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**THE STRUGGLE OF THE
MARINE
WORKERS**

by

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



N. SPARKS is a close student of the shipping industry and has written extensively on the conditions of marine workers in the United States.

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THE STRUGGLE OF THE MARINE WORKERS



I. THE RE-BIRTH OF AMERICAN SHIPPING

WHEN America entered the last World War in 1917, it found its weakest point was in shipping. In the early days of the "clipper ship era" American shipping had held a prominent place in the world's merchant marine, but after the Civil War, American capitalism had concentrated on the immensely profitable task of developing and industrializing the United States, and shipping was allowed to decline.

With the beginning of this century, however, American capitalism began to look afield. It began to feel the need of new markets, of new sources of raw materials. It was becoming an imperialist power. It was awakening to the opportunities for huge profits to be obtained from the exploitation of colonial peoples and backward countries. With this new imperialist policy shipping became a vital need. American capitalism could no longer afford to be dependent for its shipping on foreign and competing imperialist powers.

Thus, the forty years previous to 1860 show an average of 77.3% of U. S. foreign trade carried in American ships, but the half century from 1866 to 1913 shows an average of only 14.6%. The lowest point—8.2%—was reached in 1901, an irregular increase beginning after that time.

In the same way, although from 1868 to 1899 the American merchant marine had remained practically stationary at around 4,000,000 tons, from 1900 to 1910 it grew from 4,480,000 to

6,500,000—an increase of 45.1% in 10 years. By 1915 it had grown to 7,290,000, a further increase of 12.1% in 5 years.*

The beginning of the war, however, showed to what a great extent American shipping was still lagging behind the needs of the American imperialist system—let alone the extraordinary and inflated needs of the war period. The United States Shipping Board was set up to rush the building of ships. At a prodigious expense and with incredible waste (for there were lots of dollar-a-year men whose pockets had to be filled), the Shipping Board began to build ships. The war ended, and huge profits were yet to be made in carrying over thousands of cargoes to supply the needs of an exhausted Europe and in reëstablishing world trade. The shipyards also were making millions out of the Shipping Board contracts, and so it continued its frenzied ship-building right through 1921, when the business depression had already set in, and hundreds of new and hardly used ships had to be sent “to the boneyard.” The peak was reached in 1922 with 17,230,000 gr.t.

Taking steel steam and motor vessels of 100 gr.t. and over, the American merchant marine consists to-day of 3105 vessels of 13,291,000 gr.t., which is 20.2% of the world's tonnage, and 58.5% as much as England's. Of these, however, only 10,475,000 gr.t. are operating, the rest being laid up. America's *active* tonnage is only 17.0% of the world's active tonnage, and only 46.1% as much as England's.¹

Just as all other capitalists, even though making tremendous profits, howl for a protective tariff to save them from “ruinous competition,” so too have the American shipowners been crying for a government subsidy. The operations of the Shipping Board have themselves, however, constituted a gigantic subsidy to American shipping.

Up to June 30, 1926, the Shipping Board had spent over three and a half *billion* dollars of government money to build ships and establish them on the various trade routes. Yet on

* All figures in this chapter are gross tons (gr.t.), with fishing vessels, canal boats and barges excluded.

June 30, 1927, the active fleet of the Shipping Board comprised about 6,500,000 deadweight tons, valued at less than \$135,000,000! * Where did this immense subsidy—over 3 billion dollars—go to? Huge profits to the shipbuilding companies, to the shipowners acting as managing operators for the Shipping Board, incredible graft and waste, deterioration of the fleet (built with the cheapest materials and methods), and so on.

In 1924, the Shipping Board reported a deficit of \$41,000,000 from the year's operation of its ships. In 1925, it lost \$30,000,000; in 1926, \$20,000,000; in 1927, \$16,000,000; in 1928, \$16,000,000. This means that each year the Government was subsidizing the American shipowners to the extent of these amounts.

Let us see how it worked. The Shipping Board would establish a fleet of vessels on a certain route. A private steamship company would be appointed "Managing Operator" and would be paid a fat compensation by the Shipping Board for its services. Of course, "the first 100 years are the hardest," and at first the line might not make money. The Shipping Board would meet the losses and the Managing Operators would get their regular payment. When, however, it was certain that the line was making plenty of money and would continue to make more, the ships were sold to the Managing Operator at a fraction of their cost and on long-term credit, and the steamship company went on to reap the profits. This is the exact history of the South American passenger fleet of the Munson Line, of the American Export Line, and of many other lines.

Thus the reason the Shipping Board lost money was that as soon as a line became profitable, it sold it to a private company, *retaining only the unprofitable lines*. This is the acknowledged policy of the Shipping Board—to build ships

* Nearly 4,000,000 deadwt. tons besides were laid up. Figures from U. S. Ship. Bd. reports, given in *Statistical Abstract of U. S.*, 1927, and *World Almanac*, 1928.

and make them profitable and then practically *give* them away to the private companies.

Thus the combined fleets of the American Merchant Line and the United States Lines were recently sold to the P. W. Chapman Co. Despite the fact that this prize package contained not only the five passenger-and-freight vessels of the American Merchant Line, but also the famous steamers *Pres. Roosevelt*, *Pres. Harding*, *Republic*, *America*, *George Washington*, and last but not least, the *Leviathan*, the entire lot were sold for just \$4,000,000 cash and \$12,300,000 on long credit. Such operations are subsidies with a vengeance!

But even such gifts from the Shipping Board did not satisfy the shipowners. Their several years of intense propaganda and lobbying finally bore fruit in the Jones-White Subsidy Law. Under this law, any company intending to build a ship has only to put up cash equal to one-fourth of the value, and the Government *will supply the other three-fourths* on long-term credit and at extra low interest. A fund of \$250,000,000 is set aside for this purpose.

In addition, "liberal mail subsidies on long-term contracts" are to be granted to the companies. These mail subsidies come sometimes as high as \$12 per mile covered! As the Munson Line announces to its stockholders, "The Company has entered into a mail contract with the United States, calculated to add more than \$750,000 per year to its net earnings." This prospect of having to pay only one-fourth the cost of a ship, and then rake in four-fourths of the profits, with mail subsidies besides, is pleasant enough to warm the heart of even a shipowner, and many companies have begun to build.

II. THE SHIPOWNERS AND THEIR PROFITS

IN almost every industry to-day the smaller companies are either crushed out by competition, swallowed up by bigger ones, or forced to amalgamate, so that the ownership of the entire industry gradually becomes concentrated into the hands

of a few large trusts. The same is true in shipping, where probably less than fifty companies control the bulk of the world's shipping.

Exclusive of shipping used exclusively for internal and coasting traffic, the world's transoceanic and interoceanic shipping services in 1925-26 were almost wholly carried on by 5575 ocean steamers each of 4000 gr.t. or over, and aggregating 22,210,000 net tons.

	Ships	Net Tons
Ocean liners of 12 knots speed or over totaled	1640	8,170,000
Ocean liners under 12 knots and owned mainly by the corporations operating the faster steamers	1735	6,316,000
In addition, the oil tankers.....	700	2,970,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	4075	17,456,000

. . . These 4075 liners* and tankers are operated by *less than 150 highly organized steamship companies, industrial companies or government agencies. Most of these individual organizations are inter-related with one or more others financially, or associated with others in steamship conferences.*

The preponderance of liners in the handling of traffic is greater than these figures indicate because liners by their higher speed increase their total and relative carrying power. When speed is taken into account *the liner organizations furnish 81% of the transoceanic and interoceanic shipping facilities.*²

When we look over the list of American steamship operators we see at once that they fall pretty sharply into two classes. First there are those which operate ships for the general trade taking any and all cargoes they can get. Then there are those lines which are really just the Marine Transport Departments of huge industrial concerns, carrying only the raw material and finished products of these industries. These are known as "industrial carriers." Of course the best example of the industrial carriers are the oil tankers, which belong to the

* Of course the term "liner" does not mean only the big passenger ships but includes all freighters on a regular run between given ports.

different oil companies and serve to carry the crude oil from the wells to the refineries and the refined oils from the refineries to the distributing points. Other industrial carriers are the fleets of the steel companies, of the Fruit Trust, and particularly the great fleets of ore and grain carriers on the Great Lakes. Tankers comprise 30% of the active United States tonnage, and we can safely estimate that about 50% of American shipping can be classified as "industrial carriers."

The Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey is one of the largest American shipowners. It owns 40 tankers of 500,000 deadweight tons (as well as 61 tankers of equal tonnage under foreign flags). The Standard Oil Co. of New York owns 48 tankers of about 550,000 d.w.t. Other oil companies owning important fleets are: Pan-American Petroleum Co. (formerly Doheny's company, but since bought up by the Standard of Indiana); Vacuum Oil Co. (a subsidiary of the Socony); Atlantic Refining Co. do.); Standard Oil Co. of California; Gulf Refining Co. (Andrew Mellon's company); Sinclair Refining Co.; The Texas Company; Sun Oil Co. (owned by the Shell interests—the main rivals of the Standard); Union Oil Co.; Pure Oil Co.; and Cities Service Co. (Henry L. Doherty).

The U. S. Steel Corporation operates under the name of the Isthmian Steamship Lines, 202,000 gr.t. of general cargo ships which deliver its products all over the world. The Bethlehem Steel Co., a close associate, operates 78,000 gr.t. of ore carriers, chiefly to Chile and Peru.

The United Fruit Co. owns and operates an American fleet of 40 passenger and freight steamers of 168,000 gr.t. Through their British subsidiary Elders & Fyffes, they operate under the British flag 32 ships of equal tonnage. They chartered (in 1928) from other companies 25 ships of 36,000 gr.t. They own vast sugar and fruit lands, molasses and sugar refineries, railroads, public utilities, etc., in Central and South America and the West Indies.

"Inability to meet foreign competition" is the excuse offered by the shipowners for every step they take, whether an attack

upon the wages and working conditions of the seamen, or a demand for government subsidies. However, the laws of the United States prohibit any foreign ship from engaging in the coastwise (and inter-coastal) trade of the U. S. On Oct. 1, 1929, 3,666,000 gr.t. of shipping (47% of the total active tonnage) was engaged coastwise and *was faced with no foreign competition whatever*. In addition, the new German merchant marine with which American shipowners are supposed to be competing, is largely owned by American capital. American bankers own a large share of the Hamburg-America Line, and about three-quarters of the North German Lloyd.⁸

However, the best proof of the hypocrisy of the "competition" argument is to look at some of the actual profits of the steamship companies.

The Agwi (Atlantic, Gulf & West Indies) SS. Co. owns 63 ships (113,000 gr.t. of passenger ships, and 242,000 d.w.t. of freighters). The group comprises the Clyde Line, Mallory Line, Ward Line, Porto Rican Line and Southern SS. Co. Until a few years ago, they owned oil properties in Mexico and a fleet of tankers. In 1926, their net "earnings" were \$1,999,000. In the first five months of 1927 alone their profits were \$1,412,000, and for the same period of 1928, \$2,363,000.

The Munson Line operates (including chartered vessels) over 80 ships from New York and Gulf ports to the West Indies and East Coast of South America. It owns (directly and through subsidiaries) 104,000 d.w.t. of freighters and 117,000 displacement tons of passenger-and-freight ships. In 1928 its net profit was \$1,219,000, and it proudly announces to its stockholders that its new mail contract will add over \$750,000 per year to its profits.

The American-Hawaiian SS. Co (a member of the Harriman banking group) operates 22 freight ships, intercoastal. It has recently bought the eight ships of the Williams Line. In January, 1928, it received from the German Government Mixed Claims Commission \$4,620,000 reparations. In February, 1928, together with the Matson Line, it bought 21 freighters of

193,000 d.w.t. from the Shipping Board for \$1,982,000 (only 25% cash—another Shipping Board gift) to be operated as the Oceanic & Oriental Navigation Co. in the Pacific-Australia-New Zealand and the Pacific-China-Philippines services. In 1928 its profits were \$385,000.

The Matson Line, operating 25 passenger and freight ships between Pacific Coast ports and Hawaii had a total income of \$2,474,000 in 1927 and \$2,291,000 in 1928.

The Eastern SS. Co. owns 32 passenger and freight steamers operating between New York and Boston and New England. It also owns the Old Dominion Line and the Richmond-New York SS. Co., both operating between New York and Virginia. Its total income in 1927 was \$2,171,000; in 1928, \$2,005,000.

The A. H. Bull SS. Co.—freight service from Atlantic coast ports to the West Indies—merely reports “Dividends of 6% or more per year paid regularly.”

The Grace SS. Co. is a subsidiary of the W. R. Grace Co., which owns the Grace National Bank, nitrate properties, cotton and woolen mills and sugar plantations and mills in Chile and Peru. It owns 13 passenger and freight ships of 106,000 d.w.t. running between New York and the West Coast of South America. The reports of the W. R. Grace Co., Grace SS. Co., and the Atlantic & Pacific SS. Co. give an excellent example of the way subsidiary concerns are used to conceal profits. The W. R. Grace Co. has been paying regular dividends of 8% “with extras.” In January, 1928, a special cash dividend of 50% was paid.

The Southern Pacific Railroad, which owns the 23 passenger and freight steamers of the Morgan Line, running between New York and New Orleans and Galveston, “earned” \$32,000,000 in 1928.

