JONES-ALDINGTON: wage cut or the dole
by Harold Youd

The only thing that the report of the Jones-Aldington Committee proves is that we can't solve our problems short of the demands of the Dockers' Charter.

The T.U.A., 'pool', is to be abandoned on September 4th. Its 'inmates' will either take severance pay and leave the industry, or be absorbed back into employment. The Register is to be closed until January 1, 1973, and possibly longer. The Government will pay out a subsidy to compensate employers for hiring labour they 'don't really need'. Minimum severance pay is up from £1,000 to £2,000, and maximum up to £4,000 (or for the next 5 months) - for less fit men and those over 55.

The problem of container depot work will be solved by 'negotiation'.

Those are the recommendations of the Jones-Aldington Committee. What do they really mean for dockers?

All dockers will welcome the abolition of the pool, and some will be happy to take the increased severance pay. But these proposals, whatever they may do towards helping the bosses solve their problems - do not solve any problems for the dockers.

They hope to weed out as many of us as possible, particularly older and weaker men. But with the present level of unemployment, those who take severance pay will have little chance of another job - especially for women.

The report says: "Industrial agreements - in many cases existing agreements - will establish the appropriate level of payment to men for periods when there is no work available for them. In this way men now fully employed will make an appropriate contribution to the additional costs that will result from the employment of an abnormal number of surplus men".

What that means is that the general level of dockworkers' wages will be depressed. This is not work-sharing with no loss of pay. It is unemployment-sharing, and weight-sharing, to tide the employers over a difficult period of adjustment.

There are 4,500 men in the pool now, mainly in London and Hull.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

The 5 are free! Not because they have "suffered enough" - but because the Government has sweated enough. Once again the Tories have been beat a quick retreat. But even in doing so they have thrown down another challenge to the trade union movement - £55,000. They have decided they'd rather pick on the official trade union, which is more likely to knuckle under and pay up, than on stewards who stand firm and call on the industrial strength of the whole working class to defend them.

JONES paid up the first time. Since then we've shown how easily the Tories can be beaten. Demand of Jack Jones - don't pay our money over to the Tory Court. Bring out the members, and other trade unionists, if any move is made to grab Union funds. After last week, the Tories won't dare touch them!

STAY OUT! mobile pickets can bring out more!

The Government has declared war on the Unions. The reimposition of the fine on the T&G is a demand that the Unions make war on their militant members. The last week has shown more than anything else that what is needed is not just defence, but an all-out attack. NOW IS THE TIME TO GO FORWARD AND PUT THE BOOT IN.
Hull and Grimsby workers have declared war on the private wharves which have sprung up along the Humber. These private wharves have succeeded so far in making products that have been stolen from them. Hull has been declared and it must be won.

Since 6th July, dockers on the unattached register from Hull and Grimsby have been picketing Howdendyke wharf. This is the last privately owned wharf which is working on the unattached register. For Hull, Howdendyke was the first port to be attacked and since the picketing started, trade has been reduced to a trickle. The main transport firms aren't crossing the picket lines—only the local firms are.
We've said that if any shop steward or trade unionist is brought before the NIRC, or threatened with jail, then the reaction would be immediate: all ports in the country would close. Although the other shop stewards, representing the other major firms, haven't been able to give the same assurances, we feel certain that we'd get a tremendous response from other trade unionists, not only in this area, but throughout the country.

T.R. — Finally, on the question of the small ports. How can they be encouraged to come onto the nation at Shop Stewards Committee?

W.C. — It's necessary for these small ports to be brought into the movement and it's been left up to the major ports to encourage them to be represented on the NFSSC. In the Humber area this has been going on nicely. We've succeeded in getting Goole, Immingham and Grimsby represented on the Committee and we're hoping we can get more. We also hope that unregistered ports like Fleetwood will fight to become registered and be represented on the NFSSC.

from p.1

The bosses say that about 10% in work are really "unnecessary" and "surplus".

But the idea that there are too many dockers is ludicrous! The work is hard, dirty, dangerous and exhausting. There are too many hours being worked — not too many men.

