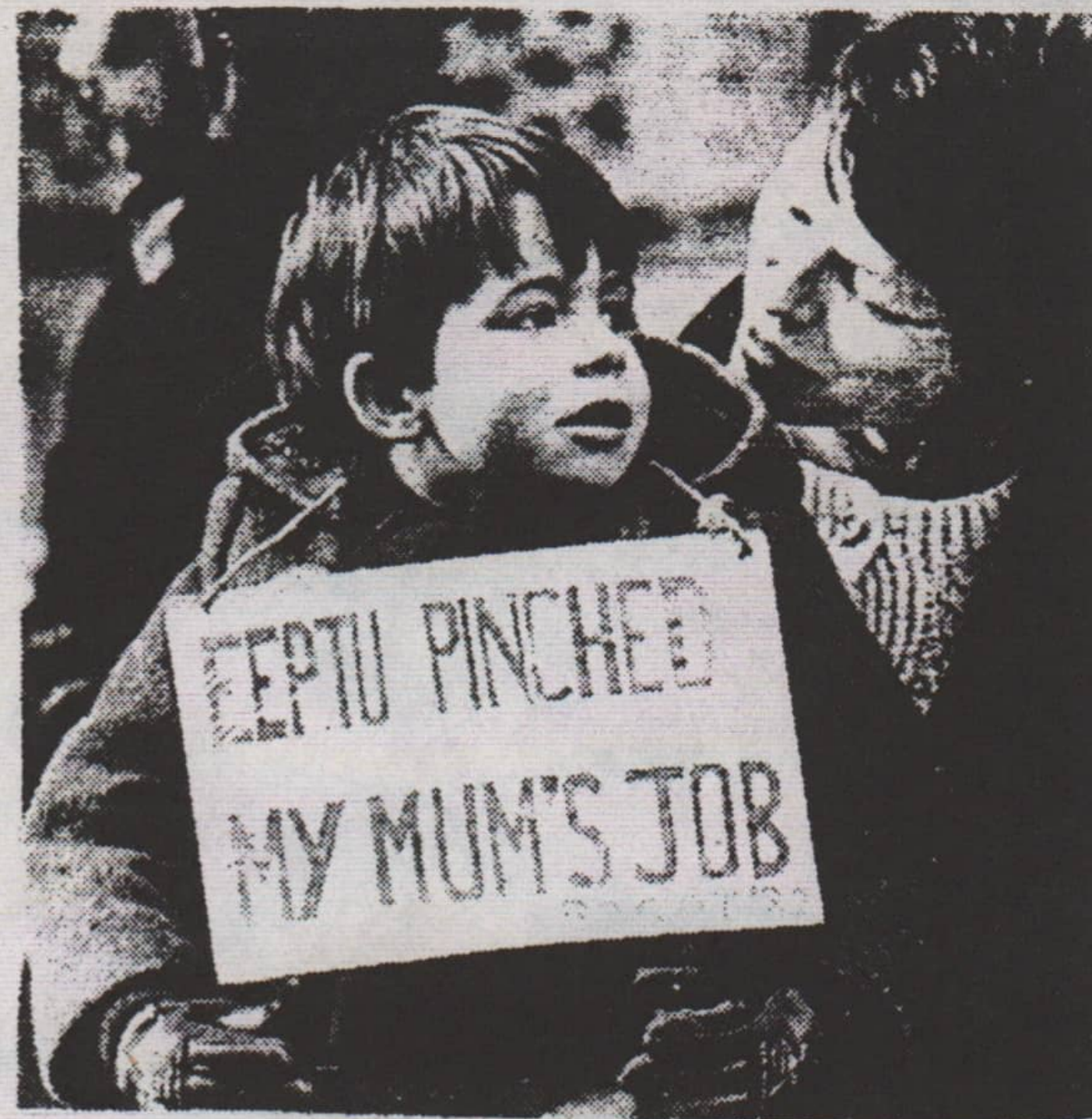
Bruce Matthews, News Group's managing director hinted at the real intentions of News International, "If the unions were to be highly co-operative we would get 'The Sun' and 'News of the World' in(to Wapping)".

THE ELECTRICIANS

On 28th September 'Socialist Worker' newspaper revealed details of the EETPU's involvement in recruiting scabs for Wapping. Their information came from members of the EETPU's Southampton branch where the recruiting was done. Ginger Pearse the branch's chairman told 'Socialist Worker': "Men are queuing up in the area office. It's a recruiting centre. Over 500 people have been interviewed and recruited but our branch has not been informed about these jobs, nor, as far as I know, has any other branch in the area.....I've been in the union for 30 years, I've been branch chairman, except for one year since 1972, and I've never met anything like this before. This has got to be brought to the notice of our brothers in SOGAT and the NGA".

The electricians union were instrumental in the creation of a workforce that could, and indeed did, replace the existing News International workforce. Prospective applicants for Wapping were first told they must join the EETPU. Those chosen at interviews in Southampton then went to a second interview at South Bank House in London where one of the first questions they were asked was "Are you prepared to cross picket lines?". Candidates who were successful at this second interview

then went to a third at the Tower Hotel, near Murdoch's East London plant. For those accepted generous terms were offered: £12,000 during a 3 month training period, rising to £16,000 after training was complete, plus a free canteen, six weeks holiday and private health care.



The writing was indeed on the wall. All the signs were there but still the unions did nothing.

THE SLAVES CHARTER

On 21st November 1985, News International management presented the unions with a draft agreement for work within Wapping. This was the infamous 'slaves charter'. The main points of the agreement were:

1. No strikes or any other industrial action. Any such action taken must be disowned by the unions.
2. No recognition of chapels or branches and no negotiations with them.
3. Immediate dismissal with no right of appeal for anyone taking strike or industrial action.
4. No closed shop - employees would be able to leave the union at any time.
5. Union representatives to be elected by members, but they could be removed from office by management for any disciplinary offence.
6. Complete flexibility of working and no demarcation lines.
7. Introduction of new technology at any time with subsequent job cuts.
8. No minimum staffing levels, management deciding the numbers required for any job, when they will start and when they will finish.
9. Management to have the "exclusive right to manage".
10. All the above to be legally binding on the unions and their members.

It was quite evident that the unions would never accept this agreement, representing as it did the total negation of all the rights the unions had fought so bitterly for for over a century. Murdoch must have known this. As Danny Sergeant, General President of SOGAT, explained: "There is a widely-held suspicion that Murdoch never intended to reach an agreement with the traditional unions in the industry but was looking to follow in the footsteps of Eddie Shah by excluding the NGA and SOGAT from his new printing works in Wapping and then transferring his present titles to the dockland factory".

It was evident at the turn of the year that Murdoch was still succeeding in fooling

Crispin Hughes/Photo Co-op.

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE BARBED WIRE

DON'T BUY

SOGAT • NGA • AUEW • NUJ

THE Sun

NEWS OF THE WORLD

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

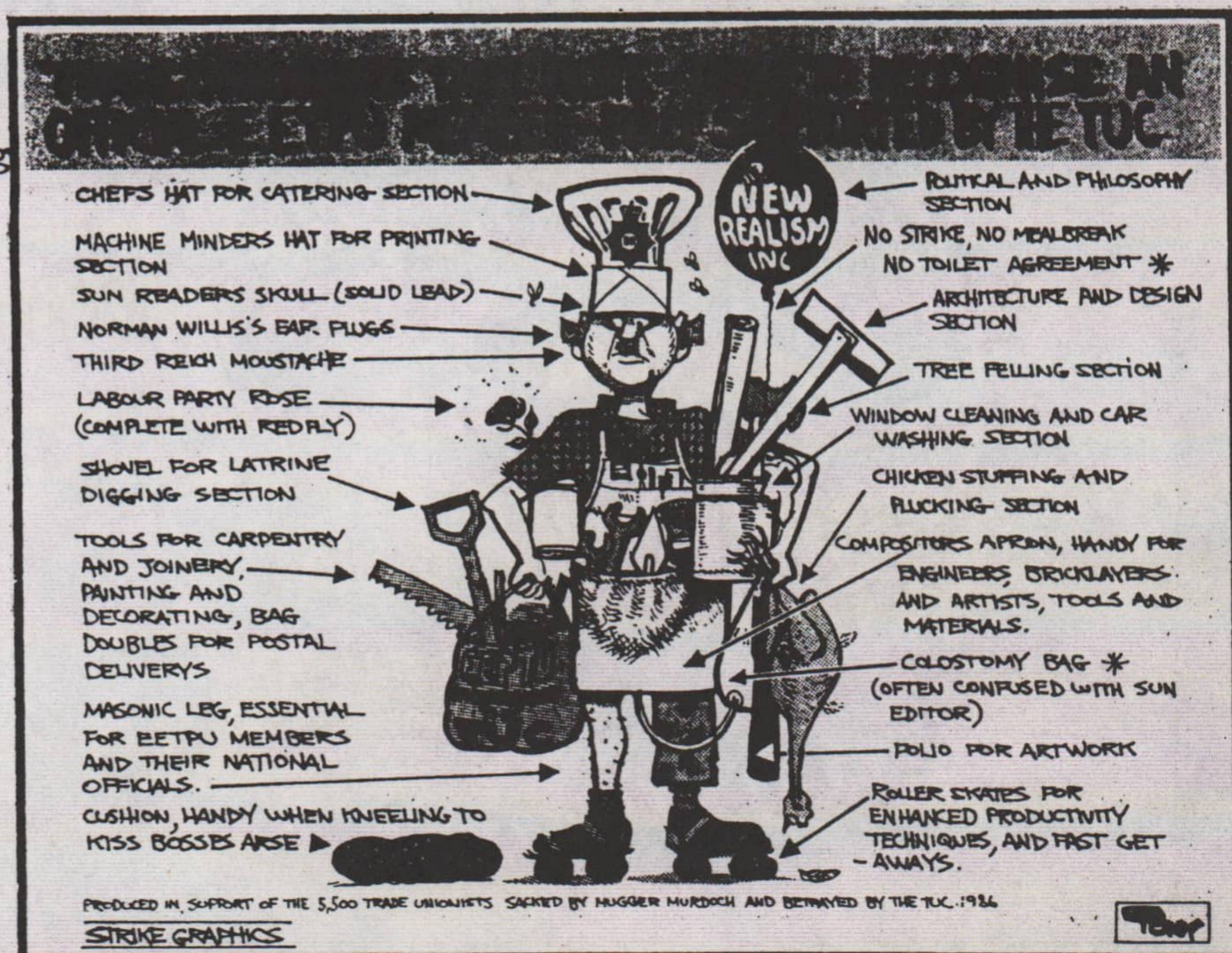
many union officials that the only publication he would be printing in his new £80million plant in the docklands would be the bogus 'London Post'. Indeed SOGAT's own journal for December 1985/January 1986 gave credibility to this very idea by talking about the 'Post's' intended circulation area within London's orbital M25 motorway, and the possibility of it becoming a 24 hour daily with a wider circulation area. The same issue also stated: "A single-union deal between Mr. Murdoch and the electricians' union the EETPU, excluding the print unions had been rumoured, although this would be contrary to TUC policy". It seems incredible that at that late date SOGAT still saw this as nothing more than a "rumour", at a time when the EETPU was into the full swing of recruiting scabs for Wapping.

Even when it became apparent to all concerned that Murdoch intended to print all his titles at Wapping with scab labour, the union leaderships dragged their feet. Their inactivity in the face of the greatest attack the print unions had ever seen was criminal.

Finally on 10th December 1985 the National Executive of SOGAT decided to recommend industrial action to its News International members. Yet the ballot for strike action wasn't to be until well into January, giving Murdoch the time he so desperately needed to get his scabbing operation into full swing. A strike in mid-December would have crippled Murdoch and stopped his union-busting in its tracks.

THE EETPU AND THE TUC

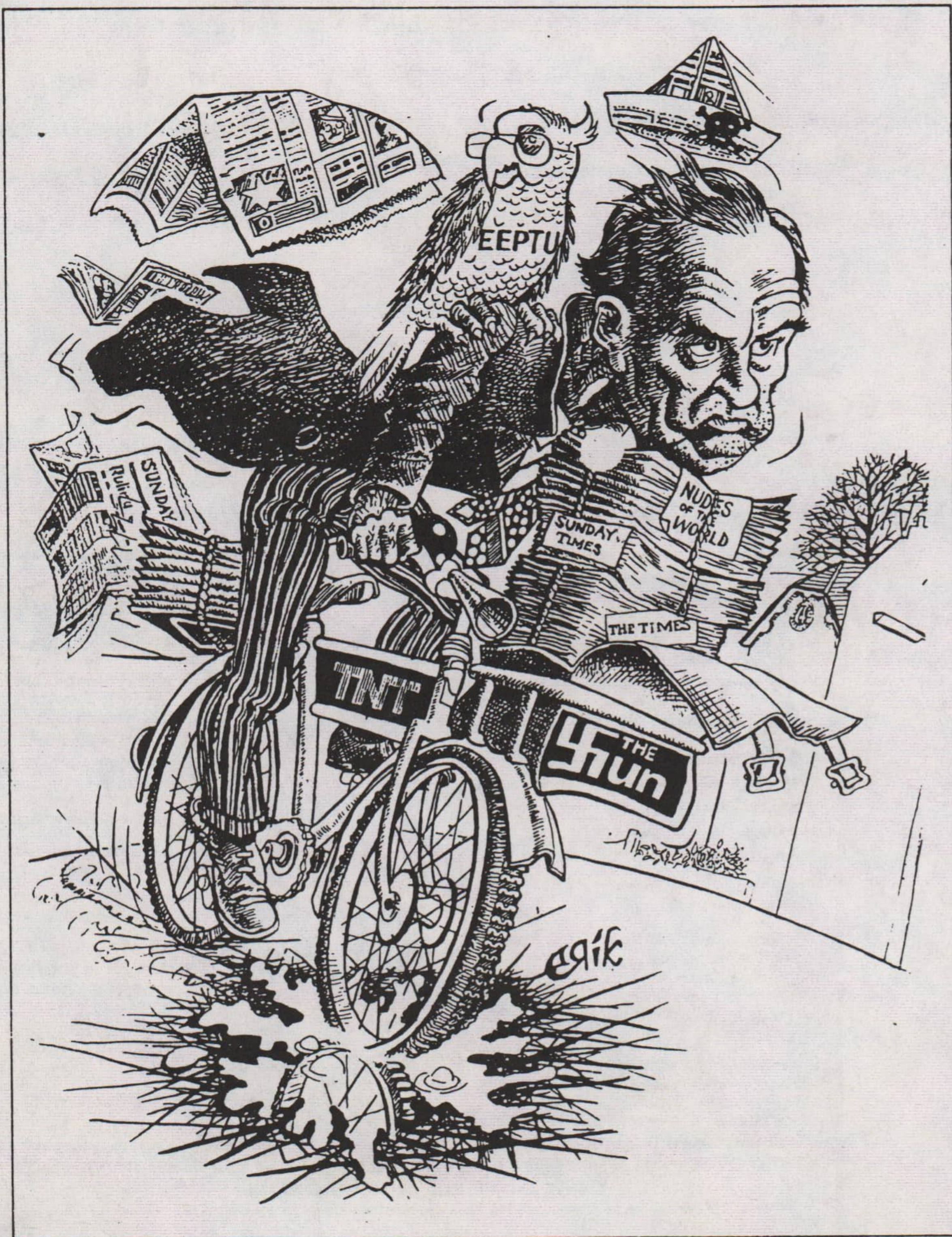
Meanwhile the TUC's reaction to the EETPU's full-scale scabbing operation, in contravention of Congress' Bridlington Agreement, was pathetic in the extreme. The lumbering, beauracrat dinosaur that is the TUC has a long history of sell-outs, and it was obvious, even at this early stage, that it wanted to do everything not to rock the boat. 'New realism' was the new god of Congress, the fiery speeches and anti-government rhetoric of the Wembley Conference's opposition to the anti-union laws was long forgotten. The intervening period had seen the betrayal of one union after another - the



POEU in their dispute with Mercury; the ASLEF strike over flexible rostering; the NGA itself during the Stockport Messenger dispute; the Health Service unions; the Civil Service unions at GCHQ; and of course the year long strike by the NUM.

In a letter dated 23rd December, Norman Willis, the TUC's General Secretary and one of the pillars of the right-wing, "advised" the EETPU not to sign a single union deal at Wapping as this would be contrary to Congress policy, under the TUC's Rule 11. It seems quite incredible that Willis took such a softly, softly line to the EETPU's collaboratory role in News International's union busting, especially since even the threat of expulsion from the TUC in September 1985 over the acceptance of Government funds for ballots, hadn't deterred the electricians union in the least from defying Congress policy. There was no reason to suppose it was going to be any different this time round.

The battle lines were drawn and the stage was now set for the inevitable clash between the unions and a ruthless, well prepared employer.



CHAPTER 2

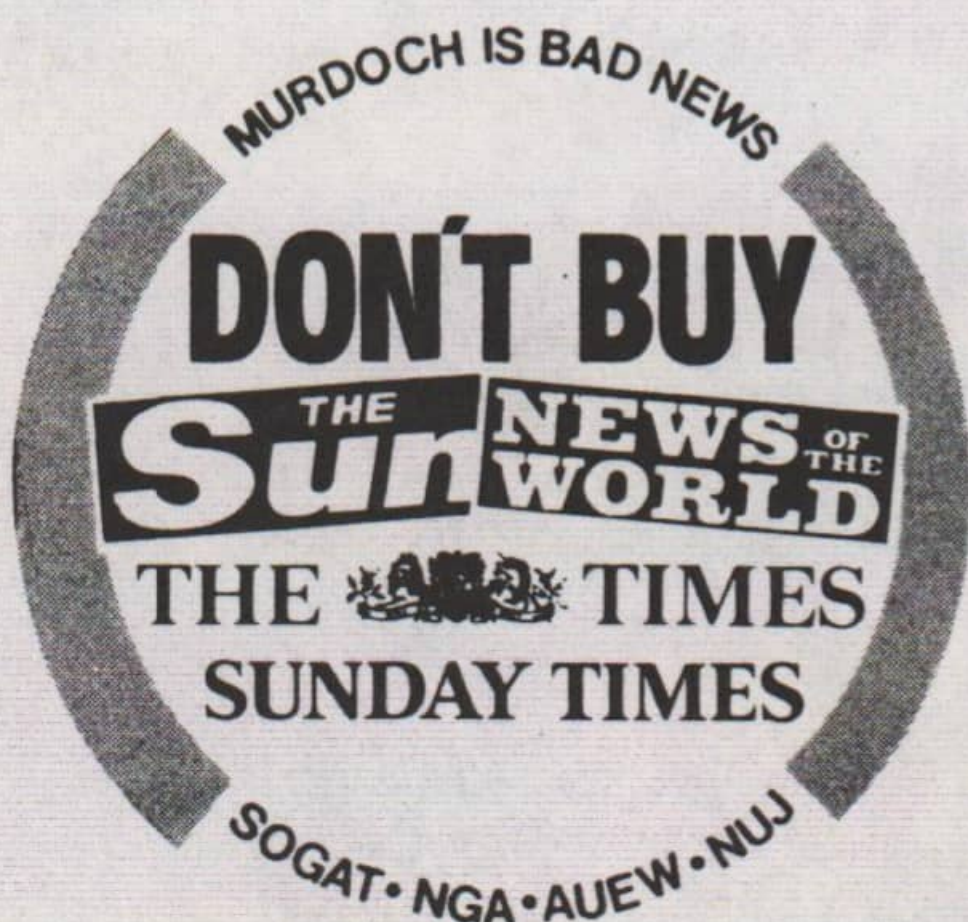
"IT'S MASS PICKETING THAT'LL BEAT MURDOCH"

In the week before the strike started, union officials had ordered their members not to black advertising for Murdochs scab supplement and even went as far as to instruct the process department to produce duplicate bromides and printing plates which were subsequently taken to Wapping. In the same week workers from British Telecom who were installing the telephone exchange at Wapping vowed not to cross picket lines - the tragedy was, there were no picket lines.

Finally on Friday 24th January 1986 the unions at News International came out on strike after an overwhelming vote for action in their ballots. During the pit dispute, the National Union of Mineworkers was constantly under attack for not holding a strike ballot, it was inferred that had they done so, their industrial action would have been more acceptable. The printers well and truly nailed that lie - they held a ballot and voted overwhelmingly for strike action and their reward was the sack. Murdoch dismissed his entire workforce - not just the printworkers, but clericals, engineers, tea ladies and cleaners. Within 24 hours his first scab newspapers were rolling off the presses.

The journalists debated for days over whether to go to Wapping, and some to their credit refused, and were promptly sacked. On 24th January the National Union of Journalists chapel(branch) at the 'Times' voted to make the move. They were followed the next day by the 'Sun' and 'News of the World' NUJ chapels who voted 101 - 8 and 43 - 2 respectively to go to Wapping. On 27th January the journalists at the 'Sunday Times' voted by 68 to 60 to scab. In abandoning their colleagues the scabs were no doubt swayed by promised bonuses and free membership of BUPA.

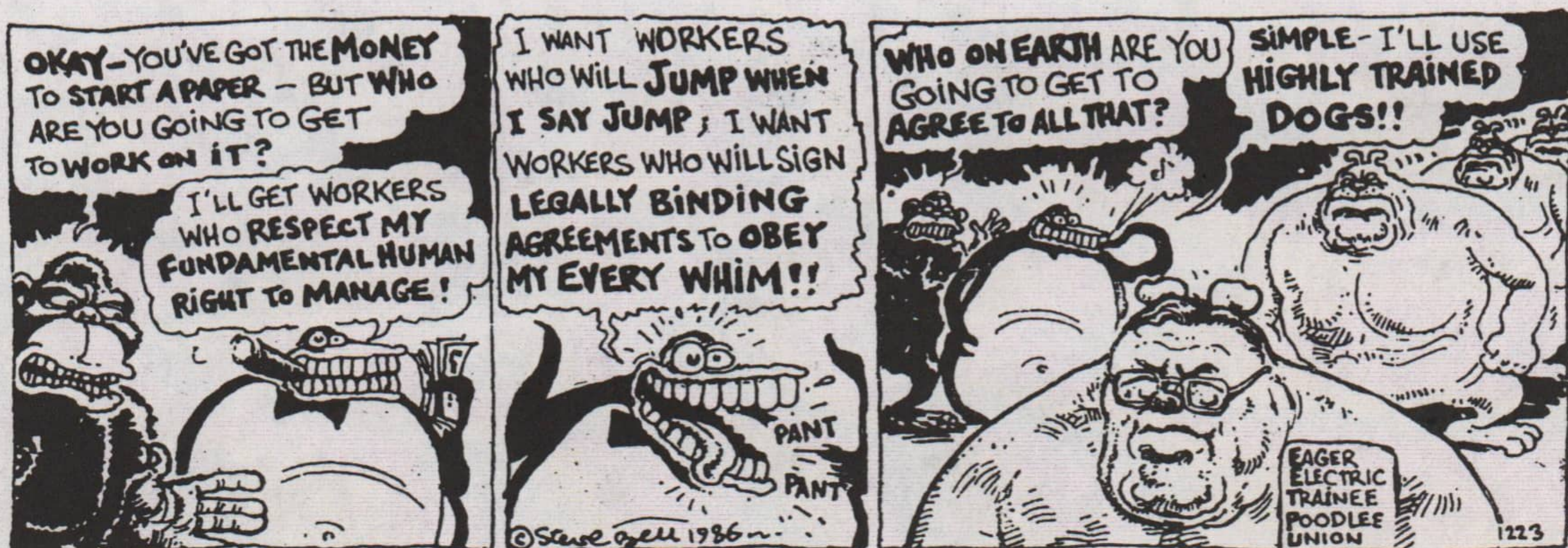
From the outset 'new realism' was the key word for the unions leaderships. They had learnt the lessons of the miners strike - unfortunately they had learnt the wrong lessons. They saw mass pickets as a thing of the past and one of the



reasons for the NUM's defeat, but as Arthur Scargill said after the miners had been forced back to work, the defeat was due not because of failure of mass picketing, but because of the failure to mass picket. The print union officials were at pains to ensure that picketing was legal and peaceful, and they were determined to stay within the law. Those very same laws however were designed to crush them, to prevent mass picketing and to make solidarity illegal. Scargill knew perfectly well that to have any chance at all, the unions had to be prepared to defy the Tory's anti-union legislation. Although the days of Saltley Gates were long gone, Wapping was certainly very susceptible to being brought to a halt by mass picketing. As Steve Masterton writing in 'Trade Union Briefing' put it: "Unlike coal, newspapers are a commodity that cannot be stockpiled. Infact, if any single part of the production or distribution process is slowed down, this highly perishable commodity can lose millions of copies. Unlike pits spread here and there, Wapping is only a mile away from Fleet Street print workers, who, given a strong lead from their union leaderships, would certainly respond ...
..... Unlike the countryside pits, Wapping is at the heart of Britain's largest concentration of organised workers, a city whose communities know what unemployment and oppression are all about." The narrow streets of Wapping could prove to be easy to block, here there were no wide open spaces as at Orgreave, the police would certainly find it much more difficult to manoeuvre.

But the very idea of large pickets was discouraged from day one. London SOGAT issued a document instructing pickets that all picketing must be under the strict control of the police, there should be no more than 6 pickets, there must be no violence and any unofficial pickets and supporters were not welcome and must be turned away. To avoid defiance of the Employment Acts the groups of pickets on the Highway (just opposite Murdoch's plant) which started to increase in numbers as the days went on, were called 'demonstrators'.

The continued assertion of the union leaders that mass pickets were a thing of the past, outdated in this technological age, gained some credence among certain organisations on the left, particularly the Euro-Communists, but the union-busting methods that Murdoch was using were as old as the class struggle





itself. Elaine Robe of the Hatfield Main Womens Support Group, writing in the 'Rank and File Miners' newspaper put the case for mass pickets:

"We have got to defend mass pickets in support of victimised workers, this is not outdated in this technological era.

Technology is working against us instead of for us, it should be benefitting the working class, not lining the pockets of the bosses.

One thing technology does need, that is as old as the hills, and that's scabs to operate it while the workers are locked outside. Keep the scabs out by mass picketing, keep the papers off the streets by mass picketing."

Unfortunately Dean and Dubbins seemed more interested in winning public opinion. "We are in this dispute to get the sympathy of the public" declared Tony Dubbins, but it was a ludicrous idea from the start. Industrial disputes are not won by public sympathy - if they were the nurses would be among the highest paid group of workers in the country. While the boycott campaign was good as a base to build on, by itself it was to prove disastrous. The strategy even went as far as co-operation with the other Fleet Street barons in a ridiculous attempt to poach Murdoch's readers. But at least one person had faith in the way that the dispute was being run. "So long as Brenda Dean is in charge I think things will be fairly peaceful" said Rupert Murdoch in January 1986.

There was some success for the pickets during the first week when they managed to turn away newsprint lorries, but the TNT lorry drivers were to prove a harder nut to crack. All members of the Transport and General Workers Union, the TNT drivers claimed that they had been told to cross picket lines unless mounted by their own union, and even clear instructions not to cross any NGA, SOGAT, NUJ or AUEW picket line failed to stop them. Ron Todd, the TGWU's General Secretary even tried to pull his members into line with no success at all. To those who remembered the vital part TGWU lorry drivers had played in the massive scabbing operation during the miners strike this came as no surprise.

But there were signs from some sections of the trade union movement that the spirit of solidarity was far from dead. The rail unions had decided from the outset that they would not handle the News International titles, something that Murdoch had obviously anticipated when he had asked TNT to investigate an alternative distribution system back in 1985. Members of the Union of Communication Workers

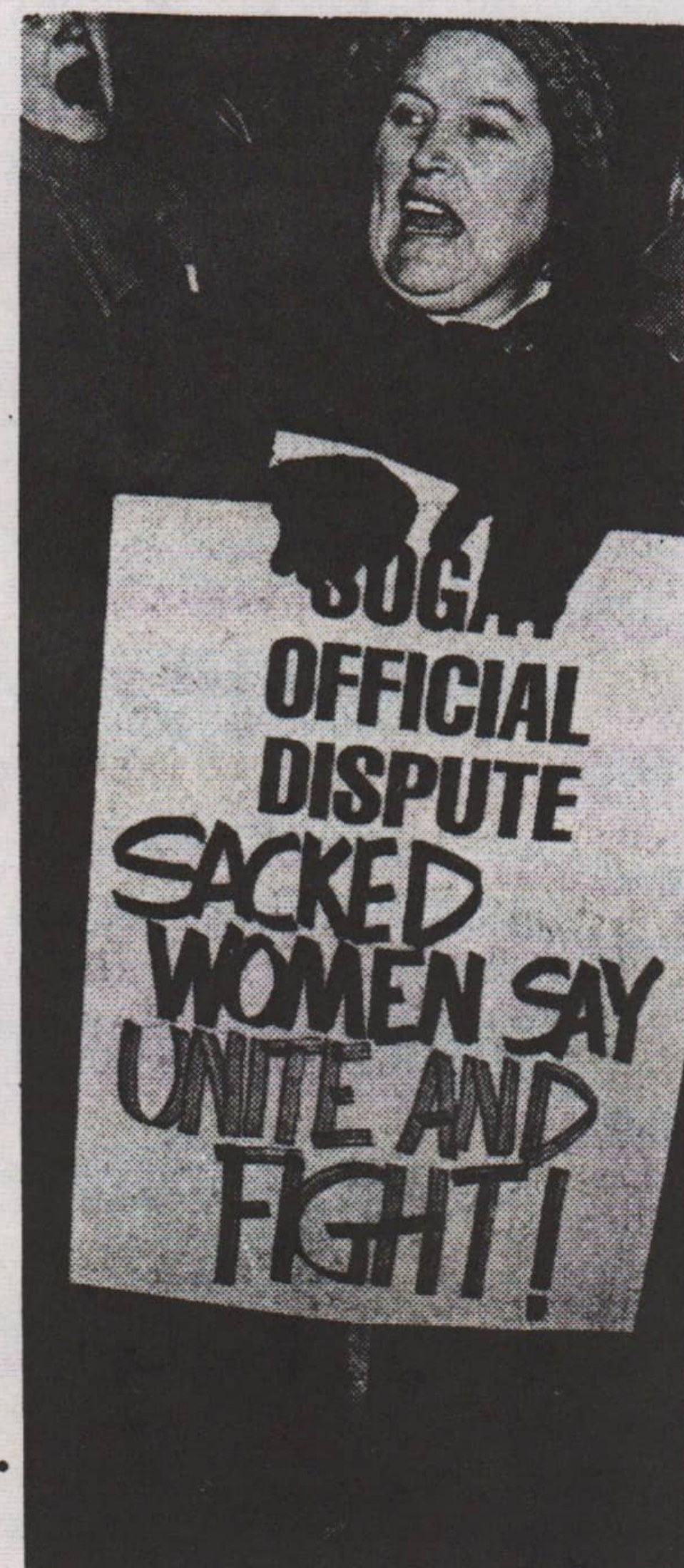
also refused to deliver 'Sun' bingo cards, although they were eventually forced to backtrack by their leadership fearful that they would be taken to court for secondary action. More support came from the London City Branch of the National Communications Union who issued instructions to its members not to cross the printers picket lines. There were also the fitters at Felco-Moore who blacked work on the newly installed lifting tackle at Wapping. "What's happening at Wapping is disgusting - bloody awful" said their AUEW shop steward, "We had a meeting and decided to black anything at Murdochs plant. Now it's up to the TGWU to sort themselves out. They have to stop those TNT depots".

SUPPORT THE PRINTERS!

It would be true to say that to many the printers were a less attractive cause to support than the miners had been. The miners, apart from being regarded as the shock troops of the trade union movement, were seen to have dangerous and dirty jobs. The printworkers, especially on Fleet Street, were seen as the 'fat cats' of the union movement, doing an easy job. The truth was a very different picture. £40,000 a year was a figure bandied around by the media and Murdoch quite a bit during the first weeks of the strike, but of the 6,000 sacked workers very few got anywhere near that amount, many sections such as the clericals and cleaners were very lowly paid, the cleaners taking home £50 to £60 per week. And the hypocrisy of it was, that while the press and television bleated on and on about 'well paid' printers (as though it were a crime to have a decent wage) they conveniently ignored the fact that Murdoch had made millions on the backs of his workers.

There was some validity in the criticism that the print unions were elitist, and to some extent sexist and racist, but to use this as an excuse not to support them in their struggle, as Beatrix Campbell of the Communist Party did, was a betrayal of the working class. The printers have a long history of solidarity with other groups of workers, stretching from the General Strike of 1926 to the miners strike of 1984/5. To stand by and let one of the most organised sections of the working class be smashed would not improve the contents of Murdochs papers one little bit and would severely weaken the working class as a whole.

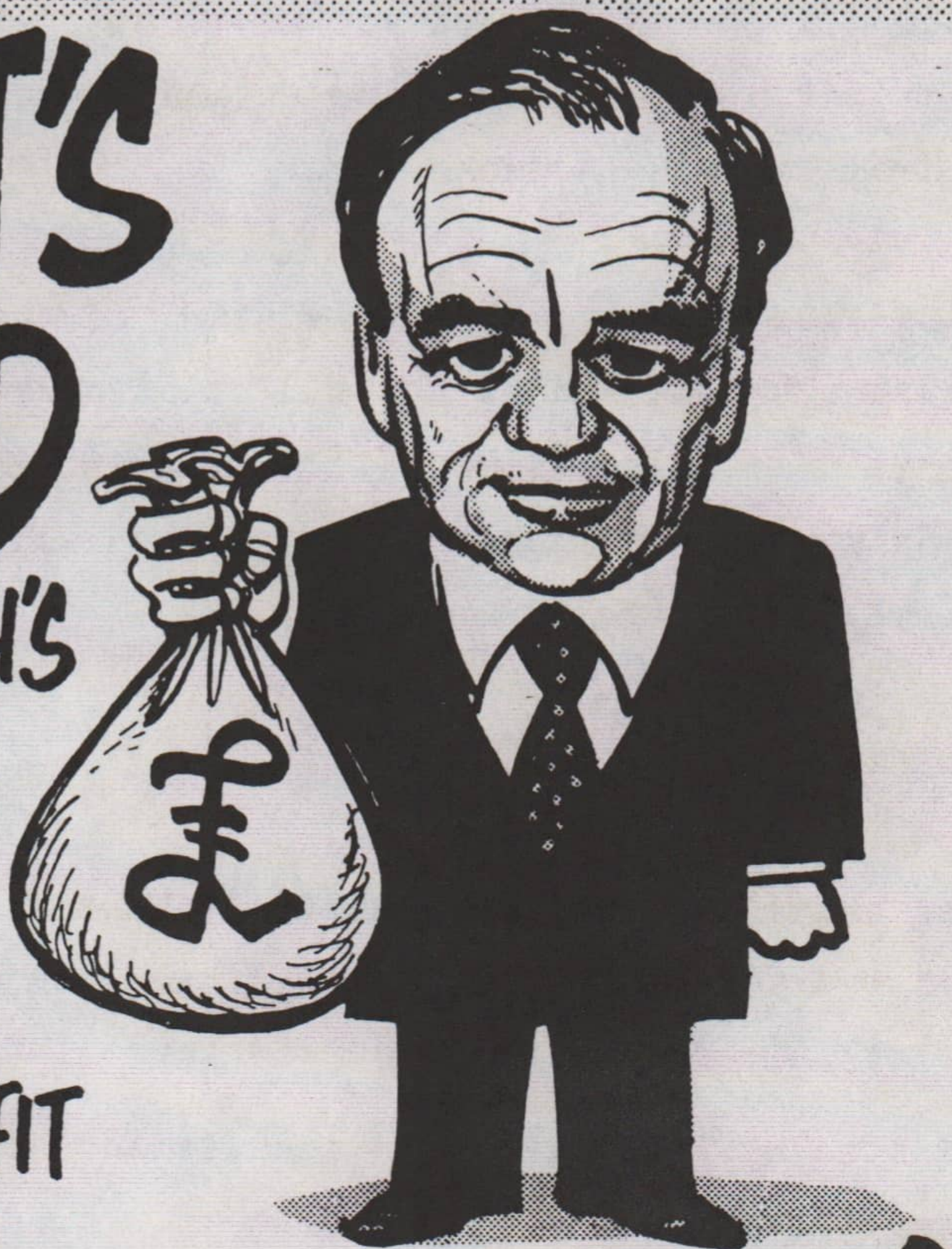
Still, Brenda Dean was sticking to her low-key boycott campaign. In the February 1986 issue of SOGAT's journal she wrote ".....it would not surprise me if as a reaction there was a truly massive boycott of the Murdoch publications".



★ *TRADE UNIONISTS BEWARE!* ★

RUPERT'S REWARD

RUPERT MURDOCH'S
NEWSPAPER
WORKERS
HAVE MADE HIM
MILLIONS IN PROFIT
THEIR REWARD -



STRIKEGRAPHICST.U.ALL DEPTS.

THE SACK!

★★ *Show solidarity, BOYCOTT...*

THE Sun IE  **TIMES**

**NEWS OF THE
WORLD**

SUNDAY TIMES

Yet as Larry Hyatt of 'The Times' explained, "Brenda Dean is winning her publicity battle, but the strike should be organised another way. She needs to change gear and operate mass picketing. It's mass picketing that'll beat Murdoch".

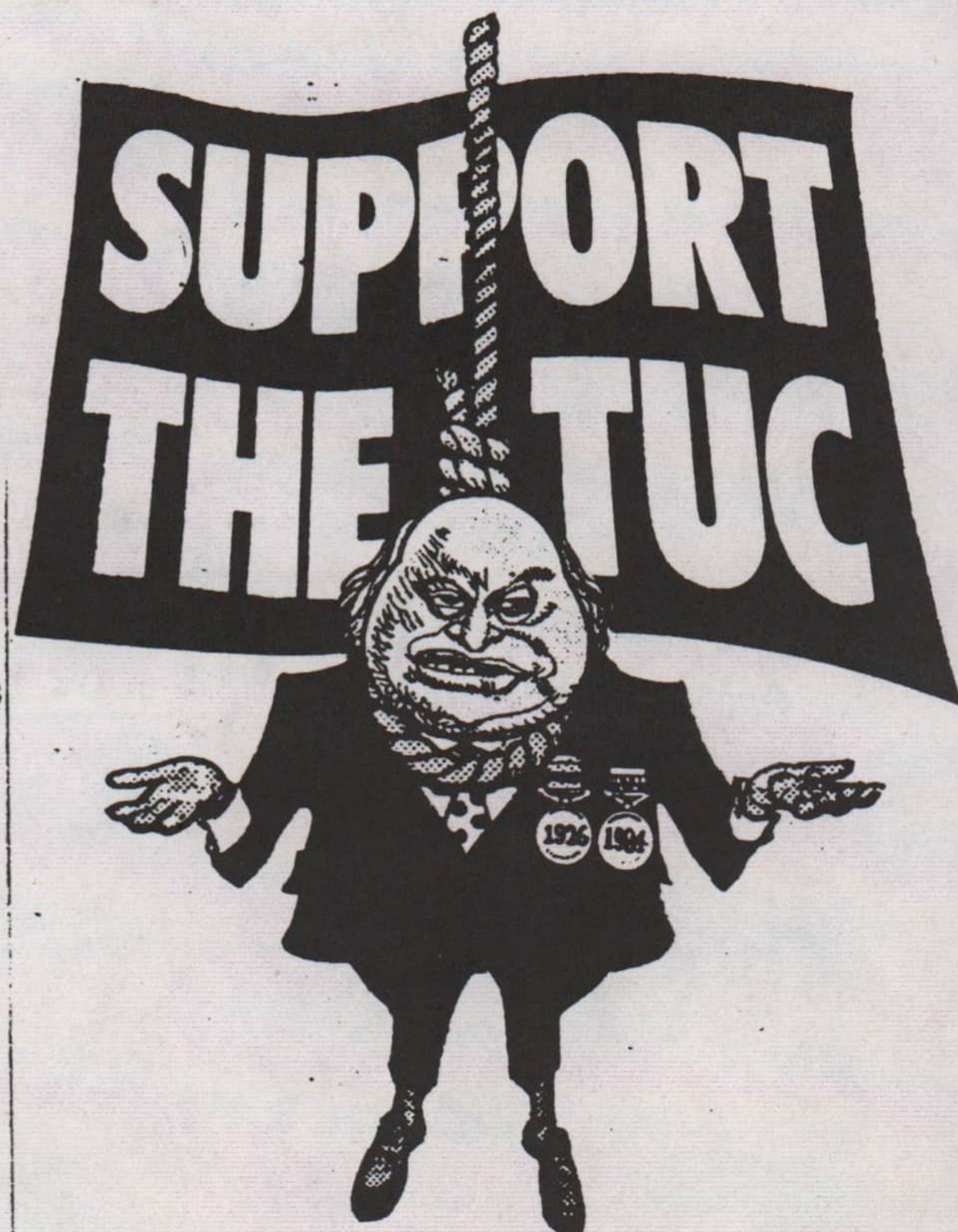
On the 28th January 1986 500 SOGAT London Wholesale members attended a mass meeting at Congress House. "We're in this together", Brenda Dean told them, "SOGAT is fighting for its life and you're fighting for your working lives". She was awarded with three standing ovations, a very different scene to the reception she would be getting 16 weeks later.

On the same day an emergency meeting of the TUC General Council voted to back the print unions and to start disciplinary proceedings against the EETPU for acting in a way 'detrimental' to the interests of the trade union movement. The only vote cast against came, unsurprisingly enough, from the electricians General Secretary Eric Hammond.

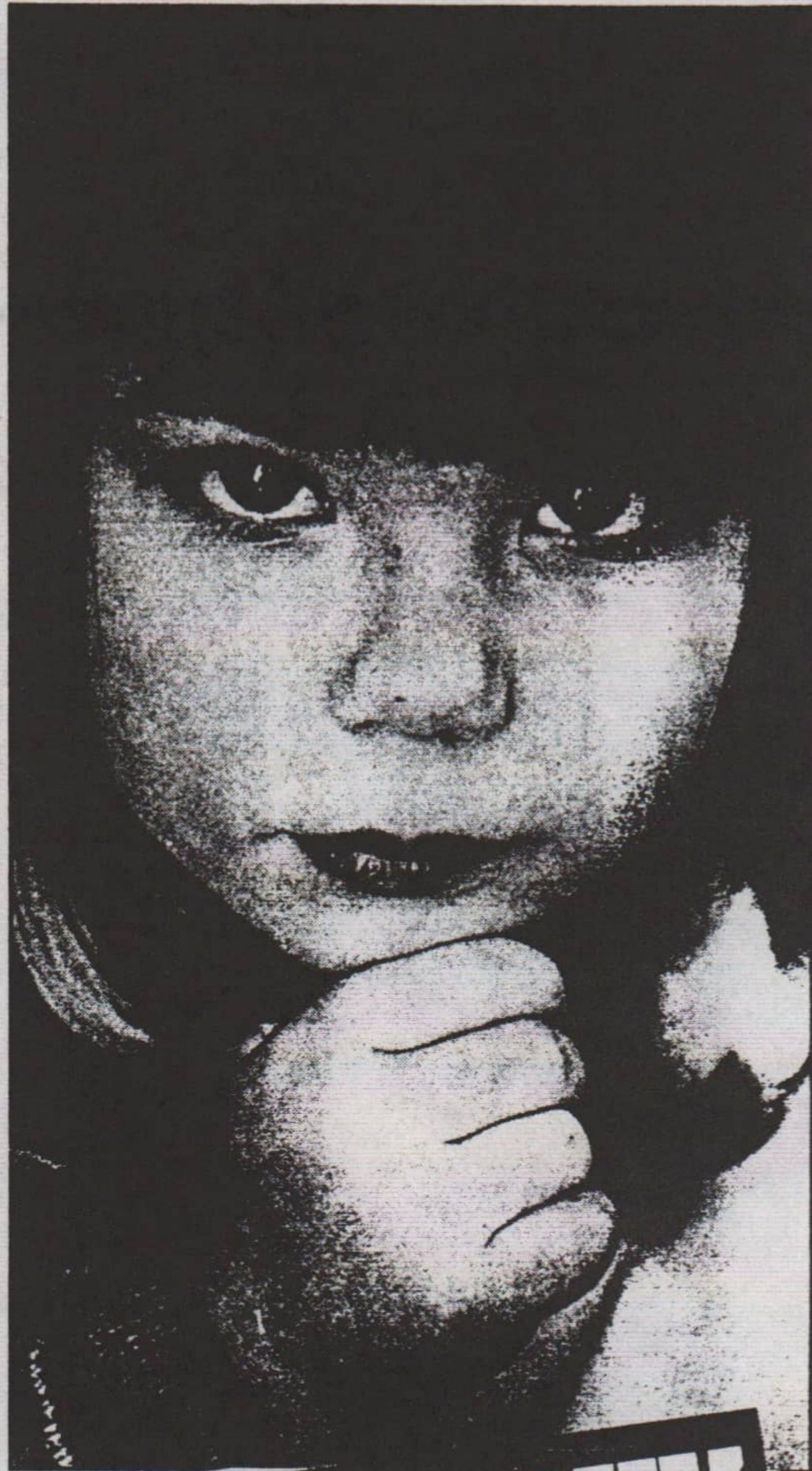
THE FIRST BETRAYAL

After a marathon 14 hour session, the General Council issued a 6 point directive to the EETPU, the conditions of which had to be met by Wednesday 12th February. The actual directives were as follows:

1. Not to assist further in recruitment of staff for News International's Wapping and Glasgow plants.
2. Not to recruit any members employed by News International at Wapping or Glasgow, who are either not members of a union or who are members of any other union.
3. To inform EETPU members at Wapping and Glasgow that they are engaged upon the work that is normally done by members of other print trade unions at Bouverie Street and Grays Inn Road.
4. Not to enter into any agreement, nor continue in any non-contractual agreement with News International without the agreement of the AUEW, NGA, NUJ and SOGAT.
5. Not to enter into any unilateral negotiations with News International and to use best endeavours to bring about fresh negotiations between News International and other unions.
6. Not to enter into a sole negotiating agreement where other unions would be deprived of their existing rights of



SOGAT • AUEW • NUJ • NGA



DON'T BUY

THE Sun

NEWS OF THE WORLD

THE ~~SUNDAY~~ TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

My Dad
wants to
work
but Mr
Murdoch
sacked
him.

5,000 families
like Emma's
have now lost
their breadwinners

THEY NEED
YOUR
SUPPORT

recognition, except by prior consultation and agreement of other unions concerned.

The contentious point proved to be number 3, on the question of whether the wording should be 'inform' or 'instruct'. Considering the unprecedented attack on the print unions and in the face of the EETPU's connivance, it was felt by many that the very least the General Council should do was 'instruct' the scabs rather than merely 'inform' them, which was completely meaningless. To those printers who remembered a similar situation at the TUC over whether to offer 'sympathy' or 'support' to the NGA in their battle with Eddie Shah, the General Council's decision could not have come as any great surprise. The TUC's decision to 'inform' the scabs was doubtless heavily influenced by the fact that to have done otherwise may well have laid them open to legal moves in the courts. Their feeble stance is even more incredible when it is considered that at that very time the EETPU were still recruiting scabs for News International and were working with management to try and overcome some of the teething troubles being experienced at Wapping.

To the sacked workers and their families, lobbying Congress House, the General Councils low-key approach was tantamount to a betrayal. The TUC's decision not to discipline the electricians union was bitterly recieved amid angry shouts of "rubbish!".

