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INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN'S & WAREHOUSEMEN'S UNION

AFFILIATED WITH THE CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

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September 16, 1949

Memorandum to: Bridges ✓

From: Goldblatt

Please study carefully the attached circular issued by the Secretary of the Maritime Federation of the World. Frankly, it's pretty far from some of the basic documents adopted by the Conference, and it would seem to me it might not be a bad idea to send a note indicating our reaction.

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.... is a victory over the warmongers, against the realisation of their monstrous plans. It is at the same time a great help given to the workers of the U.S.S.R. and the countries of Popular Democracy towards further developments of their industrial and agricultural production, the improvement of their standards of living, and the reinforcement of democratic progress not only inside these countries, but also over the whole world, through the strength of the example given by their superior economic systems.

IT IS THEREFORE ON THE BASIS OF THESE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS THAT THE PROBLEM OF THE DEFENCE OF PEACE MUST BE STUDIED AND SOLVED.

It is through the Union and the struggle of all Sea and Port workers for the defence of their immediate interests : Wages and conditions and through the Union and the Struggle of all manual and intellectual workers jointly with the other layers of population : youth , women, artisans, small shopkeepers, peasants etc... struggling, under capitalist conditions for their own betterment, that a solid barrier can be built up against the ideological and material preparations for Imperialist War.

This is why the efforts of our class enemy to isolate one from the other these various layers of population are so great. These efforts are in direct relation with the importance of the rôle that the various Merchant Navies will have to play in a war, and also in direct relation with the imminence of the danger of war. Our isolation from the other social categories could have a fatal effect, as well for our wages and conditions claims as for the defence of Peace.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE CANADIAN SEAMEN'S STRIKE IS RICH IN LESSONS FOR ALL OF US, AND WE MUST AT ONCE REAP THE BENEFITS OF THESE LESSONS

It is the duty of all our affiliated bodies, National and corporative, to initiate as speedily as possible contacts with the organisations representative of the other layers of population to build up together on the basis of the ports and Maritime Enterprises of all kind, (Merchant marine, Fisheries, tugs, River transports, Cargoes handling, Shipping, Ships' repairs and shipbuilding etc..etc..) permanent Committees for the Defence of Peace and Democratic Rights. These Committees should include, together with the qualified representatives of various workers' organisations, representatives of the Maritime World, commercial, or industrial who have a rôle to play in the economic and social activity of the port, and who are resolute partisans of peace, and prepared to work with us in its furtherance.

On board the ships, similar committees must be set up, on the basis of the Trade-Union, including representatives of the various union, where there are several on the same ship, and the various trades (Officers and men, Deck and Engine-room, Cooks and Stewards) and also issuing a call to join to the non-organized seamen. Such a committee should be built up on the basis of precise and concrete claims, liable to be supported by the whole crew : Limitation of working hours, number of men in a crew, food and lodgings aboard, Wages etc..etc...

The appeal sent by the Constitutive Conference of our International Union of Seamen, Rivermen, Fishermen & Port Workers, held in Marseilles from the 15th to the 18th. July 1949 is an excellent basis for the coming together of all Workers of the Sea and Ports.

It is necessary that this Appeal, which is now between the hands of all Affiliated Bodies, should be widely broadcasted, not only.....

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.....amongst the members of our organisations, but ESPECIALLY AMONG SEAMEN & PORT WORKERS BELONGING TO ORGANISATION WHOSE LEADERS ARE HOSTILE TO THE W.F.T.U. AND TO OUR INTERNATIONAL UNION.

This appeal should render easier unity on a trade basis aboard ships and in every port, between workers of the sea and the ports, whatever political, philosophical, religious, race or trade union tendency they belong to, as long as they are not indifferent to the problems of peace or war, and the problems of their own wages and conditions claims.

