

# L U D D

## DON'T BREAK!

### SUPPORT IS THERE - USE IT!

THE SUPPORT IS THERE... NOT IN THE SACRED HALLS OF THE T U C, BUT IN THE DOCKS AND WORKSHOPS AMONG THE WORKERS. AT THE MOMENT THIS SUPPORT IS PASSIVE. IT IS UP TO THE SEAMEN TO TURN IT INTO ACTIVE SUPPORT. WITH CERTAIN HONOURABLE EXCEPTIONS IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT NO SUPPORT CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE EXECUTIVES OF OTHER UNIONS. SO FAR WORKERS IN OTHER INDUSTRIES HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH MONEY. THERE IS NOW NO DOUBT THAT THEY WILL ASSIST WITH ACTION. NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE JUSTICE OF THE SEAMEN'S CAUSE BUT BECAUSE IT IS A COMMON CAUSE. THE T U C HAS NOW JOINED THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SHIPOWNERS IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST THE SEAMEN. IT IS UP TO THE SEAMEN TO JOIN WITH OTHER WORKERS. THE T U C DOES NOT REPRESENT THE WORKERS... IT REPRESENTS THE BUREAUCRACY. ONLY UNITY AMONG THE WORKERS WILL WIN A COMPLETE VICTORY.

### ODD LOT

Much play has been made, by the daily papers (hardly the seamen's friends) about three small N U S branches anxious to get back on their tips. It must be a very queer seaman indeed who would choose such a time for withdrawal, but their actions become more logical when it is realised that they are in fact running sea-going trains.

### DEEPSEA VOICE

Only one third of the N U S members are now on strike - and surely the whole thing will be a farce if those men still at sea are given no chance to take part in the struggle. In the absence of these men the only acceptable end to the strike is a complete victory.

### DIRTY TRICK

Remember - the shipowners have used every dirty trick in the book to keep their ships at sea: diverting ships here and there; swapping flags of convenience and hiring foreign crews who are frequently unaware that they are being used as scabs. Politeness is a waste of time so far as the shipowners are concerned; they have the Government, the T U C and the law on their side, but even a mere third of the seamen out is enough to make them hysterical. What would be the result of a total strike?

### WORKERS' ACTION COMMITTEES

Serious moves took place over the week-end by the Labour Government, the T U C and the shipowners, to isolate the official National Union of Seamen's strike and to guide it into the muddy channels of a sell-out.

This was made clear by the visit of George Woodcock, TUC general secretary, to the Seamen's HQ, on Friday last and the appointment by the NUS executive council of a delegation of 9 to meet the TUC's "inner cabinet" at Congress House.

After carrying out this "cloak and dagger" operation, Woodcock gleefully sought out his friend, Ray Gunter, the minister of Labour, to report on his success. In turn, Ray Gunter then went on to a 35 minute visit to Harold Wilson at Downing St. to inform him of the success of Woodcock's manoeuvres. Wilson warmly shook Gunter's hand.

Woodcock said: "I think we have to forge an instrument to get them (the NUS) to co-operate." "Forge" about sums up the sinister purpose of the current scurrying backwards and forwards between the various parties.

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BEWARE OF THE DOG

### NO PONCING ABOUT

At last other workers are realising that the Seamen's strike is not going to win itself. The Docks Liaison Committees in London, Hull and the Merseyside have all taken action. Let us hope that this action was taken in time. The whole of official T U C and international Trade Unionism has tried to join the Government and the shipowners, backed by the law, in trying to smash the just demands.

Everyone knew that Woodcock would not lift his little finger. It took a lot to get him to leave the sunny shores of Majorca to condescend to put the knife into the N U S.

### TRANSPORT WORKERS -

The seamen have taken the brunt of this strike for over four weeks now. And the Docks Liaison Committee did not help matters by promising a never-never land of no work, lots of fall-back money and fairy cakes. None of us are idiots, we all know what the stakes are - if the seamen win we all win, if they lose then we all lose. So, now the dockers are supporting - it musn't stop there.

This strike is every transport workers' fight, so get in with both feet and make sure that the lorry-drivers and railwaymen understand it too.

# EBANI SAILED - WHY?

Seamen in Tilbury are naturally angry about the release of the Elder Demster ship, the EBANI, from Tilbury Docks last week. An they are right to be angry, but in this case things are not quite as they appear to be on the surface; there were scabs around, alright, but there seems to be some confusion as to who was scabbing.

## LONDON

Unanimous vote of dockers on Monday agreed not to work any British flag ship without reference to the Seamen's Strike Committee. The meeting, outside the Royal, also decided to black any foreign cargo normally carried by British flag ships.

Gordon Norris, of the N.U.S. emphasised that the seamen were not asking the dockers to strike. He appealed for international 'blacking' of all British ships.

Within one hour of the dockers resuming work, at least 5 gangs had contacted the Seamen's Strike Committee at the Royal Group to see if the ban applied to the ships on which they were working.

