

# Against the Stalinist Union Bureaucracy!

went a long way to demoralize these workers. Comrade Mink showed off his extravagance by staying at a swell hotel while in New Orleans, while the active organizers slept on deck of the union hall and went hungry while they were doing organizing work on ships and docks. This caused many workers to raise embarrassing questions to the organizers who had to sleep on the decks. When comrade Morgan and others asked Mink why this extravagance—Mink could offer no other answer than the excuse that it was orders from the Communist Party. Another case showing the neglect of the workers by the bureaucracy, is to be found in the Independent Tide Water Boatmen's Union which has a membership of 1250 workers. It can conduct activities among 15,000 workers in the Harbor. Comrade Golden informed Mink and Hines of the League about the reported vote of the I. T. B. U. to affiliate with the Marine Workers League. But Mink and Hines just neglected to do anything about it. They even refused to get in touch with the I. T. B. U. or make any effort at all to win over workers in this organization. Thus the bureaucrats threw away another fine opportunity for winning workers to our ranks. Their contempt for the workers again showed itself. In fact this leadership even went so far as expelling members for going into the I. T. B. U., for example, Willy Lang. . . .

## THE "LEADERSHIP" RUINS STRIKES

In June the opposition proposed that our union should make preparations to lead a strike of 16,000 longshoremen and seamen in the port of New Orleans in the fall of the year which is the busy season. The board of the union adopted this proposal. Comrades Morgan, Haigeny, Golden, Seaganik and Evans, were chosen to proceed to the New Orleans Port immediately. However, no funds were provided for these comrades and no support whatever was given them in order to enable them to carry out the decisions.

Despite the fact that these comrades had made many contacts in the port of New Orleans and were familiar with the situation, two other comrades totally unfamiliar with the situation in New Orleans were provided with ample funds and rushed down to New Orleans to replace the above comrades originally chosen. Under orders from the bureaucratic leadership of Hines, Harvey and Johnstone, these two members proceeded shortly after their arrival in New Orleans to call a premature strike for which no preparation whatsoever had been made. The result of this strike was to discredit the union in the eyes of the marine workers in that port. Harvey's circulation of a false news release to the effect that a 20% increase in wages was won, only further discredited our organization with the longshoremen. . . .

Yet, this fiasco which the bureaucratic leadership performed in New Orleans was advertised at the last Fifth R. I. L. U. Congress as one of the big achievements of our union. Such bluff is very costly and only hurts the best interests of the marine workers.

Exactly the same bureaucratic adventurist sabotaging policy was followed by the leadership in the recent Philadelphia strike. The night before the Atlantic District United Front Conference in Philadelphia, Sep. 20, 21, there was held a Bureau meeting of the union. Gardos, the District Organizer of the Communist Party of Philadelphia, was present. Comrade Hines was present also. Here it was decided that we should go to this united conference to propose active preparations for a strike. The workers were to go back to their jobs and set up their dock committees and take all the necessary steps for a strike.

Right after the conference there was held in Philadelphia a bureau meeting of the marine workers. There were present at this meeting in addition to the eight National Bureau members of the marine workers seven representatives of the Communist Party. Among these special representatives were Gardos, T. U. U. L. representative, etc. Gardos immediately proposed the withdrawal of the organizers from the Philadelphia field. These workers were Soderburg and Johansen. But the Bureau members protested against this proposal of Gardos. A hot discussion followed. Hudson supported Gardos by making his motion for the withdrawal of the organizers from Philadelphia field. Comrade Hoben amended this motion to the effect that the organizers should stay.

There soon followed bitter fights as to who is and who is not a bureau member. Gardos gave himself a vote. Hines and Hudson voted with him. But that was all the votes that Gardos's proposal could muster. The rank and file were against Gardos and Hines. Gardos then said:

"I, as the District Organizer of the Communist Party, over-rule the decision. This is only a fraction meeting of the Communist Party."

Later the organizers were forced out by a sort of rump meeting which Gardos and Hines set up themselves. The New York members of the union protested against this action. To cover up this high-handed action and to escape the wrath of the rank and file the bureaucracy decided to call a strike in Philadelphia.

