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THE IMPASSE—
AND THE WAY OUT

The Impasse

SO TODAY, seamen are in an impasse, a blind alley. They sense it instinctively. They want to get clear. In previous sections we tried to show how they got into that impasse; because only by thoroughly understanding that, can they see how to get out of it.

We have seen why the maritime industry is a special one which must be government-fostered as a national enterprise, because in the cut-throat game of capitalist world competition that is the price any imperialism must pay for survival, however uneconomic its maritime industry may be. We have seen how, as the executive committee of the capitalist class, the government cannot be neutral between shipowners and maritime labor; but, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the peculiar needs of the national economy at the time, intervenes to aid the shipowners and repress the unions.

But the American government has given really careful consideration to the maritime problem only in periods of crisis. We have seen its colossal improvisation in World War I; and how, as ships were silhouetted against the gathering thunderheads of World War II, it finally reached, in the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, a definitive program which tried to anticipate the immediate needs of the national economy as well as its long-term ambition to reorganize the world market in its own interests.

U.S. imperialism, once plunged into the war, could not afford to leave its shipping industry at the mercy of the short-sighted policy and inefficient management of private owners. The anarchy of capitalist competition in this key field would endanger its entire war. Consequently the shipowners were replaced by the government—in everything save that which the government of the employing class

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is instituted to protect: private profit. It restored the profiteers in management again, but specifically as representatives of the government, to apply its program of rationalization, and elimination of wasteful competition.

But government control applies not only to shipyards, wharves, docks, terminals, and ships; it applies also to seamen. The government could not afford to leave labor relations in the hands of private management either. The interests of the whole employing class were involved, and even within that class the shipowners were discredited. They had been defeated by the maritime workers in 1934 and again in 1936-37. They were obviously not powerful enough themselves to cope with militant labor. The government stepped in to rig up what the shipowners had failed to do. The government's program toward the unions was: to destroy first their independence, then the unions themselves. We have seen in detail their method: steady unrelenting pressure, first from this angle, then from that. The moment union militants were aroused enough to fight back on one front, the pressure there was prudently lifted, but only to be redoubled on another. The buck and the pressure were passed neatly back and forth among the government agencies. But the purpose—through the government training ship, the government hiring hall, and the government discharge book—was single and consistent: the destruction of the bases for independent rank-and-file militancy. This was one pincer of the dual attack.

The other pincer was the attempted seduction of the union bureaucrats. The union leadership, as we have seen, by giving political support to the imperialist war, prepared the ground for all subsequent concessions. The seamen's unions voluntarily gave up the right to strike, to hold crew meetings aboard ship, and concentrated their attention on providing crews for the submarine targets. The Stalinists, consistent politicals, were selling out the unions with both hands in the hopes of government posts on the British model; the "anti-politicals," naturally inconsistent in a purely political situation where only political action counted, floundered and flopped, ceding position after position, stubbornly enough but with no hope of ultimate success. The government, as we have shown, pushed relentlessly on, trying first the Land gambit, then the Knox gambit, then the all-out requisition opening, then the Army-transport side-attack, then the M-1 sneak-play. With one leadership treacherous, and the other bamboozled, the unions have reeled back, fanning the air, till, in the general puzzlement, the gravest danger of this present moment is that the rank and file may fall into a confused apathy.

Union independence has already been perilously compromised;

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it is in imminent danger of being lost entirely. One through open treachery, the other through incorrect policy, the union leaderships have failed. That is the simple fact of the present situation.

