

SECURITY
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UNITY

SEAFARERS LOG

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE ATLANTIC AND GULF DISTRICT,
SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF NORTH AMERICA



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No. 19

SEAFARERS DEFEAT N.M.U. 3 TO 1 IN BALTIMORE INSULAR LINE ELECTIONS

West Coast Schooner Beef Hits Snag

SAN FRANCISCO.— West Coast maritime unions remain deadlocked with the operators over demands to bring wages on the steamships in line with recent increases won off-shore, the differential on steamships always being traditionally higher to correspond with the conditions of work.

The strike on the steamships was called early in October by the Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders and Wipers, was joined later on by the Marine Cooks and Stewards and the CIO's Marine Engineers Benevolent Association. It was called without previous negotiation or agreement with the Sailors Union of the Pacific, but the SUP has, as always, respected the picket lines while carrying on its own negotiations with the shipowners.

Early in November the SUP called a conference of all the unions involved and proposed the following program of action: 1) That the four unions pool their efforts to secure new agreements from the shipowners; 2) that no union or unions return to work until all unions secure new agreements satisfactory to their own membership; 3) that no official, union or unions submit any point in dispute on steamships to arbitration of any type or form.

To date, this proposal has not been accepted by the others. The

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District Representatives on The Job Beginning This Week

With the setting up of Atlantic & Gulf District Headquarters of the Seafarers' International Union in Washington, D. C. by Secretary-Treasurer Gretcher, the old, separate Atlantic and Gulf headquarters at New York and New Orleans went out of existence this week. As per the Amalgamation Resolution adopted by the membership in the referendum, the former Secretary-Treasurers of each of the erstwhile districts automatically become District Representatives.

Thus, Brother John Hawk, formerly Secretary-Treasurer of the Atlantic District, becomes Atlantic District Representative. Similarly, Brother M. D. Biggs, formerly Secretary-Treasurer of the Gulf District becomes Gulf District Representative.

District Representatives Hawk and Biggs will henceforth pay far greater attention than heretofore to the individual branches in

Men Choose Militant S.I.U. by Decisive Majority in National Labor Board Poll

After a stormy campaign, in which Curran's lying propaganda machine did not spare slander or mud, the Seafarers' International Union of North America came off with flying colors as a result of the balloting on the Baltimore Insular Line ships, it was announced on Wednesday, November 6, 1940. The SIU won the National Labor Relations Board elections on that line by a majority of nearly 3 to 1 over the National Maritime Union, the tally showed. The Seafarers thus stand certified as the only collective bargaining agency for the men who sail the Baltimore Insular's ships.

Refute Lies

In voting overwhelmingly for the SIU, the seamen on board these ships gave a telling and effective answer to the reams of falsehoods and distortions by means of which the NMU officialdom tried to blacken the Seafarers in order to deceive them.

By a vote of 3 to 1 they threw back into Curran's teeth the lie that "the SIU was originally fostered by the shipowners" carried in that infamous leaflet which the *Log* exposed in its issue of October 15, 1940.

By a powerful decision in a fair vote, the seamen on this line proved that they understood very well the "argument" which that same slanderous leaflet tried to disprove, namely that "the SIU secured a larger wage increase in the Bull Line than the NMU secured on their ships running coastwise and to Puerto Rico."

By their clear cast ballots the Baltimore Insular Line seamen showed their derisive contempt for the claim made by Curran and Co. in that same scurrilous leaflet that "no pledge made by the NMU was ever broken."

Vote of "No Confidence" in Curran

In voting so demonstratively for the SIU, these seamen dealt a terrific and telling blow to the misleaders at the head of the NMU. It was a decisive vote of NO CONFIDENCE in these treacherous officials and their sell-out policies. It was a heart-warming expression of trust in the militant and progressive policies of the SIU.

Significance for Future

The decision in the Baltimore Insular Line election is of a significance that goes far beyond those particular ships. This was the first time that SIU and the NMU faced each other on an NLRB ballot.

First Direct Challenge

It was the first direct challenge to seamen to choose between the two organizations.

In choosing as they did, the Baltimore Insular men gave vent to the feelings of the rank and file of the men who sail on this coast, in their vast majority. They showed that they preferred ACTION that corresponds to a

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Harry Bridges on The Tobaggon?

As was to be expected, Harry Bridges carried out the C. P. order to switch to Willie and issued the familiar statements of standing 100 per cent behind John L. Lewis, etc. Result?

In his own ILWU the following reactions were given by the membership. The headquarters branch at San Francisco endorsed Roosevelt 100 per cent. The Seattle Longshoremen followed suit and demanded Bridges' resignation to boot. The Pedro Longshoremen also endorsed Roosevelt and voted to accept Lewis' resignation.

Looks like Lewis will have to look for another California CIO director. 'Arry can't produce and is on the skids besides.

