

# STALINISTS ON THE WATERFRONT



by Art Preis

PIONEER PUBLISHERS

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NEW YORK

Published for the  
**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

PIONEER



PUBLISHERS

116 University Place

New York 3, N. Y.

April, 1947

Cover by Laura Gray

### FOREWORD

American labor is closely watching the conflict in the CIO National Maritime Union. What is being determined in part, is the future influence of the Communist Party (Stalinist) in the American trade unions. In no other major union have the Stalinists exercised such complete control for so many years. A balance-sheet of their leadership in the NMU is therefore an accurate gauge of their record throughout the labor movement.

In this pamphlet we have gone into painstaking detail, with fully documented evidence, to record the specific crimes of the Stalinists against the American workers, and particularly against maritime labor.

Many workers observing these crimes, and repelled by them, are confused about the Stalinists' motives. They often arrive at the false conclusion that Stalinism is Communism, and therefore say, "If that is Communism, we want no part of it."

Capitalist propagandists try to reinforce this false notion in order to discredit the very idea of Communism, by identifying it with the repressive rule of Stalin in the Soviet Union. This enables Wall Street to pose as a "defender of democracy" in its preparations for war against the Soviet Union.

For their part, the Stalinists welcome the capitalist lies about their "revolutionary" aims. They operate under cover of the monstrous lie that they represent genuine Communism.

In order to conduct a progressive struggle against Stalinism, it is first of all necessary to expose this lie and treat the Stalinists for what they are — a reactionary current in the labor movement.

It is the aim of this pamphlet to disclose the political roots of Stalinist policy in the American trade unions and the record of their betrayals growing out of these roots.

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Set Up, Printed and Bound by Union Labor

APR 1948

EMORY UNIVERSITY, GA

# THE STALINISTS ON THE WATERFRONT

## A Documented Record of Betrayal

The Communist Parties are a world-wide agency of the bureaucracy which usurped power in the Soviet Union after the great Lenin's death in 1924. This bureaucracy, headed by Stalin, represents the privileged layers of Soviet society.

The Soviet Union was founded by a workers' revolution that wiped out Czarism and the rule of the capitalists and established a workers' state based on nationalized property. It is like a giant trade union. The Stalinist regime in this workers' state is similar to a corrupt, bureaucratic machine that takes control of a trade union, destroys its internal democracy and fattens off its treasury.

While the workers fight the bureaucratic machine, they do not cease to defend their union on the picket line against the bosses. *That is why we defend the Soviet Union from imperialist attack in spite of and against Stalin.*

In the Soviet Union, the real Bolsheviks, who opposed the Stalin bureaucracy, were led by Leon Trotsky, founder of the famous Red Army and co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution. The Trotskyists are the sole heirs and continuators of Lenin's program of world socialist revolution.

### ROOTS OF STALINIST POLICY

The Stalin regime destroyed Lenin's Bolshevik Party. The real leaders of the Russian Revolution, and hundreds of thousands of the best revolutionary fighters, were systematically wiped out in vast bloody purges. Trotsky, who fought hardest to preserve Lenin's program of international socialism, was driven into exile and finally assassinated by a Stalinist secret police agent in Mexico in 1940.

Along with the founding of the Soviet Union, Lenin and Trotsky had founded the Third (Communist) International to extend the workers' revolution begun in Russia on a world scale. When Stalin usurped power in the Soviet Union, he also proceeded to convert the Third International into a mere pawn to serve his foreign policies and diplomatic maneuvers with the capitalist powers.

Although Stalin formally dissolved the Third International

during his wartime alliance with U.S.-British imperialism, the Communist Parties of the various countries continue to function as pliable instruments of Stalin's foreign policy.

These parties are used as political pressure groups to bolster Stalin's current diplomatic moves and deals with the capitalist governments. When Stalin wants to put pressure on some other government, the Communist Party in that country starts to talk "militant." When Stalin wants to conciliate some imperialist power and make a deal with it, the Communist Party is instructed to play ball with the capitalist rulers.

*The constant shifts and somersaults in the "line" of the American Communist Party therefore directly reflect Stalin's diplomatic zigzags. At all times the interests of the workers are sacrificed to the Kremlin's temporary diplomatic needs.*

Thus, when Stalin made his pact with Hitler in July 1939, the Communist Parties ceased their clamor for "collective security" of the "democratic" imperialists against the fascist imperialists. They yelled that the war, which Hitler launched after Stalin gave him the green light, was due only to British and French imperialism. In this country, they raised the slogan, "The Yanks are NOT coming!"

When Hitler turned on his ally Stalin and invaded the Soviet Union, the Communist Parties overnight changed their "line." They discovered that Hitler alone was responsible for the war, while the British, French and American imperialists were waging a "non-imperialist, progressive war of liberation."

### **Class Character of War**

All the great Marxists, including Lenin, had always taught that the character of a war was determined by the class character of the state conducting the war. If a monopoly capitalist state waged war, it could be only a war which pursued monopoly capitalist aims. Thus, all the capitalist powers in the Second World War, as in the First, were engaged in an imperialist conflict for markets, colonies and spheres of influence.

Because Stalin had entered a military and diplomatic alliance with American and British imperialism against German imperialism, the Stalinists said that Wall Street, ruler of the richest and most powerful country on earth, was conducting a "progressive" war. They called on the workers to support Wall Street's war and give up all their rights in order to maintain "national unity" with the Big Business war profiteers.

*The Stalinists supported the most reactionary elements against the labor militants. They placed themselves at the disposal of the*

*American capitalist class as its most loyal and abject servants. No anti-labor crime was too foul for them to commit—including open strikebreaking—in order to further "unity" in the imperialist "war effort."*

Today it is clear to every thinking person that American and British capitalism didn't fight a war for the "Four Freedoms" and "liberation" of oppressed peoples.

The people of Germany and Japan, who suffered so long under fascism and military dictatorship, are ruled by conquering armies. The German capitalists who put Hitler in power still remain, protected by Wall Street and London. In Japan, U. S. imperialism upholds the hated Emperor Hirohito on American bayonets. In Greece, the British, armed with American lend-lease weapons, have restored to power the bloody Greek monarch. In China, the butcher Chiang Kai-shek, murderer of millions of Chinese peasants and workers, has been kept in power by U.S.-trained and equipped armies.

### **What World War II Brought**

More than half a million American troops are stationed in 55 lands all over the globe. Wall Street has become the great treasury and arsenal for the suppression of colonial peoples fighting for their independence. American arms in the hands of French, Dutch and British troops are slaughtering the people of Indo-China, Indonesia and India. United States loans are financing reactionary regimes and wars of colonial suppression. Nowhere did the war bring the "Four Freedoms"—only repression, starvation, ruin and death.

Here at home, the first fruits of "victory" have been a ferocious anti-labor drive; a wave of lynch-terror against the Negro people; a terrible housing crisis affecting millions of veterans and workers; monumental government debt, mounting taxes and inflation; the looming shadow of another depression; and the growing threat of military regimentation. Over all hangs the threat of another World War in the not distant future—a war of atomic annihilation.

*This is what World War II has brought—not the "liberation" promised by the Stalinists. Their betrayal of the workers to the imperialists in the war constitutes their greatest and most monstrous crime.*

It is only in the light of this real understanding of Stalinism, what it is and how it operates, that the specific record of Stalinist crimes presented in this pamphlet takes on full and clear meaning. It is only with this understanding that the maritime workers, as well as all other sections of American labor, can conduct a progressive and effective fight against the sinister influence of Stalinism.

## MARITIME UNIONISM'S GREAT TRADITION

American seamen have a great and honorable tradition in the struggle for labor's emancipation. Maritime workers for the past century have fought and sacrificed and died to build unionism.

