

Ryan Says No to Appeal For I.L.A. Aid to Ethiopia

By CYRIL BRIGGS

A blunt refusal to lift a finger to oppose Fascist Italy's projected war of plunder against the Ethiopian people and its inherent threat of a new world war, more bloody and horrible than even the first world war, was made by Joseph P. Ryan, president of the International Longshoremen's Association, in a letter to the Looking Forward Publishing Co., the Daily Worker learned yesterday.

Ryan's letter was in answer to an appeal by Leon A. Bynoe, president of the Looking Forward Publishing Co., a Negro enterprise, for action by the I.L.A. to stop the loading of the huge shipments of war material to Fascist Italy from American munition concerns for use against the Ethiopian people.

Flouting the strong anti-war sentiments of the I.L.A. rank and file, Negro and white, and the official condemnation of Italy's war moves by the Executive Committee of the A. F. of L., Ryan answered that the I.L.A. "cannot refuse to load ships" — even though the cargoes are death dealing weapons and munitions and consigned to a regime that has smashed the trade unions and other organizations of the Italian workers.

In his refusal to support the anti-war actions which white and Negro workers are carrying out on an increasingly wide scale throughout the country, Ryan repeated his treacherous argument of a few months ago when he unsuccessfully

tried to force West Coast longshoremen to unload scab cargoes on the peculiar grounds that agreement with the ship owners precluded solidarity actions by American longshoremen with striking longshoremen in Vancouver, British Columbia.

To refuse to load ships with lethal weapons, he now says in his letter to the Looking Forward Publishing Co., would be "depriving our men of a livelihood, particularly (1) in view of the fact that we are signatory parties to agreements which it has taken us twenty years to perfect. Should we do this, we would without question place these agreements in jeopardy."

This shameful argument was answered at the recent national convention of the I.L.A. by Harry Bridges, militant West Coast marine workers' leader. Bridges pointed out then that union solidarity and the solidarity of the working class takes precedence over any agreements with the ship owners. Ryan's proposal to the West Coast Longshoremen to unload ships that had been loaded at Vancouver by scabs and

strikebreakers was rejected by the West Coast I. L. A. locals.

Such solidarity actions, as carried out by the militant West Coast longshoremen, far from "depriving our men of a livelihood," have resulted in strengthening the West Coast I.L.A. locals. As a result of their militant refusal to unload scab cargoes, West Coast longshoremen have now forced the shipowners to renew their agreement for another year. Wages of San Francisco longshoremen, it is pointed out by the New York I.L.A. rank and file committees, at present average three times as much as those of the men in New York.

The agreement with the Atlantic ship owners expires in October. Ryan's attempt to have the present agreement renewed, with a five cents an hour increase thrown in as a sop to the men, is meeting with vigorous opposition from the rank and file. Four I.L.A. locals in New York, including Ryan's own local No. 791, have gone on record in support of the rank and file demands for a six-hour day and union hiring halls as the basis of the new agreement.

Solidarity Source of Strength

The experience of the West Coast longshoremen shows conclusively that international solidarity actions can become a great source of strength for the unions, cementing the labor movement and at the same time laying the basis for victorious struggles at home for better conditions.

Negro and white longshoremen should demand a reversal of Ryan's policy on munition shipments.

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