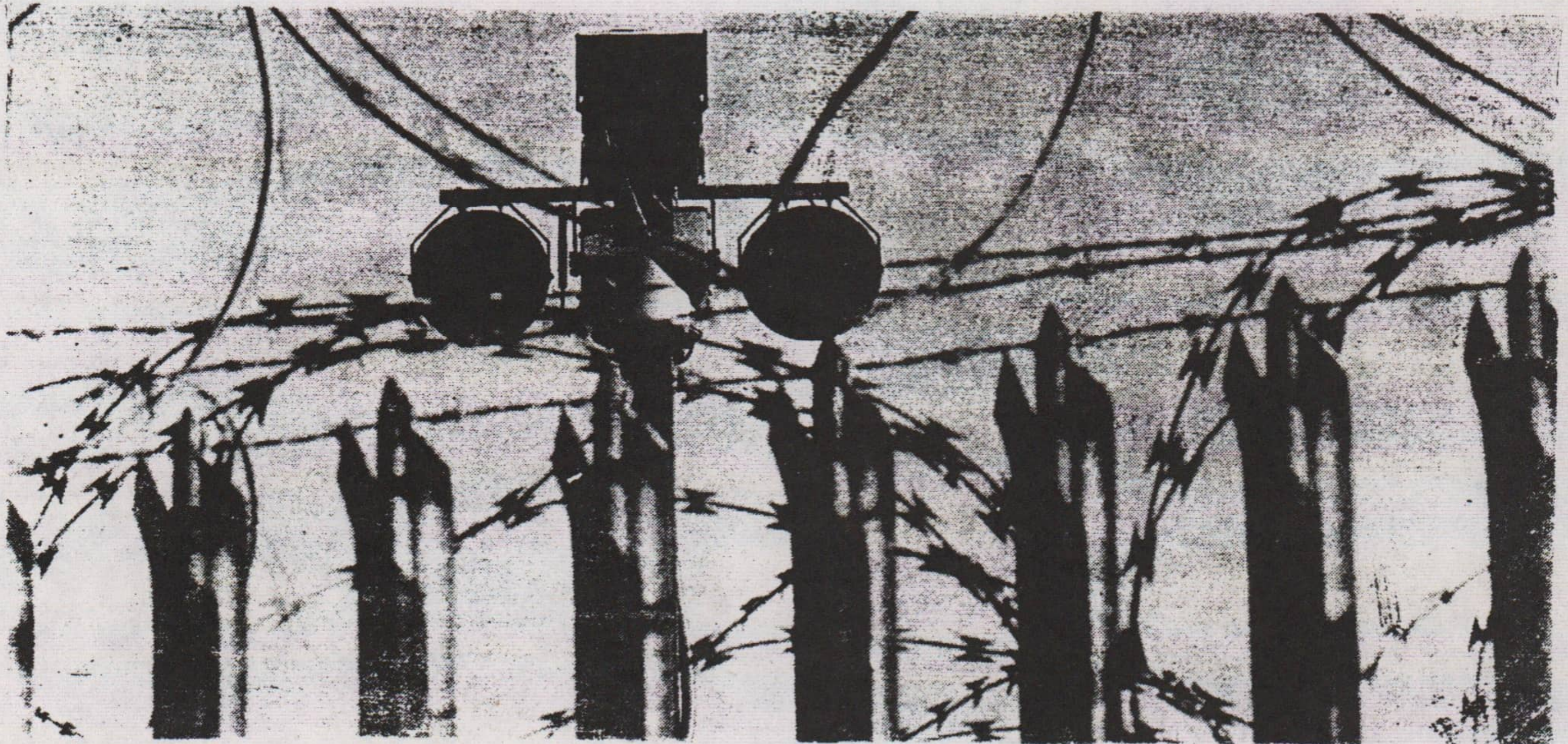
That month also saw the revelation by the 'Morning Star' of a letter from News International



C.C. K. R. Murdoch Esq
Mr R. H. Searby Q.C.
W. A. Gillespie Esq
C. Wilson Esq
P. W. Stehrenberger Esq
T. Hopkins Esq
J. Collier Esq
W. A. O'Neill Esq

solicitors Farrer and Co., to News International Managing Director Bruce Matthews. The letter clearly showed that far from trying to reach a settlement with the unions, it was Murdoch's intention all along to provoke a strike by his workers so that he could sack them all. He had clearly prepared well for this dispute, there would be no repetition of the 'Times' lockout of 1978.

Brenda Dean's strategy of compliance with the anti-union laws exploded in her face when on the 10th February 1986 Mr. Justice Michael Davies in the High Court made an order for the sequestration of all of SOGAT's funds, on top of a £25,000 fine for contempt of court for ignoring an earlier order not to disrupt distribution, as this was classed as 'secondary action' and was therefore illegal. The sequestrators, from Ernst and Whinney, chartered accountants, lost no time in moving into SOGAT's head office to seize the union's £17 million assets. They were ably assisted by SOGAT's financial secretary Denis Bartlett and by the full co-operation of the national officers. Murdoch and the High Court had



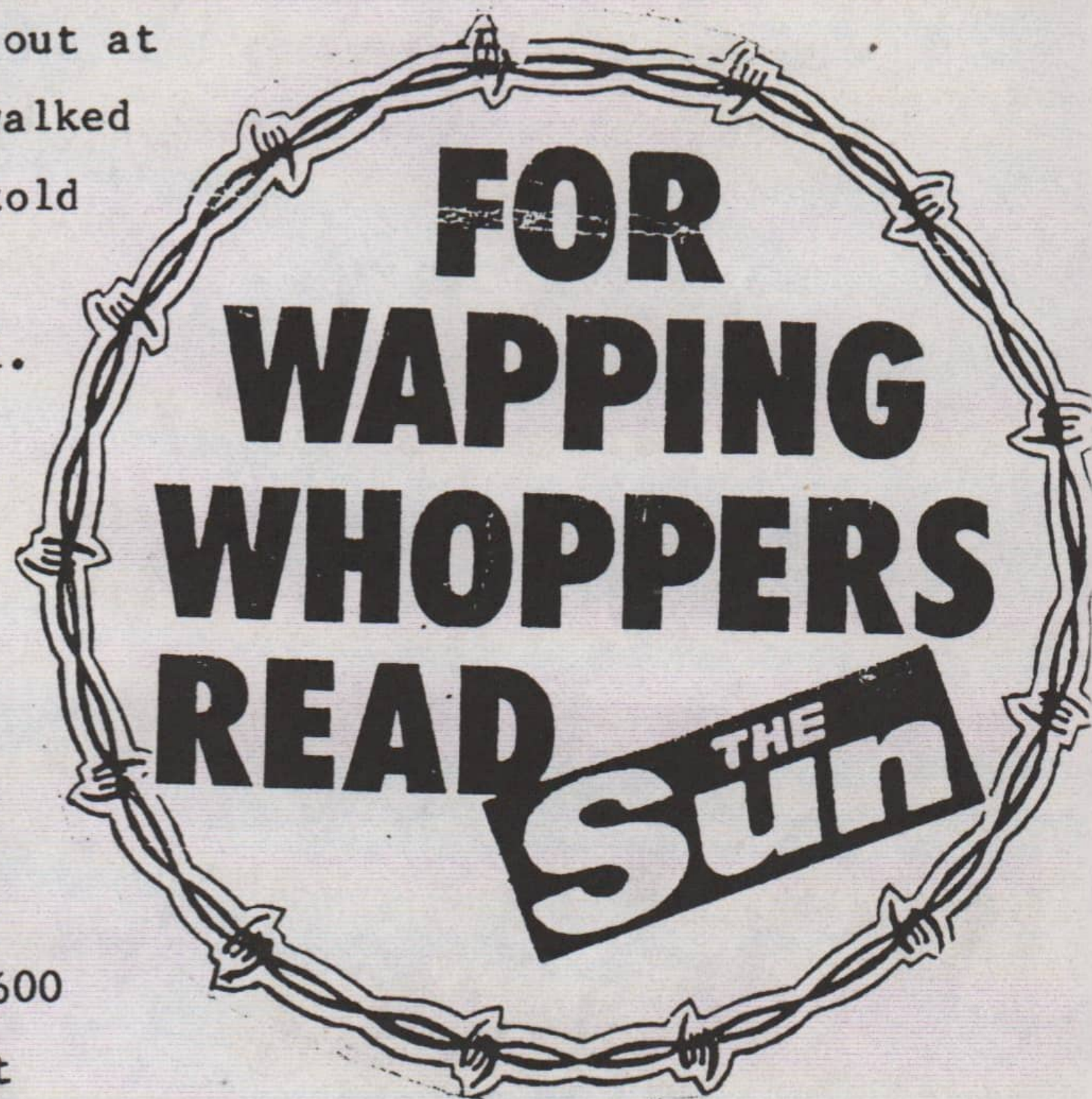
managed, with a little help from Brenda Dean, to incapacitate SOGAT in a matter of weeks, something it took months for the courts to do to the NUM; but then at least the NUM's leadership was prepared to fight and defy the Tories and their laws. It might have been expected that after such a draconian attack by the courts that Brenda Dean's strategy may have changed, but no! Writing in the March issue of SOGAT's journal she stated, ".....if we want a country in which governments can be changed and laws can be changed, then we must accept the rule of law". And then, in one of her most ludicrous statements, she said, "....We must not forget that justice is on our side. The British people have a remarkably acute sense of injustice and an innate dislike of the bully". It would have been laughable if it were not so tragic.

CHAPTER 3

"WE'RE HERE TO STOP LORRIES"

Life inside Fortress Wapping from all accounts was far from a bed of roses. The 'London SOGAT Post' for February 1986 revealed how the scabs inexperience at operating the high speed machinery was not only causing a number of injuries but was resulting in considerable damage to the machinery itself. Murdoch promptly called in the service engineers to repair the machines, and the AUEW promptly called them out again! Within the new plant security was strict. Each area had its own colour code and workers from one area were not allowed to move into other areas or talk to workers from a different colour code. Combined with the razor wire, the pickets outside and the virtual seige environment, it was not suprising to see many of the workforce either resigning or being dismissed. As one NGA process worker pointed out at the beginning of February: "Twenty engineers walked out of Wapping last Saturday. They had been told to sweep up and weren't having it. But the picket must have had an impact on them as well. No one with half a conscience is going to cross a picket line - providing it looks like one".

Despite instructions to limit the numbers picketing, the demonstrations started to grow in size. The first Saturday march, something that was to become a regular event, numbered 600 to 700. Admist the confusion a TNT juggernaut became isolated and was surrounded by pickets. The driver panicked, sped forward and knocked down a policeman coming to his aid. The policing of that first march was very low-key, the first and last time that was to be the case.



THE WOMEN'S MARCH

Saturday 8th February saw the first real mass picket at Wapping and it showed that the potential to stop Murdoch was there. It started off as a 'peaceful' women's march to Wapping, with Brenda Dean leading over 3,000 women. The march had been organised by SERTUC Women's Rights Committee and it was planned to have a rally in Wellclose Square, across the road from the plant. The rank and file however had other ideas. "We're here to stop lorries, not listen to bloody speeches!" shouted one of the women strikers, as the women were joined by the rest of the pickets lining the road, in an attempt to block the roads and stop

the lorries coming out. It was a slap in the face for those who had argued that the mainly women clerical workers and cleaners had no history of militancy and would be put off by the 'macho' image of mass picketing. The horror-struck officials tried in vain to get everyone off the road. "Christ, there's far too many people here" exclaimed one. For more than two hours the pickets held their ground against the police and blocked the Highway. It was only when numbers started to dwindle that the police moved in, using the SPG and snatch squads to clear the road. The rank and file had had a taste of what they could do and the 8th February proved to be the first of many mass pickets and the beginning of the police's brutal attacks on ordinary working people. These attacks were to increase in ferocity and on subsequent nights the use of mounted police and riot police became the norm. The lie that the police during the miners strike had only been protecting the right of some miners to go to work was shown to be the sham it always was. Here were 6,000 workers who wanted that 'right to work' and they were being prevented from doing so by a paramilitary police force.

THE INJUNCTIONS GAME

Like SOGAT the NGA soon found itself caught up in a web of injunctions and court cases over the blacking order to its members printing and typesetting the 'Times Educational Supplement', 'Times Higher Educational Supplement' and the 'Times



MURDOCH IS BAD NEWS

Rupert Murdoch made a staggering £47 million profit last year out of the Sun, News of the World, Times and Sunday Times.

He has just bought six American TV companies but he needs even more profits to pay for them.

So Murdoch has provoked a strike to sack over 5,000 British employees – employees who have worked on his papers for years and earned him huge profits.

● Eric worked for the Sun for sixteen years before he was sacked by Rupert Murdoch.



● Jeremy Nicholl

People all over the country have stopped buying Murdoch's papers.

Please do the same.

Then he will have to start negotiating.

DON'T BUY

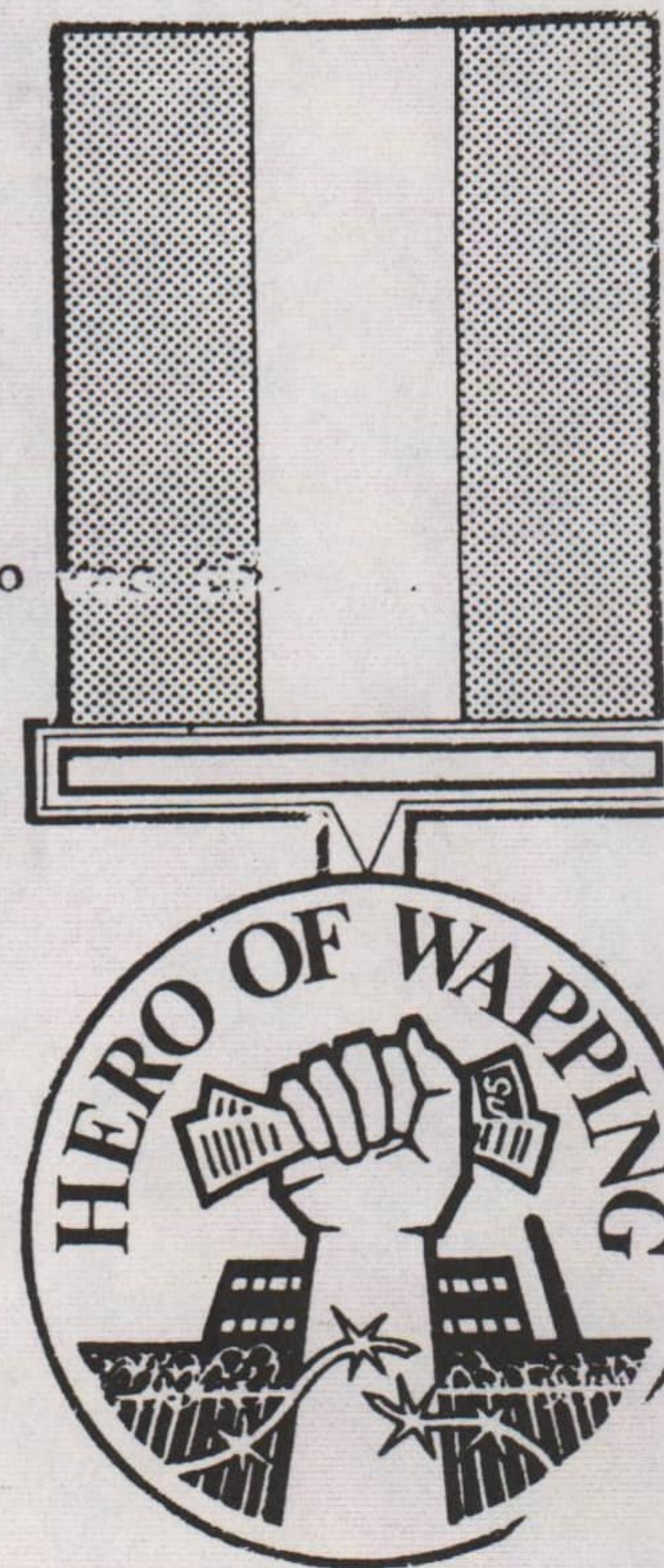
THE Sun NEWS OF THE WORLD

**THE ~~AND~~ TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES**

Literary Supplement'. On the 28th January 1986 Murdoch's Times Newspapers Ltd. was granted an injunction against this action on the grounds that the NGA had not held a ballot of its members working on these titles, and further, that such action could be classified as 'secondary'. To achieve this Murdoch had planned well. He created a buffer company, News International Supply Ltd., to give the appearance that the printers of the supplements were nothing to do with News International, and when the NGA re-imposed its blacking order it was News International Supply Ltd. and not Times Newspapers Ltd. that took out contempt proceedings.

As a result of these proceedings the NGA was fined £25,000 for contempt of court but avoided sequestration of its £17 million assets by rescinding its blacking order a second time. But within an hour of leaving court the union simply reimposed its boycott for a third time on the grounds that its members at Type Matters and Northampton Mercury Ltd., the two firms that published the supplements, had been balloted on this action. Within hours Murdoch had obtained another contempt order and the NGA once again lifted the Blacking order. And so it went on.

During the long and tortuous path through a minefield of injunctions it became very clear that Murdoch and News International had gone to great lengths to create bogus firms in order that almost any blacking or boycott could be declared illegal by the courts under the anti-union legislation. In total Murdoch created six false companies - News International Supply Ltd., News International Distribution Ltd., News International Advertising Ltd., Times Papers, Times Printing and Times Publishing. All the first three companies had the same director, G.W. Richards from the solicitors firm Farrers, who just happened to be Murdochs solicitors and the same firm who advised him how to get rid of his workforce by provoking a strike. And Murdoch went even further, just in case the scabs inside Wapping were to contemplate industrial action. They were all employed by the 'London Post' and not Times Newspapers or News Group Newspapers who published the 'Sun', so any action on their part would also be classed as 'secondary' by the courts. What it all boiled down to was the fact that the unions had no chance of ever winning by playing the injunctions game. By staying within the anti-union laws the unions stood defenceless, like some modern day Canute trying to stop a tidal wave. To many of the rank and file strikers it was becoming quite apparent that their only hope was to follow the example of the miners and defy those laws designed to smash them.



THE FIGHT SPREADS

Meanwhile the fight was spreading far beyond Wapping itself to the rest of the country and it didn't just involve the boycott campaign of Murdoch's papers. The real battles centred around the TNT depots and wholesalers. From Wapping the TNT artics travelled to depots up and down the country, where the scab papers were unloaded onto fleets of small transit vans, nicknamed 'white mice' by the pickets. These white transits then travelled to various wholesalers in the area, where the papers were then delivered to newsagents. Many of these drivers in the wholesale were members of SOGAT, but almost without exception they handled the scab papers from day one. The exception were the magnificent London wholesale members who blacked the papers throughout the entire dispute. The picketing of depots in many areas met with considerable success, as did the large pickets which started to appear outside Portabello Press at Worthing where 250,000 copies of the 'News of the World' were printed. Newsagents also started to find that bundles of the 'Sun' and 'Times' were regularly disappearing from outside their shops. In one way or another the distribution of Murdoch's papers were being severely affected, not so much by the boycott campaign but by picketing and direct action.

Despite Brenda Deans talk about 'outsiders' not being welcome at Wapping, more and more support manifested itself in the form of larger pickets. The attitude of the strikers themselves was very different to the official line. "It's an attack on the whole trade union movement" said John Clifford of the NGA 'News of the World' Chapel, "That means any conscious trade unionist and anyone who supports trade unionism should be at Wapping". This sentiment was echoed by Ross Pritchard of the London Regional Committee of the NGA: "If we had ten times the number we had on Saturday the police would think twice about attacking us. We want more outsiders not less".

The violence of the police tactics had indeed increased dramatically as the pickets grew in strength. On Saturday 15th February thousands of printworkers and their supporters marched from Tower Hill along East Smithfield and the Highway. Among those in the front of the demonstration were electricians from Southampton EETPU. When the demonstrators reached the plant, suddenly and without any warning the police attacked the march. For the first time they sent mounted police into the crowds causing instant panic. Men, women and children fled in all directions to escape the horses bearing down on them. No sooner had the mounted police charged the pickets

**HEROIN ISN'T THE
ONLY THING THAT
DAMAGES YOUR MIND**



DON'T LET MURDOCH GET AWAY WITH IT.

use your brain while you still can.

if a friend offers you

THE Sun

NEWS OF THE WORLD

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

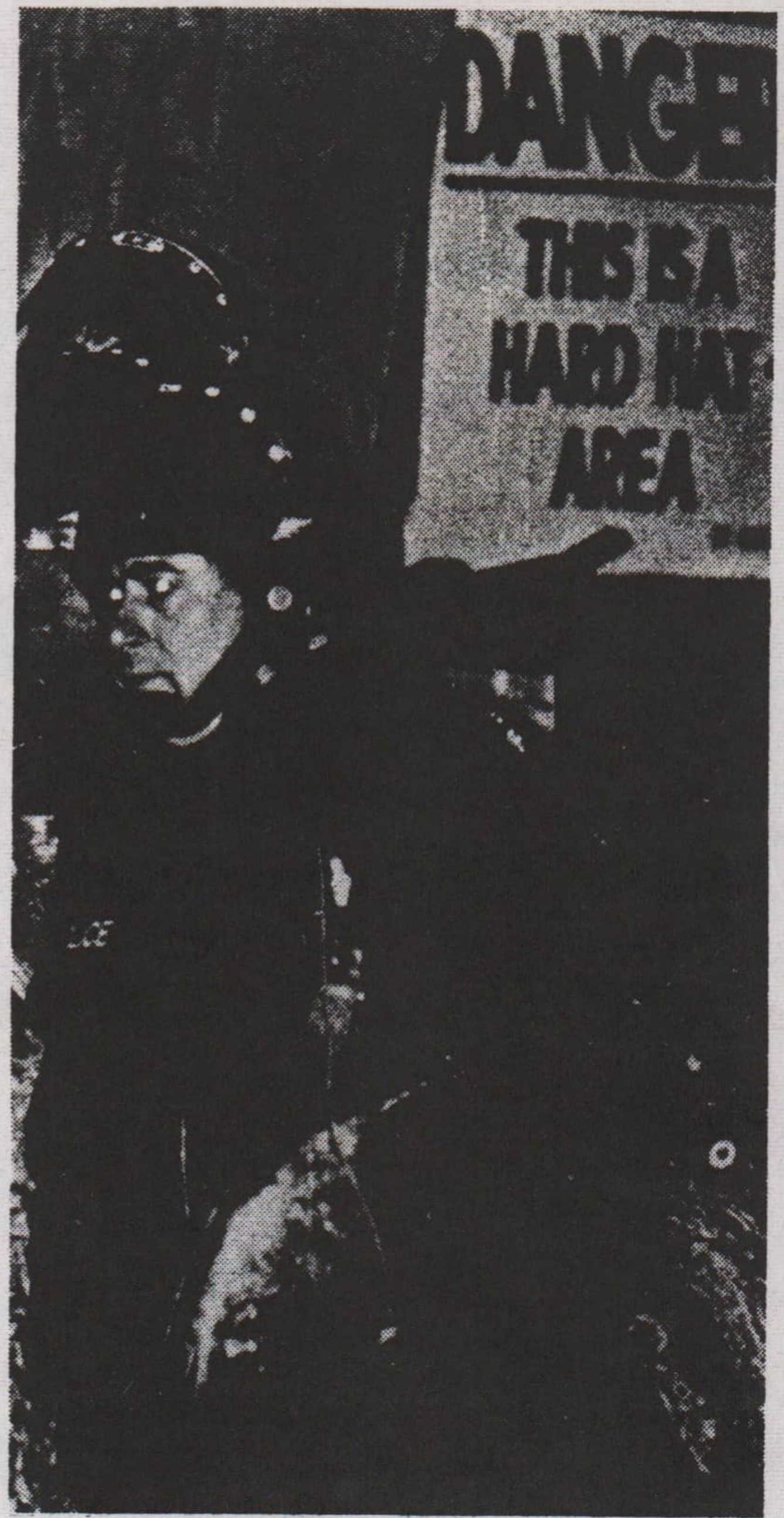
Don't make the same mistake. say no.

THE Sun SCREWS YOU

than officers in full riot gear, carrying small round shields appeared, and started attacking people indiscriminately. These Police Support Units (PSU's) were sent in clearly with the aim of intimidating people by sheer brute force into not picketing again. Snatch squads moved into the crowd picking out and arresting suspected 'ringleaders' and activists. To many who had only seen the riot squads in action on their televisions, the events of that evening were an eye-opener. As one SOGAT clerical put it: "The police say it was rent-a-mob who caused the trouble.....That's right, and what identified them was their blue uniforms, helmets, truncheons and shields".

Brenda Deans response was very different: "We want nothing to do with them". The 'them' she was referring to were not the riot police, but the pickets who had been ridden down and subjected to baton charges. Her attitude was even more disgusting when she went along with the police and the Tory press, blaming the violence at Wapping on 'outside extremists' and 'Trotskyists'. It was obvious that she was trying to shift the blame for her pathetic leadership and her opposition to mass picketing, but all she could offer the strikers were possible talks at ACAS. As all union members who have been in dispute will testify, all that ACAS ever offers the workers is a shoddy compromise, usually on the bosses terms. The ordinary strikers, however, were beginning to have a taste of their own power and a small, but growing, group of pickets were starting to criticize their leaderships and the whole concept of 'new realism'.

It wasn't only Dean who was offered the excuse to shift the blame by the ACAS talks. The Transport and General Workers Union had failed to prevent the TNT drivers from scabbing. Despite a letter from Ron Todd to all scab drivers stating "The immediate need - and duty - is clear. It is support for the print unions and the honouring of picket lines", the TGWU could not even keep good their promise that any driver who refused to cross picket lines would not be suspended. The only TNT driver who actually refused to cross was Terry McCabe from Luton. "I have been a member of the Transport and General Workers Union since 1971 and having to cross a picket line tore the guts out of me". For his trouble he wasn't only suspended by TNT but he was beaten up by his colleagues.



Transport and General Workers Union



TRANSPORT HOUSE - SMITH SQUARE - WESTMINSTER - LONDON SW 1P 3JB

OUR REF RT/JP/ID

TELEPHONE 01-828 7788 TELEX No 918009

YOUR REF

Wednesday, 29th January

To: TNT drivers
and other TGWU driver members

Dear Member,

The TGWU is recognising the News International picket lines as official action fully in line with the position of the TUC and the two print unions, SOGAT 82 and the NGA.

The dictatorial methods of Rupert Murdoch have caused this dispute and the picket lines to be set up. 5,000 print jobs are at stake, and unions other than the TGWU have members affected.

From my own involvement in this matter, I am quite convinced by the facts and history of this dispute that News International has sought to use our own union members, outside legitimate agreements, and that the company's moves can be fairly described as dictatorial, diabolical and totally unacceptable for the print workers involved, for our own members and for the future of genuine trades unionism.

This has convinced me that it is proper and necessary to instruct all TGWU member drivers in TNT and any other firms which are, or may become involved, not to cross official picket lines.

Other unions are making similar directives in line with TUC requirements. To support our members in carrying out this action, full time TGWU officers involved will be available at all times and maximum assistance will be provided. They will attend picket lines to see TGWU policy implemented.

This situation has its complicated aspects, like most disputes. But the immediate need — and duty — is clear. It is support for the print unions and the honouring of picket lines, in the genuine best interests of the workers involved, and the future of trades unionism in this country.

Yours sincerely

Ron Todd

General Secretary

General Secretary RON TODD

Deputy General Secretary ALEX KITSON

THE MINERS

Since the start of the strike it was to the miners that many of the sacked printers looked for inspiration and support. The rank and file miners had learned the hard way that the entire state apparatus was against them. The printworkers were also learning the same thing to their cost. The people of the mining communities would always remember the magnificent solidarity and support that they recieved from Fleet Street workers during their year long struggle. As one Yorkshire miner put it: "We came to Wapping to repay the solidarity from the printers during our strike".

But there was a lot of confusion among the miners as to what was happening at Wapping. Way back in January 1986 Peter Heathfield, the NUM's General Secretary had declared: "I hope miners the length and breadth of the country rally to the side of the NGA and SOGAT". But by the end of February Yorkshire miners were being told that they were not welcome on the picket line at Wapping. That message was coming from Brenda Dean via Jack Taylor, the Yorkshire NUM president. Miners were left in no doubt that the Area NUM Executive would not offer any support if miners were to go to Wapping. If arrested they would get no legal aid from the union and they would be left alone to face the sack. This was despite the fact that every NUM branch in Yorkshire had been sent a letter from sacked printers asking for support. But miners did go to the picket line and stood shoulder to shoulder with the printers. From the beginning of the strike miners from Kent, including their General Secretary, the late Jack Collins, travelled regularly to join the Wapping picket lines and all members of the Kent

THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS SUPPORTS SOGAT 82,

**NOW IN BATTLE TO SAVE JOBS AND
TRADE UNIONISM.**

**MINING COMMUNITIES WILL NEVER FORGET THE
PRINTWORKERS' SOLIDARITY IN OUR ONGOING
FIGHT AGAINST PIT CLOSURES**

ARTHUR SCARGILL	MICHAEL McGAHEY	PETER HEATHFIELD
President	Vice President	Secretary

Area NUM were levied weekly to give financial assistance to the printworkers. But it wasn't just rank and file miners who were discouraged. Tony Dubbins of the NGA consistently refused to invite Arthur Scargill onto the picket line, although Scargill eventually did go to Wapping on the 6th April for the national rally.

The attitudes of the ordinary miners was summed up by an Armthorpe miner writing in the 'Picket' newsletter: "The scabs at the moment have the money and their police friends, but that is nothing compared to the esteem in which you (the sacked printers) are held in the eyes of the real people".

The miners were among the many trade unionists and supporters who found the officials behaviour at Wapping hard to understand. To them it seemed incredible that no real concerted efforts were being made to stop the scab lorries coming out of the plant. Brian Butterworth, a NALGO steward from Brent complained in late February: "We'd come to stop Murdoch, not wander around Wapping all night. Neither had we come to listen to a load of boring officials telling us to be 'peaceful' and 'co-operate with the police'. Murdoch won't be stopped unless the print unions get the numbers there and show determination to stop the lorries". A similar view came from an AUEW steward from the GLC: "The officials have got a stranglehold over the thing.....They don't seem interested in stopping Murdoch's newspapers".

The attitudes of the strikers themselves were also hardening. "What's needed is proper fighting leadership. That could transform demoralisation. Stopping the lorries at Wapping would be a real boost to spirits throughout the Street. If there is no all out strike on Fleet Street and no mass pickets at Wapping, how can we call on other workers - TGWU lorry drivers and dockers, railway workers and postal workers - to support us" (SOGAT clerical from the 'Evening Standard'). Another SOGAT member from the 'Telegraph': "If Wapping goes down, we all go down";

and a SOGAT FoC: "We all came out together and we'll all go back together". The NGA pickets were taking a similar line: "If I'm going down I want to take Murdoch with me". The rank and file were getting themselves organised in defiance of their leaderships and officials, and one sign of this was the appearance of the excellent 'Picket' newsletter, which conveyed what the ordinary strikers felt. "It is neither conscience-stricken scabs or toothless consumer boycott campaigns that will win the strike, but picketing.



All this fight for a few quid compensation? No, the issue remains entry into Wapping". It was obvious they would have a hard time convincing their leaders of that.



Union recognition and re-instatement in Wapping were certainly not on the agenda as far as Dean was concerned and both her and Norman Willis leapt at Murdoch's offer of £14 million at the beginning of March 1986. This in effect was £56 million less than the statutory minimum redundancy and worked out at about £2,400 for every sacked worker, and Murdoch didn't even have to offer that pathetic sum. Interviewed in the 'New York Sunday Times' he was boasting of five weeks of uninterrupted production of his four titles and claimed that the print unions could be locked out forever. He seemed incredulous that he had managed to get as far as he had: "They (the unions) never saw the extent of our preparations for typesetting. Yet the place had hundreds of construction workers and people here all the time. Anyone could have worked it out". The tragedy is that the unions didn't.

But the unions still had a very powerful weapon not a mile from Wapping and that was Fleet Street. Many of their 30,000 members on the Street were willing to take action but were being stopped from doing so. They realised only too well that it was their jobs that were at stake as well. If Murdoch was allowed

to win it would be a green light for the rest of the Fleet Street bosses to ride roughshod over the unions. So why wasn't this potential trump card being brought into play? Certainly among the strikers themselves there was a growing feeling that their colleagues in the Street should be brought out. The arguments offered against such action were twofold; firstly, that as long as the rest of Fleet Street continued working they could support the strikers financially; and secondly, that by closing Fleet Street down Murdoch would have a virtual monopoly to sell his papers. But this was pure nonsense. For one thing, with 30,000 out on strike in Fleet Street, the potential for stopping Wapping completely would be very real indeed. Not only that, but the pressure on Murdoch to return to the negotiating table from the other Fleet Street barons, would be immense. This potential had been used before during the 'Messenger' dispute when Fleet Street ground to a halt and the Newspapers Publishers Association, who had threatened to lock out Fleet Street printworkers, were forced to back down. In the face of a concerted attack on workers on all Fleet Street titles, the unions conceded one demand after another.

TRADE UNIONISTS BEWARE!

THIS COMPANY ADVERTISES

 **IN THE** 
Scab Sun



Anger among the pickets was growing. "There's only one way to stop the bosses chasing us and that's to stop running" said one. The 'Sun' Editorial Assistants Chapel passed the following resolution:

"This chapel calls on all SOGAT FoCs/MoCs at News International and in Fleet Street to organise immediate mass picketing of Wapping on a daily basis, and to call on the NGA for support".

On Fleet Street itself, SOGAT's federated chapels at the 'Daily Telegraph' and 'Sunday Telegraph' sent a letter to sacked FoCs stating "We do not accept large pickets equal violent pickets. We believe that thousands on the picket lines at Wapping - and there are thousands who have been sacked - will lift the morale of everyone and show Murdoch and his scabs we will not roll over and play dead". A SOGAT RIRMA member put it more directly: "The only answer to this is a Fleet Street strike". And Tony Benn, speaking at a printers rally in Manchester summed up the growing militancy of the pickets when he declared on the subject of picketing: "Scargill was one hundred per cent right".

CHAPTER FOUR

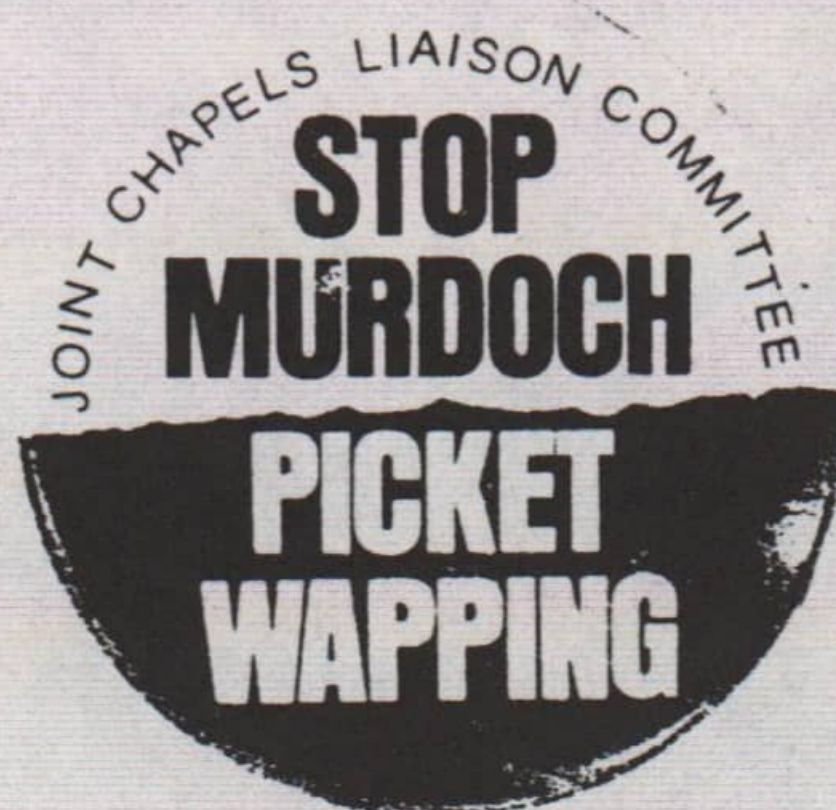
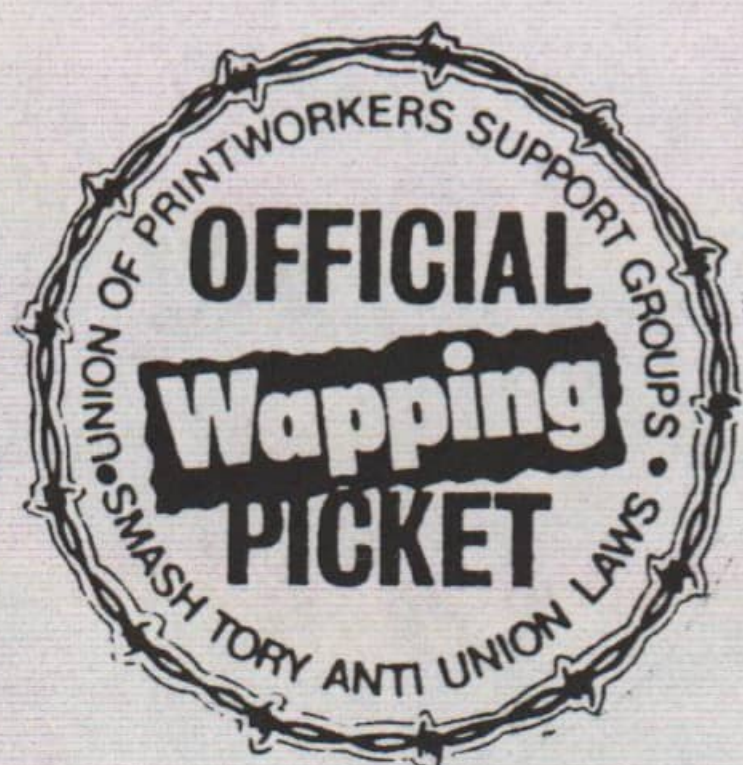
"MURDER IN THEIR MINDS"

International Womens Day on 8th March saw a magnificent demonstration by over 3,000 women. By now many of the people who had supported Dean, Dubbins and company at the beginning were becoming disillusioned at the lack of any real leadership and the low-key approach to the dispute. They felt that the leadership had been given enough time to do something and the actual running of the dispute was beginning to be organised by SOGAT London District Council. The first march they organised was on Saturday 15th March at 8.30pm, and for the first time the timing was right. On previous Saturdays marches had been organised around 6pm, which meant that most people tended to drift away by 10pm when the first artics roared out of the plant. But 15th March was to be different in another way - the power of mass picketing was to be seen at its best.

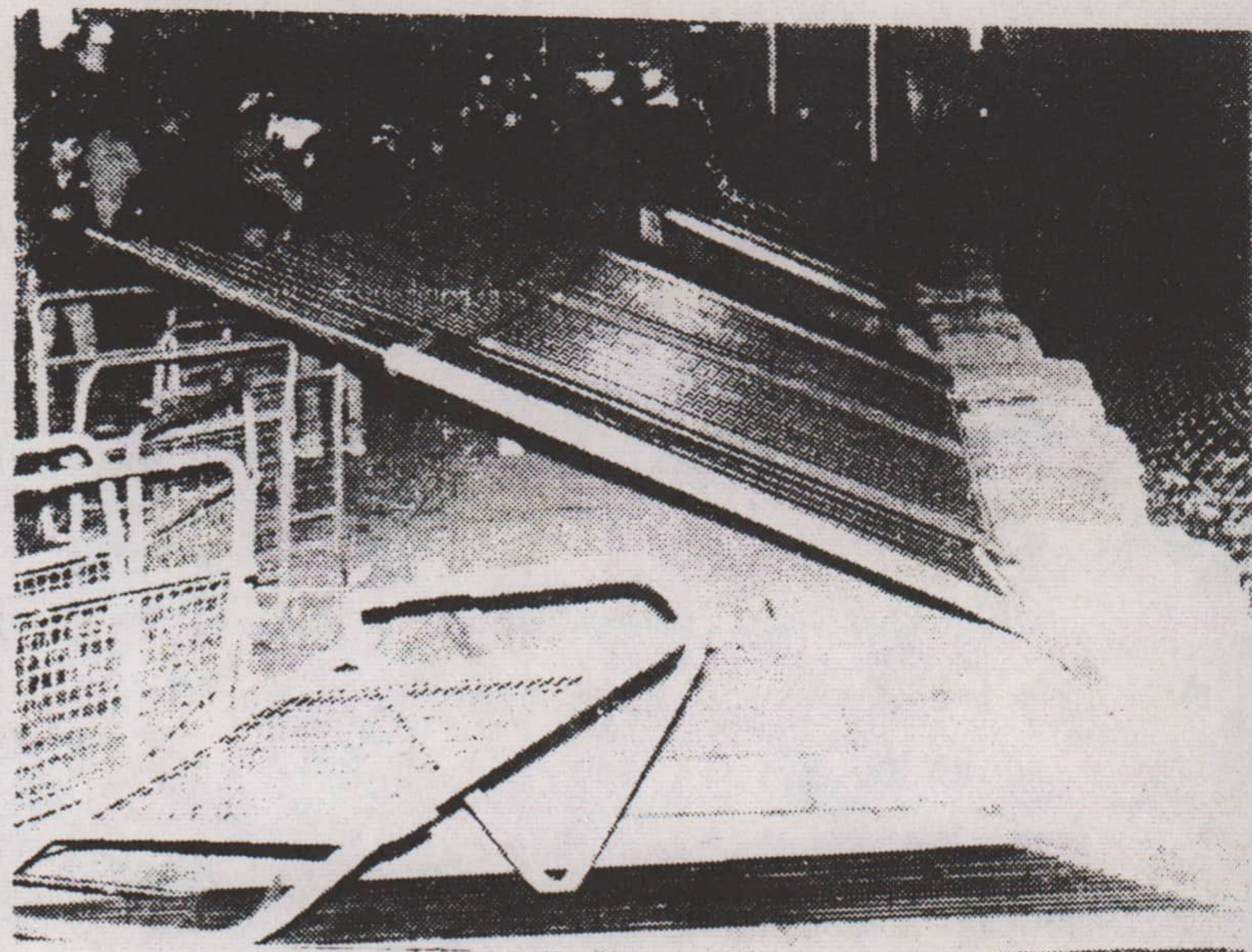
On the preceeding Wednesday, 12th March, 3,000 pickets marched from Tower Hill. Pausing only at Thomas More Street (another of the exits used by the artics) they came to a halt at Virginia Street, where many were ushered by stewards up into Wellclose Square to listen to speeches. Other pickets, however, continued along the Highway towards the Wapping Lane exit where they unexpectedly came upon a scab coach complete with protective armour. This was bricked before beating a hasty retreat. No sooner had this happened than a lorry appeared coming the wrong way down the Highway and had its windscreen smashed. The driver unsuccessfully tried to turn down Wapping Lane but was prevented from doing so by the thick blue line of police. In desperation the artic continued down the Highway straight towards the large group of pickets at Virginia Street, ploughed into the crowd and injured two SOGAT pickets. It was a miracle that no one was killed. Needless to say the police did not prosecute the scab driver although pickets identified him and gave his number. So much for their impartiality. They were there for one reason and one reason only - to make sure that Murdoch got his scab papers out. It is little wonder that the pickets soon started calling them Murdoch's 'paper boys'.

15TH MARCH PICKET

At around 9.30pm on the evening of Saturday 15th March around 11,000 trade unionists



and supporters set off from Tower Hill for the short walk to Wapping. It was a magnificent demonstration of solidarity, showing quite clearly the massive support there was for the printers. For those who said solidarity was dead and that mass pickets couldn't work, this was certainly an eye-opener. After weeks of rotten leadership, demoralisation and general disillusionment, the



printworkers and their supporters showed Murdoch, the police and their own leaders just what they were capable of.

The police were obviously totally unprepared for so many people. When the marchers reached the top of Virginia Street (the road that leads down to Wapping's main gate) the mood quickly changed. Despite the urgings of the officials, the march came to a halt and the pickets turned towards the plant, arms pointed accusingly at the blacklegs, and the chant of "Scab, scab, scab" started, slowly at first, then building in volume until the sound was deafening. "Onto the pavements!"

went the cry and people started to climb the crash barriers onto the path. In an instant the small group who had defied the police by moving onto the pavement had swelled to hundreds of pickets. Pickets full of bitterness and resentment at the way Murdoch had so callously thrown them on the scrapheap. Pickets full of anger at the scabs who had stolen their jobs. Pickets who at last had a chance to release all the pent up anger and frustration of eight long and bitter weeks, and show Murdoch, his scabs and the police just what they thought of them.

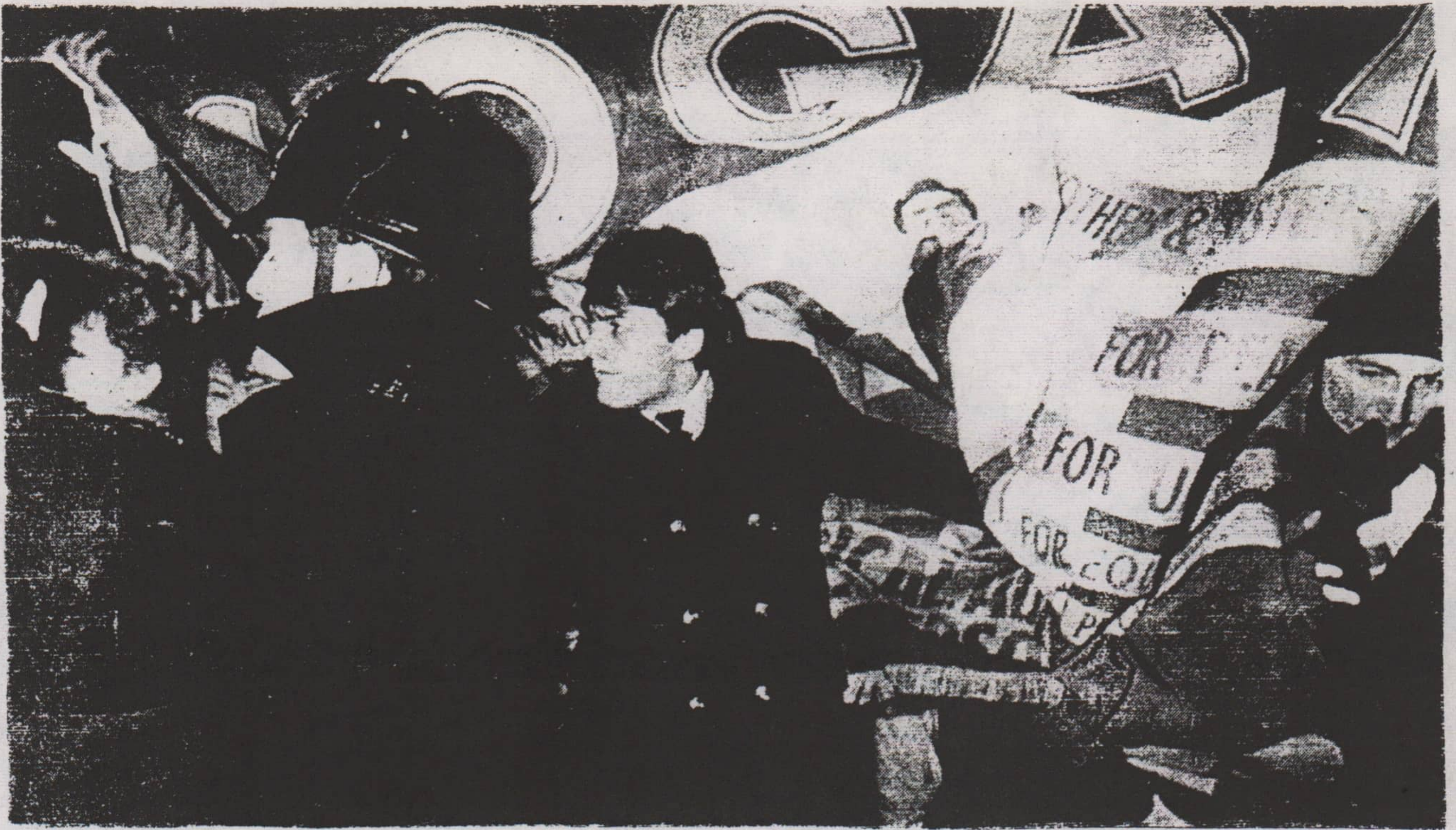
Pickets started to attack the iron fence, imbedded in concrete, that surrounded the plant. Within seconds the fence was covered with people pushing and pulling at the iron railings. Then suddenly a section of the fencing came free from its concrete base and was pushed to the ground. The effect was electric - hundreds more attacked the fence. Soon another section came free, then another, then another. For hundreds of feet the entire fence along the Highway crashed to the ground. Then the police made their move.

About twenty horses suddenly appeared at the top of Virginia Street and charged along the packed pavement straight into the crowd. People were literally knocked aside by the mounted police, but for the first time police weren't having it all their own way. "Remember Orgreave!" came the cry from the pickets. The narrow pavement proved difficult for maneuvering the horses and when they charged the pickets standing on the Highway crash barriers were used to stop them. Then

the short shield carrying riot police, the light from the street lamps reflecting off their helmets, steamed into the crowd, lashing out at people with their riot shields, and attacking those who were trying to stop the horses. With the way clear the mounted police immediately charged the pickets again. The anger at their callousness towards the demonstrators, many with children, in attacking them with horses and riot police, erupted in a barrage of missiles. Any violence that night came from the police first, they provoked the whole situation. The missiles were a natural reaction from people who had seen their families and friends ridden down by horses and attacked by riot police - of course they were going to fight back. And in most cases they were fighting back in order to defend themselves against physical injury.

The riot police moved in again and snatch squads arrested people in the most violent manner. Then, after another charge through the crowd on the Highway, the mounted police turned around and galloped up Wellclose Street to the NGA and SOGAT caravans, then charged back down again. Wellclose Street faces the front of Murdoch's plant on the other side of the Highway. Considering that this was some distance from the trouble and considering that Wellclose Street was regarded as a 'safe' area and was usually packed with older pickets and families, then the cavalry charge was irresponsible to the point of being downright dangerous. It was obviously a show of strength on the police's part and was calculated to raise tempers even more.





Unfortunately by this time some of the stewards had moved many of the pickets out of the area and east up the Highway, leaving the way open for the riot police to move into the remainder and gain the upper hand. One of the SOGAT stewards, John Nicholson, while trying to calm things down with a loud hailer was charged by the mounted police and then arrested.