The Dollar SS. Co., which owns more than 20 passenger and freight ships running from the Pacific to the Orient and around the world, the American Export Line running to the Mediterranean and Black Sea, and the Commercial SS. Lines (Moore & McCormack) running to the Baltic, make no report

of their profits. These three companies are among the most vicious, labor-hating concerns with the most wretched conditions in the whole industry.

The companies operating the industrial carriers make no separate report of the earnings of their steamship departments. However, in order to leave no doubt as to the ability of these companies "to meet competition," we may as well note that in 1928 the United Fruit Co. "earned" \$24,072,000; the Standard Oil Co. of N. J., \$134,000,000, and the U. S. Steel Corp., \$193,000,000. These will do as examples.

It seems, therefore, that the financial situation of the steamship companies is by no means as disastrous as they are in the habit of painting it—that is, even if these reported profits are to be taken at their face value. Yet there can be no doubt that in order to supply ammunition for the subsidy campaign, escape income tax, and keep down agitation for more wages, profits have been concealed and minimized by stock manipulations, excessive charge-offs, and all the other methods in regular use by big corporations.

There is another side, however, to the question of foreign competition, and that is the drive against the predominant position of British shipping. In the decade prior to 1914, American ships carried slightly more than 10% of U. S. foreign trade, the largest share being carried by Great Britain. By 1921, as a result of the huge subsidies of the Shipping Board, American ships were carrying 51%. This abnormal figure gradually dropped, reaching its level at 40% in 1925, 41% in 1927, and 41% in 1928. England still continues to carry a larger percentage than all other foreign countries combined, thus manifesting itself as the chief rival of America in shipping.⁴

The energetic building program now under way as a result of the loans and mail subsidies provided by the Jones-White Law is calculated not only to make the American imperialist system independent of British shipping, but to cut deeply into England's dominant position in world shipping.

The federal program drawn up by the Postmaster-General "calls for the development of essential trade routes *to all the important ports of the world*, for which the construction of *40 new vessels aggregating 460,000 gr.t.* is to be required. . . . The proposed new vessels are all of the fast combination passenger and freight type, and range from three giant superliners, each costing \$30,000,000, for the North Atlantic service, to 7,000 ton, 14 knot vessels for the Black Sea service." The Dollar, Matson, Agwi, Export and other lines already have several vessels under construction.

However, England still has more tonnage under construction than the rest of the world put together (50.2% at end of 1929). Shipping is a field in which the growing Anglo-American rivalry is bound to reach a high pitch. The sharpening conflict between the two imperialist powers comes clearly to the fore in shipping. What one power gains, the other must lose. Every ship built under the Jones-White Law must satisfy the requirements of the Navy Department for naval auxiliaries. These ships are merchant ships to-day and auxiliary warships to-morrow.

III. RATIONALIZATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

LET us first see what is the meaning of this word "rationalization" that has become the slogan of the capitalist class all over the world. Rationalization means organizing production in a more "rational"—"reasonable" (for the employers)—way, in order to get more work out of less workers. It is accomplished by the concentration of production into huge plants, by the introduction of all kinds of new machinery, technical devices and production systems. More work out of less workers means speed-up and harder work for those kept on the job and unemployment for those no longer needed.

This has been exemplified in the marine industry in many ways. In the first place, the constant increase in the size of the ships has thrown many seamen "on the beach." For it is quite

clear that two 5000 ton ships may employ about 70 men between them while one 10,000 ton ship will carry the same cargo and yet give employment to only about 40 men. Of course each of the 40 will, in general, have more work to attend to than on the smaller ships.

Thus if we look up the figures, we find that the increase in the *number* of U. S. ships from 1916 to 1926 (including yachts, tugs, ferries, barges, sail and everything) was less than one-third as great as the increase in *gross tonnage*—14.4% compared to 48.4%. The number of *jobs * per 1000 gr.t.* decreased from 14.4 to 11.1. This means that for every 3000 gr.t. in the entire U. S. merchant marine there were 10 less jobs in 1926 than in 1916.

If we confine ourselves only to freight and passenger steamships (naturally the most important class) the situation is much worse. The gross tonnage increased from 5,943,000 in 1916 to 11,043,000 in 1926 (an increase of 85.8%) while the number of jobs increased only from 109,000 to 129,000 (only 18.3%) a decrease in *jobs per 1000 gr.t.* from 18.3 to 11.7 (*20 less jobs for every 3000 gr.t.*). Only 18% more men carried 86% more cargoes! This is rationalization. Of course, these results were brought about not only by increasing the size of the ships, but in various other ways which we shall now consider.

The most important of all changes (until recently) has been the change from coal to oil burning. The advantages of oil over coal are so well known that they need merely be mentioned here (greater speed, greater cruising range, easier bunkering, no ash removal, more space for cargo, etc.) The change to oil has wiped out the coalpassers and cut down the firemen. When the *Berengaria* of the Cunard Line changed to oil it cut down its crew by 240 men. In the American merchant marine, a coal-

* This figure is listed in the tables as "no. of men employed," but when we look further we find it is only the "number ordinarily required for operation"—that is, the number who *would have* been employed if *all* these ships had been in operation *all through the year*. All these figures are from *Water Transportation*, U. S. Census Bureau, 1926.

passer is almost as much a thing of the past as a sailing-ship man.

A possibly still greater change is in progress to-day—the change from steam to motorships. In the motorship (Diesel, or internal combustion engine), the fuel oil is sprayed directly into the engine just as in an automobile motor—no fires, no boilers, no steam. Thus firemen and water-tenders are eliminated, leaving only oilers or motormen. The motorship saves about 50-60% in the quantity of fuel, gives an increase of 10-20% in speed, 10-15% in cargo space, has four times the cruising radius, needs less repairs and provides for a *decrease of about 40-50% in the engine room crew.*

It is true that the world's tonnage of motorships is still far behind that of steam, but it is rapidly increasing. Since 1927 more than half of the world's new tonnage under construction at any time has been motorships, reaching 56% in January, 1930. The flagships of many of the biggest lines are now motorships. The U. S. Shipping Board has spent \$20,000,000 in converting 20 freighters to Diesels (three to Diesel-electric), as trial ships.

America has been lagging behind in motorship construction (only 25% of tonnage under construction in January, 1930). This is due partly to concentration on another development—the turbo-electric drive. In this installation the steam from the boilers drives a turbo-generator which runs the main propeller motor and at the same time provides current for the complete electrification of the ship. This arrangement gives greater efficiency, higher speed, great ease of control, and also makes possible the elimination of many men from the crew. The three new passenger ships of the Panama-Pacific Line, *California*, *Virginia* and *Pennsylvania*, as well as the newest U. S. battle-ships, and the two new liners being built by the Agwi Lines, are all turbo-electric drive.

The competition of the motorship has naturally caused the steamship builders to attempt to rationalize the steam engine. One result is the turbo-electric drive, another is the use of

pulverized coal.* In this system very cheap, low-grade coal that could ordinarily not be used, is crushed very fine (pulverized) aboard the ship, automatically conveyed to the boilers, blown through pipes into the burners by a fan, where it is mixed with air and burns like oil or gas. The whole equipment is a single unit, 100% automatic. The Shipping Board has equipped 14 freighters to burn pulverized coal. On a round trip across the Atlantic the *West Alsek* showed 9% increase in speed, 5% less fuel, 23% less cost of fuel per mile, and a saving of 20% in the fireroom crew. Naturally. The former firemen were "on the beach" reading in the papers of the success of pulverized coal.

Even more startling developments may be in store. The Scandinavian-American Line reports it has developed a new Diesel using only one-fifth as much oil and requiring only one man to tend it. The all-electric M.S. *Brunswick* of the Atlantic Refining Co. can be operated entirely from the switchboard on the bridge and does not require engineers to start or stop the Diesels. The captain can handle it just like a chauffeur in an automobile.

Although the most startling developments of rationalization have been in the engine room, no department is exempt. On deck, the "skill" of the sailor which old reactionaries like Andrew Furuseth, head of the International Seaman's Union, love to prate about, has gone by the board. The "iron mike" (automatic steering gear and gyroscopic compass), installed on many big passenger ships, steers better than any man and eliminates the men at the wheel. Ropes are provided with the "Shipping Board splice," rust is chipped with automatic chipping hammers, a whole ship is painted in drydock in 24 hours by paint spraying machines. *Marine labor has become unskilled labor*, whether we like it or not, and less and less of it is being required.

New inventions are making a laughing-stock of the much-vaunted "experience," "judgment" and "skill" of the captain

* A third method is the installation of high pressure, superheated steam boilers.

and deck officers. The radio compass gives the ship's position better than dead reckoning. Radio communication forces the captain whenever an emergency arises, instead of using his judgment, to ask for orders from the company's office. And even in the dangerous situation of entering port, the radio beacon makes nothing of the skill of captain, pilot and watch officer.

Nor has the Steward's Department escaped. On most of the big passenger ships the galley is completely electrified. Electric potato peelers, dough-mixers, dish-washers, silver-cleaners, serve to throw scores of men on the beach and keep the rest in one continuous hustle to maintain the speed.

On the docks, among the longshoremen, there is the same story to tell. Rationalization is being ruthlessly carried out either simply by putting less men in each hold and telling them to work faster, or by mechanization. Mechanical equipment is transforming the docks. Conveyors are being used more and more for loading and discharge, some of them even being carried on the ship, as on the *Malolo* of the Matson Line. On the Great Lakes, many of the huge bulk cargo carriers are practically self-loading and self-discharging.

Diesel and Diesel-electric tugs are acquainting the tow-boatmen with the meaning of rationalization. Four Diesel-electric tugs have just been ordered by the Erie R.R. for operation in New York harbor.

Thus we see that all down the line, from ship, dock and harbor, the shipowners, through the rationalization process, are throwing thousands of marine workers on the beach to join the army of permanently unemployed, and steadily increasing the load on those "lucky" enough to hang on to a job.

Unemployment has always been one of the most serious problems of the marine workers. Even in "good" years, a seaman seldom works more than seven months a year. Many companies make it a practice to fire the whole crew at the end of a trip if the ship has to stay in port more than a few days

and engage a new crew a day or so before sailing, so as to save a few days' wages. Partly for this reason and partly because of the wretched conditions, American seamen seldom stay on a steady run on the same ship, but usually get fired or quit at the end of a trip and have to spend quite a little time looking for another ship.

In the winter there is a seasonal slump; the Lakes are frozen and many of the Lake seamen come down to the coast. Ocean shipping also decreases in winter and the number of seamen on the beach and longshoremen out of a job, all totally broke, waiting for shipping to "open up" in the spring, gets bigger and bigger throughout the winter.

The 1920 crisis and the deflation of the Shipping Board's post-war fleet in 1921 when hundreds of ships were permanently laid up, brought about terrific unemployment in 1921 and the years following. Thousands of seamen quit the sea. Thousands were unemployed for long periods.

In addition to all this, rationalization has now added a permanent army of unemployed. The general crisis now under way in the American economic system has already produced an unemployment situation that has never before been equaled in the marine industry. From 20,000 to 25,000 seamen and nearly the same number of longshoremen, are unemployed today in American ports. Seamen on the West Coast report that the average wait for a ship is about 60 days for a sailor and about 90 days for a fireman or oiler! Conditions are about as bad on the Atlantic and Gulf.

On the Atlantic and Gulf, employment is either through shark "shipping masters," or else through the company's office which gives the company the chance to build up a system of "company men"—that is to employ only those who have worked previously for the company—and enables it to keep its own private blacklist.

On the West Coast, employment is through the "Fink Halls"—the Shipowners' Association's Employment Agency. To quote

from the report of a delegate to the Pacific Coast Conference of the Marine Workers' League:

The Fink Halls were organized on the West Coast in the 1921 strike as strikebreaking agencies and were first used to recruit scabs to man ships in place of striking seamen. To-day they are in complete control of shipping. In San Francisco and San Pedro it is impossible to ship except through the Fink Halls. Longshoremen are also forced to register and hire through the Fink Hall for longshoremen. Fink Halls are used as something more than employment agencies. Their system of registration is an elaborate blacklist system. While the blacklist is illegal according to state law, it does not prevent ship-owners from barring from employment any seaman who actively rebels against existing conditions. Fink Halls employ spies to report all workers who take an active part in organizing the marine industry.

The International Seamen's Union, although coöperating with the Fink Halls in actual practice, has been pretending to carry on a struggle against them through the courts, trying to have them declared illegal. Now after over three years of I.S.U. preaching, of telling the seamen to have patience and rely on the courts, the Supreme Court, acting, as always, as a willing instrument of the employers, has finally declared the Fink Halls perfectly legal, and the seamen have another example of the great accomplishments of the I.S.U.

IV. THE SEAMEN AND THEIR "FRIENDS"

No figures are available giving the number of men actually in the marine industry. Basing ourselves on the active tonnage, making all necessary allowances, and checking roughly from various other angles, we arrive at the following estimates:

On ocean and Gt. Lakes vessels over 1000 gr.t.—about 75,000. On fishing vessels and small craft under 1000 gr.t.—about 30,000. On tugs and harbor craft—about 18,000. On rivers and inland waters (excl. Gt. Lakes)—about 10,000.

