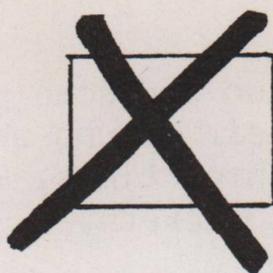


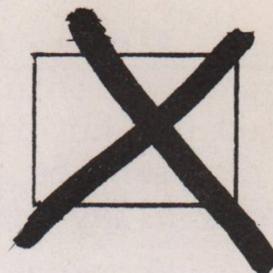
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Friday 30th May, Wapping - early-morning picket

About 120 pickets increased the ranks opposite the scab plant early on Friday morning on this the first "final deadline" of Murdoch's offer. Numbers were down owing to the afternoon meeting. Pickets booed and jeered the low-life crossing the strikers' picket.

Friday 30th May, Central Hall, Westminster - Sogat meeting

Three thousand sacked Sogat printworkers arriving for the 2pm meeting were met by an excellent lobby of 25 NGA colleagues worried about the Sogat vote. They were warmly greeted, invited inside and two NGA members spoke during the meeting. Officials who attacked the company's latest offer and the ballot were given standing ovations, and there was solid support for a "no" vote. The London Machine Branch's attempt to get the bosses' judges to stop the ballot was explained at length and invitations were extended for a mass lobby of Sogat's forthcoming Biennial Delegate Conference in Scarborough. It was clear there were two enemies - Murdoch and Sogat's leadership. One speaker joked about being "The Prisoner of Brenda" and how the NEC should be shot. At 4.30 there was a vote on the proposition in favour of a massive "no" vote on the offer. It was carried unanimously. Strikers came out of the meeting a lot happier than when they went in, and they sang: "Rupert Murdoch stick your money up your arse" for the benefit of the waiting media.

Friday 30th May Stevenage - the Labour Party selects a Scab

Half a dozen of us decided to put a picket on the building where the Stevenage Labour Party members were meeting. We felt it important to show to Malcolm Withers the depth of feeling of sacked printworkers. When delegates arrived for the meeting many were quite antagonistic, talking about greedy printers etc. Requests from us to observe or speak at the meeting were turned down. We waited outside for two hours. NUJ scab Withers was selected 49-36. Some of us entered the hall and denounced Withers until we were forcibly ejected. As we left we gave him a good Wapping chorus of "Scab".

Saturday 31st May, Wapping

Four thousand marched from Tower Hill at 9.15pm past thick lines of police at Thomas More and Virginia Streets but were brought to a halt just to the east of Artichoke Hill by police lines across the road. There were 20 horses behind the police and the riot squad was visible in side streets. The pickets stood against the police lines waiting to go through. One picket shouted out to the stewards: "Don't talk to the filth - don't trust them!" The mood of the pickets was to advance, but it did not happen. The halt lasted from 9.45 to 10.05 and then most pickets retreated to the main gate. Numbers thinned. The pickets were frustrated. There was a small march round the side streets, but people made their own way, singly or in groups, to Glamis Road. There were road blocks all over the place and only those who knew the side streets stood any chance of getting to Glamis. The Highway there was cleared by 11pm and opened completely to traffic at 1am. At the Thomas More Street exit scab cars in convoy were diverted and some acquainted with the workers' hatred for the strike-breakers.

Monday 2nd June, Wapping - the main gate is held for two hours

It was peaceful behind the razor wire until 7.45am when Wellclose Square filled with 300 pickets. They couldn't decide whose turn it was to picket the main gate, so they all crossed the road, moved the hastily-erected barriers and blocked the main entrance. Three hundred voices gave an early-morning chorus telling Rupert Murdoch what to do with his blood money. Nothing could go in or out of the plant for an hour and then the police cleared a thin path at the side. Meanwhile scabs were put into a police van for later use. Reinforcements for the scabs in blue soon arrived and the pushing began. There were ten arrests. Police threats of mass arrests tempted the stewards to start a march, but the banner was left fluttering. The pickets felt they shouldn't move until they had to.

After two hours the pickets had made their point and marched up Virginia Street to Well-close Square.