The twelve years between 1934 and today, when American labor rose to mighty organized stature, found the maritime workers in the front ranks of union struggle.

These twelve years began with the historic 1934 West Coast waterfront strike that gave a great impetus to maritime unionism. They reached a magnificent climax in 1946 with the greatest maritime strike in history.

These twelve years have seen the maritime workers solidly organized. They have raised their wages far above what they dared even dream of in the old days. They have eliminated some of the worst conditions that once made the industry a living hell.

From a virtual slave without any rights, the American seaman has become a union man, standing on his own feet and fighting back against his enemies.

It is a tribute to the militancy, union loyalty and self-sacrifice of the seamen that they have made these giant gains despite especially difficult conditions.

They are confronted by a ruthless and powerful combine of shipowners at whose side has stood the capitalist government. And an industry where workers are scattered in small groups always on the move, is a lot tougher to organize than one where workers are concentrated in large plants.

To these great obstacles was added another—the enemy within. Prior to 1934 the maritime unions were cursed with the weight of a reactionary union bureaucracy. The workers had to advance every step of the way in spite of and against the phonies and bureaucrats. These bureaucrats kept the maritime workers separated into many unions and craft divisions. They stifled the voice of the rank and file. They opposed militant policies and collaborated with the employers and their government agents.

### Rise of the NMU

The CIO National Maritime Union arose out of the seamen's struggle to establish a fighting union free of the bureaucratic machine that dominated the old AFL International Seamen's Union. Following the lead of the insurgent seamen on the West Coast, a section of the East Coast seamen fought against the sell-out policies of the AFL bureaucrats and broke from the grip of these bureaucrats after the 1936-1937 strike. In May 1937, they

founded the NMU and joined the main stream of industrial unionism, the CIO.

The NMU's birth coincided with the government's policy of direct intervention against the seamen on behalf of the shipowners, who had proved unable to push back the tide of unionism. It was the beginning of the government's legislative attack on the seamen and the attempt to put over the Copeland Fink Book.

Thus, the NMU was originally founded on a policy of struggle against the ship operators, the government and the labor bureaucrats.

Despite the policies that inspired the founding of the NMU, the seamen did not achieve their desire to be rid of a strangling bureaucracy. In the course of an internal struggle during the formative stages of the NMU, another bureaucratic clique came to power.

### The Stalinist Clique

This ruthless, anti-democratic clique was the waterfront section of the Communist Party (Stalinist). From 1939 on, the Stalinists held iron control over the NMU. Only in the past year has there emerged any serious challenge to their rule.

Thus, for seven years the Stalinists have had a truly enviable opportunity in the NMU to prove in practice their claim to be the "vanguard of the working class."

Instead of uniting the seamen around a fighting program, they have been vicious opponents of a militant policy. They have been shameless collaborators with the employers and reactionary government agents. They have been disrupters of maritime unity. They have been corrupt bureaucrats, crushing any seaman who dared to speak for a progressive policy.

Their crowning treachery came during the war. Because they supported the imperialist war, they sold themselves body and soul to Wall Street and its government. As volunteer scabs and strike-breakers throughout the labor movement, they earned the workers' contempt.

But Big Business paid tribute to the Stalinists' fink role. The Wall Street organ, *Business Week*, on March 18, 1944, observed that the unions "identified as Communist-dominated" have "moved to the extreme right-wing position in the American labor movement."

The Stalinist union leaders, said *Business Week*, have "the best no-strike record," are the most vigorous proponents of labor-management cooperation, the "only serious advocates of incentive wages," the "last to call for smashing the Little Steel Formula," and

their unions "are the only unions which support the President's call for a national service act (labor conscription)."

One working-class voice alone spoke out boldly and truthfully about the real role of the Stalinists—the *Socialist Workers Party* (Trotskyist) and its weekly paper, *The Militant*. The Trotskyists opposed the profiteers' war and militantly continued to defend labor's interests.

The Stalinists made the Trotskyists their special target for slander and physical terrorism. The Communist Party spread up and down the waterfront tens of thousands of books and pamphlets smearing the Trotskyists.

### **Trotskyists' Wartime Defense of Labor**

The *Socialist Workers Party* opposed playing ball with the employers and their government. *We fought the no-strike pledge, and called for labor to get off the employer-dominated War Labor Board. In maritime, we opposed establishment of the Recruitment and Manning Office and every attempt of the government to undermine the union hiring hall. We assailed the attempt to impose Coast Guard rule over merchant seamen.*

Because we defended the rights of labor during the war, the Stalinists slandered the Trotskyists and all union militants as "fascists" and "Hitlerite-agents." The CP issued a pamphlet, "The Trotskyite Fifth Column in the Labor Movement," by the *Daily Worker's* poison-pen specialist, George Morris. This pamphlet has been withdrawn, because today it serves as a confession of Stalinist crimes.

According to this pamphlet, our greatest "crime" was to oppose labor's surrender of its rights during the war. The Trotskyists, lamented Morris, "oppose national unity and all common labor-employer government action." They "ridicule a postwar outlook of national unity and full employment and pin their hopes on a sharp crisis." They "oppose labor's wartime no-strike pledge" and "sneer at joint labor-management committees as 'speed-up instruments.'" They "shout loudly that management and labor cannot possibly have a joint interest." And, horror of horrors, the Trotskyists have a "feverish interest in a 'labor party.'"

Morris further complains that "the Trotskyites know that they can be effective only if they exploit real dissatisfaction and grievances." He does not explain what the Stalinist union leaders were doing about "real dissatisfaction and grievances." For the Stalinists would like their wartime union record — and postwar strikebreaking record — kept as a book sealed with seven seals. Their whole record constitutes one of the most shameful chapters in the history of labor betrayals.

### **"COMMUNISTS ON THE WATERFRONT"**

In the January 3, 1947 *NMU Pilot*, President Curran states that the Stalinist clique "propose to use the same tactics which have been used in our Union for the past two years, when they attempted to jam down our throats collaboration policy with the shipowners and anybody who voted against it was slandered and smeared."

This statement is true — except for the time element. *The Stalinists have been practicing their treachery not just for "the past two years" but throughout the NMU's history.* That treachery is but a small part of their crimes against all labor. For the real record, we must go back to the war years themselves.

Let us study the wartime record of Stalinism by starting with a 112-page pamphlet the Communist Party published in May 1946, and distributed all over the waterfront. This document is misnamed "Communists on the Waterfront." Every line contains a lie, and sometimes two.

Only four of the pamphlet's 112 pages deal with the Stalinist role on the waterfront after July 1939 — when the Stalin-Hitler pact was signed. From July 1939 to December 7, 1941, the pamphlet is a complete blank. The Stalinists don't want the seamen to be reminded of that period.

After skipping the Stalin-Hitler pact period completely, the pamphlet's author, Herb Tank, hurriedly rushes over the period from December 7, 1941. He boasts how the super-patriotic Stalinists urged the seamen to "keep 'em sailing" for the benefit of Wall Street's war and profits. He complains only that "when the seamen turned their energies toward fighting Hitler the shipowners began breaking down conditions."

What did the Stalinists do about this? Tank tells in two sentences: "DON'T LET THE SHIPOWNERS PROVOKE A STRIKE! The Communists [read Stalinists] fought for a no-strike policy in the marine industry." *That is, the Stalinists held the seamen's arms, while the bosses socked them!*

In these same four pages, Tank is compelled to admit the Stalinists "made serious errors" under "the leadership of Earl Browder," who "claimed American capitalism was progressive — that the workers could solve their problems by collaborating with the bosses."

But all that, we are assured, has been "corrected." Browder was expelled for "opportunism" and the Communist Party is now led by William Z. Foster. We are told that Foster had always held that "the basic nature of capitalism and imperialism had not been changed by the war."