The distribution of the men on the larger vessels is about as follows:

Atlantic Coast, about 55%—41,500; Gulf Coast, about 15%—11,500; Pacific Coast, about 20%—15,000; Gt. Lakes, about 10%—7,500.

And classifying by craft:

Sailors, about 40%—30,000; Firemen, Oilers, etc., about 40%—30,000; Cooks, Stewards, etc., about 20%—15,000.

The officers on these vessels are about 15,000 men, about 6500 masters and mates, the same number of engineers, and about 2000 wireless operators.

About 2000 Negro seamen are employed on the West Coast, about the same number on the Gulf, and about 1000 on the East Coast. The Matson Line has all Hawaiians on deck, and the Dollar Line all Chinese in the Steward's Department.

There are about 75,000 longshoremen throughout the ports of the U. S. About 25,000 are Negroes,—about 1000 on the Pacific, and most of the rest from Philadelphia south on the Atlantic and Gulf. In the port of New York there are about 30,000 longshoremen. Irish and Italians are the chief nationalities.

The following are the nationalities of the seamen:

U. S. (native), 47.5%; U. S. (naturalized), 11.7%; British, 9.3%; German, 7.5%; Spanish, 5.1%; Filipino, 2.6%; Norwegian, 2.6%; South American, 1.9%; Dutch, 1.6%; Swedish, 1.5%; Danish, 1.1%; Central American, 1.0%; Chinese, 0.6%.⁵

Thus 59.2% are Americans and 68.5% are of English-speaking nationalities. Probably over 80% speak and understand English. This is a much more favorable condition from the viewpoint of organization than in the average basic industry in the U. S. Spanish is the next most important language, reaching 10.6% (Spanish, South American, Central American, Filipino). German reaches 7.8% (German and Austrian).

Needless to say, the seaman of to-day is a vastly different man from the "old salt" that still seems to linger somewhat in the popular impression. In the old sailing ship days, voyages

of two and three years' duration under the iron rule of a super-tyrant, checking out on arrival in port from the ship to the crimp and from the crimp to the next ship—these conditions made of the seamen a race apart, cut off from the world and from the rest of the working class. To-day, however, the modern conditions, rationalization—above all the shorter trips—have produced a new type of seaman—like the longshoreman and towboatman, a *marine worker*—less specialized, less permanent, less isolated, able to keep in contact with life ashore, able to organize and to fight together with the workers in other industries.

While the British or European seaman often has a home and a family, this is quite an exception among the Americans. In the years just after the war when the Shipping Board was building new ships and advertising everywhere for "young Americans" to man them, numbers of young men went to sea for anywhere from one trip to a few years. But to-day jobs are scarce and conditions are worse, so that a more stabilized class of seamen is developing who realize that any improvement in their condition cannot be found by quitting the sea and going ashore, but by staying on the ships and fighting for it.

The homelessness of the seamen has made them the natural field of activity of every kind of religious-charity-uplift organization. The "Seamen's Friend," the "Seamen's Bethel," the Salvation Army, the Y. M. C. A., the Seamen's Church Institute, and a host of smaller "missions" of every description locate on the waterfront, relying on the homelessness of the men to bring them into any sort of a hall that offers a little warmth and social activity. From the crude "Gospel Hall" where, as a seaman put it, "You are given a cup of coffee so you can keep awake and listen to the preaching," to the elaborate Seamen's Church Institute with its more subtle methods, these institutions hammer away at the seaman in an effort to save his soul, steadily preaching the word of God and the shipowners.

That this is not just a figure of speech can be seen by a glance at the list of "lay managers" and patrons of the New York Seamen's Church Institute (commonly referred to by the seamen as the "Shipowners' Institute") which includes such names as Kermit Roosevelt of the Roosevelt Line, James Barber of the Barber Line, Sir T. Ashley Sparks, head of the Cunard Line, Frank C. Munson of the Munson Line, and others of the same class. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., stands high on the list of patrons.

The Institute maintains its own uniformed private police who treat the seamen as potential or actual criminals. Time and again seamen have been viciously beaten up by these cops. On one such occasion last fall, the *Marine Workers' Voice* reports: "Over 2000 seamen gathered in a spontaneous demonstration at the doors of the Institute and . . . at an open air meeting called by the Marine Workers' League next day, fully a score of seamen stepped up on the platform from the audience and one after another, told of their own experiences with the 'Shipowners' Institute,' of getting beaten up by its uniformed thugs, of the various ways in which it cheats the seamen and of the menace of its scab propaganda."

Although the Institute is supposed to be "a home, hotel and club" for the seamen, the men are routed out early in the morning and are not allowed in their rooms between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. "Bells, gongs, uniformed thugs and innumerable Do-nots" keep up the same atmosphere of discipline as on a ship. "Upstairs, a fine big reading room. All the ancient and modern capitalist magazines. Spies everywhere. Government men looking for dope traders, booze traders (not in the ring). Dicks looking for rogues' gallery mugs. Stool pigeons of the common or garden variety looking for anything, especially 'reds.' Over the door of this and every other room a nice bronze plate telling the slaves that by the 'kindness' of this or that capitalist parasite they 'enjoy' the comforts of this room. Comforts, hell! Who can be comfortable in a police station?"⁶

Nor should any one get the idea that the seamen get some-

thing for nothing or even at reduced prices in the Institute. "The Institute officially says, 'The sailor pays a fair price for his lodging and his food, for the care of his dunnage and for other services which are adjuncts to any great hotel. What he does not pay for is the place in which he finds himself.' Too bad they can't charge us for the atmosphere . . . for then they might enhance the departmental profits, which in 1926 were \$36,000." 7 And yet the Institute is constantly making appeals for funds on the basis of what it does for the seamen!

That many of the seamen are awake to the full rôle of these Institutes can be seen from the following quotation from a seaman correspondent's letter to the *Marine Workers' Voice*: "The shipowners and the Chambers of Commerce own and finance these institutes for the express purpose of keeping the seamen divided and apart from their own interests. These institutes do nothing for the betterment of wages and living conditions aboard ship. No literature that would direct the sailor's mind to his own interests is allowed inside the building. These institutes allow sailors to be shipped out as gunmen and strikebreakers to the coal mines and textile mills, and in the event of a marine strike they act as a strikebreaking agency. They refuse to allow any seamen's organization that would honestly fight for a higher standard of living to get contact with the marine workers in the building, because they are not Seamen's Institutes but Shipowners' Institutes."

As against these Shipowners' Institutes with their open-shop propaganda, a series of marine workers' social and educational centers have been springing up all over the world—the *International Seamen's Clubs*. In the ports of the Soviet Union, in the chief ports of Europe, in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, Houston, San Francisco, Oakland, San Pedro and Seattle, International Seamen's Clubs, affiliated with the Transport Workers International Propaganda and Action Committee of the Red International of Labor Unions, have been established. These clubs provide social and educational facilities, game-rooms, libraries, reading rooms, meeting halls,

open forums, etc., for all marine workers without any distinctions of craft, race, or color and are dedicated to the spreading of organization and of international working class solidarity among the seamen. Foreign ships are visited, and foreign seamen welcomed and brought in contact with their fellow-workers of different nationalities. The rapid spread of these clubs is sufficient proof of the warm welcome they have received from the seamen.

The clubs in the Soviet ports are magnificent institutions where the seaman is the master. Moving picture auditoriums, reading rooms for different languages, lodgings, every imaginable facility is provided. In these ports the foreign seaman gets a foretaste of what it means for the workers to be in power that he will never forget.

V. THE "HIGH" WAGES OF THE AMERICAN SEAMEN

WE have discussed in an earlier chapter the constant plaintive wail of the American shipowners about "inability to meet foreign competition." The first and foremost reason advanced by the shipowners is the "crushing burden" of the "high" wages paid to American seamen. We shall soon see how high these wages really are. But the most important point which shows up the complete hypocrisy of all this "high wages" talk, is that *wages amount to only a very small percentage of the total operating expenses of a ship*. Calvin and Stuart in their book *The Merchant Shipping Industry* (1925) put it at 8%-12%. T. V. O'Connor, who as Chairman of the U. S. Shipping Board, certainly ought to know, says that wages amount to *only 5%* of the total operating expenses of a ship. (Fuel, repairs, supplies, maintenance, *interest on capital*, insurance, depreciation—these are the heavy items in a ship's budget.) The 1921 lockout was the result of the effort of the shipowners to put over a 15% wage cut, which they claimed meant the difference between life and death for

American shipping. When it is seen that this meant a saving of *only three-quarters of one per cent* in the total operating expenses, it can easily be realized that what the shipowners were really after was to smash the unions rather than to meet foreign competition. *Wages are too small a factor to be a determining point in foreign competition.* And this is the point that every seaman should remember in exposing this hypocritical propaganda of the shipowners.

Wage scales aboard ship have been altered four times since the last war. In June, 1919, as the result of a successful strike lasting about three weeks, the wages were increased, for A.B.'s from \$75 to \$85 per month, and for firemen from \$75 to \$90, with corresponding increases throughout the crew list. In May, 1921, the Shipping Board and the American Steamship Owners' Ass'n locked out the seamen for a 15% wage cut. The treachery and cowardice of the International Seamen's Union and the other A. F. of L. unions resulted not only in a defeat but in the complete smash-up of the organizations.

The Shipping Board instituted its 15% cut bringing the wages (for A.B.) down to \$72.50. But the private owners, now rejoicing in an open shop, saw no reason for stopping at 15% but cut to \$55 and even \$40 on some ships—a *cut of over 50%*. The Shipping Board, not to be outdone, cut again in February, 1922, to \$55—a total cut of 35% in less than a year. In May, 1923, finding too much difficulty in getting men at \$55, the Shipping Board raised the wages to \$62.50, while the American Steamship Owners' Ass'n finally fixed the figure for most of the privately-owned vessels at \$55 per month. Since the Shipping Board controls only one-sixth of the active tonnage, the \$55 scale is the one in force for almost all American seamen to-day.

The manning scales have also been cut very sharply. As a result of the rationalization process, which the A. F. of L. unions have never done a thing to oppose, a 9000 d.w.t. oil-burner which before the 1921 lockout carried 44 men, now carries only 36. In place of 8 A.B.'s and 4 ordinary seamen,

there are 3 A.B.'s and 2 ordinaries kept on deck work, while 4 quartermasters handle the wheel, and 3 men are out of a job. In addition, the 3 watertenders, the storekeeper and deck engineer have been dispensed with.

The present wage scale of the American Steamship Owners' Ass'n is as follows: able-bodied seaman, \$55 per month; ordinary seaman, \$40; bos'n, \$65; carpenter, \$70; fireman, \$57.50; coalpasser or wiper, \$50; oiler, \$65; chief steward, \$105; chief cook, \$90; second cook and baker, \$70; messboy, \$30.⁸ If we take the A.B.'s wage of \$55 per month, and add \$15 a month as the cost of the food he eats on the ship (and every seaman will protest this is far too high for the stuff being dished out to-day), this would bring the total wages of an A.B. up to \$70 per month—less than \$18 a week. It is clear that the economic status of the American seaman is that of an unskilled worker, and the "high wages" that he is supposed to get actually place him among the worst-paid workers in the United States.

It is worthwhile to point out again that while the foreign seaman is usually married and has a home and a family, this is an absolute impossibility for the American seaman. On his \$55 a month money wages, he is supposed to clothe himself, buy working clothes, seaboots and oilskins, provide for a little recreation, and have enough left over to support himself between trips when he is looking for a ship, let alone supporting a dependent or two ashore. Nor is this the worst. For convenience we have been considering only the wage of the A.B., but the ordinary seamen, wipers, messmen and messboys, making up one-third of the total number of seamen on a ship (excluding officers), get still less than the A.B.'s \$55, as we have seen.

In a report submitted to the Shipping Board December 1, 1918, R. P. Bass and H. B. Drury state gratefully: "It should be stated that ship labor has always been paid somewhat less than in corresponding employment on land. It is nevertheless true that under the excessive demand for marine labor due

to the war, *a hostile and unscrupulous labor organization might easily have wiped out all such wage differentials.*"⁹ It is thus evident that it is largely the labor bureaucrats, such as Furuseth, who could never be accused of being "hostile" to the shipowners, or "unscrupulously" loyal to the seamen, that the seamen have to thank for their present low wages.

VI. THE CONDITIONS OF THE SEAMEN

EMPLOYERS have always known that the conditions under which they force their workers to labor would soon drive them to revolt were it not for the ever-ready police force, militia, and army. On a ship at sea where these forces are not available, the shipowners and the government have filled the gap by the most drastic laws, giving the captain all the authority of the government, and making any revolt against conditions punishable as mutiny by death or long terms of imprisonment.

When a seaman gets a job he has to sign the articles, and this signing is supposed to constitute a contract between two "free" and "equal" parties—the seaman and the shipowner. Of course the seaman has nothing to say about the terms of this contract, and his freedom consists merely in being free either to take the job or starve. If the job turns out to be worse than he thought and he quits—either in a home or foreign port—he is solemnly told that he is breaking his contract, which constitutes the crime of "desertion." While imprisonment for desertion is no longer legal, the seaman is punished for this "offense" by forfeiting at least half the wages he has earned and all his clothes and possessions that he has aboard the ship.

