



SHIP CANAL

no. 2

MSC SCOOPED !!

The Interim Agreement made between the T. & G.W.U. and the M.S.C. has now been in operation since the middle of August. But although it affects every docker in the port, nobody has actually seen a copy of it.

A version specially for the dockworkers has been put out by the M.S.C. All it gave was a load of smooth talk.

We are printing the full agreement, which has come into the hands of 'SHIP CANAL', so that dockers can see what they think of the whole deal.

We think dockworkers have a right to see these agreements in writing - and in full!

DEVLIN SCHEME STAGE III - MANCHESTER DOCKS, ELLESMERE PORT AND PARTINGTON

The Company and the Transport & General Workers' Union recognise that it is essential to have normal working in the Port of Manchester, and as it will be some time before negotiations are completed on an agreement on Devlin Stage II the following interim agreement is made (subject to the approval of the D.E.F.) between the Company and the Union on behalf of all registered dockworkers, the continued operation of which is dependent upon such dockworkers at all times carrying out their obligations and accepting their responsibilities under the employment scheme (The Dockworkers' Regulation of Employment amendment Order, 1967).

I. Discussions to be arranged, amongst other things, on the following proposed changes in working arrangements:

- a) Transfer to be accepted during Sunday up to noon and on nights up to 2am.

- b) Consideration to be given at a later date that a working turn be available at the container terminal (1/9) on Saturdays on a voluntary basis only.
- c) Dockworkers to accept work as checkers and winchdrivers in instances of temporary shortages in these groups.
- d) Discussion to take place before new arrangements for receiving and delivery on quays and pilot schemes to be worked experimentally.
- e) Consideration to be given to the application of work study and work measurement techniques.

II. In exchange, the company are prepared to make the following award:

A flat payment of 1s. per hour payable when available for work in ordinary

hours and in overtime when worked.

The piecework lieu payment of 2s. an hour will be payable for periods in which men are prevented from working cargo because of weather conditions.

(14th August 1969)

.....

dodgy

SO THAT'S ONE DODGE, AND HERE'S ANOTHER - FROM LONDON:

The Port of London Authority and Ocean Containers Ltd have attempted to break a union ban on package deals at Tilbury Dock - by means of a trick.

The ban was imposed by the No.1 Docks Group of the T&GWU over a year ago, to prevent the employers introducing mechanisation through package deals at isolated berths operated with a greatly reduced labour force.

The ban stays until all dockworkers get a deal based on equal opportunity.

The employers' trick was to make a tentative offer from the PLA to OGL that the berth in question should be operated under conventional manning. But the employers' idea of conventional manning was very different from the men's.

Conventional manning means to a docker that each hatch be manned by a 12-handed gang, while on the PLA's definition one 12-handed gang would transfer from hatch to hatch.

Tilbury I.S. dockers (members and supporters of the INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM Group) and other militant trade unionists, issued a leaflet deploring such a deal.

At a mass meeting called by Harry Battie (Tilbury Docks T&GWU delegate), there was a unanimous decision that a further meeting would be called to discuss what form of militant action would be taken if the PLA attempted to break the ban.

Maintaining bans on isolated package deals is a method which must continue to be used as a weapon in the struggle for a better deal for every dockworker.

.....
(From Terry Barrett, republished from SOCIALIST WORKER)

.....

It's been rumoured lately in the Port that Preston is becoming alcoholic.

Is it true? Or just talk?

The thing is, so many people have heard

him shouting: "Where's ma Guinness? Where's ma Guinness?"

Draw your own conclusions. Further evidence to support the theory should be sent at once, postcards please, to SHEEP CANAL.....

.....

Whose turn

next?

Lord Devlin says that it is essential to share out the plum jobs.

Why then aren't the jobs at Vere St. container base shared out amongst the rest of the workers on a rota basis?

It certainly isn't because these jobs need any special know-how or training. Yet, unlike the London men, we have let them split us up. They have created a group of us set apart. And that is how they like things. It makes it easier to control us.

Another thing: when, if their plans go smoothly, they have managed to get rid of 3 out of every 4 of us, the whole of the port will look almost as empty of dockers as Vere St. is now.

The division then will be between those on the dole queues, and the few who are left to work round the clock shifts and be moved like machines from job to job.

But meanwhile, they don't want the majority of the men to even get a glimpse into the future. It might make the job of the M.S.C. more difficult. It might cause more men to think and talk about what's coming to the docks.

And worse still, they might decide to fight it. They might adopt a programme of demands against the sackings.

And that would never do.

.....



PAISLEY -

Ireland's own Enoch

POWELL

An Irish docker's view

As usual, the demand for civil rights for the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland has met with savage repression from the Ulster Tory police state. But this time, instead of lying down and suffering, the people of the Bogside in Derry fought back. They put up barricades, and set out to rule themselves.