But all through the war, when he was National Chairman of the Communist Party, when he went around attacking strikes and calling for collaboration between the workers and the bosses, Foster was silent about Wall Street imperialism. His mouth was opened, as Tank admits, only after "the American Communists came in for severe criticism from leading European Communists."

Only then did the American Stalinists suddenly discover that their leader for 16 years was an "opportunist" and "revisionist." In the Communist Party, it seems, one man could keep the whole party, including Foster, meekly chained to an "opportunist" policy for years. That speaks volumes for the kind of party it really is.

But Browder's "opportunist" and "revisionism" expressed themselves not only in the realm of theory. They led to specific acts, carried out by the whole present Communist Party leadership. These acts stand as crimes in the eyes of every honest trade unionist. The Stalinist crimes were the most despicable of all — scabbing and strikebreaking.

### **Strikebreaking Record**

To fully understand the role of the Stalinists in wartime, it is first necessary to review their record on the general labor front during the past years. Their actions in the NMU are but one reflection of a national and international policy.

During the war, more than 2,000,000 American workers were forced to go on strike to defend themselves from employer attacks, protect their unions and maintain their living standards against wartime inflation.

*The Stalinists, in the name of "national unity," placed themselves at the disposal of the anti-labor forces as direct strikebreakers.*

They tried to break the miners' strikes and the West Coast machinists' strike, and earned the condemnation of the whole labor movement for their scandalous conduct in the Montgomery Ward strikes. In every instance where the workers fought for their rights the Stalinists intervened on the side of the employers.

The actions of the Communist Party during the 1943 coal miners' strikes are remembered with hatred by every miner. The *Daily Worker* ran columns of abuse against the miners and John L. Lewis. The Communist Party held public meetings in every large city, including the Yankee Stadium in New York, to mobilize strikebreaking sentiment. Communist Party leaders toured the mine districts urging the miners to go back to work without a contract.

William Z. Foster, on April 29, 1943, wrote a front-page article in the *Daily Worker* attacking the impending mine strike on May 1. He spoke on May 2 in Town Hall, Philadelphia, calling on the miners to submit to the War Labor Board.

When the first strike was halted for a two-week truce, the *Daily Worker* gloated that the "Lewis line" had been "utterly defeated." But when the second strike began in June, the June 11 *Daily Worker* demanded that "under no circumstances should the government give way to the Lewis conspiracy."

A minor but very revealing incident happened near Pittsburgh. Two officials of the Communist Party were picked up by police outside Washington, Pa., and charged with illegal use of gas coupons for pleasure driving. Michael Saunders, Pennsylvania state CP organizer, pleaded that it was a business trip "to see some of our members and do everything we could to start a back-to-work movement." The OPA ration attorney Richard L. Nassau ruled that use of gas coupons for strikebreaking was "legitimate."

Two years later, the *Daily Worker* was again screaming in headlines: "Not An Hour's Stoppage! The Mines Must Be Seized!" (*Daily Worker*, March 30, 1945.)

In *The Militant* of November 18, 1944, we read an editorial denouncing Stalinist strikebreaking in another labor struggle. "During the recent strike of 2,500 San Francisco machinists, the traitorous West Coast Stalinist CIO leaders called on the capitalist government to use 'armed forces and the appropriate government agencies . . . in any action necessary to halt this or any other strike.'"

Turn the guns on workingmen — that was the Stalinist line!

### **Bridges Scabs on Ward Strike**

You will find no CP publication circulated today that mentions the Montgomery Ward strikes. And for good reason.

The Montgomery Ward strike in April-May 1944, evoked the support of the whole labor movement, with but one exception — the Communist Party. Everybody knew that the Ward workers were forced to strike or see their union smashed by America's Open-Shopper, Sewell Avery.

But Harry Bridges saw nothing wrong with scabbing against percent-an-hour workers. When the CIO Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union appealed to Bridges to halt CIO war-essential workers in Ward's St. Paul unit from handling scab goods from Chicago, the answer was: "We will handle Chicago orders eight hours a day, call it scabbing if you want to."

The *Daily Worker* launched a red-baiting attack on the Montgomery Ward strike leaders and slanderously linked them with

their most hated enemy, Avery. "Mr. Avery owes his success in provoking the strike in large measure to a group of Trotskyites who are in the leadership of the striking local," said the *Daily Worker*, April 17, 1944.

When union after union passed indignant resolutions demanding the ouster of Bridges for his scabbing in the Ward strike, the *Daily Worker*, June 19, 1944, turned the charge of "scab" against the STRIKERS!

"Those who violate the no-strike pledge are scabs and should be so treated. Scabs were never handled with kid-gloves."

How pleased every rat who ever crossed a picket line must have felt to hear militant strikers fighting the bosses called "scabs."

### Stalinists Back "Slave Labor" Scheme

The direct strikebreaking of the Stalinists was coupled with their eager endorsement of every government move to shackle and cripple the unions. This reached its low point when the Communist Party rushed to embrace Roosevelt's proposal for universal labor conscription — a proposal that was denounced by the leaders of every national labor organization as a "slave labor" scheme.

But that didn't stop the *Daily Worker*, January 22, 1944, from lying that, "One fact stands out beyond a shadow of a doubt when we talk of labor's sentiments on the President's message to Congress, ALL LABOR (original emphasis) is behind it."

"All Labor" turned out to be the Stalinists' chief union spokesman, Harry Bridges, and the Stalinist leadership of the NMU. The February 5, 1944 *New Leader* revealed the inside story, never denied by Bridges or the *Daily Worker*, about what happened when CIO President Murray and AFL President Green went to the White House to protest Roosevelt's slave labor scheme.

"Roosevelt's reply was to tell Murray scornfully that he could not speak for the CIO on that view . . . and in proof showed Murray a telegram from Harry Bridges endorsing a labor conscription act."

Stalinist Howard McKenzie sought to whitewash Roosevelt's draft-labor scheme at a meeting of 2,500 NMU members in New York City. As reported in *The Pilot*, January 14, 1944, page 1, McKenzie said: "The President didn't say draft labor, he said 'every adult.' . . . What the President did was to say we're going to draft both capital and labor."

The climax of Stalinist betrayal during the war was their proposal to put American labor in no-strike handcuffs permanently! Here again it was Bridges who first offered to deliver labor tied on a platter to the bosses after the war.

Addressing a meeting of CIO Warehousemen's Local 6 in San Francisco on May 25, 1944, Bridges said that the "strike weapon is overboard, not only for the duration of the war, but after the war." At the same meeting the Stalinists jammed through a resolution that called strikes "treason," offered to back the government "in any actions to prevent strikes," and urged employers to "refuse to give consideration to the demands of any section of labor" that went on strike, not merely during the war but "indefinitely thereafter."

The Stalinist clique in the NMU spilled the same kind of bilge in the pages of *The Pilot*. A typical example was the following statement in the February 18, 1944 issue: "Among the great industrialists there are many who believe in and will fight just as sincerely and effectively as ourselves, for enduring peace. These are our allies and we must learn to work with them honestly and wholeheartedly."

The first thing these "allies" did as the war approached its close, was to launch the most savage anti-union drive in modern American labor history — a drive that has steadily increased in ferocity.

### POSTWAR SCABBERY

Now the finicky Stalinist defenders of Wall Street's imperialist plan of plunder tell us that maybe they made "some errors" during the war, but when Foster took the CP helm, everything changed overnight. Actually, the only thing that changed was the phrases. Fake-militant words were used to cover up continuing Stalinist betrayals.

Two classic examples of Stalinist postwar scabbery — under Foster's leadership — were the General Motors strike and the AFL-CIO joint machinists' strike in San Francisco and Oakland.

