



THE HOOK

**For a 30 hour week!
Open the Register
No Flexibility**

In July 1972 there were 42,000 registered dockworkers in Britain. Now there are less than 35,000. At the final count 8,398 men took the severance payment worked out under the Jones-Aldington committee. Now there is an acute labour shortage in many ports, and with it a new attack on the NDLS.

The report by Lord Aldington and union leader Jack Jones was designed to bail out the Government and the union leaders. Dockers who refused to accept a 'pool' of unemployment within the industry, triggered off the biggest crisis since 1926 with militant picketing of container packing depots. By transferring work from the ports to these depots the bosses were by-passing the high rates of pay and solid practices for self-protection which the dockers had built up with the National Dock Labour Scheme since the end of the war.

The employers - Government strategy then was of:
A) diverting work from ports to the ICD's outside dockland.
B) making increasing use of small ports and wharves with unregistered labour.
C) a drive to scrap, or reorganise the NDLS, on the grounds that the growing unemployment within it and the cost of the

Jones/Aldington seemed to mean a new approach - severance pay for unfit dockers and men over 55 was raised to a maximum of £4000. Now this too has rapidly developed into a new threat to the NDLS. Previously the employers' cry was - "we can't afford the full back pay for the unemployed pool". Now the cry is - "we are short of labour".

But they resist the demand to employ new registered dockworkers, and insist on recruiting men only to the temporary (supplementary) register. The situation changes - the employer's determination to break open the dock labour scheme remains constant. They want to shrink the work force to probably not much more than half the present 35,000. But not all at once - they want flexibility - to hire, fire, deploy and generally control the docker.

In Preston the management are trying to get the dockers to do more than one piecework job per day.

The shortage of labour will mean an increasing drive for more use of machinery and greater 'flexibility' by those operating the machinery. Manning scales will also come under pressure. With temporary men the fight will be harder against such attacks.

To summarise: the dockers face a new phase in the employers strategy.

- 1) The introduction of casual labour on a more extensive scale. This is being attempted through the smaller and weaker ports. And it mainly reflects the isolation of these ports - not the efforts of militants to organise against casuals. Bristol, Teesside, Preston, and Immingham have all accepted some casuals. Ports like Manchester and Southampton are now coming under attack. (See Manchester well done!)
- 2) However for the stronger and more strategically placed ports like Hull, Liverpool, and London the attack has been aimed to get higher productivity. This has taken the form of transferring cargoes to more

Turn to page 2 ▶

**LONDON OUT
smash the Pay Law**

TORY PAY LAW

On Monday April 2nd, London dockers in the enclosed docks and at Tilbury were locked out by the employers.

The scene was set for this confrontation some weeks ago when London dockers accepted the employers pay offer of £2.60 and 4% on differentials.

Yet in protest about the offer the men voted to withdraw from operation of Clause 12 in the Green Book agreement, and in turn introduced fixed manning scales and only one job per shift. This came into operation on April 2nd; in reply the employers locked out the dockers.

The Green Book agreement was signed in September 1970, and was the end of the battle against the introduction of Devlin Phase 2.

The Clause 12 is concerned with the operation of flexibility, mobility of labour between ship and ship, hatch and hatch, and ship to shore, and also with manning scales. In other words the refusal to

co-operate on Clause 12 hits back at the employers victory in 1970.

18 MAN COMMITTEE

The 18 man committee, composed of 6 Blue and 12 White delegates that recommended this course of action has engaged in discussion with the employers to solve the problem. But until now no solution has arisen. The employers are hiding behind the Tory's Pay Law to escape talking about money or anything else.

The London dockers, unlike the Tally clerks and riverside men, thus stand out against the Tory Pay Law. In other parts of the country however the situation is as confusing. In Hull, dockers accepted 'grudgingly' £2.65. They stood out against the introduction of a supplementary register. With the struggle to win over container depots and groupage warehouses, which are "stuffing and stripping", Hull dockers may have felt their hands full.