Within three days after the recall of these organizers the Party ordered the return to Philadelphia and without calling any meeting of longshoremen to agitate them and convince them for a strike, without having any strike vote of longshoremen, without setting up any strike com-

mittees, the bureaucracy issued a mimeographed leaflet calling on the workers to strike. The only meeting that was held before the strike call was issued, was a meeting of about 10 Communist Party members who were seamen and voted for the longshoremen to go out on strike. When these comrades went down to the docks to call the strike the longshoremen bitterly resented it and beat them up. Furthermore, instead of going to the docks of the coast-wise shipping where we had some strength, these comrades went first to the I. L. A. piers, where we had no strength. Without any previous preparations they notified the longshoremen that there was to be a strike.

## The Outlook for the New Movement

What are the prospects for the movement in the marine workers' Left wing which is expressed in the document we publish here? The outlook for growth, influence and prestige is unusually excellent—providing the movement remains on the path of the revolutionary class struggle. No greater harm, nor swifter decline and degeneration, can threaten this splendid rank and file revolt than to have it turn into an anti-Communist, or anti-Communist Party movement, especially when it occurs under the outworn or hypocritical slogan of "away with the politicians" or "we want to build a trade union movement" or "this is not a party fight." The bulk of the active workers in this movement are Communists or workers wanting to be Communists. They are being and will constantly be provoked by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the hopes that they react towards an indefensible position. That cheap game of the Minks and Johnstones can be fought by persistently maintaining a revolutionary class position, by working to win the whole Left wing movement (not only the marine workers) to the cause of the rank and file opposition, by refusing to be cut loose from this Left wing for the sake of some fantastic and futile ends. That is what the Party bureaucrats are after—to isolate this promising movement, which they fear immensely, from the general Left wing and to provoke it into an anti-Communist movement. Giving aid and comfort (whether they realize it or not) to the Party bureaucrats is a small group of syndicalists who are hoping to recreate a second edition of the I. W. . . . The Left wing as a whole has learned from the rich experiences of the I. W. W., but these neo-syndicalists apparently have not. Away from the Communist movement, away from the Left wing, towards a second (and miniature) edition of syndicalism—this road is sure to lead the rank and file opposition group to a futile existence, ever-diminishing, and easy marks for the blows of the Stalinists. Those who advocate this road, and they are the ones also who have back of their minds the idea of "playing with Lovestone" and other shady liquidationist elements, are helping to weaken and nullify the new movement. There are unfortunately a few of this element in the new movement. An intelligent policy by the Communist forces will not make it difficult to deal with this danger, which has been manufactured by the criminal policies of Stalinism bureaucracy, but which can be successfully eliminated by an honest revolutionary course. This obstacle overcome, and the movement will triumph irresistibly over the little Minks as well as the "bigger" Minks who give them their brief moment of power.

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This outrageous bureaucratic procedure in our union, this utter disregard of the most elementary rights of democracy in our union destroyed all the sentiment which we had succeeded in building up for our union, wiping out all our gains which we had won only through many months of very hard work. All the results which we had previously achieved by our great sacrifices were destroyed by this adventurist policy.

## BUREAUCRACY CRIPPLES OUR UNION

The situation in our union is intolerable. Things simply can't go on the way they are now going. Anybody who criticizes Mink, or even raises a question to him is immediately picked out as a target. A whispering campaign is opened against him in the fraction of the Communist Party and in the Union.

Altho comrade Morgan was elected to the National Committee of the Union by the rank and file delegates of the Convention and the National Committee elected him to the Executive board, yet, the bureaucracy didn't even think it necessary to call an executive board meeting when they decided to expell him from the Executive Board of the Union in June, 1930. Not only

was comrade Morgan removed from the Executive Board of the Union but he was removed from all leading committees and not even allowed to function in the capacity of organizer, Morgan's spotless record as an organizer notwithstanding.