When the CIO United Automobile Workers struck General Motors in November 1945, the UAW General Motors Conference appealed to the Stalinist leaders of the CIO United Electrical Workers to pull out some 30,000 workers in GM's Electrical Division.

For more than two months the Stalinists ignored the desperate plea of the GM auto workers who were fighting against the world's greatest industrial corporation. When the GM electrical workers themselves voted to strike and finally walked out, the UE leaders hastened to conclude an agreement with General Motors in the midst of the UAW negotiations and undercut the wage demands of the GM auto workers. That is how these professional "unity shouters" practice labor solidarity.

## What CP Members Revealed

But now we come to the evidence of a group of former Communist Party members from the "liquidated" CP machinists' club in San Francisco. They were expelled for refusing to organize a strike-breaking back-to-work movement in the November 1945 AFL-CIO machinists' joint strike.

Their statement, published in the October 28, 1945 *NCP Report*, organ of a group of CP dissidents, speaks for itself:

"After issuing perfunctory approval of the machinists' strike demands as 'just,' CP began to break the strike. It issued leaflets and had articles published in *People's World* openly advising machinists that they couldn't win the strike and urging them to go back to work.

"The best CP branch here, made up of machinists and having the best reputation in the whole country, was directed by CP to attack the strike leaders as Trotskyite (which was a damned lie, as usual) and to demand a rank-and-file committee to lead a back-to-work movement.

"Naturally, the machinists' branch would not go along with CP policy, and so the branch was liquidated in the usual smart way; at the end of a meeting called for another purpose, the liquidation of the branch was announced, with a ruling: 'There will be no discussion of this.' Expulsions came thick and fast."

Here is the real picture of Stalinism in action under Foster, as under Browder.

## BETRAYAL IN MARITIME

The wartime record of the Stalinists in maritime equals their record of treachery against all other workers.

If American merchant seamen today face the threat of militarization, government regimentation, coast guard "discipline," destruction of the union hiring hall, let them remember that it was the Stalinist union leaders who not only welcomed but invited government intervention during the war.

*It was the Stalinist leaders in the CIO waterfront unions who called for the establishment of government boards to rule the maritime industry.* In a speech to the Industrial Relations Section of the Commonwealth Club, April 8, 1942, at San Francisco, Harry Bridges boasted:

"The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union . . . proposed to its employers and to the government a plan to have the entire long-shore industry on the Pacific Coast operated exclusively under the control of a joint management-labor-government board. We devised the plan and we pushed for its adoption."

Bridges further admitted that he was prepared to surrender any and every provision of the union contract at the behest of such a board. "In proposing the establishment of such a board, the union agreed to set aside any and all provisions of its entire collective bargaining contract if any such provisions of the contract in any way blocked an all-out war effort."

Bridges glorified the War Labor Board, and at the 1942 California CIO convention he declared: "One agency in the U. S. Government today that is doing a good job is the National War Labor Board."

The WLB was doing a good job — for the bosses! It froze all wages with the infamous "Little Steel Formula."

## Treachery in the NMU

Bridges' actions and statements were duplicated, with minor variations, by the Stalinist clique in the NMU.

Right after Pearl Harbor, the Stalinist leaders in the NMU rushed to Washington with proposals for shackling the union and placing the seamen at the mercy of employer-dominated government boards.

At a government-sponsored conference of maritime union leaders and ship operators, Frederick Myers, then a chief Communist Party spokesman in the NMU, presented a memorandum for "insuring uninterrupted shipping facilities to guarantee the success of our war effort."

It called for the "establishment of a board consisting of representatives of all the labor organizations, the shipowners and the interested government agencies." On this board, "the shipowners and the labor organizations shall have an equal vote, with the appropriate government agency casting the deciding vote." That is, the deciding vote would go to a government stooge of the ship operators.

At a follow-up conference in Washington (see *The Pilot*, April 10, 1942) the Stalinists introduced a further proposal on "the problems of recruitment, discipline and the maintenance of efficiency" for merchant marine personnel. This covered: "a. Availability of personnel, including manning, training and promotion; b. Discipline, on board ship and in domestic and foreign ports; c. The systematic elimination of disloyal elements; d. The waiving by mutual agreement of such collective bargaining provisions as may be found to interfere with the war effort."

This was to be done not through a union agency, but "by definite fixing of responsibility as well as authority" for handling personnel problems in a Maritime Personnel Board to be set up by the government under the shipowner-controlled War Shipping



Administration. On this hand-picked government board of 10 members, the Stalinists proposed to put exactly one representative of rank-and-file seamen.

With this go-ahead sign from the Stalinist union leaders, the government proceeded to tighten its bureaucratic grip on the seamen through special agencies: the Maritime War Emergency Board; the Coast Guard; the Recruitment and Manning Office; etc.

The Coast Guard became, and remains to this day, the instrument for regimenting the seamen under military discipline. Through the MWEB the wages of seamen were frozen and the war risk bonuses were arbitrarily slashed and finally eliminated. The RMO shipping pool provided a reservoir of non-union personnel to man unorganized ships and was held as a constant threat over the union hiring hall.

### Stalinists Supported Regimentation

Every one of these anti-union agencies was supported by the Stalinist clique heading the NMU. They went out of their way to cooperate with these agencies and enforce their decisions against the seamen.

Militant NMU members must feel sick at their stomachs when they recall the wartime issues of *The Pilot*. Look at a typical issue, like that of Jan. 21, 1944 (pages 3 and 14), reporting how anti-labor officials of the Maritime Commission, RMO and Coast Guard attended a meeting of the NMU National Council and "received a standing ovation."

Read how Admiral Waesche of the Coast Guard at this meeting defended the Hearing Units (Coast Guard kangaroo courts for seamen) and how "several of the agents (NMU) came forward to commend the Coast Guard for the fair, impartial job it was doing."

Read in the same column how *The Pilot* editors glow over praise from Admiral Land, head of the crooked Maritime Commission and author of the slogan, "Union organizers should be shot at sunrise."

It took an unsurpassed record of labor betrayal to win such commendation from a union-hater like Admiral Land.

Instead of opposing Coast Guard "discipline" for merchant seamen, the Stalinist NMU leaders welcomed it. They acted as finger-men against union militants who opposed their sell-out policy.

At the July 1943 NMU convention, Captain Edward Macauley, deputy administrator of the WSA, spoke of "a minority in the union who constitute a potential powder keg" and threatened

the maritime unions with "loss of many of their present rights unless these elements are weeded out."

### Fingermen Against Seamen

Instead of denouncing this vicious ultimatum, the NMU leaders promptly pushed through a resolution endorsing the Coast Guard Hearing Units and pledging to aid the Coast Guard in "weeding out the undesirable elements." They also promised the RMO full cooperation in ferreting out seamen employed in shore-side industries and forcing them back to sea.

The Stalinist-dominated NMU National Council went so far as to endorse the scheme to give the Coast Guard permanent control over the merchant seamen. In July 1944, they adopted a special resolution offering "high commendation" to the Coast Guard and praising the Hearing Units as "unbiased, nondiscriminatory and unprejudiced." This resolution, published in *The Pilot*, July 28, 1944, page 13, stated:

"The National Council is in favor of the continued jurisdiction of an impartial agency such as the Coast Guard, over the questions of safety, navigation and inspection in peacetime as well as in war." (Our emphasis.)

The Stalinist clique jettisoned union shipping rules in favor of onerous government shipping regulations. They spied out alleged violators and turned them over to the draft boards.

Most NMU members well recall the "Principal Wartime Shipping Rules of the National Maritime Union," which read in part:

"All men between the years of 18 and 30 who persist in turning down ships, or continually overstay their time on the beach, will have their names turned over to Draft Board as provided for under Selective Service law.