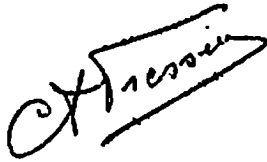
This is why we ask you to keep us informed of whichever initiative you will have taken in that direction, so that your own efforts will, through the strength of example, help other organisations towards solving the problem of working class unity, and help them to find the best form of action for every situation, country, port, enterprises or ship.

Our organisation have, on the basis of the above lines, and the decisions of the Milano Congress of the W.F.T.U. all freedom of initiatives in their action towards the aims of WORLD PEACE which are the main pursuit of the W.F.T.U. and the World Congress of Partisans of Peace.

World Peace is the task of the moment, and all organisations of the people must attach themselves to its success.

We are relying on you, Comrades, so that the workers of the Sea and Ports will fulfil that sacred task with hardihood and firmness.

We are sending to you all, Dear Comrades and friends, our brotherly salute.



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A. FRESSINET.
Secrétaire
International Union of Seamen
& Dockers.

AUG 30 1949

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SEAMEN, RIVERMEN, FISHERMEN
AND PORT WORKERS.

(International Département of the F.S.M.)

Provisional Address : 5 Place de la Joliette - MARSEILLE
(France)

Circular Letter N° I

Marseilles le 25th August 1949

TO ALL AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS.

Dear Comrades,

The Second World Congress of the W.F.T.U. has placed as the first of its tasks the struggle for the defence of Peace, without which social progress would remain for the workers an impossible dream.

The Constitutive Conférence of the INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SEAMEN, FISHERMEN, RIVERMEN & PORT WORKERS has also put down as its first task the problem of peace our initial and main target.

All affiliated organisations have certainly read and studied the Manifeste of the 2nd World Congress, in which one paragraph says that:

"Our common task, the task of the workers of the whole world is to raise an impassable barrier in front of the warmongers, maneuvers, and to ruin the perfidious plans of all imperialists."

The manifeste then shows the way to follow, and the tactics to be used :

"We must develop a wide activity in favour of the defence of Peace, build up a concrete program of action, which can be easily understood by the large masses of workers, and unite to carry out that programme without consideration of race, creed or opinion. Everywhere, when circumstances permit, we must organise inside the enterprises and offices, large Committees for the Defence of Peace, and unite within their ranks all workers, whether manual or intellectual;"

It is in compliance with the above decisions of the 2nd World Congress that the Secrétariat of the W.F.T.U. issued, on the 26th July, to the World Congress of the Partisans of Peace, a letter in which the W.F.T.U. asked for the organisation of an INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEFENCE OF PEACE AND DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES, which has been fixed by the Permanent Committee, to the 2nd OCTOBER 1949 (Meeting of the Permanent Committee 21/7/49)

It is now important that every affiliated organisation should, without delays, carry out the principles contained in the W.F.T.U. Manifeste

Never before, since the rout of fascism, the threat of war had been more precise. From day to day, the evil effects of the Marshall Plan appear, ever more evident (closing down of factories, following the invasion of the Marshall Countries by American manufactured goods without counter-part in export) and, if maritime trade with the Far East remains at a high level, this is due to fact that in that part of the world (India - Indonesia - Malaya - Viet-Nam.) colonial wars are raging, and that ships are transporting on these battlefields troops and war material indispensable for these plunder wars.

In China, where the Armies of National Liberation will soon be masters of the whole territory, all maritime trade has now been stopped and this increases even more the economic difficulties of the countries dominated by Dollar Impérialism, this increases the mass of unemployed....

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.....to whom, through a venomous and well orchestrated propagande, the capitalist cannibals offer the idea of a War against the U.S.S.R. and the Popular Democratics as the only prospect for the future, and the only solution to their present sufferings.

This underlines how much the fight for peace is sacred and must be carried out with swiftness, continuity and firmness.

In that fight, the workers of the Maritime Industries have a choice place.

Everyone knows the capital role played by the Merchant Navies during the two world wars, and particularly between 1939 and 1945, on the European Theater as well as the Pacific Ocean. In the war which is being prepared, a role even more important has been reserved to them.