On the shipowner side, U.S. imperialism has "nationalized" the industry, with its requisitioning order of April 1942. The status is peculiar: the industry is actually owned by the government; the control is exercised by government boards packed with private operators. The government provides the ships at public expense, but turns them over to companies who are guaranteed an enormous profit for "managing" them. These companies put nothing into the industry; they take everything out of it. Even as mere representatives of broader general policy, they continue their special wangles. If they were really private concerns engaged in free competition they would be more careful what kind of trips their ships are sent on. But, under the present set-up, just as they are not concerned about the loss of seamen's lives, so they are not concerned about loss of ships or cargoes. The government will replace all losses: profits are guaranteed in any case. Congress has earmarked enough funds to insure against all risks. Government control here, unlike its control of the seamen, is really benevolent and protective for the shipowners: it strives to create order out of chaos, and benefits the biggest by establishing area monopolies. The post-war perspective is to subsidize one giant company for each of the major trade routes. To top all, the *New York Times* of November 22, 1942, reports that shipping companies can deduct advertising expenses from gross profits as "reasonable expenses" because they are quite justified in keeping their line-names and house-flags before the public for the post-war period. It's Christmas all year round.

What has happened to the maritime industry under capitalist management is well illustrated by the fantastically bungled plans to build a really modern merchant fleet. Let's examine a few technical details that are of real importance to seamen in their daily work. While other powers were building ships capable of 24 knots and higher, designed to stay afloat except under the heaviest pounding of torpedoes and shells. American plans called at best for "C" type ships of 16 to 19 knots, representing no great improvement over shipbuilding of 20 years ago. The Liberty ships are still worse, slow 10-knot jobs in no way adequate to meet the demands of present-day shipping, especially under war-time conditions. Leaving aside the question of crews' quarters which up to now has been of primary concern to the unions, even the gear for loading and discharging is antiquated. Few sailors who have worked on these new ships have not complained how left-handed the gear is: guys are heavy and

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out of all proportion to the load the booms are designed to carry, fair-leads are built in the wrong places, and blocks are shackled in so that everything chafes when the gear is working. These are only questions of faulty design based on old patterns. The whole idea of using booms hung from a ship's mast to discharge cargo is borrowed from sailing ship days and adapted to use on modern steamers. The Dutch have experimented with cranes on board ship and find that this innovation makes for much more efficient handling of cargo. Sailors who have to work with ship's gear every day are able to advance a wealth of new ideas for improving it. These details may seem picayune at this point. They are not; they are revealingly symptomatic. They mean that the "managers," the "administrators," of present capitalist management not only cannot build enough ships, or good enough ships: they furthermore will not build ships that in even their minor details function at a modern level of technical efficiency.

In sum, seamen today are snarled deeper and more inextricably in a net of government regimentation, see their union independence compromised and lost, face eventually the complete destruction of their unions, as in 1921 but on a much broader scale. Meanwhile, they see the completely incompetent shipowners, transmuted into government administrators, riding high, wide, and handsome, carrying on the same greedy inefficiency that means millions of public funds, thousands of seamen's lives, wasted in a fat-cat orgy of profits and bungling. They see their leaders either wriggling comfortably into this muck, or vacillating hopelessly with no clear idea of how to keep out of it.

Furthermore, the thoughtful, advanced sector of seamen realize that this governmental "program" for maritime is this time no emergency expedient to be abandoned the day war ends; it is, unless a stop is put to it, the picture of the future. They feel that if it was correct for seamen to oppose the government's anti-union measures before war, the same is true during war; and that, if it is not done, the after-war will be the same but worse. But they sense that what labor lacks is a means of organizing and expressing its instinctive opposition. It has no program of its own, no voice to express that program, and no weapon to fight for it. They further realize that this impasse in which maritime labor finds itself is only the foreshadowing of the position of all American labor. Because of maritime's special nature, imperialism has placed it out in front. Its present position, snarled in the tangled skein of government regimentation, is only the pattern for future government control of *all* U.S. labor power.

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The maritime unions, vanguard of the American working class, are in full retreat under government attack. If this process is not soon arrested, ahead lies complete disaster.

The Way Out—The SWP's Maritime Program

That's the way it is. No serious-minded seaman can kid himself about it. Maritime labor is all fouled up.

The situation is not hopeless. There *is* a way out. It takes realism, it takes clear thinking, and it takes courage. It requires, as the first step on the road to a real, a socialist, solution, three conditions:

- 1) Restoration of union independence.
- 2) Workers' control.
- 3) Independent political action.

