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Betty V. H. Schneider

WEST COAST COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SYSTEMS

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Edited by

Clark Kerr and Curtis Aller

**Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California, Berkeley**

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West Coast Maritime
Industry

BETTY V. H. SCHNEIDER

INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
ARTHUR M. ROSS, DIRECTOR

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FOREWORD

This is the eleventh in a series of short monographs which the Institute of Industrial Relations is publishing on collective bargaining on the Pacific Coast. The present monograph was not included in the series as originally announced, but subsequently a decision was made to add an eleventh issue dealing with the vitally important story of labor relations in the maritime industry.

The Pacific Coast region provides a splendid locale for a group of studies of collective bargaining systems. It has been familiar with unionism, collective agreements, and industrial conflicts for more than a century. Not only are workers more highly organized than in most other regions, but employer associations are unique, both quantitatively and in the extent of their activities. In some areas, particularly the San Francisco Bay Area, central labor bodies are unusually influential in the conduct of collective bargaining. And as Clark Kerr and Curtis Aller point out in their preface, the West Coast presents a fascinating diversity of industrial and social environments which have placed their stamp on labor-management relations. For these reasons collective bargaining on the West Coast has deservedly attracted national and international interest among practitioners and students.

The editors of the series have had a wide and varied experience in analyzing industrial relations problems on the Pacific Coast and elsewhere. Clark Kerr was Director of the Institute at the time the original plans for the series were formulated. He is now Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, as well as a member of the Institute staff. Curtis Aller is a former member of the Institute staff who is now affiliated with the Economics De-

partment and the Labor and Industrial Relations Center at Michigan State University.

Betty V. H. Schneider, the author of the present monograph, joined the research staff of the Institute several years ago, after receiving her doctor's degree at the London School of Economics. She is co-author of two previous issues in this series and is the author of *Clerical Unions in the Civil Service*, which was recently published in England.

ARTHUR M. ROSS
Director

PREFACE

The West Coast has a rich and remarkably varied history of collective bargaining despite its youth as a region of economic importance. Its Embarcadero in San Francisco, its streets of Seattle, its logging camps in the Northwest, its motion picture lots in the Los Angeles area, its fisheries in Alaska, its hard rock mines on either side of the Continental Divide, among other locales, have witnessed the development of unique and consequential systems of labor-management relations.

This study of industrial relations in the Pacific Coast maritime industry is the eleventh in a series of reports which have been published on individual West Coast bargaining situations. Each report is concerned with a single distinct system, whether it covers an industry, a portion of an industry, a union, or a group of unions. None of the studies purports to be an exhaustive analysis of the total collective bargaining experience of the system under survey. Rather, it is the intention to investigate one or a few central themes in each bargaining relationship—themes which relate to the essence of that relationship. The series thus constitutes a many-sided treatment of collective bargaining, illustrating both its diversity and its complexity.

No attempt to present an adequate picture of collective bargaining on the West Coast would be complete without an account of labor relations in the maritime industry. Although the earlier monograph in this series on the longshore industry dealt with the problem of conflict on the waterfront, it necessarily omitted much that needs to be said about the role of the offshore unions.

The complexity of the story of industrial conflict on the Pacific Coast waterfront revolves around the interaction between labor-

management strife and rivalry among the unions. Although there have been several dramatic episodes—notably in 1901 and 1934—when the offshore and longshore unions have presented a united front against the employers, the more usual story has been one of friction between the unions. From the middle thirties on, the prolonged struggle between Harry Bridges and Harry Lundeberg dominated the scene, but the author shows that, important as the personal antagonism and sharp ideological differences between these two men were, the historical background of conflict between offshore and longshore unions reaching back into the nineteenth century cannot be ignored in interpreting the developments of recent decades.

Given the factors making for interunion friction, a strongly united group of employers might conceivably have succeeded in gaining the upper hand in labor-management relations. But in the Pacific Coast waterfront situation, as the author shows, there were a number of reasons why it was difficult for the employers, though represented by employers' associations, to capitalize on interunion rivalry. Doubtless not everyone who is familiar with the industry will agree with the author's finding that the major characteristic of labor-management relations in the West Coast maritime industry in recent decades has been their sensitivity to frictions among the unions and that, in comparison, conflicts arising between employers and unions have been of increasingly less importance. But there is little doubt that significant changes have occurred within the last 18 months which may conceivably have important implications for the future course of labor-management relations in the industry.

CLARK KERR
CURTIS ALLER
Editors

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INTRODUCTION

The Pacific Coast maritime industry is famous for its dramatic labor-management clashes and intricate interunion feuds. There have been maritime unions in the West for some 75 years, but until the last year or so there was no occasion in this period when peace existed at one time both between the employers and the unions, on the one hand, and among the unions, on the other.