"All men over 30 years of age who persist in turning down ships, or continually overstay their time on the beach, will have their names turned over to War Manpower Commission as not being bona-fide seamen."

This meant that seamen torpedoed or bombed on repeated dangerous runs were forced back on the ships before they had recuperated, under threat of being drafted. Older seamen were turned over to the War Manpower Commission, deprived of certificates of availability and virtually blacklisted in the industry.

Seamen whom the Stalinists charged with violating government rules were driven to ship on non-union lines. Frederick Myers, then NMU vice-president, complained in a letter to the WSA about the increase in shipping crimps and company "hiring halls":

"The union has even gone so far as to taking drastic action

against men who violate our shipping rules. . . . After the Union takes this action, however, its hands are tied because the individual penalized for violating these rules is free to go to any one of the few unorganized companies." (*The Pilot*, May 5, 1944, page 3.)

Commenting on the stoolpigeon role of the Stalinists, *The Militant*, organ of the Socialist Workers Party, said on July 8, 1944: "The policies of NMU leaders in supporting the government and its bureaus have become so oppressive that seamen are driven away from the Union hall to the protection of—the shipowners and their crimps. This is virtually what *The Pilot* itself says."

While the Stalinist NMU leaders were acting as cops and stoolpigeons against the seamen, union conditions won in years of bitter struggle rapidly deteriorated.

### "Readin', Writin' and No Strikin' "

When it came to enforcing government restrictions, the Stalinists were tigers. When it came to defending seamen's rights and conditions, the Stalinists crawled like worms. Their role was summarized by a leading reactionary magazine, *Collier's*, in an article that scandalized the American labor movement.

Loyal, progressive NMU members must burn with rage at the thought of the ridicule and contempt brought on their union by the Stalinists when the April 21, 1945 *Collier's* published "Readin', Writin' and No Strikin'."

This article recorded the depth of Stalinist-shipowner collaboration. Stalinists in the NMU should be made to read the article out loud every time they take the floor to slander or opponent or boast of their union "victories."

The authors of the *Collier's* article expressed amazement at the degree of collaboration between the NMU officials and ship operators. "We had to be shown," they begin, "when we heard that the shipping industry and the National Maritime Union, which only a few years ago were constantly at each other's throats, were now as cooperative as a brace of lovebirds. So friendly are they that some of the larger companies have agreed to send their captains and agents to a 'leadership' school run by the union. (Our emphasis.)"

The title, "Readin', Writin' and No Strikin'," was derived from the fact, reported by the authors, that the NMU was "the first and one of the very few unions which has already made a postwar no-strike pledge."

The Stalinist permanent no-strike program was the main subject taught by "professor" Danny Boano. One of the union students, after listening to Boano, declared indignantly: "What the hell is this? Are you working for us or the shipowners?"

Boano, reports the article, rose to defend the poor, misunderstood and abused shipping magnate who, after the war, finds he "has invested all his money in the ships, got contracts with these foreign countries to deliver the goods they need, and, just when he's all set, the seamen, like the impatient brother back there, go on strike; they pull the pin.

"Where's the shipowner going to find himself? His money is all tied up, his ships are tied up and the foreign governments are screaming for goods. And if we don't deliver the goods, foreign seamen will. Then where are we? We're on a picket line. The shipowner loses his contracts, his dough is all tied up. And then where will we ever get the \$200 a month we want for A.B.'s?"

We are not surprised to read that while this was going on, "Mr. Basil Harris, the country's largest shipowner, walked in and sat down among the students." Upon the special invitation of the Stalinist teaching staff, Basil Harris, head of the union-hating United States Lines, addressed the class. When he finished his talk, dripping with honeyed protestations of shipowner love for the seamen, one deluded student was heard to remark: "He's a real union capitalist, a regular union man."

## TROTSKYIST RECORD IN MARITIME

While the Stalinists were helping to put handcuffs on the seamen, the Trotskyists told the truth about the dangers facing the seamen during the war and postwar periods.

The full position of the Socialist Workers Party is contained in Frederick J. Lang's *Maritime*, first published in March 1943, and re-issued in October 1945, by Pioneer Publishers, 116 University Place, New York City.

*Maritime* is a conclusive answer to the Stalinist slanders about the Trotskyists on the waterfront. Published in the very midst of the war, *Maritime* exposed and attacked the ship operators and their government stooges and called for a militant union defense of the seamen's rights.

Against the retreats and betrayals of the union leaders and the government-shipowner plot to shackle the seamen under military rule, *Maritime* called on the seamen's unions to fight militantly for their independence. The Trotskyist slogans were:

"Let the unions maintain discipline! Hands off union affairs!"

"One book for all seamen—the Union Book! No Fink Books for American seamen!"

"Defend the union living hall! No pool! No government halls!"

...independent by ...

...independent by ...

...independent by ...

...independent by ...

...independent by ...

That's the program the Statists ...

PRINCIPLES OF STATISTICAL ...

The basis of the Statist ...

The Statist ...

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...independent by ...

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McKenzie was quoted as saying, "This is the best contract ever negotiated by the NMC."

Rogers' letter declared, however, that he and several other Council members took the position that in fact the WLB decision contained practically no gains whatsoever for our membership. It did not contain an actual increase in wages, increased overtime rates, steadily pay increased manning scales, or many of the other demands that we felt could have been won by a real mobilization of the membership behind a fighting policy."

The Stalinists smeared all who suggested that this self-out agreement wasn't the "greatest ever achieved." Rogers reported that Mrs. McKenzie, Smith, Stock & Co. began to "assassinate the character and integrity of all those who opposed the decision." They spread the word that Rogers himself "was a phony, that I had sold out to Lundberg and that I was a Trotskyite."

Once Rogers' letter was published, more and more facts came out. They were supplied significantly, by top NMC leaders who had themselves been members or close associates of the CP.

### *CP in NMC Leadership*

Initially, the NMC members got a first-hand revelation from NMC President Joseph Curran at the February 18, 1946 New York membership meeting. Curran openly charged that "the union is in the hands of a machine . . . a machine that is going to tell you who you are going to work or else. . . . The machine tells you who to elect, who is a phony in the union, the machine tells you who to bring on charges." Anyone who uttered a word of criticism, he said, was subjected to a vile slander campaign and hounded from the union or forced to resign from office.

The CP in the top leadership coincided with a developing internal conflict within the Communist Party. A wave of expulsions had begun against CP members for criticizing the Foster leadership.

Foster stated at a CP National Committee meeting of February 5, 1946, that "We have a very dangerous situation in the NMC. We have done our best to try to adjust the situation and have been unable to accomplish it. The principal reason is our own comrades in the NMC. They are not carrying out the party line or we would have a different situation in the NMC. There has been a little suggest in the NMC, but apparently not enough. If those comrades continue to defy the party line, we will have to do some more suggest."

Foster's lieutenants in the NMC tried to carry out this "suggest" with the gray knife of slander and bureaucratic repres-

ion but were stymied by a rising tide of revolt against their misrule.

### *The Fake "Unity" Maneuver*

It was under the circumstances of this challenge to their hitherto tight control, that the Stalinists conceived one of their most sly maneuvers. That was the formation of the Committee for Maritime Unity—more appropriately known as the "Committee for Maritime Disunity."

Through the CMU, the Stalinists planned to strengthen their dipping grip on the NMC and consolidate their machine on the waterfront. The Stalinists misused the seamen's genuine desire for unity. Not only a large section of the members, but a number of non-Stalinist maritime union leaders, were taken in by this fake "unity" maneuver.

From the very beginning, the Trotskyists exposed the scheme. Just prior to the CMU founding convention, the April 27, 1946 issue of *The Militant* declared:

"The Stalinists are motivated primarily by their desire to strengthen their stranglehold over the unions now under their domination and to consolidate their forces for a jurisdictional struggle against rival AFL unions."