This is the legal status of the seaman even according to the LaFollette "Seamen's" Act which was hailed by Furuseth as "the emancipation proclamation of the seamen" and "the dawn of a new era." And yet the whole activity of the I.S.U. and Furuseth since 1915 has been one continuous wail that the LaFollette Act is not being enforced, and that the con-

tinual "interpretation" of the different sections by the Dept. of Commerce and the courts has gradually whittled away every one of the provisions of the Act and has practically nullified it. Those provisions that remain on the books are openly and contemptuously violated by the shipowners whenever it suits them.

The whole history of the LaFollette Act since 1915 is a perfect proof of the utter foolishness of expecting a government made up of bosses and put in power by bosses to enforce any law in favor of the workers and against the bosses.

The shipowners, however, are not satisfied merely with permission to violate the LaFollette Act. They are now attempting to legalize their practices and to use the law for a further attack upon the legal status of the seamen. A proposition for "Codification (collecting and systematizing) of the Navigation Laws" is before Congress. Included in the "Codification" are a number of "suggested amendments" which make it quite clear that the whole codification proposition is merely an excuse for launching a wholesale attack upon the conditions of the seamen.

Of the 13 chief amendments, four provide for different kinds of shipowners' blacklists including photographs, fingerprints, medical examination, record of insubordination etc.* Four are for reviving imprisonment for desertion, reviving the crimp system, legalizing corporal punishment and legalizing the captain's refusal to pay up the "half wages." Two are to reduce the safety requirements and to make it impossible for the crew to protest against a vessel's unseaworthiness. One is to make seamen's accident suits for death or injury practically impossible, one is to reduce the manning scale and legalize

* Amazing as it may seem, the I.S.U.'s reply to this has been the proposition that the *government* should issue the discharge book, but make no reference to character. Even one of the Senators in the Senate Committee hearings said, "It seems to me the union is making a great mistake in requesting this book." But the reason is that the I.S.U. want their own blacklist which they hope to maintain with the help of the government—against the "reds" and militants.

coolie crews, and one is to make it easy for shipowners to insert illegal agreements in the articles.

It is clear that if the seamen are to be "emancipated" they will have to rely on their own strength rather than upon Acts of Congress!

The unorganized condition of the American seamen in the past nine years has laid them open not only to the most drastic wage-cuts but to the constant deterioration of their working and living conditions aboard the ships. The three-watch system (8-hour day) is one of the main points of attack. The Matson Line and others already have the two-watch system (12-hour day) in the Deck Department. The Stewards' Dept. is on a regular 12-hour basis. Overtime, which used to be paid at the rate of time-and-a-half, is now completely unpaid in all departments, and is supposed to be compensated by equivalent time off—which the seamen never get. For any offense or failure to keep up the speed the seaman may be logged (fined a day's pay). For any absence ashore while in port, he may be logged "2 for 1" (fined 2 days' pay for 1 day's absence, etc). Quarters have been cut down to make more room for passengers and cargo. Food, linen, and sanitary facilities have all reached a level lower than the needs of a decent human being.

Wretched as the conditions are, they are still worse for Negro and Chinese seamen. Negroes are hired at the very lowest rates of pay and as for Chinese, the Dollar Line pays them \$12 (Mexican) per month (\$6 in U. S. currency). In food, quarters and sanitary conditions, nothing is considered too bad for the Negro and Chinese seamen who are treated by the company and the officers as members of "inferior races."

But the best way to describe conditions will be to let the seamen themselves testify through quotations from their letters that they have been sending in recent months to the *Marine Workers' Voice*.

On the subject of *hours of work*, a sailor writes in from an oil tanker:

There is absolutely no pay for overtime. This ship has three watches on deck but the sailors have to work an extra hour off watch. There is absolutely no respect for "watches below" on this ship. Sailors are called at all times of the night or day irrespective of the number of hours—and no emergency either. This is particularly aggravating on oil tankers where the promise of time off is a crude joke.

The *speed-up* on the SS. *President Roosevelt* of the United States Lines:

Now about working conditions. She is what you call a madhouse. I mean you cannot leave the fireroom or engineroom two minutes before having one of the authorities after you, finding out what you are going to do. The only thing you hear below all the time is, "Come on, shake it up." I've seen one of the firemen passing out from the heat behind the boiler at sea. The following day the poor fellow was very weak; they put him behind the boiler again. Then we had to work in the hot fireroom bilges for about a week.

Company unionism, petty graft and the compulsory gambling ring—the latter one of the chief curses of the Stewards' Dept. in nearly all the big passenger lines. A Negro steward writes in from the Admiral Line:

Here on the Pacific Coast more than a thousand Negro workers are employed in the Stewards' Dept. of the Admiral Line. The hours are long, the pay is low, and the living and sanitary conditions are generally bad. The company maintains a form of union called the Colored Marine Employees' Benevolent Ass'n of the Pacific and unless you join and pay regularly, there is no chance of a job. Four dollars must be paid to join and the dues are one dollar per month. As far as I know, no account is given to the members as to what is done with this money. The crew is usually paid off before the ship docks and this gives the professional gamblers a chance to clean up on the workers' wages. These gamblers are usually signed on as porters but they do not work. Instead they pay as high as two and three hundred dollars a month for the privilege of running the games.

Quarters and sanitary facilities: (E. S. from the Ward Line SS. *Siboney*):

After being brazenly looked up in the blacklist, I was allowed to sign on . . . The "modern, commodious" fo'c'sles are built in the wings of the first 'tween decks for'ard with cargo stored in the lower 'tween decks with the dividing hatch covers always left open; the cargo is given the most tender care at the expense of the health of the seamen. When in tropical waters, the hatches are left open and sail ventilators are rigged down to the precious sugar, fruit and hides. And in warm weather through inadequate fo'c'sle ventilation it is necessary to keep the doors open, which gives us the obnoxious back draft from the cargo—and in bad weather with all top hatches battened down—sugar, seamen, fruit and hides breathe in unison. The fo'c'sle is partly a converted lavatory; part of the sanitary fittings remain to bear witness to-day. The lavatory itself, words cannot describe—it being of the farm rail fence variety. Upon making inquiry when the bug-ridden fo'c'sle was last scrubbed out, nobody could remember. A crummy uniform is issued in which you have to masquerade as a sandwich board man for the Ward Line on deck for an hour at a time, when the ship enters or leaves port.

From the *President Harding*: "The quarters are very small and overcrowded. There is not enough ventilation and besides rotten with bedbugs."

From the tanker *Swiftsure* (New England Oil Co.): "The quarters are right over the fireroom, a place not good enough to stow cargo in. There is no ventilation and the place has not been painted in two years—a regular pig pen."

From the *Calamares* (United Fruit Co.):

I am a waiter on the *Calamares*—a freight and passenger ship—just back from Costa Rica with a load of bananas. The quarters are rotten, the bunks full of bugs and other crawling things. Sweating in hot weather, the workers have no facilities for washing. One pail is supplied for every 12 men. Disease is spread among the crew and the kitchen help by the unsanitary conditions of the bunks and the rotten food and lack of washing facilities. For the entire crew the millionaire United Fruit Co. supplies one shower—salt water—one pump, which is, as a rule, out of order, and an antiquated toilet that is a relic of the sailing-ship days. The toilet, too, is generally out of order. Every time the ship sails there is an entirely new crew aboard, so rotten are the conditions.

It may be well for the reader to remember that the United Fruit Co. has cleared over \$20,000,000 a year in net profits during the last decade.

On the question of linen, etc., seamen agree that on most ships, bed linen is changed on the average of once in three weeks. A hark back to old times of 'carrying your own' is reported by L. L. from the *Lillian Luckenbach*:

Recently 5 A.B.'s, just signed on the *Lillian Luckenbach*, went up for their blankets and bed linen. To their surprise they were told they would have to buy this stuff at the price of \$3.90. Besides they had to sign for the mattresses and pillows, and if anything happened to these articles, a deduction would be made from their pay. (I suppose a dollar for each bedbug lost.)

Every ship making long trips has to have a *slop-chest* to sell the seamen things they may need on the trip. The law allows the company to make 10% profit on the *slop-chest*, but many a captain seizes the chance to squeeze the seamen and "make an honest penny" on the side. C. K. writes from the *Stelore* of the Ore SS. Co. (Bethlehem Steel Co.): "What we should do is all get together and beat all these dirty skunks. Here is some of the fancy prices charged for items in the *slop-chest*:

	Slop-chest Prices	Shore Prices
Shoes	\$5.00	\$3.50
Romeos	3.33	1.95
Undershirt	1.25	.65
Towel50	.25
Cocoa, large can30	.20
Condensed milk25	.14

The food: "A.B." from the *Munorleans* (Munson Line):

There was only one man in the galley to do the cooking and baking; the steward would not hire another man till the ship signed on the crew, thus saving the company \$15 to \$19 for a few days. The food they gave us was terrible. Rotten eggs for breakfast, stink-

ing meat for dinner, and no fruit at any time unless you bought your own.

From the *President Roosevelt* again:

Now on the question of grub, or chow as you may call it. At breakfast time they sling us some greasy, oily hash, or meat balls, or eggs that smell bad, or some of those fancy, greasy country sausages. When the men, seeing this breakfast, have no desire to eat, naturally, they go to work on an empty stomach. Coming up at lunch time, the men get a plate of soup and a few spuds; the meat stinks. So this is our dinner.

A. S. from the *Malchase* (Nelson Line):

This is one of the *hungriest* tubs I've ever been on. The grub is rotten and not enough to go round. "There isn't any more" is what you hear at every meal. A piece of fish and a spud is the favorite dinner aboard **this scow**.

Brutality of the captain and officers: (J. S. M. from the American Export Line):

Guerrera was a wiper on the SS. *Blair* of the American Export Line. His superior officer, the First Ass't Engineer, didn't like his looks, so he tore his only work shirt off and punched his face. But Guerrera, the wiper, punched back in his own defense until his superior officer quit and begged forgiveness. When the ship arrived at Alexandria, Guerrera was tried before the American Consul and sentenced to two months in jail because he defended himself against the vicious attack of his superior officer who violated the articles which read "No corporal punishment."

The Chief Mate on the SS. *Executive* of the same line, who is an ex-pugilist, amused himself by smashing a young boy sailor with his ringed fist in the face, inflicting a great cut under the eye. Afterwards he struck another boy. The captain shouted down encouragement from the bridge. The two boys did not retaliate. But when the ship docked at Marseilles they presented their black eyes and cut faces to the American Consul and complained of their treatment, but the Consul did nothing to punish the officer. And these bucko officers continue to sail the Export Line.

W. G. P. from the SS. *City of Los Angeles*:

In the first port, a fireman came aboard with a few drinks in him, and did some loud talking, then went to sleep. The 1st. Ass't told the Mate to put him in irons. They had to wake the man up to put the irons on him. The Mate, a native of San Pedro, ironed the man with his hands behind him from 11.20 p.m. until it was time to turn to the next morning at 8 o'clock.

The *Steelore* again:

Two days out while cleaning bilges, I felt very sick. There was no windchute in the hold; at one time the fumes were so heavy that one couldn't keep his eyes open. The bos'n, a willing company man, threw a scraper at me when I sat down, too dizzy to move. I was hauled up on the carpet. The captain ordered me back to work. When I explained that I wasn't able, he had me handcuffed and put in leg-irons. I was then taken forward and locked up in the carpenter shop. My hands were chained to a bracket. I was rescued from my predicament by a shipmate who, putting the ax on my shackles, enabled me at least to answer the calls of nature. I was confined for two days on bread and water brought by the steward. On the morning of the third day, I was taken before the captain, charged \$7 a pair for the irons, and for the lock. The captain also charged me and an oiler for medical service when we got to the Canal. The oiler was soaked \$10 for an examination and \$5 for the doctor's visit.

In these quotations from the seamen's letters we have a living picture of the conditions to-day aboard American ships—15 years after the LaFollette-Furuseth "dawn of a new era." Through all these letters there runs one constant thread: "*If we seamen want conditions to improve, we must do it ourselves by organizing into a strong, fighting union.*"

VII. "SAFETY" AT SEA

"THERE has not been a major disaster at sea in the last fifty years that was not due to the rapacity and greed of the ship-owners." This statement made by Charles Johnson Post, marine authority, in the *New York Telegram* following the

loss of 111 lives in the sinking of the *Vestris*, tells the truth far too plainly to have got into the press under normal conditions. But so shocking was the *Vestris* disaster that the lid did blow off a bit.

The fact that the ship had a low stability factor ("barely compatible with safety" * in the words of the British Commission), that it was overloaded, that it was unseaworthy, that it sailed with a coalport that would not close, that the lifeboats were rotten and insufficiently equipped; the willful delay in sending out the SOS until too late in order to save salvage fees, the withholding of the radio messages exchanged between the steamship company and the captain, the attempt to divert the blame to a mythical "mutiny" of the Negro crew—all combined to produce an overwhelming picture of "safety at sea" as interpreted by shipowners.

