

Under WORKERS' CONTROL

Nationalise!

STOP PRESS

VOTE LABOUR - AND PREPARE TO FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS! NO ILLUSIONS!

The general election has been announced after this issue was already typed. But it makes little difference on such things as nationalisation of the ports. It looks like Labour will win. But whoever wins, dockers must be prepared for a national ports strike to force nationalisation of all ports with full workers' control.

A national meeting of stewards, representing 10,000 dockworkers, has issued a call for Nationalisation of all Ports - 'With at least 50% say in the running of the industry for Dockers.' (Full report inside).

At present the Government plans to nationalise only those ports handling 5,000 tons and over. And though there is some talk of participation by dockworkers in running the Industry this is a far cry from workers control. It is seen by the Government as a means of loading responsibility for the industry onto the men, thus tying their hands when it comes to defending their own, working-class, interests, but without any real control being in the hands of the dockers. Dockers must beware of the Son-men and their tricks!

When an industry like the Docks is nationalised it is usually for the reason that it needs to be made more efficient - not that socialism is being introduced. When the Mines and Railways were nationalised massive compensation was paid to the old Owners - and many of them were given jobs, earning big salaries, running the industry, which they had allowed to become run-down and inefficient.

When Steel was nationalised certain 'Worker Directors' were appointed. These immediately stopped being workers, to have any contact with Steel Workers or to be responsible or recallable by workers. They are nothing but a bit of camouflage. We don't want a repeat performance on the Docks.

The same thing that happened to the old Mines and Railway Owners could happen on the Docks. Many dockers feel that employ-

ers should get 'fair' compensation. We agree - but what's 'fair' compensation? The reason why the Docks are being taken over is that for years the Bosses have held back investment to modernise the industry. We don't have up to date figures - but the following will give some idea of what we mean.

PROFITS

From 1954 to 1964 profits from the port industry amounted to some £3,000 million! How much was invested in the Ports? Just £200 million! The rest was siphoned off by the blood-suckers.

But the case against them is even stronger. By the mid 60's the ports were so backward, compared with the rest of Europe, that the Government had to step in to encourage investment! How did it do it? It offered straight grants of 20% to port authorities and persons undertaking new building or installations. For every £100,000 invested the Government handed over £20,000 No Strings - a straight gift! But in order to qualify it was necessary to have £20,000 to start with: To those who have ye's, more shall be given!

But even this generosity, by a normally stingy Government, wasn't enough to make up for the thousands of millions pocketed, over the years, by the Ports employers. That's why the Government wants to nationalise the major ports.

No doubt the Government plans generous compensation for the Docks Employers: They will be compensated for loss of their rights to exploit the dockers! This will mean that the nationalised docks industry will be saddled with a massive debt to be paid off to the old Bosses. Nationalisation with

compensation won't mean getting the parasites off our backs - just a new arrangement for them to draw dividends.

That's why dockers must oppose compensation. Old and infirm Docks Employers who are taken over could be given a pension of say £20 a week (which is better than they are willing to give us at the moment).

The employers in the more modern ports, like Manchester, are determined to fight nationalisation. The M.S.C. has spent £10,000 already in propaganda against it.

The Tories have said that they will de-nationalise ports like Manchester and Bristol if they win the Election.

WHAT WE MUST DO

The situation therefore is that both Labour and Tories are agreed on nationalising certain ports, but not all ports. The Tories want to nationalise less than Labour. Under nationalisation some form of workers 'participation' in running the industry will come in.

The National Shop Stewards Committee has come forward with part of the policy needed by Dockers in facing this situation. **NATIONALISE ALL PORTS!**
MORE CONTROL TO THE WORKERS!

'Ship Canal' believes that even this program will only be achieved if all Dockers fight for it. We can rely on the good will of neither Labour nor Tory Governments. We must rely on ourselves; and work for our own demands. We must beware of being drawn into 'responsibilities' in the industry under the name of participation - and fight instead for full workers control of rank and file committees in each port. We must be prepared for strike action to force Labour to nationalise all ports or to stop the Tories de-nationalising Manchester and Bristol. This should be the job of the Shop Stewards National Committee. We must organise our own committees to take over real control of the Ports.