Sailors Protest Indignities In Soviet Port

SAN FRANCISCO.—A resolution signed by 25 members of the crew of the S.S. North King, presented this week before the meeting of the SUP, asked that no more crews shall be shipped out on American vessels bound for the Soviet Union, unless a bonus of \$250 is paid for the run. The same resolution is being placed before the Marine Cooks and Stewards and the Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders and Wipers.

In presenting the resolution, the crew of the North King, just returned from Russian waters, explained that it was subjected to indignities unheard of in ports of other countries. These included forcible exchange of American currency for Russian rubles which could not be taken out of the country.

The crew charged that they were kept virtual prisoners aboard ship by armed sentries at the gangplank. When they finally got landing permits, they further alleged, the seamen were accosted at bayonet point by guards throughout the city of Vladivostok. Furthermore, ship's and personal radios were confiscated and sealed in port.

The SUP membership voted, after considering the bonus demand inadvisable, to request the U. S. State Department to protect the rights of American seamen in Russian ports.

It seems that under the rule of Joe Stalin, working stiff who man ships are subjected to greater suspicion and restrictions in what is supposed to be a workers' country than they are in capitalist lands. The treatment given foreign seamen can serve to get an inkling as to what conditions native Russian labor gets at the hands of the despots in the Kremlin, whose whole course has seemed to be to take away one gain after another made by the Soviet masses in the heroic struggles of the past.

We wonder if "No Coffee Time" Curran and his pals in the leadership of the NMU will take notice of these conditions and add their voice in protest. Our guess is that they won't. For, they and their superiors in the Communist Party machine are not at all concerned with the conditions of the working stiff, whether in the U.S.A. or in Soviet Russia—their allegiance belongs to the bureaucratic clique in Moscow.

American Vessel Sunk off Australia

The Australian government announced this week that the American freighter *City of Rayville* went to the bottom off Cape Otway, near Melbourne, following an explosion. The Naval Ministry expressed the opinion that the ship was sunk by a mine.

The *City of Rayville*, first American merchant vessel to be sent to Davey Jones' locker in the present war, was operated by the United States Maritime Commission. An unnamed British ship was sunk in nearby waters only a short time before.

The sinking of the *City of Rayville* confirms union contentions, hitherto disputed by the shipowners, that Far Eastern waters are mined and subject to belligerent activity.

Advise Unions to Watch Step on Contracts

The effects of conscription and the national emergency on labor unions, with particular emphasis on contracts, are discussed in an article by Joseph A. Padway, general counsel for the A.F. of L. in the current issue of the *American Federationist*.

Foreseeing a sudden rise in the cost of living, Mr. Padway says: "In times of emergency, when the real value of a dollar is more uncertain than ever, the need for flexibility is particularly desirable. . . . It is therefore inadvisable for unions to fix wage schedules in their contracts for long periods of time."

Mr. Padway strongly advises unions currently negotiating new agreements with employers to insist upon the insertion of an "escape clause," giving the unions the right to reopen the wage question in the event "living expenses substantially rise."

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HARRY LUNDEBERG, Acting President
110 Market Street, Room 402, San Francisco, Calif.

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING THIS
PUBLICATION TO:

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P. O. Box 522, Church St. Annex, New York, N. Y.
Phone: BOwling Green 9-3437

A Victory That Points the Way

In the very first direct contest between the National Maritime Union and the Seafarers International Union, the SIU has won a National Labor Relations Board election hands down. The vote on the Baltimore Insular Line showed a preference of 3 to 1 for the SIU as against the NMU. The majority for the Seafarers was so decisive as to leave no room for a challenge. In signing the official tally sheet, the representative of the NMU made that clear beyond dispute.

Since this was the first time that the two unions faced each other directly on an NLRB ballot, the result may be taken as the signal for a trend among seamen. It is the first time that the contention as to the superiority of one organization over the other was put to the immediate test of an expression of opinion among the rank and file themselves. Thus it served as an indicator of which way the sentiment of the men who sail the ships is heading in the rivalry between the NMU and the SIU.

By deciding so overwhelmingly in favor of the SIU, the rank and file of the Baltimore Insular ships has issued a direct warning against the policies of the NMU officialdom.

Their vote is a deep expression of protest against the lower living and working standards maintained by that officialdom on the ships under their control, in vying for favor with the shipowners against the SIU.

Their vote is a decisive demonstration against the disruptive tactics pursued by Curran and Co. on the waterfront to the detriment of the seamen.

Their vote is a declaration for unity among seamen and for militancy in the struggle against the shipowners.

The aroused feelings expressed in this vote are being echoed by seamen everywhere. If the NMU officialdom has ears, that should become ever more audible to them. If they close their ears to the voice of the rank and file, that voice will make itself heard in a rising crescendo with the NLRB elections that are yet to come.