The immediate result of the CMU Conference was not unity, but further disunity. The conference, as *The Militant* reported, "is regarded by the AFL unions as a hostile move directed against them. They, in turn, are talking of organizing an AFL maritime council for protection and mutual aid against any CIO invasion of their jurisdiction. . . . The Stalinist moves have strengthened the hand of the elements within the AFL unions who welcome a jurisdiction fight as an opportunity to expand at the expense of the CIO."

*The Militant* called instead for "unity of the maritime workers in agreed-upon joint actions" as the "only honest and realistic approach. Such joint action is the indicated elementary step in any program looking toward eventual and genuine unification of the waterfront unions."

Events and experience since have confirmed to the hilt the Trotskyist appraisal of CMU. The disruptive activities of CMU became so scandalous that its national co-chairman, Joseph Curran, felt impelled to resign and denounce the CMU.

In a statement to the NMC Council, Curran affirmed that the "CMU has been used for the purpose, number one, of controlling our union; and number two, for promoting warfare on the waterfront with the American Federation of Labor and the independent unions."

At home was quoted as saying: "This is the best contract ever negotiated by the NAFU."

Rogers later declared, however, that he and several other Council members took the position that in fact the W. B. decision "contained practically no gains whatsoever for our membership. It did not contain an actual increase in wages, increased overtime rates should pay, increased training scales, or many of the other advantages that we feel could have been won by a real mobilization of the membership behind a fighting policy."

The Stalinists attacked all who suggested that this sell-out agreement wasn't the "greatest ever achieved," Rogers reported. Miss McKeown, Smith, Stack & Co. began to "assassinate the character and integrity of all those who opposed the decision." They spread the word that Rogers himself "was a phony," that I had sold out to Lundberg and that I was a Trotskyist.

Once Rogers's letter was published, more and more facts came out. They were supplied significantly, by top NAFU leaders who had themselves been members or close associates of the CP.

### Rise in NAFU Leadership

Finally, the NAFU members got a first-hand revelation from NAFU President Joseph Curtan at the February 18, 1940 New York membership meeting. Curtan openly charged that "the union is in the hands of a machine . . . a machine that is going to tell you how you are going to work or else . . . The machine tells you who is a phony in the union, the machine tells you who to elect, who to fire. The machine tells you who to bring on charges." Anyone who uttered a word of criticism, he said, was subjected to a virulent campaign and humiliated from the union or forced to resign from office.

This rise in the top leadership coincided with a developing internal conflict inside the Communist Party. A wave of exposure had begun against CP workers for criticizing the Party leadership.

Exter stated at a CP National Committee meeting of February 3, 1940, that "We have a very dangerous situation in the NAFU. We have done our best to try to adjust the situation and have been unable to accomplish it. The principal reason is our own conduct in the NAFU. They are not carrying out the party line or we would have a different situation in the NAFU. There has been a little surgery in the NAFU, but apparently not enough. If these conductors continue to defy the party line we will have to do some more surgery."

Exter's lieutenants in the NAFU tried to carry out this "surgery" with the greasy knife of slander and bureaucratic reprisal.

They were struck by a rising tide of revolt against their machine.

### The Fake "Unity" Movement

It was under the circumstances of this challenge to their historic fight control that the Stalinists conceived one of their most shrewd maneuvers. That was the formation of the Committee for Maritime Unity—now appropriately known as the "Committee for Maritime Disunity."

Through the C-MU, the Stalinists planned to strengthen their shipping grip on the NAFU and consolidate their machine on the waterfront. The Stalinists misused the seaman's genuine desire for unity. Not only a large section of the members, but a number of non-Stalinist maritime union leaders, were taken in by this fake "unity" maneuver.

From the very beginning, the Trotskyists exposed the scheme. Just prior to the C-MU founding convention, the April 25, 1940 issue of *The Worker* declared:

"The Stalinists are motivated primarily by their desire to strengthen their stranglehold over the unions now under their domination and to consolidate their forces for a jurisdictional struggle against rival AFI unions."

The immediate result of the C-MU Conference was not unity, but further disunity. The conference, as *The Worker* reported, "is regarded by the AFI unions as a hostile move directed against them. They, in turn, are talking of organizing an AFI maritime council for protection and mutual aid against any C-MU invasion of their jurisdiction . . . The Stalinist moves have strengthened the hand of the elements within the AFI unions who welcome a jurisdiction fight as an opportunity to expand at the expense of the C-MU."

*The Worker* called instead for "unity of the maritime workers in independent mass unions" as the "only honest and effective approach. Such a new union is the indicated objective step in our program looking toward eventual and genuine unification of the waterfront unions."

Events and experience since have confirmed to the hilt the Trotskyist appraisal of C-MU. The disruptive activities of C-MU became so scandalous that its national ex-terminator, Joseph Curtan, felt impelled to resign and denounce the C-MU.

In a statement to the NAFU Council, Curtan affirmed that the C-MU "has been used for the purpose, number one, of controlling our union, and number two, for promoting warfare on the waterfront with the American Federation of Labor and the its dependent unions."

The fake "unity" maneuver of the Stalinists reached its lowest point when the CMU Port Committee in San Francisco "gave to the Masters, Mates and Pilots, who were on strike, a 24-hour ultimatum to pull their pickets off the dock or have them smashed," as Corran reported to the NMU membership meeting in New York on December 30, 1946.

"My name was attached to that ultimatum, and I did not approve of it," he said with justified indignation, "and the NMU does not approve of strikebreaking or smashing picket lines."

In the light of these facts Corran demanded that the question of continued affiliation to the CMU be submitted to a referendum vote of the NMU membership. This demand for a democratic solution of the dispute was rejected by the Stalinist majority on the NMU National Council. A mud-slinging campaign was unleashed against the opponents of CMU. Dire prophecies were circulated in the ranks of imminent disaster that would befall the NMU if it withdrew from CMU.

*But the Stalinist campaign backfired. The NMU membership was aroused over the bureaucratic rejection of their right to decide the question by referendum vote. The tide of opposition mounted into a mighty wave of rebellion against the Stalinist clique.*

Executing a sudden tactical shift the Stalinist executive committee of the CMU met in secret session and voted to dissolve the organization. For the Stalinists the question was no longer one of utilizing CMU to tighten their grip on the NMU but of preserving their machine in the National Maritime Union. Faced with sure defeat they executed a strategic retreat, proclaiming it was all done in the name of "unity."

## HOW STALINISM RETAINS ITS INFLUENCE

This documented record of Stalinist crimes against American labor, and the maritime workers in particular, is a vivid example of how Stalinism has disoriented and disarmed the workers and led them to tragic defeats in country after country.

Why then does Stalinism still retain such powerful influence in the world labor movement?

Stalinism has appropriated to itself the glorious tradition of the Russian Revolution and the prestige of the Soviet Union, the first workers' state. This state, despite its degeneration under Stalin, remains a symbol of revolutionary hope for hundreds of millions throughout the world. Stalin exploits this sentiment for his own reactionary ends.

At the same time, he has used the resources of a great state to conduct an unparalleled campaign of slander, falsification and terror against the real communists. As part of this campaign, Stalin

has perverted the whole meaning of communism and misrepresented the program of the real Leninists as its opposite.

## School of Falsification

The Stalinists are masters of distortion. That is the core of their method. They call black white, and white black. Here are a few examples.

We told earlier how during the war the Stalinists tried to twist the word "scab," which was correctly applied to them, to mean not a fink who goes through picket lines, but a militant worker on the picket lines.