After a while, when things had calmed down, the pickets proceeded to block all the roads used by the police to get the scab lorries out. Larry Hyett, a SOGAT striker described what was happening: "There was areal feeling of power. Printers, residents and supporters all joined to build barricades. Vehicles were used to block roads. Police tried to destroy our resolve, but people stuck together, men and women, shoulder to shoulder". It wasn't until 2.30am on the Sunday morning that the police finally managed to clear the roads and bring out a convoy of about 30 artics - Murdoch had been held up for around 5 hours in getting his scab papers out. As one picket put it: "In the past a lot of people were turning up to voice their anger, but they didn't think they could do any more than that. Now there's a new mood around".

When the lorries eventually left it was via Glamis Road, at the eastern end of the Highway. The main body of pickets at Wellclose Street were stopped from moving up to Glamis Road by the horses and riot police who blocked off the entire road. Meanwhile up at Glamis Road itself there were about 250 people blocking the road. Suddenly, without warning, SPG vans screeched up and riot police with truncheons drawn piled out and charged the crowd. A SOGAT member described the scene: "We were given no warning at all. Some of us sat down in the road. A whole lot of people fell on top of me. It was terrible.....they came at us



laughing their heads off, obviously enjoying themselves. They'd waited for the press to leave. They came with murder in their minds".

The events of that evening were the last thing that Brenda Dean had wanted. She had said all along that mass picketing would never work and that Arthur Scargill's tactics had lost the miners strike. She had re-iterated that message only two days before at a printers rally at the Wembley Conference Centre. Also on the platform were those two outstanding 'class fighters' Norman Willis and Neil Kinnock - the duo who had betrayed the miners a year before. Kinnock was full of praise for the 'new realism' approach to the dispute and added "Your case has not been obscured by distractions", no doubt referring to mass pickets. The message from Dean, Willis and Kinnock was straight forward enough - condemn the violence, no mass pickets and wait for a future Labour government. Small comfort for the thousands fighting not only for their jobs, but for the principles of trade unionism itself.

The message from the strikers was very different. Terry Flanagan of SOGAT London Machine Branch: "Dean doesn't want mass pickets. I think they are frightened of seeing the working class getting into action. If you wait for them you'll see us dead before they offer a fight. They haven't got the tradition of working class militancy and they are frightened of what they might see. The rank and file are actually beginning to have a great impact on the strike". The night of 15th March showed just how powerful that impact could be.



THE MYTH OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

News International and their friends in the rest of Fleet Street were at great pains to point out that the entire dispute was about 'new technology' and the unions 'Luddite' attitude to this technology. The facts were very different and were revealed in a report by AUEW engineers who installed and worked on the machinery for 18 months during test runs. The Goss presses inside Wapping were 16 years old and the Ferag conveyors were similar to the ones that had been used for years in Bouverie Street, and although some of the machinery was new it was of a traditional printing design worked on by engineers in Fleet Street for years. SOGAT's strike bulletin No. 2 detailed the machinery in Wapping. The press equipment was manufactured by Rockwell Graphics System Ltd. and was built in 1970/71 and stored until they were ready to be installed in the new plant. The actual press frame was pre-war. The equipment in Wapping consisted of 48 MKI Headliner press units, 24 Uniflows, 24 Folders and 48 reel tension paster units. All were of a similar Goss design to the press lines in Grays Inn Road and indeed were of an earlier Goss design to one of the press lines in Bouverie Street.

Transfer of copies was by TTR gripper Ferag conveyors, similar to those partly installed in Bouverie Street and the tying of line bundles was done on 'Ampag Automat RTN600' tandem plastic strappers, equipment which was so old in design that Pakseal, the UK agents, no longer marketed them. The exact same strappers had been in Grays Inn Road for years. Added to this, other equipment such as the Von Roll Reel Intake System (similar to that used at the 'Mirror'), a badly designed Wamac tied bundle, spiral conveyor, boom loader, bailer and shredder, then Wapping's 'new technology' machinery proved anything but.

In fact the only area where there was anything at all resembling new technology was the NAPP Systems direct plastic plate equipment, which replaced the old hot metal stereo plate by putting a plastic plate straight onto the adapted press saddles. But even this system had already been accepted in principle by 'Times' engineers when it was proposed to install it in Grays Inn Road. All in all, the technology of Wapping was neither advanced nor particularly effecient. What Wapping was really



London Region

NATIONAL GRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION

News International
Dispute

**MARCH
AND
RALLY**

Saturday 22nd March, 1986

Assemble
Lower Thames Street, EC3, at 8pm

March to:
King Edward VII Memorial Park
For Rally at 9pm


Speakers:
TONY DUBBINS General Secretary NGA
NORMAN ROBBINS
London Region Deputy Secretary NGA

SOGAT
London District Council

**Calls upon all supporters of the
Printworkers to attend a major**

**DEMONSTRATION
AT WAPPING**

TONIGHT Saturday
15th March
Assemble Tower Hill 8-30pm.
NEAREST TUBE TOWER HILL



BADGEY BREEN ON THE GREEN

Issued by Clifford and Tait harnester known as the Three Must 'no beard'

We can offer a large selection of three/four colour enamel badges (pre-washed so the colours won't run). Wear them in the bath and prove it for yourself!

Our stall has gained a reputation regarding its honesty, integrity and value for money. But disregard this and come along anyway.

Do not confuse our emporium with similar but tatty and ramshackle stalls made up of paste tables! These blackguards usually trade under the title of Strikographs. Beware, these covers only produce incredibly cheap and markey tin badges which quickly rust when in contact with moisture.

THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE!!
**YES FOLKS THE RETURN OF THE FAMOUS
WAPPING ROCK!!**
commemorating the Women's March

Forthcoming badges —
all in blazing colours.

I've never been drunk
at Wapping —
no 'I-10, limited
edition.

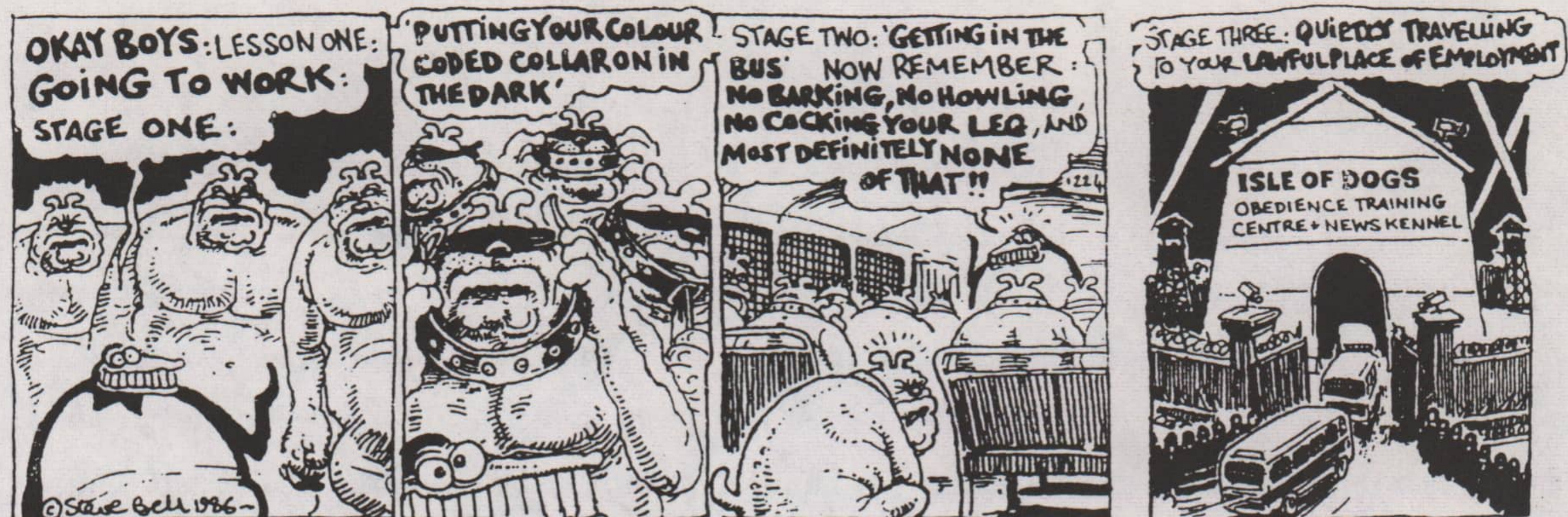
Wapping Veterans May 3rd
(not for the squeamish)

Flying Picket —
no 'I-500 limited edition.

I'm always drunk
at Wapping —
no 'I-10,000 unlimited
edition.

Don't forget, come to the
stall with the parasol and
the parasites.

OUR BADGE STALL HAS RAISED OVER £4,000 FOR STRIKE FUND



about was the smashing of one of the strongest groups of workers in the country.

THE MASS PICKETS CONTINUE

Despite Murdoch's expectation, and to Dean's dismay the mass pickets continued, and on Saturday 22nd March it was noticeable that more people stayed until the early hours of Sunday morning. Although Brenda Dean usually made her rare appearances on the picket line when the TV cameras were there, Tony Dubbins at least stayed until the early hours. This was no doubt as a result of increasing pressure from below, from the NGA strikers who, like their colleagues in SOGAT, were disillusioned with the tactics being pursued by their leadership. The majority of NGA strikers remained active throughout the strike and their weekly strike meetings were regularly attended by most of the 900 sacked members. Dubbins himself fell foul of the law at 1.30am on Sunday 23rd March for 'obstructing the highway'. His solicitor was later to appeal against this charge by arguing that since the police had blocked the road off completely there was no traffic and hence no 'obstruction' could have taken place. Needless to say the objection was thrown out of court, although eventually Dubbins was to win his case with the police being ordered to pay £300 costs.

GRAYS INN ROAD

In the first week of April 1986 Murdoch dropped a bombshell. In order to settle the dispute he offered the unions the old 'Times' printing presses at Grays Inn Road for the production of a new labour daily. It is hard to imagine anything more cynical - here was a man who had sacked his entire workforce and was running a massive union-busting operation, claiming that he wanted to help the labour movement. Rupert Murdoch - the workers friend! The strikers saw straight through the whole rotten deal, but unfortunately the Labour and Trade Union leaders did not. Both Kinnock and Willis saw in the offer the chance to have the daily paper they had for so long wanted. Indeed the TUC had commissioned a study into the feasibility of a daily labour paper, and had even raised £2 million of the estimated £6.7 million needed, when the scheme was dropped in 1984.

Although both Brenda Dean and Tony Dubbins rejected the offer of Grays Inn Road, they did add that if redundancy money were added as well the offer would be seriously considered. Kinnock, campaigning in the Fulham by-election, was brimming with enthusiasm for the offer. But the acceptance of such an offer would be on the backs of the sacked workers. The number of strikers who could have been re-employed at Grays Inn Road would probably have been 1,000 at the very most. There was another problem as well. Although News International claimed the offer was worth £50 million, the technology at Grays Inn Road was old and new technology would have to be introduced - staffing levels and conditions fought for on the rest of Fleet Street would be non-existent.


All in all the whole fiasco was one big red herring, but for Murdoch it was a tactical victory at least - he had managed to regain some of the public opinion he had lost. But most dangerous of all for the strikers was the fact that the union leaderships were taking it all seriously.

"There is a sincere effort on both sides to find a solution" said Bill Miles, SOGAT national officer. A sell-out was in the air and it was going to be up to the activists to prevent it happening.

A week later Bruce Matthews of News International was telling a newspaper conference in Paris that in addition to the offer of Grays Inn Road, redundancy was to be offered to the sacked workers. Things weren't looking good.

THE NATIONAL RALLY

The following week saw the first national rally and march to Wapping on Sunday 5th April. It was originally planned to march to Trafalgar Square for the rally and it was only the intervention of the active pickets that persuaded the organisers to turn the march around and go from Trafalgar Square to Wapping itself. But even that couldn't stop the whole day from becoming a more or less waste of time. It was the wrong day and it was the wrong time. The organisers must have known that holding the march on a Sunday meant that people would have to leave early, especially if they had travelled a distance, and the timing meant that the march would arrive outside Murdoch's plant around 6pm - and the first papers wouldn't be coming out 9pm. A marvellous opportunity had been thrown away. The activists knew only too well that the strike wasn't going to be won by long and boring

WAPPING PICKET		No. 5999
	Name	
	Date	
	Description	
	Union	
	Signature	

★SOGAT★NGA★AUEW★NUJ★
**NATIONAL MARCH
& RALLY**

SUNDAY 6th APRIL 1986

IN SUPPORT OF PRINTWORKERS

★ **IN DISPUTE WITH MURDOCH** ★

Rally at Trafalgar Square 3·pm

**Speakers will include Brenda Dean-
Tony Dubbins-T.U. and Labour leaders**

**Followed by a MARCH to WAPPING
led by 6,000 SACKED PRINTWORKERS**

TRADE UNIONISTS & SUPPORTERS are OFFICIALLY

★★ **requested to give MAXIMUM support** ★★



speeches in Trafalgar Square and false promises of solidarity - it would be won by ordinary union members, ordinary working class men and women on the picket lines.

There had clearly been little mobilisation for the rally which numbered some 20,000. Printers in some areas weren't even told that there was a rally and Durham miners weren't informed about the change of venue. Other miners from Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire simply didn't see anything useful to be gained from marching around London. As one Silverwood miner put it: "Some miners came down to picket Wapping before and were told they weren't welcome. They didn't see the point of coming down today just to march around London. The unions have done nothing to change their minds".



The rally itself was a succession of fighting speeches full of the usual empty rhetoric. Norman Willis got the reception he deserved when he was booed and hissed throughout his speech by printers, miners and other trade unionists. The miners, after all, could not so soon forget his disgusting betrayal of their courageous fight. The speeches at Wapping were a little better, due mainly to the appearance of Arthur Scargill who was warmly welcomed by the pickets. "If there was any justice" he told them, "these people in blue uniforms would be going into that building to arrest Rupert Murdoch".

As was foreseen, by about 9.30pm the ranks had thinned out and the police moved in. A line of horses appeared across the Highway just outside the 'Old Rose' pub and suddenly charged east up the Highway to the Wapping Lane exit. This effectively cleared the road, but when they charged back down for no apparent reason, tempers started to flare. Then, as so often before, the riot squads suddenly appeared and started chasing people along the pavement. Some pickets ran into the nearby churchyard and were followed by the police thugs who, away from the glare of TV cameras, knocked them to the ground and started truncheoning them. The police brutality was totally unwarranted as the lorries had already come out at Wapping Lane.

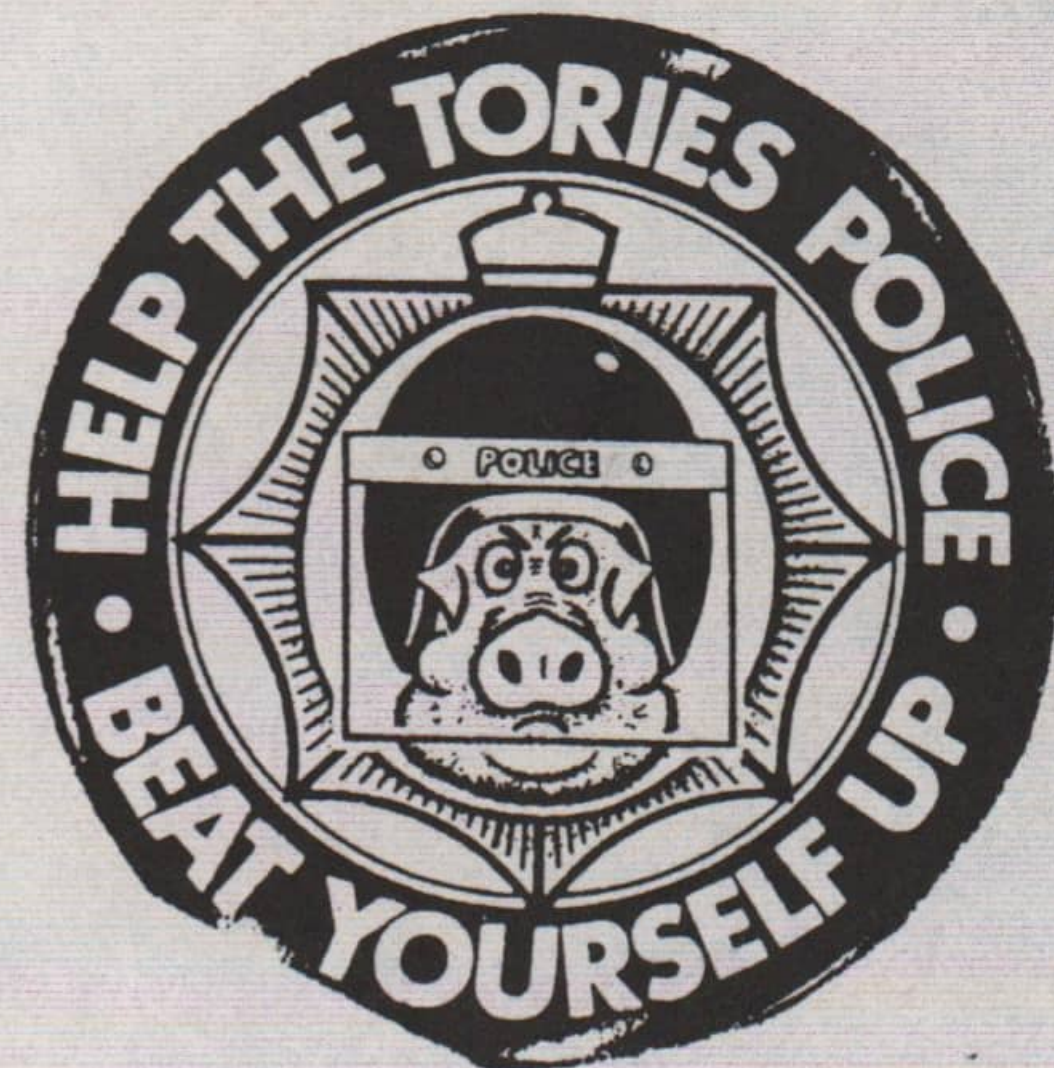
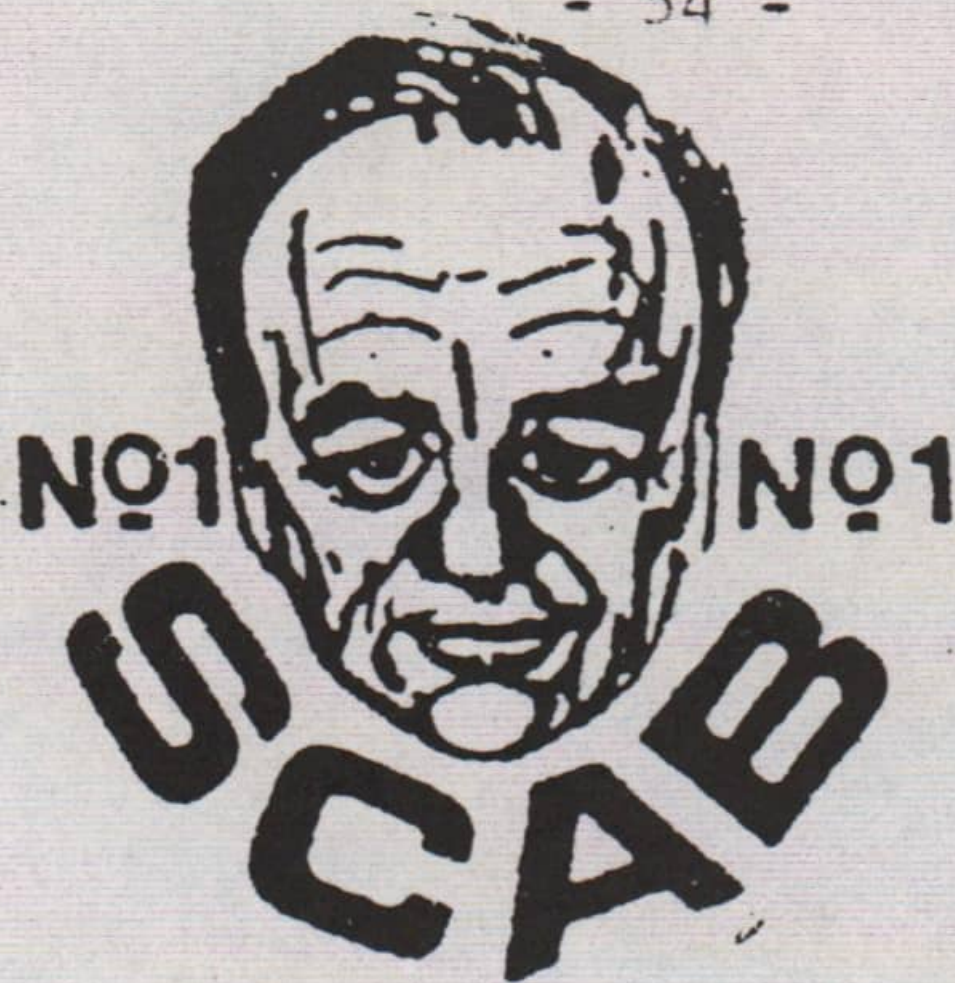
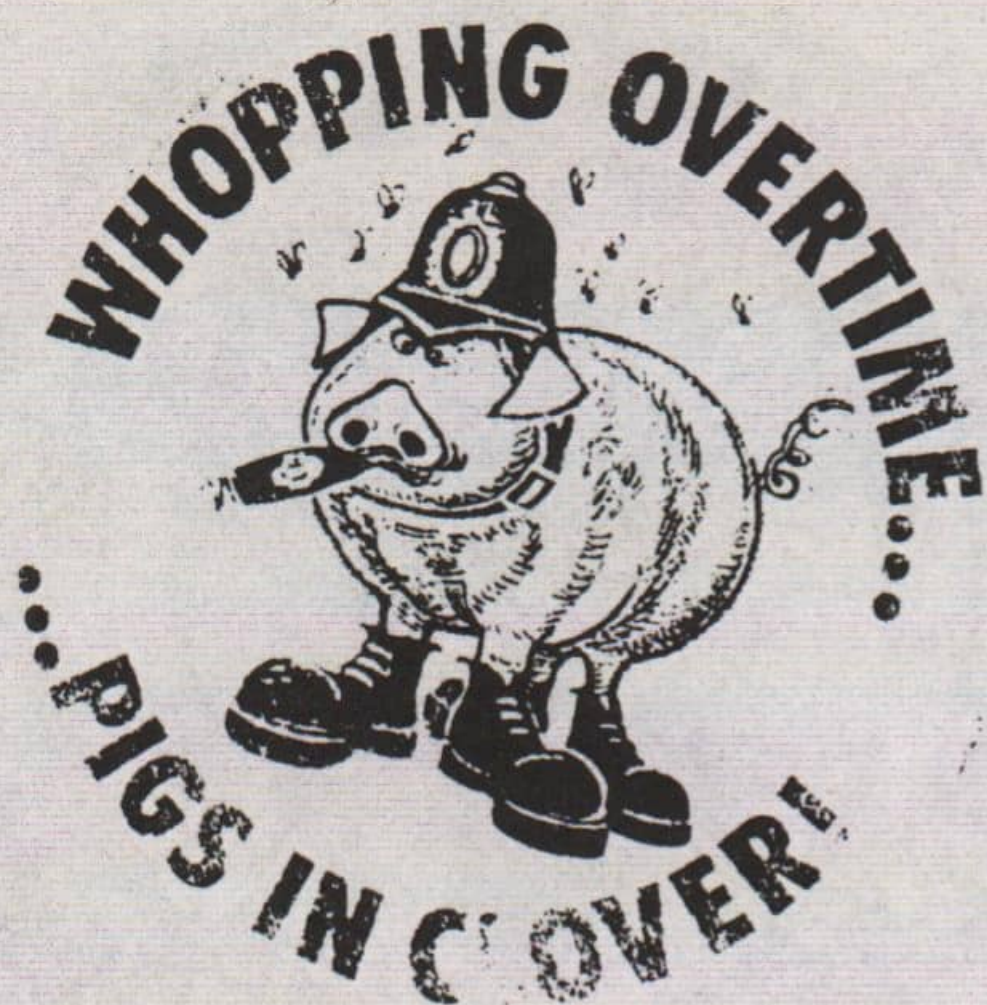
As if to add insult to injury, that evening for the second time running, print union officials on the rest of Fleet Street were doing nothing to prevent the

setting and printing of 2 page spreads in many national newspapers. These spreads were 'advertisements' from News International and attacked the striking printers.

PICKETS TAKE THE MAIN GATE

On the morning of Friday 25th April pickets, led by SOGAT women strikers, managed to achieve what weeks of rotten organisation and leadership had failed. At 6.30am that morning the number of pickets in Wellclose Street grew in size in response to the news that the scab journalists were meeting inside Wapping. By 9 o'clock the pickets numbered some 500 - 600, and with only a few police present there was nothing to stop them simply marching across the road and down Virginia Street to the main gates. In all about 400 pickets blocked the main gate completely preventing anything from entering or leaving. An armoured scab coach was surrounded by the crowd before making a hasty retreat along Pennington Street. It took half an hour before the police could clear a way through the pickets, but they stood their ground despite the pleadings of their own officials. It was only when police reinforcements arrived that the pickets retreated. But by acting on their own initiative they had made the scabs prisoners inside the plant, something the officials should have been attempting to do long before.





CHAPTER FIVE

"IT WAS MORE LIKE CHILE"

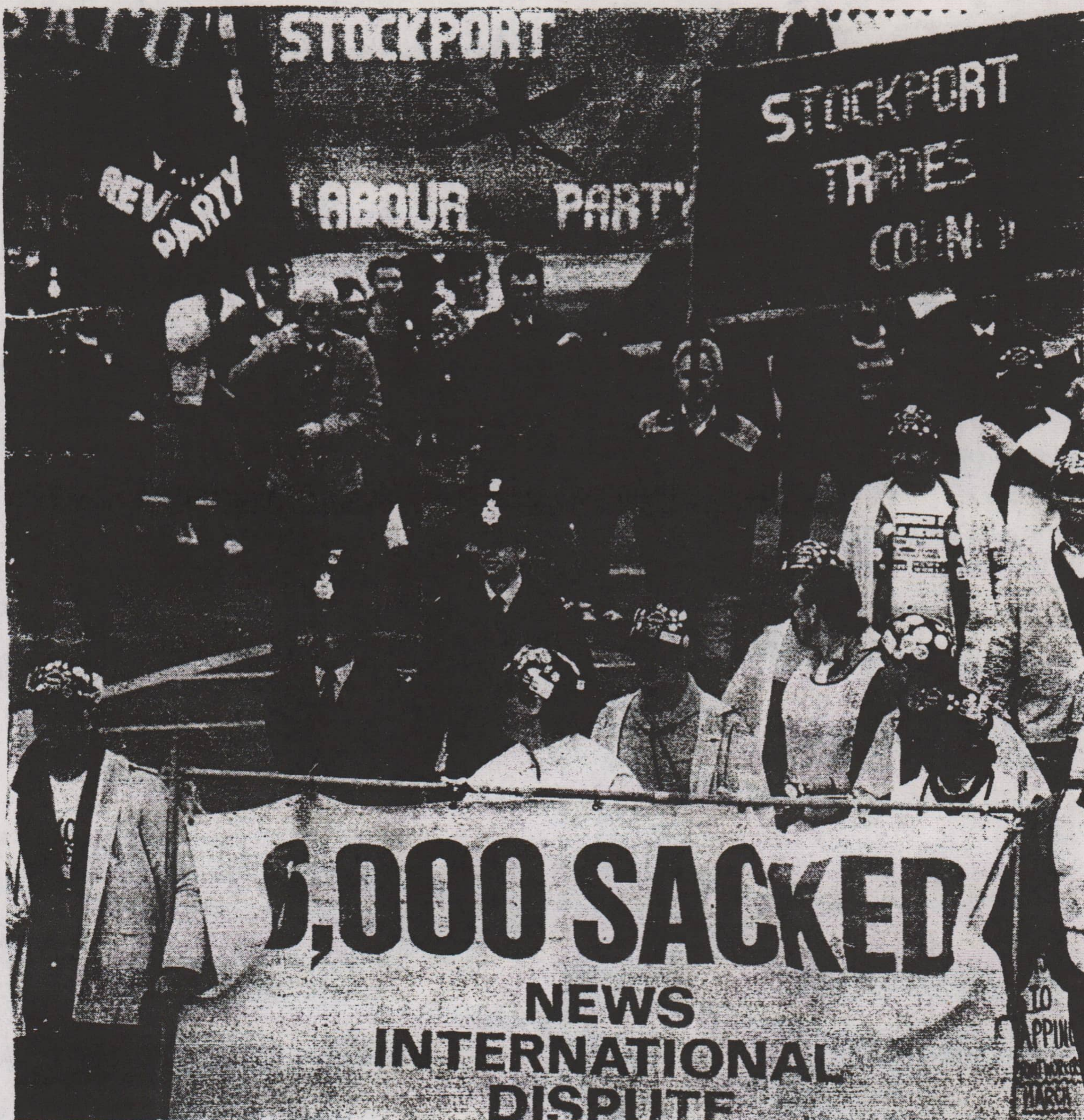
Thursday 1st May saw another magnificent display of solidarity at Wapping and from the police a foretaste of what was to come two days later. Banners on the march from Tower Hill included those of engineers, civil servants, postal workers, railway workers, builders, furniture workers and dockers. When the march reached Wellclose Street there was a rally with speeches from Ken Cameron of the Fire Brigades Union, John Prescott from the Parliamentary Labour Party, Ben Rubner of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades union, Ron Leighton MP and Jimmy Knapp of the National Union of Railwaymen who pledged that: "No railway worker will move any newspapers produced by Murdoch".

After the rally the police brought out the horses and the short shield PSU's to launch an unprovoked attack on the pickets. It was to turn out to be a dress rehearsal for tactics on the coming May 3rd demonstration. One eyewitness described what happened: "The police in the riot gear had us all pinned up against the fence. They were using their horses to force people onto the pavement and then the riot police would just have a go at people, using their round shields to hit people. And they reckon they're impartial. If anyone believes that they want to come down here and watch them. They go out of their way to hurt people and they love every minute of it". One senior ambulanceman present said he had never seen that kind of police violence before.

But for pickets and police alike Saturday 3rd May was going to be the big one. And for sheer brutality and sickening violence it was to surpass everything seen in the previous 14 weeks on the picket line at Wapping.

MAY DAY MASSACRE

Saturday 3rd May was the day the Printworkers March for Jobs was to reach Wapping from Glasgow and Ashington. It was to be a celebration both of their



efforts and of May Day. Just before 10pm that evening the 50 marchers, resplendant in their yellow jackets and black baseball hats, arrived at the head of the march from Tower Hill outside Murdoch's plant, to be met by another march coming down the Highway from Glamis Road. In all 10,000 people were converging on the Highway, a brass band was playing and the marchers from Glasgow sang songs they had composed themselves. There was a definite carnival atmosphere that evening - but then things changed dramatically.

Some of the pickets started pulling back the crash barriers at the top of Virginia Street, and two smoke bombs were set off, sending plumes of orange smoke billowing into the night air. The response of the police was immediate and unnecessary. As Chris Robbins, Secretary of SOGAT London Clerical Branch put it: "That (the smoke bomb) in no way justified Mr. Rupert Murdoch's private army in blue wading into the crowd in such an indiscriminate way". This view was echoed by Tony Benn, one of the speakers that evening: "Even if there was a small smoke bomb, to spend

hours beating up everyone in sight was wholly unjustified". But did this smoke bomb in fact come from the demonstrators? In a letter to the 'Wapping Post' in June 1986, NUPE area officer Mack R. Norton claimed "I am.....convinced that the signal for that charge was the red smoke flare which was set off by the police and not, as they claimed, thrown at the police. I believe this because I was within ten feet of that flare. It was not, in my view, thrown from the crowd".

As soon as the smoke bombs went off 20 mounted police galloped out of Virginia Street onto the Highway and charged up and down sending the crowd running in all directions. No sooner had the horses started riding people down than the short-shield PSU's appeared and charged the crowd in wedge formation. But there was a difference this night. "On other nights the riot police have attacked a few people and hit people with their shields. But tonight was different, they had their truncheons drawn and they went into the crowd lashing out at anyone within reach. Men, women, kids - . no-one was safe. They were out to injure and maim and their orders had obviously come from the top. It wasn't just a few officers out of control, it was a deliberate strategy. It was naked class war, only one side was completely defenceless".(SOGAT picket).

The response from the crowd to such deliberate police provocation was a hail of



missiles intended to slow the advance of the police cavalry. "For 14 weeks we've been harrassed, arrested, attacked and beaten up by riot police and ridden down by horses. Tonight things were different - the police didn't have it all their own way, tonight we started to fight back. What would you do if you saw your mates and your family getting their heads cracked open? It makes me sick to hear Kinnock and Willis condemning the violence, they want to come down here and see the treatment our people are getting. Of course we're going to fight back" (NGA picket).

With police horses galloping the length of the Highway and the short shield PSU's truncheoning everyone in sight, the demonstrators were forced to retreat up Wellclose



Street and into Wellclose Square. This was a traditionally 'safe' area and here the pickets were no threat whatsoever to either the police or the plant, but even here they weren't safe. By 10.20pm the Highway was clear and the mood of the crowd had calmed considerably. Up in Wellclose Square the rally was about to start with the first speaker Bill Gillespie, SOGAT Glasgow Branch Secretary. No sooner had he begun his speech than mounted police and short shield riot police began pouring up Wellclose

Street from the Highway. Their reason for this action they later claimed, was that missiles had come from that direction. If indeed missiles were thrown they were few and far between and in no way necessitated what happened next.

"Mind your backs, they've got horses down there" went the cry from the stewards as, without warning, the mounted police charged along the alley behind the union vans. It is difficult to understand their reasons for this charge as the only activity in that area had been people queuing for soup and tea, and pickets standing in small groups talking. Whatever the reason people ran for cover and jumped onto the railings to escape being trampled. Panic and confusion reigned. "I don't know what happened. As the horse went by I went down. There was no need for it. If you told people about this they wouldn't believe it" (Arthur Clements, Sunday Times).

Ron Leighton MP, another speaker that night, also described the scene: "After a pause, and completely unnecessarily, there were further cavalry charges. Then, most inexplicably of all, with the people penned into the cul-de-sac, a large force of riot police, with helmets and visors, short shields and truncheons appeared opposite Wellclose Street. For a few minutes they did a sort of war-dance, rather like footballers coming out onto the field. With absolutely no provocation and absolutely no warning, they made a charge in a V-formation into the people knocking everybody flying with truncheons and shields. Police were keeping people penned in for hours and repeatedly and violently baton charging them. If that had happened in Poland or South Africa it would have been reported in terms of outrage". These police charges continued for the next few hours at regular intervals and most people there that night would remember it for years to come.

"It was like a battlefield. It reminded me of those old films of medieaval battles, complete with cavalry charges, foot soldiers and bodies all over the place".
(NUR member)

"I've never seen anything like it in my life. It's hard to believe it was happening on the streets of London in 1986 - it was more like Chile".(SOGAT member)





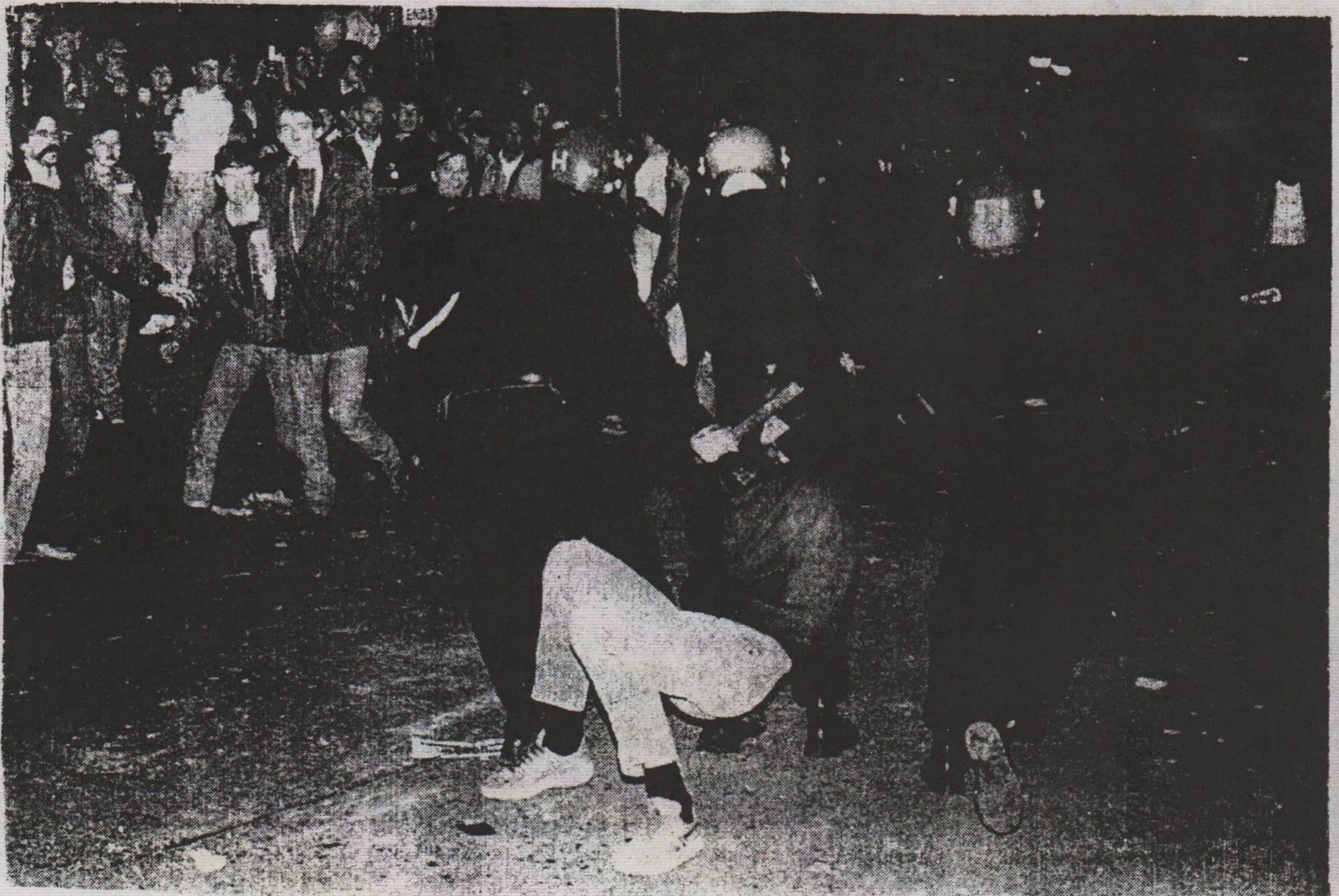
"I saw one mounted policeman pulled off his horse and knocked on the ground. I never thought I'd say it, but, I had no sympathy for him. It's bastards like him who've been riding down ordinary, decent men and women for the last 3 months. He deserved all he got". (SOGAT picket)

"The riot police were up by the SOGAT caravans, lashing out indiscriminately at people with their truncheons. There was an elderly couple just standing there and these police just started laying into them. There was about five police and they were just kicking and punching and there was blood all over. The miners were right about the police all along, it was terrible - and we're expected to respect them? Never, not after what I've seen at Wapping". (NUPE member)

"It was an exercise in intimidating people not to go picketing". ('Times' printer)

"I saw a 15 year old boy hit right in his face with a baton. A 12 year old boy with him had to be snatched away or they would have had him too. The horses were charging on the pavement forcing women and children against the fence and the riot police were forcing people against the horses". (Bob Law, NUR London Transport)

"The riot squads behave like Japanese banshee groups. It is a ritualised form of inflicting pain without killing people. I still can't believe what I saw there that night. When I first went down that Highway I was a moderate. I was an SDP supporter. I didn't agree with paying the unions NUM levy. What I have seen and experienced down at Wapping has convinced me that the militants were right. They have turned me into a militant". (Tim Hennessy, SOGAT 'Sunday Times')





"The shocking behaviour of the police, who constantly attacked the crowd, many of whom were women and children, was nothing short of barbaric. They were completely out of control and seemed to enjoy what they were doing. The impression that this will leave on the minds of young people is unthinkable". (NALGO member)

"I am not a printworker but a middle-aged deputy head teacher of a primary school who now finds it very difficult to instil into children a respect for the police after my experience at Wapping".

Through the long hours of the night the charges continued with the PSU's working in shifts, being replaced with new squads every 15 minutes. The whole thing seemed surreal. The riot squads carried powerful arc lamps, used to pick out pickets for the snatch squads. These lights also had the added bonus of having a spoiling effect on any photos or film shot. Indeed the media itself wasn't spared from the carnage. Riot squads attacked a BBC camera crew, smashing their lights while they were filming police charges, and two members of an ITN crew were hospitalised by a PSU.



One of the police charges took place while Tony Benn was addressing the crowd from the platform in Wellclose Square. While he was speaking about 50 riot police poured across from the dark at the other side of the park and surrounded the platforms with truncheons drawn. It was at this time that picket Tony Blackmore who had previously suffered two heart attacks, collapsed after being hit by the police. Tony Benn called across for first aid and, according to David Rose and Patrick Wintour writing in the 'Guardian', "A nurse shouted from behind police lines to be let through to the prostrate man. A policeman swore at her from behind his visor".

Although countless pickets were injured, some quite seriously, the police refused to allow ambulances through their lines. And even those lucky enough to get to an ambulance were not free from police attacks. Alan Sedgewick, a printer batoned during a horse charge, told of how police smashed the windows of the ambulance taking him to hospital.

Despite the rising number of injuries, police still kept the demonstrators penned into the cul-de-sac and none were allowed to leave or even go to the toilet. All this time the violence continued. Some pickets overturned cars and pushed a skip into the road to act as barricades to stop the police charges. The police response was to bring out an armoured fork-lift truck driven by a policeman in full riot gear. Up at Glamis Road, just before the scab lorries emerged at 12.45am, a police helicopter appeared on the scene and hovered 20 feet above the pickets.

The casualties were horrendous - at least 90 pickets injured, 39 requiring hospital treatment. These included 24 head injuries, one eye injury, one

broken jaw, two leg injuries, one heart attack and two people suffering from severe shock. Undoubtedly there were many more injured that night, people who went home nursing their own injuries, and people simply too scared to go to the 1st aid vans.



According to Deputy Assistant Commissioner Wyn Jones, in charge of the police operation that night, the police sustained 175 injuries, 44 requiring hospital treatment. His description of 'unprotected' officers coming under a hail of missiles is nothing but pure fantasy. Jones claimed that the only reason for deploying mounted police and PSU's was because of the serious injuries being sustained by ordinary uniformed officers. But the facts of the evening show that claim to be utterly false. The mounted police were sent into the crowds within seconds of the smoke bombs going off at the top of Virginia Street. Certainly at that point no policemen were seriously injured. Likewise his assertion that his officers came under a barrage of missiles, forcing him to send in PSU's to root out the trouble makers, is a complete fabrication. The missile throwing, when it occurred, was in response to the repeated charges of the mounted police, and not vice-versa.

To back up his claims Jones later displayed an array of lethal looking weapons including lumps of concrete, petrol bombs, steel bars and iron railings, and stated: "The police had been the victims of a determined and undeniably pre-planned attempt by many people to inflict as serious injuries as possible on unprotected officers". But what does Jones actually mean by 'unprotected officers'? Certainly not the mounted police with their NATO style helmets, or the PSUs with their shin pads, groin boxes, helmets, truncheons and riot shields weighing up to 15lbs. The people who were unprotected were the pickets. In one assumption Jones is at least partially correct - there was a determined and pre-planned attempt to inflict serious injury on as many as possible. Only it came from the police and was directed towards the pickets.

Even Brenda Dean, obviously shaken by what she saw that night, was moved to condemn the police: "The police have conducted a riot. There was no warning the police would make charges like this".

Assistant Commissioner Colin Sutton of Scotland Yard felt compelled to write to all police stations. His letter included the following statement: "War hardened veteran photographers are refusing to go on assignments in case they are assaulted

by Metropolitan police officers".

And along the Thames in the House of Commons the events of May 3rd drew two very different responses. Margaret Thatcher stated: "I saw the reports about the activities last Saturday night outside Wapping. I can only totally and utterly condemn them - they were disgraceful". The other view came from Tony Benn who was actually present that evening and saw what really happened: "I saw scenes taking place within two miles of this House that I have never seen before in this country and that I hope not to live to see again".



CHAPTER SIX

"IT'S LIKE A POLICE STATE DOWN HERE NOW"

To the residents of Wapping itself Murdoch's new plant was initially welcomed. The docklands are one of London's most depressed areas with high levels of unemployment, so the prospect of new jobs couldn't be ignored. Only these jobs didn't materialise.

When News International's proposals to move to Wapping were made known in 1978, they were seen as part of a plan to revitalise the East End, an area decimated by the closure of the docks. The Tories destroyed all those hopes of revitalisation in 1981 and instead set up the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) who subsequently forgot all prior schemes and instead encouraged a free-for-all for developers. The LDDC itself has its members appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, it meets in secret and publishes no minutes. Its powers of land acquisition are sweeping and in its first four years of existence it spent more than £250 million with no accountability whatsoever. Unemployment within the LDDC's area was around 30% in 1986, and had in fact risen since the Corporation's inception. This is hardly surprising considering that the LDDC has no strategy for employment or training. The Corporation spends millions of pounds each year propagating the myth that new jobs are appearing all over the docklands. But these 'new jobs' are non-existent, in many cases because the businesses which are moving into the area already have existing workforces. The Dockland's 40,000 population have caught on to the LDDC's con trick - there are no new jobs, no services and no houses for them.

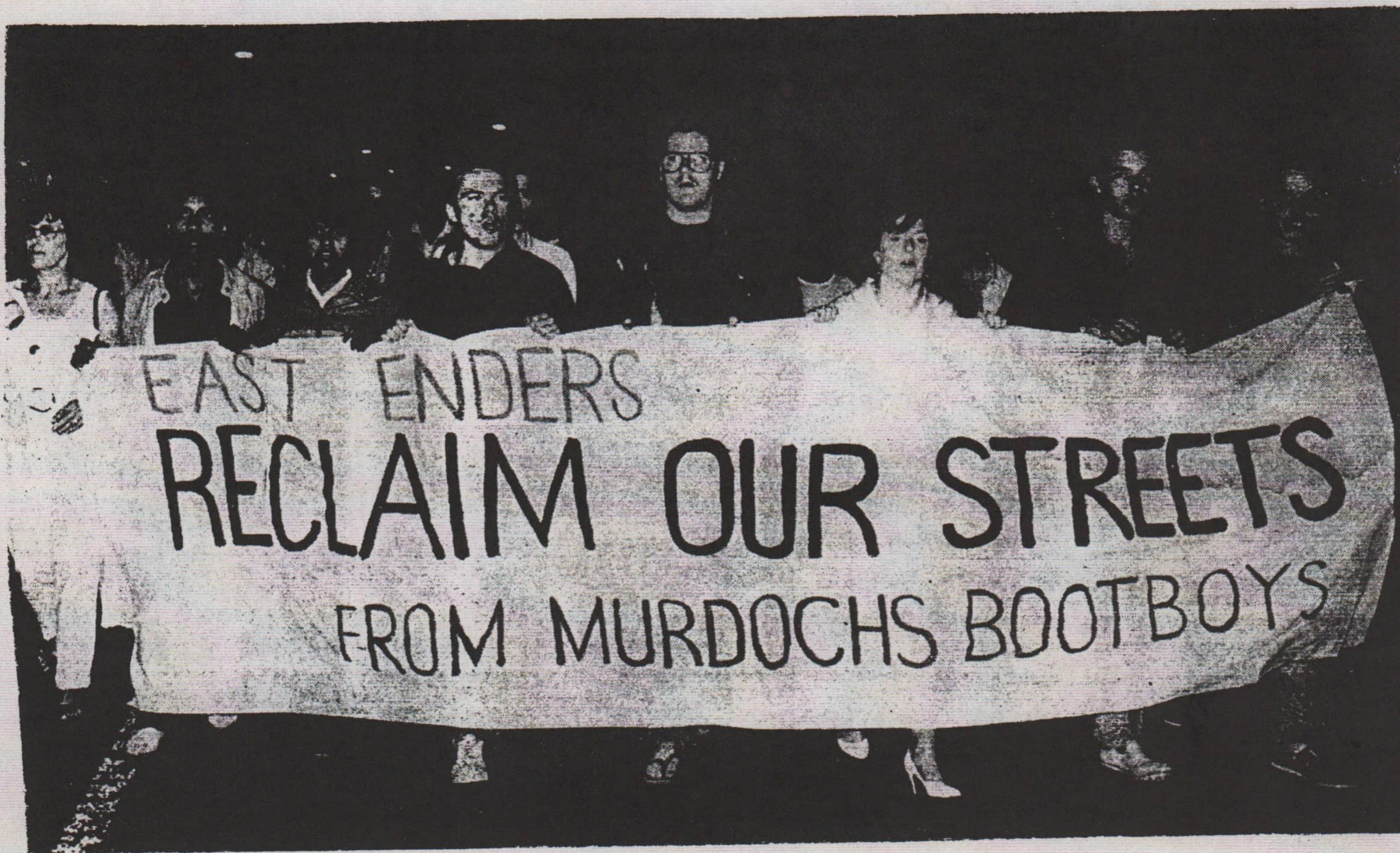
But the predominately working class community is not taking it all laying down. They are strongly organised through the Trades Council, the Docklands Forum and the Joint Docklands Action Group. Andy Coupland, a member of the latter organisation has stressed the need for strong links between the people of the area and the workers: "The fight to keep the docks was long and bloody, and close alliances were forged between the people who lived in the area round the docks. This is hardly surprising - many of them worked there themselves, or in firms related to imports. Now that the docks have closed it is even more important to rebuild that contact between the local people and the workforce moving into the area, especially if, like the print, the industry is facing an attack to remove jobs, union influence and the rights of working people".

