

# THE NEWSLETTER

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## SEAMEN FIGHT ON: UNITED ACTION NEEDED TO DEFEAT EMPLOYERS

**THE whole working-class movement in Merseyside is backing the fight to free Patrick Neary who still lies in Brixton jail by order of the High Court. Ships in Liverpool and the North-East remain strikebound. No militant seaman will work a boat until Neary is free.**

The courts continue their job of hounding the pickets and harassing the seamen's leaders. Their actions are part of the strategy of the employers to force the seamen back to the ships and thus teach a lesson to all unofficial strikers.

Not a word in support of the seamen has been heard from the leadership of the Trades Union Congress, nor from Gaitskell, newly returned from the continent. Why?

The report of the Trades Union Congress committee of investigation into strikes tells us; 'Unofficial strikers' they say, 'must be disciplined', and behind their hands they mutter — 'even if it is to be done by the capitalist courts'.

No doubt the 'Left' leader, Cousins, has kept himself informed of the happenings in dockland. He must also have seen and approved of his union's report which warns against the 'blunders and errors of judgment of unofficial strikers.' Does Mr. Cousins support the seamen? Is he prepared to throw the weight of his union behind the demand to free Neary? The dockers are sympathetic to the seamen's case and keen to help. But all appeals to bring their massive aid into play have been turned aside by the official and unofficial leaders alike.

Liverpool has shown that in spite of the Right wing threats massive action can be mounted. Such actions are now a necessity if the employers are to be defeated and workers' hard-won rights defended. Workers throughout the country must build action committees to free Neary and demand that the whole Labour movement be mobilized in defence of the seamen.

### Liverpool Workers:- 'Free Neary!'

by W. HUNTER

**'We must light a flame tonight which will spread throughout the country and burn higher and higher until Brixton jail opens and Neary is released.'**

This is how Bill Hart ended his speech to 5,000 Liverpool trade unionists last Tuesday night. He was speaking on behalf of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party.

The meeting was organized by an action committee formed by Liverpool Trades Council, the Merseyside district committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the Merseyside district of the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives.

'Whether the strike is official or unofficial' he told his audience, 'we must take a stand. We must realize we are in the middle of a class battle of a character we have not seen for some time. 80,000 of the National Union of Seamen can be subject to the same fate as Neary. The NUS should be leading this fight against the injunction.' There was thunderous applause when he added, 'The NUS should be made to answer before the council of the whole trade union movement. If any organization allies with the employers

and bars the road to socialism then we cannot be silent.'

The collection taken at the meeting is to be used to support a defence fund to aid seamen who are legally victimized and to assist their dependents.

The Liverpool trade unionists unanimously passed a resolution demanding the repeal of the penal clauses of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894.

### SEAMEN IN COURT

by R. Perry

Four seamen, Brothers Golden, Birchill, Lindsay and Burch were fined £5 each at Thames Magistrates Court on charges of 'obstructing the police' at the Queen Victoria offices of the National Union of Seamen on Tuesday.

They were part of a demonstration of more than 100 seamen during which eight men occupied the NUS office and ordered the officials to leave. Over 100 seamen stood outside the offices. About 50 police, including 5 inspectors arrived, and proceeded to push the seamen away from the door of their own union offices. A police inspector said this was only to clear the highway — nothing to do with taking sides in the demonstration.

Police began to clear seamen out of the street. Not one pedestrian or vehicle had been obstructed, nobody had so much as laid a finger on a policeman.

For two hours the eight seamen were in their union offices, before the police broke the lock and smashed down the barricades behind the door.

The seamen are not dismayed by the court fines; P. A. Webb, chairman of the Dock Street branch of the National Seamen's Reform Movement, told me, 'This has made us more determined than ever to win our demands and to remove dictator Yates and his henchmen'.

Pat Meehan, one of the men who barricaded themselves in the union office said: 'They can do what they like, we will never return to sea under slave conditions.'

Another of the eight men who occupied the office, Ron Magoulas, declared, 'We are disgusted at this savage fine, but it will not shake us. More and more of us are prepared to face such treatment. Every trade unionist must support us now this has happened.'