It was not the murderous negligence of the Lamport & Holt Line, however, that was the most important revelation in the case, but rather the fact that *such negligence is common practice* among the steamship lines, and the fact of the *complete complicity of the U. S. Government authorities in such negligence by passing unseaworthy ships and by shielding the company after the disaster*. A marine engineer has the following to say about the Government inspections:

In plain English, the Government inspection is a farce! The inspectors are well acquainted with the port captains and port engineers of the companies, and the inspection takes on the character of a reunion and a family affair. One or two high officials of the company come down to see that it gets started off right, there are handshakes, funny stories, breakfast and lunch on the ship, a couple of drinks—everything possible is done to create an atmosphere that prevents the inspectors from being too hard-boiled. Rather than carry through the whole laborious procedure of a detailed examination of every part of the ship and its equipment, it is usual merely to look at a couple

* To prove the hypocrisy of all these government commissions it is only necessary to point out that although the *Vauban*, sister ship of the *Vestris*, has the same stability factor, no one has dreamed of suggesting that the *Vauban* be condemned.

of things in detail and take the word of the mates and engineers for the rest.

The Marine Workers' League, in a statement on the *Vestris* case, gave the following characterization of the government inquiry:

A steady procession of fixed witnesses, a steady stream of "I don't know," "I can't explain it," "I can't remember," a persistent attempt to ascribe the results of the company's criminal negligence to "the perils of the sea," and to faked up stories of the crew's refusing duty has marked the progress of the Government inquiry. . . . What can be the purpose of such an "investigation" where all the witnesses are so evidently fixed, where "don't remembers" and obvious lies are solemnly accepted as evidence, and where the officials conducting it pretend to be completely checkmated when a witness refuses to answer? There can be only one purpose—to provide an official white-wash for the steamship company.

Perhaps the reader may think that inquiries are any better in other countries—England, for instance? At the British inquiry, when F. W. Johnson, senior surviving officer of the *Vestris*, saying he could no longer maintain "loyalty" to his company and was going to tell the truth, declared that the ship was overloaded and that he had faked the log under orders from on top, he was immediately treated as "de-classed," was bullied and threatened and doubt was thrown on his credibility.

Or take Germany. The SS. *Quimistan* was sold to be junked as old iron. But the firm ordered her to make a last trip. It *was* a last trip. Here are the findings of the Hamburg court: The crew were justified in abandoning the ship. The Norfolk (Va.) authorities *were also justified in issuing a certificate of seaworthiness!* The inquiry *failed to establish the cause* of the sinking! There is hardly a case on record where a court ever found the company guilty of anything in the loss of a ship.

As a result of the *Vestris* disaster, the "Second International Conference on Safety of Life at Sea" was called in London in April, 1929. (It took the *Titanic* catastrophe to bring about the

first Conference in 1912.) Although a specially large delegation was sent from the U. S., not a single representative of the seamen was included. Shipowners and politicians, government and company officials constituted the delegation. Not safety, but *the equalization of the regulations of the different governments so as to prevent "unfair competition"*—this was the main concern of the Conference. The "great achievements" of this Conference heralded by the press were "adequate lifeboats for all," which was supposed to have been decided in 1912 and "radio equipment on all vessels over 1600 gr.t." which is pretty much the practice anyway on American vessels due to the commercial convenience of radio. There is no room here to expose the whole bluff of this Conference for "safety of life at sea * but we have only to contrast the things accepted by this Conference with the safety devices exhibited and offered at the Shipping and Engineering Exhibition in London in September, 1929. Automatic SOS alarms, a light ray which serves as an automatic lookout, a gyroscopic "artificial horizon" permitting observations to be taken at night or in fog, automatic fire detectors together with fire extinguishing gas; automatic sounding machines that operate while the ship is going full speed; range finders that tell the distance of an object at one glance, lifeboats that can be lowered with the vessel at any angle. And yet shipowners have the nerve to talk about "acts of God"!

Where freight ships alone are concerned, however, the situation is much worse. In an editorial on the *Vestris*, the *Marine Workers' Voice* said:

* For instance, the radio regulations are followed by exemptions which permit each government (1) to raise the minimum to 2000 gr.t.; (2) to exempt passenger vessels going less than 20 miles from land, such as the Long Island Sound steamers; (3) to exempt freighters going less than 150 miles from land—which means practically all coastwise steamers all over the world. The requirement for "radio direction-finding equipment on all passenger ships over 5000 gr.t." is another bluff. Notice it does not call for a *radio compass* which would enable the ship to locate others in distress and to follow a radio beacon into harbor, but only for "direction finding equipment." Any radio transmitter can act as direction finding equipment *in connection with a radio compass station ashore or on another ship.*

The uproar about the *Vestris* is not due merely to the fact that an unseaworthy ship went to the bottom with the loss of a great number of lives. This is by no means a rare occurrence. The sinking of a freighter with the loss of all hands takes place often enough but never gets more than a few inches of space on an inside page of the newspapers. Seamen are expected to get drowned. . . . If the *Vestris* had not carried passengers there would have been no mention of delayed SOS calls, of unseaworthiness, of rotten lifeboats, no talk of "Dollars against Lives." Seamen's lives don't count.

To pick only a few outstanding cases from the past year's record: 14 men swept overboard and lost from the SS. *William A. McKenny* between San Pedro and the Canal; 16 lost when the *Manasco* foundered on the Great Lakes; entire crew of 34 lost when the molasses tanker *David C. Reid* "went down leaving nothing but an oil blotch"; three-quarters of the crew lost when the 47-year-old *San Juan* was rammed by the tanker *S. C. T. Dodd* near San Francisco, drowning 74 seamen and passengers; entire crew of 14 lost when the *Andaste* foundered on Lake Michigan. Add to this numbers of individual cases where men are put to work in dangerous places where a strong wind or a heavy sea tears their grip loose and carries them away—such as happened just recently on the *Leviathan*, delaying the giant liner a whole hour while it made the regulation search.

But a greater danger still than all the "perils of the sea" is presented by the oil tankers, which comprise 30% of the active American tonnage. Explosions and fires occur on the oil tankers with sickening regularity, but since no passengers are involved the great oil trusts always succeed in having these disasters treated as "private affairs." These explosions are chiefly due to the fact that the companies refuse to allow sufficient time to clear the gases thoroughly out of the tanks and other enclosed places, and neglect other precautions. The fires always spread with terrific suddenness, usually destroying the wireless and making the ship a floating death trap. To take a few recent cases: A survivor reports from the *Shreveport* (Cities Service Oil Co.)—five killed and four hurt in explosion

off Frying Pan Shoals: "The first explosion came with terrifying suddenness, tore away the bridge deck and midship housing, and rendered the wireless useless. The ship was almost immediately enveloped in flames, and before the crew could take to the boats, three more explosions occurred. . . . The general opinion was that four of the men had been blown to bits by the first explosion." The *Delaware Sun* (Sun Oil Co.)—1 killed, 2 injured in a small explosion in the pump room. The *William Rockefeller* (Standard Oil Co.—1 killed, 7 injured in explosion in New York harbor): "The watchman's body became a flaming torch as it was hurled over 50 feet by the blast. The seamen saved their lives only by rushing out on deck and diving overboard, swimming around and dodging the patches of oil burning on the water." Fire at sea on the *Paulsboro* (Vacuum Oil Co.): "Our fo'c'sle was a fire-trap. We all ran to the only exit. The flames were all around us. We ran through flames, smoke and paint fumes to get amidship. We could see flames going to the top of the mast. Then the wireless fell down."

In addition, there is a steady casualty list of seamen who fall into empty holds (due to low hatch coamings), who have arms or heads crushed by a sudden drop of the heavy tank-tops on the tankers, or who are otherwise killed and injured in their work about the ship. A steady average of about 200 seamen's lives a year are lost from all causes on American ships,¹⁰ with no figures available on the number crippled, burned and injured.

Overloading, cheap and rotten loading gear keep the menace of death hanging constantly over the heads of the longshoremen. Typical cases are reported by the *Marine Workers' Voice*: "San Pedro: Three longshoremen narrowly escaped death to-day. Two were badly cut and bruised when a wire cable on a cargo platform parted. The other fell between the dock and the ship's side when a ladder slipped." "San Francisco: A longshoreman was killed to-day when a chain that was being used instead of a wire sling, carried away. His legs were crushed and

his fingers cut off by the steel girder falling on him. This was a clear case of negligence and violation of the law as a chain sling should never have been used. An almost similar case occurred on the SS. *H. F. Alexander* where another man was killed. The rotten overloaded gear carried away, letting a two-ton steel plate hit a man below. The work went on five minutes after, as though nothing had happened."

In the crowded traffic of the harbor, towboatmen and barge-men have to be always ready for an involuntary swim. Any towboat captain who tries to take all the necessary precautions will soon find himself discharged for being too slow, by the boat owners who expect tugs to thread their way through harbor traffic like taxis on the city streets. The fast passenger liners are particularly adept at crashing into tows and sinking barges.

Outside the harbor, on ocean tows, safety regulations are practically non-existent—a barge isn't worth enough. A recent instance: On a winter night (February, 1930), the last barge in a tow bound for the Delaware sprang a leak in a gale and heavy sea, filled, and broke loose from the tow. Of the four men aboard, only two succeeded in getting into the lifeboat. They were unable to fight their way to the tug and were found in the morning frozen to death, still clinging to the oars.

VIII. CONDITIONS OF THE LONGSHOREMEN AND HARBOR WORKERS

Casual work, underpayment, speed-up, and numerous rake-offs are the chief characteristics of longshore work in United States ports to-day, on the Pacific as well as on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The men working on the organized docks are the victims of one of the most corrupt, "racketeering" unions in America—the International Longshoremen's Ass'n. For the most part the men are hired for one job only (a few days) and often even for only one day. Most stevedores hire only men of their own race, or their own relatives, friends, or

clique. In many cases the men are hired only on condition they agree to smuggle liquor ashore for the stevedore, risking their liberty and sometimes their lives (as in a case in Hoboken last year where a longshoreman was killed by a customs guard while smuggling liquor). To get anything like a steady job, the worker has to pay from \$100 to \$200. The money has to be paid through go-betweens who usually also take \$25 for their services.

The speed-up, chiefly through the use of conveyors, electric trucks, etc., is particularly vicious on the docks. In San Francisco, the shipowners openly boast that they get more tonnage output per man than any other port in the world. Gangs of four to six are now working on the docks and in the holds where eight to ten were employed before, in open defiance of union rules. Accidents occur constantly, due to the speed-up, overloading, and rotten gear.

Wages are 85 cents an hour on the Atlantic and 80 cents on the Pacific, with time and a half for overtime on the union docks. The average union longshoreman, working as much and as often as he can, averages from about \$15 to \$29 a week. The stevedores usually take the men on at 10 minutes to the hour and finish up 10 minutes after, the men not getting paid for these extra minutes. Another form of petty graft is described in a letter from a longshoreman: "A boss stevedore over here in Brooklyn was to marry off his daughter. He printed tickets at \$12 apiece. All of his 250 men were informed. Pretty nearly all bought them. Those that did not found themselves fired."

On the Great Lakes, much the same conditions prevail, but wages are lower—from 65 cents to 50 cents an hour. The Lakes are open to navigation only about five months in the year, so the work is seasonal as well as casual. The great bulk of the cargoes on the Lakes are ore and grain, and the fine dust ruins the lungs of the men who work on these cargoes for any length of time.

Mechanical methods of loading and discharge have reached

their highest point in the handling of bulk cargoes on the Great Lakes. 12,000 ton ships are discharged and able to leave port again three hours after arrival. Even self-discharging ships have been successfully introduced and a few men are employed only to clean up the holds.

On the unorganized docks (chiefly the coastwise lines, fruit docks, etc.), conditions are even worse.

At many piers the "shaper" does not hire the men by name or in rotation. He stands on a box, throws the work checks among the crowd, and laughs as the men fight for them. On the banana docks the men have to work nine hours without a break for meals. The work is casual; the men are very often without food before starting to work, and the nine or ten hours of this heavy work on an empty stomach has a ruinous effect upon their health. The workers are watched and should they try to steal out for a meal or even go too often to the toilet, they are fired. Tarantulas and often snakes and other tropical vermin abound among these bananas. Should a worker get bitten or stung and ask for a doctor, he is told not to worry as these vermin are "harmless." The workers have to keep up with the conveyor and keep it loaded. The work is so hard that the half-starved workers often fall exhausted and faint. When it comes to carrying cocoa beans, coffee, etc., there is no machine here. The bags have to be carried on the backs of the workers. These bags weigh over 200 pounds. Men often have to go to work here on an empty stomach also, and the shift here is ten hours. The men carry on their backs about 25 to 30 of these heavy bags in an hour. For this heavy and arduous labor they get the huge sum of 55 cents an hour and 83 cents an hour overtime—when there is any.¹¹

Negro workers are in a much higher percentage among the longshoremen than among the seamen, and from Baltimore south on the Atlantic and Gulf Coast, Negro longshoremen are in the majority. Both the employers and the I.L.A. systematically attempt to fan race hatred between the Negro and white workers, keep all the best jobs for the whites, and discriminate against the Negroes.