In Liverpool the position is not clear. The stewards committee made a recommendation to a mass meeting that the offer of £2.78 from the employers should be accepted. The fact that the agreement signed over the Aintree Container Depot, giving registered dockers the right to work there, was frozen, and with it a concession for a 35 hour week, weakens the Liverpool dockers struggle.

Other ports, like Manchester, Southampton, and Bristol, have agreed on pay offers within the Tory pay norm. But feeling expressed at the Manchester meeting that they would come out for a 'national effort' means that the NPSSC could take up the task of organising the national action needed to smash through the pay law. If the NPSSC does not take up the organisation and lead to support London, then the Tory pay laws will be strengthened.

LIVERPOOL

In Liverpool the now re-organised Mersey Docks and Harbour Co. has a number of tricks up its sleeve. The M D & H Co. took over 3 other stevedoring companies last year, and this year has planned its strategy to integrate these companies. However this integration is also aimed to increase the productivity of the Liverpool dockers under its control. (The M D & H Co. controls 80% of Liverpool dockers.)

Turn to page 2 ▶

Liverpool (cont.)

The introduction of a management consultant firm Inbucon/AIC Management Consultants is aimed to "improve cargo handling facilities in the port and so speed up the vital turn round..." The M D & H Co. is concerned to draw as many people into its discussions. One group has been consulted fairly early on - the 200 strong group of dock managers, key foremen, hatch bosses, and checkers who supervise all aspects of the operations. This group is important because it is these who know in detail the working practices we adopt to maintain our living standards and present working conditions.

In fact "They are free to air whatever problems they face on the quays and advance suggestions for improving productivity."

The current refusal of the M D & H Co. to press for opening of the register, to the National Dock Labour Board indicates their willingness to try and get by on their reduced labour force. A spokesman for the M D & H Co. said on 15/1/73 that "the case for recruitment was not fully made, except on a temporary basis." They intend to get by through squeezing more productivity out of us and through introduction of more machinery and the use of aspects of agreements signed but not yet used. For example in Manchester an agreement has been signed allowing more than one one piecework job to be done per day, but as yet it has not been implemented!



SOUTH AFRICAN DOCKERS FIGHT BACK.

At least 15 African stevedores employed on Durban docks have been dismissed for having given evidence to the Wage Board hearing set up as a result of the recent strikes.

After several requests for reasons for their dismissal the employers replied that their services were no longer required.

Under Section 25 of the Wage Act it is unlawful to victimise anyone for giving evidence on wages and conditions. But the law in South Africa only has one purpose - to serve the interests of the employers. Meanwhile the Durban dockers have unanimously rejected a pay offer of 1 Rand (equal to about 52 p) per week. This would have brought their basic wage to 9.50 Rands (about £4.75) per week!

The dockers sent a signed objection to the Ministry of Labour, and at the time of this report being written meetings were being held to discuss the imposition of an overtime ban. (Information from SECHVBA.)

(Information from SECHABA) In the next issue of the HOOK we will have a fuller article on the struggle of S.African dockers.)

Mr. Redford speaks!!!!

Mr. Redford, Chairman of NAPE, had some new thoughts last week. Mind you not too many. Or else we would have been deprived of his genius while he recovered from "overworking". As the re-elected Chairman of the National Association of the Port Employers his ideas have to be taken seriously.

Mr. Redford wants 2 things: 1. a 'more representative way of selecting shop stewards', 2. and to encourage shop stewards to become more involved in the industry and promotion to management positions where appropriate.

But let us be fair, and hear exactly what Mr. Redford and his his dull band of employers want.

SHOP STEWARDS

"Shop stewards must be built into a completely integrated structure, but employers ought first to make sure that men who represent their fellows are truly representative. Then as employers we have got to recruit them into management and replace them with other worthwhile shop stewards".

Some would say he's being a bit cheeky, and others could

FOR 30 HOUR WEEK (continued from Page 1.)

mechanised berths eg South American meat trade; or as in Liverpool re-organisation of the port. (See inset).

Thus the fight is a national fight, and the National Dock Labour Scheme is the prize.

The NDLS will not survive in the way we know it without a clear and consistent leadership coming from the militants now controlling the stewards' committees.

