

Chester Wright is right. Organization of some 85 percent of the steel workers into company unions—most of it since N.R.A.—is the best of proof of his estimate. Yet it is this same N.R.A. that Matthew Woll and William Green, in pursuit of their jobs as N.R.A. salesmen, have tried to peddle to the working class. They denounce the Communists without restraint for exposing N.R.A. and the Roosevelt regime. They call openly for the organization of a special branch of the secret service—*secret political police*—to suppress the Communist Party for organizing workers to resist the onslaughts of this latest “American institution.”

But Dr. Barnes has not lost hope that N.R.A. may yet save capitalism. He blames the “piratical industrialists” for the failure of clause 7A and sticks to his claim that N.R.A. is intended to do something for workers instead of to workers. I quote from his article in the World-Telegram for Feb. 19:

“Section 7A of the National Industrial Recovery Act seems explicitly to give workers ‘the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing . . . free from interference, restraint or coercion of employers.’” (Literally thousands of workers have been jailed, gassed, clubbed and murdered with not a single “piratical industrialist” punished.—B.D.)

“The actual execution of Section 7A today is calculated to give rise to the greatest concern on the part of liberals and to produce ecstasy in the camps of both Fascists and Communists.” (Since the whole N.R.A. stinks of fascism, there is probably rejoicing in the Fascist camp; as for Communists they wasted no time in ecstasy. They told the working class what N.R.A. was and what it was intended to do to them—and now they do what they can to arouse and organize workers against it.)

The National Labor Board seems to be in a state of relative collapse; piratical industrialists, who have learned nothing since 1929, (Oh, yes, they have, Doctor!) are in control of the execution of the code! (Who did you *think* would be in charge, Doctor Barnes?) and there is a definite defiance of the government with respect to 7A in representative industries throughout the country. (How do these “representative” industrialists manage to defy *their own government*? Is it done with mirrors? B.D.)

Nothing in the progress of the recovery program has been more disappointing and demoralizing than the collapse of the National Labor Board. Set up as the supreme arbiter of disputes between capital and labor, it has degenerated into an object of employers’ contempt and employees’ despair. Buried under a mountain of complaints it blusters and does virtually nothing.” (But in such a situation *doing nothing* is a *policy*—a policy which, however, is more active than Dr. Barnes is willing to admit. The Board sends representatives to confuse and demoralize the workers in struggles while the employers mobilize for more decisive battles.—B.D.)

It was futile against Ford at Edgewater, and pathetic against National Steel at Weirton. It meets only to adjourn . . . the industrial members don’t show up. Even Louis Kirstein, the most devoted of them, is missing. Its chairman, Senator Wagner, is away on Capitol Hill . . .



Dan Rico

its most diligent officer, Dr. William Leiserson, has resigned . . . and gone over to the Petroleum Labor Board, apparently in search of action. As thousands of automobile workers are reported discharged for joining the union, General Johnson removes the limitation on hours in the industry.

This seems to require little comment except that the attitude outlined seems as good a way as any of not doing anything to interfere with the “orderly processes” of American industry—some of which have been mentioned already. Phil Frankfeld, leader of 20,000 unemployed in the Pittsburgh sector, has just been sentenced to from two to four years for heading their struggles for the right to live like human beings. This is the beginning, under the New Deal, of the spring drive for recovery in the steel industry—preceded by the liquidation of the C.W.A. at the behest of the “piratical industrialists” who must be assured of a plentiful supply of hungry workers whether their plants are running or not.

Thirty-three years of twentieth century capitalism! One year of New Deal “recovery”! More than four years of the crisis! There can be no separation of these three facts in any appraisal of the economic status of the American working class.

Fascism and imperialist war are in the air. On the basis of the known facts and their Marxist-Leninist analysis, Communists can say with full confidence that the only way out is the Communist way of organization for, and conquest of, power by the working class fighting every step of the way against the continuous drive of the capitalist class and its government on their wages, living standards and political rights.

For those who see in Fascism a way out I would like to say that this is a country of abundance. Here there is no question of a country stripped of its natural resources by defeat in war or of a country with scanty natural resources where much of the raw materials and food supply must come from abroad. This is the richest country in the world. Its moral standing is already low.