The working week should immediately be cut to 30 hours, as the Dockers' Charter demands. A 30-hour week is already T&GWU policy. Why aren't they fighting for it where it is desperately needed?

The only way to guarantee that there will be no cut in earnings is to get the high minimum wage demanded by the National Shop Stewards Committee.

The report completely evades the containerisation issue — except for vague talk about negotiation and "encouraging" the companies to "give preference" to the "restitution" of registered dockworkers.

JONES-ALDINGTON REPORT

3. All loading and unloading of containers to be controlled by the NDLB.
4. All workers in a port to get the average wage in the port; for the "poo" to be in fact temporary.
5. Earlier retiring age.
6. Strict adherence to the Bristow Committee's definition of dockers' work.
7. A minimum national manning scale.
8. A 30-hour week.
9. Nationalisation of all ports under workers' control.

WE'VE INCLUDED IN THE HOOK rank and file dockers' paper, available from
26 Langston Street, Salford 6
Editor, Harold Youd, Manchester Portworkers Committee
They say, though I don't believe it personally, that in Italy there's a statue of the Virgin Mary that miraculously sheds tears. After the victory of Chobham Farm, if there's anywhere that's got a status of Heath, I bet they'll have found it sweeting.

Feather had capitulated to the courts with his ludicrous line of: "I didn’t know the NIRC would have the status of a High Court!" The rest of the TUC leaders followed him. Jones agreed to pay the £55,000 and had to be saved — not by defiance but by Denning! The railway leaders followed the ruling of the NIRC, and had a ballot of their members. Only the rank and file stood firm. The victory of Chobham Farm is their victory. It was their fight that was a rallying cry for the hatred of the working class for the Tory government.

Messages of support by immediate strike action came from all the ports. NUR members at Southamp...

"Make no mistake about it, the same action will take place if they try it against any industrial worker in this country"

Vic Turner
DOCKWORKERS HAVE NOW BEEN five of their leaders jailed for defending the right to work. We know the answer to this sort of legal intimidation.

The victory of Chobham Farm was a clear lesson in how to deal with judges and the law. Except for those who believe in fairy stories, everyone knows full well that it was through a national dock strike which convinced the Official Solicitor to intervene, and not police power.

The certainty of a national dock strike combined with the possibility of mass support by non-dockers was too much of a risk for the Tory government, which was not prepared for a general strike, and rather than take that risk they decided to back down and drop the plans to arrest the Chobham Farm three.

For the first time this slogan has been used and nothing could be said of the first time that it has been forcibly demonstrated that the laws of class struggle take precedence over the "law of the land".

The slogan was first coined 21 years ago by the seamen dockers who were threatened with the law.

ORDER 1305

The Industrial Relations Act of 21 years ago was known as Order 1305. This piece of legislation was introduced in 1940 as a war-time emergency measure. Article 4 of the Order stated: "no employer shall declare or take part in a lockout and a worker shall not take part in a strike in connection with any trade dispute unless it is declared to be a matter of the Minister of Labour ... and 21 days have elapsed since the date of the report of the dispute that passing of time being referred by the Minister for settlement in accordance with the provisions of that article."

If it is nice, the way they put that bit about employers giving notice of lockouts before the bit about workers giving notice of strikes! Of course, the mention of lockouts was just window-dressing. It was never intended that the legislation should be used against employers and never was.

It was intended to be used as a weapon for breaking strikes, and for that purpose it was far from redundant.

The Labour Government, which was elected in 1945, had promised to withdraw the legislation as soon as it came to power. In fact, far from withdrawing it, the Attlee Government used it, just as it used every other piece of Fascist machinery against the working class.

This same Labour Government, a high 7 times sent the troops into the London docks, wasn't going to have a dockers' strike.

The events which led to the use of Order 1305 against the 7 dockers were on 30th May 1945, and 1st June 1945, when 2,200 Birkenhead dockers went on strike.

The strike had just concluded a deal with the Port employers for a 2s. a day wage rise, which brought the basic up to 21s. a day. The Birkenhead dockers came out against the deal and in support of the "Dockers Charter", which included demands for 2s. a day, two attempts to create those conditions which would enable the policy of International Communism to achieve its purpose and prevent the economisation of this and other European countries."