The key fight is the defence of the NDLS. All conditions and wages are tied in with the existence of the NDLS. A fight to bring containerisation under dockers' control will be through the use of the NDLS; a fight for a national wage agreement will be possible only with the NDLS

in existence.

A key point in this struggle will be the demand for a 30 hr week. This demand links the dockers' struggle against redundancies to that of other workers who face redundancies in steel, for example.

As one of the central points in the charter of the National Port Shop Stewards Committee, the 29 hour week will of necessity involve the leadership of the NPSSC leading a national fight in all ports - registered or unregistered. Dockers in the key unregistered port of Felixstowe or the other railway ports, are not misled by arguments

not moved by arguments about stealing registered dockers' work - they are impressed by what registered dockers can win. And 30 hours will be impressive

TOM RAMSEY

and Mr. Redford can agree on how to get rid of 7,000 dockers, we do not see how they can disagree on how to change dockers into company men!

WHAT TO DO ?

So what can we do ?

We must realise what the Industrial Relations Act is, and how to fight it.

It was the Act which jailed our 5 London brothers last July; it threatens to cut to ribbons any rank and file action. The main intention of the Act is to act as an "arm bender" on trade union leaders and officials so that they become the trade union boys in blue - so that they police and control us.

Therefore we want the Industrial Relations Act broken. No co-operation, or deals. Let us see the sort of blacking lists we were used to see; let us have fewer chats with the Tories and the bosses. Let us have some leadership and action over fighting the freeze.

But we have learnt a few lessons from Mr. Redford. One is that our representatives must fully represent us, (or else they will represent the boss instead of us). Therefore we want mass meetings in working time, with no loss of pay. (So no one has a reason for not coming). These meetings will decide policy; elect union officials and hear report backs. WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON ! We want to know what is discussed at the parties, dinners etc our union 'leaders' attend. We want no secret deals or negotiations. Everything has to be in the open. If it is not we will force it into the open: we will open files, letters and your company books.

We make this warning. If we find a man who is a company's man, and no longer our representative we will give him to you Mr. Redford ! As we say: a rat always knows where to go.

TOM RAMSEY

Dockers face police at Neap Wharf



POLICE HAVE NOW ARRESTED TWO HOSPITAL ANCILLARY PICKETS AT ST MARY'S HOSPITAL, PADDINGTON. AND LAST WEEK SEVEN PICKETS WERE ARRESTED AFTER A POLICE ASSAULT OUTSIDE FINE TUBES, PLYMOUTH.

This is part of an attack on the right of picketing, which has proved so effective in recent strikes.

Last year's mass pickets smashed Tory government plans on wages and the National Industrial Relations Court. Miners and dockers used their muscle power to turn picket lines into impassable barriers against scabs and other Judases. In Birmingham, there was a city-wide strike, as thousands reinforced miners picketing Saltley Coke Depot. They overwhelmed the scab-herding police, closed the depot, and immediately afterwards the Government caved in.

Now the Government, in turn, is using mass squads of specially trained police to physically beat down pickets. Police strong-arm squads have assaulted Hull dockers. They have smashed their way through picketing electricians at St Thomas Hospital, London, using maximum force. In every dispute now the police harry and attempt to intimidate pickets. In Manchester they have made a point of

arrogantly warning hospital pickets not to molest scabs.

Sean Matganna.

ANTI-PICKET SQUADS

These are dress rehearsals. If the miners strike again, they will be met by these special police anti-picket squads.

The anti-picket squad is the centrepiece in a full-scale drive against picketing. The Government rightly sees picketing as the weapon which helps to mobilise some of the reserve strength of the working class in what would otherwise be sectional struggles, to be isolated by the centralised power of the bosses and beaten down.

There is a sustained press campaign. Robert Carr, the Home Secretary, has issued statements 'insisting' that the number of

pickets be limited to two. 'Conspiracy' charges have been brought against 24 building workers in connection with last year's strike.

But the State can bring conspiracy charges whenever it thinks it can get away with it. Whether it can actually curb

mass picketing depends on its ability to physically beat down pickets. That's where the police squads come in.