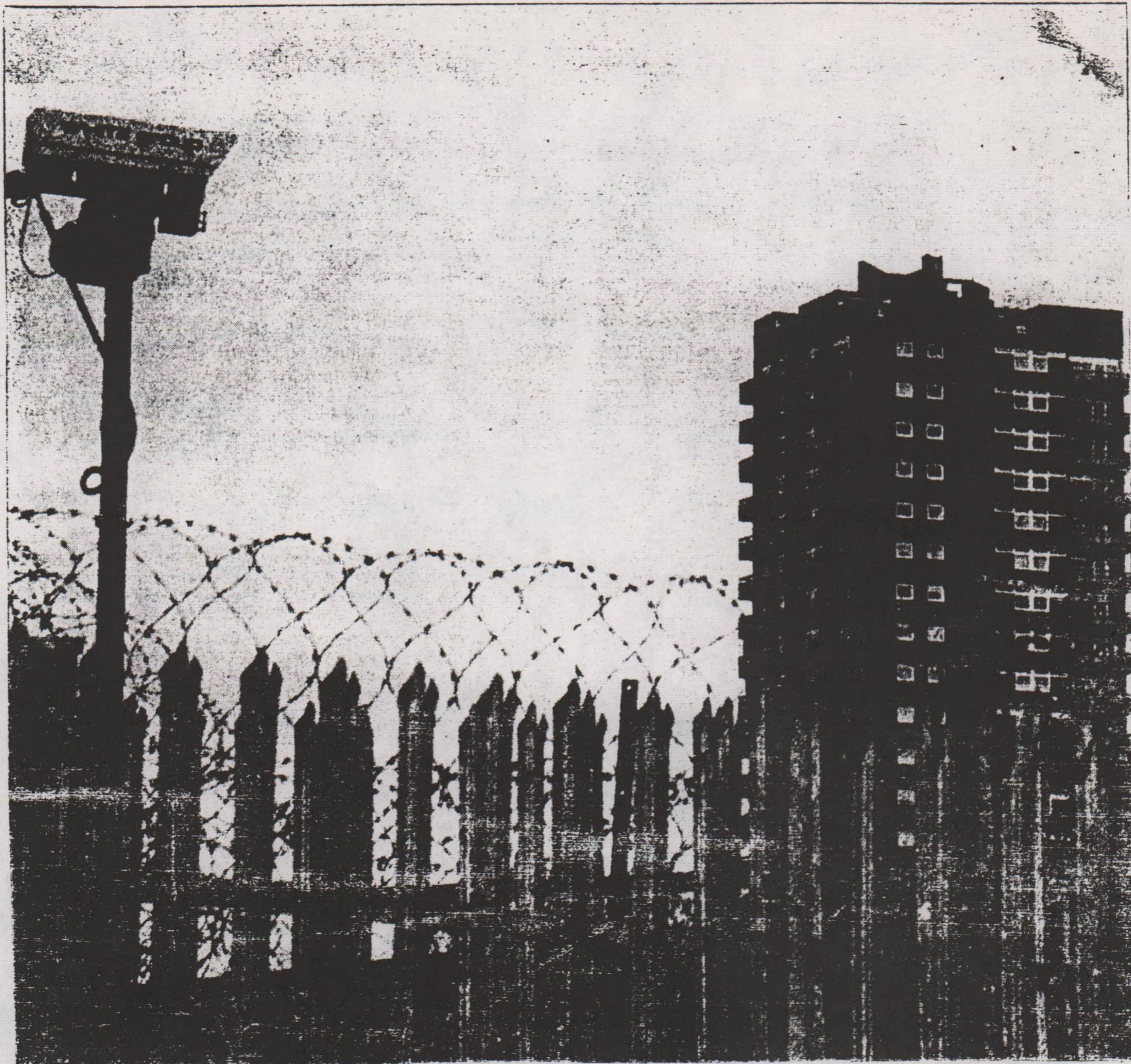
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As the strike progressed support for the printers from the Wapping residents started to grow. The people of Wapping found themselves living under a virtual state of seige as thousands of police moved into the area. As one resident, Kevin McGeown said: "This is a built up area and you've got juggernauts piling through at all hours. It should be a breach of the peace, but it's like a police state down here now".

At 6.30pm on Saturday 15th March 1986 around thirty tenants marched up Thomas More Street and into the Highway chanting "lorries out of Wapping". The march had planned to turn right down Virginia Street to present a petition to News International at the main gates to the plant and then march along Pennington Street, the road which runs from the main gate parralell to the Highway. But on reaching the top of Virginia Street the residents were stopped by police 3 rows deep, backed up by mounted police. Eventually two residents in wheelchairs were allowed to present the petition amid cheering from the pickets across the road.

More and more residents started to turn up on the picket lines and helped in other ways, such as by providing food for the pickets during the day. The residents of South Quay Estate, nearest the plant, took out an injunction against News International under the 1974 Control of Pollution Act over the unacceptable noise levels. And of particular concern to the residents was the fact that due to the success of picketing on the Highway police were routing the artics through Wapping's narrow streets, resulting in at least two people being knocked down in the first few weeks of the dispute alone.





There are only four roads out of Wapping and it was these roads that the police blocked every Saturday night trapping Wappings 3,500 residents either inside or outside the area. Many residents have recounted tales of the numerous times they had been stopped by the police while simply trying to get home. From the start of the strike taxis had been unable to get through to the area and Wappings only bus service, the 22A, stopped at Aldgate, some 2 miles short.

Every Saturday saw some 1,800 police officers in the area, including the riot squads and mounted section. For an area that had seen very few police officers in the past this was something of a shock. One resident likened the East End community to a mining village during the pit strike. There was an ever present feeling that the area was a military camp under seige. Many of the locals were taken aback and incensed by the weekly acts of police violence against the pickets. Life-long held respect for the police turned to disgust in a matter of weeks. The people of Wapping saw for themselves the true face of Britains policeforce in the 1980's and what they saw blew away all pretence of 'impartiality'. Mary Hooper, treasurer of St. Patrick's social club, epitomises those whose admiration

An End to Sterile Areas - Streets Safe from Murdochs Juggernauts - No Scab Labour in Wapping

ONE YEAR OF OCCUPATION



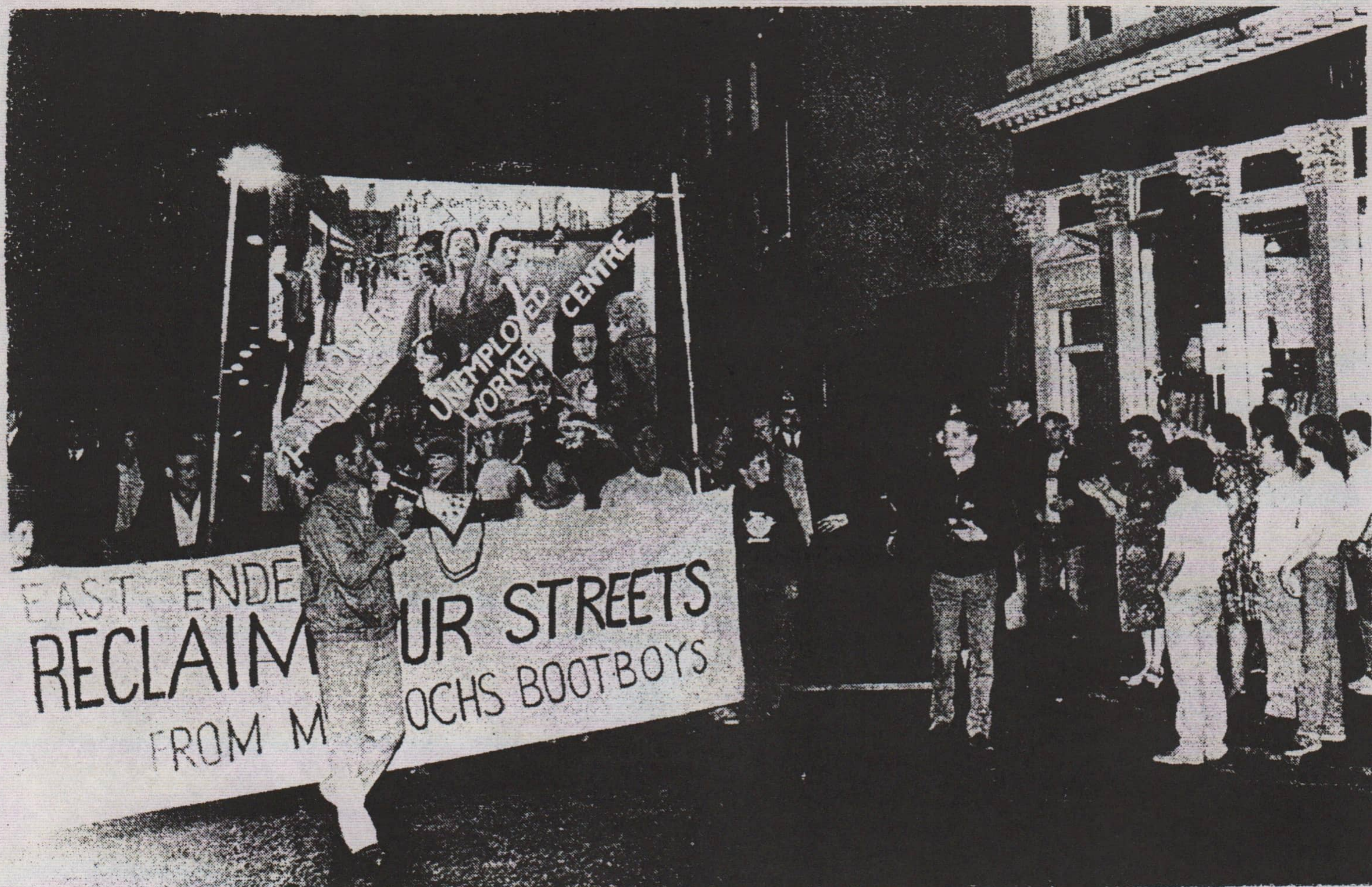
MARCH & RALLY
BY
LOCAL RESIDENTS
IN SUPPORT OF SACKED PRINTWORKERS
GLAMIS ROAD, WAPPING E1
8.30pm
SATURDAY, 24TH JANUARY



for the police had been shattered: "I don't think they're acting fairly. In the first instance I would have seen them as trying to protect us. But when you see the streets that are blocked off over a mile away from here and when you see fifty of them march outside your home every Saturday night at one in the morning I would say that now they have gone too far".

The Association of Wapping Organisations had seen 3½ years of effective opposition to heavy lorries in Wapping destroyed almost overnight. The AWO were opposed to an arterial road which would have cut the community in two. They successfully fought the scheme, first against Tower Hamlets Borough Council and then against the LDDC. Pat Hanshaw, chairperson of the AWO, summed up their feelings: "The police say they're protecting us from the pickets. But we don't need protection from them. The pickets haven't done anything to us. They put leaflets through our doors apologising for the disruption and have donated music centre to the old age pensioners. But we don't get any apologies from the police, each time they route Mr. Murdoch's lorries through the narrow streets around our homes. The irony is that we have spent 3½ years trying to stop heavy lorries going through the community only to find now that the police are doing just that".

By the beginning of June it was estimated that over one hundred residents had been arrested since Murdoch moved into the area, this was despite promises from the



• police to co-operate with the people of Wapping. Anger was building up among the residents, especially the younger ones, resulting in more arrests. As one of the residents put it: "Wapping has become a police state since this multi-millionaire moved to our doorstep and we have had enough of living in a state of seige". The residents endured an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Their children were kept awake by the scab artics and their police escorts thundering through the area in the early hours of the morning. On Saturdays and Wednesdays Wapping was effectively cut off from the outside world by police roadblocks. Entry to the area was allowed only at police discretion. Likewise both the Wapping and Shadwell tube stations were heavily policed.

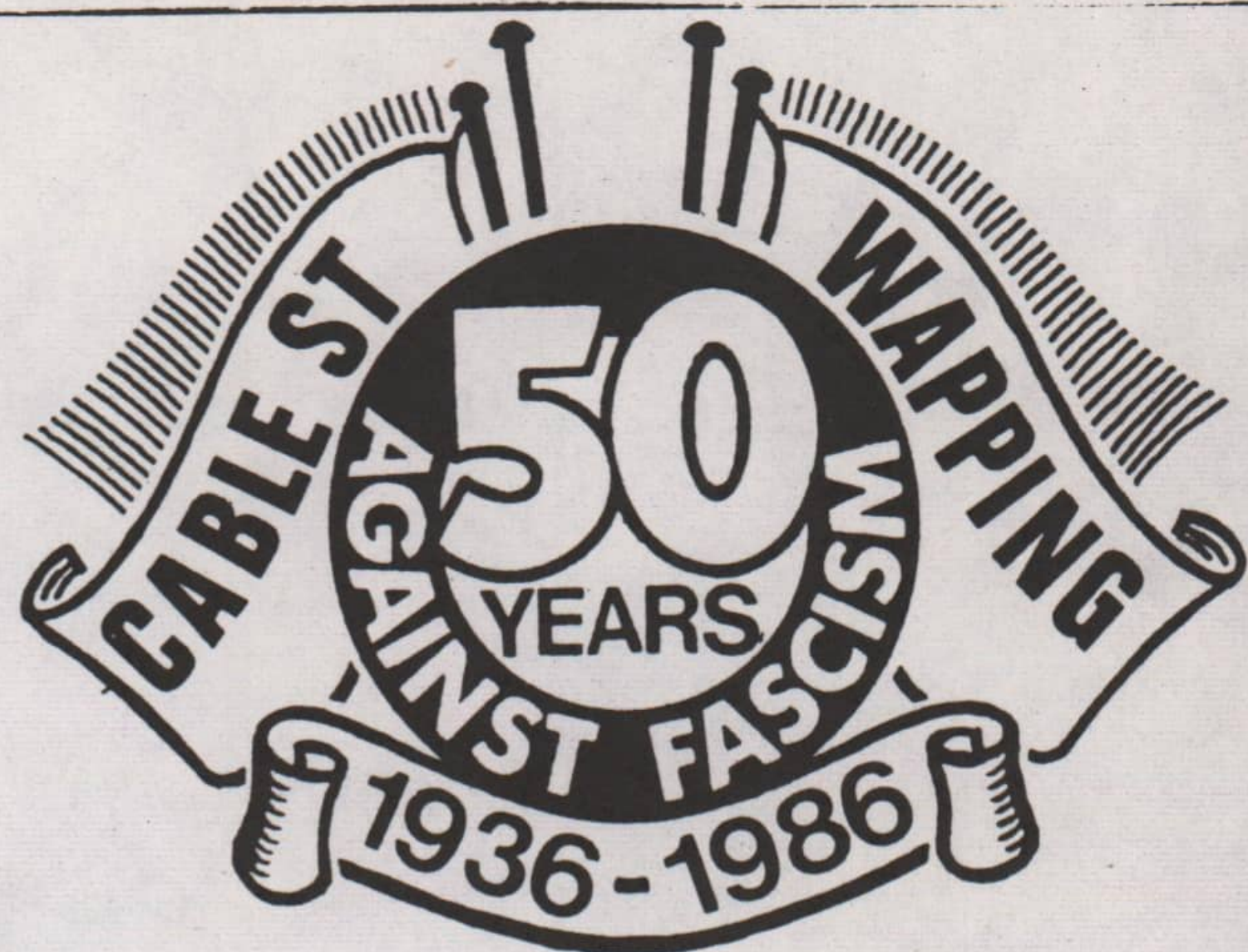
One of the worst cases of the police's attitude was contained in a dossier compiled by Tower Hamlets Trade Council. It was the case of a young black woman with four children, one of them a small baby, whose taxi was stopped by the police in freezing weather, and was made to walk home. But, as the report says: "Meanwhile the police were waving Daimlers and Bentleys letting posh visitors to St. Katherine Street pass unchecked through the barrier". The police knew who their loyalty was to - the wealthy. That had always been the case right from their inception. The 'peelers' were created to protect property, not fight crime, and things haven't changed. There is a myth that the police fought crime and protected the citizen, but that now things are changing. But that has never been true, the police have always been

there to protect the ruling elite, to keep the working class in their place and to smash any threat to the state. Those who think the use of baton charges and mounted police are a new development should look at the selfsame tactics used on the hunger marchers of the 1930's or, earlier, at the attacks on demonstrators in Trafalgar Square in the 1880's. Perhaps a better known example took place just a few hundred yards north of the Highway

in Wapping when the people of the East End stopped a march by the British Union of Facists in Cable Street in 1936. As a result the anti-facists were subjected to police cavalry charges and baton weilding foot officers.

Fifty years seperated the battle of Cable Street from the Wapping strike but the police tactics, if a little updated, remained essentially the same. There is a memorial in Cable Street commemerating the spot where Mosely and his blackshirts were stopped. What the printers were fighting for was another memorial on the Highway which would read 'Murdoch was stopped here'.

The weeks of police occupation and its effect on the people of Wapping and their children was summed up by resident Mike Jempson in the 'Wapping Post': "Their (the police) very presence has become offensive. One night last week two mounted police took their horses onto the pavement for almost half an hour, forcing pedestrians to walk in the road. Who do we complain to about that? For six months now we have been subjected to virtual house arrest at weekends. Nobody wants to visit us. Nobody wants to go out. It is difficult to concentrate on anything when you are surrounded by police.....These police are certainly not here to protect us. We even have to explain why we are crossing the road to go to the pub. And the kids are cute enough to see that they aren't like the friendly bobby who visits the school.....They have had a taste of the police state, and it is very bitter. Murdoch will have a lot to answer for when the final reckoning comes".



'THEY SHALL NOT PASS'

CHAPTER SEVEN

"WE FIGHT ON FOR JOBS AT WAPPING"

Many felt that the events of May 3rd would persuade SOGAT's National Executive which was meeting the following week, not to purge their contempt of court. After all, hadn't Brenda Dean told the rally that night "There will be no sell out"?

At the centre of the legal battle with Murdoch were the members of SOGAT's wholesale distributors in London. It was mainly their action in refusing to handle News International titles ('secondary action' the courts called it) that led to the sequestration of SOGAT's funds.

Murdoch had obviously anticipated problems with the distribution of his scab papers and had developed an alternative distribution system. This had entailed the granting of permission to TNT to expand the number of their depots around the country. On August 24th 1985 TNT had announced their intention to increase their number of lorries. The whole project of expansion was classified and known as "Project 800".

News International titles come to something like 30 - 40% of the London wholesale trades newspaper business, so the effect of the switch to TNT, and the refusal of SOGAT London wholesale members to handle the scab papers was proving disastrous. In a year it was estimated that John Menzies and W.H.Smiths (the big two London wholesalers) would lose £14 million and £22 million. The effect on the SOGAT members themselves was also high with redundancies and wage cuts.

But there was another worry for the wholesale traders. As Crispin Aubrey, writing in the 'Guardian', said: "There remains considerable scepticism, however, as to whether News International will ever return to the old system in the capital. One of the wider rumours is that Murdoch might even stretch his hand over the John Menzies wholesaling/retailing empire, thus achieving true vertical integration".

The picture outside London wasn't as good. Provincially the union was much weaker and most SOGAT members continued to handle the scab papers. But the ones to be most affected in the provincial distribution were British Rail. They were losing a third of their newspaper business, worth £9 million, to TNT. And so it was amid this scene that



sacked printworkers and London wholesalers alike looked apprehensively to SOGAT's meeting on 6th May. To Brenda Dean, whose heart had never been in the dispute it was to be an excellent opportunity to stab the wholesale members in the back and severely undermine the struggle of the sacked workers.

THE BETRAYAL

The SOGAT National Executive were to meet at 10am at Congress House, and strikers started to grow in numbers to lobby the meeting. Dean herself arrived long before 10 o'clock, no doubt in order to avoid having to face the strikers. Rumours were rife that the decision to purge the unions contempt had already been taken before the meeting even started. This is credible as SOGAT had already printed letters to be sent off to all strikers explaining why the Executive had decided to bow down to the court and purge the contempt. These letters were ready to be dispatched BEFORE the meeting at TUC headquarters. The strikers lobbying outside were, as usual, outnumbered by the police. The TUC had even told the boys in blue that the forecourt of Congress House was private property and the police were more than happy to move people off it.

When the news from the meeting eventually came it was short and to the point. SOGAT's NEC had backed down, 'new realism' reigned supreme. This treacherous act was greeted with disbelief and anger from the strikers. Carol Hall, deputy Mother of Chapel, Times Clerical compared it to ".....being punched in the

TNT DEPOTS - WHERE THEY ARE

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Tel.: (0454) 323323 Telex: 444571 BYFLEET Unit T 327, Brooklands Ind. Park, Oyster Lane, Byfleet, Surrey KT13 0YU. Tel.: (09323) 55155 Telex: 915801 CANNOCK Littleworth Road, Wimblebury, Cannock Staffs. WS12 5HV. Tel.: (05438) 77251 Telex: 336726 CARLISLE Plot 31, Peterfield Road, Kingstown Industrial Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 0EY. Tel.: (0228) 48881 Telex: 64270 DEESIDE Fourth Avenue, Deeside Industrial Park, Deeside, Clwyd CH5 2NR. Tel.: (0244) 821055 Telex: 61230 DURHAM Mercantile Road, Rainton Bridge Ind. Estate, Houghton Le Spring, Tyne and Wear DH4 5PH. Tel.: (0783) 849595 Telex: 53392 EXETER Lodge Trading Estate, Broadclyst Station, Exeter EX5 3DY. Tel.: (0392) 66888 Telex: 42642 GLASGOW Rughead Industrial Estate, Bellshill, Lanarkshire ML4 3JU. Tel.: (0698) 749565 Telex: 777337 HOUNSLOW Phoenix Way, Cranford Lane, Heston, Hounslow, Middlesex	Units 1 and 2, Cranford Way Industrial Estate, Tottenham Lane, Hornsey, London N8 9DG. 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stomach with a copper's truncheon like on Saturday". John Bloom of SOGAT's London Central Branch summed up the feeling of disgust from the activists: "The decision is a stab in the back for the strikers and our wholesale members".

In view of the unsurpassed brutality and violence witnessed on the picket line only 3 days previously, SOGAT's decision was hard to understand. It in effect meant that SOGAT members in the wholesale and NUR members who had been blacking the News International titles were now placed in a precarious position. In order to regain control of it's assets SOGAT had agreed to lift the blacking order issued to it's members in the wholesale trade. Their action henceforth would be considered unofficial and illegal. It was clearly an attempt by the NEC to de-escalate the dispute. Brenda Dean was effectively washing her hands of the whole affair, despite her empty promises to 'stand by our members'. She hoped that the decision of the NEC was the beginning of the end for the dispute. But the rank and file strikers had other ideas.

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Despite SOGAT's caving in over the purging of it's contempt, there was a magnificent display of the continued support for London wholesale members on Wednesday 7th May. About 1,000 people marched along the familiar route from Tower Hill to Wapping to be stopped at Virginia Street by lines of police blocking the Highway, supported by 10 horses half way down Virginia Street. The crowd stayed here until about 10.40 pm when the police cleared the road. Although there were no arrests, the tension among pickets and police was high. After all, most of the pickets had seen what the police had done the previous Saturday, and they were not going to forget or forgive. The demonstration that night was also a slap in the face for SOGAT's NEC. While the officials might want the whole thing over and done with, for the strikers the battle went on.

Two days later, the pickets scored a victory. Not at Wapping but in Fleet Street. Friday 9th May saw an early morning picket at the old 'Sun' building in Bouverie Street. There were still numbers of scabs going into Bouverie Street and there had been a picket there since the dispute began. From 7.30 am onwards the picket started growing until the pavements were crowded right up to Fleet Street. Just before 10 o'clock an impromptu march began behind a Fleet Street AUEW banner, taking the police completely by surprise. The pickets marched all way to the



Sun

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Workers in offices and factories throughout Britain are banning the Sun.

They are joining a massive campaign to show billionaire Rupert Murdoch that he can't sack 5,500 workers and get away with it.

The Sun is produced at Fortress Wapping in East London by people who have taken the jobs of the 5,500 print workers.

The men and women thrown out on the streets have spent half a life time producing the Sun, making Rupert Murdoch vast profits in the process.

They have turned down the offer of compensation terms and determined to win their **JOB**S back with your help.

DON'T LET THEM DOWN.

DON'T LET YOURSELF DOWN.

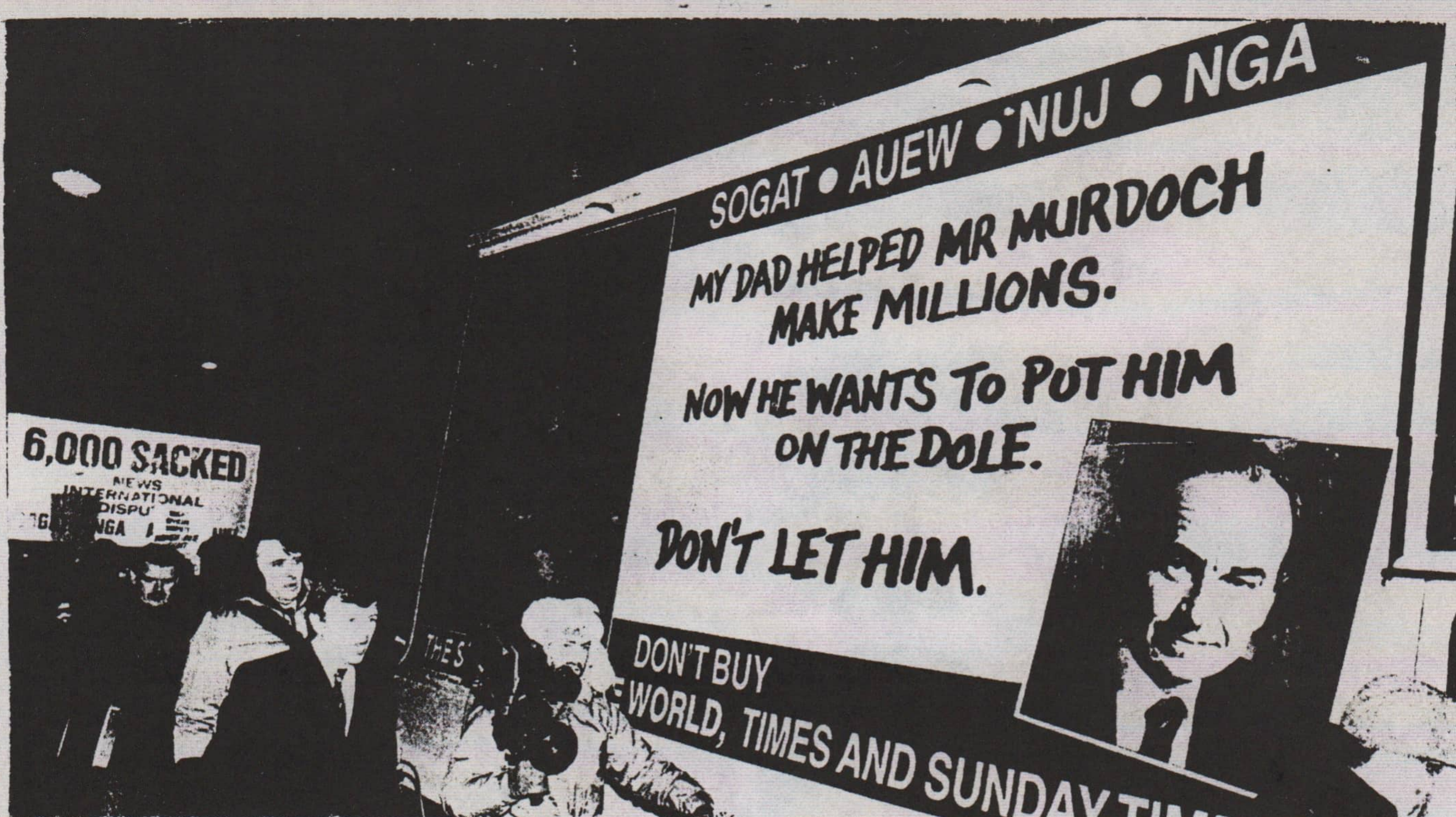
DON'T LET THE SUN INTO YOUR WORKPLACE.

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old 'Times' building on Grays Inn Road disrupting traffic en route. Here they stayed for just over an hour, much to the dismay of the scabs. Once again the pickets had organised themselves and been successful. As the 'Picket' newsletter put it: "It has reached the stage where pickets are escalating the fight by thinking and acting for themselves. Our hatred becomes harder, quicker and better aimed. Scabs and their defenders will burn in the heat of that anger".

MURDOCHS MUPPETS

For over 2 months Murdoch had been printing 100,000 copies of 'News of the World' at Portobello Press, Worthing, being unable to do so at Wapping. Week after week, local support groups and trade unionists had picketed the plant with little success. On Saturday 10th May, however well over 300 pickets turned up and caught the police completely by surprise.

A union official was allowed into the plant to speak to the drivers but was unable to persuade them not to cross the picket line. The lorries were held up for 2 hours, and when they eventually did emerge at 1.15 am their windscreens were smashed.

From Worthing the pickets then moved on to Surridge Dawson Wholesalers of Brighton. Once they had reached the depot a large compressor from a building site was pulled across the front entrance and the tyres were let down. When the local police eventually arrived they found 300 pickets manning this barricade, and despite attempts by a senior officer to persuade the crowd to disperse the pickets stayed put. They obviously had an unnerving effect on the few

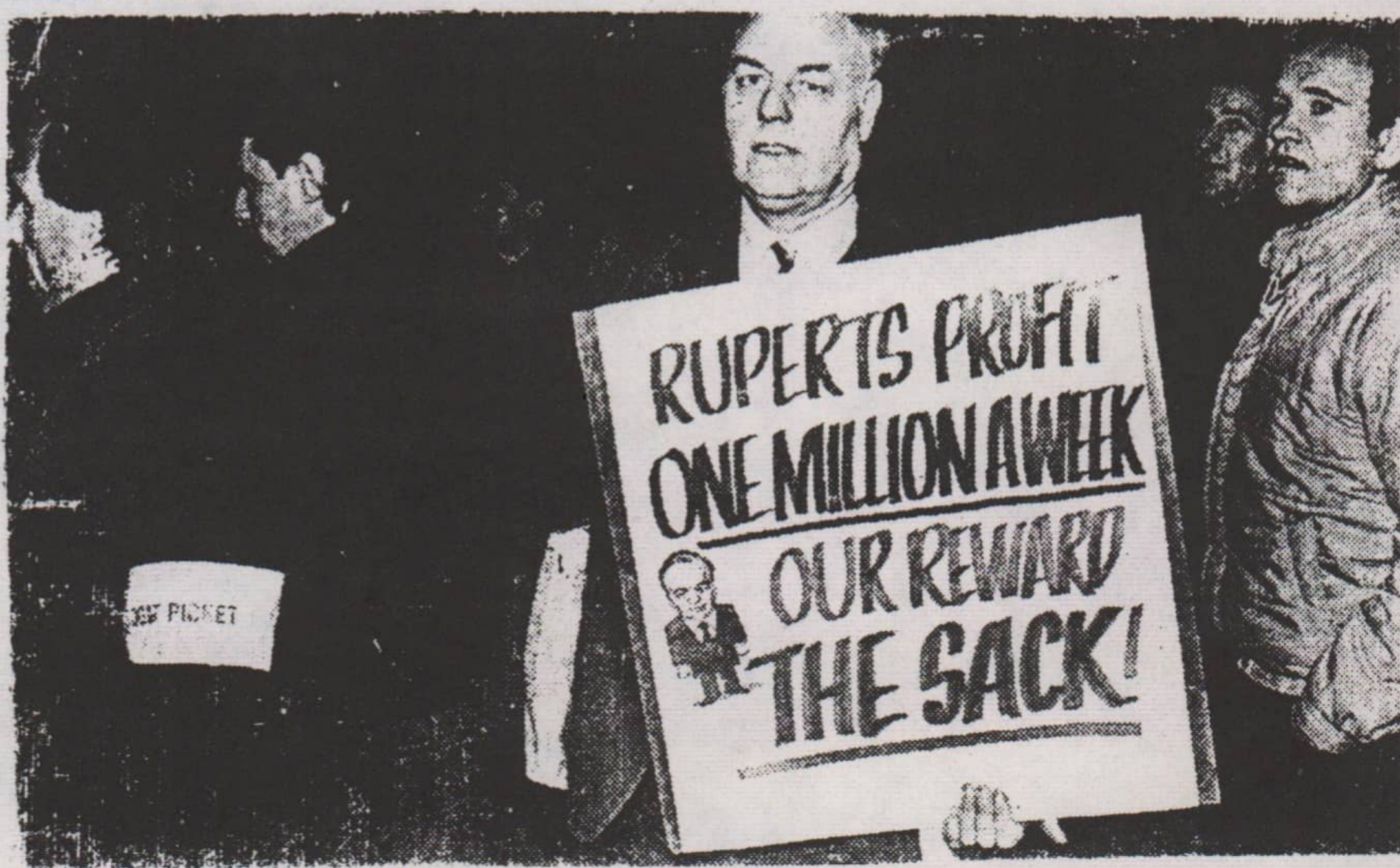
SOGAT scab drivers who turned up, as they promptly turned around and left. The pickets eventually departed about 6 am having successfully stopped anything leaving or entering.

If the Brighton police had difficulty in handling the pickets, their colleagues in the Met took a harder line, and despite all the assurances given by the police earlier in the week, both the mounted police and the riot squads were out in force again that very same evening up at Wapping. Just before 9 pm 5,000 people marched along the familiar route to Wapping. Many people were absent after the sickening police brutality of the previous Saturday, but others felt reassured there would be no repetition of such violence due to the agreement on policing worked out earlier that week between police and union officials. And indeed things remained fairly peaceful until about midnight. But then, without warning as usual, 10 horses charged west along the Highway, through the pickets, to the corner of Dock Street, followed 10 minutes later by another 5 mounted police, who blocked The Highway preventing access to Thomas More Street to the west. And sure enough after another 10 minutes a scab coach and 10 artics left via that exit.

There was relative calm for the next half hour, but then the riot squad appeared and charged up to Wellclose Square followed by 17 horses. Once again there was absolutely no reason for these charges. Chief Inspector Jerald Goodall later said he had deployed mounted and riot police reluctantly and only after they had come under a hail of missiles. The truth as usual, was very different. Pickets only started fighting back after continuous police attacks, arrests and injuries including one woman who was ridden down by the horses. A legal observer, quoted in 'Policing Wapping' a Police Monitoring and Research Group Briefing Paper, described what was happening:

"At about 12.30am a group of approximately 12 mounted officers equipped with riot helmets approached along the Highway from the east. At this point, 20 yards from the crowd, the pace of the officers increased to a trot and they rode towards and into the body of demonstrators who were trapped between the horses and the police line.

I saw people running in panic including a number of middle aged men and women who had difficulty in getting out of the way. Several people fell to the ground in the stampede. Having ridden through the crowd the horses were turned



and formed a picket in front of the original picket line. As they rode the final distance through the crowd I saw one or two missiles being thrown, most appeared to be plastic cups of coffee which people had been drinking."

The use of horses was in breach of the agreement reached by Brenda Dean with the police. One of the people present at that meeting had been chief marshal Michael Britton who that night found himself pulled to the ground and stood on by the police. It was obvious that the Metropolitan Police had never intended to keep their part of the bargain. To believe otherwise was foolish, and to even talk to the police was a betrayal of the men and women who had suffered at their hands on the picket line.

A few hundred yards down the road at the corner of Dock Street the riot police were yet again dishing out their own brand of 'justice'. David Hearst, writing in the 'Guardian', described the scene: "From the east came the familiar reflection of street lights flashing on the shields of an advancing line of riot police. The charge when it came was sudden. I saw one man truncheoned to the ground by four officers. He was dragged away, apparently unconscious." There was heavy fighting at Dock Street and it was there that most of the arrests took place. Dean's agreement with the police had lasted all of ten hours-and the police's increased hostility was clear for all to see. The final toll for the pickets was 41 arrested and at least 20 injured. The rank and file were paying a high price but their determination remained as strong as ever.

The following week was as busy as usual. On Monday 12th May many pickets travelled up to Scarborough to lobby the EETPU's annual conference. Not suprisingly they were prevented from getting anywhere near the conference centre itself by the police, acting on orders from scab Hammond. The printers did manage to speak to some of the rank and file electricians and recieved alot of support,



although there was little they could do to stop Hammond and the rest of their National Executive on their path to 'business unionism'.

Meanwhile back in the capital the picketing continued at Wapping, Grays Inn Road and Bouverie Street. The regular Wednesday night march was organised by SOGAT London Central Branch and attracted 800 people. Once again the pickets were stopped at the top of Virginia Street by two lines of police and mounted officers across The Highway, and the road was cleared by 11 o'clock.

That week also saw the imprisonment of NGA member Walter Dowie by Thames magistrates. He was jailed for seven days on charges arising out of a picket at Wapping on 15th March. Like the miners before them the printworkers were fast coming to the realisation that to fight for their jobs was a criminal activity under the Thatcher regime. Many pickets would end up in prison before the dispute was over, but when workers dared to fight they were always faced with the full brunt of the state. If the courts thought they could crush the fighting spirit of the working class by jailing workers they were gravely mistaken. The laws of the land are the laws of the ruling elite and when working people realise that the sooner they will inherit what is rightfully theirs.

On other fronts the Communist Party finally got round to expelling Chris Nawrat and Stanley Levinson, two CP members who also happened to be NUJ scabs at Wapping.

Saturday 17th May saw a change of tactics to try and stop the lorries - one which failed miserably. The idea was to block four of the exits used by the artics at 11pm. The march from Tower Hill, 1,500 strong, therefore consisted mainly of supporters. No one, unfortunately, had seen fit to tell them what was going on, with the result that many felt isolated, wondered where all the printers were and finally drifted away, dispirited.

Despite police roadblocks, most printers managed to get to their pre-arranged exits at 11 o'clock. Those at the eastern exits failed to stop the scabs, although a number of artics leaving via Glamis Road were bricked and forced to turn back. Lack of numbers and general disillusionment meant pickets were unable to do anything when a convoy of lorries and scab cars left by



London Region
NATIONAL GRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION

News International Dispute

MARCH & RALLY

SATURDAY 1 MARCH 1986

Assemble:
TRINITY SQUARE, TOWER HILL 6.30pm

March to:
KING EDWARD VII MEMORIAL PARK
FOR RALLY AT 8pm

Speakers:
Tony Dubbins General Secretary NGA
All Parish National Secretary NGA
Bill Beoroff London Region Secretary

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 1986

SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN IN PRINT WOMEN'S MARCH AND RALLY

Women in the print unions call on their sisters to support them in their fight for jobs and the right to belong to an effective trade union.

SATURDAY 8 MARCH

Assemble at 5.00pm, Lower Thames Street (Tower Hill end)
March moves off at 5.30pm. Rally at Wapping 6pm

Speakers include:
BRENDA DEAN, SOGAT ANN LILBURN, WAPC

"Let us the open streets of Wapping and up and down the river have crowd
solidarity: This comes of your not paying our husbands, and now your work is
solidarity, or done by hands like underpaid it was."
An extract from Samuel Pepys' Diary 1667

Sponsored by NGA, NGA, WAPC, SEPTIC, National Printers' Committee, Greater London Labour Party, National Committee

London Machine Branch SOGAT '82 RALLY & DEMONSTRATION

WEDNESDAY 5 MARCH 1986

Assemble Gough St., 8p.m. (BARKING TIMES BUILD)
March Off 8.30.

Rally: At Wellclose St., Wapping
March will be in three groups in columns 6 abreast
FIRST GROUP, L.M.B.
SECOND GROUP, S.O.G.A.T.
THIRD GROUP Other Unions and Councils etc.,

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS, LONDON DISTRICT EXECUTIVE NEWS INTERNATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE, BRANCH COMMITTEES AND CHAPELS SATURDAY, MARCH 1st 9pm DEMONSTRATION AT WAPPING

Prior to their own National Demonstrations members of the National Union of Mineworkers and Women's Support Groups will be joining the Wapping demonstration on Saturday, March 1st.

In addition, the London Region of the NGA have organised a March on the same evening.

In order to show maximum solidarity with the NGA and provide an appropriate welcome to the NUM, there will be a March and Demonstration of members in all Branches and Chapels in the London District of SOGAT.

Branches and Chapels are asked to give maximum support to this demonstration which will assemble in LOWER THAMES STREET (Next to Tower Hill) AT 9pm ON SATURDAY EVENING Chapel and Branch banners should be brought.

STRIKE GRAPHICS

the Wapping Lane exit about 12.30. The general feeling of the pickets was summed up in the 'Picket' newsletter: "The tactic was deemed by many printworkers and supporters to have been demoralising. It had split the printers from their supporters.....and it was all but ineffective."

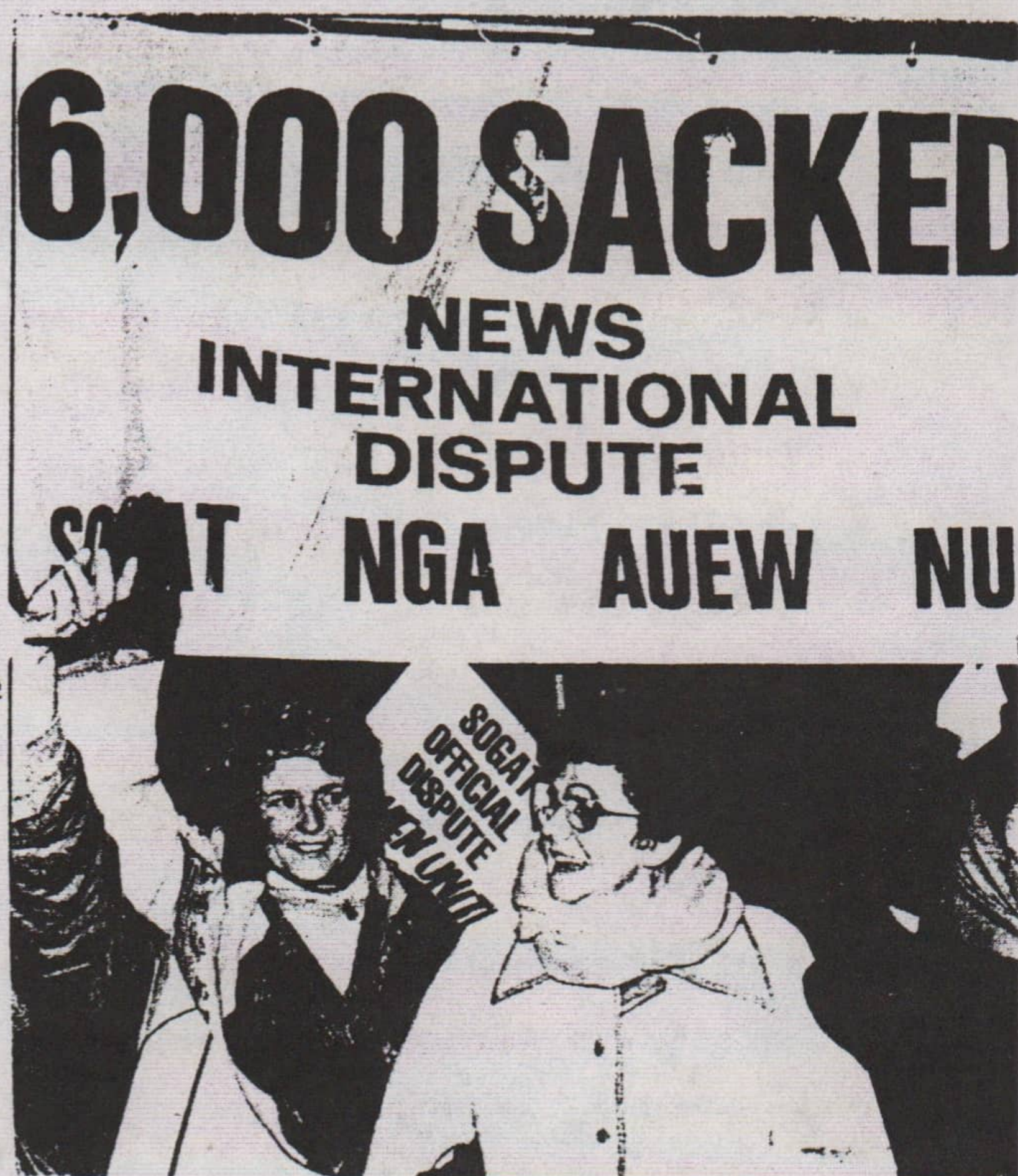
DEAN'S ROASTING

Way back in January 1986 at the start of the dispute Brenda Dean had recieved a standing ovation at a meeting of SOGAT wholesale members. The sacked members had believed her when she had told them that the union would not desert them. There would be no sell-out she declared. Now, some 16 weeks later, the pickets had learnt the hard way that Dean had tried everything to undermine their fight and isolate the strikers, and the reception she recieved at the Central Hall, Westminster on Monday 19th May was one which she so rightly deserved.

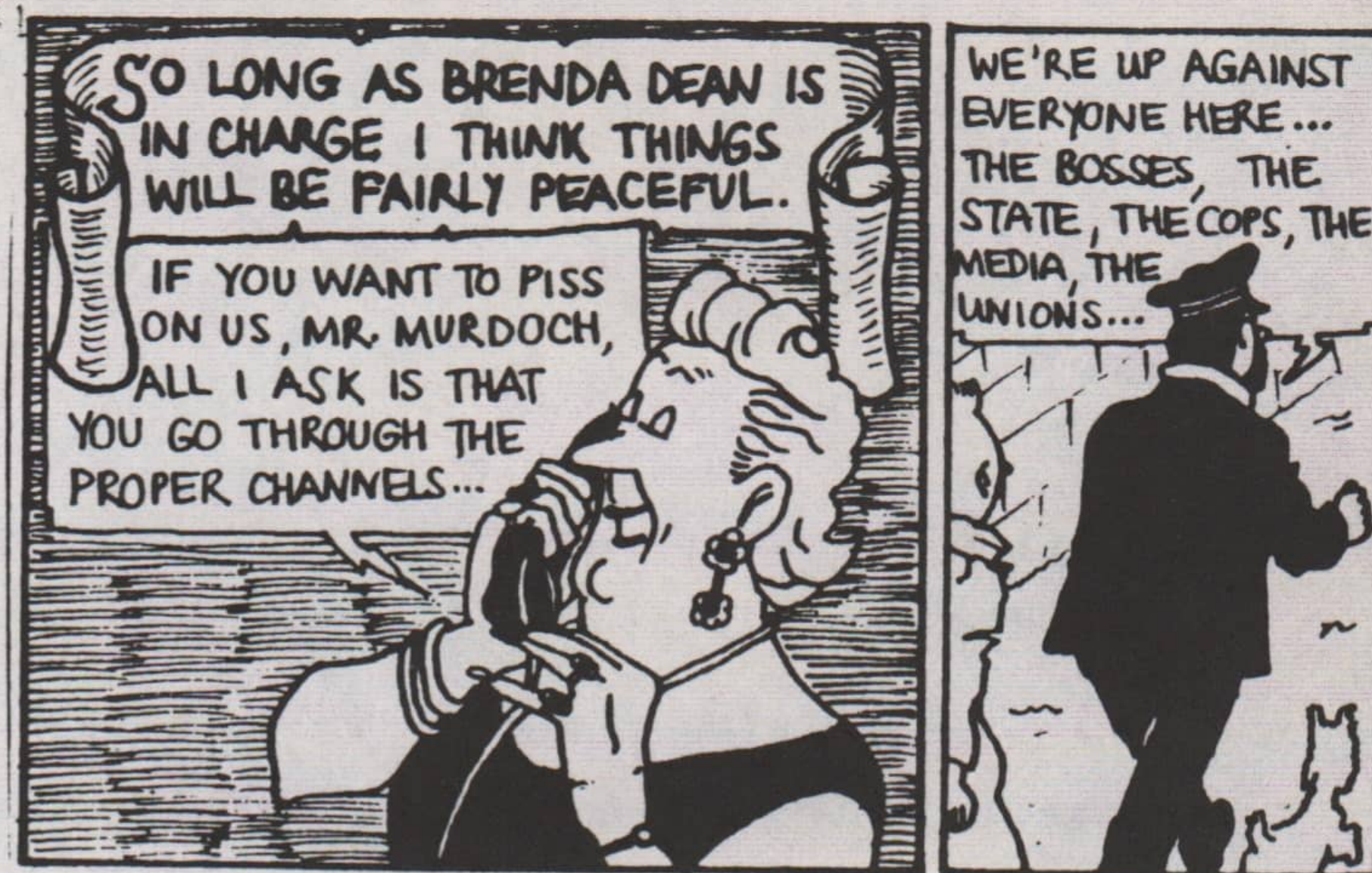
Over 3,000 SOGAT strikers attended the meeting, and speaker after speaker from the floor attacked Dean and the National Executive for the way they had been handling the dispute. Members were amazed to hear Dean put the blame on virtually everyone BUT the National Executive. "It's not our fault" she declared, but the rank and file weren't going to be duped. What had happened to the promised blacking of News International

titles? It was all very well for Dean to call the Bemrose workers in Liverpool, who printed Murdoch's colour supplements, scabs for not blacking the work, but SOGAT's NEC had issued no instructions to the workers at the firm until months into the dispute by which time it was too late. As one Bemrose worker put it: ".....there's no confidence in the leadership. They've seen the jobs being signed away in London. They can see the same happening here." And even those SOGAT members in the wholesale who had remained loyal and blacked Murdoch's papers had been stabbed in the back by the NEC's decision to purge it's contempt.