In fact, the T&G Journal became place on Friday 9th February. By the following Monday all the major ports were back.

On the advice of the unofficial committee there was a return to work in order to conserve strength for when the Seven next appeared in court.

On February 27th the case came up again at the Bow Street Court before the Chief Magistrate. Again the docks were crippled by unofficial strikes.

By now the issue had broadened beyond the docks into a general struggle against Order 1305.

The "Road Haulage and Allied Trades Committee", an unofficial committee of lorry drivers, organised a strike in support of the Seven, as did building workers on the Festival of Britain site. An Appeal Fund was started and a trade union defence committee formed.

Eventually the case arrived at the Central Criminal Court at the Old Bailey. It opened on Monday April 10th and lasted until the following Wednesday. Throughout the trial London dockers came out on strike and picketed the Court. Meanwhile, inside the Courtroom, the Prosecution produced police photographs which had attended dock meetings, and gave word for word accounts of what the Defendants had said at those meetings.

T&GWU officials also rolled out to give evidence against their own members.

The defence for their part insisted that the strike was not a 'trade dispute' since it was directed against the union leaders and not against the employers, and therefore was not covered by Order 1305.

DEAKIN

If patience is a virtue, then the Birkenhead dockers must have been less virtuous than the T&G leaders. They came out under the leadership of the Merseydse Port-workers Defence Committee, an unofficial body, which was in conflict with the T&G leadership in particular with the right wing General Secretary, Arthur Deakin.

On the same day, the strike spread to Liverpool docks, where 2,400 came out. Glasgow, Newcastle and Ellesmere Port had already decided to accept the 2s. a day, but the following Monday meetings were to be held in Liverpool, Manchester and London. In Liverpool the meeting resulted in 8,000 more dockers coming out, and at Manchester and London. In Liverpool the meeting resulted in 8,000 more dockers coming out, and at Manchester and London.

In London there were already a firmly established committee which had led several unofficial strikes in the post-war years.

The unofficial Committee was a common thorn in Deakin's side. He saw himself as a dockside pol- iceman, stamping out any unofficial initiative, and his main weapon against the unofficial committee was an anti-Communist witch-hunt, he blamed the strike on "Commun- ist saboteurs".

In the T&G he claimed that dockworkers were being exploited by a diabolical Communist plot - "behind the effort to involve the British Ports was a disaster the favourite reading matter of every MP at Westminster, who often quoted from it.

In London, Deakin and his cronies won out. The Unofficial Committee failed to organise a proper mass meeting, and not more than 500 London dockers came out on strike. It was only in Manchester and elsewhere that the strike had any bite, and when the failure to get the London men out became apparent, the strike began to weaken in the north west.

7 ARRESTED

If things had been left as they were, the strike in the North West would have been isolated and in all probability defeated. However, it was at this point that the law stepped in. The police invaded a meeting of the London strike committee and arrested 4 of the leaders, 3 members of the unofficial committee on Merseyside were arrested too.

The 7 men were charged with "conspiring with others unknown to instigate dockworkers to take part in strikes in connection with disputes contrary to Article 4 of the Conditions of Employment and Na- tional Arbitration Order, 1940."

The Government obviously thought that invoking the Order would give them a crushing victory over the strikers. 2 years before the Order had given the Government a decisive victory over the gas workers' strike.

If they were hoping for a repeat performance, however, they were to be disappointed.

As soon as it was known that the seven had been arrested, 8,000 London dockers came out on strike, and 300 of them marched on the Magistrates Court where the prelim- inary hearing was being held. Apart from one who was arrested for "in- sulting Behaviour" the rest of the demonstrators were able to cheer the Seven as they were released on bail.

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The Seven were tried on three counts. The jury found them guilty on one charge, couldn't decide on another and never got round to con- sidering the third. But, since according to the Judge all the charges depended on whether or not the strike constituted a 'trade dispute', the just findings were said to be 'illogical' and so the Attorney Gen- eral hastily dropped all charges.

But few dockers believed this official explanation for the dropping of the charges.