If the Baltimore Insular decision shows anything, it shows that the seamen will not tolerate the continued undermining of their wages and conditions by the NMU chiefs in the name of "unionism," that they will not tolerate "reorganizations" by Curran and Co. on ships that enjoy good union conditions under SIU contracts, that they will not stand for control of their fate by men who take their orders from the discredited Communist Party which works to suppress every expression of real democracy in the unions.

At the same time, the result of the Baltimore Insular election is a clear mandate to the SIU to continue its proven policy of militancy in the fight against the shipowners and of free, unhampered rank and file control of seamen's affairs in a union the men can call their own.

West Coast Steamship Beef Hits Snag

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reason for this non-cooperation came into view last week when it was revealed that the CIO Maritime Committee headed by the notorious Harry Bridges was directing "strategy" for the other three unions.

It appears that Bridges has poked his finger in the pie in his old campaign to bust up the SUP. To this end, he will not shrink from endangering the conditions

of all the men involved in the strike.

Upon his initiative, the Firemen are said to be considering acceptance of a \$7.50 flat raise in pay without awaiting the outcome of the Sailors' negotiations. They are also said to have agreed to submit the question of Saturday afternoon overtime to arbitration. The SUP opposes arbitration in principle.

The Sailors are on guard against the usual brand of Bridges treachery. Their appeal to the other unions for cooperation has been renewed and is receiving a ready response from the rank and file despite Bridges' and the Communist Party's attempt to split the ranks of the strikers.

"Encouragement" for Curran

Admiral Lands On Ships' Transfers

Referring to the possible fate of seamen on merchant vessels transferred to the naval auxiliary service, Admiral Lands of the Maritime Commission informed Joe Curran, in reply to a letter from him, that those crew members who join the Merchant Marine-Naval Reserve would retain their jobs.

"No Coffee Time" Joe is worried—and justifiably so—as to what will happen to his membership (and the per capita derived from them) with all the transfers of merchant vessels to the Navy. The Admiral's reply is small consolation for Joe. All hands know what wages are under the Merchant Marine Naval Reserve system. And as to other union conditions—the less said, the better.

That's the kind of gratitude Joe gets for all of his really back-breaking services on behalf of the Maritime Commission's sinking program! Well, any seafaring stiff with an ounce of gray matter could have told him what to expect. . . .

But the real pay-off comes at the tail-end of the admiral's letter. Says he to Joe:

"As you know, the United States Maritime Service also is still available to those merchant seaman who desire to avail themselves of the opportunities. . . ."

In other words: You can always advise your men to sink!

Draft Boards Packed with Employers' Men

Some time ago, the Log carried excerpts from a speech made by Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana, in which he told the Senate how draft boards were manipulated during the World War so as to aid employers' attacks against unions. The Senator warned against a repetition of this situation.

Symptoms of discrimination in the selection of the draft boards are already plentiful. Almost nowhere is there a draft board which is composed of labor men—even though the district within which it functions may be inhabited by an overwhelmingly labor population.

In New York, the authorities requested the Army to release them from the regulation which requires that Draft Board members must reside within the area in which they serve. This request was made on the grounds that in some "slum areas" (that means areas in which labor is the predominant element of the population) not enough "men of character" could be found to "serve adequately." The request was granted. Most of the Draft Board members now come from the fashionable Park Avenue, Central Park and Riverside Drive areas. The "men of character" who live in those areas are for the most part employers of labor or their close associates.

This situation will bear watching in the future.

Bucking the Party Line

NMU Crews and Branches Protest Leadership's High-Handed Politics

One thing emerged clearly from the Presidential election insofar as the NMU is concerned: the rank and file does not see eye to eye with the leadership as regards political dictation from the Communist Party.

Although the NMU officialdom—Curran, Meyers, Lawrenson and Co.—were ready enough to obey orders and switch to the new "Party Line" to support Lewis' stand in favor of Willkie, the rank and file bucked and bucked aplenty. If the NMU officialdom thought they could sell their members' votes and opinions with a flip of their fingers—from Roosevelt to Willkie, from the Democrats to the Republicans—they were proved to be sadly mistaken.

Admit Strong Opposition

The Pilot itself admits as much, in its issue of Nov. 8.

"The crews which made their feelings known to headquarters," it says, "were ALL opposed to both Lewis' and the National Office's stand."

Analyzing the ports that voted on the issue, we get a measure of the actual reactions of the membership. Nine were supposed to uphold the "National Office." Included among them were such dead NMU ports as Pedro and Corpus Christi and the inland port of Cleveland for good measure.