Instead of organising picketing as promised back in January, every effort had been made to sabotage it and make it ineffectual. 'We'll fight or negotiate' had been the headline of a SOGAT magazine back at the start of the strike. But as John Laing, clerical FoC rightly pointed out to Dean: "We've been doing all the fighting, you've been doing all the negotiating." On the question of



the purging of the contempt of court, Dean claimed that the decision had been a difficult one to make and had taken hours to come to. But then how could she explain, asked one striker after another, the fact that everyone had recieved a letter saying that SOGAT was to purge it's contempt only hours after the decision? And hadn't she said early on in the dispute when asked about the danger of possible sequestration: "People's jobs are more important than money."?



One striker got up to tell how, on the night of May 3rd, when Tony Blackmore suffered a heart attack after being hit by the police, Dean had refused to intervene saying instead that she had to make a speech. Dean was quick to brand the speaker a liar, although it was obvious who the strikers believed. She was constantly booed and hissed at as she tried to claim she had kept all strikers informed on what was going on. As SOGAT clerical Sherrl Yanowitz said "She also told us we would make the decisions, but a lot of fear was expressed over getting a ballot form with a question not one striker had any part in making." And as the report in 'Picket' said: "One question from the floor summed up the feelings of many: 'Whose side are you on?', and when she was called a 'film star' there were roars of applause."

By 2.40pm Brenda Dean and her cronies had had enough, announced that they had another meeting to go to and left the platform to slow hand clapping, jeers and shouts of 'resign' from the entire hall. Afterwards Chris Robbins, London Group Secretary, reconvened the meeting and a resolution on escalating the picketing and demonstrations was passed.

The fears expressed by many of the strikers that a sell-out was brewing were to materialise into fact in a matter of days with Murdoch's infamous 'final offer'.

THE FINAL OFFER

Finally, on Bank Holiday Monday, 26th May, the news the strikers had been dreading for so long became reality. The TUC 5 (NUJ, NGA, AEU, SOGAT, EETPU) had secretly met with Murdoch at a Heathrow hotel and had ended up with what Murdoch insisted was his final offer - the old 'Times/Sunday Times' building at Grays Inn Road and £50 million in redundancy money (£35 million up on his previous offer). It was clearly hoped that the extra redundancy money would persuade

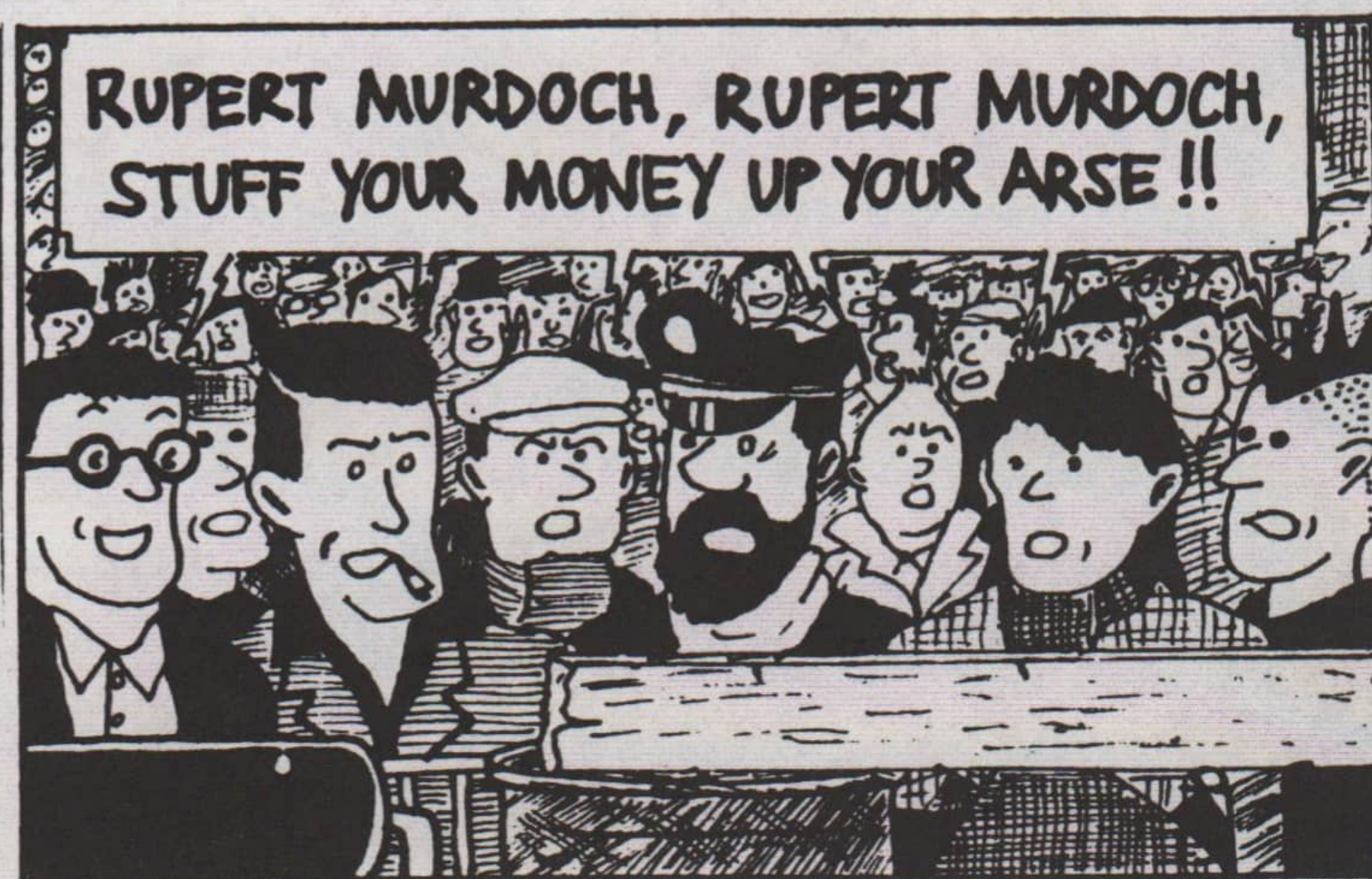
the strikers to give in. Dean had all along talked of improved redundancy terms to her that was all that the strike was about - getting the best pay-off she could.

But the strikers thought otherwise. As Jim Brookshaw AEU FoC at 'The Times' put it: "My members are disgusted with the offer. We struck for jobs and the principle of trade unionism in Wapping. The offer amounts to no more than we have lost in wages. We are willing to fight on." NGA striker Tony Wolfarth echoed that sentiment: "It's a deal that makes everyone happy - except the strikers themselves. It makes Murdoch look generous, Dean look a shrewd negotiator and Kinnock happy because of the Grays Inn Road offer."

Dean and the SOGAT NEC lost no time in trying to sell the deal. "I am not going to recommend it, it is for the members to decide" she said, then added, "Personally I doubt that if they reject it Mr. Murdoch would re-table a better offer". This was tantamount to telling the strikers that it was the best that they would be getting, so they had better accept it or lose everything. To the leadership the offer presented an ideal opportunity for them to wash their hands of the entire dispute.

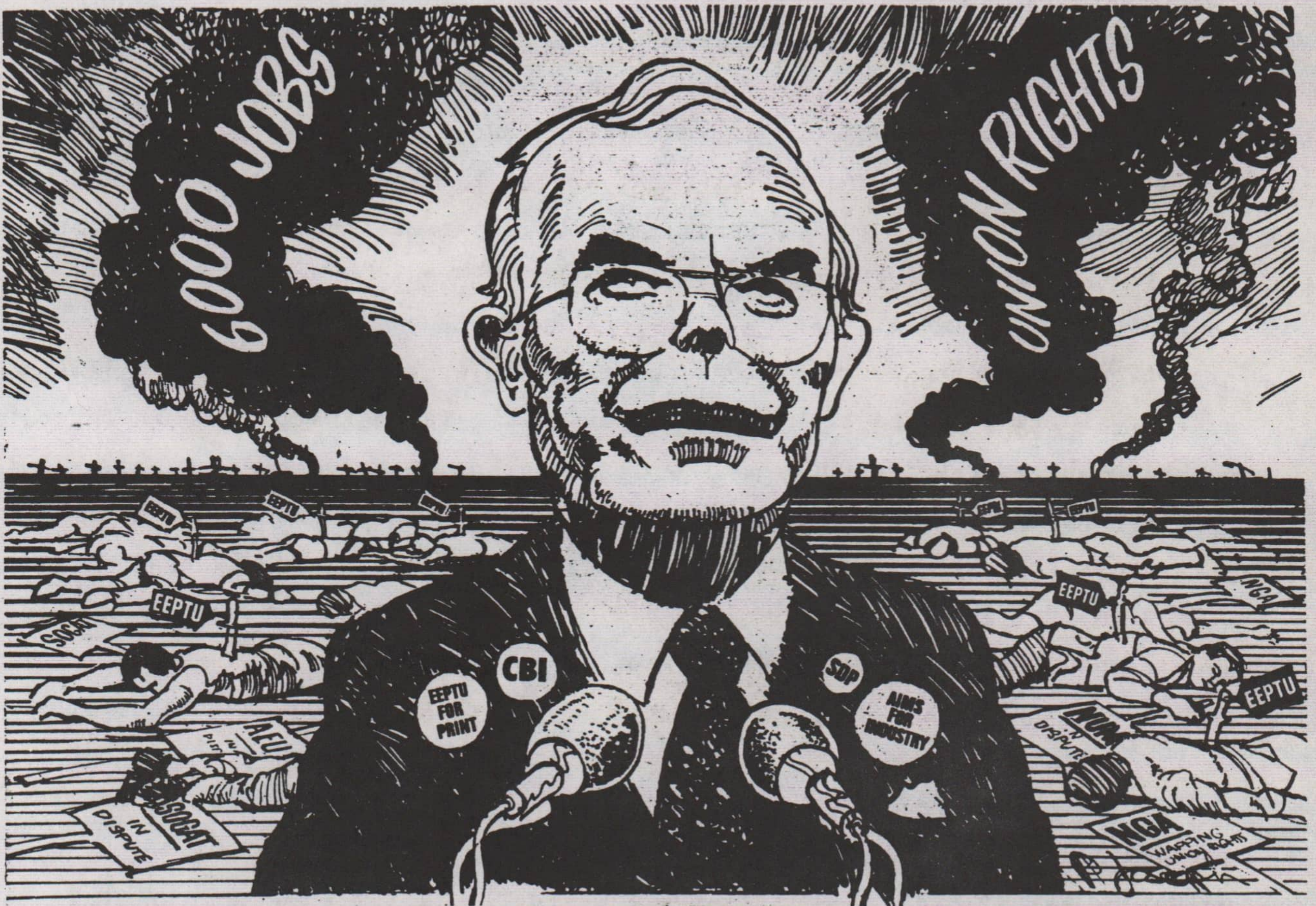
Unlike the NGA and AEU, SOGAT decided to rush through a ballot on the offer without giving their members any real chance to consider what they were voting on. On Wednesday 28th May ballot papers arrived at the homes of striking SOGAT members, along with a 5-page letter from Brenda Dean which, incredibly, put Murdoch's case for him. Despite the NEC's decision not to make any recommendation on the offer, it was clear which way they wanted the vote to go.

The 800 odd NGA strikers meanwhile met to discuss the offer and came out determined to reject it. Speaker after speaker from the floor insisted that the fight was for jobs and union recognition inside Wapping, not for some derisory redundancy offer. Mike Hicks, SOGAT IFoC for John Menzies wholesale, reflected the mood of the meeting when he told the NGA strikers: "The London wholesale has stood solidly behind you without any need for ballots. They have done so at great cost to themselves and under the very real threat of closures and redundancies. We now demand you stand by us." Speaking after the meeting, Tony Dubbins, NGA General Secretary, told the 'Guardian', "It is very clear that there is considerable and strong opposition to the proposals.....We are being



offered the 'Times' and 'Sunday Times' buildings in Grays Inn Road, as it was made clear tonight, but no jobs will go with it. There was also a feeling that the money on offer is pretty inadequate."

Likewise the 200 AEU members sacked by News International rejected Murdoch's final offer. Like their colleagues in the NGA they weren't interested in paltry sums of money, they wanted their jobs back. But it was obvious to both AEU and NGA strikers that SOGAT members would be the ones who would determine the final outcome. They had the majority of people on strike and if they accepted the offer the other two unions would find it difficult to fight on alone. But the rank and file in all three unions were only too well aware of what a 'Yes' vote



A VOTE FOR MURDOCH IS A VOTE FOR ME

would mean. As 'Picket' stated: "To cease picketing in London, Glasgow and the distribution depots, to end the boycott campaign and to end the fight for jobs at Wapping would be abject surrender. Grays Inn Road has nothing to offer. The fight is not for redundancy payments. The NGA made this clear at Thursday's meeting with a massive rejection of the offer. We fight for jobs at Wapping."

There was, however, one part of the final offer which the leadership of SOGAT failed to mention, and this was a virtual 'scabs charter'. This was revealed in a letter to sacked SOGAT members from Charles Cherrill, London Machine Branch

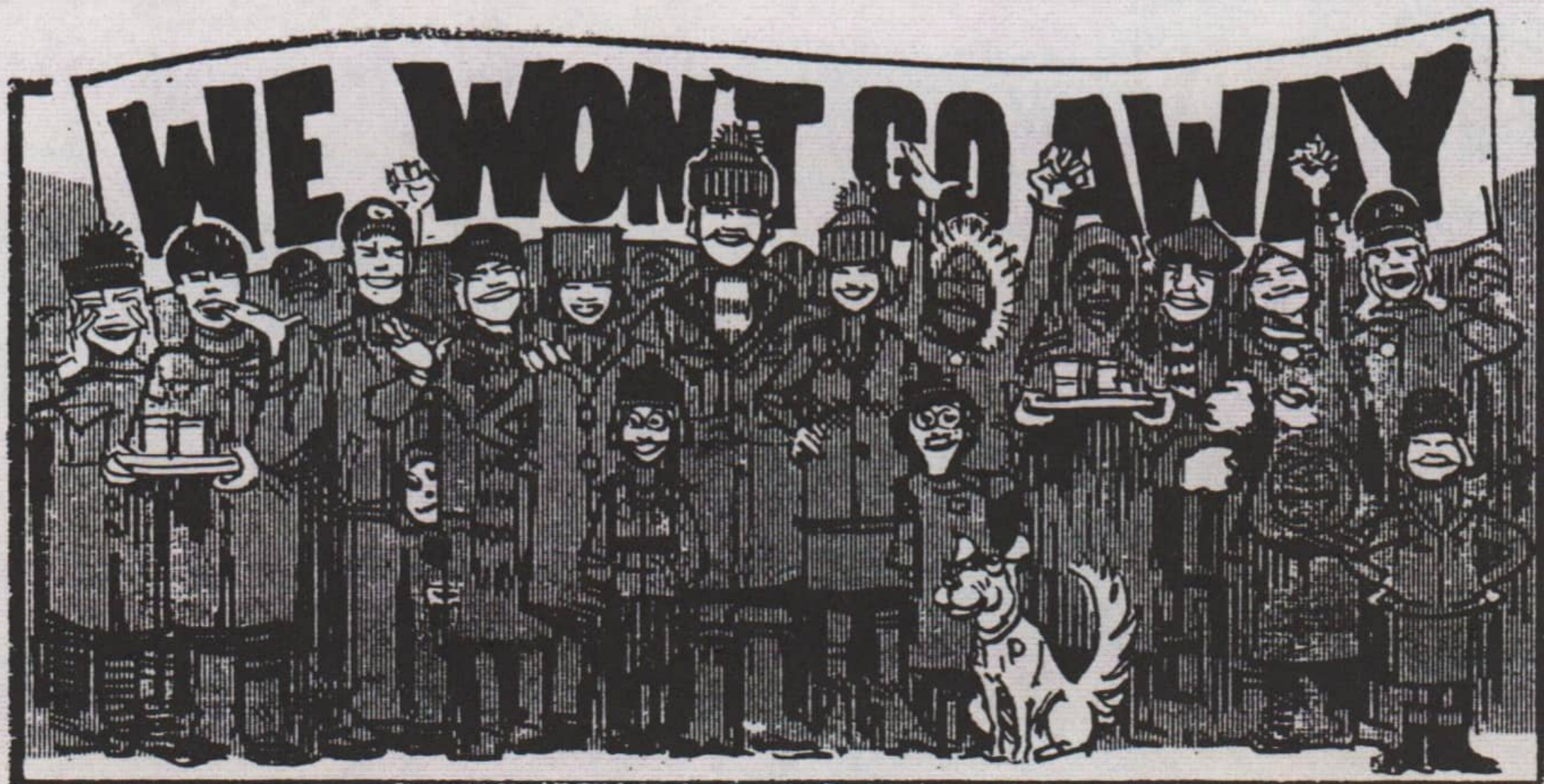
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secretary, in which he wrote: "All of those we have expelled for scabbing on you will be reinstated by the union. Far from our actions in terms of picketing and the boycott campaign not hurting Murdoch, he is insistent they are lifted."

Meanwhile SOGAT strikers had encountered problems on other fronts with their own union. Contrary to its own rules the NEC decided that it would conduct the ballot, not the local officials of the branches as had always happened in the past. Indeed, it was through the branches and chapels that the original ballot to take industrial action had been organised. So if it had been good enough in January, why suddenly was the tried and trusted method no use? Was it, as SOGAT's Bill Freeman said: "Because Brenda Dean wants to get our members voting before they know what the score is."?

According to the London Machine Branch some 30% of its sacked members wouldn't even receive a ballot form as SOGAT head office records were out of date and inaccurate. By sending ballot forms direct to members homes SOGAT NEC were contravening both Rule 10, which lays out a strict procedure for ballots, and Rule 7(clause 4(b)) which stated that the NEC would on no account be allowed to contravene the Union's rules. In the end the London Machine Branch took the national union to court to try and get an injunction to stop the ballot. Not surprisingly they failed. Mr. Justice Saville ruled that, although the rules had been contravened, he wasn't going to grant an injunction on the grounds that a re-run may have meant Murdoch's June 6th deadline would not be met. It was obvious that Mr. Justice Saville, like all his colleagues in the judiciary, wanted the strikers to lose. As Bill Freeman of SOGAT put it: "If we had just elected Ron Todd as our general secretary the media would have been screaming ballot rigging and we would have got a different ruling from the courts". But then the old adage 'One rule for them, another for us' still rings true today. Going to the bosses courts to try and get a ruling in favour of the workers is doomed to failure from the start. The judges, the employers and the union leaders are all part of the same rotten system and stand on the other side of the class divide from the workers.

On May 30th 3,000 sacked workers met at Westminster Central Hall to discuss the





The truth?
He couldn't give
a XXXX

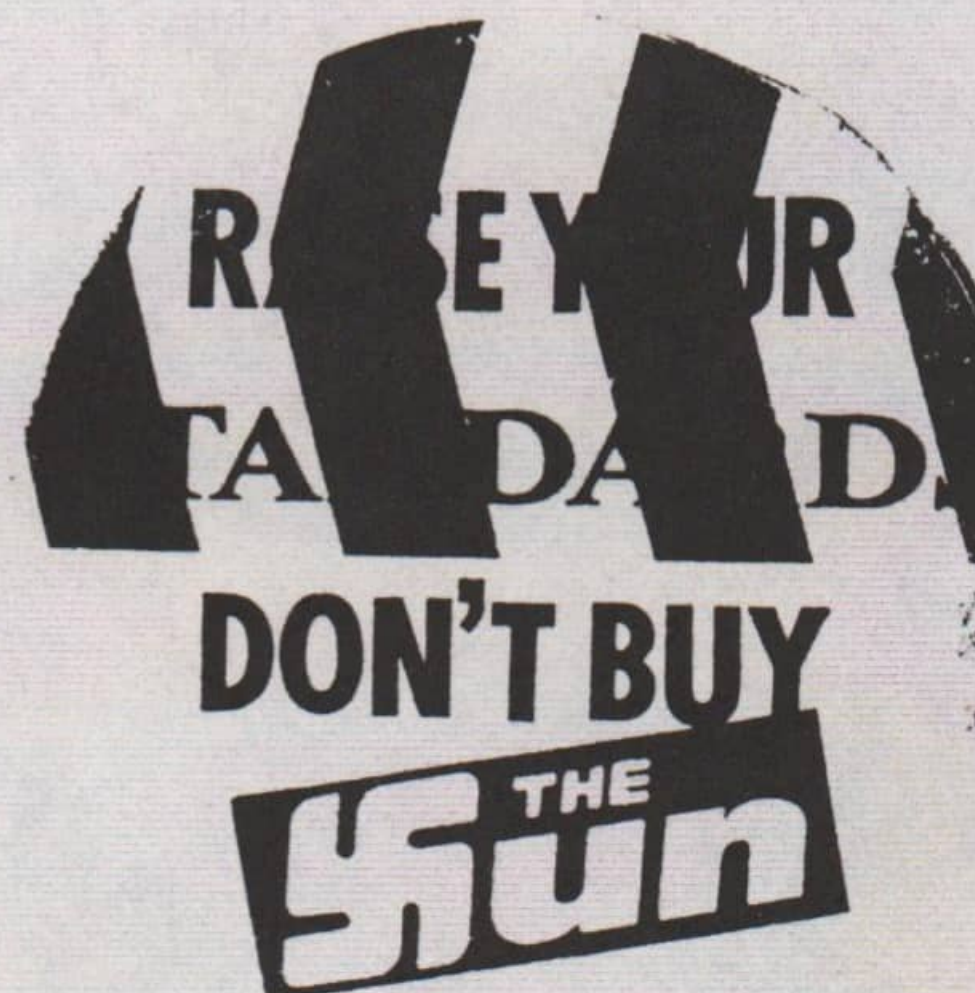
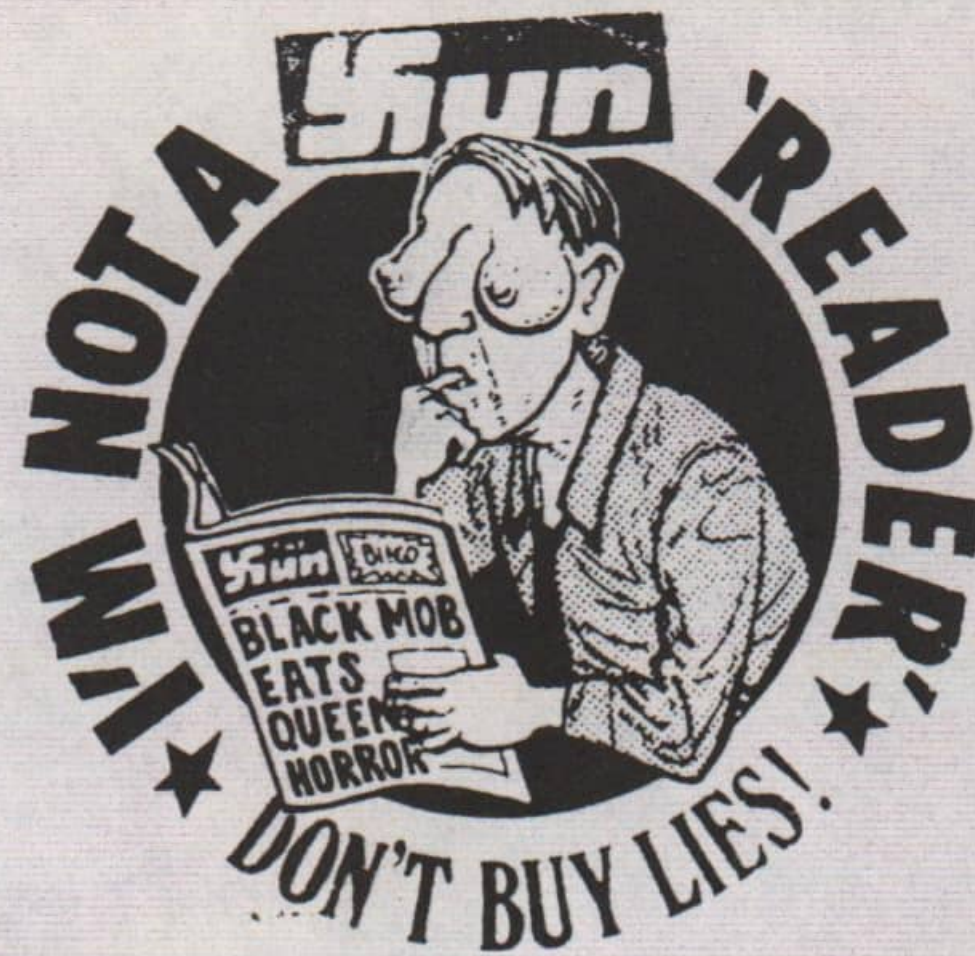
final offer. Outside the meeting there was a lobby of NGA strikers, clearly worried about the way SOGAT members might vote. The NGA members were invited to speak at the meeting and recieved a warm response, as did all the speakers attacking Murdoch's offer. The meeting ended with a unanimous 'No' vote, and the strikers prepared for the ballot itself. Although it was apparent how the NGA and AEU would vote, it was recognised that the SOGAT vote would probably be very close, and it was that vote that would be the crucial one. So the strikers on one hand, and Murdoch and the union leaders on the other, looked expectantly to the final results.

When those results were announced on Friday June 6th they took everyone by suprise. As expected the NGA and AEU rejected the offer, the former 4-1 against, and the latter 2-1 against. But the SOGAT vote was unbelievable, a resounding 3-2 against. The actual figures for the 3 unions were:

NGA - 648 against, 165 in favour
AEU - 112 against, 58 in favour
SOGAT - 2,081 against, 1,415 in favour.

The results were a blow for News International. Managing director Bruce Matthews expressed his suprise and said "We thought the cash offer on the table was a considerable amount of money and I think many people in the country thought we had been fair and generous. It now seems that the dispute was all along about jobs and recognition at Wapping, and these jobs are not going to be available to them, so I feel very sorry for them." Like all his kind Matthews believed that every worker had their price, but he failed to realise that unlike the scabs who'd sell their souls for a pittance, to the strikers some things were worth more than money, and those things were worth fighting for.

Matthews wasn't the only one dissappointed with the results. Brenda Dean was clearly upset at the outcome, as she described the strike as "the most tragic on the industrial scene in Britain for many years", adding "it is obviously a long way past anyone winning." The message from the rank and file had been loud and clear - "We fight on."





And for poor old Rupert Murdoch the troubles were really beginning. As if the rejection of his final offer was not bad enough, he now found himself faced with a rebellion from within. The journalists from 'The Sun', 'Times' and 'Sunday Times' NUJ chapters were in the middle of a lengthy disputes procedure. The journalists had always been the key to the dispute, and the printers looked to the rapidly deteriorating relations between News International and the scab NUJ members with a glimmer of hope.

"SOME UNPOPULAR DECISIONS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE"

While the struggle for the rejection of the final offer was going on the picketing continued as usual. Saturday 24th May had seen a Welsh night at Wapping with coachloads of supporters arriving from South Wales. The usual march from Tower Hill was 4,000 strong and there was a carnival atmosphere until the march reached the plant. The police were once again out in force, backed up by riot squads and cavalry. Access to Wapping Lane and Glamis Road in the east was prevented by lines of police across the Highway, and police roadblocks in the back streets successfully stopped substantial numbers of pickets reaching Glamis Road.

Meanwhile down at Worthing flying pickets scored another success at Portobello Press. After previous picketing at the plant the management had written to SOGAT and the NGA threatening legal action. But undeterred, upwards of 400 pickets arrived on the evening of May 24th. With police unable to guarantee the safety of the scab lorries, the plant was shut down completely for the first time in the dispute. From Worthing the pickets moved on to Surridge Dawson wholesalers in Brighton to find large numbers of police guarding the building and police roadblocks effectively sealing off the entire area. With not a thing moving in or out all night the whole episode showed just how effective flying pickets could be.

Pickets scored another success on Monday June 2nd, this time at Wapping itself. At about 7.45 that morning around 300 pickets assembled at Wellclose Square and swarmed down Virginia Street to block the main gate. It took the police an hour to clear a narrow path by the side of the pickets. Then with the arrival of police reinforcements things got rougher with ten arrests but the pickets stood their ground before finally marching back up to Wellclose, having successfully held the gate for two hours.

THE CONVOYS FIRE

On the night of Monday 2nd June a Convoys Wharf Warehouse, belonging to News International, was burnt down, allegedly by "two men" seen running away from the scene. But who were these mysterious figures? Bruce Matthews lost no time in telling the world that without doubt they were sacked printers. How exactly he knew this when the police themselves were baffled remains a mystery. On closer inspection some interesting facts



emerged. The 'Wapping Post' for July 26th revealed that the warehouse was in fact due to be demolished, and that within a week of the fire at the Deptford warehouse a new building was opened. Convoys claimed that the total damage caused by the fire was £7 million, and it all seemed very convenient for News International. It must also be borne in mind that the Convoys warehouse was heavily guarded and the reports of two men throwing something into the building then running away doesn't hold up under scrutiny. As one expert told the 'Wapping Post': "You can't start a fire like that with a couple of Molotov cocktails. Newsprint is so tightly packed that there is no air circulation between layers. You'd have to soak the reels for a week".

THE OLD BILL

The 'Wapping Post' revealed on June 7th 1986 that, to that date, it had cost nearly £6 million to police the dispute at Wapping. Answering questions in the House of Commons on May 9th, Home Office Minister Giles Shaw revealed that: "The number of police officers held available for deployment at the News International plant varies from day to day and hour to hour, from a minimum of about 25 to a maximum of about 1,800, depending on the current or likely public order situation. Up to and including 25th April it is estimated that approximately 350,000 police-man hours have been spent at or near the plant in connection with the dispute." In reply to a question from Ron Leighton, Shaw revealed that on the night of May 3rd 1,744 police officers were deployed.

Working on the basis of these figures, the 'Wapping Post' calculated, on the basic wage of £5.40 an hour for a PC in London, the minimum manpower bill up to the start of June 1986 was £2,160,000. Added to this massive overtime earnings, plus the higher basic rates for higher ranks and the bill for wages alone came to well over £3 million. Then on top of all that there was the cost of "surveillance cameras, helicopters, vehicles, canteens, shields, dogs, horses and whatever back-up is required." And then there was the additional cost of policing other News International plants and warehouses, TNT lorry escorts and TNT depots. And the cost of policing the dispute was eating into the Met's £1 billion budget, prompting Kenneth Newman, Metropolitan Commissioner, to complain that the money he wanted to use to recruit new officers was instead being used to police Wapping.

And just a few days later on June 10th Home Secretary Douglas Hurd appealed to the unions to stop mass pickets. He was speaking to a conference of senior police officers in Torquay and it was obvious from

Headache? Tense, Nervous Headache?

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Get rid of those unwanted half-bricks,

paint-bombs & mollies NOW!

For more details rush a donation to your nearest strike fund

Another great game from the makers of "stick-a-pig",
"castrate-a-rapist" and "lynch-the-boss"

his comments that mass picketing was having an effect and was a considerable drain on the Met's resources. He told the Conference: "Over 400,000 man-hours had been spent in this way so far. I would far rather these hours were spent making the streets and homes of London safer for Londoners(sic). I ask the union to find ways of exercising their rights which do not involve this enormous waste of men and money". But it was a futile appeal. To have abandoned mass pickets would have been to abandon the fight - and that was simply not on.

Elated at the 'No' vote in the ballot some 3,000 people gathered for the regular Saturday night march from Tower Hill on June 7th. The march arrived outside the plant at 9.45pm to find access east along The Highway once more



blocked by police. Another march going along Cable Street and Cannon Street Road was confronted by large numbers of police including 10 mounted. At about 11.15pm two scab lorries and a number of scab cars left via Glamis Road, which the police had cleared. Despite police attempts to clear The Highway opposite Virginia Street at 12.50pm, pickets managed to block the road for a further hour. Despite a fairly low turn out many pickets were feeling more confident and were prepared to take risks.

THE SOGAT CONFERENCE

SOGAT's Biennial Delegate Conference opened in Scarborough on June 9th amid worsening relations between the Union's National Executive Council and the London Branches. From the start it was obvious that Brenda Dean and the NEC were out to drop the dispute despite the resounding rejection of Murdoch's



THE SUN AND NEWS OF THE WORLD **PROCESS CHAPEL**

**EXTEND THEIR FRATERNAL GREETINGS AND
HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL COLLEAGUES IN
FLEET STREET, FELLOW TRADE UNIONISTS, AND
LABOUR MOVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS, FOR
THEIR UNPARALLELED AND CONTINUED
SUPPORT DURING OUR STRUGGLE FOR**



JOBS JUSTICE and
TRADE UNION RECOGNITION





final offer. They produced a document which supposedly showed that the cost of continuing the dispute could increase by £2.5 million, with Dean trying to claim that the strike was bankrupting the Union. But in the face of widespread opposition to that pathetic attempt to wind down the dispute, another approach was tried with an appeal for unity.

Dean's opening speech was a disgrace. After first branding the London branches as 'wreckers', she went on to preach new realism, claiming the only hope

for the future was a Labour government. "We owe it to ourselves" she told Conference, "to our families and to Britain as a nation to return a Labour government. That above all must be our priority.....And when we get a Labour government they will have a very difficult job to do. Some unpopular decisions will have to be taken". What she meant was that everything had to be sacrificed to get Kinnock into 10 Downing Street, and that included the jobs of the sacked printworkers. And even if Kinnock were elected there would be no guarantee that things would be any better. Only the previous October at the Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth Kinnock had voiced strong opposition to the motion by Arthur Scargill demanding a future Labour government reinstate sacked miners, review the cases of all miners in prison and reimburse the NUM for the money stolen by the Tory courts during that strike. There was little reason to suppose that Kinnock's attitude to strike would change once he was in office.

Dean continued with more of the same: "I am not interested in macho breast-thumping or street corner chants about 'selling people down the river'. That sort of chant usually comes from those who have failed to recognise that there is no longer any river to sell them down. It appears to me that there are some branches in this union who seem to be taking the view that they are not part of SOGAT." No-one should have been surprised at Dean's speech, but what was surprising was that the London branch officials apparently went along with it in the name of unity.

The original motion from the London Branches called for the stepping up of

picketing at Wapping and the expulsion of the EETPU from the TUC. But, led by John Menzies Imperial POC Mike Hicks, the London officials then argued that their motion should be composited with the NEC's motion, which was incredible considering the two motions said opposite things on nearly every point! The NEC's motion insisted that any further action in the dispute must be within the law, nothing would be done to risk re-sequestration, and the NEC would have complete control over the dispute. There was no reference to jobs and recognition in Wapping and it was clear that as far as the NEC were concerned the way forward was the boycott campaign.

And if that wasn't bad enough, on the fourth day of the Conference, the London Machine Branch decided to withdraw its motion criticising the NEC for purging the contempt of court. This was followed by a shoddy deal between the London officials and Dean. If the London branches voted for the NEC motion Brenda Dean would accept that the dispute was about jobs not money. The result was a complete climbdown by the London officials in the name of some phoney 'unity'. And within hours of the motion being passed Murdoch was once again on the offensive. He issued injunctions against not only SOGAT and the NGA, but against SOGAT's London Branches and named officials.

And at the same time the striking printers were demanding the expulsion of the electricians union from the TUC, Norman Willis was approaching them to find a solution to the dispute. In a formal request to the EETPU he asked them "urgently to use their best endeavours with their members at Wapping and with the company to bring about a resumption of talks between News International and the five unions." It was difficult to believe that the people who were being asked to bring an end to the dispute were the very scabs who were, in a large part, responsible for the whole thing in the first place. If the electricians hadn't undertaken a massive scabbing operation the sacked printers would still have had their jobs. The spectacle of the scabs being asked to find a solution was akin to King Herod being put in charge of a nursery school. And the fact was, despite everything, the EETPU had still not instructed its members at News International to stop crossing picket lines.

But one thing was certain. With the issuing of injunctions by Murdoch it was clear that the gloves were off.

**SOGAT
LONDON
MACHINE
BRANCH**
**We built a union
called NATSOPA
in 1889**
**WE ARE
NOT GOING
AWAY**
C. Chernill Secretary
D. Lloyd Chairman
A. Elderton Deputy Secretary

CHAPTER NINE

"LIKE RATS DESERTING A SINKING SHIP"

Back in Wapping itself Murdoch's problems were mounting. 'The Sun' NUJ chapel had voted by 94 to 80 not to continue working at Wapping. As if to make matters worse News International, while trying to quell the rebellion from 'Sun' journalists, at the same time sacked six 'Times' journalists who had refused to cross the picket line.

A letter to all journalists in Wapping from the NUJ pointed out that News International had broken its own disputes procedure agreement with 'The Times' chapel by sacking the journalists while talks were going on.

Faced with the deepening crisis Murdoch himself met 'The Sun' NUJ chapel twice on Tuesday 10th June 1986. He offered them a pay increase of 10%, which was worth more than £2,000 to each journalist. In addition he guaranteed not to impose a five day week and promised to build them a gymnasium and swimming pool at Wapping!

Outside the Fortress the printers were joined by some of the journalists who had honoured the picket line. Down on the main gate a number of the thirty NUJ refuseniks who had been on strike from the start tried to persuade their colleagues not to cross. Since the beginning of the strike 100 NUJ members had left Wapping for one reason or another. The following day, June 11th, 'The Sun' NUJ chapel held a mandatory meeting at Butchers Row, at the eastern end of The Highway. At 3 o'clock that afternoon the news came that 'The Sun' journalists had voted 136 - 6 to accept Murdoch's offer. Once again the scabs sold their principles for money. This was despite the fact that their own FoC, Malcolm Withers, had been sacked for refusing to cross the picket line.

Meanwhile, with the number of sacked journalists from 'The Times' and 'Sunday Times' standing at 8, these two chapels decided to ballot on industrial action in support of their dismissed colleagues. In a message to 'The Times' chapel the National Union of Journalists said: "By ignoring agreed disciplinary procedures, News International has shown its contempt for your house agreement. While the Times chapel has kept it's side of the bargain and meticulously followed the disputes procedure, Rupert Murdoch has once again shown that he keeps his side of the bargain when it suits him". Even before balloting began the company started to disrupt things by evicting 20 journalists who were working their notice. Hot on the heels of this obvious sabotage attempt, 'Times' editor Charles Wilson sent all his journalists a letter urging them to vote 'No'.



NUJ

NATIONAL UNION
OF
JOURNALISTS

TO ALL JOURNALISTS STILL WORKING AT WAPPING

11 June 1986

Acorn House, 314-320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP Tel: 01-278 7916

DISPUTELATEST*...MORE JOURNALISTS SACKED...DISPUTES
PROCEDURE BROKEN BY THE COMPANY...SUN CHAPEL VOTES
NOT TO CONTINUE WORKING AT WAPPING...PRINT DISPUTE STILL ON...

Dear Colleague,

The Wapping dispute is now at a crucial phase, with every indication that the journalists on The Times, The Sunday Times, The Sun and the News of the World are now the key to any quick settlement.

But if the NUJ Chapels and their members do not act now, the dispute is likely to drag on, increasingly acrimonious, for many months.

Yesterday journalists on The Times were sacked. They have been honouring the official NUJ instruction not to cross the picket line. They include two former FoCs.

The management has broken its own disputes procedure agreement with The Times Chapel in sacking the journalists while talks have been going on. The sacked journalists, and the Chapel's right to have its agreements honoured, must be defended.

Meanwhile, the Sun journalists have voted 94 - 80 in a secret, democratic ballot, not to work at Wapping. Already, the Sun FoC and other members of the Chapel are honouring the picket line. Some Sun journalists have already been sacked.

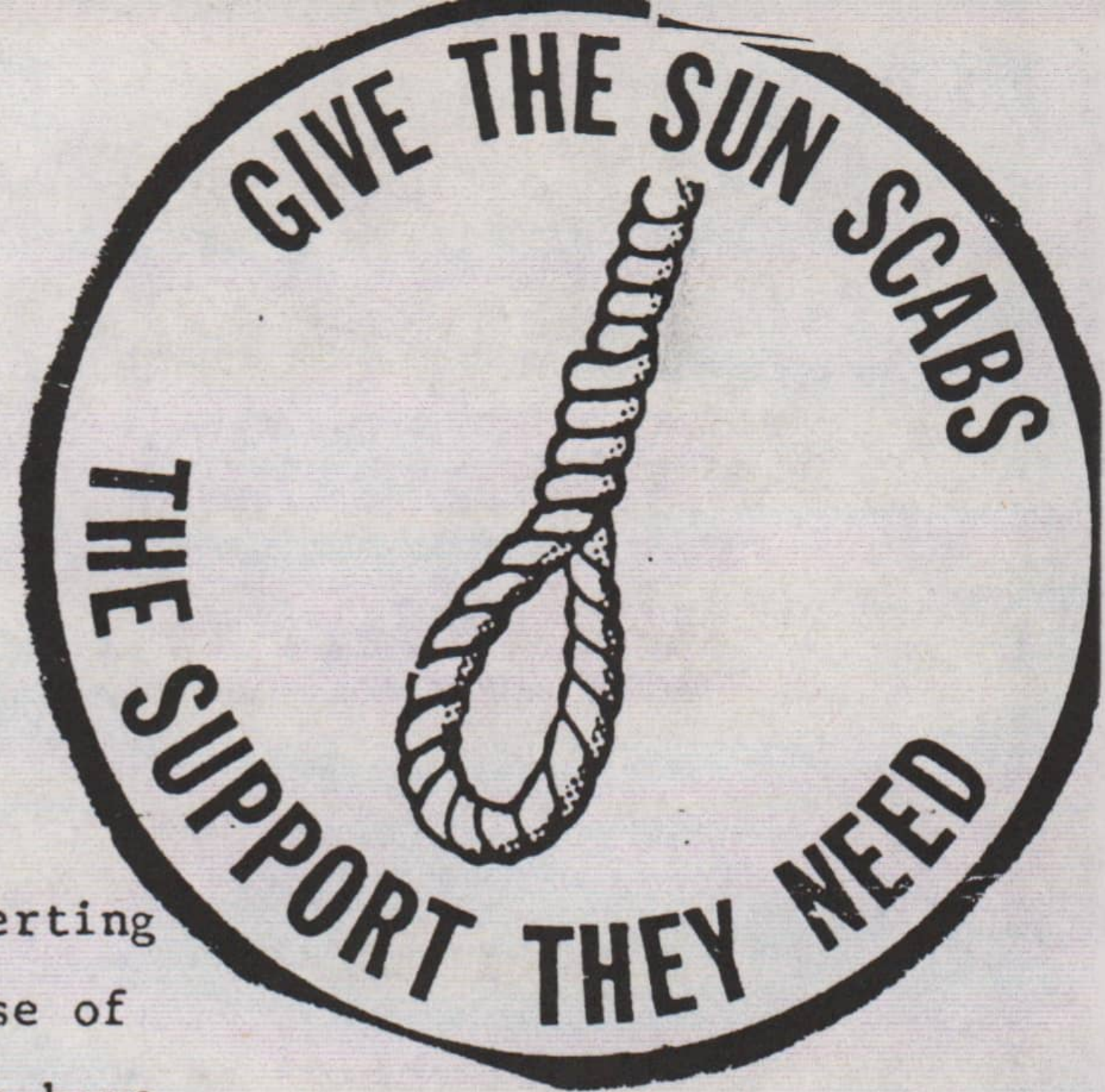
The Sun Chapel meets today, Wednesday, 11 June, at 1pm. The meeting is mandatory for all Sun journalists.

The venue is The Royal Foundation of St Catherine, St James' Hall, Butcher Row, E14 -- last turning on the left as you go east along the Highway from the Wapping plant.

The management, meanwhile, is desperately trying to buy off individual journalists, as more join the dispute. These attempts should be treated as what they are -- completely missing the point.

NUJ journalists want a quick, honourable end to the dispute. We will get it by honouring the picket line, defending our Chapel agreements, our sacked colleagues and our dignity.

The eventual result of 'The Times' ballot was a great disappointment to all concerned. With an appallingly low 39% turn out the journalists voted not to take action. Days later the 'Sunday Times' NUJ chapel voted by 68 to 42 against supporting their sacked colleagues. But the stream of journalists leaving was increasing and for those left behind things looked gloomy. As one 'Times' journalist put it: "It's like rats deserting a sinking ship. Morale has never been lower. Those of us still here feel imprisoned, as though somehow we have been left behind."



The day time pickets were experiencing continuing success in outwitting the police and scabs. On Saturday morning, June 14th, just after 8am, about 350 pickets gathered in Cable Street, marched down Wellclose Street, across The Highway and down Virginia Street to the main gates. The few police there were taken completely off guard. Two van loads of reinforcements arrived, but seeing that they were outnumbered, they blocked off Pennington Street and Virginia Street to stop any scabs coming down. By 9.30am the police were getting desperate and threatened to deploy 400 officers, horses and riot squads. There was no reason to believe they could actually call up that many officers as the Met were overstretched that day with the Trooping of the Colour. But it was decided to retreat to Wellclose just before 10am, although many pickets were unhappy with that as the threatened police reinforcements hadn't materialised. Just how successful the pickets had been was shown by the scab vehicles which entered the plant in a continuous stream for the next half hour.

That evenings march from Tower Hill was led by a delegation from the Kent NUM. Once again the march stopped at Virginia Street with the police blocking off The Highway west of Cannon Street, stopping the pickets getting to Wapping Lane and Glamis Road. Many pickets attempted to get to the eastern exits despite the presence of riot squads and mounted police, and there were large numbers at both Dock Street and Thomas Moore Street.

Just after 11 o'clock a convoy of artics left the plant going eastwards. Less than an hour later a large group of pickets went west along Cable Street from Glamis Road and reached The Highway through the flats near King David Lane. Here they were successful in blocking the road and they marched up to Wapping Lane where they succeeded in turning back all the scab cars which were trying to make a dash for freedom. By 12.30 thirty mounted police strikebreakers

were at the Wapping Lane exit and these were joined by more from Wellclose, but it wasn't until 2am that the police eventually felt confident enough to attack the pickets and clear The Highway.

Three days later the day time pickets once again took the main gate to the Fortress. About 250 pickets poured across from Wellclose to descend on the main gate and the suprised police at 2.45pm. At the same time another 50 pickets got as far as Pennington Street where they were stopped by masses of police. Within half an hour reinforcements in the form of 300 more pickets had arrived and they proceeded to block The Highway at the top of Virginia Street. These pickets were soon cleared by horses, but while this was happening pickets used the distraction to get down to Pennington Street and join the group already there. No doubt frustrated at being outwitted yet again, horses charged the main gate and backed by four van loads of thugs in blue, managed to clear half the entrance. Further along Pennington Street the police were kept busy trying to protect a scab Convoys reel lorry which had come up against the pickets.

Desperately trying to contain the pickets, the police erected barriers at the top of Virginia Street, but it was all in vain because at 3.50pm the pickets in Wellclose once again took The Highway and stopped the traffic. By 4.20pm six horses were at the main gate and the police warned the pickets of their intention to attack the crowd, so having held the gate for well over an hour and an half, the pickets retreated up Virginia Street. Once in Wellclose the pickets, by now numbering about a thousand, took the police by suprise again by marching up The Highway to Dock Street and back! No sooner had the police cleared The Highway again at 5pm than another march formed further east along The Highway and marched to Wapping Lane, while to the west Dock Street was



blocked. Yet another march arrived at Wellclose Street at about 5.50pm and 150 pickets took the scab exit at Thomas More Street. By this time the truncheons were out and there were a number of injuries, but it wasn't until 6.35pm that the pickets eventually returned to Wellclose and called it a day. "It was the best picket we've had" said one striker, "the police didn't know what the hell was going on. They'd clear one group only to find another group blocking some other road. I bet they wish they'd left us down at the gate." And as one SOGAT cleaner put it: "We showed all those so-called 'clever' officials and 'leaders' who said pickets won't work. We stopped the scabs today with only a few hundred. Just think what we could do with thousands." Sadly, there was no serious attempts by officials to use the Saturday night marches to stop the lorries, that was left to the day time pickets acting on their own initiative.