This is why the Shipowners are trying to make sure that their ships will not leave the imperialist camp. They want to protect their crews against the "Pacifist Microbe" by choosing them themselves and by trying, as in Canada to break the Unions which refuse to submit to their dictation. They have entrusted the splitters of the I.T.F. with the job of maintaining, through a virulent campaign of hatred against our International Union and against the W.F.T.U. the atmosphere of division without which none of their criminal plans could succeed.

Everyone knows, also, the decisive role played by all port workers in the maritime trade and the economic set-up of the various countries. Their struggles were never isolated. The victories gained by the French Dockers in 1947, the Stevedores of the Eastern Coast of the U.S.A. in 1946 and 1948, the seamen of Italy in 1949, etc...etc..., were due to the International solidarity and are a proof of the high degree of class consciousness of Sea and Port Workers.

The magnificent example of international solidarity given in July 1949 by the London Dockers, in support of the Canadian Seamen on strike since the 1st. of April is a brilliant demonstration that there is a long distance between the strike breaking wishes of certain leaders of the British T.U.C. such as DEAKIN, or of the I.T.F., such as OLDENBROCK and the fighting mood of sea and port workers, who will never accept to be treated like slaves.

TOMORROW, THANKS TO THE MUTUAL AID OF SEAMEN AND PORT WORKERS, NOT ONLY OUR WAGES AND CONDITIONS CLAIMS WILL BE DEFENDED AND WON, BUT ALSO PEACE, THAT MOST PRECIOUS WEALTH OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE, WILL BE PRESERVED.

Already, the Dockers of Algeria have refused to load ships going to VIET-NAM. The Viet-Nam Confederation of Labour have publicly sent their gratitude to them. The Dockers of DUNKIRK (France) have also begun an action on the same lines, against that colonial war.

Dockers and Seamen must refuse to handle troops and war cargoes going to the colonial wars of plunder, and to the preparation of Imperialist Anti-Soviet War.

Seamen and Dockers must obtain the resumption of normal economic relations between all countries of the world, on the basis of equality of rights. This alone will insure a maritime trade through which seamen and dockers will have a decent standard of life.

IT IS IN THAT WAY, WE MUST ADVANCE, FEARLESSLY, WITH FIRMNESS
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.....AND PERSEVERANCE, NOT ISOLATED, BUT CLOSELY BOUND ON THE BASIS OF ALL PORTS. THE FORCES OF DEMOCRACY ARE THE LARGEST AND THE MOST POWERFUL BUT IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO BE CONVINCED OF IT, IT IS NECESSARY TO ACT AND TO BRING THESE FORCES TO FINAL VICTORY.

To reach our aim, we must become organised. In every port, the basic organisations of seamen, rivermen, fishermen, dockers and other port workers must unite and create wherever possible, Committees for the defence of peace.

These Committees should then draw up a CONCRETE PROGRAMME OF ACTION, which can be understood by the workers, and which will reflect their own aspirations.

The conditions of success for the building of such Committees and for their successful action lies in the realisation of the largest Union of workers, without difference of race, colour, creed or political appartenance.

In the present decisive period, all our militants must have a high sense of the responsibilities resting on their shoulders, and comprehend fully the importance of the struggle which grows over the whole world. They must do everything in power so that the date of OCTOBER 2nd. 1949 will not only be a great day of struggle for Peace, but also the starting point of a continuous action, which will be as efficient that the 2nd. of OCTOBER will have been powerful.

To that action, we are sure that seamen and port workers of the whole world will attach themselves, not only with the faith of men who know that right and justice are on their side, but who also know that nothing is obtained without a struggle for the widest unity.

Let us know, as soon as possible, your results whatever they are the successes registered and the difficulties encountered. Let us know the prospects opened for you by the action which starts now, and will only cease when a lasting peace will have been established upon earth:

Fraternally yours,



A. FRESSINET
Général - Secrétaire
International Union of Seamen, Fishermen, Rivermen
and Port Workers.