STEP UP STRUGGLE

This is the Tory counter-attack. Every working class intensification of the struggle against the bosses calls forth a stepping up by the bosses in their turn — right up to the point where the working class breaks the power of the bosses once and for all.

The idea that even a strengthened police force could win in a confrontation with the working class is still laughable — if the strength of the working class is used. **But only if it is mobilised and used.** Otherwise specially trained gangs of thugs in blue uniform and helmets can be a formidable force against small groups of workers.

The answer is to step up the struggle on our side. Last year the mass pickets were an 'optional'. Now, ruling class tactics make big mass mobilisations necessary for victory. They make alliances of workers in struggle, and organised support action, essential. The building of joint action committees to organise such solidarity can mean the difference between victory or defeat.

In France and Italy strikers have for long had to face police bullying and intimidation. They have responded by organising for self-defence. In America strikes have very often tended to become civil wars (see p. 9) Workers could win only by match

ing force with force, violence with violence, the "strong arm of the law" with the stronger arm of the working class.

Heath and his despicable Tory gang have taught us in the last two years what a sham the 'neutrality' of the law is. Many workers now don't give a damn about Tory law. Even less now does 'the law' deserve respect or 'obedience' when it is being 'reinterpreted' as a scab's charter in a Government attempt to break the strength of the working class. They want to reduce us to an atomised, broken-spirited rabble, from an organised force increasingly conscious of our common working class interest.

The police anti-strike squads are licensed to attack striking workers as the tools of this scabs' charter. The policeman who attacks or arrests a picket is the biggest scab of the lot. He must be treated as scabs have always been treated by the labour movement. Since he is organised to use force against us, we can only prevail against him if we can rally massive, organised working class force, on the model of Saltley and beyond.

The next mobilisation of mass pickets will have to be more disciplined, better organised, and better trained than the last lot.

N.P.C. Report!

"Although the report does not go as far as the unions would have liked, it was accepted without dissent by all council members including the vice-chairman, Mr Jones"

The report from the National Ports Council has arrived at last — but there are no surprises, or gifts for registered dockers. The report basically argues for leaving the 'cowboy' ports alone, and in favour of the bigger ports improving their productivity.

NO CHANGE

The NPC report (which we only discuss briefly here) changes nothing. The cowboy

ports and wharves will be kept out of the NDLS.

The main aim of the report was to balance out all the feelings and pressures amongst the bosses in such a way that unity can be achieved around a common objective — the breaking of the dockers into docile workhorses.

Dockers after the national docks strike last year expected something from the employers. What did we get?

1st: more casuals. Ports like Preston now have casuals. Southampton has increased by 300 the number of casuals; the employers had wanted an extra 1,000!

2nd: 2e have lost over 7,000 registered dockers. This makes a total of just over 30,000 dockers gone since 1965!

3rd: The entry into the Common Market has given a weapon to the employers. The small ports and wharves are NOW more important than ever. More and more the trade, and therefore cargo from, Europe will increase. The Ports like Tees and Hartlepool, Hull, Felixstowe

the Medway ports, the eastern railway ports will all get a share of this increased trade. The larger and traditionally militant ports like Liverpool and London will be undermined through loss of trade to other ports. The NPC report understands this and does not want to change any of it in favour of the registered docker.

In the next issue we will give more coverage to this report. The HOOK will have comments and feelings of dockers about the future of the registered docker and how to organise a fight back.

Southampton.

We have a situation here of temporary workers demanding their own branch. If they are allowed to develop in opposition to us we could have a position of the regular dockers out the gate and temporary workers working in the dock.

Tories step up attack on unions

Published by H. Youd, 26 Langton St Salford 6. Printed by voluntary labour at 93 Gifford St., London N.1.