Throughout the trial dockers had been coming out on strike and the right to put an end to Order 1305 had gained immense support in the organised labour movement. Support was growing - and the Attorney General could have had no doubt as to that, since every day the Court was picketed by dock- ers and other sympathetic workers. The dockers were on strike and carried away shoulder high by their supporters.

Later, Order 1305 was with- drawn completely.

This except from working class history. The example of how workers should deal with these laws is the same. The procedures of Court proceedings are nothing more than a charade put on to dupes and fools. Continued On Back page
THE SIGHT OF FELLOW T&GWU members encountering each other over the picket line was a common sight. The picketing of London dockers by drivers, a picket directed not against the employers but against the dockers, amounts to a declaration of war. It could well lead to a fratricidal war which will which will benefit neither dockers nor drivers, but which will suit the employers down to the ground.

If every member knows, 'unity is Strength' is the ABC of trade unionism. And as every employer knows, too, that the ABC of the bosses. There is nothing an employer loves more than shedding crocodile tears and moaning 'It's an inter-union dispute; nothing I can do about it!' A division in the working class on this scale is nothing less than a tragedy, of that there can be no doubt. But merely saying 'unity' doesn't solve anything. If 'unity' means anything at all it means that we continue to undercut the hard-fought gains that dockers have won, then we better have to do it in a different way.

But is there a possibility of anybody winning? No. It is a possibility of a unity in struggle against the employers and their plans to erode dockers' jobs. If there is a chance then we should seize it.

T&G WU

As to where the blame for the present tragedy lies, there can be no doubt. It lies squarely on the shoulders of those T&G union leaders who have negotiated the right to man container bases with non-registered labour. Our火烧眉毛 to the bosses. It meant that they could push ahead with the new industry. But at the same time they could under-cut dockers' rates of pay and job security. Even if the dockers have been sold a cheap labour has meant a bonanza for the container firms, it has meant a catastrophic loss of jobs in the established ports. For allowing the employers to use non-registered labour to do dockers' work and thus creating the split between dockers on one side and drivers and containers workers on the other, the T&G officials have not condemned. But if it was the T&G leaders who got us into this mess then they have shown themselves totally incapable of finding a way out of it. Quite clearly we have to go up to the rank and file and the shop stewards committee to find a solution to the mess with which we have been lumbered. The problem is - how.

In the short term the blacking of container depots and non-registered ports is the only defensive measure open to us. This blacking should be continued and extended, but at the same time we must recog-nise that it is only a short term measure.

The container depots which are being picketed only represent the tip of the iceberg. The bulk of container stuff and stripping is done at inland ports in such places as Ingham and London. It is impossible to ensure that all dock work is done by registered labour by just chipping away at individual firms. Even if we won the right to dock work within the 'dockers' corridor' defined by Bristow the employers would simply expand the inland ports in order to get away from registered dock work. It was the self-out by the T&G leaders that, if you continue to be used by the employers to spring up in the first place. If the container men were not used by the men that had to employ registered labour, then they would have built their bases on the established ports.

Any long term strategy for besting unemployment and the unachieved is to first join and then to continue to undercut the hard-fought gains that dockers have won, then we better have to do it in a different way.

And there is a possibility of anybody winning? No. It is a possibility of a unity in struggle against the employers and their plans to erode dockers' jobs. If there is a chance then we should seize it.

JOU!.

The national shop stewards committee should say to the container employers 'We say to you take your jobs. We are fighting against the employers undercutting OWDU rules and conditions by using non-registered labour to do OUR work. If you are prepared to fight your own employers to become reg-istered dockers, if you are prepared to fight for the right that all dock work is done by registered dockers, then we will fight with you.'

'If you go on strike in order to win dockers' rates of pay and dockers' job security then we will black any containers loaded by scale, and support your struggle in every way we can. If on the other hand you don't take this job, then we will try to use the employers to undercut the men, we have fought for, then you will fight you against us. We will black your firms until you use registered dockers to do the work that is rightfully ours.'

