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25/9

Prime Minister
Depositing news

CC IND FOR PTZ
PORTS

MR FLESHER

31 August 1984

31/8

STRIKES: LATEST INFORMATION

I gather that the Prime Minister asked this morning for more information about events at Tilbury and about NIC contributions from striking miners.

TILBURY

There were reports this morning that the TGWU was fining dockers who returned to work at Tilbury. The position seems to be this:

1. According to the PLA, pickets are 'asking for' (and presumably obtaining) union card numbers from members entering the dock.
2. The TGWU apparently intend to call such members before branch officials to 'consider disciplinary penalties'. The union rules allow a maximum fine of £30 for any single instance of misconduct.
3. Dockers who refuse to pay a fine may be suspended by their branch. They have a right of appeal to

regional and national committees; but they may be expelled from the union by these committees if they lose the appeal and still refuse to pay the fine.

Since Tilbury is a closed shop, suspension or expulsion from the union amount to suspension or dismissal from the dock.

4. Any docker who is suspended or expelled has a right to appeal to an Industrial Tribunal against the Union. We are advised that, under section 4 of the Employment Act 1980, and sections B and D of the 1983 Code of Practice, the docker would have good grounds for arguing that the expulsion was unreasonable. If the Tribunal found that it was unreasonable, the union could be ordered to pay compensation up to £20,000. (Tribunals usually take two or three months to reach decisions; but informal pressure might be applied by D/Emp to speed them up.)

5. We believe that the docker would not have any additional redress against his employers, since the provisions of the Employment Acts dealing with closed shop dismissals do not come into force until later this year.

CONTRIBUTORY BENEFITS FOR STRIKING MINERS

Miners on strike do not pay national insurance contributions
and receive no credits.

The national insurance contributions paid during a given tax
year govern the amount of unemployment and sickness benefit
to which the contributor is entitled during the following
calendar year. The amount paid by miners from April 1984 to
April 1985 therefore governs the amount of benefit to which
they will be entitled from January 1986 to January 1987.

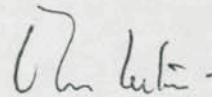
The rule is that, to qualify for full benefit in a given
calendar year, one must have paid a contribution equal to
fifty times the contribution demanded each week from a
person on the lower earnings limit of £34 p.w. The
amount of benefit decreases in steps as the amount of
contribution falls below this sum.

This means that a miner earning £180 p.w. would have to pay
contributions for ten weeks between April 1984 and April
1985 to qualify for full unemployment and sickness benefits
during the calendar year 1986; if he contributed for only
7.5 weeks, he would be entitled to 75% of the benefits; if
he contributed for five weeks, he would be entitled to 50%;

and if he contributed for less than five weeks, he would not be entitled to any benefit.

The result is that miners on £180 p.w. will begin to lose contributory benefits in 1986 only if they remain on strike beyond the middle of January 1985, and will lose all such benefits only if they remain on strike after the middle of March 1985.

It should, of course, be remembered that a miner who loses contributory benefits may nevertheless receive supplementary benefits which more than compensate for the loss.



OLIVER LETWIN



File

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

Tim Flesher Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1

31 August 1984

Pamela Hurst

Dear Tim

DOCK STRIKE

As promised on the phone earlier this afternoon, here is a list of scheme ports working and not working today (as I told you, we understand all non-scheme ports are working). And I also attach copies of the letters from PLA to the TGWU and to all PLA employees.

I will speak to you again about the proportion of sea-borne trade getting through, and about the latest situation at Tilbury. I am copying this to David Normington at DEMP.

yours ever,

Henry Derwent

H C S DERWENT
Private Secretary



Port of London Authority

LESLIE FORD HOUSE
TILBURY DOCKS
TILBURY, ESSEX RM18 7EH
TELEX 99267

Tel: Tilbury 3444 Ext. 97/ 475

Reference

From: The Chief Executive

John N. Black

TO: All PLA Employees

31st August, 1984

The Chairman of the Port of London Authority has today sent the attached letter to Moss Evans at the TUC in Brighton.