When the armed police found that they couldn't force their way in to beat up and terrorise the working people of the Bogside, they took revenge on the Falls Road area in Belfast. For three days and nights in August they went on a rampage, together with the thugs of the B-Specials and the fanatical followers of Ian Paisley. They burnt whole street down, 10 people were killed, and many hundreds wounded.

And the British government sent its troops in - to make sure that things don't get too far out of hand and upset the whole foundation of the British bosses' backyard colony.

50 YEARS OF TYRANNY

For fifty years the Catholics - one in 3 of the population - have been treated as second class citizens. First, they were kept within the boundaries of the Unionist state by the use of force - against their will.

Since then, they have faced clear discrimination in jobs and housing. They have been harried by special police state laws passed by the bosses of the Orange lodges. Many have been thrown in jail without trial and kept there for as long as it pleased the Unionists. For example, the singing of certain Irish nationalist songs, or the flying of the Irish Republic's flag, meant a prison sentence for anyone caught!

They have been denied a free vote, through the fiddling of election boundaries, and because of the property qualifications still in force there. (These were abolished in England many years ago.) Many adults have no vote at all in local elections - while others can have as many as 25!

Since Ireland was partitioned in 1920, the bosses have ruled supreme. Backed by

.....
"SHIP CANAL" is published by supporters of the International Socialism Group in the Port of Manchester. Articles, letters etc should sent to: 11a Rowan Ave., M/cr 16
.....

all the power of a series of British governments, they have used the religious differences to keep the Northern Irish workers divided.

They have used religion the way Enoch Powell uses colour: to divide worker against worker. Instead of fighting the bosses and struggling together for better wages and conditions, workers have been incited to fight each other.

The result has been fifty years of safe Tory rule, with Protestant and Catholic workers alike suffering mass unemployment, low wages, appalling housing and emigration. Instead of fighting their common enemy - the Protestant and Catholic bosses - the workers have fought each other.

Britain pretends to be neutral in all this. But that is a sham. The British government bears direct responsibility for the antics of the Orangemen and the injustices of the Unionist state. Britain put them there in the first place, to make sure that the British bosses would always have a stranglehold on Ireland. Without British support the Northern Ireland statelet could not have survived.

This is why the troops went into action 6 weeks ago: to make sure that the Tories in Ulster do survive. To make sure they keep control of all their territory - including the areas where the Catholics are in the majority.

So the troops are no solution - at any rate not for the workers of Ulster. But what is the way out?

Clearly, in the long run, real progress can only be made when the workers, Catholic and Protestant, North and South, unite to kick out the bosses and control their own future.

In the short term, however, the Ulster police regime must be kicked out. To this end, the Catholic minority must strengthen its defences and once more take up the struggle for the elementary civil rights which are still denied them.

FRED'S

Friday

Wincanton

3.0

- JOE'S JEM

FRED'S

FANCIES

Saturday

Newmarket

4.5

- LUCY ROWE

FANCIES

the day the bosses' press supported the "workers"

Fighting redundancy isn't an easy matter. If a factory is about to be shut down, it isn't much of a headache to the bosses if a strike is threatened. New tactics have to be worked out. But just because they are new, it is difficult to achieve the kind of solidarity and unity that have been built up over the years in the course of more traditional forms of struggle.

The bosses rely on this. And they have their own tricks, too. The promise of redundancy payments to soften the blow, and the threat to withdraw these payments to anyone who lifts a finger to fight, are combined with smooth talk of new jobs for all.

And thus the bosses, hand in hand with the "Labour" Government, send batch after batch of men to the dole. The 1.0% - 1.5% of the 1950s has grown to 2.5% - 3.0%. And that's just the average. Liverpool, for instance, has twice this number permanently unemployed.

The week before last saw the tragic setback to Merseyside GEC workers' plans to combat coming redundancies. The national press has made much of the fact that the Action Committee's proposal - for an occupation of the 3 factories, designed to show that it was the management, not the workers, who were redundant - was prevented at the last minute by opposition from some of the men.

The Action Committee have been painted as being either "Communist spies" (paid, no doubt, with Russian gold!) or remote union bureaucrats who did not even bother to consult the men - or just hooligans out to disrupt the 'good labour relations' between Arnold Weinstock and those he is about to chop.

In fact, the Action Committee held frequent consultations with the rest of the workers (especially at the Netherton factory), and had the support of the majority.

But, it seems, they had not realised just how difficult it would be to keep all the men together, in battle array, for an action which has not yet been tried and tested in this country on such a scale. In their enthusiasm, they had gone ahead a little too fast.

Meanwhile the management and its friends had been busy, with their threats and promises. "You will receive redundancy pay - but only if you behave". They allowed anti-union men to organise against the Action Committee in the company's time. 300 workers in the B Shop, Fusegear Divis-

ion at the Fazakerly plant were organised by the management to make placards for the mass meeting which was to discuss the take-over.

