

Labor unions - Communist Party influence.
problem (1951?)



A MESSAGE TO ALL LOYAL AMERICAN CITIZENS

This pamphlet reveals how communist controlled labor, overlorded by Harry Bridges and his colleagues, is being given sustenance and being needlessly perpetuated in the San Francisco Bay Area and basically, on the Pacific Coast as well, by a group of employers who seem to be obsessed with the illusion that the Dollar Sign is the emblem of democracy.

The question involved here is one of basic Americanism. It concerns a vital industry and the question is whether this industry should be placed in the hands of Americans or be allowed to remain in the hands of friends of Soviet Russia.

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THE first outward manifestation of disintegration of the solid communist control of the Bridges ILWU came at the break of the year 1950 in San Francisco. A large section of the rank and file membership of Warehouse Local 6, ILWU (at that time within the CIO) including most of the officers, decided that the internal affairs of their union and the political and patriotic implications involved, demanded immediate and drastic reorganization of ILWU leadership.

THESE people, within their own union meetings, charged that their union was communist dominated. They charged that the Bridges regime was utilizing the union for the economic-political aggrandizement of the Communist Party and was suborning both trade union and American democratic principles toward that end. The militant group organized themselves into a solid block. They called themselves "The Right Wing." The fight against the communist control was brought to the floor of the Local 6 meetings. The group went into contest at the Local's union elections on the anti-communist control issue and succeeded in placing some of their people in various offices.

THE Right Wing found, however, that the machinery of democracy in Local 6 had no chance to function and such was the rigged machinery that did function, that the iron communist grip tightened all the more.

WITH the flat specific statement that their union was communist controlled; that they had tried to remedy this fact and that they were unable to be effective in that respect, the right wing group explored the entire field of organized labor for support in their fight for American unionism.

THEY finally turned to the Teamsters International of the American Federation of Labor. The Teamsters pledged them an autonomous, democratic, American union of their own and also pledged them full support in their fight against communist control in the labor movement in the San Francisco Bay Area.

SOME 2000 members and the great majority of the officers of Local 6, ILWU, in February of 1950, moved into AFL and were given a charter as Local 12 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

THE major portion of warehouse operation was, at that time and still is, under a blanket union contract held by an employers' organization called the Distributors Association of Northern California. The group is made up of both local operations and many of the large nationally operating firms.

THE secession of such a formidable group from ILWU Local 6, naturally caused an approach to panic on the part of the ILWU officials faced with the charge of communist cooperation ringing in their ears. It also seemed to have caused an approach to panic on the part of the Distributors Association.

ALTHOUGH the warehouse contract termination date was May 31, the representatives of the ILWU union and the representatives of the Distributors met at one midnight early in March, 1950, and worked out a new union contract, a contract which subsequent events have proved to be an instrument of mutual protection. The employers executed a quick manœuvre which protected the communist leadership in its control of the ILWU union and thereby got for themselves a cheap deal at the expense of the rank and file.

THAT contract—for three cents increase over a three-year period, no reopening wage negotiations and a strict prohibition against any discussion of any welfare program—became commonly known in the Area as "the sellout deal." The warehouses under the jurisdiction of the Distributors became known as the "captive houses."

MANY of the workers in these operations, during the past 19 months, have left and are still leaving ILWU Local 6 despite the jurisdiction and joining AFL Local 12. A large segment of the Local 12 membership are working today in these "captive houses."

SINCE the American-minded workers pioneered the fight against the communist control of the ILWU, the CIO, charging communist domination has thrown the union out of its family circle. The recent ILWU Convention at Honolulu that condemned American domestic and foreign policy and practically fawned at the feet of Soviet Russia, proved that the rebel Local 6 group was not only right but had performed a service both to labor and to the nation.

OF COURSE, danger to the nation notwithstanding, the Distributors Association held what they then claimed was a valid contract with the communist controlled Local 6 ILWU. And, as the saying goes, "a contract is a contract" and what will one do otherwise than live up to it? In March, of this year, however, the NLRB handed down a ruling that affected the Master Contract between the Distributors and the communist dominated Local 6 ILWU. In action on an independent warehouse, NLRB ruled the contract illegal. This contract in question word for word, item for item, clause for clause, comma for comma, is identical instrument with the Master Contract. The workers in that independent house immediately came into AFL Local 12 and the company signed a Local 12 contract.

THE Distributors Association know that their contract with Local 6 ILWU is illegal; they know that all the charges of communist domination of this union have never been denied or disproved; they know that one of the leading lights of ILWU Local 6—a man who, in the interests of the Communist Party, was mostly responsible for the building of the communist control within the ILWU—a colleague of Bridges and the other manipulators—Ernest Otto Fox, is one of the most dangerous of all the communists arrested by the FBI, charged with plotting to overthrow the Government by force and violence; they know that the people they do business with in the ILWU have taken and right now are taking the "Party" program.

THE Distributors Association know also, that our country, in fact all of democracy in this world, is threatened by advancing Soviet aggression. They know that, by the stroke of a pen, they can aid in the destruction of the last segment of communist controlled labor on the Pacific Coast, as strong as it is at the moment. They know that its only strength comes from the sustenance they are giving it. But they make no move.

FOR a cheap deal, definitely at the expense of the workers who are entrapped in this unholy alliance, the Distributors Association continue to give sustenance to the cancer of communism in Pacific Coast labor, a cancer that they can so easily destroy were they more concerned with the future of their country than they are with the human commodity dollars they are pocketing at the expense of both their employees and our country of which they profess to be loyal citizens.

THE Distributors Association has seen fit to ignore the imminent danger confined within this issue. The Distributors Association has seen fit to ignore its responsibility toward our country, in continuing a deal with a communist controlled union that legally, it can and morally should terminate and thereby initial the ~~disintegration of the Bridges-Communist~~ labor influence in the Bay Area and on the Pacific Coast.

HERE is an issue that demands the concerted action of all decent, loyal elements of labor and management.

This Pamphlet Issued By

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Chamberlain