We must resolve this matter urgently. We are being crippled by a dispute not of our making and in which the Port of London is not involved.

Please help your Port return to normality by demanding a further mass meeting for Monday, 3rd September or Tuesday, 4th September in order that an unambiguous resolution is put to the meeting which will resolve clearly whether you wish to return to work or remain on strike.

John N. Black

John N. Black
Chief Executive

ATTENTION Mr. FURK
S 2/02

Chairman: V. G. Paige, CBE

Enrwn J. K. M. G. P. L. N.
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
PLN



PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY
INTERNATIONAL HOUSE
1 ST CATHERINE'S WALK

Telephone: 01-4811491

31st August, 1984

See next.

The mass meeting at Tilbury yesterday has resulted in total confusion. There is a strong conviction that the men had agreed by a substantial majority to return to work. The announced decision by the Chairman of the meeting to remain on strike was a direct contradiction of this. Indeed a Teller at the meeting has publicly stated that there was a heavy majority in favour of a return to work.

The Port is open for business; employees are working. However if this present confusion continues, the consequences for the Port and its employees will be disastrous; we ask you therefore as a matter of urgency to arrange a further Mass Meeting for Monday, 3rd September or Tuesday, 4th September. Furthermore we urge you to ensure that an unambiguous resolution is placed before the meeting which will resolve clearly whether the men wish to return to work or remain on strike.

This is a crisis situation demanding urgent attention. We ask you for a speedy response.

To ensure that there is no lapse in communications we are sending a copy of this letter to your officials and to our employees.

Yours sincerely,

V.G. PAIGE

A.M. Evans, Esq.,
General Secretary,
Transport & General Workers' Union

SCHEME PORTS ON STRIKE (³¹~~32~~)

BARRY - ROWS meet again on Saturday before next Coast boat due

BIRKENHEAD

BRISTOL

BROMBOROUGH

CARDIFF

ELLESMERE PORT

FLEETWOOD - MEET AGAIN ~~4/9~~ 3/9

GALSTON

HULL

LIVERPOOL

MANCHESTER - some wharves working

NEWPORT

PORT OF LONDON - ~~including~~ BSC terminal some cargo moved at port (including grain) / 2 CONTAINER SHIPS BEING WORKED

PORT TALBOT - excluding BSC terminal

SOUTHAMPTON

SWANSEA

~~WIDNES~~

SCOTLAND

FISH PORTS + WORKING ASH TRAFFIC WITH TFC DISPENSARY BUT

ABERDEEN - ROWS VOTED AGAINST TFC ~~DISPENSARY~~ DISPENSARY FOR GRABST/SUET. LIVESTOCK

ARDROSSAN

ATR

KIRKCALDY

BURNT ISLAND

LEITH

DUNDEE

METHILL

GLASGOW

TAY PORT

GRANGEMOUTH

TROON

GRANTON

GREENOCK

(FOURTH PORTS MEET AGAIN 4/9)

IRVINE

SEVERE PORTS WORKING NORMALLY (42)

- Barrow
- Blyth
- Boston
- Charleston
- Dunstan
- Falmouth
- Fowey
- Gateshead
- Gloucester ~~(Sharpness)~~
- Goole - voted this morning to continue working
- Great Yarmouth
- Grimsby/Lowmington
- Hartlepool
- Ipswich - Kings Lynn - reviewing position daily
- Lowestoft
- Medway and Swale (5 ports in all)
- Newcastle
- ~~North Shields~~ Newlyn
- North Shields
- Par
- Perry
- Penzance
- Plsmouth
- Poole
- Roncar
- Seaham
- Sharpness
- Silloth
- South Shields - ~~mass meeting today~~
- Sunderland - mass meeting today
- Teeside
- Truro
- Weymouth - bar on freight to Channel Islands
- Wisbech Whitehaven
- Wisbech
- Workington

DOCK STRIKE: PUBLIC LINE TO BE TAKEN FOR THE PRESENT

The objectives should be:-

(a) to encourage more dockers to increasingly question and resist the strike decision and remain at or return to work;

(b) to point to the variety of explanations given by TGWU officials as to what the strike is about;

(c) to stress that for dockers a strike is self-defeating, with the consequences of a further loss of pay and a clear threat to their own jobs;

(d) to seek to encourage demands from dockers themselves for a proper vote on the strike call and to point to occasions when this is denied.