MANAGERS VOTED !

Then they were led out early by the management, and took up strategic positions in front of the platform. The meeting was riddled with staff and management of English Electric - who themselves voted against the Action Committee.

So Weinstock has won that round, and 3,000 men will join the Liverpool dole queues. But the stewards at Liverpool GEC have shown us all that there are ways to fight redundancies - if we are prepared to fight them seriously, that is. Now it is the workers' move.

And that doesn't only mean GEC workers. It means dockworkers too. We can learn from what has happened in Liverpool. And we are not so easily conned.

The Government's plan for the docks is not very different from Weinstock's plans for GEC: a new super-industry where all effort is geared to higher profits. Where the interests of the workers have no place at all.

Only we can stop them. It won't be easy. But life on the dole is a damned sight harder. Redundancy pay doesn't go very far. And the way they are planning things, most of us won't even get that.

The lesson of Liverpool isn't that the stewards went too far. It is that the rest of the men wouldn't go far enough.

And 'far enough' is when we stand up and stop them doing just what they want with us.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

GEORGE
NORMAN

TRIBUTE FROM A WORKMATE

A tower of strength, of simple taste,
A Fighter, that we must not waste,
A thorn in the side of unscrupulous bosses,
Who count our gains as their dreaded losses.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

.....

G E O R G E N O R M A N

George Norman is dead. The man who for many years was the best known militant rank and file leader on Manchester docks was cremated on Wednesday June 18th. He had been incurably ill with cancer for a long time.

George Norman was the man the Ship Canal couldn't buy, and the fighter they couldn't scare. He was the man they finally succeeded - ten years ago - in driving out from his job. He was the militant leader they had offered to make foreman - and then victimised when he told them where to stick their 'soft' job.

Others who got up to speak at meetings had their price. Some liked the prospect of becoming foremen. One even thought a foreman's salary worth the nickname "Judas". A few enjoyed the 'respectability' of friendly relations with the management.

But not George. George never flinched in the fight, he never cowered - and he never sucked up to the bosses. His 'price' was better wages and conditions for every docker in Manchester - and that was the price the gaffers wouldn't pay.

For George the foremen were the overseers who wielded the employers' whip to make sure the bosses got more than their money's worth out of the men. George was interested in making bloody sure they didn't succeed.

The higher wages and softer job he could have had by selling out, by crossing the line to the bosses' side - for George these came at too high a price. He wanted these things for all dockers - or for none!

Nor did George want 'friendly' relations with the management. He, like any good militant, would have been insulted to find himself in their good graces. He saw the need to negotiate with them, of course.

But he saw further. He saw that when the share of assets going on wages rises, then profits fall. He knew that there was an unending fight - under the present system - between wages and profits, between owners of docks and factories who receive profit, and us who own nothing but our labour and receive wages. He saw talk of a common interest between bosses and men as a snare to trap foolish workers. He knew that dockers and other workers have never got anything without a fight. He saw his own job to be to make that fight as successful as possible. He saw the hatred for him of the Ship Canal as proof of his success. He was honoured, not upset, by it.

There was another reason why George didn't want friendly relations with the employers. George was a socialist and a communist. Like many other good militants, whose first belief is in the democratic power of the workers, he remained with the Communist Party despite -

not because of - that Party's connection with the Stalinist antics of those who rule Russia. He believed the working class should own, rule, administer and control the ships, ports, industries and fields of England and the world. He believed the working class should and could rule itself, that it didn't need the bosses.

This is what made George Norman different. His unbending belief that the working class could, should - and one day will - take over this country and the whole world, allowed him to see things differently.

He saw the everyday struggle for wages and conditions as part of the big struggle for workers' power. He saw the wages battle as battles for everyday life - but also as dress rehearsals for when the majority of our class decides to solve its problems once and for all by taking over.

In each wage battle he saw the giant strength of labour stirring itself. Until his death he remained convinced that we will one day go further - and stand up on our feet and sweep aside those who today make us fight every inch of the way to keep the little bit of butter we get on our 'crusts'.

George saw the workers' fights from this angle, and that's why he couldn't be bought; that's why the tin-pot tyrants of the Ship Canal couldn't frighten him. That's why he had contempt for those labour and trade union leaders who enjoy and are flattered by hob-nobbing with the bosses, whether on the steps of the 'front' or of the 'back' stairs.

That's why they couldn't break him. They victimised him, drove him out of his job, and used the courts to stop his re-instatement. But George stayed in the fight - and his fight goes on.

He was cremated last Wednesday, Last Wednesday there was the 4th of the present series of one-day strikes. This is the best way to commemorate and vindicate George Norman, and all the other labour militants who are gone.

In the future George and all the others will be fittingly commemorated by the battles of millions of workers for better conditions and eventually for socialism. The workers who strike and struggle and fight will not know George's name. But they will commemorate him all the same.

Goodbye George Norman.