American workers are not fools. They know there is enough and to spare of everything here to make life worth living. The program of wanton destruction of necessities and curtailment of production of foodstuffs for the purpose of raising prices of commodities they need and cannot buy, will yet cost the American ruling-class its power.

Marxism-Leninism points the way to a correct appraisal of the present situation of the working class, to the method of changing *in its favor* the relationship of class forces—to a correct estimate of the strategy and tactics of monopoly capital and its N.R.A., it points the way to organization and successful struggle against imperialist war, fascism and endless exploitation. It has, not as a mere symbol of its vitality in the world of declining capitalism, but as a living force—the Soviet Union.

“The centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labor reach a point where they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.”

## OPEN LETTER

The bourgeois gentlemen from Chicago discusses supply and demand and the curb price of wheat.

Homosexual young men with a flair for metaphysics arch their eyebrows and assign T. S. Eliot to the archives

(Pardon, Sirs, the archives are overflowing). Time is of blood and the wind shall cleanse weak soup from last year’s dinner suit. Time and the direction of the wind should be reckoned with.

Listen

to the oracle, the Ides of March, etc. If the soap-box offends the right eye, pluck it (the eye) out!

The dusty pigeon flaps his wings like a flag in the breeze and defecates (with discrimination) on the bronze statue of the general. The gentleman (no one knows from where) speaks:

are you giving your wife satisfaction sex is the greatest force in life this booklet endorsed by six governors five college presidents three senators . . .

Every rooster crows over his dunghill and Messrs Roosevelt, Hitler, and Mussolini yodel over XYZ while the distinguished litterateur of the South (Allen Tate, Esq.) dips a scented pen in a Brown inkwell.

Be that as it may (editorially speaking), listen to these Communists! They have something to say and they’ll say it. Stick your fingers in your ears or read Proust, but you’ll listen now— or shall you wait till later?

WILLARD MAAS.

# War on the Waterfront

EUGENE GORDON

BOSTON.

**B**EFORE the Marine Workers' Industrial Union entered Boston, the psychology of this town's waterfront was similar to that of a worker who had been driven to panhandling. The A. F. of L.'s International Longshoremen's Association, the only union on the waterfront, had organized some of the whites; a larger number, however, both whites and blacks, did not know what unionization meant. While the general plight of the organized group was unhealthy, that of the other men was wretched. Neither group had much self-respect left in it, although the organized workers looked with some contempt upon the unorganized "scum."

The unorganized were mostly Negroes. The few whites among them did not get on very well with the blacks. The reason was that an artificial but effective barrier had been built up between these Negro unemployed workers and their white fellow-sufferers. They barely tolerated each other; sometimes their intolerance flared into the open.

This is the way it was brought about. When a ship came in at one of the unorganized wharves the unemployed non-union workers would rush fiercely upon the straw-boss. They were like starving dogs at the sound of the dinner gong, each knowing that there were enough scraps left to reach just a few of them. The straw-boss, arrogant, a petty tyrant of the meanest stripe, would order the men into line and, standing back dramatically, would look them over. All this time their excitement at the prospect of failing to get work would whip the men almost to frenzy. The job paid only 67 cents an hour and time and a half for overtime, but, hell! . . . The boss would strut down the line, while the men begged him with their eyes. He would stop here, and pick out a Negro; would stop there, and pick out another. And the whites would swear under their breaths. Sometimes they would swear aloud, and sometimes fighting between them and the blacks could not be averted.

Then the Boston newspapers flew streamer headlines proclaiming the "race riot" on the waterfront. The straw-boss' scheme had worked successfully. He would perhaps receive an extra dollar from his boss for a damned good job. For this elaborate show of "preference" for Negro unorganized longshoremen was a cunningly calculated scheme. A class-conscious white worker explained: "They give the colored fellows the preference so they can keep them and the white fellows separated. If they can keep us at one another's throat all the time, they know there won't be any chance of our coming together and cooperating. You see, they expect all us white fellows to be organized, sooner or later;

then, if we should happen to strike, the company could use the colored fellows as allies. You see, all this is just their way of manufacturing scabs out of the colored fellows."