1. NATIONALISE ALL PORTS.
2. MINIMUM COMPENSATION
3. ELECT LOCAL COMMITTEES AT MASS MEETINGS TO EXERCISE FULL WORKERS CONTROL
4. ELECT A LOCAL APPEALS COMMITTEE WITH THE POWER TO VETO ANY DECISIONS OF THE MANAGEMENT - PRIVATE OR GOVERNMENT.
5. DOCKERS THEMSELVES MUST DECIDE ON WHETHER COMPENSATION - IF ANY, IS PAID OUT TO THE EMPLOYERS

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ONWARD CHRISTIAN BARNARD ?

In the long saga of Professor Christian Barnard, we've had his heart-transplant operations; his divorce; his remarriage to a nineteen-year-old girl and now his autobiography - One Life. As far as we are concerned its one too many - or is that a bit heartless?

A H! B R I S T O W!

The Bristol Committee was set up to define the limits and extent of Dockers' work in the Port of London. It was to try and answer the vexed question of who should load and unload containers into which an increasing part of Dock's traffic is being packed before reaching the docks. The decisions taken on this question in London will obviously set the tone for other ports including Manchester.

It has now produced a report, which Mrs Castle is said to be 'studying', and which has had a limited circulation amongst employers and union officials. Bristol proposes a 'Dockers Corridor' five miles, for ordinary cargo, either side of the River Thames, and ten miles on either side for container traffic.

At first this seems favourable to the Docker. The employers are certainly not happy with it. According to 'The Times Business News' - "A spokesman for the Road Haulage Association said 'That members with warehouses and loading/unloading facilities near the River fear that the Dockers Corridor, if implemented, would force them to sack their present work force and hire dockers, who are traditionally better paid'".

No doubt its the extra pay that worries them: and no doubt all sorts of people with vested interests are whispering into Mrs Castle's ear at this moment. Dock workers have an interest too - the biggest of all! Their daily bread. But so far no one has thought of circulating the Bristol Report amongst rank and file Dockers, not even in London. This is a scandal. It is completely undemocratic.

However, we should not let ourselves be duped by what appears to be a generous concession to London Dockers. In the near future gigantic 'inland ports' for loading and unloading containers are expected to spring up. There is no reason why Depots shouldn't be situated somewhere 50 or more miles from London (or Manchester or Liverpool). If it means lower wages and no dockers (who have the bad habit of fighting for their rights too much) involved, then no doubt that's where they will be.

That's why 'ten miles either side of the Thames' offers no real protection for Dockers. No definition of dockers work as confined to a definite geographical area can - because employers (private and Government) can always move outside it at little extra cost which they will more than save by using cheap, non-docks, labour.

For their own protection Dockers can agree to nothing less than a definition which makes all container packing and unloading dockers work, on dockers wages. Whether ten miles or a hundred from the port in question shouldn't come into it.

As preparation for a fight on the question we must create unity in action by dockers and haulage drivers (and all cargo transport workers) who will be a vital link between the 'inland ports' and the docks in the next four years.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS BILL - T.U.C. RETREAT

The unofficial one day strikes of Dec 8th and Jan 12th, the official engineering workers' strikes of March 2nd and March 18th, the massive TUC demonstration on Feb 21st all showed that the rank and file of the trade union movement was becoming more and more aware that the Tories' Industrial Relations Bill was a direct attack on workers' rights and living standards.

Not only was the opposition to the Bill becoming wider - it was also becoming deeper and more resolute. "Kill the Bill", "Tories Out" and "General Strike" were the most popular slogans on the Feb 21st demonstration. Increasingly workers saw that the Industrial Relations Bill was only a part of the Tories' cudgel for the organised working class and that the fight against the Bill was only a part of the fight against the government.

What has happened to this fighting spirit? Has the opposition to the Tories and their Bill decreased? We think not. What has happened is that whereas the mass of workers have begun to move in opposition to the Tories, and that is becoming more uncompromising, the TUC leadership has been heading in exactly the opposite direction.

If the TUC was prepared to lead a fight against this Bill then it was vital that they decide on a fighting policy at the special conference of March 18th at Croydon. But instead of looking for a plan of battle the TUC decided on a shameful retreat.