The calm experienced in recent months is in sharp contrast with conditions which have prevailed in the industry. Since 1934, six lengthy coastwide strikes and hundreds of local stoppages have caused over 11 million man-day losses. Friction between labor and management has been increased and complicated by interunion rivalry. Jurisdictional disputes and stoppages have been common. In addition, in the process of competing with one another, the seven unions involved have delayed and manipulated both negotiations and strikes. Badly divided themselves, the operators have been susceptible to union whipsawing of wages and working conditions. More often than not, opportunism and day-to-day expediency have dictated courses of action of all parties. In spite of a decline in the demand for shipping services over the last 25 years, neither side has been able to create a mutually acceptable program directed at protecting the future of the industry. A cooperative approach to maritime labor problems, rare even on the employer or union sides, has so far proved impossible of attainment on an industrywide, labor-management basis. Industrial relations have been unstable and unpredictable; collective bargaining, for the most part, has been conducted in an atmosphere of distrust and dislike.

There are many reasons—based on historical, economic, and ideological factors—why relations in the maritime industry have taken the course they have. For instance, a history before 1934 of very low wages, inferior working conditions, and suppression of unions led to the development of a strong antipathy to management. The unions were obliged to struggle for over half a century before they obtained permanent recognition and the power to bargain effectively. As a result, resentment over employers' past actions has not disappeared even yet. Or, another example, the diverse problems present for management in different branches of shipping and the stiff competition existing within each trade have contributed to disorganization and weakness in approaches to the unions.

But most of the causes of the erratic state of labor-management relations from 1934 on seem to hinge on the highly complex competitive situation which developed in the late thirties among the unions in general and between the Sailors Union of the Pacific and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union in particular. Under the best of circumstances, seven craft unions, walled off from one another by class and occupational barriers, might have difficulty in reconciling their interests in a declining industry. However, in the West Coast maritime industry, policies on economic goals, jurisdiction, strike strategy, and even day-to-day attitudes to the employers have been influenced not only by the special interests of the individual unions but also by the pressures resulting from the extensive ideological war between the two strong men of the industry, Harry Bridges and Harry Lundeberg.

The death of Lundeberg, head of the Sailors Union of the Pacific, in January 1957 removed a major participant from the interunion struggle. It is impossible to know what effect this will have on future events. However, it can safely be said that the previous 20-year battle between Lundeberg and Bridges for the lion's share of power in the industry adversely influenced most phases of waterfront relations. Any issue was likely to stimulate diametrically opposed opinions. Most controversies became critical in terms of prestige, and were fought out intensely. Generally, it was difficult for one of the smaller unions to refuse identification with the policies of either the SUP or the ILWU. Without the

protection of one or the other of the two major maritime unions, for example, a weaker group was open to raids of membership or refusal of important strike support. The result was a choosing of sides and a long-term duel of massive proportions.

Relations between management and labor could hardly fail to reflect the serious strains which have been present among the unions. Aggressive campaigns have been pursued by the unions at the bargaining table for the satisfaction of beating competitor unions. Employers have been played off against one another. In turn, employers have, from time to time, been led to capitalize on splits between the unions. Factionalism, intrigue, power politics, and irresponsibility have, in the past, kept the maritime industry in a turmoil.

What has caused interunion tensions to remain unresolved for so long? Why have rivalries taken such extreme forms? What accounts for the importance of interunion conflict as a determinative factor in labor matters? Why have employers failed to deal more effectively with the situation? What is the significance of the current lack of serious friction between any of the parties? Does the cessation of overt hostilities among the unions indicate the beginning of a movement toward modification or elimination of past practices and attitudes? The purpose of the following study is to outline briefly, through an historical and analytical approach, the various forces which have been at work in the industry, and to attempt to identify the causes of the particular pattern of reactions in maritime industrial relations.

THE INDUSTRY AND THE PARTIES

The centers of the Pacific Coast shipping industry are the four major port areas of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle. Elsewhere on the coast are approximately 30 smaller ports used principally in the handling of specialized cargo such as lumber and petroleum. Four categories of trade are carried on from these harbors: foreign, noncontiguous, intercoastal, and coastwise. Foreign trade is the traffic between the United States and all other countries; intercoastal trade links the West Coast with the ports of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts; noncontiguous routes run between the United States and Hawaii and Alaska; coastwise shipping is limited to ports along the West Coast. Foreign trade is pursued in competition with other nations; the three remaining groupings are reserved by law to American operators using American-built ships. All operations may be divided into two further classifications: carriage of dry or liquid cargo. It is the dry cargo field with which we will be primarily concerned.