2 The tone should be low-key (at least for the present) and comment should avoid any direct appeal from Ministers to dockers to continue working, any condemnation of dockers generally on the grounds that they are politically motivated, or any too stark portrayal of consequences for the economy generally of a long-running strike.

3 Points to make:-

(a) It is obvious that a great many dockers - very possibly the majority - are reluctant to strike.

(b) They are being instructed to strike with the sacrifice of a further loss of pay and an increased threat to their own jobs for no good and sufficient reason.

(c) Calls for a proper and democratic vote on the strike call are being denied in some ports; in others show of hands decisions are being questioned and challenged by dockers themselves. In most cases

where dockers have voted freely they have decided to remain at work.

(d) The strike cannot be in protection of dockers' jobs. Connolly (National Docks Officer of the TGWU) has said that the strike call is not about the Dock Labour Scheme. A strike can only put dockers' jobs at risk.

(e) Dockers are being instructed to strike in support of Scargill's campaign; they are being asked to sacrifice their pay and jobs to his ambitions.

(f) Because of the importance of the jobs they do, it appears that they are at risk of being continually identified as conscripts to the causes of others, whatever these may be.

(g) In some cases where dockers have decided to remain at work, threats of pickets to prevent them from doing so are already evident. In the course of the miners' dispute a new industrial tactic has been developed, "if you can't persuade them out, picket them out". This is a gross distortion of generally accepted union practice.

(h) [As to detail] the tying up of the Ostia at Hunterston by contractors employed by the Clyde Harbour Authority for over 25 years has not been found in breach of the Dock Labour Scheme and is no threat to dockers' jobs.

(i) National leaders of the TGWU say that the dispute can be settled if BSC agree to accept a severe limitation to supplies of coal for Ravenscraig. But workers there, including the TGWU's own members, are desperately anxious to preserve their jobs. Any limitation of supplies put them at risk.

(j) The Opposition (John Smith) says that the Government should intervene. To do what? To put at risk steelworkers' jobs to bring peace from the

TGWU who are calling for sacrifices from their dockers members in support of Scargill's ambitions? Which in turn are resulting in unnecessary hardship - and much worse - for many miners and their families.

4 Quotes displaying the confusions about the objectives of the strike are attached.

30 August 1984

QUOTES

- Last Friday, Mr Connelly said the strike call was not influenced by Dock Labour Scheme issues but "was in support of the union's policy over the miners' dispute" and "based on the use of 'scab' labour to berth the Ostia".

- On Sunday Mr Ron Todd said (rather confusingly) that the strike had not been called in support of the miners but in response to BSC's refusal to accept limitations on the supply of coal to Ravenscraig! Mr Connelly has also said that the strike could only be resolved by BSC agreeing to an 18,000 ton quota of coal for Ravenscraig.

- In Scotland, Mr Gilligan has repeatedly said that the strike was about the use of non-union labour for mooring the Ostia. He has added that the target is not people or animals (ie sheep from the Islands) of multi-national oil companies!

- On Tuesday, at a mass meeting at Southampton Mr Pearce, a local dockers' leader, is reported (on press tapes) to have said that the strike was over "the protection of dockers' jobs".

- Mr Harryman, a divisional officer of the TGWU covering Southampton, is reported to have said on Tuesday that the "use of scab labour at Hunterston is a direct attack on the scheme".