Now, it will be remembered that the "National Office" position while supporting Lewis, disclaimed absolutely and positively that it was for Willkie. But, who do you suppose is counted among the "ports" supporting the "National Office"? The Houston branch of the NMU. And how did Houston actually vote? Here is the account as given in that same issue of the Pilot:

Winking the "Line"

"A large mass meeting in Houston voted to concur with the National Office's position and to support John L. Lewis." Nothing here is said about refraining from support of Lewis' candidate Wendell Willkie. That is how the NMU officials' execution of the C. P. pro-Willkie line worked: By winks.

Warnings to Curran

Among the ports opposing, on the other hand, were such as Philadelphia, Norfolk and Mobile and the substantial ships' crews of the Aquarius, Susan V. Luckenbach, Cudahy, Mormacgull, Heredia, Transoil and Coama.

In Providence the membership overrode the pleas of the whole set-up of local officials and voted to wire their disapproval.

Marcus Hook warned Curran "to refrain from using the name of the NMU for political purposes in the future without permission of the membership."

It is significant that, while the Pilot has to report letters from ships' crews protesting the stand of the officialdom, it cannot print a single report of a ship's crew approving it.

Lining 'Em Up

In the ports where a goodly crowd of alleged seamen borrowed from the ranks of the furriers, barbers, garment workers, etc., could be mustered, the officials did, of course, fare somewhat better. But even here, as in the case of Cleveland and Galveston, pressure had to be brought and voting strength rounded up in order to reverse originally unfavorable votes.

Beginning to Awaken?

Regardless of the political issues involved, these signs are highly interesting. They show that the rank and file of the NMU are not the blind, obedient sheep

that Curran and Co. think they are.

Is this the beginning of an awakening that will extend to the far more important economic issues facing seamen? We hope so!

Election Aftermath:

Curran Gets the Buttons, The Others — The Votes

Although "Curran-for-Congress" buttons were sold all the way out in Africa (the Pilot tells us), and although ships' crews in every port from Boston to Pedro were milked plenty for the "Campaign Fund," it seems that the other fellows got the votes. All that is now left for "No Coffee Time" to show for his race for Congress is a collection of tin and cardboard and canvass worth about a Continental all told.

In spite of a nation-wide campaign among seamen, and despite the fact that Chowderhead Joe ran in a district populated predominantly by New York waterfront workers, all that the big Stalinite front could muster was 4,635 votes. Even an old Tammany ward heeler was preferred to him to the tune of 26,113 votes. Nay, even a Willkie-smearing Republican got 13,166 votes, or nearly 9,000 votes more than Joe. If he were to follow the sound example of his leader in the CIO, "No Coffee Time" should, on the basis of these ignominious results, not only pledge himself to resign as head of the NMU, but carry out that pledge as well.

In any case, judging from this experience, we can well understand why Joe clings so closely to the Communist Party machine in the NMU. If his candidacy were submitted to an untrammeled expression of democracy in that union, he would fare no better than in the 15th Congressional District.

SIX LAKE BOATS SUNK WITH 20 LOST

Thirteen men were reported dead and another seven feared to have met a similar fate when six Great Lakes vessels were sunk in the worst storm of a decade, with 70-mile an hour winds that billowed the waters. Among the boats lost were the William B. Davock, the Navadock, the Anna Minch, the Indian and the Richard H.

SIU Defeats NMU 3 to 1 In NLRB Vote

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militant policy over PROPAGANDA that is accompanied by sell-outs.

In deciding as they did, the Baltimore Insular seamen are only leading the parade of the seafaring rank and file to the banner of the progressive and militant Seafarers' International Union. That banner—representing progress, militancy and genuine trade union democracy—is becoming increasingly the rallying point in the East for unity in the struggle against the shipowners.

What's Doing—

Around The Ports

MOBILE

November 10, 1940

Editor, Seafarers' Log
Dear Sir and Brother:

Shipping has picked up quite a bit here in the past few weeks. The S.S. Arispa (Waterman) came in a few days ago after about a seven-month trip to the Orient and over to Spain by way of the Panama Canal. Considering the length of time she was gone, there were very few beefs aboard her.

A few minor overtime beefs were about all she had with the exception of the feeding, which was pretty bad. This was due mostly to the fact that it is practically impossible to get decent stores in Spain now. Needless to say, she shipped practically an entire new crew.

She is making another voyage to the Orient, and she signed articles calling for a dollar a day starting from Honolulu outbound until the ship gets back to Honolulu homeward bound.

The S.S. Topa Topa was in port last week, and she will get a new messroom the next trip in with-out fail.

Today we had three ships, the S.S. Beauregard, Bellingham and Maiden Creek. The Bellingham is having her ventilators extended up past the bridge, so there will be a little breeze in the fireroom when the wind is dead ahead.

The S.S. Davenport, which was bought from Lykes by the Alcoa S.S. Company, will be ready to take a crew in about three weeks. At the present time she is in the shipyard undergoing extensive repairs. It is rumored that the Alcoa S.S. Company will have a ship every other day in here before long. They are supposed to be buying twenty-one ships for the bauxite ore run.