Right now they are reversing the meaning of "red-baiting." Those who attack the Stalinists for serving the shipowners are being labeled "red-baiters." We read in the November 1946 issue of *The Maritime Worker*, issued by the "Waterfront Committee of the Communist Party" in San Francisco, that workers expelled from the Communist Party are conducting "a new kind of red-baiting campaign."

The Stalinist sheet explains: "Of course their red-baiting sounds different than that used by the shipowners. . . . They say the Communist Party isn't 'radical' enough for them. . . . They say that the Party is 'too conservative.' They say that we are 'reformist.' . . ."

According to this logic, anyone who attacks labor traitors is a "red-baiter."

During the war, Harry Bridges gave a classic demonstration of this Stalinist method in a statement on former U. S. Attorney General Francis Biddle, who was trying to railroad Bridges out of the country. Bridges, in the August 11, 1944 *Dispatcher*, called Biddle "Number One on the list" of "people who pal around with the Trotskyites and go a long way to protect them."

*At that very moment, 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Minneapolis CIO truckdrivers were in Federal prison. They were railroaded by Biddle and his Department of Justice in the famous Minneapolis Labor Trial. Prosecuted under the infamous Smith "Gag" Act for opposing imperialist war and advocating international socialism, the Trotskyists were charged, among other "crimes," with circulating the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.*

Scores of CIO and AFL unions, representing nearly six million members, sent resolutions to President Roosevelt demanding the freedom of the SWP leaders.

The only elements in the labor movement who supported the imprisonment of the Trotskyists were the Communist Party and AFL Teamsters Czar Daniel J. Tobin, who helped engineer the frameup.

## THE GREATEST FRAMEUP OF ALL

The fountainhead of all the Stalinist slander about the Trotskyists being "agents of Hitler" was the Moscow Frameup Trials. These trials were staged by Stalin to besmirch the real Bolsheviks, particularly the incorruptible Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army and co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

In these "trials" from 1935 to 1938, a number of Lenin's leading co-workers were forced under physical and psychological torture to "confess" fantastic plots to overthrow the Soviet Union in alliance with the Nazis. The chief target of this frameup was the exiled Trotsky, who warned that Stalin was framing and murdering his political opponents as a cover for his own behind-the-scenes preparations for a pact with Hitler. That pact was signed in 1939.

### *Moscow Trials Exposed*

The Moscow Trials "confessions" invented by the Stalin secret police were completely exploded by the exhaustive investigation of the Dewey Commission, headed by Professor John Dewey. Its findings that the Moscow Trials were frameups are contained in a monumental report, *Not Guilty*, published by Harper & Bros.

The conclusions of the Dewey Commission were confirmed by the Nuremberg trial of the Nazi leaders last year. Every living Nazi leader was in Soviet and Allied hands. Tons of Nazi confidential documents had been seized. Yet the Soviet prosecutors could not find ONE THING to back their frameup accusations against Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders whom Stalin had murdered.

One of the Nazi defendants in the Nuremberg trial was Rudolf Hess, who had been named in the Moscow Trials as the "direct link" with Trotsky. Trotsky's widow, Natalia, demanded that her attorney be given the right to cross-examine Hess. This demand was ignored, for the Stalinist prosecutors knew this would expose the frameup nature of the Moscow Trials before the whole world.

It is on the basis of these proven frameups that Stalinists for years have tried to discredit and smear the Trotskyists. These same methods of slander and frameup are used against every honest working-class opponent of Stalinism in the labor movement. They are the methods used by the treacherous Stalinist leaders in the NMU today.

In their fight against the reactionary and disruptive role of the Stalinists, the progressive NMU rank and file are helping to cleanse the labor movement of the sinister methods of slander, vilification and frameup.

## HOW TO FIGHT STALINISM

The documented facts in this pamphlet show that the roots of the NMU's internal conflict grow deep in the sub-soil of basic union policy and program.

For years the Stalinist bureaucratic clique has ruthlessly trampled underfoot the elementary rights of the rank-and-file and collaborated with the employers and their government.

Thus, the basic issues are the defense of union democracy and the fight for a militant class-struggle program against the seamen's main enemy, the shipowner-government combine.

These are the issues the Stalinists want to bury. They want to drag the discussion into a blind alley of petty personalities and side issues. They seek to poison the atmosphere, and prevent a discussion of the real issues. They thereby give an opening to the reactionaries to launch a red-baiting drive.

Nothing would help the Stalinists—and the employers—more than to have the discussion derailed from basic issues by any form of red-baiting.

*Today the danger of red-baiting is especially acute. The employers and their press are trying to inspire an "anti-red" campaign inside the union movement to divide and disrupt it. Their ultimate victims are the real union militants.*

The employers are anxious to divert the progressive struggle of the NMU members against the Stalinists into reactionary red-baiting channels. They fear that a fight for union democracy and a militant class-struggle program will strengthen the union against the shipowners and government. They would like to see the reactionary, but discredited, Stalinists replaced merely by another reactionary clique who will serve Wall Street with undivided loyalty.

### *Red-baiting Serves the Bosses*

Red-baiting serves Wall Street imperialism in its war preparations against the Soviet Union. During the war the Stalinists spread the myth that the alliance of the Kremlin with Allied imperialism provided the basis of permanent peace and universal prosperity. The end of the war found a speedy realignment of Stalin's erstwhile "allies," who immediately began to lay the foundations for World War III against the Soviet Union.

For this reason, the employers do not consider the Stalinists to be sufficiently reliable today as labor lieutenants of American capitalism.

To defeat the Stalinists AND the bosses, the NMU ranks must fight for a real progressive, militant union policy and program.

## FOR A CLASS - STRUGGLE PROGRAM

An effective program must answer the basic problems that have always faced the seamen. These problems are internal division, economic insecurity, shipowner parasitism and government regimentation.

The maritime workers are divided among more than a score of unions, separated along both craft and jurisdictional lines. In addition, a number of the unions practice racial discrimination against Negroes, thus dividing the workers on color lines.

While the maritime workers are divided, their enemies are united. The shipowners and their government agents are conducting a concerted offensive to smash all maritime unionism.

The great maritime strikes of 1946 again demonstrated the burning need for maritime labor unity. Unfortunately, inter-union hostility and suspicion have been sharpened by long years of jurisdictional strife. The problem of unifying the maritime workers cannot be solved overnight or by some slick "unity" maneuver like the Stalinist CMU, which only created further disruption and division.

### *Establish a Solid Maritime Front!*

*The first step toward real and lasting unity is to dispel the atmosphere of hostility and suspicion. Without being called upon to give up their present affiliations, the maritime workers must establish a solid front against their common enemy.*

This can be achieved through carefully worked out, agreed-upon joint actions of all unions in defense of their mutual interests against the shipowner-government forces. In the course of such joint actions the existing mutual distrust and suspicion will be broken down and a firm foundation laid for genuine unity.

The ultimate objective of the maritime workers is organic unity, the fusion of the separate unions into one. One of the most serious obstacles to the achievement of this objective is the policy of race discrimination particularly in the AFL seafaring unions and the independent Marine Firemen's union.

While this is a barrier to organic unity with the non-discriminating NMU, it should not prevent joint actions. The Stalinists, however, seized upon AFL Jim Crow practices as an excuse to bolster their policy of sharpening jurisdictional division on the waterfront. The Stalinists use this seemingly plausible argument to oppose even joint actions, falsely claiming that these by themselves will lead to the imposition of Jim Crow policies on the CIO unions.

*But it is precisely joint action of all seamen in struggle against the common enemy that offers the best means to break down racial*

*prejudice. When seamen of all races and all affiliations join together in common action, racial and organizational prejudices will be dispelled in the heat of the struggle against the real enemies of all the workers, the capitalist exploiters.*

Immediately after V-J Day the old problem of economic insecurity again loomed large before the seamen. Unemployment and reduced wages struck double blows. Soaring prices further slashed living standards.

