Orders vs. Democracy

What enraged the judge and prosecutor most was the democratic operation of the ILWU.

It was clear that this very democracy was on trial, not Harry Bridges.

It is not hard to find the purpose. The ILWU is a union that has never taken orders from anyone. It has debated and decided, and the decision has always come from the men who made the union and who pay its dues—the workers on the job. All orders have always come directly from the majority after full democratic debate.

It is logical, then, that the forces which would control this union and give orders to its members must first destroy its source of strength, namely, its rank and file control, its solidarity, its autonomy and its freedom of debate.

Judge George B. Harris, acting on request of a prosecutor who is part and parcel of a gang which includes Joe Curran, Joe Ryan, James B. Carey and other frustrated enemies of the ILWU, has revoked the bail of ILWU President Harry Bridges with an opinion which on its face says this:

"We have a new kind of union for you guys. From here on out you take orders and do what you are told by anybody in Washington, including National CIO."

In ordinary times that would sound crazy.

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The judge's fundamental disagreement with President Bridges was that Bridges refused to accept and recommend to the union, given blind obedience to an order which might have overnight destroyed the hiring hall, dispersed with load limits, delivered up preferred gauges and placed the union in a position of blacklisting its own brothers.

Bridges had anything to hide. He didn't. The people who forgot their oath of membership! The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States cleared Bridges. A little over a month ago this same judge revoked his bail is the same judge who presided at the trial and helped the frameup case by protecting the perjurers upon whose testimony the conviction was secured. It was Judge Harris who cited the defense attorneys for contending that he tried to get before the jury the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States clearing Bridges. A little over a month ago this same judge revoked Bridges' citizenship.

No Facts, No Law

"Nowhere in the case presented by the department of justice, or in Harris' decision, is there a single accusation that Bridges is a member of the Communist party. He tried to protect the union, ILWU Secretary-Treasurer Louis Goldblatt charged in a letter to the officers and members of all ILWU locals August 5. Goldblatt followed:

"The President of our International is in jail.

"Judge Harris who revoked his bail is the same judge who presided at the trial and helped the frameup case by protecting the perjurers upon whose testimony the conviction was secured. It was Judge Harris who cited the defense attorneys for contending that he tried to get before the jury the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States clearing Bridges. A little over a month ago this same judge revoked Bridges' citizenship.

No Questions Allowed

"Specifically, Harris said that Bridges should be jailed because he did not accept without reservation the so-called security program adopted in Washington. This, Harris said, is disloyalty.

"So that a security program may be set up by known enemies of our union, and for the explicit purpose of wrecking our union, and we are supposed to accept it without question or debate or go to jail."

"An additional ground for revoking bail was Bridges' proposal to have the coming longshore, shipcleckers and walking boss caucus take up the question of the Maritime Federation of the World. Here again, Harris made clear that officers of the union are not even to consult the membership when the Administration tells them to jump.

No Minority Opinion

"Most astounding is that the entire proceeding was based upon what Bridges was supposed to have said at meetings of Local 10. The bulletins of Local 10, not the minutes, were used as evidence, although the court knew that the membership had gone on record that only the official minutes of the union contained a record of the union meeting, and that the bulletins are an independent circulation of what has happened.

"It is significant that although Bridges explained at length on the witness stand how policies are made by the membership of the ILWU, and that the officers are bound to carry out those policies, the court was not interested. They wanted only Bridges' so-called opinions and they insisted that he must state those opinions. So the court's decision means trade unionists not only must do what they are told to do with no back talk, but they must think what they are told to think."
We Are Bound to Defend the Members' Rights, Bridges Says

Here are excerpts from ILWU President Harry Bridges' jail address to the ILWU membership prior to his testimony before Congress, which was published in the August 11, 1950, edition of the ILWU's newspaper, The Dispatcher.

On Security

"Bridges: "Certain people were picked out by the security services of the union..."

"The membership was told that this security program would not suspend any basic provisions of their agreement. I told them that my information was to the contrary. And I proposed that this so-called security program would continue to screen longshoremen and seamen for political views."