WILLIS DISPLAYS HIS CLASS LOYALTY

Meanwhile, worlds away from the picket line, scab Willis was yet again displaying his real loyalty - to the ruling class. Speaking at the NGA's delegate conference he ruled out any attempt by the TUC's General Council to discipline the EETPU for their scabbing. His great fear, of course, was that Hammond would carry out his threat to break away from the TUC and declare all-out war. Rather than stand up to this obvious blackmail he preferred to bow down at the expense of the strikers and the whole trade union movement. It would perhaps be unfair to say that Willis was out of touch with rank and file trade unionists, because the truth was that he had never been in touch with them. Like his despicable predecessor Len Murray, he came up through the bureacracy, never having been on the shop floor. He told the NGA delegates that "if anyone is out of the TUC, obviously there is scope for a repitition to the eventual detriment of all print union members. I will be doing what I can to avoid that." In effect of course. he was giving Hammond the green light to do just what he wanted.

He then went on to say that the trade union movement had to accept a legal requirment for pre-strike ballots. To not go along with this would damage the Labour Party's chance



CALLING ALL WOMEN TRADE UNIONISTS, WIVES,
MOTHERS, SISTERS, DAUGHTERS

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S
★ DEMONSTRATION ★
SATURDAY 1 AUGUST**

SATURDAY 2nd AUGUST

**Assemble with banners Tower Hill for
★ march to Wapping at 9pm ★**
SPEAKERS, ENTERTAINMENTS, REFRESHMENTS

PAGEANT OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE LABOUR
MOVEMENT THROUGH THE CENTURIES

**NO RETURN TO VICTORIAN BRITAIN!
A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN HER UNION!**



Organised by the SERTUC Womens' Rights Committee
in support of sacked News International workers

of winning the next election. The indication was of course that Labour were actually intending to put forward employment legislation which would be barely indistinguishable from the Tories anti-union laws. It would perhaps sound better but the results would be the same. The 'Party of the working class'(sic) would bend over backwards to please the bosses and to hell with the workers.

FLYERS

While the day time pickets at Wapping continued to be effective at blocking The Highway and taking the main gate, flying pickets at TNT depots around the country were also having considerable success. Perhaps the most spectacular example was at Eastleigh, near Southampton. The TNT depot at Eastleigh had been the scene of heavy picketing earlier on in the dispute but had been relatively 'picket free' for a couple of months. All that changed on July 5th.



Upwards of 400 pickets descended on the plant at just after 3 in the morning clearly to the horror of the depot's security man, who showed the renowned courage of all scabs by running into the building to hide. He was joined by a number of scab drivers who obviously thought better of trying to get Murdoch's rags through the pickets. The six foot high fence proved no obstacle to the resourceful pickets who simply pulled it down! All scab vehicles were then given the Wapping 'air-conditioning' treatment by having their windscreens removed. The first police car to arrive got similar treatment, and even when police reinforcements arrived no arrests were made.

As an indication of how successful these flying pickets were, TNT's response was to go to the courts to try and get injunctions preventing picketing at their depots.

PICKETING AND THE HIGH COURT

Murdoch too was in the courts again to try to end the mass pickets at Wapping. Following SOGAT's biennial conference and the overwhelming rejection of his shabby offer, he had issued writs against both SOGAT and the NGA. According to Murdoch himself, he was resorting to court action because since the rejection of his 'final offer' picketing had become more unpleasant for his employees. He wanted to restrict pickets to six around the immediate area of the plant - obviously in response to the day time mass pickets of the main gates. In addition to his writs against the two print unions, Murdoch also issued writs against three London SOGAT Branches and four officials, Michael Britton, Mike Hicks, Bill Freeman and Chris Robbins.

To support their case News International produced two bundles of affidavits with statements from Wapping employees. In these statements the scabs whined on about being insulted by pickets, one NUJ scab, Fred Burcombe of 'The News of the World', complained of the 'mental burden' of crossing picket lines. Presumably the mental burden wasn't great enough to stop him scabbing. What these affidavits actually showed was the substantial effect picketing was having on the company's finances and the morale of the scabs at Wapping and Kinning Park. It was revealed that it was costing News International £100,000 a month to hire coaches and protect the blacklegs at Wapping, with an additional £67,000 at Glasgow. On top of these costs there was £200,000 a month for TNT road haulage and £14,400 lost each month with late or non-deliveries of papers.

The restrictions Murdoch wanted to impose on the unions were far reaching. Firstly he wanted to ban SOGAT and the NGA plus the named officials from organising, financing or encouraging pickets at Wapping. The pickets were to be restricted to six and must be picketing their place of work. This in itself would have been an impossible task for the sacked workers since none of them

had ever actually worked at Wapping and the plant was 'owned' by Murdoch's London Post Printers and not News Group Newspapers or Times Newspapers, the strikers former employers. Likewise Murdoch wanted the number of pickets at 23 TNT depots to be limited to six, all of whom had to be TNT employees. At Grays Inn Road and Bouverie Street the number of pickets also had to be six. In addition to the writs from the Murdoch companies there was also one from one of his scabs, Pamela Hamilton-Dick, who wanted to stop pickets shouting at her and swearing. Murdoch, in seeking these injunctions, no doubt had in mind the ruling of Mr. Justice Scott who granted injunctions to

MURDOCH IS

BAD NEWS

**DON'T
HANDLE**

**THE
Sun**

**NEWS
of the
WORLD**

THE ~~1982~~ TIMES

THE SUNDAY TIMES

scabs in South Wales during the miners strike preventing the area NUM from organising mass pickets.

The case itself lasted ten days and cost £1 million, and by the end Murdoch had gained very little. News International's plan to shackle the unions and prevent effective picketing failed miserably. In fact the whole episode proved rather embarrassing for the company. Bruce Matthews was forced to apologise when his affidavit about TNT being contracted to distribute the 'London Post' was proved to be a complete fabrication. A 200 page document dated April 1985 showed that TNT were given a £1 million a week contract to distribute News International titles NOT the bogus 'London Post'.

In an effort to regain some credibility 'Times' editor Charles Wilson appeared in court along with dummy plates for the 'Post'. According to Wilson the April document was a contingency plan, as News International expected a strike at Bouverie Street and Grays Inn Road in response to their plans to print the 'London Post' using direct input.

Mr. Justice Stuart-Smith apparently found it incredulous that sacked workers would protest about the loss of their jobs. "I find it hard to believe" he declared, "that day after day for 6 months, 50 to 200 dismissed printworkers



and some of their families assemble spontaneously from all over London and maybe further afield at their own expense to signify by their presence the depth of their feelings." No doubt the judge thought that the strikers should just stay at home and accept what Murdoch had done to them. It seemed inconcievable to the ruling class that workers were still willing to stand and fight against enormous odds.

News International alleged that the unions had committed four civil wrongs or torts, namely public and private nuisance, intimidation, harrassment and interference with contract. On the question of nuisance, the judge ruled that this would only be the case if News International could show particular damage other than that generally suffered by the public, and in the case of Wapping he thought this to be so. Many journalists had left since the move to Wapping and the cost of bussing scabs through the picket line was £100,000 a month. There was, in addition, an unreasonable obstruction of the highway by pickets.

As far as the alleged 'intimidation' was concerned, the judge decided that swearing, shouting and abuse didn't constitute "a threat of violence". On the other hand he thought a remark such as "scab, we'll get you" could mean a threat of actual physical assault. The allegation of 'harrassment' was thrown out completely, as in the view of Mr. Justice Stuart-Smith it didn't really exist, having been invented by a judge during the South Wales NUM picketing case.



On the final point of 'interference with contract' it was ruled that the unions had knowingly asked workers (scabs) to break their contracts. According to the judge the pickets had no right to ask TNT drivers not to cross picket lines as they had never been employed at Wapping. The question now was were the unions responsible for these torts?

After a 2½ hour judgement Murdoch ended up with very little to show for his efforts. The six official pickets at the main gate were allowed to continue as they had done for six months, but they could only give information and not try and stop workers crossing the picket line. Mr. Justice Stuart-Smith had obviously never been down to the main gate at Wapping where it was impossible to tell the scabs anything as they usually roared through the picket line at high speed inside armoured coaches. The unions were also allowed to continue to organise marches and demonstrations as long as they ended in Wellclose



mounted and foot police steamed into the rear of the march. Two horses rode to the rear of Wellclose but were forced back by the large number of pickets in the Square. Scabs trying to leave the plant had to join a convoy of some 50 vehicles, and because of the picketing and the traffic jams they caused, management were forced to hire a helicopter to fly in pictures from the Royal wedding.

The ever-loyal residents of Wapping held another of their 'Reclaim the Streets' marches in support of the pickets. About 75 marched from Glamis Road but were stopped by lines of 30 to 40 police at Pennington Street who immediately charged the march, arresting some (for walking along their own streets!) and and attacked the rest with fists and boots. Having been forced back onto The Highway the residents continued westwards towards Virginia Street to be greeted by cheering pickets. From the opposite direction marched several thousand from Tower Hill. A few hundred pickets managed to get through police roadblocks and reach Glamis Road to meet the returning residents march.

As 'Picket' number 23 said: "Picketing printers came into the strike largely without real picketing experience. During the miners strike most activists were sucked into the fund-raising circuit. This robbed activists of essential picketing experience. Not so with the bosses and their hirelings. They come into this strike with all the experience of fighting picketing and a whole lifetime of rule. Experience in the strike has shown that it is only the most hardened and determined pickets who can be trusted to command".

THE RAGGED TROUSERED CABARET

★ ★ ★ ★ PRESENT ★ ★ ★ ★

THE ROYAL WEDDING ALTERNATIVE SHOW

ON THE GREEN AT
WELLCLOSE SQUARE THE HIGHWAY

23rd. JULY WAPPING 4-9 p.m.

SURFING
DAVE

SOGAT
SINGERS

P. R.
MURRAY

PATRIC
CUNNANE

ANTI-
APARTHEID
SINGERS

LOL WESS (COMPERE)

IAN
McPHERSON

IAN
SAVILLE

MARIA
TOLLY

SKINT
VIDEO

PORKY
THE
POET

ARTISTES INCLUDE

SURPRISE SPECIAL GUESTS & SPEAKERS
INCLUDING KEN LIVINGSTONE &
★ ★ THE BICYCLE THIEVES ★ ★

PLENTY OF REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

And if, as the EETPU claimed, the new recruits were not employed to do the jobs of printworkers, why were they being trained as printers? This training began on September 27th 1985 and included work as press hands, machine minders and reel hands - work done by members of other unions. Among those trained were Scanlon's sons, and, as the 'Post' stated, "It is inconcievable that Mick Scanlon, the secretary of the EETPU Area 22, remained unaware of what exactly was going on at Wapping."

Another EETPU official, Patrick O'Hanlon, was so blatant about the whole thing that he sent out News International application forms to factories that were about to close, and he attended the interviews where the prospective employees were asked "Would you be prepared to cross picket lines?". To try to cover itself the EETPU told the General Council of the TUC that they couldn't be held responsible for the actions of their area officials. This is hardly plausible as the EETPU is one of the most centralised of all unions. There is



no way that the Southampton branch officials could have recruited scabs for Wapping without the national union knowing about it. It must also be remembered that both Scanlon and O'Hanlon are closely associated with Eric Hammond and Tom Rice, EETPU national officials.

The EETPU also claims that their own area officers were recruiting for the 'London Post' and not the four existing News International titles. But if this were the case then why was it that Southampton dealt with the vacancies and not the EETPU Fleet Street Branch? Just the numbers being recruited for Wapping should have told Tom Rice that more than the 'London Post' was going to be printed there. The EETPU was adamant in it's submission to the General Council that it had no knowledge at all of the recruitment going on in Southampton.

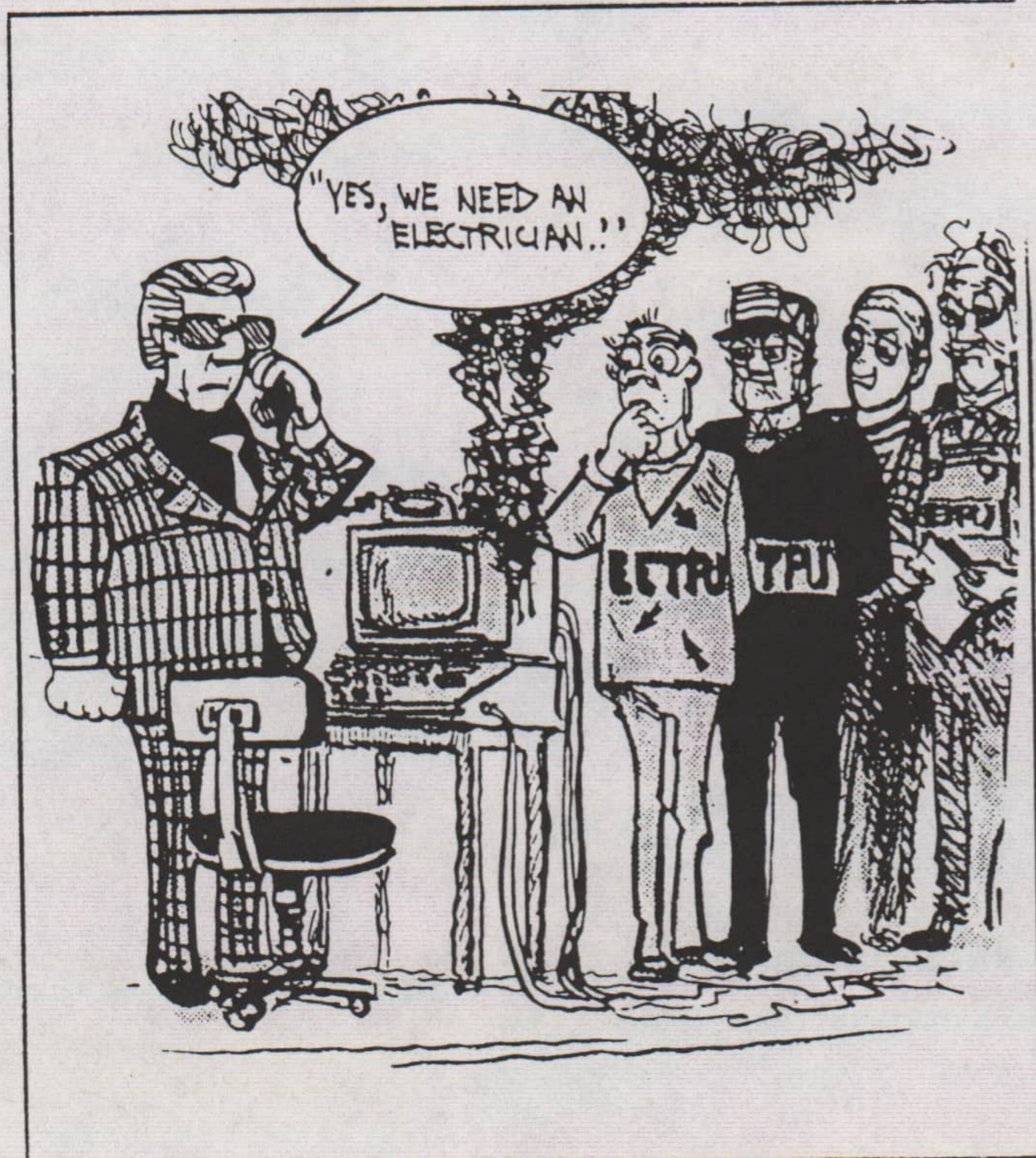
CHAPTER TEN

"IF THERE WAS A PLOT WE HAD NO PART IN IT"

"The dignity, credibility, and integrity of British trade unionism today hangs by a thread from the razor wire surrounding a fortified print works in the east end of London. The most cynical and devastating betrayal of the principles on which the trade union movement was founded is now entering it's eighth month behind the guarded gates of Wapping." These are the words that appeared in the 'Wapping Post' on August 30th. They are an indictment of the treachery and betrayal of Eric Hammond and the EETPU for their role in the Wapping strike. Since the TUC General Council had discussed the electrician union's role back in February 1986 an amazing amount of new evidence had come to light concerning the EETPU and Wapping.

The EETPU denied that they had recruited scabs for Wapping through their Southampton and Glasgow officers. According to them they were simply supplying electricians to install new equipment in the docklands plant. But, as the 'Wapping Post' showed, EETPU official Mick Scanlon supplied not only electricians to install machinery but others who were not electricians, and were not even members of the union! Scanlon had been present at the second and third set of interviews for prospective Wapping employees at Black Prince Road, London and the Tower Hotel - surely an unusual role for a union official by any standards. And in view of the union's claim that it had no representation inside Wapping, it's strange that one of the questions on the application forms was "Are you prepared to become a member of the EETPU?".

As was soon to be seen, Scanlon and other Southampton EETPU officials were



involved in the whole thing up to their necks. Among the scabs sent to work at Wapping were Scanlon's three sons and his daughter! Bill Luffman, Southampton Branch Secretary, also had two sons at Wapping, as did Vivian Seaman, Scanlon's secretary. As the 'Wapping Post' said: "None of these is in any way qualified to install and commission sophisticated multi-million pound electronic equipment. An employer might be lucky if they could wire a plug."



ASLEF declares its continuing solidarity with NGA, SOGAT, NUJ and AEU Members in struggle.

- 110 -

However, the EETPU's national office is not far from the British Legion Club in Hayes, Kent. This club was a well known recruiting ground for Wapping scabs, and one of the club's regulars is none other than Tom Rice. Hammond is no stranger there himself. With up to 14 club members working in Wapping it's

inconcievable that the national officials weren't aware of what was going on.

As the 'Wapping Post' asked: "How did it come to this? Why is the British trade union movement.....apparently helpless to stop it?". The TUC had stood by and allowed the EETPU to bring shame and dishonour on the movement and the sacked workers looked to the TUC's annual Congress meeting in Brighton. If the General Council were reluctant to discipline the electricians, then Congress would just have to make them listen to sense. There was now more at stake than just jobs and union recognition at Wapping - the whole future of British trade unionism hung in the balance.

THE TUC

- . The 1986 TUC Congress was held in Brighton at the beginning of September. It was obvious from the outset that the General Council was going to be opposed to any motion asking for them to deal with the EETPU. As only 20 seats had been allocated to the strikers in the gallery (out of sight, out of mind perhaps?), most pickets and their supporters massed outside the Brighton Conference Centre to lobby delegates. They were kept away from the delegates by barriers and police, but much chanting meant that they couldn't be ignored. Few delegates bothered to approach the demo, most preferring to get inside as quickly as possible. Arthur Scargill was one of the few who took the time to talk to the pickets, and was given a warm reception. Brenda Dean was jeered after trying to say a few words, and, not suprisingly, Eric Hammond sneaked in by a back entrance. Unfortunately for him he forgot about the pickets inside who pursued him all day.

The News International motion was 11th on the agenda, proposed by the NGA and seconded by SOGAT and read as follows:

"Congress congratulates members of the NGA, SOGAT, AEU and the NUJ who are in dispute with News International in a principled stand for jobs, trade union recognition and adequate compensation.

Congress condemns the Tory Government's anti-union laws which have been instrumental

THE Scum

THE PAPER THAT SUPPORTS THE PICKETS

STILL ONLY 10p



BARBED

WIRE

LIES!

The truth
about the
class war
against
Murdoch's
empire

SUPER SIZZLING SOLIDARITY SPECIAL



throughout the entire strike, "They are taking a partisan position in an industrial dispute and acting as a private army escorting Murdoch's scab papers at the public's expense."

The motion was seconded by Brenda Dean, and while the speech sounded fiery it must be remembered that the speaker had done her utmost to sabotage the strike and sell-out the strikers. Like Dubbins she dwelt on the EETPU's collusion with Murdoch. "This dispute has exposed the shameful role of the EETPU, a so-called trade union. Murdoch could not have achieved anything without the collaboration of the EETPU.....Hammond and the EETPU leadership have not only stolen the jobs of our union members, they have stolen the jobs of their own Fleet Street section who were being put on the dole so that EETPU scabs could work in Wapping. We must go beyond passing motions, we must follow them through. We are dealing with an anti-union union. We need to stop this scabbing union once and for all." Fine words, but where was that commitment to following through motions when the striking chapels voted to escalate the dispute and the picketing. It had been convenient then for Dean to ignore the motions and her members wishes.

Next to speak in support of the motion was the NUJ's General Secretary Harry Conroy who, as usual, had to apologise for all his members who were scabbing. "We have 150 members - and the number is growing daily - who have either refused to go to Wapping or who have walked out of Wapping.....who have shown the principled way and stood four square with their sacked colleagues." More fine rhetoric, but the fact was that most News International NUJ members had crossed the picket line since day one, and still continued to do so. They were News International's lifeblood, without them Murdoch would not be able to produce his scab papers and it was only at that late date after months of scabbing, that the NUJ was taking some disciplinary action against NUJ members working at Wapping.

Next to the rostrum came Jock Whyman of the AEU, who had 200 members on strike

TUC'86 BRIGHTON



in assisting Rupert Murdoch to dismiss five and a half thousand British workers in order to increase his profits to fund his media empire in the USA.

Congress confirms that this dispute must be settled by negotiation on the basis of achieving trade union recognition for the production unions at Wapping and Kinning Park, employment opportunities, retraining facilities and adequate compensation.

Congress instructs the General Council to actively enlist the involvement of all affiliated unions in stepping up the demonstrations of support for trade union rights at Wapping and Kinning Park and elsewhere. In addition, Congress resolves to give increased support to the 'boycott' campaign against 'The Sun', 'News of the World', 'The Times' and 'Sunday Times'.

Congress rejects the decision of the General Council made by 15 to 14 votes on February 5th 1986 not to issue a directive to the EETPU requiring them to "inform their members to refrain from undertaking work normally done by members of other print unions at Grays Inn Road and Bouverie Street."

Congress is further aware that EETPU members in Wapping subsequently issued a statement confirming "We took employment on this site to set up a new London newspaper with new machinery. It was additional work and not as we understood to displace others. We are concerned that an honourable settlement is found for all concerned including ourselves and would make it clear that EETPU members will support their union in actions to secure such a settlement." "

Proposing the motion Tony Dubbins dealt in great detail with the EETPU's treachery. "It is a disgrace to even call the EETPU a trade union. Their officials have sat in on company interviews for the new scab workforce..... The EETPU during the miners' strike had said they would have supported the NUM if they had held a ballot. In our dispute we had held two ballots and the response of the EETPU was to steal our members jobs and act as a scab recruiting agency." Dubbins also mentioned the role played by the Metropolitan police

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"INTERNATIONAL SYMBOLS OF CLASS SOLIDARITY"

Back in May when the strikers rejected Murdoch's derisory offer it was made clear that it was a 'final offer' - there would be nothing else.

But as the months passed and the picketing continued, Murdoch was obviously getting worried, and so, in September 1986, he offered the unions another 'final' offer to end the dispute once and for all. Naturally the TUC and the union's leadership jumped at the offer. The strikers were horrified. "According to the News International offer, there are no jobs at present in Wapping. We know that this is a lie, because all the jobs at present being done in Wapping are ours" wrote Iain Notman, Times Stereo NGA. "If we accept the News International offer as it stands, we will have destroyed Trade Unionism in all National newspapers, and signed away any hope of justice for those coming behind."

This was a sentiment echoed by Tony Newbury, FoC Times Photo Technicians Chapel, SOGAT RIRMA Branch, who was writing in the 'Wapping Post': "The loyalty of the members of our chapel, matched equally by that of all the brothers and sisters in dispute, is now being rewarded in this fashion. A niggardly monetary offer and recognition of a scabs work council in Wapping. We will NOT accept this third and Final offer and wipe away the years of struggle fought by those who came before us, nor will we deprive those who come after us, of the right to work".

This latest offer was an insult to the courageous men and women who had held the front line against Murdoch for eight months. There was a slight increase in the money available but no mention of jobs or union recognition which was what the strike was all about. The deal included a number of clauses including no recognition for the unions at Wapping and Kinning Park, and the establishment of, what in effect, would be a scab council made up of representatives of the unions, including the EETPU and scab NUJ members, management reps and non-union workers.

This body, called the 'Joint national council' would have a number of tasks, including the selection of sacked workers for future employment if vacancies arose. What it meant, of course, was that no decent trade unionist, and certainly no-one active in the dispute, had a chance of getting a job in Wapping. As the 'Wapping Post' on September 28th stated: "For any of our members to even



at Wapping. But this wonderful 'trade unionist' wasn't speaking in support of the motion but actually opposing it! "We too object to the actions of the EETPU" he declared amid boos from the hall, "but they have been tried and found 'guilty' by the General Council and they have obeyed the General Council. It's no good going back over old ground". The electricians may well have obeyed the General Council, but the advice given to them was so meaningless as to have no effect whatsoever.

When Hammond himself made his way to oppose the motion the hall erupted in jeers and boos. "We deny any responsibility for the 6,000 sacked printworkers" he declared. "If there was a plot, we had no part in it." The man's arrogance was incredible. To get up and deny any knowledge of what the EETPU had done in the face of all the evidence to the contrary was disgusting. "The print unions should have used the six months notice of termination of their agreements given in December '85 to get good Fleet Street redundancy terms for their members." The rest of his speech was mercifully almost inaudible amid the hisses and shouting.

Almost as bad was Norman Willis, who tried to defend his appalling performance in the face of an all-out onslaught on trade unionism. "We have done all we could within the law" he whined. As one picket said "If we'd always stuck within the law, there'd be no TUC today and no unions for that matter. Working people have only ever advanced when they've broken the law, but then again Willis and his kind couldn't give a shit about working people." In the end the motion was passed overwhelmingly with a 2 to 1 majority. It now remained to be seen whether Willis and the TUC General Council would abide by the decision of Congress and deal with the EETPU.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT AND
SOLIDARITY, JOIN THE MASS
MARCH TO WAPPING ON



SATURDAY, 30th AUG.
3pm, FLEET STREET
SALISBURY SQUARE

BRING FACTORY, BRANCH, DISTRICT
BANNERS, DEMAND THE RIGHT TO
WORK, AND UNION RECOGNITION.

SPEAKERS INVITED INCLUDE
PRESIDENT, GENERAL SECRETARY,
EXECUTIVE COUNCILMAN DIV. 7.
DIVISIONAL ORGANISER DIV. 25.

ISSUED BY AEU NEWS INTERNATIONAL
STRIKE COMMITTEE



get a sniff of the tiny trickle of jobs that may arise, they must go through a selection procedure and vetting far more 'barbed' than the razor wire surrounding the Fortress.....We do not believe we have spent eight months of our lives in hardship, suffering and struggle just to get recognition for scabs and hand a victory to Murdoch and Hammond".

When the ballot results were announced on October 8th they were even better than before. SOGAT voted by an astounding 2,372 to 960 to reject the offer. Brenda Dean, announcing the result, said "They (News International) must now take full account of the democratically expressed views of their employees, made clear in two successive secret ballots, and re-open negotiations. Jobs and trade union recognition inside Wapping and Kinning Park are being demanded on this ballot result." The full results of the ballot were:

London Machine Branch	1,115 to 214	Clerical Branch	240 to 141
London Central Branch	641 to 350	NGA	556 to 116
RIRMA	367 to 137	AEU	107 to 47

The news of the ballot result was welcomed with joy by the pickets. That evening 3,000 marched from Tower Hill, taking a different route it went via Aldgate roundabout and along Commercial Road, cheered on by residents and passers by. The march, coming south down King David's Lane to reach The Highway, was confronted by lines of police who attempted to arrest some of the marchers, leading to hand-to-hand fighting. Having thwarted the police's attempted arrests, the march continued to The Highway just in time to see a convoy of four scab lorries making the dash from the Fortress. Two of these artics had their windows smashed before they could scuttle away.

It was another round to the rank and file strikers, but how to escalate the dispute from this point was going to be a problem.

NUJ

In late October the NUJ eventually made their first moves towards disciplining their 545 members working in Wapping, under Rule 18, which covers conduct by members which is "detrimental to the interests of the union and of the profession of journalism". Those journalists who had accepted jobs in Wapping

The NUJ is **still** in dispute with **News International**. **NUJ** members employed by The Times, The Sunday Times, The Sun and The News of the World are **instructed** not to work at Wapping or cross picket lines there or at Kinning Park.

NUJ members are instructed not to apply for or take jobs on any of the newspapers published at Wapping.

Any member taking a job at Wapping is liable to disciplinary proceedings under union rules.

The NUJ will remain in dispute with News International until all our members are reinstated, re-engaged or compensated.

NUJ
NATIONAL UNION
OF
JOURNALISTS

Please contact Harry Conroy, General Secretary of the NUJ (01-278 7916) if you require further information or advice.

But if some trade union leaders and officials had forgotten about the basics of trade unionism, others had not. In an article in the 'Wapping Post' of 25th October 1986 Arthur Scargill gave a spirited defence of the Wapping pickets. "At this point in history, the men and women locked out of Wapping nine months ago are fighting for all the fundamental elements on which our movement was built. The Wapping demonstrations, of course, have become international symbols of class solidarity....It reminds



us that trade unionism is synonymous with fighting for justice, family and security and individual dignity. Wapping is about the right to work, and about the worker's right to trade union representation and protection.....Today's great struggles prove that we need one another's support not only to survive, but in order to build a better society for those who will come after us..... Trade unionism is first and foremost about principles. Organisation, administrative, strategies and tactics all take meaning and validity only from the dreams which have spurred humanity since its beginnings. Without adherence to principles, our Movement has no heart, and no reason for being. We can best sustain the heart through solidarity with one another. It is up to the entire Movement, with the leadership of the print unions and the TUC, to provide effective action on Wapping now."

Unfortunately, not all union leaders were like Arthur Scargill, and at the other extreme was the traitor Hammond. With the publication of Linda Melvern's book 'The End of the Street', yet more information (based on secret management meeting minutes and interviews with NI executives and Southampton EETPU members) came to light of Hammonds' deceit. The problem was going to be to get the TUC to look at this fresh evidence and implement the Brighton Congress decision - something they were obviously reluctant to do.

The new evidence in 'The End of the Street' was extremely disturbing. It showed, among other things, that the EETPU's Tom Rice had accompanied Pole-Carew and John Keating, of Murdoch's News America, on a tour of US newspapers NINE MONTHS BEFORE the move to Wapping. He had also held regular meetings with Pole-Carew

in London to discuss Wapping. The minutes of one of these meetings, on August 8th 1985, read "Mechanical Technicians are now needed.....CPC (Pole-Carew) feels that the union will provide the necessary people by the end of the month". How then do we explain the EETPU's submission to the TUC General Council in February 1986, when they stated that they had no dealings with Pole-Carew. Tom Rice, the man who had been meeting with Pole-Carew for months before the strike lied through his teeth to the General Council. "The EETPU had no contact with Pole-Carew" he stated.

'The End of the Street' also shows that there was a draft agreement between the EETPU and the 'London Post'. Minutes of a management meeting on May 21st 1985 show Murdoch's lawyer, Geoffrey Richards, talking about the "draft agreement between the 'London Post' and the EETPU". Once again this is totally the opposite to what the EETPU told the General Council. Hammond stated quite categorically: "We have no arrangement, no understanding, and nor are we seeking one at the moment". This was 9 months AFTER the EETPU/'London Post' agreement had first surfaced.

Far from the EETPU's earlier denials that they knew nothing about what was going on in their Southampton branch being true, it was revealed that the EETPU national office had actually paid Steven Seamen (son of Vivian Seamen) to recruit scabs for Wapping. According to the 'Wapping Post', Seamen was hired during the summer of 1985 for nine weeks in order to recruit for Wapping. During that time he recruited some 400 scabs. There was no doubt that this was done with the full knowledge of the EETPU's national officers. Under the EETPU's own rules, permission would have been needed from the National Executive to supply labour outside the Southampton Branch's area. The truth of the matter was that the EETPU at national level had been involved with Murdoch's scheme all along. This fresh evidence also showed that the EETPU had blatantly lied to the TUC at the February meeting.

On November 26th the General Council of the TUC met to look at the fresh evidence. In addition to the evidence in Linda Melvern's book there was additional information over the electricians role. An article by Patrick Wintour in 'The Guardian' on November 20th had concluded that Hammond had given Murdoch his personal approval for the move to Wapping. In a top secret management document it was stated that Hammond "was thoroughly prepared



to go ahead and also accepted that should there be an emergency need to start without the 'London Post', this would be acceptable to him".

At the stormy General Council meeting SOGAT argued that motion 11, passed with a large majority by Congress, should be implemented. The NGA rejected Willis's feeble argument that the case against the EETPU had been dealt with in February, rightly pointing out that the February decision had been rejected by Congress. After a long and heated debate the General Council voted by 23 to 21 to ignore the clearly expressed wishes of Congress. The 21 who voted to abide by motion 11 and instruct the EETPU to instruct its members in Wapping not to do the work of the sacked printers represented more trade unionists than did the 23 who betrayed the strikers and the movement. As the 'Wapping Post' put it: "Norman Willis and the 23 who supported him have strained the rules of the TUC almost to breaking point to get the electricians off the hook". It was incredible that, despite all the new evidence, Willis still refused to act. He told the General Council that "if the allegations in 'End of the Street' were correct then he would regard the EETPU's conduct as despicable and contrary to just about every Trade Union principle he had ever believed in". He wasn't, however, prepared to even look at the new evidence. As the 'Picket' newsletter stated: "The TUC is not bothered by pickets in prison, or the massive strike-breaking operation in the heart of London, or the police assaults, or workers hardship etc. What bothers them is picketing, just as they hated the miners pickets".

OTHER FRONTS

Meanwhile in other areas there was a flurry of activity. The NUJ finally expelled a Wapping scab from the union, Carson Black. This disgusting individual had ignored NUJ instructions not to apply for jobs at Wapping and had left the 'Birmingham Post' for a job on 'The Sun'. In response to Black's expulsion the 'Sun' NUJ Chapel suspended payment of it's subscriptions to the national union. At the same time Murdoch was attempting to buy off the NUJ refuseniks. The offer was made to less than half the sacked NUJ members and was a derisory four weeks pay. Sticking to their principles, the sacked journalists rejected

GUARDIAN NEWSPAPERS Electrical Chapel

Though our Union's role
has weakened our movement,
Despair Not,
We Will Arise.
Tim Palmer FoC

Daily Mail Electrical Chapel

We ask Conference
to condemn the role
of our officials
in the Wapping dispute.

John Mitchell FoC

Daily Mirror Electrical Chapel

For evil to triumph
it requires honest men
to be silent.
Our Union must
be cleansed now.

Dennis Smith FoC

SUN/NoW Electrical Chape

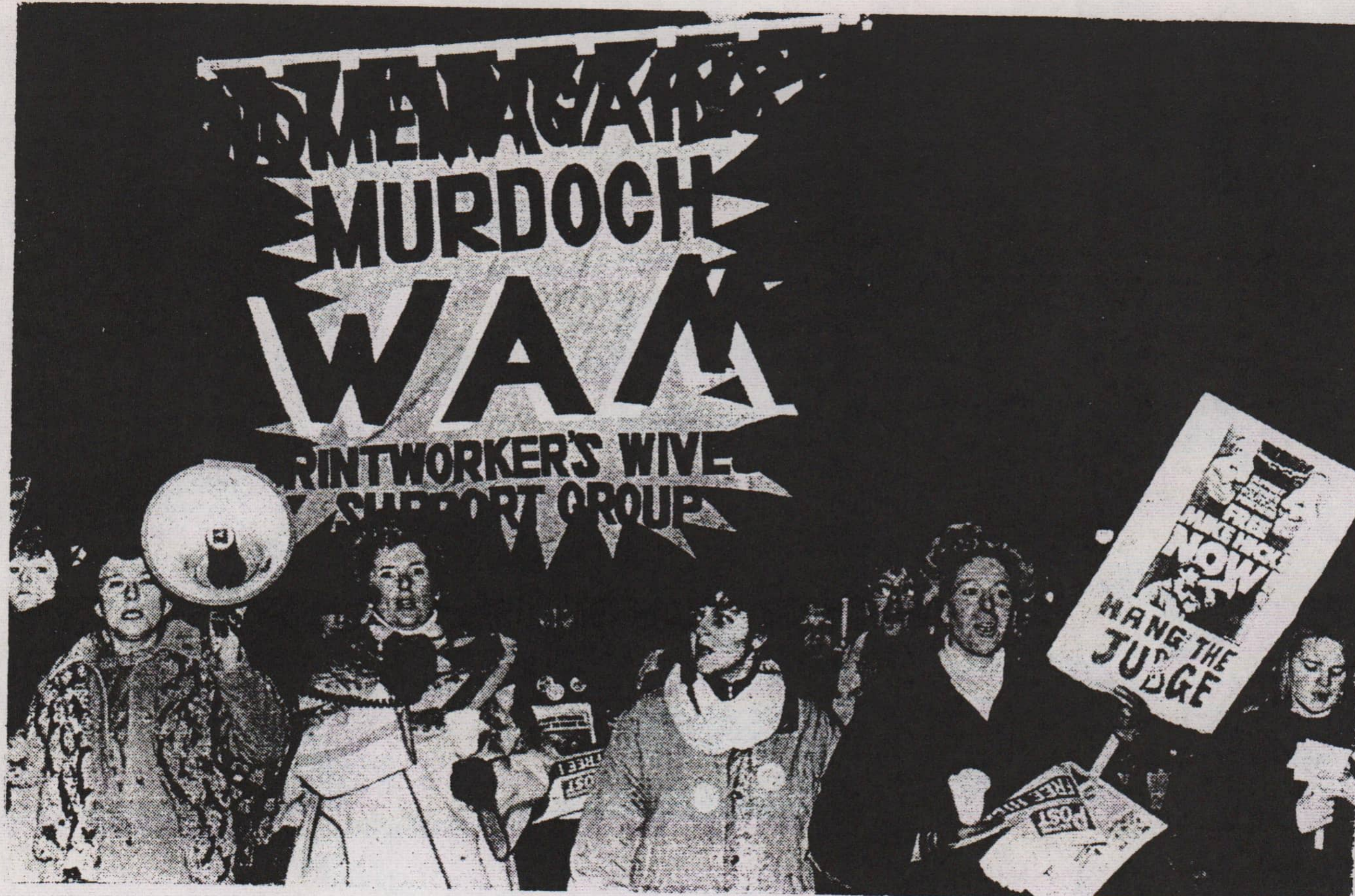
Wounded
January 24th, 1986
Finally murdered
March 7th, 1987

Financial Times Electrical Chapel

THE
EXECUTIVE AND OUR
ENEMIES WERE
TOGETHER IN
PERSECUTING TRADE
UNIONISTS WHO
FOUGHT FOR THEIR
JOBS AT WAPPING
Jack Gillick FoC

TIMES SUNDAY TIMES Electrical Chapel

WOUNDED
January 24th, 1986
FINALLY MURDERED
March 7th, 1987



the offer and re-affirmed that any agreement with the NUJ must be part of a settlement that would involve all workers in dispute.

News International were also back in the courts yet again. The victims this time were not the unions but three London Labour-controlled councils which had banned Murdoch's titles and refused to talk to scab journalists. For their solidarity with the sacked workers the three councils, Camden, Ealing and Hammersmith were ordered by the High Court to lift their bans. As Camden Council leader, Tony Dykes, said at the time of the hearing, the case illustrated yet "another sorry tale of unelected judges replacing democratically elected councillors in local decision making".

Another welcome development was that the women of the strike were now getting organised. The newly-formed Women Against Murdoch (WAM) very soon found themselves in a confrontation with the forces of 'law and order'. Following their initial meeting, the 60 strong group of women marched on the Fortress where the police moved in to make arrests. Their first attempt was thwarted by the women who refused to leave The Highway until their arrested member was released. The police eventually gave in and released the woman, but later that night they arrested more WAM members. Like Women Against Pit Closures before them, the women of the Wapping strike were standing side by side with the men and carrying the strike forward with their enormous courage and determination. There was no way they would surrender to Murdoch and his scabs.

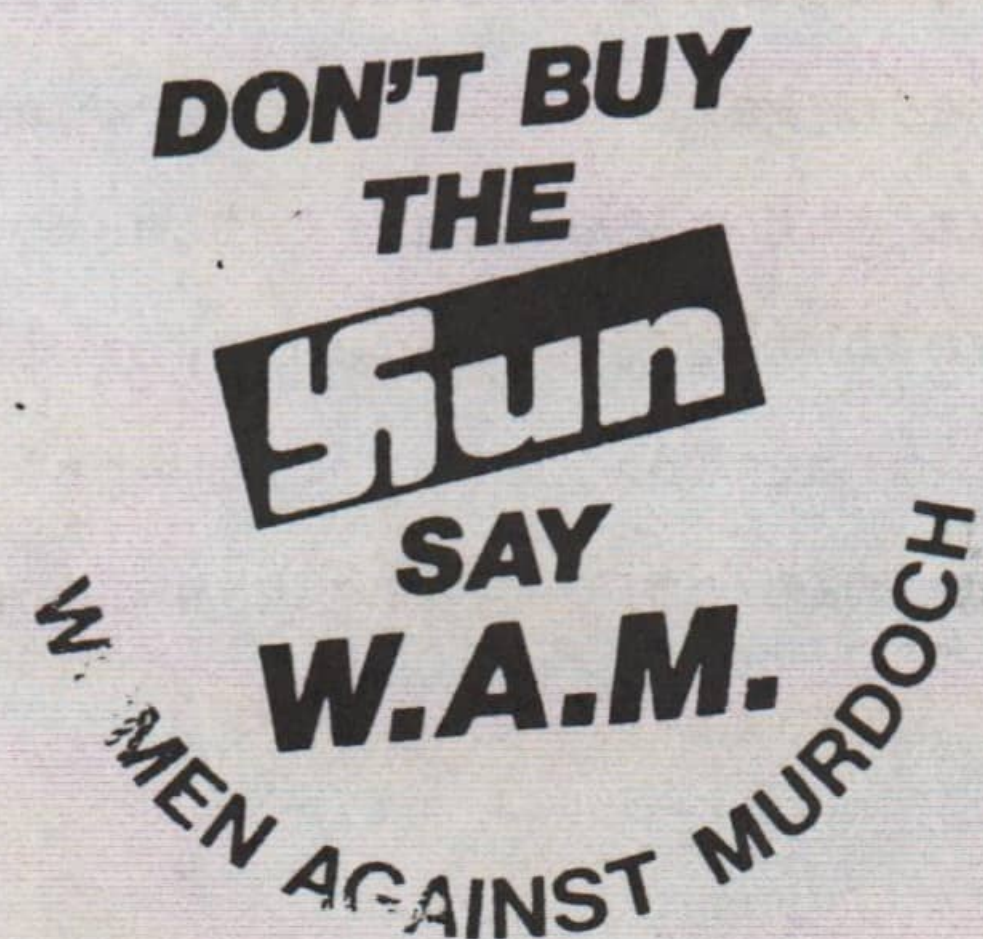
Saturday October 18th saw another successful picket at Wapping. After the main march from Tower Hill was over, several hundred pickets left Wellclose and made their way to the Commercial Road area, a well known scab run. A scab coach was caught making the dash from Butchers Row and was hit by a missile. Just after 11 o'clock a convoy of three artics, escorted by the police, came east down Commercial Road. Pickets swarmed onto a zebra crossing bringing the convoy to a halt. This brought a swift response from the Met. Three vanloads of police piled out and attacked the pickets, allowing the artics to move on. Unfortunately for them a hundred yards further down the road they ran into more pickets and lost their windscreens before fleeing. Into the early hours, as happened every week, white mice were damaged throughout London. Frustration was leading to these guerilla actions, but it was clear that on their own they could not win the dispute, that had to be done on the picket line. But it was all costing TNT a lot of money. TNT admitted that there had been 600 attacks on them during 1986, and Chief Inspector Rowe, writing in 'Police Review', claimed that every single vehicle owned by TNT had had it's windows smashed since the start of the dispute.

BRITISH RAIL

Meanwhile Murdoch was recieving a nasty shock from British Rail, who took out a £37 million law suit against News International for breach of contract. There had been a threat of legal action hanging over News International ever since they had met with BR in July, at which time the Board were told that the four News International titles would not be carried by rail until the Wapping strike was over. This prompted British Rail's national business manager, John Fitzgerald, to declare: "trust is dead between us".

The difficulties arose because British Rail had a £9 million a year agreement with News International to carry their papers until 1988. When Murdoch moved to Wapping he immediately switched his distribution to the road using TNT. This was something he had planned well in advance, anticipating that the rail unions, ASLEF and the NUR, would refuse to handle the scab newspapers.

There were also problems on another front, for the Met' finest. Detectives

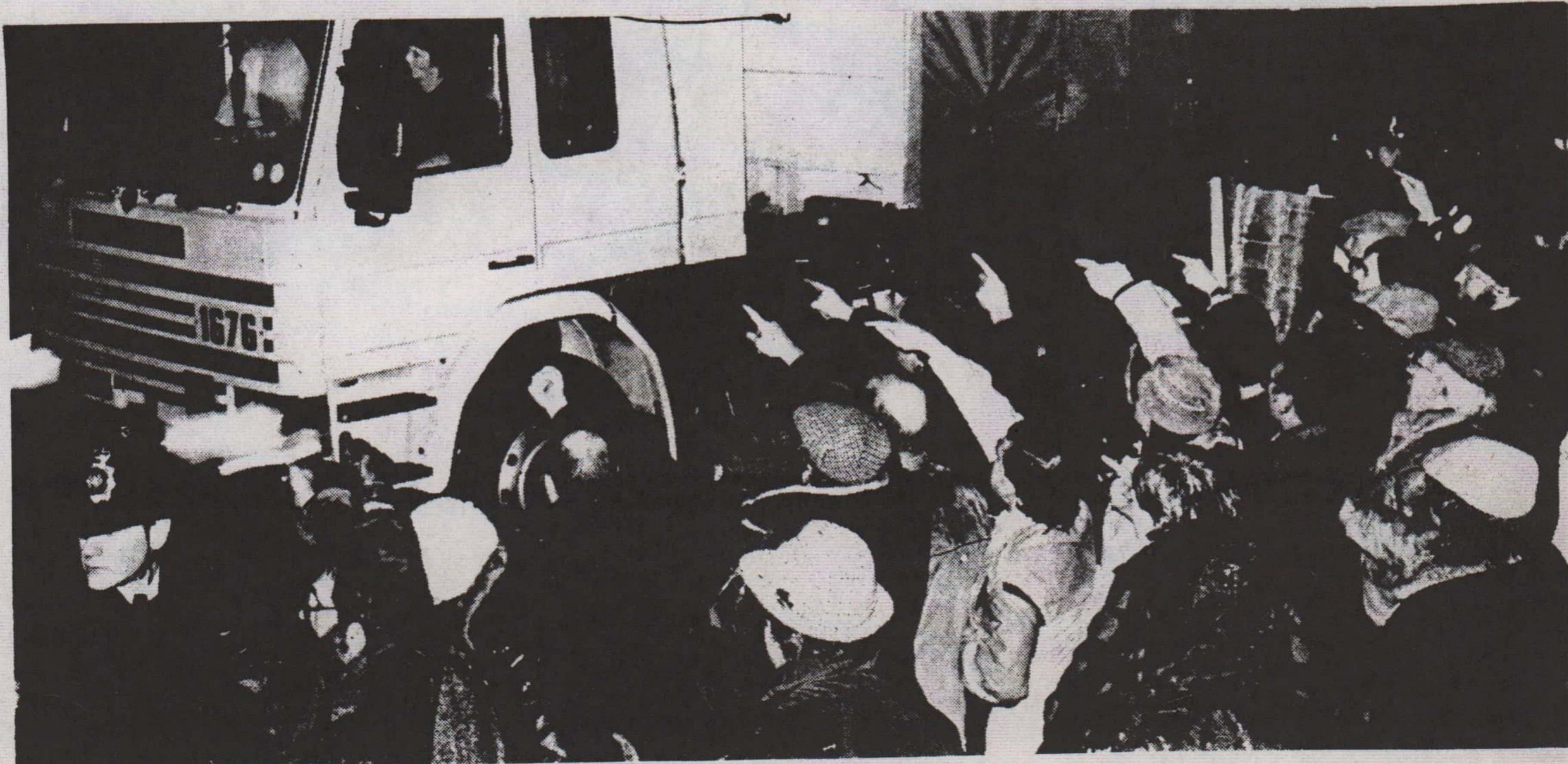


were starting to complain about what was going on at Murdoch's plant. They claimed serious crime was going undetected because "all the overtime money is going on policing the Wapping dispute". Adding his voice to the complaints was Michael Bennet, chairman of the Metropolitan Federation. "If we had our way we wouldn't be policing there (Wapping) at all. Our presence has only succeeded in making a large number of people anti-police. The public are angry because police are being taken off the streets because of Wapping. Police morale is rockbottom."