Union Independence

The first problem today is how to retain the independence of the maritime unions under war-time conditions.

Seamen have learned in bitter experience that the government is not neutral. In some shoreside industries, such as the Kearney Shipyard and Bayonne General Cable Co., strikers up against a tough boss demanded that the government take over the plant. The government stepped in, forced the strikers back to work under the same old wages and conditions—and returned the plants to private management as soon as the strike was broken. Any seaman who got mixed up in these strikes would have known better. Shipping is the first industry where government controls. Government boards—seamen know them well. Under the planned attack of these boards, even the signed contracts the unions won from shipowners in long and bitter struggles are rapidly being reduced to scraps of paper. The seamen have found that their fight to retain conditions has had to be directed against the government, that they had to demand that the government respect the contractual relations established between the operators and the unions. But since the government board is packed with operators, the demand is only a makeshift.

Some of these boards' worst proposals, as we have seen, were made under the guise of maintaining "discipline." For example, the prohibition of union meetings of crews aboard ships. The decree is not only a give-away of the government's anti-union intentions, but, properly understood, a boomerang. For, by doing away with union meetings, the government did away with the only kind of discipline that works, that counts: the discipline that is self-imposed and comes from a loyalty to the union which improves the living and working standards of its members. Any

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other kind of discipline is that of the master over his slaves; the kind that benefits not the industry but the plunderers of the industry. All the fine phrases about "discipline" are just camouflage for the government-shipowner drive to smash the maritime unions. Real discipline is self-discipline; union discipline. *Let the unions maintain discipline! Hands off union affairs!*

The Continuous Discharge Book, likewise proposed in the name of "discipline," is another blow at union independence. This Fink Book does nothing to establish a seaman's competence, which is tested rather by the examinations every seaman must pass to gain his ratings. Before signing articles he must show the official papers proving this competence. No, the Continuous Discharge Book is designed solely as a blacklist. That the government boards always tend in this direction is shown by the identification papers a seaman is forced to carry. First, he must be able to prove citizenship; then, besides his rating papers, he must carry an official identification certificate, a Coast Guard pass issued by the FBI, and the State Department's seamen's passport, all of which bear his photographs and finger-prints. It is but a short step to a government-organized blacklist. The Continuous Discharge Book is that blacklist. Seamen must continue the fight against accepting it. *One book for all seamen—the Union Book! No Fink Book for American seamen!*

The independence of the unions is threatened by the proposal to establish a common pool of seamen, on either a national or international scale. Such a pool would not only cut across union jurisdictions, but, far more serious, would give non-union men equal privileges with those who hold union books. The government's attempt to establish pools met with such united opposition from every seamen's group (except the Stalinists) that it had to shelve the plan—but only temporarily. Renewed and more carefully engineered attempts to dissolve the unions in a common pool of seamen can be expected. The government's fine talk about "filling the manning requirements of the industry" is a smoke-screen for union-smashing regimentation. Who is more qualified to "fill the manning requirements" than the unions? The union hiring hall has been an established institution for more than seven years. No one can deny that the most experienced and capable ships' crews come from the union halls. All the old-time sailors, sea-wise from half a lifetime spent on ships, belong to the unions. Without these experienced men among the new recruits, a crew is virtually helpless in time of emergency. But, above all, maintenance of the union halls is one of the keystones in maintenance of union independence.

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Destruction of the union halls would paralyze the unions. *Defend the union hiring hall! No pool! No government halls!*

In the final analysis, the life of maritime unions, as of all other unions, depends on their power to enforce their demands and to defend their gains. The basis of that power is their ability to strike. If they are deprived of the right to strike, or worse still, if they voluntarily give up this right, they become powerless, and their days are numbered. One of the principal functions of the government boards is to wear away the strike weapon through endless delays, red-tape, and phoney arbitration set-ups. Only the unconditional right to strike can guarantee complete independence of the maritime unions. *Defend union independence by maintaining the right to strike!*