## HULL

Early reports indicate complete support for the seamen. Meeting held here confirms London Docks Liason Committee claim that all major ports will be affected.

Even so, how did the ship manage to sail? It was declared black long before it sailed and this was realised by the joint T & G W U and Seamen's Strike Committee.

The story is a rather sick example of what the seamen can expect from the officials of other unions: at 6.30 pm the Seamen's Strike Committee went down to the docks when they heard that the EBANI was sailing; they approached the lockgatemens who told them that she could not leave until 9.00 pm, and that they were to come off at 8.00 pm. The lockgatemens suggested that the Seamen contact the Branch secretary of T & G W U 1/154 branch and get him to deal with it. The branch secretary, K. Edgecombe, was informed, at his home, of what was going on. The seamen, thinking the matter settled, left for Shellhaven where they had another matter to deal with. Edgecombe tried to get hold of the District Official (E. Harrall) who was not available, but leaving a message, he went on to Tilbury where Harrall contacted him, and told him to "let her go".

So now you know who the scabs were.

## MERSEYSIDE

Meeting of all Birkenhead and Liverpool dockers decided to join with Hull and London in joint action against 'black' cargoes. Meeting addressed by members of the local N.U.S. strike committee.

# PEARSON'S PISS-POT

In the middle of the seamen's strike a rather curious document has come to light called the Pearson Interim Report. It was composed of a few layabouts who even had to work on a Saturday for a change. This miracle of Wilson planning paid these lads a fair old wack of loot to decide how much the seamen should be under paid. It was a desperate attempt to stave off what the government realises to be a completely just case. It will of course be ignored and it seems that the government is regretting its very existence. The laugh of course was that the official trade union delegate was Joe O'Hagan who 'carved-up' the Ford workers.

The rest of them make a rather unsavoury crew of directors and holders of various government sinecures. There was - or need we add - no seamen on the board. There are only two things worth mentioning about the report. 1st: That the government and employers have always said that they will not negotiate or hold an enquiry while the strike is on...but they have. Secondly article 37 doesn't bode much good for the rest of the inquiry into the Merchant Shipping Act, it says: "These plans must not in any way interfere with the right of the master to instruct men to work overtime as he sees fit." So the bastards have still got the whip out.

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The basis for this new move came, of course, after approaches from Harwich and Dover and certain other branches of the NUS - branches which have a reputation for "modest moderation!"

This despite the fact that the major branches of the NUS remain firmly solid and the overwhelming majority of the rank and file of seamen have stood firm against all the forces ranged against them: employers, the Labour government and the blandishments of the officials of the NUS.

In order to make it absolutely clear to the rank and file seamen that so far as the official trade union movement is concerned, they are "on their own", the TGWU executive met the same day and voted in effect not to extend its action in support of the seamen's strike beyond the minor efforts they have made so far. What this amounts to is that the "White" union docker members will continue working normally, except where instructed otherwise by the union officials, as has been the case since the beginning of the strike. Thus the T & G W U is following the lead of the TUC's "inner cabinet", which is to sell the seamen short in order that the TUC general council's support for the governments "wage freeze" policy shall not begin to melt. Nor can it be said that the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers,

the "Blues" has shown any more militancy. Its executive council also met and it appears that it is doubtful whether the "Blue" union will step out of line with the "White" union.

All this activity to scuttle the seamen's strike will render null and void any efforts of the International Transport Workers' Federation to swing into action the support of its affiliated membership. Even at this late stage of the strike, the NUS executive has made no firm appeal to the ITWF for supporting action.

As for the TUC, right from the very beginning of the strike, it has deliberately avoided pledging its solitariness and support for the seamen's struggle and has completely failed to make even a gesture of issuing a circular to affiliated unions for hard cash contributions for the seamen or for the extension of the strike by any appeal for solidarity action on the part of other transport unions or to the trades union movement in general.

Indeed, one can say in this situation that the TUC's effectiveness as a co-ordinating body in a genuine struggle of the workers against the employers, has once again been exposed. So far as militant struggle is concerned, it is a "stinking corpse", which has been laying around unburied for too long.

As we urged in the last issue of "LUDD", the seamen dare not rely any longer on the "official" movement. If the seamen are to win the maximum concessions out of this strike - and their strategic position is strong - they can only do so by an approach to the rank and file of other transport unions, the dockers, lockgatemens, road transport, and all other workers, for solidarity strike action.

The setting up of joint action committees is long overdue. The local seamen's strike committees - if they want the seamen to win - must go out to other sections of workers and invite them to co-ordinate rank and file activity through local joint action committees.

Local factories along the waterfronts in all ports should be immediately approached to join such action committees. Speakers must be out at factory gate meetings explaining the need for solidarity.

If the "admirals" of the official trade union movement have deserted the bridge, then the ship can only be kept on course by the crew.

Donations should be sent to the STRIKE COMMITTEE, National Union of Seamen, Victoria & Albert Docks, Connaught Road, London, E.16.