

# UK electricians' demonstration faces police repression

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Riot police launched a brutal attack on electricians involved in protests against a 35 percent pay cut in London on Wednesday, November 9.

Electricians marched through London, massing outside building sites and urging workers to walk off the job. They blocked major streets, occupied train stations and resisted efforts by police to kettle them.

Five hundred electricians began their unofficial protest outside the Pinnacle building site on Bishopsgate, just outside Liverpool Street rail station. They then marched into the road, forcing the police lines back and directing chants towards construction workers who had stopped work.

Workers marched to another construction site, reversed as police tried to lure them into a trap, and headed towards the Gratte Brothers Cannon Street construction site. They occupied the train station and again urged workers to join their protest.

They then marched on the Farringdon building site.

Construction workers are reporting increasing threats from managers aimed at preventing them from joining the protests. Since they began protests after a 500-strong rank-and-file meeting in August, electricians have won growing support. Other construction workers are aware of the implications for their own pay and working conditions if the cuts are pushed through against electrical and plumbing grades.

At the end of the Wednesday protests, the electricians were led off to join an official Unite union protest rally, which marched to the Blackfriars building site where a further protest was conducted. The official union protest then headed off towards a lobby of Parliament.

A section of workers broke off and tried to join a national student protest. Riot police waded in with

batons and began knocking workers to the ground. Police were reportedly armed with stun grenades and plastic bullets in reserve.

Electricians were forcibly kettled and only released one by one after being searched by police. Their names and addresses were taken under the authority of section 60 of the Public Order Act. (See "British police mount massive operation against student protest")



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