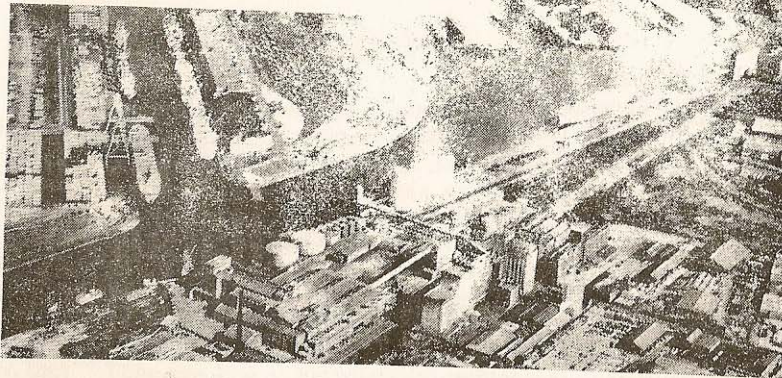
We have always had seasonal workers because of the vast amount of seasonal trade, but for years their numbers did not go above 200 men. Over the last few years the temporary register has been steadily increasing. They come in about March and go out in October. Last year we had 538, and because of a build up in trade and voluntary severance all of these men were kept in over the winter.

LORD VESTEY

When Lord Vestey decided to screw the London docker and come to Southampton with his meat trade. Our employer then asked the local Board for a further 1,000 temporary men. After some discussion with the stewards the employer dropped this to 800 men. This then went to the national Board who granted permission to recruit another 300 men. To allow these men to start we managed to get our employer to pay our group 2 men the full rate. Also we had a long standing rule that a man had to be 21 years of age to come into the docks this has now been dropped to 18 yrs.

BILL WHITLOCK (T&GWU)

Manchester



WELL DONE MANCHESTER

On Thursday 8th March a meeting of Manchester dockers was held in the Manchester control. The previous Thursday, 1st March, there had been a meeting. This meeting had unanimously decided that there would be no temporary labour on Manchester docks. However this decision was not good enough for the shop stewards committee who called the second meeting on the 8th March. This meeting was called by the shop stewards to try to persuade the men that they were wrong in rejecting temporary labour.

Only one shop steward is against temporary labour, his name is Les Donovan. At the time of the meeting he was on the sick, but he came into work for the meeting. He asked to be allowed to speak, but Harold Gee, the paid official and also acting Chairman of the mass meeting, said that he should abide by the democratic decision, a majority decision of the shop stewards' committee, and support the stewards' committee.

It was then pointed out to Harold Gee that the committee should abide by the unanimous decision of the previous week's meeting. With this, Donovan was allowed to speak, and he voiced his opposition to the recruitment of men to the temporary register.

During the course of the meeting, Bill Dooley, Chairman of the shop stewards' committee, said that we would have to recruit to the temporary register because there was a ban on recruitment to the permanent register. And he pointed out that in a letter sent out by the Company to the dockworkers it stated that "they would make the supplementary register workers into permanent workers when the Dock Labour Board would allow them." Dooley said that was more or less a guarantee from the Company. It was pointed out by Brother Jack Walsh that he had never heard of a "more or less guarantee". At this point the men shouted "Get down" to Dooley.

Harold Youd then pointed out that the Managing Director of the Ship Canal Company had made a statement in that well-known employers' paper "The Port" that "Although the Manchester

men had rejected a recruitment to the temporary register, he still felt that there was no case yet for lifting the national ban on recruitment to the main register. Brother Dooley replied "he couldn't care a damn what Mr Redford said". It was pointed out to Brother Dooley that Mr Redford was the Managing Director of this company, and the man who gave the orders to Mr Fields, the Docks Manager. This created quite a lot of laughter when one man pointed out that Mr Redford was the engine driver.

At another point in the meeting, while Joe Barry (Branch Secretary of the NAS&DU) went for a document from his office, Harold Gee shouted to Youd "Do you think that my Shop Stewards are company men". To which he got from the mass chorus of the meeting a resounding "Yes".

Joe Barry spoke from the floor and went into the details and composition of the various committees involved in the Dock Labour Board. He produced a letter from Maurice MacMillan to the NDLB, and argued with H. Gee interpretations and consequences of this letter.

When the vote was called for,

an amendment went up from Jack Conway to take the rest of the day off. Brother Dooley refused to accept the amendment, and then called for a vote on the Shop Stewards' Committee's resolution calling for recruitment to the temporary register. It was an unanimous decision against

BUT WHAT NOW.....