While pickets were keeping police busy at the front of the plant several others decided on a tour of the back areas to make certain the scabs weren't sneaking in by another route. There had been reports of an exit at the south-west corner. Round the back of the plant a convoy of scab cars appeared. With the help of a scaffolding bar and a handful of pickets they were held in place for an hour. During this time they were each given a present of a windscreen-full of stickers. As ever, the usual "move along or else" happened when the police arrived.

Wednesday 4th June, Aldgate East

The pre-march picket of this busy junction and scab pick-up point was poorly attended. Only twenty turned up, but they stood their ground and heckled scab coaches and artics. One scab driver circled the roundabout three times, mounted the pavement and drove his artic up a no-entry alley trying to kill pickets.

Wednesday 4th June, Wapping

A thousand pickets left Tower Hill at 9.10pm and surprised the police by making a detour at Dock Street. Instead of heading straight for the plant the march turned left and up to Lemn Street. Cable Street was blocked, so the march did a U-turn, arriving at the top of Virginia Street at 9.55. The Highway here was blocked by a line of police with seven horses in Virginia Street itself, and the march halted. Small groups of pickets went behind the police lines through Swedenborg Gardens but not in sufficient numbers to be effective. Others made attempts to get to Glamis Road, but the area was very heavily policed. At 11.10 a march to Thomas More Street provided a diversion and The Highway was cleared and opened to traffic at 11.45.

Thursday 5th June, Fleet Street

The Fleet Street Support Unit's lobby of the Press Association from noon to 2pm was lively and busy. Hundreds of leaflets were distributed in this attempt to stop scab copy being sent to Wapping. A series of sacked printworkers used a megaphone to good effect and once again Fleet Street as a whole was reminded that it's their turn next.

In Picket 11 Mr M Hone, 8 Shepherd's Down, Alresford, was mentioned as a Wapping scab. This is incorrect and he deserves an apology. He is a sales manager at a furniture company in Worthing.

Notes:

- At Ford's giant Dagenham plant in East London the unions have banned The Sun and The Times since day one of the strike.
- Last Friday's unemployed night was small, but all present had a good time.
- About 15 pickets went up to Commercial Road on Saturday, 24th May and stopped two scab artics for a brief period by standing on a zebra crossing.
- On this same night's flying picket to Worthing and Brighton there were four arrests.
- Meanwhile, more confusion at Bemrose's. Pickets in Liverpool (including Sogat casual machine) report some success, but there are also reports of Tony Mulhearn, several Militant and one SWP crossing the picket line, just as they have for four months. Other reports say the picketing is being stepped up and becoming more successful.
- Production of the Sunday People is threatened by Maxwell's plans to print outside London in a few weeks' time.
- Alert: Murdoch may well try to place more ads in Fleet Street papers. Strike supporters know the best way to help their sacked colleagues is to refuse to handle scab material.
- On Wednesday, 28th May, a support group meeting witnessed a debate over picketing when 12-15 of the 35 present walked out to go on the march to Wapping.
- Last month the courts barred one picket from three miles of Wapping. At his latest appearance this was altered to one mile.

Calendar:

Picket Wapping - 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And don't forget Gray's Inn Road and Bouverie Street.

Saturday 7th June, 8.30pm Tower Hill, march to Wapping.

Wednesday 11th June, 8.30pm Tower Hill, march to Wapping.

Income: £1 Sun clerical; £5 unemployed NGA machine minder; 34p picketing friend; £1.22 working Sogat member; £5, £5 misc; £1 Sun stereo; £2 Times RIRMA; £24.36 Guardian Revisers and Copyreaders chapel; £5 two General Trade NGA; £2 Natsopa machine; £2 121 Bookshop; £1 supporter; £2 Wapping resident; 50p striker; £1 WH Smith; £5.50 News International Day Machine Chapel; 50p Lesbians and Gays Support the Printworkers; £1 Banda staff Sun/Now; £1 Picture Library Sun/Now.

Donations are most welcome and necessary.

Concise written contributions welcome.

Picket: published by NGA/Sogat pickets.