There were two positions put before the conference. One was supported by the AUEW and T&GWU delegations and said that refusal to register, as required under the terms of the Bill, should be a condition of affiliation to the TUC. The other position, which was supported by the General Council, was to "recommend" non-cooperation with the government over the operating of the Bill.

The question of non-cooperation is crucial. If all the unions refuse to register, when the Bill becomes law it will meet with the united resistance of the whole trade union movement. Otherwise what will happen is that the government will pick on a weak unofficial strike and the unions will refuse to support the strikers on the grounds that it would be breaking the law. Once a union registers it means that it has accepted the Bill hook, line and sinker. If the conference had voted for total refusal to register then the stage would be set for a real fight against the Tory legislation.

In fact the conference voted for the line of the General Council, which was to make non-cooperation and non-registration a policy of the TUC but not to give this policy any teeth by making it a condition of affiliation.

However we should be clear that the right-wing union leaders who voted for the line of the General Council have no intention of carrying it out. These double talking bureaucrats have been telling lies for so long that they have forgotten how to tell the truth. Already they are preparing to register once the Bill becomes law. Lord Cooper, head of the G&MWU, after his delegation had voted for non-registration at the Croydon conference hall, then went to the House of Lords and told his fellow peers that his union would be registering.

When the Bill becomes law there is no doubt that we will see Lord Cooper and Frank Chapple of the ETU tripping over each other in their eagerness to register their unions. The danger is that this defection by the right wing union leaderships will be used as an excuse for the T&GWU and AUEW to register. In a recent speech Hugh Scanlon, president of the AUEW, attacked the TUC's refusal to fight the Tory laws, but what he did not do was to come out clearly and say that the AUEW would not register.

Instead he said this - "The question is thus posed - whether we can compromise on that position (the AUEW's position of leading the movement for non-registration) or whether we can submit to the necessary evil of registration". Scanlon may have asked the question but he did not answer it. It is up to the members of the AUEW and T&GWU to answer resoundingly "No Compromise".

In the T&GWU we must demand that Jack Jones state categorically that he will not register.

However by itself a policy of non-registration is not sufficient. In the end the strike weapon is the final card which will have to be played if the battle is to be won. The essential question is this - what will happen if a shop steward is fined or imprisoned as a result of this law? Will the official trade union movement support him or will they stand around making empty noises? Will the fight against the laws be left to unofficial sympathy strikes? If the trade unions are to

to strike in support of a member who is victimised under the law then this will not be a strike against one particular employer - it will be a political strike against the government. This means that if the strike is to be effective it will have to be a general strike of all the unions.

At the moment the majority of trade unionists do not see the need for a general strike, but this could change overnight, once they see the Bill in action. In the meantime it's the duty of the trade union leadership to prepare for a general strike and to explain to their membership why a general strike will be necessary to defeat the Bill. After the Croydon retreat this is especially the responsibility of those union leaders in the T&GWU and AUEW who say they are still serious about fighting the Bill.

The Industrial Relations Bill may well become the law of the land. But if they passed a law telling us all to jump in the Dock would anyone take the leap? Neither do we think that 10 million trade unionists in this country are going to sit idly by and watch their brothers being gaoled. But the resistance of 10 million trade unionists will only count for anything if we are prepared and organised for action. It's up to Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon take upon themselves the task of preparing for the real struggle by not registering and declaring that they will lead their unions out on strike as soon as the law is enforced.

The best dressed bureaucrat

Three cheers for Sir Sidney Greene, leader of the National Union of Railwaymen. Sir Sidney anxious to get rid of that cloth cap image has been voted by the "Tailor and Cutter" best dressed trade union leader of the year. This honour has cost Sir Sidney £20 per week on clothes. We wonder whether Sir Sidney's members are as proud of the honour as they ought to be. Recently Sir Sidney has signed a deal which gives the average railwayman less a week than he spends on clothes.

THE HOOK is published by members and supporters of the International Socialism Group in the Ports of Manchester and Runcorn.

Any dockworker is welcome to put his views in the paper. Send all correspondence to "The Hook", 26 Langton St., Salford 6.

THE WAR ON TRIAL

The trial of Lieutenant Calley over the Pinkville massacre is probably one of the world's greatest black comedies. Calley's judge and jury are members of the same organisation who issued the orders that led to the massacre - the American military.