BROADSHEET DISTRIBUTED AMONGST DOCKWORKERS AT TILBURY

LET COMMONSENSE PREVAIL

Dear Brothers

We would like to take this opportunity of asking you to read this newsletter very carefully and give the items some deep thought.

Once again we are being asked to lose wages and put OUR JOBS at risk. The P.L.A. are fighting for survival and that survival means OUR JOBS too.

We've just got over a two week strike and now we can see the wheels being put in motion for us to come out yet again.

We're appealing to you all to stick together and push for a ballot or a vote not to be dictated to and to learn from the T.V. like we did a few weeks ago that we are on strike and we have no say in the matter and that we are being used for the miners.

Nobody has ever supported us and we've been on strike in the past more than any industry in the country but collections and food parcels have not come our way and nor have the dockers in all their strikes turned to mob rule and violence like we see today, but we'd like to say, not all the miners are rebels but those few who are, are making it bad for the others. The majority of miners are law abiding citizens and if there was a vote today they would be back at work tomorrow.

As you know, London Docks have closed down; there were efforts to try and stop the closure but for the P.L.A. to be viable and to compete with private Docks this had to be so. We had to accept automation. A lot of our Trade Union officials could see there was no option but Scargill will not see reason in the coal industry and these closures will have to be so.

The Union is there to fight for OUR wages and conditions. It is OUR contributions which put these men in their jobs to represent us - so please don't let them dictate to us. The rank and file should have a say and not be dictated to by the few.

BALFOUR - when we do end up at No. 1 Shed for a meeting the call from the platform will be "they're using scab labour" or "un-registered men" but they know at this particular place of work, there is nothing in any agreement which prevents British Steel berthing the ship and unloading it using it's own employees as the dock workers only assist there. This is normal practice at Humberston, but because of Union threats British Steel have held back while talks with the National Dock Labour Board have been held, but these have got nowhere so far.

Let us hope commonsense prevails, but we believe that certain Union Officials are just looking for some excuse to use us in support of the miners and we only hope that if the Union Officials do call a National Dock strike and go ahead with it's threat, the strike will swiftly collapse under the resentment of the members being used as battering rams.

Most of us dockers are middle of the road, it's only the minority who are the militants, who we hear calling for us to be out. Let us stand up and be counted making our voices heard and stick together as we did in June - overturning the vote for a one day token strike in support of the miners.

Look at the conditions which the miners are being offered. They are far better than anything which has been offered to any other workers in the Country, even the dockers severance and conditions, so don't let us bury our heads in the sand - stick out for a Ballot / Vote.

From a Group of concerned workers.

**MIRROR
COMMENT**

Politics in the dock . . .

THE dock strike is crumbling almost before it has begun.

But it was always doomed to failure. A political strike like this can never succeed.

To end any strike a settlement must be possible. Certainly most miners want to end their dispute honorably.

But there can be no solution to a political strike. The dockers know that.

THEY KNOW this strike was called by their leaders to support the miners.

THEY KNOW that nearly one out of three miners is at work.

THEY KNOW that this strike began after steelworkers unloaded the coal ship Ostia only to defend their own jobs—and those of the miners at Polkemmet.

This dispute will achieve nothing except to turn worker against worker.

Excuse

Nothing shows that more clearly than yesterday's decision by the Immingham dockers to stay at work.

They started last month's stoppage over a breach of the dock labour agreement. But this new dispute has nothing to do with that. It is just an excuse.

The dock strike is as unwelcome to those union leaders who want to solve the miners' dispute as it is welcome to Mrs Thatcher.

The Prime Minister wants to rule the country by exploiting divisions in the unions. And the timing is perfect for her.

In just a week the Trades Union Congress meets. It was bound to be split by the miners. Now, unless the lead from Immingham is followed, it may be torn apart.

Political extremists will blame Mrs Thatcher, blame the Government, blame the Coal Board, blame British Steel, blame the TUC and blame those who cross picket lines.

But the truth is, there is no one to blame but themselves.