The future of shipping has been a matter of concern and controversy within the industry for some years. Before 1930 growth was steady and there appeared to be reasons for optimism in all trades. But, by 1948 commercial tonnage as a whole had fallen approximately 27 per cent as compared with 1930. The annual total of all tonnage handled in Pacific Coast ports rose for the next three years, then decreased slightly, and has since leveled off at about the 1939 figure. The recent steadiness of tonnage does not reflect the fortunes of West Coast companies with complete accuracy, however, as the figures include the cargo carried by East Coast, Gulf Coast, and foreign flag ships. Ships in operation from

western ports dropped from 386 in 1948 to approximately 175 at the end of 1956.¹

The lower cost of land transport as well as the growth of population in inland areas have caused a shift of much cargo formerly carried by coastwise or intercoastal lines to railroads and trucks. For example, Pacific coastwise shipping today bears little resemblance to what it was in former years. In 1930, 147 coastal vessels were engaged in passenger and cargo service;² in 1956 the fleet had shrunk to eight ships. Tonnagewise, the trade declined 91.3 per cent between 1939 and 1947.³ In foreign trade, government operating-differential subsidies have protected many American flag vessels from competition by offsetting the differences in costs between American and foreign operations along the same routes. But, in spite of such subsidization, Pacific Coast ships are now carrying less tonnage in foreign trade than in 1930. The only trade to show improvement since the thirties has been that between the mainland and Hawaii, where competition from foreign shipping and land transport offers no threat.⁴

Contraction of the industry is reflected in postwar employment figures. Pacific Coast seagoing personnel dropped from the wartime figure of 40,455 at the beginning of 1946 to 17,238 at the beginning of 1948, and then to an average of approximately 8,500 in 1955 and 1956.⁵ Longshore employment has averaged between 13,000 and 16,000 since 1948, with the exception of the Korean War period when it rose briefly. The number of jobs available on shore has been more stable owing to the fact that longshoremen work all dry cargo ships, regardless of their national origin.

¹ See Wytze Gorter and George H. Hildebrand, *The Pacific Coast Maritime Shipping Industry, 1930-1948*, II (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1954), 117; Pacific Maritime Association, *The Longshore Wage Review* (San Francisco: 1954), table IV; Pacific Maritime Association, *Monthly Research Bulletin*, January 16, 1957; Pacific Maritime Association, *The Longshore Review*, 1956, Research Report (San Francisco: September 1, 1956), table IV.

² *A Report on Pacific Coastwise Shipping with Special Reference to the San Francisco Bay Ports Area*, by R. F. Burley, San Francisco Bay Ports Commission (Sacramento: 1953), p. 10.

³ Pacific American Steamship Association, *Research Report 48-1* (San Francisco: 1948), p. 1.

⁴ See Gorter and Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-39.

⁵ Pacific Maritime Association, *Monthly Research Bulletin*, January 16, 1957; Pacific Maritime Association, *Seamen's Earnings Under Pacific Coast Contracts*, 1953, Special Research Report (San Francisco: August 12, 1953), p. 7.

Maritime wages have moved strongly upward during the postwar period, as they have in other industries. The hourly base wage rates of able seamen⁶ on the Pacific Coast rose from 89 cents in 1946 to \$1.82 in 1954 and those of longshoremen increased from \$1.52 to \$2.21.⁷ These figures do not take into account overtime earnings or substantial improvements in fringe benefits. Employers claim the unlicensed seaman's average monthly earnings, including overtime, in 1953 were over 300 per cent of average monthly earnings in 1943, while the average monthly earnings, including overtime, of workers in manufacturing in 1953 were only 150 per cent of the 1943 average figure.⁸ Average monthly wages and overtime earnings per vessel, including both licensed and unlicensed seamen, increased 256 per cent from September 1946 to October 1956. In the fourth quarter of 1956, average monthly earnings (base wages plus overtime) of an ablebodied seaman were \$644; average monthly earnings (base wages plus overtime) of the Pacific Coast longshoremen were \$510.⁹

The maritime workforce is divided into two major groups, those who go to sea and longshoremen. Aboard ship, workers are employed in either the deck, engine, or stewards' department and are referred to as licensed or unlicensed seamen, depending on their specific occupations. For example, masters, mates, radiomen, and engineers are officers, requiring special training and government licenses before they are qualified to serve. Government certificates of efficiency are necessary for a few unlicensed positions, but training is generally acquired on the job by this group: deckhands (sailors, carpenters, quartermasters, etc.), engineroom personnel (firemen, oilers, wipers, electricians, etc.), and cooks, stewards, and chief stewards.

