

At the recent SOGAT conference in Scarborough, the union leadership showed its attitude to the strikers at Wapping.

Stewards locked strikers out of the conference hall and barred them from the coffee lounge. When Neil Kinnock addressed conference, rank-and-file militants were excluded, while SOGAT officials invited the press.

Meanwhile the leadership of the London branches came to a compromise with the union bureaucracy. Control of the strike at Wapping has been placed firmly in the hands of Brenda Dean and friends like Tony Dubbins of the NGA.



The people who can win at Wapping

So how do Dean and Dubbins propose to win the dispute? Well, to begin with they have committed themselves to negotiating a settlement "within the law"; in other words, the state can dictate terms. And SOGAT chiefs are prepared to offer union cards to Wapping scabs in exchange for union recognition. This amounts to no less than a sell-out of the 6000 workers sacked by Murdoch.

But all is not lost. A demand for the calling out of Fleet Street could gain increasing mass picketing at Wapping. Such action could be the beginnings of a revival of rank-and-file militancy.

More than the jobs of 6000 people, important though that may be. Murdoch's attack on union organisation is part of a wider employers' offensive. The bosses want to make working-class people pay for the economic crisis. If the printworkers lose this struggle, as the miners lost theirs, trade unionism everywhere will be side open to attack.

The efforts of Dean and Dubbins to sell out the Wapping dispute are typical of the actions of union officials. When it comes to the crunch, their jobs are not on the line, their livelihoods are not threatened.

Rank-and-file action is our greatest source of strength. At Wapping, the rebuilding of militant activity is a priority for us all.



Spain 1936: revolution and counter-revolution. ...Page 3.



40 years of imperialist terror...Page 4.

International struggles France - Chile - Spain ...Page 5.