On WFTU

"Any position I hold in that organization (World Federation of Trade Unions) is one at the desire of and with the will of the membership."

"The members run the union. They tell me what to do. I do it because they have always been that way."

On War

"Defense Attorney James Martin MacInnis asks: "As of now, what is your position on the Korean conflict?""

"Bridges: "As president of the union, I am subject to the decisions of my union and I will continue to do so, and that no matter who the person is, I will continue to speak out, in trying to make wars as unattractive and peacefully possible."

"The newspapers carried on the worst kind of propaganda about people being communists, subversives or others, in Australia, Great Britain, Russia, or others, that they should be settled as quickly as possible and in the best and most reasonable way."

ACLU Backs the Fight to Free Bridges

"Neither Bridges nor any other officer made any proposal that would interpret the shipment of supplies to Korea."

"Bridges and the Coast Committee did not oppose a proper security program, but proposed one similar to that in World War II, that did not wreck the internal affairs of our union. Even though the committee's personal remarks in a union meeting or the expression of personal opinions as grounds for court action and incarceration.

"We condemn as un-American and dangerous in the extreme the invasion into the internal affairs of our union of the Coast Committee member's personal remarks in a union meeting or the expression of personal opinions as grounds for court action and incarceration."

"We have a determination to fight against the framewor of Harry Bridges and demand that he be released on bail."
It was Judge Harris who granted the order on the 27th. He had been impressed by the evidence there was for a motion for bail for Bridges. Siting were J. R. Robertson, Wilkinson, Healy and Orr.

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It was Judge Harris who granted the order on the 27th. He had been impressed by the evidence there was for a motion for bail for Bridges. Siting were J. R. Robertson, Wilkinson, Healy and Orr.

Because of the judge's obvious bias and the hysteria which had been generated around the Korean "police action," it was a ten thousand to one chance that Bridges was made up the day a poll tax member of the Senate Judi-

catory committee moved to ask the Department of Justice to jail Bridges.

Bill of Rights Out

Special Prosecutor F. Joseph Donohue, who flew here from Washington to do the hatchet job on Bridges, told the court:

"There can be no minority opinion in this case."

The court went along with this amazing reversal of American tradition, and then went even further to throw the Bill of Rights out of the window.

He said:

"To protect Bridges in the main the Bill of Rights would be a mockery!"

Judge Enraged

But in sending Bridges to jail the judge went far out of his way to repeat the hearsay lies and distortions which had been presented in court by the special prosecutor.

Among these lies was the assertion that Bridges' had sought to prevent a security program on the waterfront.

Bridges and the coast committee did not oppose a security program, but proposed a security program that would be effective, yet guard at the same time to protect the contract rights of all longshoremen.

The judge apparently was enraged because the union had not accepted without question a security program accepted in Washington by many known enemies of the ILWU.

The judge ignored Bridges' explanation, given at a Local 10 meeting, as to how the Washington program could be used to blacklist members of the union and break down contract conditions.

Bridges' testimony as to how decisions in the union were made by the rank and file and carried out by the officers regardless of their personal opinions was swept aside.

No Bones

Instead the court and prosecution insisted upon Bridges' stating even those personal opinions which did not exist in the union or its activities.

The judge was enraged, too, Bridges' reliance upon fraternal ties with dockers in other parts of the world, and had explained that it was with the help of these dockers that the ILWU maintained most of its waterfront conditions. He said that without their help no waterfront strike could be won.

To the judge this was "troublesome.

The prosecutor demanded to know point by point if Bridges agreed with President Harry Bridges and if Bridges' public speeches were not in line with what he said in private.

Donohue said: "That's all," and turned to his seat with a that-does-it-brother air.

This is undoubtedly the first time in American history that a court and prosecution made a demand of sending a man to jail for what he thinks.

Many spectators found it hard to believe they could sit in an American court and hear a special prosecutor seek to convince a man's opinion with a view to punishing him for that opinion.

Bail a Right

It is a fundamental that one of the zealous senators who started this move against Bridges is Pat McCarran of Nevada, chairman of the Judi-
ciary Committee, who is a personal friend of his from Spanish Flu.