The operative word here is 'fight'. Anyone is free to sit around and do nothing while others fight to improve his conditions. But the container workers, who have in many cases shown them-selves to be employers' stooges, are prepared to fight for the ir own employer for the same rights that dock-ers have won? We think that some of them, at least, will be prepared to take up this challenge.

No doubt many employers will be justifiably alarmed at the idea that a hand should be extended to registered labour into those who will fight with us and those who prefer to fight on the side of the employers.

In the past, registered dockers have approached unregistered container workers with a view to the latter becoming registered dockers. In Preston there are 270 registered dockers to about 900 non-registered workers who operate the container base. The dockers approached the container men and had them to fight for the principle of registration. The container men, who could not see further than the end of their noses, turned down the offer. However, if the car lot approach fails, then the car lot and stick approach might succeed. That is, we say to the container men, "You are dockers' work, whether you are not registered dockers. As such you are actively helping the employers to undercut the rates of pay and rights that we have fought for and won. It is up to you to decide. Either you fight with us against the employers or you remain on the side of the employers and we will fight tooth and nail to make sure that you do not do dockers' work."'

Ted Johns, leader of the Drivers and Agricultural Workers' Action Commit-tee, which has been responsible for the pickets directed against the dockers, said that he is in favour of a joint campaign to save jobs by reducing the working week. A reduction in the working week is also one of the National Shop Stewards Committee's nine points. A joint campaign by the two commit-tees is obviously welcome, but there can be no unity without the agreement won by dockers to reduce the working week can be under-cut by the employers using non-regis-tered labour. Is Ted Johns prepared to fight for the right that says by standing with the dockers against unregistered labour doing dockers' work? Are we and those who follow him prepared to fight their own employers for the principle of registration?

HULL BLACKING LIST

The following firms have been using either Howendeky or Selby and the Hull and Goole Shop Stewards consider these firms should not be worked for. This list will be sent to the National Shop Stewards Commit-tee.

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The following are the numbers of the nameless motors which crossed the picket line:

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Liverpool

If the jailing of the 5 London dockers had not brought all the ports out, Liverpool would have been out anyway in a local strike against redundancies. The dispute came about over a two-year old agreement with A.E. Smith, Dockmaster, the pay for porter on the docks. The agreement provided that some clerical work should be done by regular dockers who could no longer do heavy duties.

The clerical workers agreed to this and the agreement operated until Smith Coggins moved from the South docks to the North docks. Under cover of the move they tried to scrap the old agreement and recruit wharfage clerks from the staff.

After a few days the employers conceded that registered dockers should do the work, but they still hadn’t done it with trying to put one over. They now said that two men would have to do the work that one man did before — on two shifts at once, rather than one as previously.

At this point all the dockers employed by Smith-Coggins came out. In meetings with the management it became clear that Smith-Coggins were being backed up by other firms. So far from it being an issue of just one job, as the press tried to make out, the struggle was part of the general employers offensive to reduce jobs.

If Smith-Coggins win this one, then the next fight will be over 90 jobs, and the next one over 50 jobs. Management has said that 500 Liverpool dockers are ‘superfluous to requirements’ and they clearly saw this as the thin end of the wedge.

Throughout this dispute there has been only one question of dockers after other people’s jobs’. The clerical workers agreed that the work should be done by registered dockers and are now on strike for parity of wages and conditions and a similar port registrar.

This is of course the best way to fight unemployment. Instead of mourning about the ‘privileged’ the clerical workers have taken a leaf out of the dockers’ book and are fighting for the same rights (not privileges) as dockers have already won.

FerryMaster

Recently 8 container depot workers who work the FerryMaster container depot in Preston put in for a wage increase. They get support from lorry drivers but thought they wanted the strength of the dockers to win, so they went to the ship stores workshop committee and asked them to back one of their own.

The shop stewards expressed sympathy with the men but said there would be no solidarity action. The stewards pointed out that the container men should be fighting for the principle of registration, for dockers’ pay, dockers’ security and manicining scales. If the container workers success, the dockers portwards would be with them, but as long as they were undercutting the gains dockers had then they would be on their own.