In exchange for voluntarily giving up the right to strike, trade-union officials are often given posts in the secondary bureaus set up to administer the government's program. This is palmed off on the union membership as a "voice in government." The government needs them in these posts so that they can use their union position and prestige to make the union membership accept the government's anti-union program. In the formation of that program they have no voice at all. They are captives in the government apparatus. As we have seen demonstrated by the servile leaders of the British seamen, their talents, however limited, are at the service of the employing class. They concern themselves with the government's problems to the neglect of the union's problems and the membership's interests. In these surroundings, out of touch with the membership, they forget that without the union they are nothing and tend to lose their sense of union responsibility. They are hostages in the camp of the capitalist enemy. The rank and file must put a stop to this. *No union hostages in government war boards!*

The last war showed what happens when maritime unions give up the right to strike and collaborate with the government, spearhead of the shipowners. In this war the government attack on the independence of the unions is infinitely more complex, infinitely more determined. If union independence is not defended, the unions are lost. Militant seamen must advocate this minimum program to defend their unions against government attack!

*Let the unions maintain discipline! Hands off union affairs!
One book for all seamen—the Union Book! No Fink Book for
American seamen!*

*Defend the union hiring hall! No pool! No government halls!
Defend union independence by maintaining the right to strike!
No union hostages in government war boards!*

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Workers' Control

Now that the complete parasitism and catastrophic ineptitude of the shipowners have become evident, the next task is to bring these greedy, clumsy parasites under the supervisory control of the men who man the ships.

Every official government report on the condition of the maritime industry is testimony to the incompetence, the flagrant and systematic plundering of those who have been placed in charge of the industry. A union demand to drive out of public office these industrial racketeers and all their political stooges would be a service to American society. The operators have made a complete hash of the maritime industry. There is no one qualified to build a maritime industry except the maritime workers. But the first step is workers' control.

The advantages of workers' control are obvious. The entire industry would be freed from the paralyzing need to line the pockets of Wall Street. The ineptitude of a fossilized and piratical management living in the remote past would be checked by progressive seamen keenly and intimately aware of all the problems of the industry. The question of decent quarters, wages, and working conditions could be disposed of in passing. The men who live on the ships know what their homes should be like. The unions can best decide what wages and working conditions should be established. All the bigger problems of developing the maritime transportation system would become the central concern of the tens of thousands of intelligent working men who go to sea. The industry would become the first public utility in America controlled by the workers.

Are the workers capable of controlling the industry? Well, let us look at one example of what is already being done, as reported in the September 4, 1942, issue of the official SUP organ, *West Coast Sailor*:

It costs the U.S. Maritime Commission \$654 per man to turn out an ordinary seaman—and double that, or \$1,308.90 per man to turn out an A-B. The SUP plan has not cost the government one penny! Yet we have turned out some 500 A-Bs, at a saving to the tax-payers of some \$654,000—not counting the administration costs of the Maritime Commission Schools.

It is foolish for workers in the industry to dig down in their own pockets or pay out of the treasury of their union for training new recruits. Congress has allotted money for this purpose, and certainly either the government or the shipowners ought to carry the burden of training these new recruits. The only remaining question, then, is who is qualified to train seamen. The Sailors

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Union of the Pacific has demonstrated that no other agency except the union itself is qualified to conduct this training program.

The SUP's training program has now added a two-masted schooner to school a still larger number of young sailors. Here then is a case of where a union took up a job which the government pretended only it could do, and, according to the most qualified observers, has done it ten times better. It is a key case, because it not only shows that workers are perfectly capable of such administrative tasks, but it struck a direct counter-blow against the government's attempt in its fink schools to inoculate new seamen with anti-union prejudices, steer them away from union influence through the pool and into unorganized lines like the Standard Oil, and eventually flood the industry with potential strike-breakers. As long as control of these schools remains in anti-union hands, they threaten the unions' very existence. Now if, in the SUP case, such excellent results in turning out skilled union seamen can be obtained in what amounts to an experiment by a single union, what couldn't the unions do if placed in charge of all the government training schools with all their enormous resources? And union control of the schools would guarantee against the government's instilling anti-union poison into new recruits, such as was confessed by Admiral Wiley who, speaking at a shipowners' celebration on Maritime Day 1940, expressed the government's wistful hope as follows:

... it was doubtful that men given pay and subsistence while they are in training will want to follow the guidance of union leaders.
[*Journal of Commerce*, May 23, 1940.]