Last Monday night the membership in regular business meeting elected a six-man committee to start preliminary negotiations on a new agreement for 1941 with the Waterman S. S. Company. There are two men from each department on this committee. We will appreciate it if the members will send in any helpful suggestions or criticisms, so that the committee will have a general idea of what the majority of the members want in the form of a contract.

A few days ago Brother Biggs came over from New Orleans, and

he, Banks and I went up to the Company to try and get an agreement whereby oilers on day work in port would not be required to sougee, paint and shine bright work. The Company readily agreed to this. So to you men on the Waterman ships that haven't come into Mobile recently, inform the engineers that oilers are not to do this work any more. I have informed the delegates on the various ships that have come in here to that effect already.

There are about ten men in the hospital here at the present time. That's all for this week. So till the next time I remain

Fraternally yours,
Robert A. Matthews,
Mobile Engine Patrolman.

TEXAS CITY

Editor, Seafarers' Log
Dear Sir and Brother:

Still holding our own down here. At the time of writing this, the shipping list is something to be proud of: seven A.B.'s, three O.S.'s, and one cook, about four permits deck and steward departments; engine department—nary a one. Shipped ten men in all three departments and two relief men for the week. The boys on the beach sure like that \$6.40 for relief.

No excitement at all this week except for the fact I proved that a Buick can lose an argument. A Chevy hit mine and after me and the car stopped rolling over, I just needed a license to have a junk yard. No one hurt bad, so I guess it could be worse.

Notice in the papers that the would-be Congressman sent word to the CIO misleaders that the NMU WERE 100 per cent behind his political program in an public telegram on Sunday. At last "No Coffee Time" has something. Any system that will allow the membership of a seamen's organization to be tabulated as to their beliefs in the record time of under forty hours, so as a statement may be put out assuring 100 per cent cooperation, is a world-beater! (Western Union should note this.) Or maybe I'm wrong again.

Steady as she goes till next week.

A. W. Armstrong, No. 136.

(Brother Armstrong drops us a note to say that he is too stiff—from the automobile accident—to write more extensively this week. But, accident or no, he writes in as per schedule. We congratulate him on his good luck in avoiding any serious injuries and trust that he will soon be in tip-top shape again so that he can continue to send us in his regular, informative and amusing comments. He also says that "with all those till now silent ports writing in the Log will have plenty of material." We hope he is right!—ED.)

S.S. POINT BRAVA RUNS AGROUND

The Aluminum Line's Point Brava ran aground last Sunday, November 10, eighty miles east of Quebec. She ripped her bottom plates and is full of water. It is feared that she may be a total loss.

NEW ORLEANS

November 7, 1940.

Editor, Seafarers' Log
Dear Sir and Brothers:

Shipping for the past week was pretty fair, with a total of 58 men dispatched to various jobs.

The S.S. Bayou of the Bayou Steamship Corporation has finally taken a crew. They took the crew Sunday, the 3rd, to turn to Monday morning. She sailed for Port Sulphur to load for the East Coast.

Brother Biggs had the Agents for the Company sign the following agreement: "It is hereby agreed between the Seafarers' International Union of North America and the Bayou Steamship Corporation of New York that all ships owned and operated by said corporation shall come under and abide by the agreement negotiated and signed between the Canadian Gulf Line, Ltd., of Houston, Texas, and the Seafarers' International Union on September 30, 1940, as long as these vessels continue in the coastwise or near foreign trade. It is further agreed that the combination Chief Cook and Steward shall be paid at the rate of \$150 per month, and the Cook shall be paid at the rate of \$130 per month. Signed by W. S. Smith, acting for owners. Witnessed by M. D. Biggs, for the SIU of NA."

This company will take out another laker in two or three weeks. They are fitting her up now. We hope it doesn't take as long to fit this one up as it did the last one.

The stewards department for the Delargentina was shipped yesterday. They were sent to Baltimore. The rest of the crew will be furnished in Baltimore. She is due to sail from here on her maiden voyage to South America, November 22, 1940. We hope she doesn't turn out to be as big a headache as the Delbrasil and Delorleans were on their maiden voyages.

Fraternally yours,
C. J. (Buck) Stephens,
Dispatcher.

HEARINGS HELD ON EXPLOSIVE CARGO

Beginning with December 9, hearings will be held in Washington regarding the proposed regulations governing transportation, storage or use of explosives or other dangerous articles and combustible liquids on board American vessels. The hearings will be held by the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation of the Department of Commerce. The regulations have been prepared in accordance with an act approved by the President on October 9, 1940 and are to go into effect next April 9.