In New Orleans there are over 10,000 longshoremen, fully two-thirds of them Negroes. Only about 2000 men are organized and the rest have to work on the unorganized docks

where the pay goes as low as 30 cents an hour for banana handling. In Mobile, Ala., where 2000 longshoremen, chiefly Negroes, are employed, the Inland Waterway Corp., a federal government organization, pays 30 cents an hour for loading cotton; the same at Pensacola, Fla. From the southern ports on the Atlantic, a delegate writes: "Things are so rotten here I can't describe them. In Charleston the highest pay is 35 cents, and that is to the straw boss. In Georgetown (S. C.) a man handling lumber gets 15 to 20 cents an hour, for handling freight—20 to 25!"

Railroad tugs, independent tugs, steam lighters, coal barges and lighters, oil barges and lighters, brick scows, sand, gravel and rock scows, covered barges and lighters, grain elevators and hoisters, steam and gasoline derricks—these are the different craft on which about 20,000 harbor workers toil in the ports of the U. S.

With the exception of the railroad tugs and the larger sea-going tugs making fairly long trips outside, the towboats are in a pretty low class as regards safety and seaworthiness. Leaky hulls and old patched-up engines are the rule. Sanitary conditions are wretched, fo'c'sles leaky, bug-ridden and overcrowded. On the double-crew boats, *the working day is 12 hours*, for which the sailors and firemen receive a princely \$100-\$110 a month. On the single-crew boats, *the 10-hour day is in force* and wages are \$80-\$90 for sailors and firemen. The cook has to work in the galley and also lend a hand on deck, hauling lines. On the "outside" towboats, hours are 8 for firemen, 12 or more for sailors, and wages are \$75 to \$90.

The men on the independently-owned towboats are in a most strategic position in the marine transport industry. Without their work, passenger and freight ships could neither enter nor leave their docks, nor, for the most part, receive their fuel and cargoes. Yet they have not yet been able to win even the 8-hour day.

On most of the barges and lighters, the men are required to

live aboard the craft, often with their families, so as to save the boatowners the expense of a watchman. Wages for the most part are from \$80 to \$90. A scow captain gives the following description of conditions on the sand and gravel scows in New York harbor:

These boats carry only one man. He is captain, crew and watchman all in one. He is unable to leave the scow for more than a few minutes at a time as he does not know how long the craft will be at the dock. If he loses a tow he loses his job. Stake boats are kept anchored at various places on Long Island Sound which are used as markets for the sand and gravel. The scows are often tied up at these stake boats for 5 or 6 days, and sometimes 2 or 3 weeks until the cargo is sold.

Out of their \$80 a month, the men have to provide their own food, cooking utensils, bedding, blankets, etc. The cabins on these craft are about 12 feet by 8. There are absolutely no toilets or sanitary facilities. Water has to be carried in a brackish water barrel or kept in a bucket. Should the men be at the stake boat for any length of time they must put out their small boat and row to the nearest small town or village to buy food. Last week two men had to row ashore—about an hour and a half's pull. On the way back a squall blew up, the boat capsized and the men lost all their food.

The men are on watch 24 hours a day. They may have to turn out two and three times in the middle of the night to tie up their boat. In some of the companies the men are paid \$4 per load trimming money—that is leveling off the top of the load with a shovel. With trap rock or gravel, this takes 10 to 12 hours of hard work. The majority of these craft are old and leaking badly. They have to be pumped out by hand pumps; it takes one hour to pump one inch of water out of the craft.

IX. THE MARINE UNIONS

CRAFT unionism, carefully fostered by the union bureaucrats, has been one of the curses of the marine workers. In the period just after the war when nearly all the workers in the industry were organized, over a dozen different unions kept the workers apart from one another and prevented them from exerting their full power against the shipowners.

Seven different craft unions were usually represented in a single ship's crew—two for the mates, one for the engineers, one for the wireless operators, one for the sailors, one for the firemen, and one for the stewards' department (the last three grouped together in a loose federation known as the International Seamen's Union). The longshoremen were in the International Longshoremen's Association, while every port had its own unions for the harbor workers—at least three or four in the port of New York. In addition there was the Marine Transport Workers' Union of the I.W.W.—an industrial union but without a mass membership.

To-day the marine workers are almost completely unorganized. Practically all these unions are still in existence, but in name only. With the exception of the I.L.A., the marine workers belong to none of them. Not one of these unions is doing anything to organize the men; not one of them has the confidence of the marine workers.

The International Seamen's Union (A. F. of L.), headed by Furuseth, Olander and Flynn, is a loose federation of district craft unions—sailors' unions, marine firemen, oilers and water-tenders' unions, cooks and stewards' unions, and fishermen's unions. Continual treachery to the interests of the seamen has been the record of the I.S.U. Its whole activity for 25 years before the war was concentrated on discouraging strikes, and on lobbying, begging and bribing to get the Seamen's Act passed. "Probably *in no other American union* has so much time, money, and energy been spent in securing legislation."¹² And we have seen already that the Seamen's Act, the result of all this effort, is nothing but an empty shell, and that conditions are not a scrap better to-day than before it was passed.

But instead of organizing the seamen to rely on their own strength and to fight for better conditions, the I.S.U. organized them and then told them to rely on Congress and "public opinion." With words that would make any self-respecting seaman vomit, Andy Furuseth crawled on his belly before his masters and begged for "better laws":

To those who govern nations, to those who make the laws, to humanitarians, democrats, Christians, and friends of human freedom everywhere, do we, the seamen, the yet remaining bondmen, humbly, yet earnestly, submit this our petition that we be made freemen, and that the blighting disgrace of bondage be removed from our labor, which once was considered honorable, which is yet needed in the world of commerce, and which has been held to be of great importance to nations with seacoasts to defend.¹³

In the last sentence Furuseth already holds forth the promise to his masters, the shipowners, of the still greater treachery which he carried out later—the selling of the seamen to the capitalist war machine in 1917.

“From 1917 to 1919 . . . the most important activity of the union was the concentration of efforts on the winning of the war.”¹⁴ In 1917, the I.S.U. eagerly served the shipowners and the government by gathering thousands of seamen and sending them out on hastily built, unseaworthy ships to face the torpedoes and mines. While the shipowners were making immense profits out of the seamen’s danger, sometimes earning the whole value of the ship in a single trip, the I.S.U. helped the shipowners and the government to keep the wages down. It is worth recalling again the statement of Bass and Drury that “under the excessive demand for marine labor due to the war, a hostile and unscrupulous labor organization might easily have wiped out the difference” between the low wages at sea and the higher wages ashore.

The I.S.U. even practically *gave up the union* on the Pacific. “To increase the number of new seamen the union agreed to . . . increase the proportion of ordinary seamen. As the proper operation of this plan made it necessary for the seamen to relinquish the closed shop, they did so. This *voluntary surrender* was especially noteworthy because, at the outbreak of the war, the Pacific seamen were understood to have been 95% organized.”¹⁵

In 1920 when the union was at the height of its strength, it decided its chief duty was to increase the efficiency of the seamen so they could make more profit for the owners. In 1921

the shipowners, having no more need for it, contemptuously kicked the union aside, and locked the seamen out for a 15% wage cut. Only the greatest pressure from the rank and file prevented the I.S.U. officials from giving in without a struggle. Furuseth even wrote a petition to President Harding, asking him to arbitrate and promising to accept his decision as final! It was so clear from the start that the cowardly leaders were sabotaging and selling the strike out, that when the seamen were finally beaten, the open shop restored, and wages cut 50% and more, masses of them quit the union in disgust. From 115,000, the membership dropped to 18,000. Furuseth immediately retaliated by becoming an open stool-pigeon, reporting thousands of militant alien seamen to the Department of Justice and getting them deported.

To-day the I.S.U. has barely 5000 members scattered through its 22 unions. Since 1921, it has not made one single move to organize the seamen. It preaches class-collaboration instead of class struggle—that the workers should “work in harmony” with the bosses instead of fighting them. It is bitterly against the alien seamen, getting them deported whenever possible, and still calling for “patriotic Americans to keep the Flag on the seas” for the starvation wages. And at a time when, as we have seen, the seaman is becoming practically an unskilled worker, the I.S.U., still dreaming of the sailing-ship days, preaches that the only way the seamen can improve their conditions is by improving their skill and efficiency. In short, the I.S.U. is a 100% company union—an agent of the shipowners—preaching exactly what the shipowners want it to preach.

The International Longshoremen's Association (A. F. of L.), headed by Joseph P. Ryan, has probably about 30,000 members. It makes no attempt to organize, actually *keeping the workers out* by demanding an initiation fee of \$50. The officials are against all strikes. They sign sell-out agreements with the shipowners and then force them down the throats of the membership, preventing the members from fighting for any improvements. Many of the locals have not held any meetings in

years. In San Francisco, the I.L.A. has recognized and approved the company union called the Waterfront Employees' Ass'n (the "blue card" company union), getting them a seat on the Central Labor Council.

The I.L.A. is one of the most corrupt, racketeering unions in America. In New York, its officials are part of the Tammany machine. Its delegates are gangsters and ex-pugilists. "When the delegate visits the pier," writes a longshoreman, "he is quickly taken to one side by the stevedore. The stevedore is then permitted to hire non-union men while union men are left without a job, and to get away with all kinds of violations of union conditions and safety regulations." "The only time you see a delegate," writes another, "is when he comes down to collect dues, and then he comes with a strong-arm squad well-heeled to prevent any protests from the rank and file about job conditions." To the bureaucracy that control the I.L.A., the union is nothing but a "racket" giving them the opportunity to coin money out of the workers through dues and graft.

The I.L.A. refuses to organize the Negro longshoremen as equals. It neglects them entirely, or it herds them into "Jim Crow" locals. In cases where Negroes do belong to the I.L.A., the officials discriminate against them and see that they get only the worst jobs.

In the harbors, the unions that exist are either company unions or "sell-out" organizations. In New York harbor, the majority of the independent towboatmen belong to the Associated Marine Workers' Union, headed by William A. Maher. This union (within the narrow limits of the towboats) is organized on an industrial plan—captains, mates, engineers, deckhands, firemen and cooks all belong to the same union. These workers who, as we have seen, are in a most strategic position in the industry, have been trying for more than three successive years to call a strike to get rid of the 10- and 12-hour day and to get living wages.

But each time the agreement expires and the men put up

their demands and are anxious to strike, the sell-out machinery is put in motion. Boss Maher refuses to call the strike, gets a little concession from the boatowners and forces the new agreement through.

As for the officers' unions, the once powerful Marine Engineers' Beneficial Ass'n (A. F. of L. from 1918 to 1923) is now a total wreck. In 1921 its officials worked in complete harmony with the sell-out policy of the I.S.U., and as a result the union was smashed, split three ways, and lost its membership.

The Masters, Mates and Pilots Organization (A. F. of L.) was never very strong on ocean vessels, but did have fair control on inland waters. To-day it has practically nothing.

The Neptune Association (Independent) hardly considered itself a union. It was rather an "association of officers and gentlemen." Most of the captains and mates belonged to it before 1921. The Deck Officers' organizations did not take part in the 1921 struggle—their agreements expired at a different time—so that they were killed without even a fight. Both the M.M. & P. and the Neptune limit their membership to "white persons."

The United Radio Telegraphers' Ass'n had about 80% of the wireless operators organized. In policy the organization used to follow fairly closely the lead of the M.E.B.A. It struck in 1921, and closed up the next year.

The Marine Transport Workers' Union of the I.W.W. had a program of militant industrial unionism. On three separate occasions—in 1912, when the Atlantic Firemen's Unions quit the I.S.U. and affiliated to the I.W.W., in 1921 after the lock-out, when the seamen flocked into the M.T.W., and in 1923 in the San Pedro longshoremen's strike—the marine workers, disgusted with the treacheries of the I.S.U. and I.L.A., rallied to the banner of industrial unionism—and each time, the M.T.W. showed that it did not know how to build a solid union.

Its refusal to adapt its policies to the real needs of the

marine workers, its local autonomy which resulted in the different branches constantly fighting one another, its opposition to political struggles, its opposition to the Soviet Union and to the Red International of Labor Unions—all these policies caused the marine workers to lose faith in the I.W.W. union, and each time its membership dwindled almost as rapidly as it had grown.

To-day the M.T.W. is practically dead. The fragment that is left, comprising a few disconnected "irreconcilables," stands 100% in the camp of the bosses, shows not the slightest militancy, and is one of the bitterest enemies of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union. Those former members of the M.T.W. who still retain their fighting spirit, are now active in the ranks of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union, the only organization that puts forward a program of militant struggle in the marine industry to-day.

On April 26 and 27, 1930, at a National Convention of marine workers, called by the Marine Workers' League in the port of New York, 118 elected delegates—seamen, longshoremen and harbor workers—from all ports of the country, established the Marine Workers' Industrial Union of the U. S. A.

The organized movement for this new union dates from 1928 when the Trade Union Unity League organized the Marine Workers' League, based upon the group of militant marine workers that had gathered around the International Seamen's Club of New York. As its official monthly organ the Marine Workers' League began the publication of the Marine Workers' Voice, which continues now as the organ of the Union. Leading up to the National Convention, Coast Conferences were held with elected delegates from ship, dock and harbor—on the Atlantic in August, 1929, on the Pacific in November, 1929, and on the Gulf in January, 1930. At each of these conferences, Organizing Committees were

elected which immediately after spread throughout the ports to carry on the organizational work.