Mink made the slanderous accusation against comrade Morgan charging him with refusal to go to the Gulf and with drunkenness. Comrade Harvey even proposed in the Bureau of the Union to expel comrade Morgan from the Party and the Union. Johansen seconded this motion. Hines proposed in the Bureau of the union that this question be referred to the Party and the T. U. U. L. Morgan tried to appeal against this. But he failed. The ridiculous and outrageous character of the charges against Morgan is shown by such indisputable facts as Morgan's being arrested more than one dozen times in New York, Houston (unemployment demonstration), New Orleans, etc., for his activities in trying to build up the Marine Workers Industrial Union. But Harvey found nothing but ridicule for these arrests. Comrade Mor-

and without keeping any accounts. . . .

But the Communist Party leadership chose a handpicked committee and after some delay only whitewashed Mink and Hines and company of the charge of running the lunch counter as a private affair.

How the bureaucracy tried to terrorize workers is clearly shown by their tactics towards comrade McGrath. Comrade McGrath who is a good worker and who mobilized the Philadelphia delegation for the National Office was asked to give a statement endorsing the leadership of the union. This statement was to be printed in all the Party papers. But comrade McGrath refused. Steps were then immediately taken to kill him politically. He was removed from all leading committees. He was shelved. Comrade McGrath became disgusted, naturally so.

The various organs and departments of our union don't function. They are dead. The committees don't meet. Insufficient and even false information is sent out. Altho the Executive Board has held meeting after meeting, the membership has never been acquainted with the proceedings or has had a chance to consult the minutes of these meetings. Nor are minutes from other ports available to us. Members are kept in ignorance about the activities of other ports. The bureaucracy prohibits the discussion of the activities of other branches.

## OUT WITH THE DESTRUCTIVE BUREAUCRACY — FOR CORRECT CONSTRUCTIVE POLICIES TO BUILD THE MARINE WORKERS INDUSTRIAL UNION.

It is because of these wrong policies, it is because of this denial of democracy in the union, it is because of this terrible bureaucracy, that no new members are being gotten into our union and old members are not paying dues. Today our union gets no response from longshoremen or seamen.

Highhanded political conniving can only hurt our union as it has already done. It must be stopped. We are against such arbitrary ways of working as was done in the setting up of a special bureau to control the convention. There must be an end to the sectarianism in our policies which has caused the marine workers to speak of our union hall merely as: "Communist hall." This tends to narrow our base of activities amongst the marine workers. There must be put an end to the bureaucratic incompetence which showed itself in the failure to do anything at all to provide adequate defense and attention for Ralph Duncan, the literature agent of our union after his arrest on September 20 in union hall. This is an example of the disregard of our incompetent leadership for the welfare of our union and its membership.

We, members and active workers in the union demand an end of this state of affairs. We demand a thorough-going house cleaning. We demand that our union should begin to consider national affairs. We demand that our union should take steps to strengthen itself, to build its ranks, to wipe out bureaucracy, to establish rank and file control, to have democracy in our union. We demand correct policies. We demand an end to adventurism in the conduct of strikes. We demand responsibility in handling organization questions. We demand the removal from leadership of the present bureaucracy—Hines, Mink, Harvey. We demand that the rank and file should be given a chance to discuss the policies of our union, to adopt correct policies and to elect a new leadership which will have the confidence of our rank and file and will be able to lead in the building up of the Marine Workers Industrial Union into a mass militant union.

It is only by making such a thorough-going house cleaning, by facing and examining the facts frankly, by merciless self-criticism and correction that we can unite our forces, strengthen our organization and succeed in our aim which is the building of a powerful industrial union uniting all the marine transport workers in the country.

Marine Workers Industrial Union  
Rank and File Committee

Larry Murphy\*  
M. Soderstrom\*  
W. Crocket\*  
John Starkovitch\*  
Joe Cass\*  
Joseph Murphy\*  
Aal Erickson\*  
A. Fransen\*  
C. H. Rorr\*

Ernest Lobart\*  
John S. Morgan\*  
Joe Golden\*  
John Anderson\*  
Henry Williams\*  
S. M. McDonald  
Edward Simmons  
Ralph Duncan

He conducted it as a private enterprise