THANKS, BROTHERS

U. S. Marine Hospital
Mobile, Ala.
Editor, Seafarers' Log
Will you please publish the following:
Fellow Members:

I wish through the "Log" to thank all the Brother members of the SIU who have donated money to me while I've been in the Hospital and especially the members of the crew of the S.S. Afoundia for their donation on the trip ending October 24, 1940.

Fraternally yours,
W. V. Albaugh, No. 4-G

SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF NORTH AMERICA

Atlantic & Gulf District

HEADQUARTERS

Room 918, Washington Loan & Trust Co. Building,
9th and F Street, N.W., Washington, D. C.
P. O. Box 6180 Phone: District 5963

DIRECTORY OF BRANCHES

BRANCH	ADDRESS	PHONE
NEW YORK	2 Stone St.	Bowling Green 9-3437
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News From:

NEW YORK

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

By John Hawk

District Representative John Hawk reported to the membership at the last Branch meeting on November 4, and upon a motion, seconded and carried, it was voted to incorporate his remarks in the Log. His remarks follow:

In order to continue to function as a Union progressively and effectively, it is every member's duty to take a keen interest in all matters affecting the Union, in order to solidify every concession that we have gained and to further promote better living conditions for all seamen.

Every concession is progress. Whether it be small or large, it should be protected and not abused. As every Brother knows, each and every concession that John Shipowner has made to date was made primarily through much bloodshed and hunger on the picket line in 1934-35-36-37, and we cannot afford to allow irresponsible members within our ranks to sabotage any of our gains by the abuse of some minor, but very convenient, necessities, such as electric toasters, percolators, and cots for sleeping on deck in the tropics, etc.

Brothers, don't forget that the abuse of these gained minor necessities often upsets the appletart when your officials, in negotiating, ask for comparable concessions along those lines.

AFL MEMBERSHIP AT ALL-TIME PEAK

The American Federation of Labor is now at its all-time membership high, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany reports in the November issue of the American Federationist.

The combined enrollment of all unions affiliated with the A.F. of L., on the basis of per capita tax payments, stands at 4,247,443. This figure is almost 50 per cent

Charges Navy Is Out to Break Unions

Charges that the Navy Department was taking advantage of the national defense program to break up unionism in Navy shipbuilding yards were made at the annual convention of the Metal Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor this week. The convention is being held in New Orleans, Louisiana. The charge directed at the Navy was made by Jasper Davis, vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers. During the discussion dealing with conditions in the Navy yards, N. P. Alifas, president of the Federal district of the International Association of Machinists, said that "some people in the Navy Department were sitting up nights thinking of ways to destroy us (the unions)."

Several resolutions affecting workers in the shipyards were adopted by the convention. One calls for a full wage scale for all qualified and skilled men under the Navy's jurisdiction.

Steel Workers Defy Hysteria With Strike

Defying the hysteria about "national defense" spread by employers in order to combat unionism and demands for improved conditions, 4,000 workers in the Crucible Steel Co. plant at Midland, Pa., walked out on strike this week. The men are particularly incensed over the speed-up introduced after the company obtained war orders recently. They claim that time is not being allowed even for lunch. Other grievances deal with discrimination by foremen.

With the vast majority of the workers walking out, the plant has been forced to close down. The Steel Workers Organizing Committee (CIO) has a contract with Crucible.

Unless the strike is quickly settled, it is expected that it will spread to other plants of the same company in New Jersey.

above the membership three years ago, when the total was 2,860,933. (That was the time the CIO unions had left the A. F. of L.)

NOTICE TO ALL SIU MEN

Canadian Branches of the Seafarers' International Union

When in Canadian ports, visit the halls of the following organizations, affiliated to the Seafarers' International Union of North America:

CANADIAN SEAMEN'S UNION
406 St. Lawrence Boulevard
Montreal, Canada

BRITISH COLUMBIA SEAMEN'S UNION
340-B Cambie Street
Vancouver, B.C.
Phone: TRinity 2251

Resolution on Strike Assessment

WHEREAS, the Seafarers' International Union has proven itself to be a democratic organization for seamen, of seamen, by seamen, and

WHEREAS, we, the members of the SIU of NA, have proven to the steamship owners that we are a militant union interested only in the welfare of the seamen, and

WHEREAS, we must combat the subversive tactics of the top fraction of the NMU in their sell-outs to the shipowners, and

WHEREAS, we may not only have to combat the NMU but the shipowners as well to maintain what wages and working conditions we have at the present time, and

WHEREAS, no militant union is any stronger than the Treasury of the Union, and

WHEREAS, the Treasury of the SIU of NA is not in any too healthy a condition at the present time, and

WHEREAS, in a long and protracted struggle with the shipowners our funds would be very insufficient to maintain a picket line, and

WHEREAS, we have learned what can be done with any fund if it is not handled properly, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we assess ourselves the sum of FIVE DOLLARS (\$5.00) per man to be known as a Strike Assessment for the year of 1941; be it further

RESOLVED, that all monies collected through this assessment shall be earmarked and deposited in a fund to be solely known as the strike fund, which can only be drawn against by a duly elected Strike Committee, and be it further

RESOLVED, that this fund cannot be put up to any bank, loan agency or person as collateral for any loan of any description, and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall be incorporated in the general election ballot so that it may be properly voted upon by the membership, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that this Resolution be printed in the Seafarers' Log for three consecutive weeks before being put before the membership for ratification.