The bitter attacks that have already been made upon the organization, even in its earlier form—the Marine Workers' League—show that the shipowners recognize it as their real enemy. The New Orleans headquarters have been raided three times by the police, the organizers arrested and threatened with lynching. The San Pedro headquarters have been raided three times, and organizers have been arrested in almost every port for the crime of organizing—*often on complaints made to the police by the I.S.U.* But the only result of all the raids and arrests has been a steady increase in the membership of the organization, and the support given it by the marine workers.

The National Convention which established the M.W.I.U. was the most representative gathering of marine workers' delegates ever held in the United States—men direct from the ships, docks and harbors, Negro and white, youngsters and old-timers, from Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf and Great Lakes. The note of preparation for immediate strike struggles ran throughout the discussions. After the most thorough discussion, the Convention adopted a Constitution which insures rank-and-file control of the Union and disciplined, united action under centralized leadership. The Convention elected three delegates to the Fifth World Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions, at which the Convention asked the R.I.L.U. to establish a Red International Union of Marine Workers. A National Committee of 41 was elected as the supreme power in the Union. The Program of Action of the M.W.I.U., adopted by the Convention, is given in Chapter XII.

X. UNDER THE SOVIET FLAG

AN excellent picture of conditions on a Soviet ship is given by the following letter from an American seaman—J. S. M., from the SS. *President Van Buren*:

I have thirteen years actual sailing time on my discharges, and have sailed on the best ships flying the American flag, and in my opinion, the conditions of the crews on Soviet ships are better than any I have ever seen.

In Marseilles I visited the Bolshevik SS. *Dnieper*, 3700 net tons. The only man who could speak good English was the machinist. He showed me every part of the ship and I never saw a ship in better condition. The spars and booms were varnished, and the rigging and gear were in first-class condition.

The sailors' and firemen's quarters were spotlessly clean, big, roomy, and well ventilated. Four fancy shaded lights over each table, white linen and comfortable bedding, with lockers for clothing. There was a first-class heating system and ice-water in all quarters.

The ship is a flush-decker, and the washroom is built on deck abaft the beam—six showers and six wash-basins, with fresh running water, hot water tank and steam. A recreation house astern is called the Red Corner. This is the last word in comfort for the crew. It is equipped with upholstered seats and a long table covered with a fancy red cloth, a radio, games and reading matter, pictures on the walls, and a wall newspaper. The room is steam-heated.

The machinist translated the ship's articles which read "Not more than eight hours," and explained that all ships have a ship committee of five men and a union delegate. All ships carry a doctor and if a man is sick or badly fatigued, he reports to the doctor and will get treatment and time off until he feels fit to work again.

The Deck Dept. has three watches and the Engine Dept., four. The ship has a complement of 54 men, so we can understand that if a man is laid up, his absence will not be felt by his shipmates on account of the extra large crew list. The sailors are furnished free with oil-skins and sea-boots which are kept in an oil-skin locker. The crew are issued free of charge two suits of dungarees and jumpers and two caps every six months and one pair of leather shoes a year.

One month's holiday a year is granted with full pay for the engine crew and two weeks for the sailors. Together with this goes free board and lodging in the rest homes that are built all over Russia for the workers. For every Sunday or holiday spent aboard the ship the time is given back or double time is paid. Time-and-a-half is paid for the first hour overtime and double time thereafter.

I was invited to eat and had three meals, one each day I went on the ship. The food is of the best quality and the cook is a cook, not a blacksmith. There is always plenty cooked for the night lunch. The Russian seamen all belong to the Red International of Labor Unions.

Naturally the capitalist governments do their best to prevent seamen from visiting Soviet ships and finding out the conditions there. An American seaman writes from Alexandria:

The following morning a ship from the Soviet Union arrived—the SS. *Communist*—and tied up opposite my ship. The Egyptian police would not let me or any one else on board. None of the crew were allowed ashore except the Captain, and he could only go to transact business for the ship, with a guard to escort him. Anybody who went on board had to have a sealed metal bracelet on one wrist, and if he should lose the bracelet, he would have to stay on the ship and go back with it to the Soviet Union. I tried to get a bracelet from the Chief of Police but he refused.

However, scores of American seamen have had better luck, and either in Soviet or foreign ports, have had a chance to see what the Workers' Government has done for the marine workers. Over 200,000 marine workers, ocean, river, and port, deck, engine, galley, officers and engineers, ship repair workers and office workers,—every one working in the water transport industry—belong to the Water Transport Workers' Union, which constantly looks out for the special interests of its members. The Union maintains a network of clubs, educational and recreational facilities for its members throughout the sea and river ports of the country.

At the present time the whole Soviet Union is engaged in a gigantic program of construction—the Five-Year Plan. This is a plan of work to be carried through in five years which will provide for a tremendous increase in industry, will put farming on a collective, machine basis, will bring about a great rise in the standard of living of the whole population, will make the Soviet Union economically independent of the capitalist world, and will put it a long way along the road to Socialism.

In the field of marine transport, the Five-Year Plan will not only make up for the 200 of the best and largest Russian vessels which were carried off and sunk by the White Guards

and the Allies during the Revolution, but, in addition to buying a number of ships abroad, will provide for the building of 259 sea-going vessels and 390 river vessels. The number of seamen employed will be increased by 88%, and the number of waterfront workers by 25%.

It is already clear in the second year of the Plan that the Five-Year Plan will not only be victoriously carried out but *will probably be carried out in four years*, and will mark one of the greatest victories, not only of the Russian workers, but of the working class of the whole world.

XI. THE MARINE WORKERS AND THE COMING WAR

THE greatest political task facing the marine workers to-day, in common with the rest of the working class, is the fight against the new war. We discussed in an earlier chapter the increasing rivalry between America and England in shipping. Of course, this is only one front of the whole gigantic economic conflict which is going on to-day between the British and American imperialist systems. In every field of industry and commerce, in every corner of the world, these two giants are in deadly conflict, each trying to beat the other out.

Of course, this is not just a "private fight" between America and England but rather a "free-for-all." Although England and America are the outstanding contenders, France, Japan, Italy, Germany, all the imperialist countries—all *those where the big trusts, in addition to exploiting the workers in the home countries, export their products and capital abroad and make profits out of the sweat of the workers and farmers in the backward and colonial countries*—all are engaged in this life-and-death struggle, each one fighting all the others for a greater share of the spoils.

The causes of this conflict are rooted deep in the economic system of all these countries—the system of capitalism. In

America the capitalists' process of rationalization, as we have described, is constantly increasing through speed-up, etc., the productive capacity of the industries. But as a result of the same process, millions of workers are being thrown out of work and wages are being cut, so that less goods than ever can be sold in the country. This means that the question of foreign markets to which to export these goods has now become a life-and-death question for American imperialism. And at the same time, the search for foreign fields of investment and for sources of raw materials for the industries is becoming more frantic than ever.

But all the imperialist powers have long been suffering from these same diseases, and American imperialism finds itself in competition and conflict with all of them and chiefly with the next strongest—England. In every industry, in every part of the world, this rivalry is daily getting sharper, and the only possible outcome is the same as the outcome of the economic rivalries before 1914—a World War.

That the capitalists themselves are perfectly aware of this fact is shown by the frantic race of the governments to pile up huge armaments and prepare themselves in every way for war. New types of military airplanes and dirigibles, new and more deadly types of poison gases, new military machines for every kind of destruction are being developed on every hand.

The pacifist talk of peace pacts and disarmament conferences is intended only as a smoke-screen to blind the workers to the actual war preparations. The Geneva "Disarmament" Conference which failed, has now been followed by the London "Disarmament" Conference. As a result of this new conference for "disarmament," the U. S. is now going to build 240,000 tons of war craft at a cost of *one billion dollars!* In this program of slaughter, the government has been supported by the A.F. of L., as well as the I.S.U., which both came out in favor of more battleships, provided only that they are built by union labor.

That the marine industry is already getting on a war footing

can be seen by any seaman who uses his eyes. The *Bulletin of the American Bureau of Shipping* says: "All wars on the seas, in recent years, have demonstrated the value of converting fast merchant vessels into cruisers and raiders against the enemy's commerce and . . . there is no doubt as to converted fast merchantmen being of a decided military value *especially when in their original design, arrangements have been made for gun mounts and magazines.*" Every seaman who has been aboard any of the new ships built under the Jones-White Law, knows that *such arrangements, for gun-mounts, etc., have been made!*

Before a company can get a loan under the Jones-White Law, the plans for the proposed ship must be *approved by the Navy Dept. as to its suitability for use as a naval auxiliary.* In addition, naval experts agree that it is easy to convert merchant ships into aircraft carriers. The big liners could easily "mother" a couple of hundred planes apiece. Thus the present merchant marine construction program is in itself a war preparation program. The marine workers are engaged in a war industry whether they like it or not.

So much for the ships. What about the men? The seamen are always in the front line of every war. The government is taking good care to see that they will be there in the next war. This is the meaning of the Naval Reserve Law. This law permits steamship companies to enlist "approved" ships in the Naval Reserve entitling them to subsidies, mail contracts, etc., provided two-thirds of the officers are enlisted in the Reserve also. In time of war these ships (with their officers) are mobilized by the Navy and if the ship is sunk, the owners get a fat sum as compensation. Naturally the officers are "advised" to join. In September, 1928, a short time after the law went into effect, 1500 commissions had already been issued to officers and engineers of merchant ships. It is getting harder and harder for an officer to get a job if he does not belong to the Reserve.

The next step is the recruiting of the seamen, which will be

attempted as a matter of course. Time and again the ship-owners have raised this proposition not only for the needs of the war program but also to increase their peace-time profits. In the first place, they consider that the small amount of "retainer pay," paid the men by the government as members of the Reserve, would enable them to cut wages still further, and most important of all, as soon as a strike is called, the government would be able to declare an emergency, mobilize the reservists, and force the seamen to scab on themselves under military discipline.

As a seaman explains the law, writing in the *Marine Workers' Voice*:

Thus the shipowners get theirs, and the government gets officers who are acquainted with particular ships on particular runs, and lastly large crews of seamen are made available which can be put aboard a battleship if necessary, or even put into the trenches as soldiers, like the British Royal Naval Reserve was during the last war in Belgium. Fast transports are also obtained. Nothing is left out. Now what about the other side of the story? What do we seamen get? We get the chance to fight in the next war and leave our bones for the crabs to pick the flesh off, or if we're lucky, we come home and maybe get a night watchman's job because we have a wooden leg, a glass eye, and a half a dozen tin medals.

But there is a still sharper conflict going on to-day than that between the rival imperialist powers, and that is the conflict between all of them and the Soviet Union. The imperialists feel that they could get a new lease of life if they had the huge market of the Soviet Union to divide among themselves and the Soviet workers and peasants to exploit. More important still, the capitalist governments know that the very existence of the Soviet Union with its increasing successes, is the greatest threat to their own existence, for the Workers' Government stands as a shining example to the workers all over the world to follow in the same path and overthrow their bosses and establish their own Soviet Government.

The capitalists know that capitalist industry with its lack of organization, waste, and huge profits going into individual

hands, will not be able to compete with developed socialized industry. Leslie Urquhart, one of the biggest British capitalists, says in the New York *Engineering and Mining Journal*, "Successful completion by the Soviet of its Five-Year Plan will destroy, or at any rate, deal a terrific blow to our entire civilization." (He means, of course, "to the entire capitalist system.")

Thus it is clear that there can be no peace between a Soviet world where the workers rule, and a capitalist world where the workers are enslaved. The capitalists are only looking for a favorable moment to launch a combined attack upon the Soviet Union. They have no intention of letting the Soviet workers carry through their Five-Year Plan in peace. The chief goal of all war preparations to-day is war against the Soviet Union!

The Soviet Union is the fatherland of the working class. We have seen in the previous chapter the splendid conditions that the marine workers enjoy under the Soviet Government. The defense of the Soviet Union is the greatest political task before the world's workers to-day, and in the carrying out of this task, the marine workers will play a leading rôle. In the words of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union: "The attack against the Soviet Union will begin right here in the ports where the arms and munitions are loaded aboard the ships to be carried across and used against the Workers' Republic. The marine workers must begin to organize against the coming attack now. The seamen must prepare to boycott all transportation of military supplies, the longshoremen to refuse to load or unload them. The Marine Workers' Industrial Union declares that it will defend the Soviet Union against all attacks of the imperialist governments by every means in its power!"

XII. THE PROGRAM OF THE MARINE WORKERS' INDUSTRIAL UNION

THE following, in abridged form, is the Program of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union adopted by the National Convention, April 26-27, 1930:

The marine industry to-day is becoming of more importance to the American capitalist system than at any time since the war. Throughout the industries of the country, the bosses have been speeding up the workers, installing new labor saving machinery, and in every other way getting more production out of less workers. The workers who have been displaced by machinery and speed-up and have been thrown out of their jobs, are left to starve and are unable to buy any of the things they need. At the same time, the bosses have been cutting the wages of those who are still on the job so that they also are unable to buy as much as they used to. This has resulted in a crisis—a tremendous overproduction of goods which the workers and farmers are unable to buy, and many factories are therefore shutting down, throwing still more workers out of jobs.