This is great, but the fight is to recruit men to the permanent register. We see that the only possible defence of the NDLS from attacks will be us fighting back in an attacking manner. One of the first blows back at the employers will be a demand for a shorter working week. A call for 30 hours will be the beginning of a campaign to protect dockers' jobs.

If we begin to organise now, and fight to get the National Port Shop Stewards' Committee to take it up nationally, this call for a 30-hour week will help in organising dockers for the long term to face even greater attacks. "If someone is aiming blows at your stomach, you do not cover your head".

HAROLD YOUD (T&GWU)

WHOSE IN THE MONEY THEN!

Manchester Ship Canal Company has in the financial year upto Dec 31st 1972 has increased its pre-tax profits from £1,559,011 to £2,369,088. This is despite a fall in tonnage from 16.8 m tonnes to 16.3 m tonnes. Thus there was a profit increase of 52%!

In May 1974 there should be an opening ceremony of a new freight terminal. This ceremony will be held in Trafford Park and no registered docker will be invited even though "registered"

"dockers work" will be the business of this new terminal. It is to be called the Manchester International Freight Terminal - or MIFT for short! The backers include the P & O subsidiary - Anglo Overseas Transport, and Gentransco Services Ltd. This company has connection with the London International Freight Terminal (LIPT). But there is a word of warning - MIFT "will control its own personnel and handling equipment within the sheds." Thus no registered dockers can expect jobs at MIFT, unless we fight for them!

Felixstowe: expanding port.

Recently a new Inland Clearance Depot was opened in Felixstowe. The East Anglia Freight Terminal Ltd., represents a large consortium of shipping interests and users connected with Felixstowe dock. As traffic grows and flows through Felixstowe this will not be the last ICD to be built here.

Another morsel dropped to Felixstowe is the contract from the C.Y. Tung group. This will help Felixstowe diversify away from its present strong dependence on the North Atlantic run. It also means that the importance of Felixstowe in the plans of the big container consortiums is underwritten. The OOCL (owned by C.Y. Tung) is the 40th regular service to choose Felixstowe as its main port in the U.K.

WHAT FUTURE?

The National Ports Council report gave no future to the registered dockworker. The fight led by Hull against Barchard of Bankside Wharf is the sort that was planned for at a recent meeting of North West dockers. This meeting of dockers from Preston, Ellesmere Port, Manchester, Liverpool and Western Point decided to tackle the warehouses and depots using non registered dockers to "stuff and strip".

But other than this dockers in the NPSSC are faced with the employer's attacks:

demand for casuals and a 'supplementary register' in ports like Southampton, Hull, Preston and Bristol.

demand for greater 'productivity' through more flexibility eg in London blackmailing dockers over the South American Meat trade

controlled by Lord Vestey. As the London employers said "flexibility is the cornerstone of the Green Book Agreement".

In reply to these veiled threats we should demand a shorter working week thus forcing open the register. We should close down the cowboy ports which enable employers to blackmail us, and weaken our strength.

WHAT FUTURE ???

"We would like to discuss with the unions a higher pay structure which would consolidate all the present differentials,"

PLA Director General John Lunch said.

The employers were also prepared to discuss improvements in holiday and sick pay and a possible further increase to cover the cost of living.

In return, the employers would want to discuss the INTRODUCTION OF A THIRD SHIFT AND THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFERRING DOCKERS FROM ONE EMPLOYER TO ANOTHER TO MAINTAIN FULL EMPLOYMENT.

FELIXSTOWE AGAIN!

Over the last year there has been:

- a 25% increase in value of through trade;
- a 10% increase in volume of trade;
- a 19% increase in number of container boxes passing through;
- and a 56% increase in pre-tax profits!

Someone obviously gains through not having registered dockers around - and it is certainly not us!

ELLESMERE FIGHTS BACK.

Recently this small port was in the news when the Manchester Ship Canal Co. asked for 100 temporary dockers to be recruited. The reason given was that the Company had won a contract for receiving imported cars (Fiats).

The men in reply have rejected the idea of recruiting temporary men, and have put in a claim for a £7 per week increase as well as a demand for an extra 10% on piecework..