(Passed by a Majority of the Branches)

Transfers to Naval Reserve: A New Danger to Seamen

With the increasing transfer of merchant vessels to the Navy for auxiliary or transport use, a new danger looms for seamen everywhere. The danger consists in the pressure that is bound to result upon conditions won by hard fighting, in view of the situation established on the transferred vessels.

Ships operated by the Navy work under Navy regulations. These regulations provide for the following rates of pay:

Navy's Wage Scale

A.B.—\$54; O.S.—\$21; Firemen \$60; Oilers and Watertenders—\$84; Cooks—\$72.50 to \$84; Bosun and Quartermaster—\$72 to \$84.

No provisions are made for overtime pay. No union organization whatsoever is allowed aboard these ships to represent the men.

No bonus is paid for war zone runs.

All men shipping on these vessels must be eligible for the Naval Reserve. Thus, men disqualified by the age requirements, are not acceptable.

Yet, the process of transferring merchant vessels to the Navy is increasing constantly. While the bulk of the seamen may not as yet be affected by these transfers, the ultimate influence on conditions of all seamen is inevitable. With the low wages in force on Naval Reserve ships, and with many men thrown on the beach by transfers, how long will it be before the shipowners will attempt to take advantage of these facts in order to direct an onslaught on the conditions enjoyed by union seamen at the present time—conditions won through such hard struggles?

A grave danger threatens the

seamen which will require the attention of the union more and more as time goes on. The SUP has protested the transfers in a letter to President Roosevelt. Among their arguments against the transfers are the following:

"1. It is a waste of man power. Experience proves that three times as many men are required to man a merchant ship when it is operated by Naval men than when operated by merchant seamen. This is the record of ships taken over by the Navy during the last war.

"2. It is a waste of tonnage. The additional men must be furnished with accommodations for sleeping and living on board the vessels. Such accommodations can only be provided by appropriating cargo space.

"3. It is a waste of skill. The officers and men now sailing are highly skilled. The officers have gradually been advanced because of their skill and experience. Age and physical defects are preventing many merchant seamen from passing Naval examinations, and yet they are the most valuable men in the merchant marine where such defects in no way interfere with the performance of their duties."

Prepare for Future

These arguments and this protest express the sentiment of all union-conscious seamen. Whether arguments and protests will be enough remains to be seen. In any event seamen will have to be prepared to take the bull by the horns for a more resolute solution of the problem to prevent lowering of general conditions in the future.

Ballots to Be Ready December 1

With nominations for officers of the Atlantic & Gulf District concluded in all branches and at headquarters on November 15, preparations are now in process for voting.

Investigating Committees are to be elected at the coming meeting night to verify the qualifications of all candidates. With the report of the Investigating Committees ready, the official ballot is to be prepared by headquarters in Washington, D. C.

The ballot will be ready for voting on December 1. From that day on until February 1, 1941, voting will be conducted in all branches to determine the selection of officers for the coming year. In addition to officers, the members of the Seafarers' International Union will also vote on the ballot for or against a Resolution establishing a strike assessment.

A.F.L. Predicts Big 1940 Profits

WASHINGTON.—A 23 per cent increase in industrial profits during 1940, due partly to the spending under the nation's multibillion dollar total defense program, was forecast by the American Federation of Labor.

In its monthly survey of business, the Federation placed, prospective profits of 400 leading industrial corporations at \$2,280,000,000, which approaches the prosperity peak of 1927-29 and the recovery peak of 1937. These corporations, it was said, reported profits during the first six months of 1940 were up 59 per cent over the same period last year.

During this period, the Federation said, dividend payments were up 14 per cent while earners' income rose only 4.9 per cent.

High time for the working stiffs to bridge that gap!

Lundeberg, Biggs Delegates to AFL

Harry Lundeberg, Acting President, and M. D. Biggs, Gulf District Representative, have been elected by the membership of the Seafarers' International Union to represent them at the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor.

The convention opens on November 18 at New Orleans. The delegates have been instructed to muster all possible support from the A.F. of L. Executive Council and the convention in order to block any attempt to put merchant seamen into the Naval Reserve.