Here, then, is a first step whose practicality is unarguable, whose need is pressing. It demands immediate action. *Train new seamen at government expense under trade-union control! No fink ships!*

It is true that the training of new seamen is only one phase of the problem of supervising the administration of the maritime industry; but the same results could be expected throughout the entire industry under workers' control. Not a few seamen have visualized how efficiently the ships could be run if the crews, including the captains, were responsible not to a miserable handful of parasitic private operators, but to the mighty mass organizations of labor.

How would workers' control work out in contradistinction to the present government board set-up? First of all, the seamen would elect committees in a democratic fashion either on the ships or through their unions. These committees, placed on the company payroll, would become watchdogs on the company operations. It is secret bookkeeping, "trade secrets," and trade agreements that permit the bosses to hide all the profiteering and graft. These

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committees would check the company books, keeping track not only of contracts, shipments, salaries, etc., but especially of profits. They would worm out shady deals, trace tie-ups with labor's enemies, and curb everything to the detriment of the industry. Where some deal might prove too devious for them to follow easily, they could call in specialists, such as public accountants, research experts, etc., to help out. The committees' findings would bring the inner workings of the shipping outfits to light, not years after the events, but while they are occurring. "Business secrecy" is the parasitical bosses' best smoke-screen. Once it is blown away, their plundering could be stopped, their pretenses revealed as such, their greedy mismanagement converted to efficient administration. The millions of public funds poured by the government into the maritime industry could be really used for that industry instead of sneaked off into the shipowners' pockets. The answer is: *Workers' control! Open the shipowners' books! All maritime subsidies controlled by union committees!*

What would the set-up be under workers' control? We have seen that behind the sham maintained to guarantee operators' profits, we already have government ownership, plus operators' management. Result: graft, inefficiency. Superimpose workers' control, and it would already be a long stride forward to eliminate plundering and incompetence in favor of honest and efficient administration.

But where, furthermore, would workers' control lead? First, to the discovery that it is nowhere near so complicated to manage an industry as the capitalist mismanagement deliberately makes out in order to bamboozle honest workers who don't know it from the inside. Secondly, to the experience that those special administrative tasks which require some little technical training could be learned fast enough by an alert committee really interested in finding out what makes a shipping company tick. Those who know both worlds suspect that the committee would find out that it takes greater skill to make a good oiler or able seaman or cook than it does to sit behind a desk transmitting orders for the movement of a cargo or a ship.

A short period of workers' control would convince everyone—except the ship-"owners" and their stooges—that the maritime workers could manage the maritime industry a thousand times better than it is managed at present. The experience gained through workers' control would enable the workers to decide whether to move on to the next big step, workers' *management*. That is, turning the parasitical ship-"owners" completely out of management and

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replacing them by a management of the workers themselves. But that is for the future; right now, the immediate pressing demand is for workers' *control*, that is, *supervision* of the capitalist management. Freed of the paralyzing limitations of private profits, the workers would force the replacement of the rust-buckets and sea-cows with real ships, efficiently designed and propelled, with proper loading gear and decent crew quarters. The parasitical operators have mismanaged the U.S. merchant marine long enough. *Stop the mismanagement of the ship-"owner" parasites! Let the men who man the ships control the industry!*

Two sanguinary wars and the semi-starvation of uneasy peace, scores of years of public millions poured into the bottomless pit of shipowner greed without producing a real merchant marine, show that the shipowners are unsalvageable. The first experiment in union duplication of a government function shows how false is all the boss talk about "impracticality." The time has come for seamen to get behind this minimum program for workers' control:

Train new seamen at government expense under trade-union control! No junk ships!

Workers' control! Open the shipowners' books! All maritime subsidies controlled by union committees!