In order to prevent their profits from falling, the capitalists are making a new attack upon the conditions of the workers, cutting wages and speeding them up still more. The workers are responding with increased resistance, are organizing and fighting back. In their attempts to crush this resistance the capitalists are throwing aside all pretense of democracy, and are resorting to open fascist violence as in the repeated raids on the Marine Workers' League headquarters in New Orleans and San Pedro and the numerous arrests of Marine Workers' League organizers.

Seeking another way out of the crisis by selling their goods abroad, the capitalists come into direct conflict with those of other countries which are also suffering from the crisis and trying to export their goods to the same foreign markets. A terrific struggle for markets is springing up between the powers, and most important of all between England and America. The conflict between America and England is getting sharper and fiercer every day, and it is only a matter of time until it will burst out into a new world war. In this struggle for markets shipping reaches a new importance. Ships are not only used to carry exports in times of peace; they are used as transports and naval auxiliaries in war. With war in view, the American capitalists are no longer relying on the ships of their bitter competitors and future enemies, and have begun to build up a modern merchant marine under the American flag.

This is why they have passed the Jones-White subsidy Law which sets aside a fund of \$250,000,000 as long-term loans for the shipping companies in order to hasten the building of ships. In addition huge subsidies are to be paid to the companies for carrying the mails. While the workers slave and starve, the Government makes these gifts to the shipping companies so that they will be enabled to build and operate ships without risking a cent of their profits.

The subsidies do not mean that conditions will become any better for the marine workers. On the contrary, they will become worse. Rationalization (getting more work out of less workers through speed-up, etc.), has been introduced in the marine industry, just as in all others. . . . Thousands

of marine workers from ship, dock and harbor are being thrown on the beach as a result of rationalization, and the seamen, longshoremen and harbor workers have been reduced to the status of unskilled labor.

Up until the foundation of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union, the marine workers were practically without any organization and were in no position to protect themselves or to fight against unemployment, against the speed-up and for better conditions on the ships and docks.

The program goes on to expose the treacheries of the I.S.U. and the I.L.A., and shows how the I.W.W., as well as the A. F. of L. unions, are all playing the bosses' game.

Thus the Marine Workers' Industrial Union is the only organization in the field that is organizing the marine workers to fight for their interests. . . .

The Marine Workers' Industrial Union fights against the wretched conditions under which the marine workers have to live and work in the marine industry to-day. It fights for higher wages making possible a decent standard of living, for better food, living and sanitary conditions aboard the ships, for proper safety regulations—to be enforced by the union, and for other necessary improvements in working conditions. It fights against the speed-up which sucks out the vitality of the worker so that the very same bosses who have used him up, tell him that he is "too old at 40." It fights against unemployment, demanding that vessels should be adequately manned, and that the longshore gangs should be enlarged, with work or wages for the unemployed. It fights for social insurance against unemployment, sickness and death. It fights against the Fink Halls and the dozen varieties of blacklist.

The Marine Workers' Industrial Union fights against racial discrimination, which is one of the chief weapons of the bosses to keep the workers apart and to sow hatred among them. Particularly in the next war, the imperialist governments will attempt to use black troops against whites, and white troops against blacks. The M.W.I.U. stands for the solidarity of workers of all races. In the *Vestris* case when the steamship company tried to accuse the Negro crew of cowardice despite their heroic work, the Marine Workers' League rallied the white seamen and longshoremen to the defense of their Negro fellow-workers against this contemptible slander. "Full economic, social and political equality for whites, Negroes and Asiatics!" is the slogan of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union.

The following two paragraphs of the program constitute the preamble to the constitution of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union :

The Marine Workers' Industrial Union leads the marine workers in the fight not only for better immediate conditions but also for ultimate freedom from wage slavery. The fight between the marine workers and the shipowners is only one front of the class struggle which rages ceaselessly between the whole working class and the whole class of employers—the capitalists. Victory in this struggle can be won only by the most relentless, militant, and revolutionary struggle of the whole working class. For this

reason the M.W.I.U. does not limit itself to narrow craft interests in the manner of the A. F. of L. unions, but considers itself always as an integral division of the forces of the working class. It rejects and condemns the treacherous "class-collaboration" policy of the A. F. of L., which seeks to delude the workers into believing that it is possible for them to live "in peace" with the capitalists, and betrays them into surrendering their organization to the control of their employers.

While striving constantly for the immediate betterment of all living and working conditions of the marine workers, the M.W.I.U. does not limit itself to immediate economic demands alone, but declares that the liberation of the marine workers from exploitation is only one part of the revolutionary struggle of the whole working class against the capitalist system. The M.W.I.U. urges upon all its members the most active participation in the general struggles of the working class, economic and political, directed toward the goal of the establishment of a revolutionary workers' and farmers' government.

The program continues by describing the preparations for imperialist war and for an attack upon the Soviet Union going on under the cover of "peace" talk.

In particular, the M.W.I.U. fights against the coming war. The Naval Reserve Law has been passed in order to mobilize the seamen in times of peace, and thus make it easy to herd them into the coming war. At the same time the shipowners get additional financial advantages, and—when the system has been extended to the seamen—they will be able to use the Reserve as a strike-breaking agency to mobilize the seamen to scab on their fellow-workers in time of strikes. . . .

It is clear that there can be no peace between a Soviet world where the workers rule, and a capitalist world where the workers are enslaved. The capitalists are only looking for a favorable moment to launch a combined attack upon the Soviet Union. The chief goal of all war preparations to-day is a war against the Soviet Union. . . . The Soviet Union is the fatherland of the working class, where the workers' government has introduced the seven-hour day and is building up socialism. The M.W.I.U. will defend the Soviet Union against all attacks of the imperialist governments, by every means in its power.

The M.W.I.U. can win the demands of the marine workers, can fight successfully against the war danger, against rationalization, against unemployment, against the Fink Halls, and for better conditions, only if it is a solid organization, embracing the masses of workers on ship, dock, and harbor. This means that the union must be built on an industrial basis—one industry—one union. The seamen, longshoremen and harbor workers all slave for the same bosses—the big shipping trusts—and must fight together in one union to win the victory.

The first task of the union must be to organize the masses of unorganized workers in the industry. Effective organization means that the union must be rooted in the ships and docks through the formation of *ship and dock committees*, which must be the bases of the union. Without the ship committee, when the seamen ship out they have no contact with the union while they are away, lose touch with union affairs and are unable to fight for their demands just at the point where this fight is most immediate and necessary—on the job. The ship committee system enables them to take

the union aboard the ship with them. In the same way with the longshoremén, the dock committee system enables them to organize and carry out their struggles for better conditions right on the dock where they slave.

The M.W.I.U. can become a mass organization only if it takes a direct and active part in all the struggles of the marine workers, proving to the workers that it is *their* union. The organization drive of the union must be based upon active participation in every struggle—supplying leadership and organization to the seamen, longshoremén and harbor workers. Only through preliminary struggles can the marine workers and the union gather the strength, and mobilize the massed forces necessary for the future greater struggles and general strike in the marine industry.

The M.W.I.U. is affiliated to the Trade Union Unity League, which established and led the Marine Workers' League, out of which the union grew. The T.U.U.L. is the guiding force of the Marine Workers' Union. It is the center of the revolutionary trade unions of the U. S.—the American section of the Red International of Labor Unions. Through the T.U.U.L. the struggles of the marine workers will be coordinated with those of the workers in other industries. The T.U.U.L. stands for militant industrial unionism, for *solidly organized and thoroughly prepared* mass struggles, for control of strikes by strike committees elected by the rank and file, for democratically-elected centralized leadership, and for participation in political struggles.

The M.W.I.U. must organize not only nationally but internationally. The M.W.I.U. is affiliated to the Red International of Labor Unions which embraces over 16,000,000 workers organized in unions. Through the R.I.L.U., the M.W.I.U. is linked up with the millions of revolutionary workers not only in Europe but in China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Australia, and Latin-America. At the same time, the M.W.I.U. in common with the red marine unions of other countries is requesting the R.I.L.U. to establish an International Marine Workers' Federation in order to provide a closer linkage between the revolutionary marine workers of all countries.

The M.W.I.U. maintains *International Seamen's Clubs* in the various ports of the U. S. in order to provide the seamen with social and educational centers to counteract the vicious strike-breaking work of the Institutes, missions, Y.M.C.A.'s, etc., which are subsidized by the shipowners for the purpose of spreading scab propaganda among the seamen. At the same time, the International Seamen's Clubs which have been established by the R.I.L.U. in the most important ports of the world, have as one of their main objects the welcoming of foreign seamen of all nationalities, colors, and creeds, and building up a spirit of international solidarity among all seamen. These clubs must become real centers for revolutionary seafarers. They will then be a most powerful instrument in building up an international movement which will deal a deathblow to the exploitation of seamen by shipowners all over the world.

The M.W.I.U. puts forward the following demands:

FOR ALL MARINE WORKERS:

Full recognition of the M.W.I.U.; hiring only through Union Hall; no men to be hired on dock or street, or through shipping masters; complete recognition of ship and dock committees; abolition of all Fink Halls and Sea Service Bureaus.

No discrimination on account of race, creed or color. Full political, social and economic equality for whites, Negroes and Asiatics.

Full social insurance for all marine workers against unemployment, sickness and death. Funds to be subscribed by the shipowners and the government and administered by the union.

FOR SEAMEN:

Scale of wages at least equal to that of 1920 (A.B. \$85).

Same food for crew as for officers.

Three watches on deck. Four watches in engine room of coal burners. Eight hours a day for Stewards' Department. All overtime to be paid at the rate of 75 cents an hour. Sunday and holiday work to be classed as overtime.

Abolition of all fines and logging.

Clean towels and linen every week. Improved quarters and sanitary conditions.

Free passage to home ports for seamen left in foreign ports, with wages to be paid in full up to time of arrival in home port.

Slop chest at cost prices.

Oilskins, seaboots, uniforms and all other special clothing required to be furnished free of charge by the company.

Abolition of all penalties for quitting ships. Wages to be paid in full in any port on demand.

No painting or work of similar nature to be performed by the engine crew on watch at sea.

No cargo to be loaded or discharged by seamen. Longshore work to be done by longshoremen.

No workaways. Every one working on the ship to be paid full wages.

FOR LONGSHOREMEN:

Restoration of 1919 wage rate of \$1.00 an hour. Dangerous or special cargo to pay a minimum of double time.

Double time for overtime. Overtime to start after 5 p.m. and before 8 a.m.; to include Saturday afternoons, Sundays, and all holidays, and meal hours if worked. The working day to be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with an hour for lunch. Thirty minutes to be allowed for closing hatches and squaring gear before knocking off.

No man to work over 8 hours a day when other men are available. No man to work more than 16 hours without 8 hours rest.

Larger gangs; 20 men to a gang. Not less than 8 men in the hold at any time. Not less than 8 men to make up a car gang or a dock gang. One dock gang to each hatch, 2 winchmen, one gangway man and one relief man.

Pay to start from time men are ordered to report to dock. Men ordered for standby to be paid regular rates, whether straight time or overtime. Men who are ordered to work and cannot, due to rain or non-arrival of ship, are to be paid for 4 hours.

Dock committees shall see that all these conditions are enforced. They shall inspect all gear and rigging. No ship to be worked unless O.K.'d by Dock Committee after thorough inspection. Dock Committee shall set and enforce load limits on all gears. No speed-up. Lagging to be used on winches. Gear broken or lost to be refurbished by the company.

Traveling time to be paid in full while ship is shifting from one dock to another or from one Bay Point to another.

FOR TOWBOATMEN:

Twenty-five per cent increase in wages, overtime regulations, the 8-hour day both for single and double-crew boats, Sundays off, higher grub money, improvements in quarters, sanitary conditions, etc.

FOR SCOW AND BARGE CAPTAINS:

A flat wage of \$120 a month, overtime regulations, no load trimming, extra pay for sweeping decks and for work as watchmen, all cabins above the waterline, coal to be provided by the company and facilities provided by the company for the men to get food, water, and supplies at least once in two days, when lying out at stake boats.



HEADQUARTERS OF THE M.W.I.U.

The Marine Workers' Industrial Union has its National Headquarters at 140 Broad Street, New York City. It also maintains headquarters in Boston, 247 North St.; Philadelphia, 121 Catherine St.; Baltimore, 1710 Thames St.; New Orleans, 308 Chartres St.; Houston, 7511 Ave. O; San Pedro, 265 W. 4 St.; San Francisco, 204 Sacramento St.; Oakland, 334 Market St.; Seattle, 110 Cherry St.; Buffalo, 357 Michigan Ave.

The M.W.I.U. also has international affiliations with the International Seamen's Clubs in the following foreign ports: Bordeaux, Quai de Bacalan; Copenhagen, 15 Todboldgaten; Antwerp, 24 Rijn Kaai; Marseilles, 10 Rue Fauchier; Hamburg, 8 Rothesoodstrasse; Bremen, 111 Lloydstrasse; Leningrad, 15 Prospekt Ogorodnikova; Archangel, Nabereshnaya; Vladivostok, 48 Ulitsa Lenina; Odessa, 2 Boulevard Feldman; Novorossisk, 5 Bergovaya; London, 88 East India Dock Road; Newcastle, Royal Arcade, Pilgrim St.

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