



Settlements Not Par with Strike

by T-BONE SLIM

General Motors Strike Settled.—

As to that all I can say is: Half a loaf is better than no loafing at all.

I think they were trying to stripe a zebra.

In the meantime (bear up brother) we are ruled by corporations. And there isn't even a fight against it. (Corporations are a stepping stone to fascist distatorships.)

Dictatorships of whatever nature do not fare so well. It's a form of time killing.

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Just go ahead and organize your One Big Union. A league nations we do not need. We've already got one right here in this country.

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One joker in the CIO-GMC agreement this morning: "6. The union agrees not to interrupt production pending the negotiations." That's betting on a dark horse.

I do not see where workers have won anything except the privilege to negotiate, and if they think they can negotiate better with the mills running, they don't know Nellie like I do. Job action is all they have left. Fortunately for them job-action is ace.

It seems damn funny to me that corporations will not negotiate unless the workers be tied hand and foot. If the negotiations last forever, production must go through.

Hm. Will that hold in law? It isn't law, but it will hold.

That's what I call an indeterminate sentence.

Said "Sitting Bull" Simons when he woke up according to Paul Gallico: "That won't do for the men to hear. That ain't what we're striking for. They'll never get them guys out of here with those terms."

And then he put on his shoes . . .

The strike was not settled by political moves, but on the contrary the gain-offering by Gen. Motors was inspired by the steadfast determination of the sit-downers.

A similar situation obtained in the marine strike: After the politicians had pulled and hauled this way and that and collected thousands of dollars for the Daily Worker; after the horse and buggy craft unions had called off the strike, on top of pulling a series of phoney moves, the seamen had the highsea moral stamina to some through and win the strike. The General Motors strikers came out of the shops singing "Solidarity Forever"—that is a very healthy sign.

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"Pacific Seamen Hint New Strike" (Feb. 12) Commerce "will again be paralyzed from the Pacific Coast" they say "unless the enforcement of the Copeland Act gets paralyzed first."

Coming as this does from experts in paralysis, it would be well to lend an ear to their plea.

I'm telling you, you can't compel seamen—theirs is a fight of desperation against the lousiest, dirtiest masters in the world.

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The "finkbook" got off to a bad start. I tell you, lenient ladies and jaunty gentlemen, it's hell to be born with a black eye (just as if the sagacious seaman had been taking observations with a trick binocular.) The name will cling. Such nicknames are very tenacious.

Another thing, when those finkbooks were forced upon the seamen (I said forced) their original tickets, certificates, were confiscated, and I do most solemnly claim that act alone constitutes force. Those original tickets and certificates are personal property of the able seamen, and when they are in the hands of the shipping commissioner they are there without due process of law, by assumed power. Well then, if force or misrepresentation be used, doesn't that disqualify the fink book before the law?

No?

Well then the black eye will disqualify it outside the law.

The trouble here is that the "framers" of seamen ignore the fact that the world has made several revolutions on its axis since the same thing was put over on the seamen of the Great Lakes.

If the originals can be taken up, the finkbook can be taken up. If so, it is not personal property. Why carry something that is of demonstrable value and which isn't yours—ours? It looks like hornswoggle.

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Just now the seamen are passing through the swells that follow

storm, and here again I note that the seamen ignore the value of aggressive action. The two leaderships of the I.S.U. are passing out ballots of choice as between the two, and when the ballots are counted, they will have I.S.U. — not Curran or Ivan Hunter, but I.S.U. — and I.S.U. will be based upon political action.

In the course of the swells the shipowners will be functioning and that action will not be political — it will be industrial. After the shipowners fasten a system of surveillance (after the manner of the Lake Carriers) upon you, it will be too late to start launching life rafts — recognition of the union shall have been upon tolerance, and another strike shall have been lost. It is then that seamen shall cry for the M.T.W.

It's just like this: The I.S.U. canoe can go up the Hudson so long as the tide is running in, but when the estuary of the tides is reached, and the tide starts going out, the canoe begins to act crazily. When the going gets hard, well, they need a motorboat plainly marked on both bow and stern—M.T.W.

The finkbook, gentlemen of the sever seas, now held in abeyance, is merely an act of shortening sail till the gale blows over. (Say, seamen, got any more gale?) Establish your shipstewards before the boss does it for you—and make it stick.

Everything seems to be settled, so now all we have to do is "save the passengers." All right, I'll save a few thousand here and now. We have every circumstantial proof that ships are sabotaged. Keenest of competition prevails between shipowners and they have done everything to make their ships attractive—even unto hanging rosettes in the mudhook ports. Swayback life boats, hanging bow and stern are scrubbed and scrubbed and scrubbed, washing off the sabotage. Passengers feel chilly and go below; after they return they are chillier than ever.

It is unreasonable to suppose that the crew has sabotaged those ships, for they have to ride 'em.

It is unreasonable to suppose that the owners have sabotaged their own boats.

There's the reason: It is reasonable to suppose that the shipowners have sabotaged their competitors' ships.

Aw, hell! Let's go to town! The passengers are safe and the Caribbean Cruises are off. Why should we go to town? Because of the unnecessary scrubbing—we ain't getting paid for it. It's extra work—and useless. There is no use in the shipowners' pretense of ignorance—in fact their action heralds their ignorance to the wide, wide world, and also the deep, deep, deep.

The shipowners are incapable of choosing efficient officers for their ships — Vestris, Mohawk, Morro Castle in point, and before that the Titanic, still further back the Elbe. Such incapable officers are not fit to choose a crew—if they do, such crew is inefficient, and better fitted for shoveling manure. There is very little consolation for passengers in conversational young gentlemen, piano players and violin virtuosos.

It takes serious minded young men and still more serious minded old cranks to launch those life boats and rafts in nothing flat. M.T.W. has such men, and when the shipowners learn to get their men there they can choose blindfolded for the unions' choice is automatic. In other words, capable seamen choose the M.T.W.—and are proud of it. Passengers can protect their own health by inquiring of the shipowners if the crew is M.T.W.

Note: Shipowners' choice of officers too often is motivated by a condition of relationship of applicant to some big shot of the shipowners corporation, and at other times it may be the shipowners have not been able to resist the temptation of low pay for struggling young officers—a racket.

Thus: Having no officers, it is well the passengers make sure they have a crew. Copeland's program is wild and wooly.

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A bit of humor creeps into the Supreme Court question. I know six old senators that dassen't vote against F. D. R.'s "pension plan" for old justices' because it would look too much like self-defense. (That Franklin thinks up the darndest jokers I ever seed!)