Calley's not the one responsible for the American's "search and destroy" policy in Vietnam, he's just the poor sod who has to carry it out. The American army officers, the military advisers in the Pentagon, the Nixon government and the big industrialists are those guilty for the bloody war in Vietnam. And as the whole of America's military power fails to crush the will of the Vietnamese people to be free to run their own country with a government of their own choice, the American warmongers get more and more frustrated and their policies get more and more brutal.

But even such policies are not a new thing in Vietnam. The burning of villages the shooting of women and children and the torturing of prisoners have been going on ever since the Americans got there. For every Pinkville massacre that finally comes to light there are hundreds of incidents that remain hidden.

And what else can the Americans do when they're not fighting a regular army, when the women and children are willing to fight for their freedom as much as the men; what can you do when your enemy is the peasants, the workers, the school-teachers, the students and the school-children. In order to defeat their enemy the American army must defeat the people of Vietnam and that's proving difficult - in fact it's proving impossible.

The military were caught with their pants down over Pinkville, even though they'd done their best to keep it quiet for a couple of years. When they couldn't ignore it any longer, then they looked for a scapegoat. But the problem was this - if they convicted then everyone would realise that to find the real culprits they would have to climb the ladder a lot higher; and if they acquitted Calley then wouldn't it be an admission that the whole war was nothing but a great big Pinkville massacre.

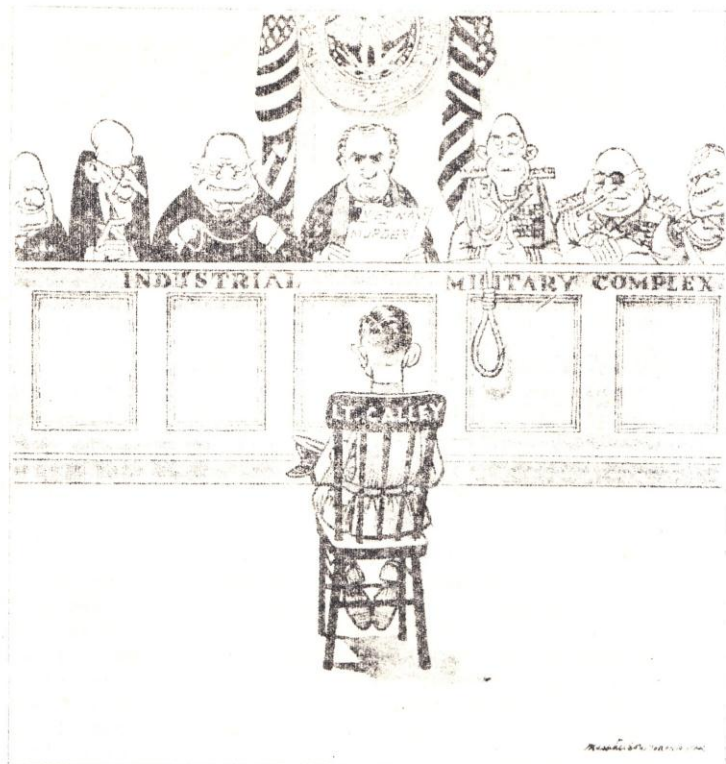
If anyone is to be tried then it should not only be Calley. It should be everyone running the war in Vietnam, the military commanders, the industrialists, who have

been making fat profits out of the bloodshed, up to and including the president of the United States. And the judge and jury? Why who better than the victims of this brutal war - the Vietnamese peasants and workers.

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LAY DELEGATES TO HOLD RECALL CONFERENCE ON CONTAINERISATION

Containerisation is one of the biggest threats to dockers' jobs that there is. Last year Manchester dockers won a court decision which ruled that filling containers was dockers' work. Then the employers went to the High Court and had the decision reversed. The only thing to come out of this fiasco was a lesson - to put our faith in our own action and not in court decisions. But that's not the end of it.

The whole question of containerisation is being taken up by a special lay delegates conference. Let's hope that we get a national policy for a national struggle to make sure that filling containers is dockers' work, because so far containers have meant disaster for the dockers' job security.

boards.