Entering Boston for the first time last July, the Marine Workers' Industrial Union immediately attacked the problem which I. L. A. officials and their ship-owning bosses had aggravated. Building up a militant union here has been hard; it still is. At first ignored with sneering contempt by the I. L. A. aristocrats, the M. W. I. U. today is driving them to distraction. But this distraction is evincing itself not so much in the wringing of pudgy A. F. of L. paws as in desperate acts of violence against individual members of the M. W. I. U. When first noticed by the I. L. A., the M. W. I. U. organizer was frequently threatened by rank and file I. L. A. members. On one or two occasions he was mauled around and told to keep off the docks. He and his comrades knew that these men were following orders of their leaders, these leaders in turn being direct links with the steamship owners and officials. So the M. W. I. U. continued to issue leaflets that exposed the role of I. L. A. officials. Rank and filers in that union read the leaflets; reading, they began to think.

What is the situation today? Well, let the M. W. I. U. organizer absent himself from the waterfront for one day, and rank and filers of the A. F. of L. union will demand aggrievedly to know where he has been so long. They do not say it in so many words, but they unmistakably imply their resentment at being neglected by "you reds." The situation, then, has developed into one in which officials instead of rank and filers have to do the companies' dirty work. Whispering, "Reds! Up and at 'em!", the ship owners could once sit back and gloat while the workers sailed into the militant organizers. Today the bosses have to do the job, aided by the Boston police.

Leading the present coal-boat strike in Boston, the Marine Workers' Industrial Union has encountered hostility on two determined fronts. Since the crews were pulled off the first boats more than two weeks ago, officials both of the International Seamen's Union and the International Longshoremen's Association, A. F. of L. affiliates of the American Steamship Owners Association (all allied with the coal boat owners), have fought desperately to kill the militant organization. This combination represents one of the hostile fronts. The other one is the newspapers.

Here is a strike situation in which at present 13 coal boats are partially or completely at the mercy of their determined crews. It means that little or no coal is being delivered in Boston; it means that a coal shortage is staring the city in the face during the severest win-

ter in the records. Yet no newspaper mentions the strike. Questioned about their silence, the city editors and the labor reporters retort irritably that there is no such thing; that there is a so-called union "that hasn't even got a telephone," a bunch that's affiliated with the I. W. W.'s, making "extravagant demands on the ship owners;" but "nobody's paying any attention to them." No; nobody's paying any attention to them; that is, nobody but the ship owners, the seamen (who are filling the M. W. I. U. headquarters to overflowing every day), the police who have mounted machine-guns on the ships to keep the strike committees off), members of the John Reed Club, the National Student League, and the Young Communist League (who are helping to keep up the strikers' morale with entertainment and food). No; aside from these, nobody's paying any attention to the Marine Workers' Industrial Union—except the newspapers. For, let there be no question about it, the newspapers are alertly on the job. What they are doing now is deliberately and consciously suppressing that part of the news which they *fear* to print, lest it cause panic.

Why, they ask themselves, should we publish the fact that only a few tons of coal are available during the worst winter some of us have ever seen? Why, it might cause discontent, and criticism of the government. In other words, the newspapers are doing their part under the code they have recently signed. Their part is to suppress any news that might "inflame the public mind"; such news, for instance, as that of the three seamen whom everybody on the waterfront knew to be missing from the Glen White except Boston's city editors.

In the meantime the strike goes on. Nobody can tell how long it will last. By the time this article appears it may be over; again, it may have spread. At present, there are thirteen coal boats tied up in and around Boston harbor. Boston is the focal point, both because most of the seamen live here and because the Marine Workers' Industrial Union, despite its youth, is strongest here.

The strike is aimed in general against the shipowners' code; specifically, it is aimed at all the abuses aristocrats of the International Seamen's Union and the coal-boat owners have crammed down the seamen's throats since these workers can remember: coal trimming, which is the job of longshoremen; insufficient and rotten food (literally rotten, at times); refusal to recognize the Marine Workers' Industrial Union; starvation pay; blacklists; refusal to agree to central shipping bureaus controlled by seamen and longshoremen; withholding of pay (on some of the richest lines) *for as long as six months at a time!*