Manchester

In Manchester the check clerks have recently put in for a day’s pay for the day after they finish work when working one night. This is something ALL dockers should have had long ago as it was the perk of the foremen for some years.

The present situation on the docks has shown how wrong the Manchester national delegate was in voting to give the employers a longer time to deal with containers. The employers and the Government have used this time to prepare for a fight against the dockers, but more important than this, it has given them the opportunity to choose their delegate. All delegates on the NSSC should ally to the Manchester national delegate and call the Manchester stew shop assistant to the next meeting and if they still insist on double dealing the NSSC, it is up to us here in Manchester to sweep them out of office.

Know Your Enemy

In the latest issue of The Port, a so-called independent paper published for London dockers, is a letter from Philip Chappell, Chairman of the National Ports Council.

The National Ports Council is an employers’ organisation on which sit all the leading port owners, so what this powerful body has to say to the showdown.

In fact the letter amounts to a patent lie, just as the back page of this employer’s paper, “Fair Play”, is a patent lie, and “a remarkable piece of industrial communication” are the praises which he heaps upon The Port. In particular he is taken with the “fairness” of the previous issue which covered the Container crisis. Why let The Port answer. We quote from its editorial:

“The Jones-Aljdington Committee is a committee of which there are lay dockers as well as other transport men. The committee will report in less than a fortnight. Its findings will be as crucial to the industry’s future as the original Devlin report. The rational thing to do is to wait for it. Not to jump the gun by further extra-ordinary existing strife. THE PORT believes that the employers should do the same. They should cool it until the report is out.”

In other words, The Port is bolstering up the Jones-Aljdington Committee. The Jones-Aljdington Committee was not started to be a long term solution to unemployment on the docks. It is there to find an answer to the employers’ problems — how to get things back to normal.

In all probability it will propose higher severance pay and give dockers a few jobs around London dockland depots.

This is no solution as far as dockers are concerned. It merely represents the motive employers are prepared to pay in order to avoid dockers working by cheap labour.

And that’s the reason why The Port is putting off.

1951 contd.

1951 contd.

This isn’t the case with the Industrial Relations Act. The Act is essential to the Government in a way that Order 1305 was not, and it will vigorously fight for it: the stakes are higher.

But if the stakes are greater now, then so is the strength of the working class. In 1951 they were often the minority of dockworkers who came out on unofficial strike while the majority went on working. Today you would be hard pressed to find the dockers on an unofficial strike in the major ports. Dockers are united nationally for the first time ever and the National Ports Shop Stewards Committee, today’s dockers, united with other workers, can win a victory over the anti-union law that will make 1951 look like a very minor skirmish.

Less Work.... But More Profits

For the first time in several years the nationalised ports are making a profit. This was announced in the annual report of the British Transport Dock Board, the body which governs all the nationalised ports. When the report was revealed there was massive increase in the container side of the industry. The overall increase in the number of containers passing through BTDB is 10%, while the total tonnage handled by containers has increased by 18%.

Despite an overall drop in the amount of tonnage BTDB was able to increase its profits by increasing containerisation. In the BTDB is making a profit, why are we still acting as (a national and port) still tending to the unprofitable register? We should be demanding a work day with no work.

Otherwise the containers in the registered ports are just as much a threat as the unregistered container ports.

Thanks Jack

The report also contains the following statement: “Tribute is paid to the co-operation of the trade unions. This has brought about the most marked improvement in the formulation of a programme for improving productivity and efficiency and the testing of work of job evaluation.” In other words the union officials are still selling our jobs. For our part we like to know exactly what “schemes” were “formulated”.

Tees & Solidarity

Saturday 22nd July, tucked away at the bottom of the Gazette’s front page under the heading Tea and Sympathy a report stated that so far 1,000 of the 5,000 dockers had decided to strike in protest at the new hours of the 5. This was decided at a series of teas break, namely the Head, Mr. Binnie, Ward T. Green and Mr. Wright, Mr. Wright (Dockers Manager) stressed the strike was unofficial, Mr. Wright added that the decision to strike did not come from a quarrel with the employers. Quite right mate! It comes from a quarrel with the employers’ agents, the Tees Government.