Stop the mismanagement of the ship-"owner" parasites! Let the men who man the ships control the industry!

Independent Political Action

Because it is now the government itself, instead of individual shipowners, which stands facing maritime labor, any economic action automatically becomes a political action. The nature of any action by a union is determined by the demands the union raises. Today all demands are political. Even a small job action for wash-rooms on Liberty ships is filled with political significance because it is directed at a government board. But beyond this, in the present sharpening situation, more important demands are becoming of a more highly political nature: they deal primarily with such non-economic questions as democratic expression, a union's right to independent existence, opposition to government regimentation (such as Fink Books), etc.

The present capitalist management and its stooges naturally will fight against such measures as workers' control. Even if it were won, the struggle could still be lost if political measures were not taken in time to consolidate the victory.

Such reorganization of the maritime industry requires the united action of the majority of the workers of the country. Here is where

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the political problems of the seamen merge with the problems of American labor as a whole.

Certainly both the AFL and the CIO should understand the fight seamen are having to make today. Seamen's unions, because of the unique character of maritime, form an advance guard, now under the heavy fire of the government as it moves up steadily against the entire labor movement. What the seamen are getting today, all labor will get tomorrow. The independence of every union is threatened. All union men must understand this.

Even if Maritime Commission admirals cannot understand seamen's answers to the industry's problems, shoreside labor can and will: the seamen's story will get sympathetic understanding from all union men. Seamen can present a program for their own industry. But the only satisfactory program runs head-on into the whole weight of the government apparatus. Seamen alone cannot drive out the \$1-a-year maritime parasites, cannot by themselves force the government to change its policy of anarchy and waste. This needs the support of the whole trade-union movement. Seamen have learned that it is impossible to live in isolation and have banded together in the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. But under present conditions and with their present program, the best that the CIO and AFL bureaucracy can offer their affiliated unions struggling for existence is "moral support."

This "moral support" is expressed most often in the political arena. It consists in CIO or AFL legislative representatives appearing before some Congressional committee in protest against certain bills harmful to seamen's interests. More often it amounts to lining up "friendly" congressmen against new attacks by the government, or maneuvering for the appointment of "favorable" personnel to some union-smashing government agency such as the Maritime Commission. This is political action without a political weapon. It is as if the seamen had tried all these years to improve their economic status by promising some "friendly" employer not to organize unions if he would get the employers' association to grant a periodic wage increase.

The United States Congress is made up of Republicans and Democrats. Both of these political parties are organizations of the employing class, representing conflicting tendencies within that class. The eleven million organized American workers have not one single representative in Congress. The unions have their "Washington representatives." But these people have no voice in the government. They cool their heels in the ante-chambers of

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Congress trying to find some Republican or Democrat who will introduce a bill for them. They are allowed to appear before some committee and argue for their bill. But they are not permitted to get up in Congress and present their case. They have to leave that in the hands of the political agents of the employers.

The maritime unions, like most others, have found it necessary to maintain full-time representatives in Washington. Their salaries and expenses are paid out of the union treasury. They have no official status in Washington. They spend most of their time arguing in the various bureaus set up by the Maritime Commission about what further concessions seamen can be expected to make. The time is not far off when some of them will be given posts on one or another of the war boards. And then they will cease to be union representatives and become government agents, utilizing their union experience and prestige to put over the government's anti-union program. Mr. Sidney Hillman held such an official position, with its dubious honors, while a member of the Office of Production Management.

Only a political party of the working class can seriously address the demands of American labor to the capitalist government. Seamen have a right to some form of independent working-class political expression for their demands. Seamen are not fighting against individual shipowners. They are facing the entire employing class organized through its government. It is this government that feeds the shipowner parasites.

The government's maritime program will sooner or later eliminate the independent existence of the seamen's unions. This program has been carefully developed by the Maritime Commission for more than five years of its existence. No amount of running around the halls of Congress trying to find "friendly" support against this program has altered in any respect its basic aims. The only real support seamen can find is in the ranks of their own class—the working class.