Draft Regulations Show Small Chance Of Exemptions

Physical standards for men to be drafted, made public in Washington lately, show that few exemptions will be granted for what was formerly regarded as disability. Men with flat feet, exempted during the last World War, will be subject to conscription this time. Similarly, men with a missing left thumb, or with two fingers missing in either hand, or with a loss of two toes, will not be eligible for deferment. Teeth, sight and hearing requirements are on the same order.

Register Within Five Days After Hitting Port!

All SIU members are hereby advised once more that seamen who were not ashore to register on October 16 for the draft (Selective Service) are required to do so within five (5) days after reaching the first American port. Those failing to do so are liable to a penalty of anywhere up to five years imprisonment and \$10,000 fine or both.

Contact the Union hall at the first port you hit for information as to where seamen may register.

Lundeberg's Letter Appointing Gretcher to New Post

San Francisco, Cal.
October 21, 1940

Dear Brother:

This will be official confirmation of the appointment of Brother Sydney Gretcher, heretofore employed in the Atlantic District office of the SIU of NA, to act as Secretary-Treasurer of the amalgamated Atlantic-Gulf District of the Seafarers' International, until such time as a convention of the Seafarers' International is held.

Brother Gretcher is appointed after a careful study of the qualifications of several Atlantic and Gulf members of the Seafarers' and is made bearing in mind the unqualified endorsement of Brother Gretcher for such post by a majority of the Atlantic-Gulf District officials, which officials have been elected by the rank and file membership of the Seafarers' International.

I will ask each and every official of the Seafarers' International, and the membership as a whole, to give Brother Gretcher their wholehearted support, and may state that Brother Gretcher has been personally known to me for many years as an untiring worker in the interests of the seamen, and particularly qualified to act in the office to which I have appointed him.

Yours fraternally,
(signed) Harry Lundeberg, Acting President.

By a motion carried at the New York Branch and concurred in by a majority of the other branches, the membership has voted to carry the above letter in four consecutive issues of the Log.

LABOR UNITY AHEAD?

On November 18, the conventions of the American Federation of Labor and of the Congress of Industrial Organizations are to begin proceedings in New Orleans and Atlantic City respectively. As the conventions are about to open, rumors are flying thick and fast. In some A.F. of L. quarters it is believed that a unification of the two labor organizations is imminent. In the C.I.O., such unions as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers are known to be driving intensively for a definitive unity move. What, in reality, are the prospects of the breach in labor's house being healed?

Will Lewis Keep His Pledge?

A good deal of the speculation regarding unity revolves around the pledge made by John L. Lewis in his Willkie endorsement speech, to step down from the leadership of the C.I.O. in case of his candidate's defeat. How do matters stand in respect to that pledge? There is no doubt that Lewis is prepared to make good his word—FORMALLY. That is, to relinquish the formal position of Chairmanship. But he is known to be the exclusive candidate in the elections, due next month, for the presidency of his United Mine Workers, with no candidate whatsoever to oppose him for re-election. The U.M.W., however, is not only the source of Lewis' income of \$25,000 a year—he receives no salary as Chairman of the C.I.O.—but it is also the bulwark materially and morally of the federation of industrial unions. As long as Lewis remains at the head of the miners, his hold on C.I.O. policy remains undiminished.

Division of Forces in the CIO

An indication of his actual intentions may be gleaned from the preparations made for the C.I.O. convention in Atlantic City. The most important convention committees are appointed by him. Now, on these committees such as the one on Resolutions, Lewis has appointed an average of 10 trusted followers (including, of course, the stalwarts dominated by the Communist Party in such unions as the NMU, the Transport Workers, etc.) to 4 for the forces opposing him. In other words, despite a formal resignation of leadership, he intends to maintain actual control over policy, even if such a man as Phillip Murray, who is acceptable to the opposition led by Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated, is selected to replace him. A fight for control on the floor of the convention appears inevitable.

Other Factors Involved

If the A.F. of L. leadership banks on progress towards unity merely upon the fact of Lewis resigning, it is nurturing false hopes. There is, however, another factor to be counted with. Namely, the desire of the Roosevelt administration to "iron out" the labor front in its preparation for the war and emergency measures that are in the cards. That factor will play its role in the C.I.O. through Hillman in his capacity as Labor chief of the National Defense Board. It has been made increasingly felt in the A.F. of L. through such figures, allied with the administration, as Dan Tobin of the Teamsters and Dan Tracy of the Electricians.

Prospects and Hazards Ahead

A united labor movement is, of course, highly desirable and can, if it is brought about, result in a tremendous push forward for union men in all industries. Labor must be on guard, however, to see that the steps to it—at the conventions and after—are not accompanied with such hamstringing provisions, made in the name of "national defense", as would nullify the gains made in the great organization drives within the industrial empires and the militancy which, with the awakening of labor since 1934, has been responsible for the great headway made.