THE JARROW MARCH

On Saturday November 1st, 10 months into the strike, the march to Wapping was led by the Jarrow marchers, who had walked down through the country from the North East, as had their grandfathers, to focus public attention on the plight of the unemployed. The 3,000 strong march reached Wellclose and were greeted by a fireworks display. The pickets cheered as rockets went flying over the razor wire into the scab plant. Later in the evening hundreds of pickets made their way to the Commercial Road area. Confident, because of their numbers, the police brought a convoy out just before midnight, along Butchers Row and down into Commercial Road. As it happened, they probably regretted the move, as at least two artics lost their windscreens.

The fireworks continued throughout the week. On Wednesday November 4th 1,000 pickets marched on Wapping to be met by mounted police at Virginia Street. Once again rockets arched into the air from Wellclose, only this time they started landing in the police ranks, where one mounted policeman was thrown to the ground. The police strikebreakers responded by moving into Wellclose and arresting anyone in sight, with the usual violence. They were ably assisted by Mike Hicks, SOGAT steward, who called for the fireworks to stop. The



following Saturday the fireworks were still in evidence, and one of them even went sailing into the Fortress to land on a scab lorry on the ramp.

It was clear that the resolve of the men and women on the picket line was as strong as ever. Murdoch once again tried to buy them off by offering individual compensation. Very few took his blood money, and those that did had never really been involved in the fight at all - they would not be missed. "Which side are you on?" asked the 'Picket' newsletter, as it sent out this message to the strikers: "Are you going to accept the scab infection in Wapping? The sight of armoured coaches, security cars, scab lorries and vans in the same street as you is ugly. Massed police strikebreaking is going on in front of your eyes. Petitions and prayers won't stop the scabs. Picketing will. These scabs can be forced out and police ambitions broken up. Organise, picket. In numbers there is strength."



CLASS PRISONERS

As the pickets dug in for the long winter months, the judges renewed their vicious attack on the working class. In October, Steven Savage of SOGAT Central Branch had been sent to prison for 3 months. Now it was the turn of 'Sunday Times' NGA compositor Bob Shirfield, sentenced to nine months, and Mike Hicks of SOGAT Central Branch, sentenced to 12 months (eight months suspended).

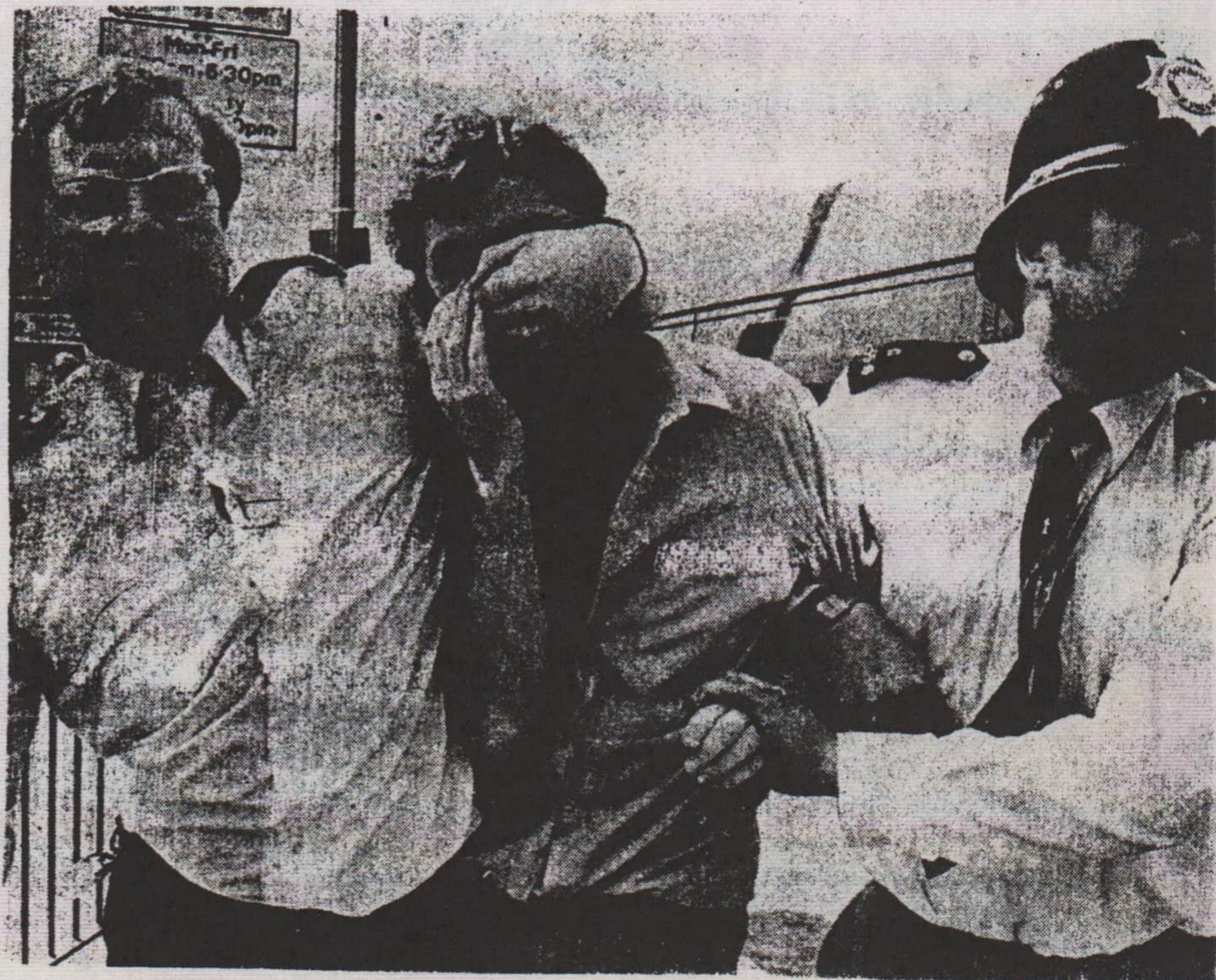
Hick's case, in particular, showed the lengths to which the police and the judiciary would go to frame someone and send them to prison.

It had all happened before of course. The Pentonville 5 were dockers who were imprisoned during their industrial action in 1972. They were subsequently released when the country ground to a halt with an unofficial general strike in their support. Three Shrewsbury building workers had also been imprisoned during their national strike in 1972, and more recently there were all the miners imprisoned during the coal dispute. But what the ruling class failed to realise was that they couldn't break the working class by locking them away. There were always others to take their place. As Arthur Scargill once said: "Don't they understand they acn't imprison my mind? They can't sequestrate my ideas." From the Tolpuddle Martyrs to the present day the judges have never had any hesitation in dealing ruthlessly with the organised working class. As Terry French, a member of Kent NUM jailed during the miners strike, put it: "We aren't in prison to be taught a lesson. We are the lesson."

THE WOMEN'S MARCH

Six hundred women marched to Wapping on Saturday December 13th, to meet up with 600 on a print support group march. They were joined at the top of Virginia Street by 2,500 pickets who had marched from Tower Hill. By 3am the next morning, with considerable numbers of pickets still present, 300 people surged down and took the main gate at one of the busiest times for a newspaper. The pickets stood their ground for over an hour, until the police had drafted in enough numbers to push them back up Virginia Street. The picket had been so effective, however, that copies of the scab papers were late or undelivered throughout the country.

The following Saturday, the gate was once again taken by 400 pickets at 5pm. Three hundred had quickly moved along Pennington Street, while the other 100 had come down Virginia Street, catching the police completely by suprise. It wasn't until nearly 7 o'clock that the police were strong enough to



NATIONAL PRINT SUPPORT GROUPS DEMONSTRATION



ON 13th DECEMBER 1986

MEET AT ALDGATE EAST

STATION AT 8.30 pm.

SHOW YOUR SOLIDARITY

WITH THE PRINTERS.

Strike Graphics

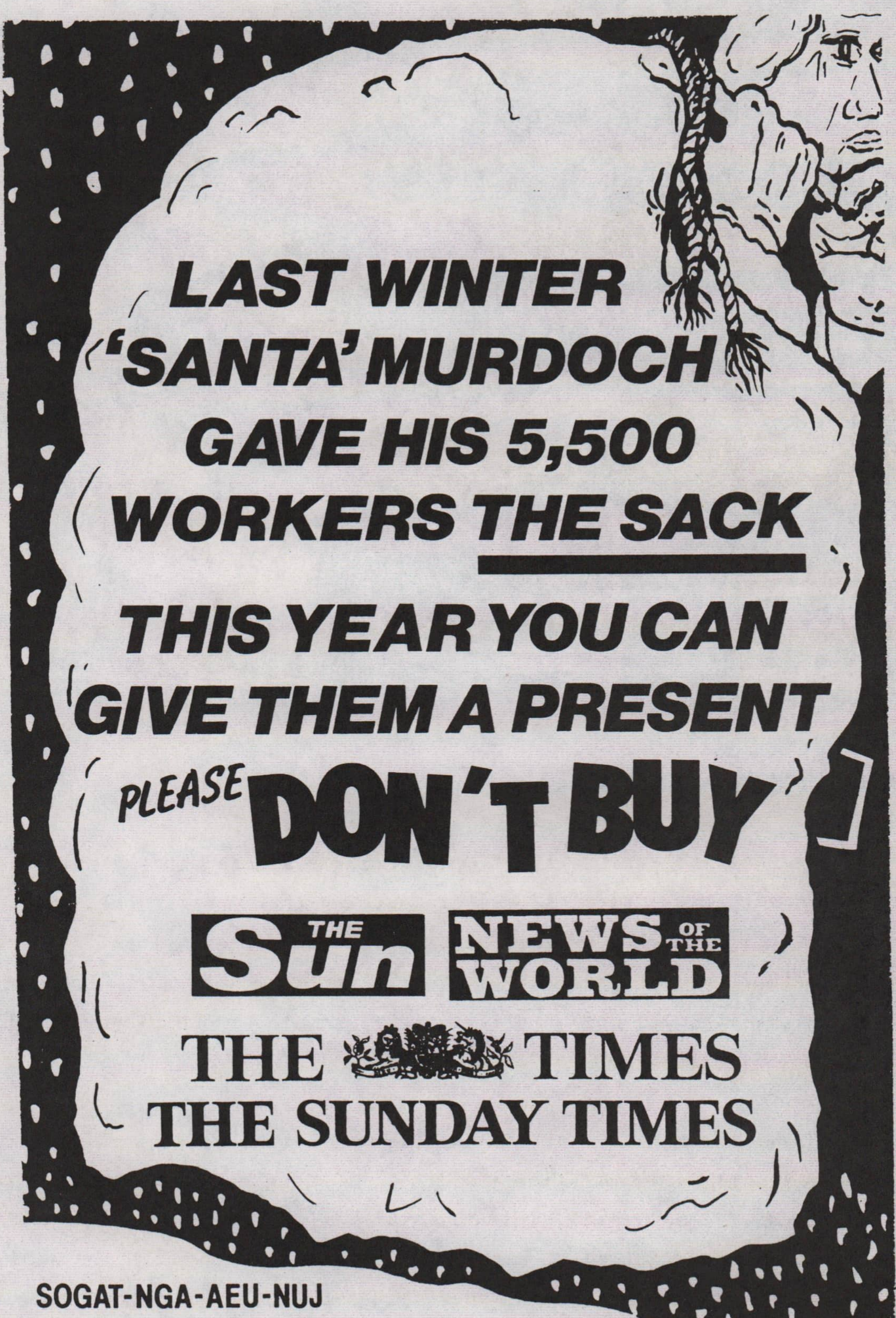


force the pickets to retreat.

Looking back at the year, 'Picket' newsletter evaluated the situation. "We are at a stalemate, News International are getting their papers out, but we are harassing them. Further, we are frustrating News International's efforts to expand and they are suffering from a declining share of the UK Press Market. The longer this dispute goes on the more frustrated the employers will become. It is a war of attrition."

"We still have to take the initiative, from the start of this dispute it is the employers who have made the running, the question is how we take this out of their hands. Some are claiming that the key to the dispute lies with the TUC. However, even if the TUC expelled the scabs or the EETPU the strikebreakers would carry on. Moreover the TUC is a sell-out.....It has become obvious from the beginning that the leadership of our unions are either unwilling or unable to prosecute the dispute and therefore all the action has to be organised and implemented by ourselves."

"News International did not expect this dispute to run for so long, they will now let the winter run it's course and we have to keep up the pressure, if we



**LAST WINTER
'SANTA' MURDOCH
GAVE HIS 5,500
WORKERS THE SACK
THIS YEAR YOU CAN
GIVE THEM A PRESENT
PLEASE **DON'T BUY****

**THE
Sun**

**NEWS OF
THE
WORLD**

**THE  TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES**

SOGAT-NGA-AEU-NUJ

Wapping Print Workers Children's Christmas Appeal

AEU — NGA — NUJ — SOGAT

This Christmas will be a little different for the Wapping Print Workers and their families. It is now ten months since they were callously sacked by Rupert Murdoch's News International.

As a result of this long and bitter dispute many of our sacked members and their families are now experiencing severe hardship and distress and are only just managing to cope financially.

Therefore, the unions involved in the "Wapping Dispute" — AEU, NGA, NUJ, and SOGAT — are launching the "Wapping Print Workers' Children's Christmas Appeal".

The aim of the "Appeal" is to raise substantial sums of money to alleviate the undoubted hardship and distress that many "Wapping Print Workers" and their families are now experiencing.

We do of course fully appreciate that many of you will also be facing financial hardship yourself — particularly at this time of year when most family budgets are already stretched to their limits. Nevertheless, we most strongly urge you to support this "Wapping Print Workers' Children's Christmas Appeal".

All monies received by this "Appeal" will go directly to the "Wapping Print Workers" and their families.

By contributing to this "Appeal" we will be able to demonstrate to our "Wapping" colleagues and their families our total support for their magnificent struggle for jobs and trade union recognition at Wapping.

All cheques should be made payable to "The Wapping Print Workers' Children's Christmas Appeal" and sent to Financial Secretary, London Region NGA, 13/14 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8PF.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Les Elliot	Tony Dubbins	Harry Conroy	Brenda Dean
Divisional Organiser	General Secretary	General Secretary	General Secretary
AEU	NGA	NUJ	SOGAT

do and we organise bigger and better pickets then we can win, if we fall under the spell of the TUC we will be reduced to impotent protest."

The 'Wapping Post' had a simpler message for Murdoch: "We were here all through 1986. We will be here through 1987, 1988, 89, 90 and into the year 2000 and beyond, but it will be inside the Fortress with the barbed wire down, with our pride, our dignity, jobs and union recognition. We will never go away."

CHRISTMAS DAY

To the sacked printworkers Christmas Day was like any other, the picketing continued. A small march of around 30 set off from Tower Hill at 10.30am. When the march reached Wellclose it was met by the pickets on duty, and marched straight down Virginia Street. The police were in their van playing cards, and before they realised what was happening the gate was taken. The security guards quickly chained up the gates. The group stayed there a while chatting to the pickets on the gate before the police escorted them back to Wellclose. It was the first time in the dispute that union banners had been placed at the gates of Wapping.

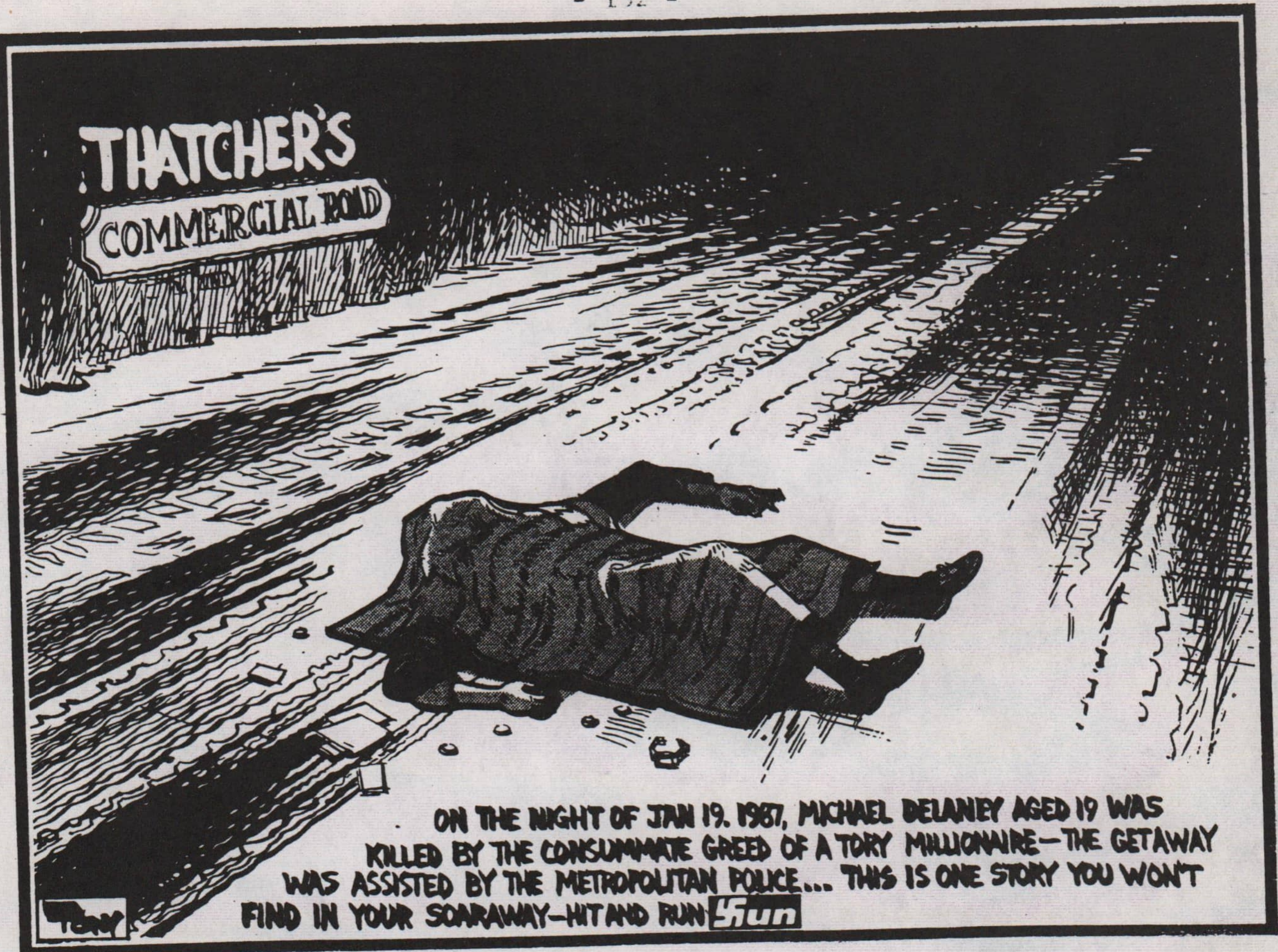
TNT KILLERS

On the night of January 10th 1987, Michael Delaney, aged only 19, was knocked down and killed by a TNT scab lorry at the junction of Butchers Row and Commercial Road. He had been returning from a birthday party at the time, when he was crushed beneath the wheels of the artic. The lorry had been part of a convoy coming from Wapping, and had even had a police escort. Despite this, the driver was allowed to carry on his journey - obviously Murdoch's scab papers were more important than a young man's life.

Sacked printers who quickly







arrived at the scene of the accident were abused by the brave boys of the Met and told to go away. All this time Michael Delaney lay in the road in freezing temperatures, without any cover. When, again, printers offered to give 1st aid the police threatened to arrest them, and eventually did arrest one picket. The sheer callousness of the police was shown by police radio messages that at first thought a picket had thrown himself at the scab lorry. A later message read: "They need not worry, he wasn't a picket so they haven't got a martyr."

It was only a miracle that someone hadn't been killed before. Time and time again the unions had warned about the possibility of a serious accident, with Murdoch's scab vehicles tearing along the roads, breaking speed limits and traffic regulations with the apparent approval, even encouragement, of the Metropolitan police. The attitude of police on this occasion was predictable. They said the matter was being treated as an ordinary traffic accident, and the reason they didn't stop the driver was because they knew who he was! When a TNT lorry ploughed into pickets early on in the dispute, injuring two, the police refused to take any action. Later on when scab Barry Skeggs deliberately drove his lorry across the wrong side of the road at pickets, the police pretended that they hadn't seen anything. Their hypocrisy, and that of the press was sickening. If, instead of an innocent 19 year old, it had been a scab that had been killed, it would have been front page news on every national newspaper for weeks. It would have taken pride of place on television and radio.

Instead there was a deafening silence.

To top it all off, a few days after the killing of Michael Delaney, 'The Sun' was praising it's scab drivers for getting the papers out in arctic conditions. "Our hero lorry drivers" it exclaimed. It's doubtful that the family and friends of Michael would have agreed with that sentiment.

THE NUJ MOVES AGAINST THE SCABS (AGAIN)

By the start of 1987 96 journalists in Wapping were facing fines of £1,000



from the NUJ for ignoring instructions not to work in Wapping. The scab journos were given six months to pay the fines, but they did have the right to appeal under NUJ rules to an Appeals Tribunal. Their defence at the disciplinary hearings was that the NUJ had broken the law by not holding a ballot on whether journalists should walk out. This is despite the fact that the instructions were given correctly under the NUJ's rules.

The truth of the matter was, of course, that every decent journalist who had any principles at all had refused to go to Wapping in the first place or had already left. The blacklegs left behind the wire were simply grasping for an excuse to justify their continued scabbing.



And so , as a year outside the gates of Wapping drew to a close, the strikers looked back and reflected on the first 12 months of the strike. After those 12 long and bitter months of struggle, the picketing was as strong as ever, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The quick victory that Murdoch had hoped for had failed to materialise. Despite the hardship and the suffering, despite the police violence and imprisonments, despite the scabs and the unwillingness of their own unions to support them, the News International strikers fought on. Wapping had become the rallying point for all those determined to fight back against the Tories and their anti-union laws. The printers were making a principled stand, they had refused to be bought off by Murdoch's repeated 'final' offers. They had been put out of work with the help of a so-called 'trade union', the EETPU, they had been betrayed by the TUC and let down by their own leadership, but they were far from beaten.

As John Breen, Deputy FoC 'News of the World' NGA, put it: ".....we can't do any more.....the TUC and the labour movement have got to deliver a victory for us, and not just for us, but for the rank and file of the trade union movement, because the rank and file of the trade union movement are now heartily sick to death of performing autopsies on magnificent defeats."

The pickets now prepared for the 24th January 1st Anniversary Rally. It was advertised as the 'Big One' and it was to turn out to be a night that no-one involved in will ever forget. Next to the mass picket of January 24th 1987, the May 3rd massacre and Orgreave would seem like picnics.

WAPPING

MARCH & RALLY

STRIKE ANNIVERSARY

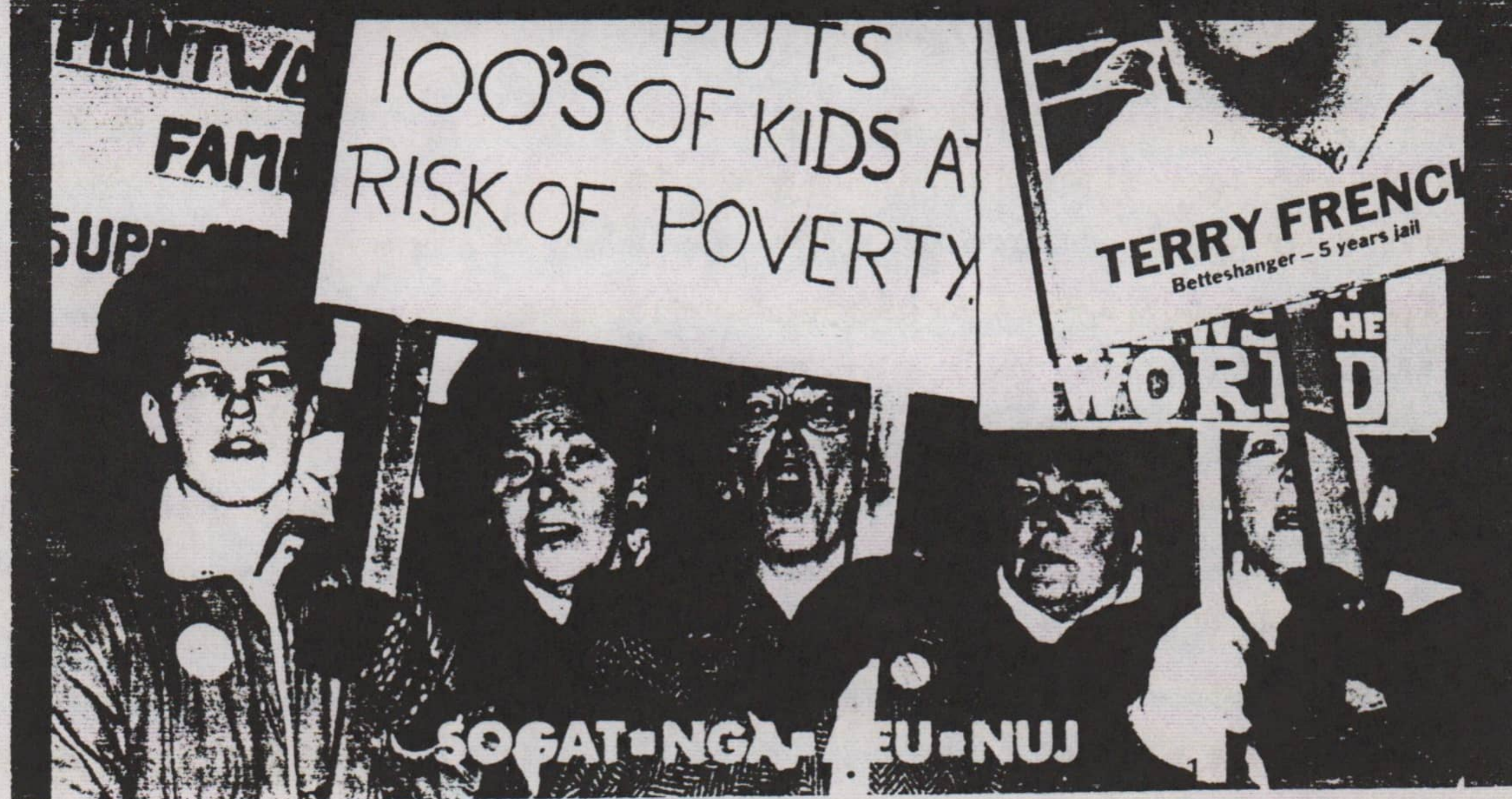
a year of struggle

SATURDAY 24th JANUARY

Assemble: Arundel Street, Temple Tube 4pm

Rally: Wellclose Street E1 6.30 pm

◆ National speakers ◆ Music ◆ Special guests ◆ Stalls ◆



CHAPTER TWELVE

"THIS IS BRITAIN 1987"

Saturday 24th 1987 was the first anniversary of the Wapping strike. It was also the night that the working class fought back. Thirty thousand people descended on Wapping from all over the country to show their support and solidarity with the sacked workers.

There were banners from almost every union on the march. From dockers to teachers, miners to railway workers, firefighters to nurses, employed and unemployed, young and

old, all marched to Murdoch's scab plant to show that working class people everywhere would not stand by and see effective trade unionism smashed. They nailed the lie that the printers had no support in the wider labour movement.

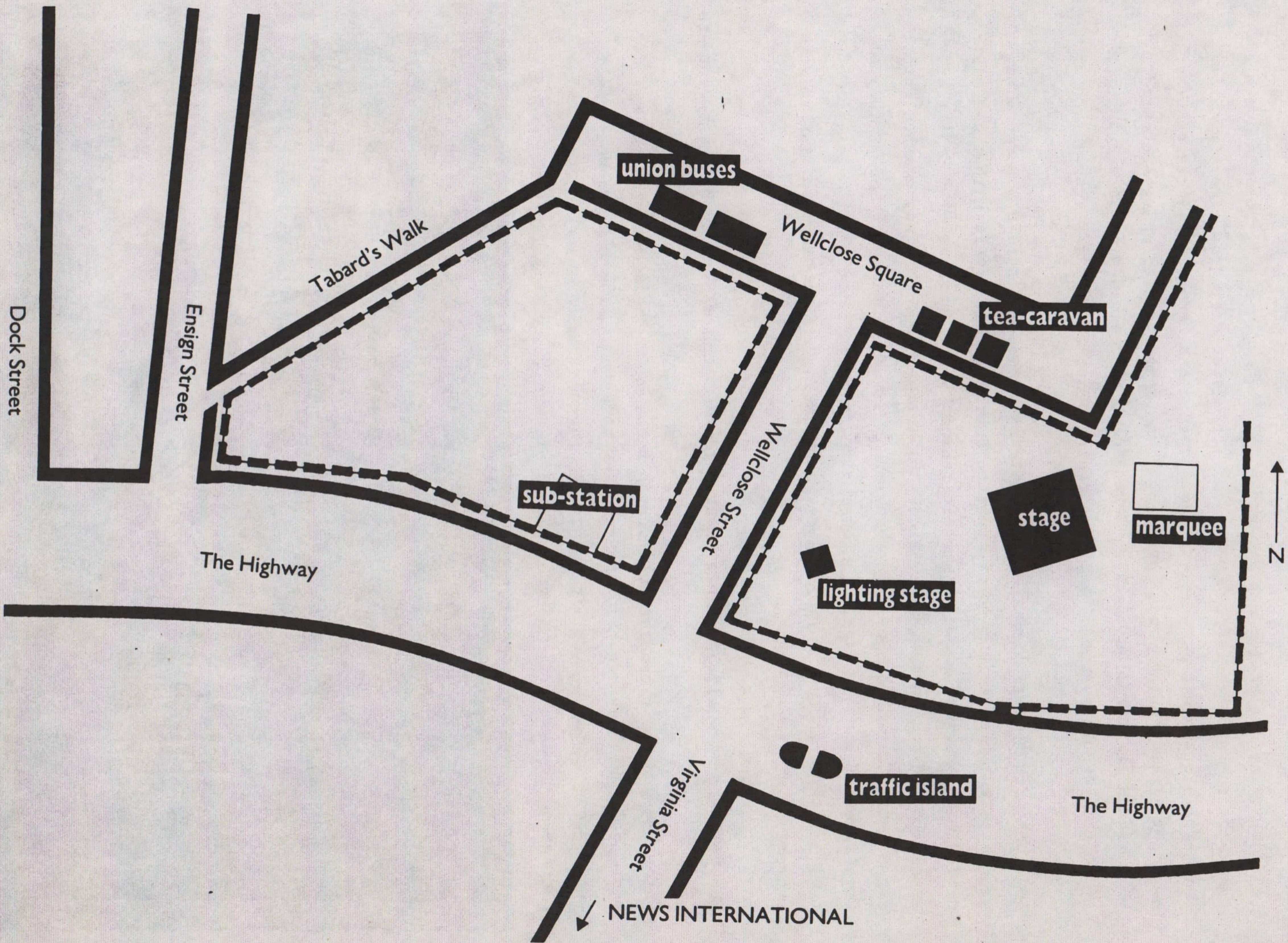
While the marchers assembled at Temple tube station for the march to Wapping, the police were busy down at Wellclose preparing a welcome. Police units, including riot squads, had been arriving at the area since 11 o'clock that morning. At least four police horse boxes had arrived up at Wapping Lane, while the mounted riot squads were much in evidence at Virginia Street. Huge floodlights had been erected at the top of Virginia Street. It was obvious that the police were determined to inflict serious injury on the pickets.

As the march reached Virginia Street, pickets blocked The Highway as far as could be seen in each direction. All the scab exits were blocked by police, including riot squads and horses. As more and more people arrived a lorry was parked at the top of Virginia Street and overturned in an attempt to stop the horses charging. From this point things changed dramatically.

The floodlights came on and riot police with full length shields moved forward. A heavily armoured JCB was brought out to move the overturned lorry. The riot squads accompanying the JCB came under a hail of missiles as they tried to beat back the crowds. The sounds of objects hitting the perspex long shields was clearly audible over the shouting. Then the small shield units started making charges into the crowds, truncheons drawn. Anyone who couldn't run fast enough was battered and arrested. By 8 o'clock the attacks were coming thick and fast, but the riot police were constantly forced to retreat as they came under attack by the pickets determined to stand their ground in the face



Map of the Area



of the savage onslaught. Reports were coming in of plain clothes police among the pickets, directing riot squads through pocket radios, and police agent provocateurs throwing missiles at the riot shields.

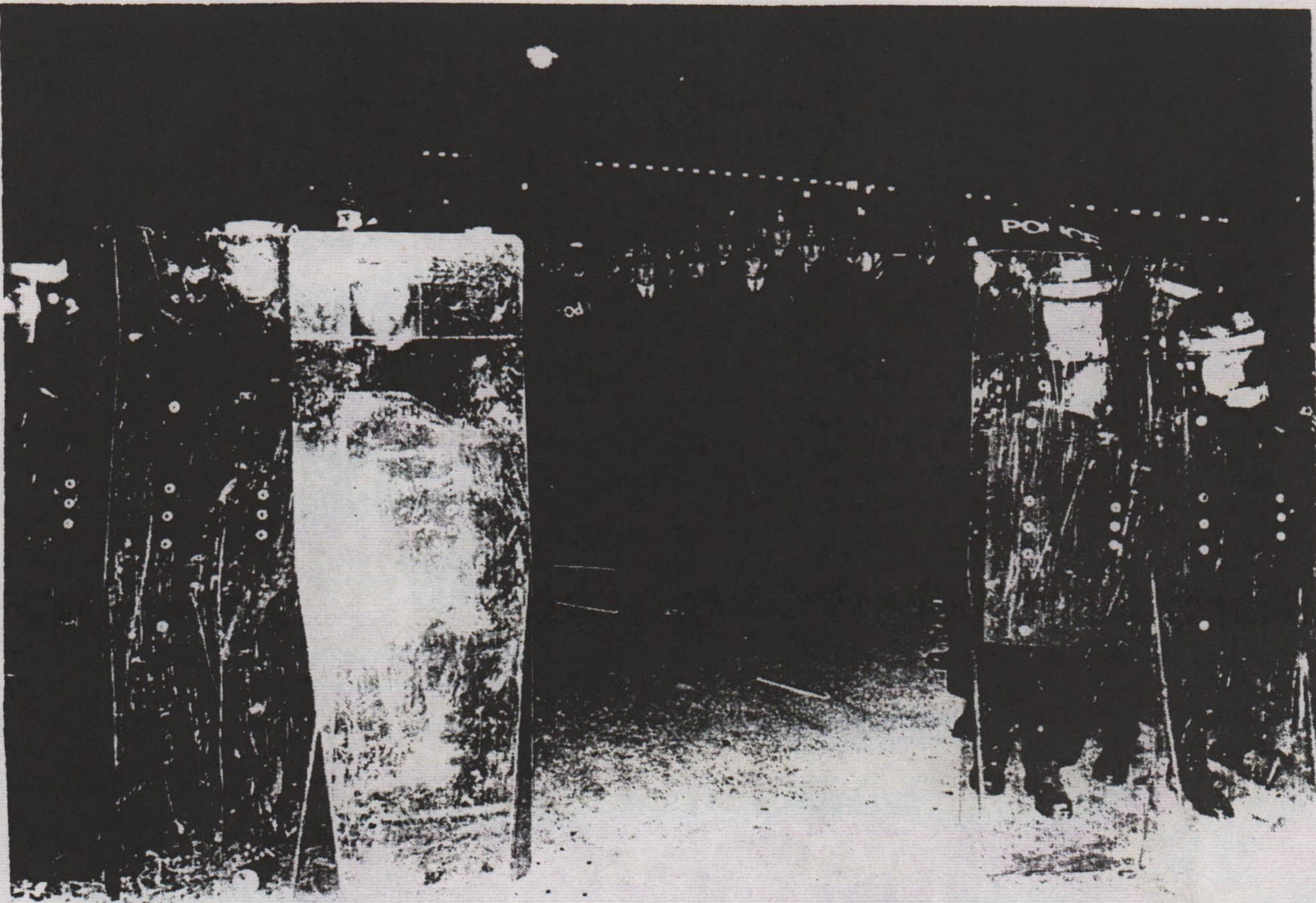
All the while this battle was raging on The Highway, in Wellclose Square one speaker after another droned on and on. It was unreal, people were fighting for their lives against heavily armed and ruthless thugs, while the beauracrats were acting like nothing was happening. One of the police charges occurred when Brenda Dean started speaking. Most of her speech was drowned out by cries of "Off" and by the sounds of battle taking place a 100 yards away.

Among the first victims of the police attacks was solicitor John Bowden. This was despite the fact that he was wearing a bright yellow jerkin that was clearly marked 'Legal Observer'. The attack occurred as Bill Freeman of SOGAT tried to appeal to the police for calm. Suddenly, a riot squad charged, smashed into the crowd and truncheoned Bowden to the ground. Among others attacked by the police were television film crews. At least nine reporters, including Kate Adie of the BBC, were batoned by riot police, and cameras and lights were smashed with truncheons.

The following are all incidents related to the Haldane Society by press photographers:

"At about 9pm I was bundled by a snatch squad against the fence on the north side of The Highway and had, with considerable force, a short (round) shield thrust into my face.....This and the previous incident seemed designed to prevent me or discourage me from taking pictures.....It seems the Metropolitan





Police force will no longer tolerate photographers being present when their members are at work. (Andrew Moore, NUJ Freelance Branch).

"I saw a number of attempts by police to prevent photographers and TV crews working. In the first charge I saw a film cameraman arrested. An officer..... repeatedly shone a bright spotlight on me whenever I attempted to take pictures of his unit; he twice shouted "Fuck Off!" at me. An officer with the shield serial sprayed his fire extinguisher directly at a female photographer in an attempt to blind the camera." (Jeremy Nicholl of 'The Independent')

".....I noticed that a number of officers headed straight for photographers and set about them. The photographer standing next to me was attacked and his camera was smashed by a single accurately-aimed truncheon blow.....On at least three occasions I and other photographers were chased by the police with truncheons who were deliberately preventing us from photographing other officers indiscriminately truncheoning demonstrators." (John Sturrock, NUJ Freelance Branch)

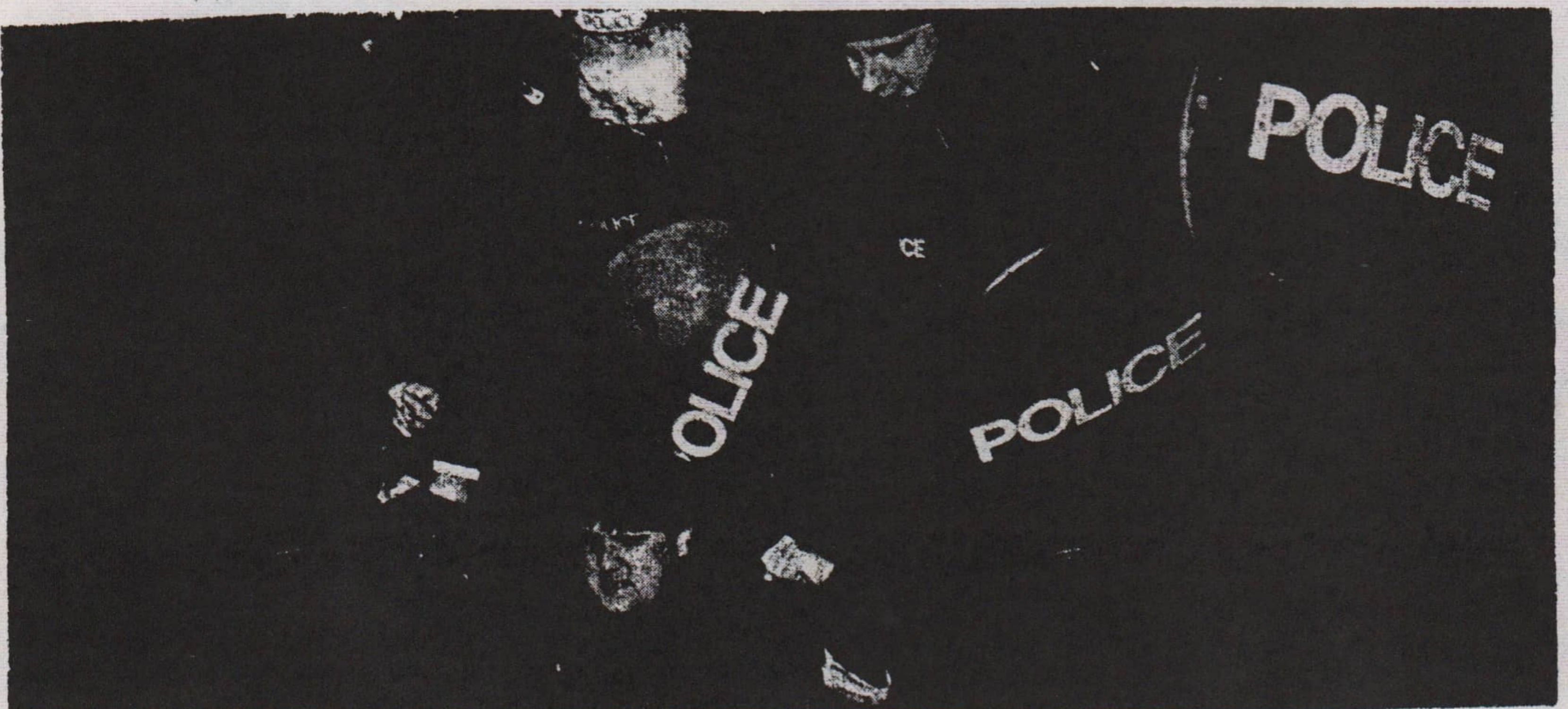
The use of truncheons completely contradicted the Association of Chief Police Officer's (ACPO) own guidelines which state that truncheons should only be used when officers are under violent attack and should be used only "in extreme cases". Another part of these guidelines states quite clearly that blows should be aimed at arms, legs and torso. Yet the vast majority of injuries treated at first aid posts were for head injuries.



One of the accounts published in the Haldane Society's report 'A Case To Answer?' was of a woman who had been standing in Wellclose Street:

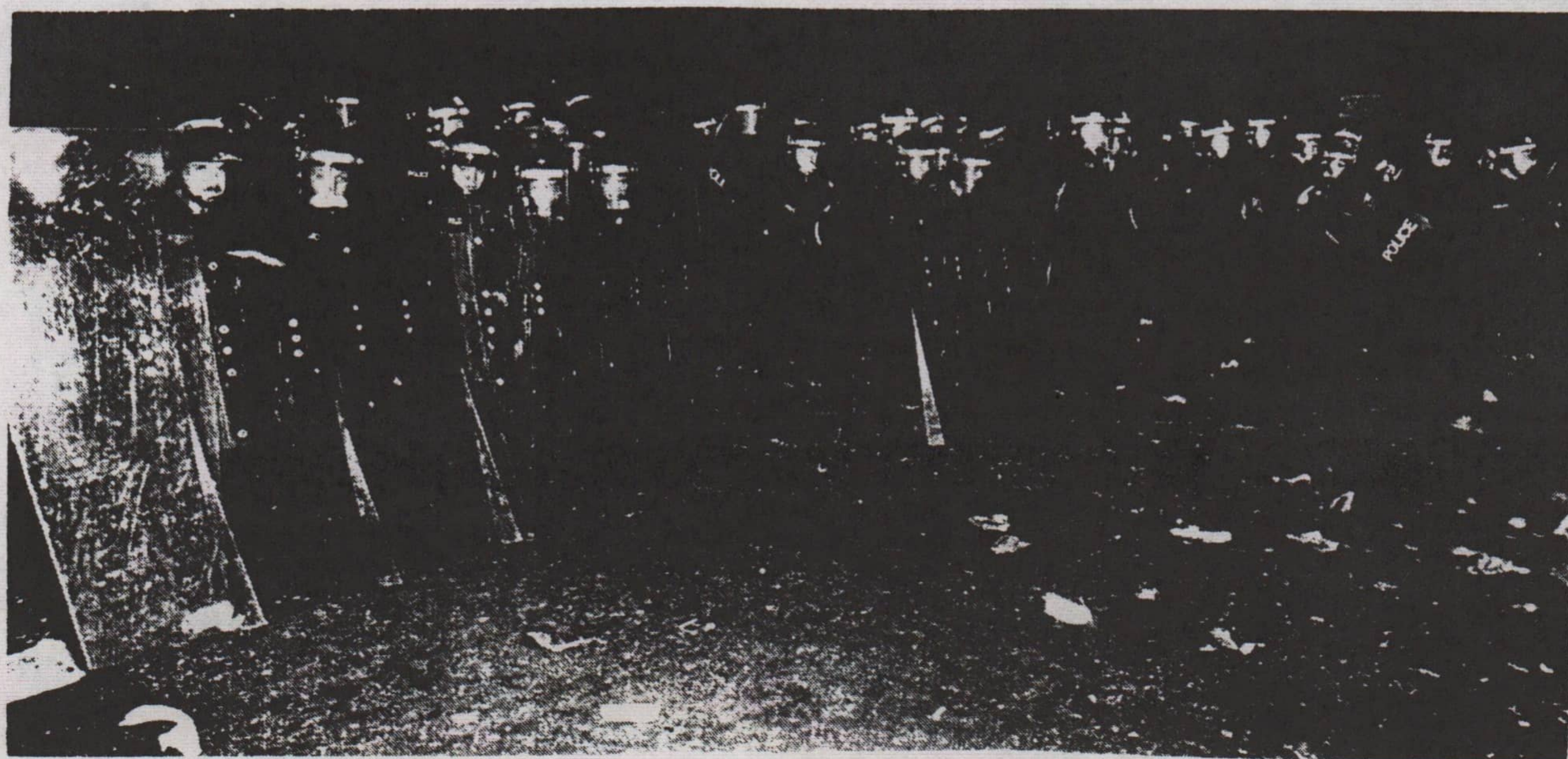
"I witnessed the riot squad charging across the road for what seemed no apparent reason. They charged the people who had the misfortune to be on the wrong side of the railings.....they were hitting people over the head with their truncheons. I helped a girl who had been hit over the head twice one side then once the other. I and another girl managed to drag her across the railings and took her to the bus for medical treatment. She was in a terrible state bleeding from both sides of her head."

I myself witnessed a similar incident on The Highway. I quite clearly saw a young woman who wasn't fast enough to get out of the way of a group of riot officers, receive a blow across the front of the skull from a truncheon. Together with another picket I helped her to the 1st aid station at the bottom



of Dock Street, where we left her in a state of shock.

Countless snatch squads, 30 strong, fanned out east and west along The Highway indiscriminately beating anyone in the way. Police searchlights blinded pickets before riot squads attacked. But still the pickets stood their ground, forcing the riot police to continually retreat behind the cover of their shields. By now police were also spraying people with a red dye, so that they could be easily identified by the snatch squads. The police were later to claim that this was untrue, and that a picket had thrown a pot of red paint! Hundreds of demonstrators quite clearly saw riot police with back packs, spraying the crowd, and the 'Wapping Post' even obtained photographic evidence.