Under the so-called "free enterprise system" of capitalist anarchy, the maritime industry is unstable, disorganized and chaotic. Once the artificial war boom was over, thousands of seamen were tossed on the beach as the government put hundreds of ships in "cold storage."

The immediate answer to the growing unemployment in the maritime industry is the demand

### FOR A FOUR-WATCH SYSTEM!

It is necessary to create more jobs by reducing the number of hours worked with no reduction in pay.

The elimination of the war bonuses and skyrocketing prices forced the seamen into strike action to regain a portion of their lost take-home pay. But within three months after the strike, inflation had already wiped out wage increases. By January 1947, the seamen were forced to demand new increases under less favorable conditions. These demands were placed in arbitration.

The seamen must defend their living standards and wage gains against the menace of inflation. If they are not to be forced out on strike every few months trying to keep up with rising prices, they must demand

### A SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES!

This is a demand for an escalator clause in the contract providing that wage rates shall rise automatically with every rise in the cost of living. Under such a clause the basic wage scale stands as the guaranteed minimum. But the real wage at the start of the contract is safeguarded by automatic increases when prices rise.

The economic insecurity of the seamen is particularly acute because the industry is controlled by and run solely in the interests of a completely parasitic group of capitalist racketeers.

Most of the wartime ships were government-built and government-owned. The so-called ship-"owners" were merely operators who fattened off huge subsidies paid out of the public treasury.

Now thousands of government merchant ships, built and paid for by the American people, have been turned over to the profiteer-





parasites for a song. While the capitalist government uses every means to keep seamen's wages down, it continues to pay tremendous subsidies to the ship-owners."

If the government ceased feeding these parasites, then the added costs of the four-watch system and a sliding scale of wages could easily be met by demanding

### **ALL GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES FOR THE SEAMEN! NOT A PENNY OF PUBLIC FUNDS TO THE SHIP-OWNER PARASITES!**

To ensure permanent security and decent conditions, the stranglehold of the tiny group of ship-owners must be completely broken. These useless and greedy blood-suckers must be eliminated from the industry by

### **NATIONALIZATION OF THE MERCHANT MARINE UNDER WORKERS CONTROL!**

The men who run the ships, who do the work, must control the ships and the industry.

The greatest immediate threat to the seamen is government regimentation. Under the pretext of codifying the numerous maritime laws, the ship-owners seek to tighten the restraints upon the seamen and further restrict their freedom of action. The Coast Guard, which was imposed on the seamen under the pretext of "wartime necessity," has become a permanent adjunct of the government's program for militarizing the merchant marine.

At the same time, Congress is preparing a host of anti-labor laws to outlaw the closed shop union hiring hall, limit the right to strike and impose compulsory arbitration.

Against this conspiracy to put the seamen in a governmental straitjacket, the maritime workers must fight

### **FOR THE COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNIONS FROM GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION, REGIMENTATION AND CONTROL! DEFEND THE RIGHT TO STRIKE! NO COMPULSORY ARBITRATION!**

The vicious scheme to place the seamen under military discipline must be smashed. Joint action of all unions must be launched to break the grip of militarist control exercised over the seamen by the Coast Guard. The seamen must stand four-square to the demand

### **FOR UNION CONTROL OF ALL DISCIPLINE ABOARD SHIP!**

The whole history of the American seamen has been a continual struggle for their rights against the capitalist government. To this very day seamen are denied elementary civil rights accorded to citizens ashore. Under every Administration, Republican or Democratic, the government has intervened on the side of the bosses against the maritime workers.

The struggle of the seamen for emancipation and permanent security is above all a political struggle. This fact was again demonstrated and underscored when Truman threatened to use the Navy against the impending CIO maritime strike in June 1946.

Labor has no voice whatsoever in this government. The policy of supporting so-called "friends of labor" from the Republican and Democratic parties of Wall Street has left labor politically helpless today. If the government attacks on the seamen and all labor are to be stopped, company-unionism in politics must end. Seamen must call

### **FOR AN INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY!**

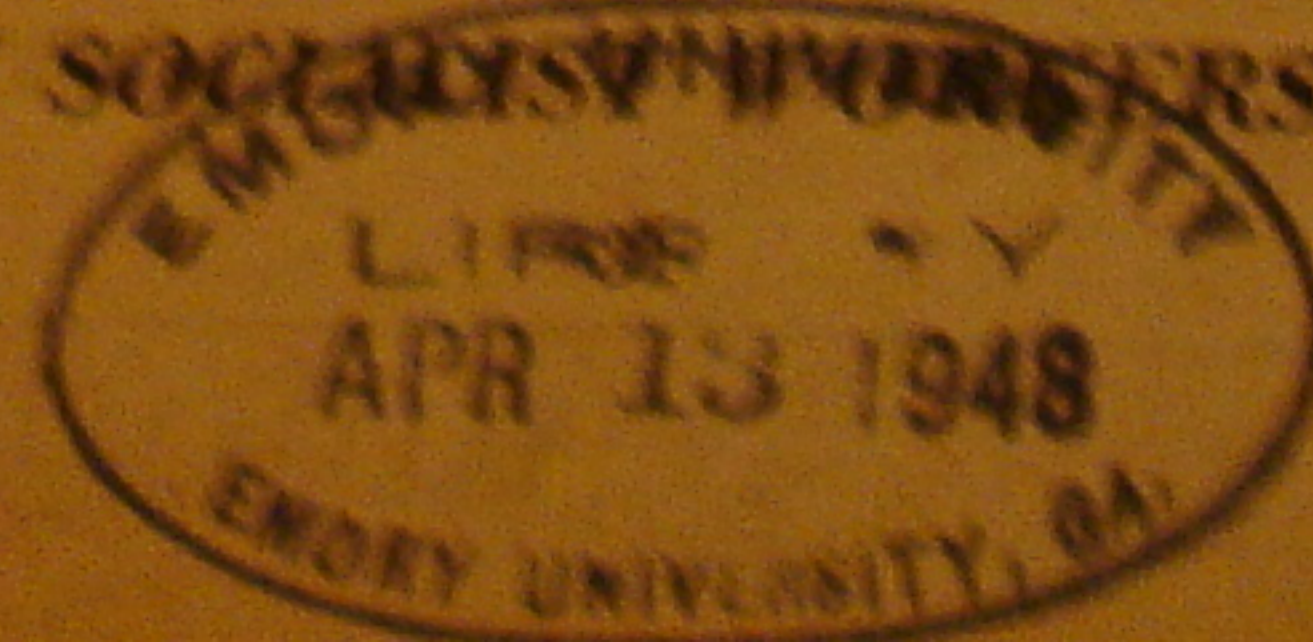
An independent party of labor, based on the trade unions, can mobilize the workers, oppressed minorities and impoverished lower-middle class. Such a party will represent the overwhelming majority of the people. With a militant program, it could lead a victorious struggle against the rule of the tiny minority of capitalists who dominate this country and exploit the people for their own profit and privilege.

Once the power of the capitalists is destroyed, the working majority can establish a government in their own interests, a real government of, by and for the people—

### **A WORKERS' AND FARMERS' GOVERNMENT!**

The Socialist Workers Party advances this program as a solution to the problems confronting the seamen. We have no interests separate and apart from those of the working class. The struggle of the seamen is part of the general struggle of the American working class for emancipation from capitalist exploitation and wage slavery. Our goal is the final victory of the working class and the establishment of a socialist society which will bring lasting peace, security and safety for all.

**JOIN IN THE FIGHT FOR THIS GREAT GOAL—  
JOIN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY!**



# MARITIME

*A Historical Sketch and a Workers' Program*

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