Labor has been scuttled by capitalist-party politicians long enough. The choice between the Democratic and the Republican candidate is that between Tweedledum and Tweedledee; and in the last election many workers showed they recognized the fact by voting with their feet. The old Gompers notion that labor should "reward its friends and punish its enemies" has shown year after year how meaningless it is when by their actions the "friends" prove as inimical as the "enemies." It's a run-around; it's the old army game. It's time to put a stop to it. *No support to capitalist-party candidates!*

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When union representatives sit in Congress as members of a Labor Party they will be free to present the program of the working people of America. They will no longer have to depend upon the "favors" of the capitalist politicians. Labor is saddled with the main financial burden of government. It should have an independent voice in the council of government. But as things stand today union men and women are taxed to pay the salaries of their political enemies. On top of this they employ lone-wolf representatives to go to Washington and try to counteract the effects of their votes for political parties of the capitalists.

If seamen hope to put over the union program for the maritime industry they will have to demand political support from the entire labor movement. Any real support can come only from the organization by the trade unions of an independent working-class party, a labor party that will fight for the union program in the halls of Congress through its own elected representatives. *Build an independent labor party!*

A labor party should have a program of its own, a specifically labor program, in contradistinction to the boss program. In the case of maritime, we have seen how the parties of the capitalists have worked out and apply for them a carefully thought-through program which accurately reflects their interests and redounds to the detriment of seamen, wearing down their organizations and aiming at their annihilation. A labor-party program for seamen, quite on the contrary, should, in an equally thorough way, reflect their immediate interests, and find its place as an integral part of a broader general labor program written in the interests of the working class as opposed to the employing class. What the seamen's program should be is indicated in the earlier parts of this present section. What that broader program should be is explained in detail in the press of the Socialist Workers Party. *Demand an independent working-class political program!*

The melancholy record of the results of supporting the "lesser-evil" candidates of one of the two boss parties is plain for every worker to read. The time has come to abandon this demonstrably false tactic. Instead, seamen must get behind the following program:

No support to capitalist-party candidates!

Build an independent labor party!

Demand an independent working-class political program!

For more than 150 years seamen have fought an uphill struggle. From the semi-serf days of blood-spattered flogging by bucko-mates up to the latest Machiavellian jugglery to force the Fink

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Book upon them, seamen have found no lasting help in anyone but themselves and their working-class brothers. They have seen the "neutral" government pouring largesse into the shipowners' gravy-stained laps while it hunted seamen down with cops and troops. The gains they have won they won by their own organized might in courageous struggles that have left the memory of martyrs.

And now they see those gains stolen away by soft-talking boards, given away by treacherous or blundering officials. Today they feel a net of government regimentation closing in, snarling, tangling, strangling; and behind that net the capitalist government itself, which has taken over all ship-"owner" functions (except profit), facing them menacingly with the full weight of state power.

But union seamen are no cowards. The men who stood up against the hired thugs and gunmen of the shipowners, against the cops and state militia, not to mention the strike-breaking flunkies of the national government, are not the men to let themselves be quietly strangled now. If they can see a way out, government boards aren't going to scare them any more than shipowners' associations ever did. The whole point is: What is the way out?

The Socialist Workers Party seamen in all the U.S. maritime unions believe that this, their present program, shows the road and the only road. They call on all militant seamen to join them in the struggle to bring that program to reality, to put their brain and brawn into the fight —

FOR UNION INDEPENDENCE!

Let the unions maintain discipline! Hands off union affairs!

One book for all seamen—the Union Book! No Fink Book for American seamen!

Defend the union hiring hall! No pool! No government halls!

Defend union independence by maintaining the right to strike!

No union hostages in government war boards!

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL!

Train new seamen at government expense under trade-union control! No fink ships!

Workers' control! Open the shipowners' books! All maritime subsidies controlled by union committees!

Stop the mismanagement of the ship-"owner" parasites! Let the men who man the ships control the industry!

FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION!

No support to capitalist-party candidates!

Build an independent labor party!

Demand an independent working-class political program!