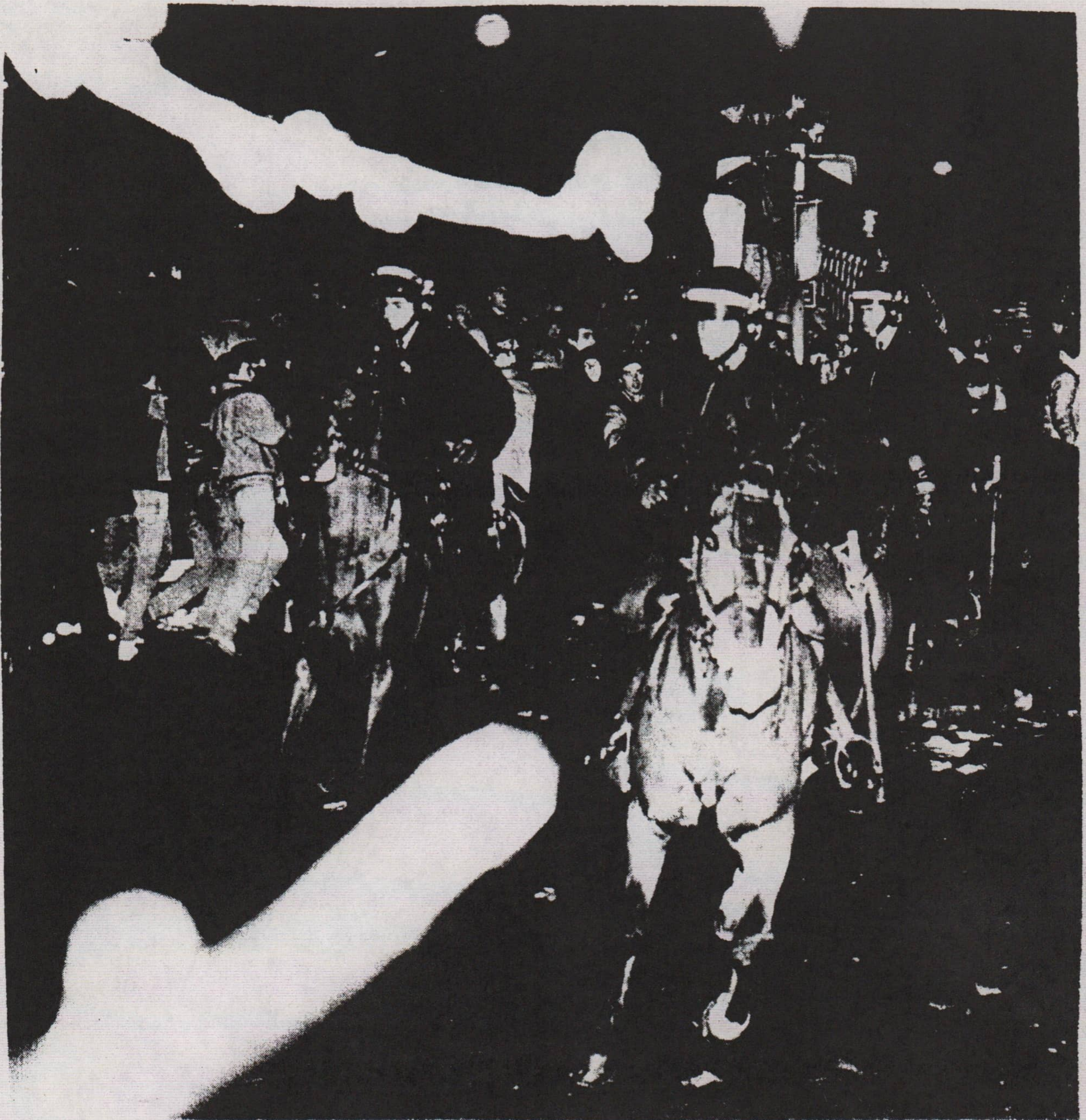


mounted riot police charged up Welclose Street where the crowds were so packed it was difficult to get out of the way of the horses bearing down on them. Ernie Greenwood, a photographer for the 'Morning Star' was injured in these charges as he fell under the hooves of a horse. The police cavalry caused instant panic as they callously rode into the frightened crowds.

These charges contradicted the ACPO guidelines which state: "A warning to the crowd should always be given before adopting mounted dispersal tactics". The guidelines also stated that mounted police should stop before reaching the crowd. At Wapping on numerous occasions horses charged without any warning whatsoever and galloped straight through demonstrators.

The ACPO guidelines quite clearly state "they (mounted dispersal tactics) are





only a viable option when the hostile crowd has somewhere to disperse rapidly. It would be quite inappropriate to use such a manoeuvre against a densely packed crowd". The crowd in Wellclose certainly had nowhere to disperse to.

During some of the worst charges from the riot squads and mounted police, Arthur Scargill shouted over the screams and the shouts of the crowds: "One thing should be crystal clear to any trade union member and any trade union leader, particularly the General Council of the TUC. In the face of this lot, armed to the teeth with riot gear, the TUC General Council should call out every single worker and come down here. Throughout the 12 months of the miners dispute we witnessed this, day in, day out.....they're not defending law and order, they're defending the multi-national corporations of Murdoch and all the rest.....This is Britain 1987. A neo-fascist state. You don't have to look to South Africa to see Nazi tactics, it's happening here and now in

Whipping. It's about time Labour politicians stopped prattling on about spy satellites and instead come down here and start prattling on about what this lot are doing to working men and women."

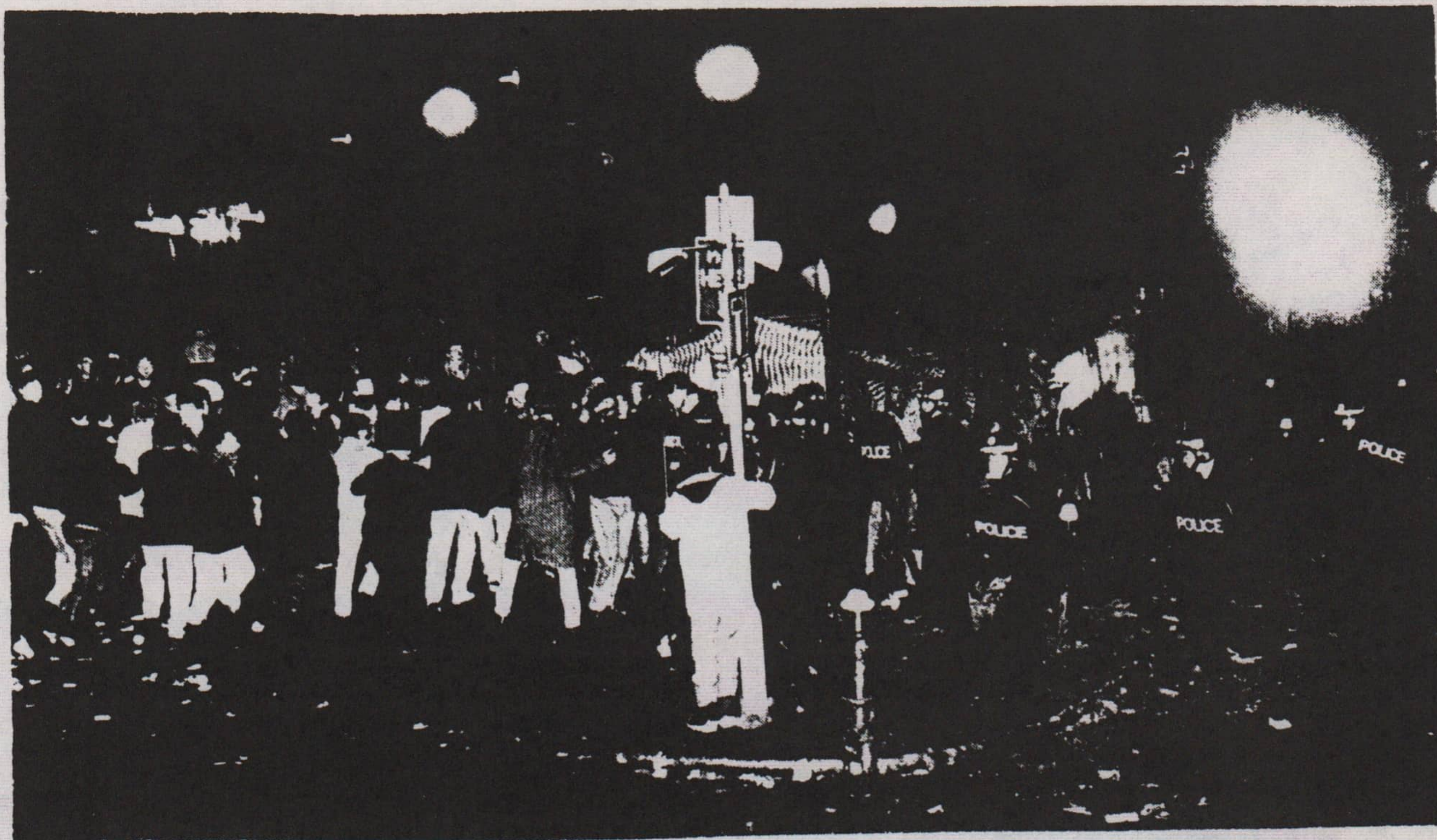
Meanwhile, the charges by the mounted police continued, backed up by short shield carrying riot squads. As the police pressed home their attacks the casualties mounted. "The police tell us they are here to protect law and order" declared Tony Dubbins. "The law they are here to protect is Thatcher's law, and the order is Murdoch's order that he must get his newspapers out at any price."

The ambulance first aid stations were becoming overwhelmed with the sheer



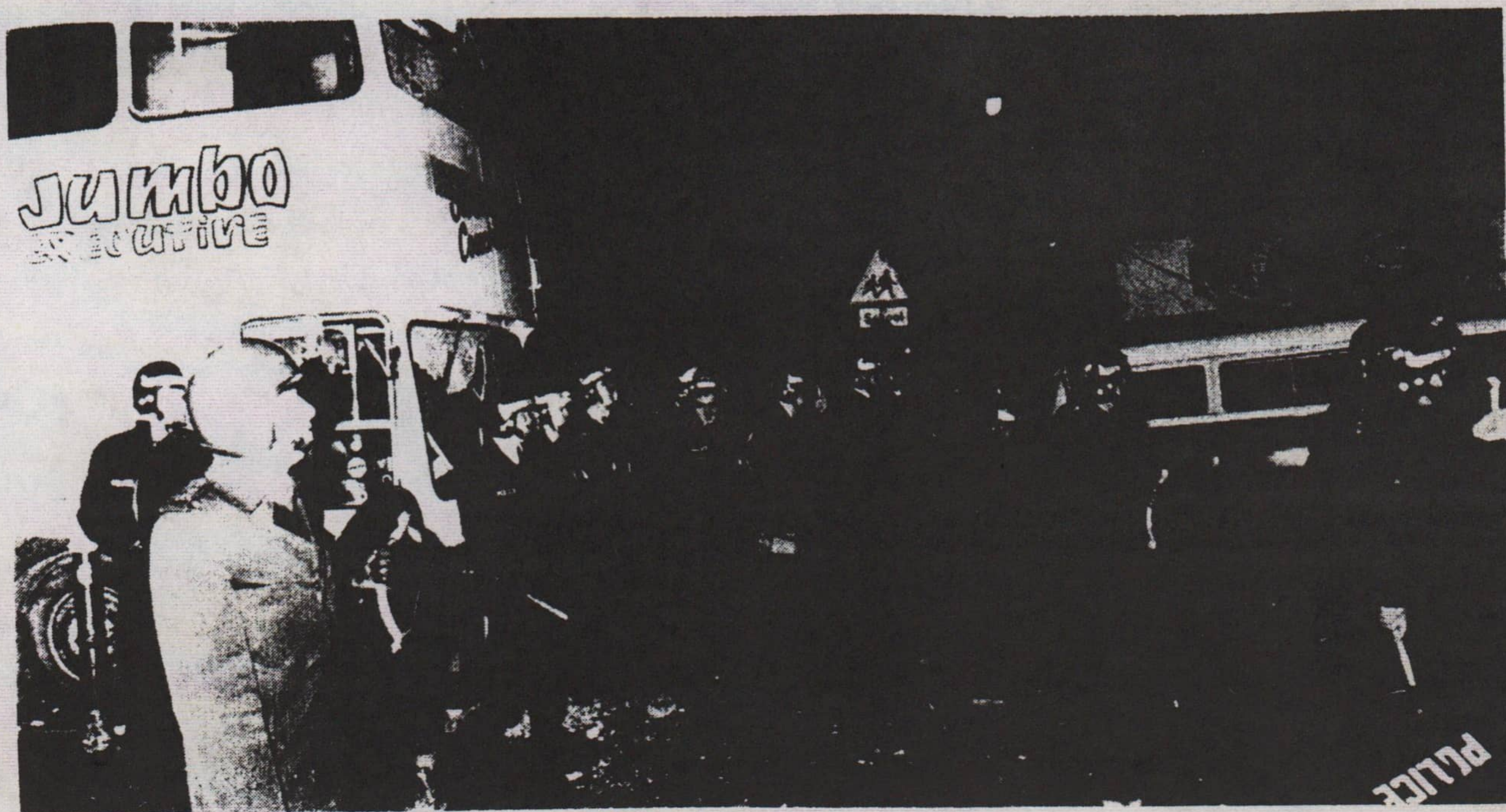
number of injuries. "I've never seen anything like this in 20 years" said one ambulanceman, "This is premeditated brutality by the police on defenceless people. I'm sickened." The London Ambulance Service valiantly struggled on at the bottom of Ensign Street. The ambulances themselves were coming under attack from the riot police with truncheons. The inspector in charge of this particular squad just laughed when a chief ambulance officer told him to stop the carnage.

By this time the pickets had been pushed back along The Highway to the junction at Dock Street, and riot squads and horses had battered their way up Wellclose



Street. In the sweep up Wellclose, among those injured were a group of nurses. One of them, aged 19, was clubbed unconscious by the heroes of the Met and was taken to the double decker bus that was being used as an emergency first aid station. One of the helpers described what happened next in the 'Wapping Post': "It was like a nightmare. We had put women and children onto the top deck to get them out of the way of the cops. Suddenly two squads of riot police on foot surrounded the bus, sealing it off."

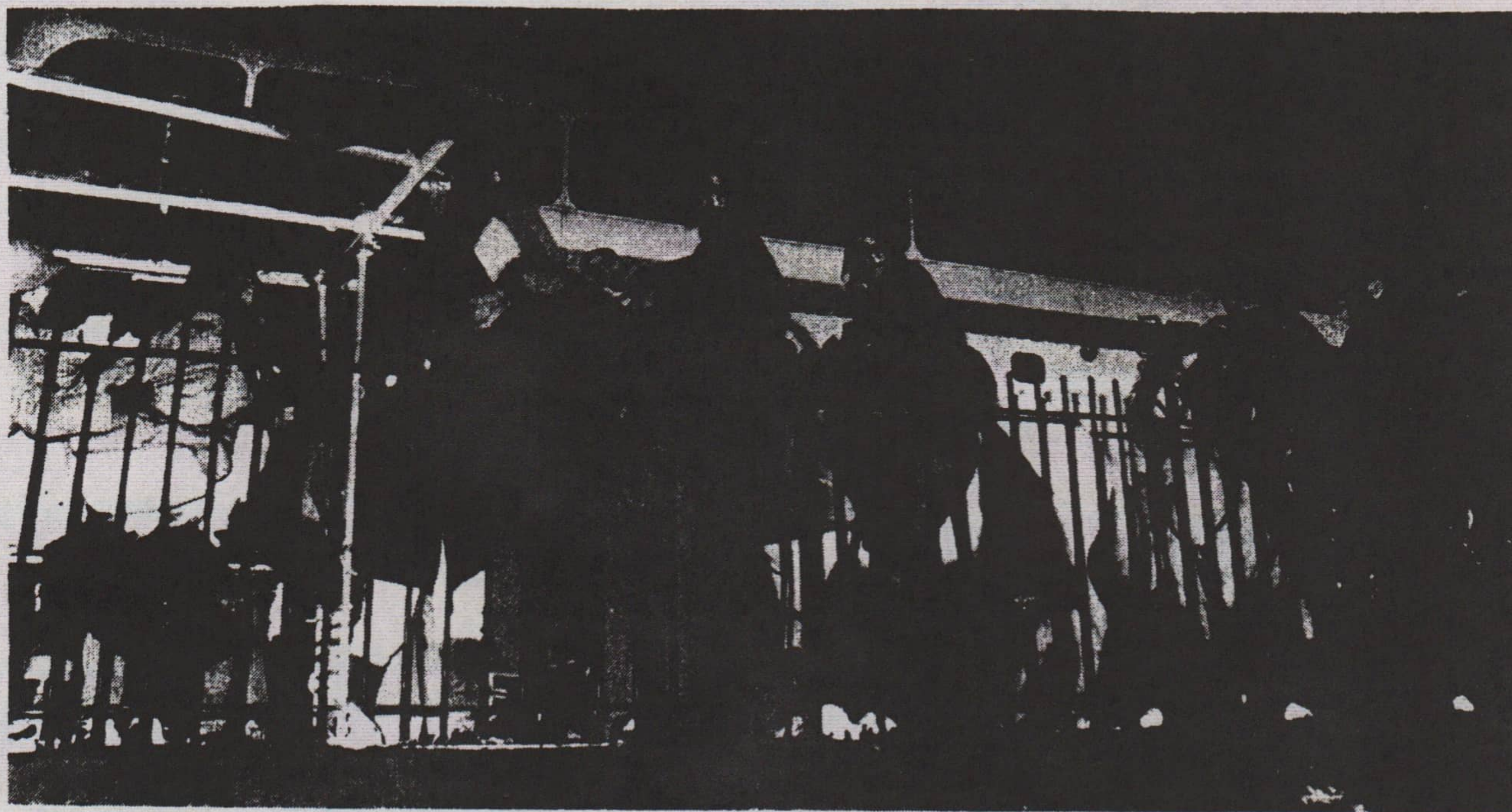
"They then started to batter the windows with their riot clubs. They broke the windscreen and several side windows. At the same time they were shouting abuse and swearing at the people trapped inside. The women and children started to scream in terror. The lower deck was covered in blood, and all our clothes were marked with red dye picked up from the wounded. For well over an hour police stopped us from getting the injured into ambulances. I will never,



over that night. It was even worse than the first."

The last entry in the incident book that night tells a frightening story: "The time is now approaching 10pm. I am on the top deck of the bus and can see the police charging up Wellclose Street hitting anyone and everyone in sight. They are now smashing the windows of the bus. The children are screaming and I find it all very terrifying.....The ambulance men are unable to reach the bus to take our injured away because of the police presence all around the bus."

The pockets of demonstrators still trapped down on The Highway were being battered by the riot squads. "It makes me sad to be in Thatcher's Britain in 1987" declared Ken Cameron of the Fire Brigade's Union. As the police continued their ferocious attacks Tony Benn shouted from the platform. "The main prop



of capitalism are running across the street behind you."

By now the police were gaining the upper hand. Through the constant use of horses and riot squads they had cleared The Highway and Wellclose Street leaving pickets hemmed into Wellclose Square. The sounds of concrete and bottles thudding against riot shields was deafening. Orchestrator of the police operations that night, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Wyn Jones, cowered in the gateway of the apartments at the top of Virginia Street. "Doesn't anyone care about the suffering?" shouted one woman. "You should be at home feeding your cat" came the reply from a high ranking officer. This enraged the woman demonstrator, who cried "You shithouses won't do a thing about the TNT scab who killed last week." Almost immediately two boiler suit clad riot police grabbed

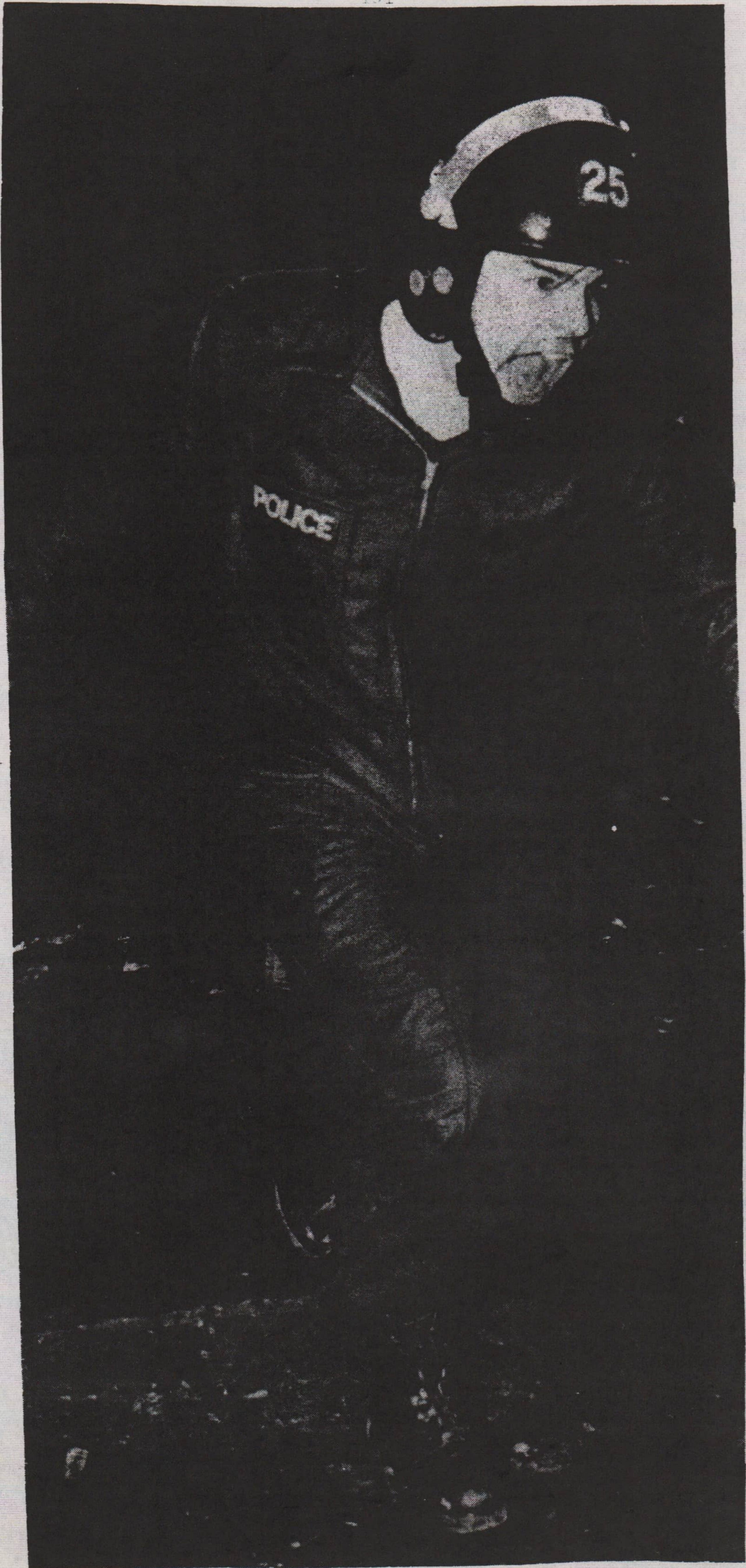


bar, but were overwhelmed and disarmed by pickets. As the long shield units moved up out of Virginia Street, they banged their shields, Tebel style, as they had done at Orgreave.

As on many other occasions at Wapping it was impossible to identify many of the police officers as they bore no numbers. After the carnage of May 3rd, the SERVIC had written to the Home Office to complain about this. The reply they received included the statement: "Any officer who wilfully neglects to wear personal identification or removes such identification will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary regulations". Yet on the night of January 24th countless officers bore no identification other than the numbers '5' and '25' on their riot helmets. Other officers covered up or unfastened their epaulettes to conceal their numbers. The Haldane Society report on the events of that night includes the case of Councillor John Bloom who was attacked by an officer when he tried to find out why police were collecting stones. This officer appears to have blacked out his rank and identification number.

Up at the eastern end of The Highway the residents march, 800 strong, had set off from Glamis Road and was trying it's best to get down The Highway. The residents were met by squads of riot police who steamed into the march without any warning, lashing out with their truncheons. Further down The Highway, outside the 'Caxton' pub, a skip had been overturned and pickets tried to build a barricade across the road to stop the horses charging.







At 10 o'clock the police decided to clear Wellclose Square, and squad after squad of riot police, accompanied by horses, attacked the pickets crowded into this area. They went about their task with a vengeance, smashing stalls and vehicles. People fled in sheer terror, slipping and sliding in the muddy field. The unlucky ones were beaten mercilessly. Women and children who had climbed onto the stage for safety were attacked. Some were trapped on the stairs and others were thrown five feet to the ground where they were beaten. One man was caught by the police and dragged to the ground where he was repeatedly hit by batons and kicked in the back.

From St. George's Estate, behind Wellclose Square, the pickets continued to fight back against the police. Hand to hand fighting took place around the blocks of flats, with riot police attacking the Wapping residents for good measure. Up on Cable Street about 400 pickets had regrouped and were managing to hold their ground against the riot squads. As the fighting continued around Cable Street and the Estate, the pubs were being forcibly emptied by the police and the customers truncheoned. To the west, riot police and horses were chasing demonstrators up to Tower Hill.

The resident's march meanwhile, despite repeated baton charges, had eventually managed to reach Wellclose to be met by the scene of a battle. Many wept at the courage they saw. The police's brutality continued until the last police charge at about 12.30am, when sections of the crowd were repeatedly attacked by truncheon wielding riot squads, and banners were ripped from the fences around Wellclose.

Even Brenda Dean was outraged at the police brutality. "Decent, law-abiding people with their families had come to demonstrate their support for the strikers and to listen to leading trade unionists and politicians addressing the rally. They were treated with a brutality by the police which would have been unbelievable if one had not been there to witness it.....Many who were injured by the police felt so intimidated that they did not report for treatment to the hospitals." Chris Robbins of SOGAT described the 24th January as "the worst aspects of police violence seen anywhere in the world this year, let alone in the United Kingdom." And Patrick O'Connor, a barrister, said "Nothing could justify the police action on Saturday night. They acted indiscriminately and with unnecessary violence."

Arthur Scargill, in an article in the 'Wapping Post', was to write: "The police were brought in as a paramilitary force to attack trade unionists and their families, to crush resistance to unemployment and smash effective trade unionism itself. Workers are now in a struggle against the most vicious and repressive government since the early decades of the 19th century."

Tony Gifford QC wrote in 'A Case to Answer?': "The irresistible suspicion which has to be voiced.....is that the police commanders who planned the strategy used on January 24th 1987 saw it as a military operation against an enemy, not as a public order exercise in which the civil right to assemble peacefully had to be balanced against the need to deal with violence."

The tragedy of the whole evening was, that while the pickets fought tooth and nail to hold back the police, News International's scab papers left the plant in convoys, virtually unnoticed, at Wapping Lane. But if nothing else, the events of 24th January had raised the stakes dramatically.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

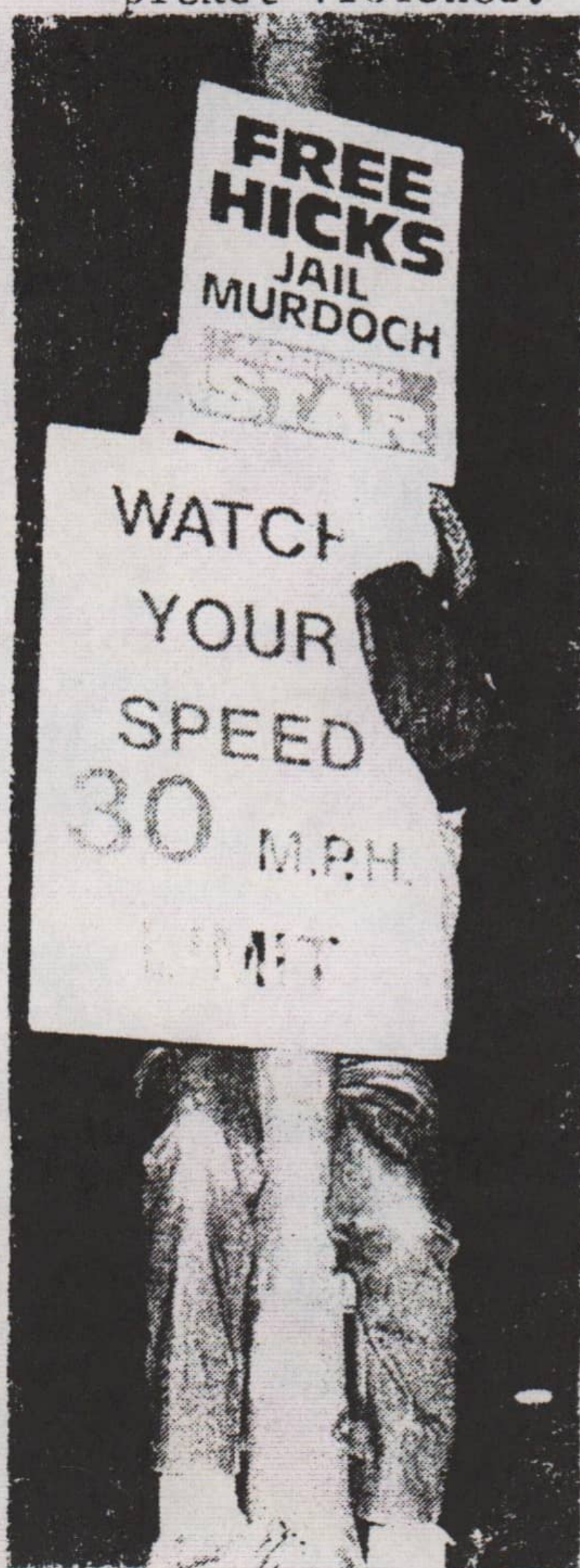
THE BITTER END

Within days of the police riot of January 24th Murdoch was again returning to the High Court against the NGA and SOGAT. The events of the anniversary march were, he claimed, a contempt of the High Court hearing of the previous July. This time News International were going for the seizure of the assets of both unions. The company also claimed to be seeking a sequestration order due to the number of mass pickets of the main gate which were in direct contravention of Mr. Justice Stuart-Smith's earlier order, limiting the number of pickets at the main gate to six. This time Murdoch was out to smash the unions and force an unconditional surrender.

The striking chapels certainly realised the enormity of this latest attack. At a meeting of all striking chapel committees, held at the TUC on February 1st, a motion was passed to work for a 24 hour strike on the rest of Fleet Street. It was, unfortunately, probably too late - 12 months of demoralisation and the selling of jobs on the other national newspapers by union officials had worn down the resolve of many.

At this most crucial point in the strike the TUC's response was sickening. Following the unsurpassed police brutality on the 24th January, the General Council followed in the footsteps of the Tories and the media by condemning picket violence. Only Arthur Scargill distanced himself from the attack on the strikers. The pathetic, cowardly bunch who described themselves as 'trade union leaders' weren't worthy to lead anyone, least of all the brave men and women who had stood firm outside the wire at Wapping for a year. The picketing at Murdoch's scab plant continued regardless showing, as 'Picket' put it, "that they can throw all the power of the riot police, the horses and the rest, but they cannot break our spirit to fight on."

On Saturday January 31st about 100 pickets moved down Pennington Street in an attempt to reach the gates, but the police were present in such numbers that the pickets split up instead and moved around the area, confronting scabs where possible. That night about 2,000 marched on Wapping behind a nurses banner. As always the police were out in force, including horses, but there was no repeat of the previous Saturday's violence and The Highway was



cleared of pickets soon after 11pm.

THE BETRAYAL

It had always been obvious that if it came to the crunch, Dean and the SOGAT NEC would rather dump the strikers than risk re-sequestration. On Thursday 5th February SOGAT's National Executive Council finally betrayed the strike in an act that will forever be remembered as a cowardly and shameful action. Acting on legal advice, SOGAT's NEC voted by 23 to 9 to terminate the strike, including all picketing and demos. Dean argued that the only other option was bankruptcy for the union. So much

for her earlier statements about members being more important than money. Only the London Branches and three others (Scotland, Manchester and South East Midlands) voted against the motion. In return for this act of treachery, News International agreed to drop it's contempt action against SOGAT. Dean, looking for a scapegoat, blamed the Tory's anti-union laws for the disaster. In truth of course it was the fact that leaders like Dean had refused to stand up to those very laws that had led to defeat. The pickets had held out against enormous odds, the might of a multi-national and the violence of the Metropolitan police force. In the end they were stabbed in the back by their own union. The very size of the surrender took the rank and file strikers by surprise - at most they had expected a ban on demonstrations.

Dean, obviously anticipating the criticism, pleaded "It is not a sell out, there is nothing left to sell out. We have been in this dispute for 13 months and we have not been able to stop the papers coming out." Her hypocrisy was unbelievable. Not once during the entire dispute had she made any attempt

MINISTRY OF POWER

JAN 23rd **Hackney Empire Theatre** **£5 (£4 conc.)**

TEST DEPT **EWAN McCOLL & PEGGY SEEGER**

with **ALAN SUTCLIFFE (Kent NUM)** **JAMES PHILLIPS (ANC)**

JACK DASH THE SOGAT SINGERS & surprise guests

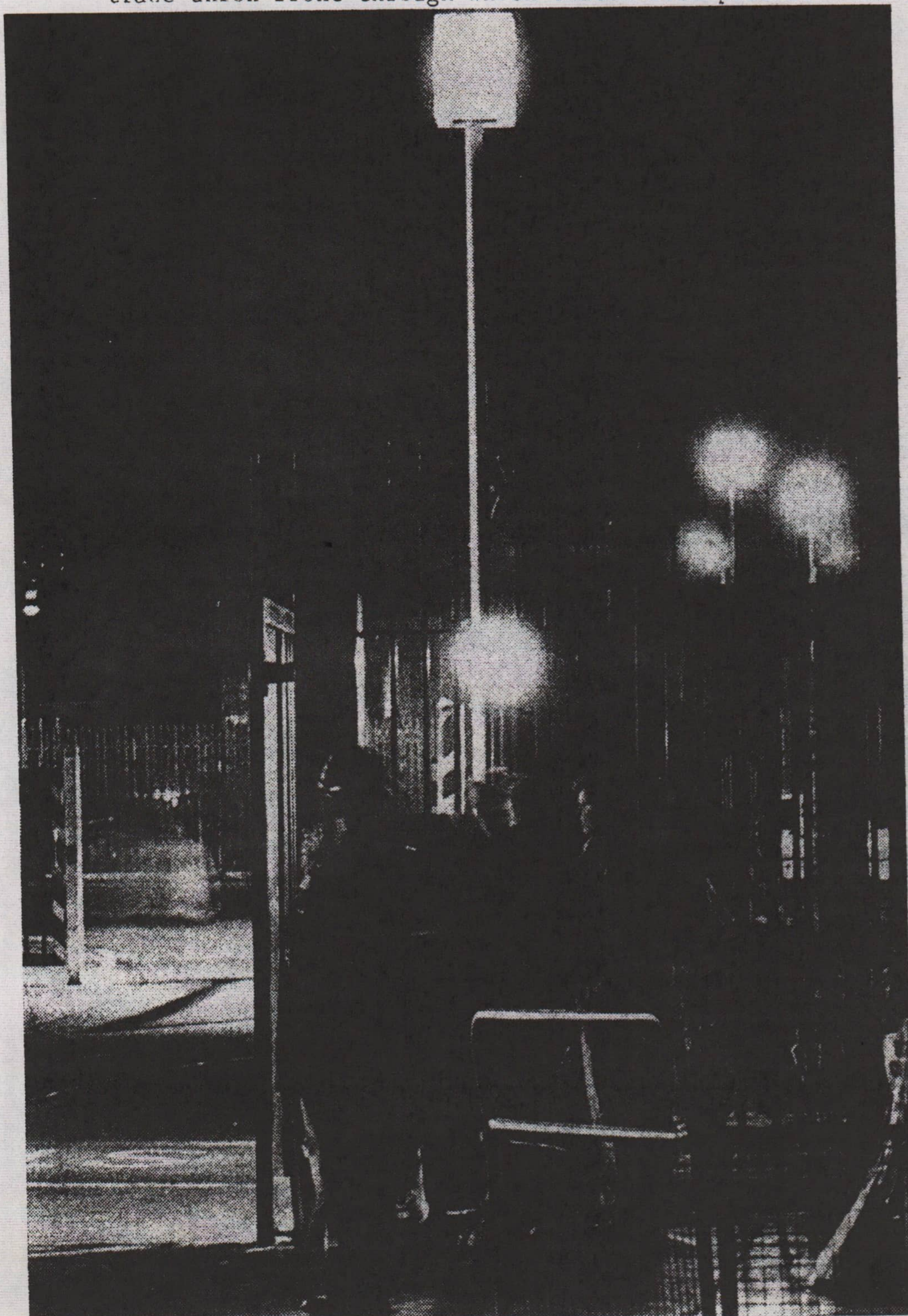
doors open 7pm (8pm start) advance booking: tel. 985 2424

to organise mass pickets - the only thing that would stop the papers. Quite the opposite, she had taken every opportunity to limit effective picketing and sabotage every effort by the strikers to stop the lorries.

Norman Willis likewise claimed "There was no other option". It had probably never occurred to Willis that the other option was to fight and he conveniently forgot the option of abiding by Congress policy by expelling the EETPU. With spineless leaders like Willis the likes of Murdoch would always have the confidence to take on the unions. As Barrie Clement, writing in 'The Independent' put it, the "decision by SOGAT.....to call off the conflict with Rupert Murdoch's News International will rank as one of the crucial breaches in the trade union front through which Thatcherism poured." And where was the ballot

of members so dear . to the Tories, the press and the 'new realist' leaders? Not a single striker had a say in the calling off of the strike. Democracy, it seemed, was OK as long as it went the way the ruling class wanted.

As one SOGAT striker put it: "We were told that people came before bricks and mortar. Well now we know the truth. Our people have gone through hell this last year. A lot of us have lost our homes, marriages have broken up under the strain, colleagues have been arrested, sent to prison and been smashed up by the police. The truth

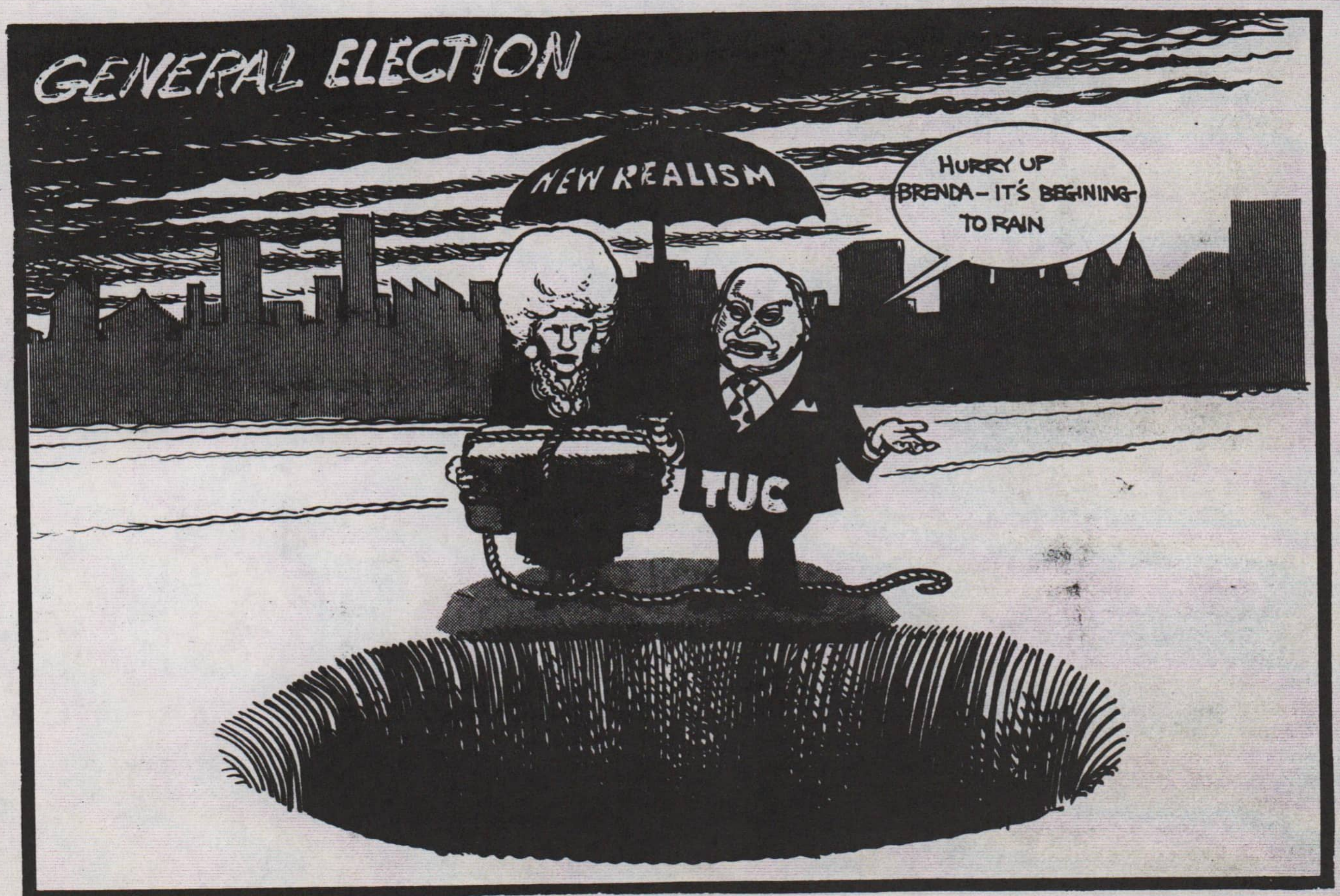


is we'd become an embarrassment and we've been sacrificed because of the next election."

It had always been realised that if SOGAT caved-in the NGA would be unable to carry on the dispute alone, and the following day the NGA also voted to unconditionally end their strike. Tony Dubbins was furious over SOGATS surrender and attacked the TUC's refusal to deal with the EETPU. "Their position in this dispute has been deplorable. They have not followed Congress policy about the electricians union, which has throughout connived and colluded with News International to steal printworkers' jobs." He also added that "News International's threat of legal action has denied our members the right to ballot. This is ironical when each and every day News International papers call for ballots on all trade union issues."

News International revealed that it would re-open the compensation fund closed earlier in the dispute, but many strikers refused to take the money, preferring instead to pursue unfair dismissal claims on the grounds that they were locked out while on strike.

Despite the calls to continue the strike from the courageous pickets, the strike was effectively at an end. Murdoch had achieved the unthinkable - he had broken the power of the mighty Fleet Street chapels, one of the most organised groups of workers in the history of the trade union movement. But he had not done it alone and much of the blame had to lay with the union movement itself.



The TUC had vacillated all along; the print union's leadership had been weak and embraced a new realist strategy which was doomed to failure from the start; TGWU members transported the scab papers; most SOGAT members in the wholesale outside of London had failed to black the News International titles; the NUJ blacklegs took their blood money and crawled to Murdoch; and the EETPU acquired for itself a place in the hall of infamy by working hand in hand with a ruthless, anti-union employer to destroy the lives of working people.

The strikers decided to hold their regular Saturday night march as a last act of defiance. Not suprisingly, there was nothing but contempt for Dean.

"Everything she has done since the first ballot in May has been aimed at getting herself out of the dispute" said one striker, "She just found us an embarassment. She wasn't up to the job." This was a sentiment echoed by others on the picket line. "Words can't describe what I feel about Rupert Murdoch, but Brenda Dean is worse. She has claimed all along that she is a trade unionist; he hasn't." (Keely Kenward, SOGAT). "She has backed the people in the provinces who would not support her union and deserted the people in London who risked and lost their jobs to fight for union recognition." (Bob Evans, NGA).



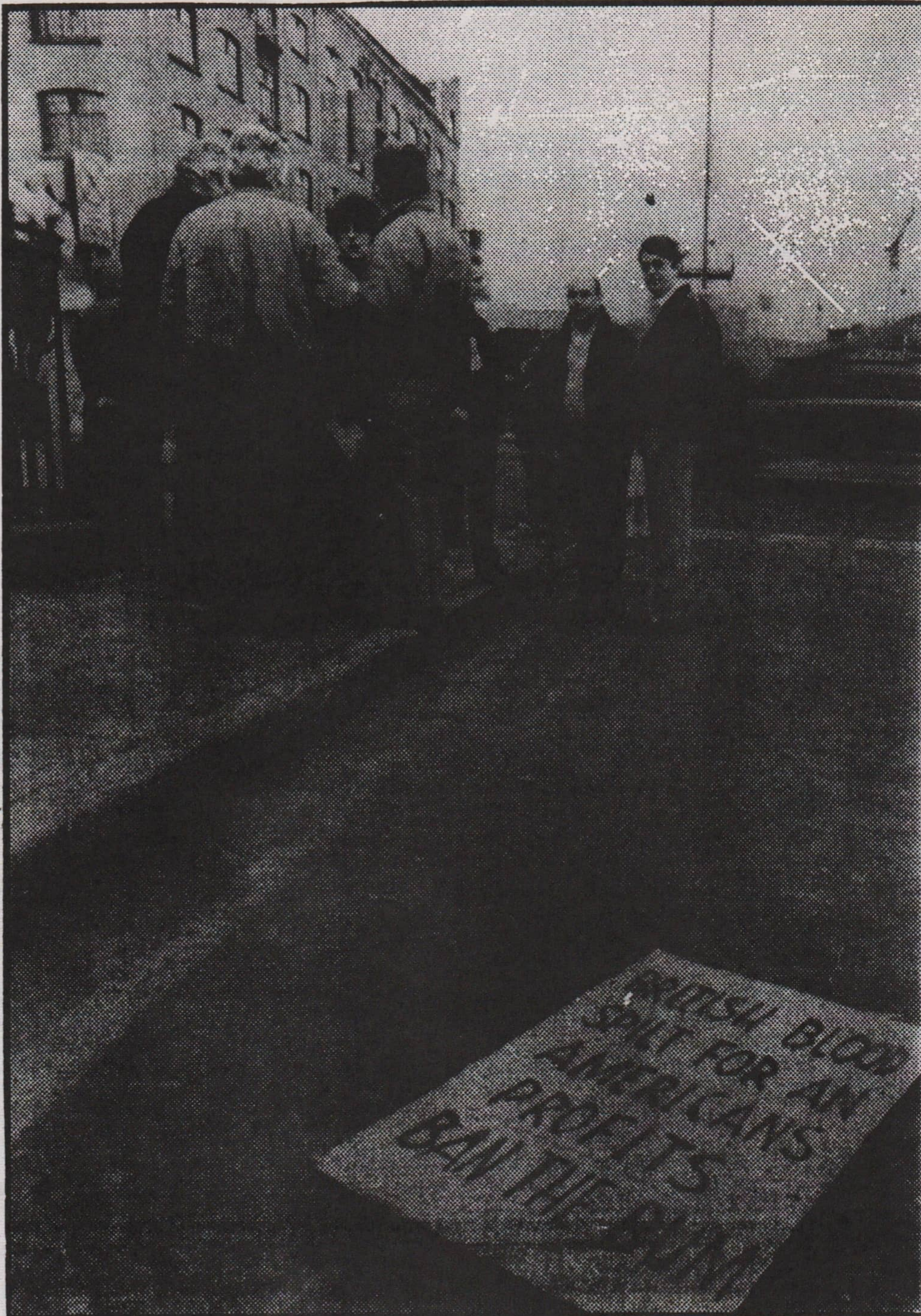
The final march from Tower Hill was 3,000 strong, despite the fact that the unions had officially cancelled the demo. Marching behind an NUR banner the pickets walked the well trodden route along East Smithfield and The Highway. Among the placards

were many denouncing SOGAT - 'SOGAT - Selling Out Good Active Trade unionists' said one; 'Proud to be a picket, ashamed to be in SOGAT' read another. It was a night heavy with emotion. The News International strikers had given their all - no-one could ask any more of them. Jim Masters, a 'Times' stereotyper, expressed the feeling of them all: "We have been betrayed". The police, including horses and riot squads were out in force, as they had been throughout the entire dispute, but there was little trouble. The mood was angry and defiant. "I feel we should have fought on" said Walter Jacobsen, an NGA picket. There were lessons for the rest of the labour movement as well, as Bill Freeman, writing in the 'Wapping Post' explained: "Millions of trade unionists should now know that their jobs can be taken away tomorrow and given to scabs. And until the TUC,

the Labour Party and the labour movement find the will, resolution and weapons to fight back, Tory thug law will prevail."

As the 'Wapping Post' concluded, the battle may have been over, but the war went on. "The ongoing struggle of working people is not like a football match where the referee blows a whistle after 90 minutes - or 13 months and rules that you have lost. If that were the case we would never have moved forward after events such as the criminalisation of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the 1926 General StrikeWe are far from defeated. We have kept alive for 13 months a

flame of freedom which will both rekindle the fires of Trade Unionism and Socialism in this country and consume Thatcher's Tories and Murdoch and his ilk. The struggle will not be over until we have won. Wherever other sections of our movement are in struggle we will never forget and we will be there with them. And one day they will march into Wapping at our side."



EPILOGUE

"Success comes to the strong. The struggle is hard and the struggle is long."
('Lean On Me' by the Redskins)

On Saturday February 14th 1987 the residents of Wapping held their final march to the scab fortress in their midst. Wellclose Square looked like one of those ghost towns out of an old Western movie. The banners and placards that had adorned the site for over a year were gone, and only one union caravan remained. The few pickets who turned up reflected on their epic struggle.

"Murdoch set us up for this" said an AEU engineer, "He took us on just for the sheer hell of it. I'm convinced of that. Just to show the world he could do it."

John Clifford of the 'News of the World' NGA chapel was disappointed at the way it had ended. "I expected things to wind down eventually. But not like this, it's virtually collapsed overnight."

"It's not how we would have liked it to end" agreed another NGA striker. "We should have marched behind a band from Wapping to Fleet Street. We should've gone out with a bang - not like this. We deserved better."

"This is it" concluded John Breen, Deputy FoC NGA 'News of the World'. "This is really the end - there's nothing left for us now."

Within 15 months most of the national newspaper proprietors had followed Murdoch's lead and moved out of Fleet Street. Confident at the success of Murdoch's use of the anti-union laws, the Tories introduced a Green Paper outlining yet more laws to shackle the unions. Four months after the defeat at Wapping the Conservatives were returned to office in the General Election. Within a year of the end of the strike there were widespread strikes by nurses, ferry workers and Ford workers. The spirit of Wapping was far from dead.

As one of the women strikers from SOGAT said: "To all those trade unionists who supported us - thank you from the bottom of our hearts. For those who didn't the message is simple - you're next."

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