The following cabinet ministers were directors of companies that made donations to either or both of these anti-union organisations:

Reginald Maudling: £250 in 1968 (Shipping Industrial Holdings), £750 in 1968 (Kleinwort Benson). Geoffrey Rippon: £150 in 1969 (Fairey). Antony Barber: £600 in 1969 (British Ropes). Lord Carrington: £4750 in 1969 (Barclays Bank). With the company so respectable we wonder if the MSC has joined the club?

THE PERMISSIVE SOCIETY

TORIES in the London Borough of Hackney have refused to allow one of their members to fight for a council seat on a 'anti-permissive society' platform. He is 55 years-old Mr. Paul Danials and he would like to campaign with the slogan 'Vote Labour for Crumpet'

The local Tory agent said: "His anti-permissive position is admirable but this slogan would be able to win votes for Labour."

I SPY . . .

At least £65,000 is paid out each year by private companies to the Economic League and a further £14,000 to Common Cause, both organisations that build up 'blacklists' of militants trade unionists and socialists. The companies are often big and influential ones, with leading Tory MP's on their

DOCK LABOUR SCHEME UNDER ATTACK?

All the signs are that the National Association of Port Employers, with the support of the government, is preparing another attack on the Dock Labour Scheme. The employers hope that the outcome of the implementation of Devlin Phase II will be a drastic reduction of the labour force in all of Britain's Ports and they see the National Dock Labour Board as a barrier to this.

The National Dock Labour Board was set up in 1947 to control who works on the docks and to protect the interests of the docker. To this end the Board has on it 50% employer and 50% union representation, and although it's very often the employers' stooges who are the union reps, there is no doubt that the docker would be worse off if the employers succeeded in getting rid of it.

Without the Dock Labour Scheme there would be no control at all over the employers' power to sack workers and in Manchester we would be wide open to the employers' plans to reduce the labour force to 560 by 1972.

The Port employers have never made any secret about their attitude to the Dock Labour Scheme. In 1955, when giving evidence to the Devlin inquiry they said that "the principle of joint control of the scheme by employers and unions should be replaced by control of an organisation of representatives of the employers alone." Last year Sir Arthur Kirby, chairman of the National Ports Council, which is backed by the government to replace the Dock Labour Boards, said "If the government is going to strengthen the NPC as they've said they would they've got to give us some powers over labour".

The fact that the employers want to scrap the Dock Labour Scheme should surprise no one. From the beginning they've been against workers having any restraining powers over their "right" to sack whom they chose and, in spite of its limitations, the principle of 50% union representation challenges that "right".

The attitude of the mass of dockers is equally straightforward. We don't think that there is a single docker who would be prepared to see the Dock Labour Scheme scrapped without a fight to defend it.

What should concern us however is that allegations have been made that the T&GWU leaders have had secret talks with the National Association of Port Employers and have been prepared to bargain over the fate of the NDLB.

Some time ago "Workers' Press" which is the paper of the Socialist Labour League, said that at a meeting between Jack Jones and George Tonge, chairman of the National Association of Port Employers, Jones had agreed to negotiate over the future of the NDLB provided that these negotiations were kept quiet until Devlin Phase II was firmly established. Workers' Press claims to have the minutes of this meeting which prove that these discussions took place. However, Jack Jones, in a letter to Workers' Press, denied the charges and said that in all his dealings with the employers he had kept to union policy of retaining the Dock Labour Scheme with joint control of the register.

The truth of this matter is vital to all dockers. If the Workers' Press has, as they claim, documents which prove that Jones was preparing to agree to the employers' plans for the NDLB, then it is their duty to publish these documents so as to prepare the countries' dockers for a fight against the pending sell out. So far they have failed to do this, which means either that they haven't got the minutes or else that they are actually weakening the dockers' readiness to fight by not publishing them.

As far as Jack Jones is concerned we don't believe that the docker has any good reason to rely on him in a fight to defend the Dock Labour Scheme. The recent Ford strike showed that Jones was prepared to manoeuvre a settlement behind the backs of the Ford workers and stewards. In a badly organised ballot, which was run by the company, the Ford workers were asked to accept the deal, without any report back from the negotiating committee or any discussion of the deal at a mass meeting.

On April 29th there will be a meeting of all the Dock Labour Boards, in Blackpool. The outcome of this meeting may well give us some idea as to what the employers and union leaders are up to.