Almost 100 per cent of the workers in maritime occupations

⁶ Ablebodied Seaman: the key rating in a ship's deck department. AB's are those sailors who have sailed more than three years and have passed Coast Guard tests on practical seamanship.

⁷ *Review of Labor-Management Relationships in the Maritime Industry and the Subsidization of Seamen Wages*, U. S. Department of Commerce (Washington: June, 1955), table 7.

⁸ Pacific Maritime Association, *Seamen's Earnings Under Pacific Coast Contracts*, 1953, Special Research Report (San Francisco: August 12, 1953), pp. 4-5.

⁹ Pacific Maritime Association, *Seamen's Earnings and Vessel Labor Costs*, 1956, Research Report (San Francisco: April 8, 1957), p. 8; Pacific Maritime Association, *Monthly Research Bulletin*, January 16, 1957.

on the Pacific Coast are members of unions. Unlicensed seamen are represented by the Sailors Union of the Pacific (SUP) in the deck department, the Pacific Coast Marine Firemen, Oilers, Water-tenders, and Wipers Association (MFOWW) in the engine department, and the Marine Cooks and Stewards (MCS) in the stewards' department. These three exclusively western unions are affiliated with the Seafarers International Union of North America (SIU), a national organization which claims jurisdiction over all seagoing personnel and which operates in direct competition with the National Maritime Union (NMU) for East Coast and Gulf Coast unlicensed seamen. (See diagram.)

Unions covering the licensed group are: the National Organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots of America (MMP), the National Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA), and the American Radio Association (ARA). The three officers' unions have representation on all coasts. However, on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, the Brotherhood of Marine Engineers, affiliated with the Seafarers International Union of North America, and the Radio Officers Union, affiliated with the Commercial Telegraphers Union, function in competition with the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association and the American Radio Association. (See diagram.)

Western longshoremen belong to the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU).¹⁰ The only exception is a few hundred dock workers in the Puget Sound area who until recently were in the East Coast's International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and are now represented by the International Brotherhood of Longshoremen (IBL), affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

The SIU (including the SUP, MFOWW, MCS, BME), MMP, MEBA, and ARA are affiliated with the AFL-CIO. The ILWU is independent.

The overwhelming majority of seagoing workers and all longshoremen are employed through hiring halls. Halls for seamen are controlled by the unions; those for longshoremen are jointly operated and jointly supported by the employers and the union. Employment by management through company facilities is generally limited to masters, first officers, chief engineers, and first

¹⁰ The ILWU also represents Hawaiian dock workers. The warehouse section of the ILWU has membership scattered across the country.

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assistant engineers. Unlicensed seamen are dispatched on a one-trip basis (one job in the case of longshoremen). All the unions negotiate separately and as coastwide units.

A. UNION REPRESENTATION: DRY CARGO CARRIERS

	West Coast	East Coast	Gulf Coast
<i>Officers</i>			
Deck	National Organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots (MMP)		
Engine	Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA)		
"		Brotherhood of Marine Engineers (BME-SIU)	
Radio	American Radio Association (ARA)		
"		Radio Officers Union (ROU)	
<i>Unlicensed Seamen</i>			
Deck, Engine, Stewards		National Maritime Union (NMU)	
" " "		Seafarers International Union — Atlantic and Gulf District (SIU-AGD)	
Deck	Sailors Union of the Pacific (SUP-SIU)		
Engine	P. C. Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders, and Wipers Association (MFOWW-SIU)		
Stewards	Marine Cooks and Stewards (MCS-SIU)		
<i>Longshoremen</i>	International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU)		
		International Longshoremen's Association (ILA)	

B. AFFILIATIONS

<i>Formerly AFL, now AFL-CIO</i>	<i>Formerly CIO, now AFL-CIO</i>	<i>Independent</i>
MMP	MEBA	ILWU
ROU	ARA	ILA
SIU (SUP, MFOWW, MCS, BME, SIU-AGD)	NMU	

The representation pattern described above applies to the dry cargo fleet. The seven tanker companies located on the Pacific Coast are organized somewhat differently. The Sailors Union of the Pacific represents all unlicensed personnel, sailors, firemen,

cooks, and stewards. There is no uniformity in representation of officers. The independent Tanker Officers Association represents deck officers in three companies, engineers in two companies, and radio officers in one company. One company has no licensed deck officers' agreement. Radio officers in four companies are covered by the Radio Officers Union. The remainder of the companies have agreements with the Masters, Mates, and Pilots, Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, and American Radio Association. Two additional companies running ships on the West Coast have their headquarters on the East Coast and negotiate there with the National Maritime Union for unlicensed personnel and the MMP, MEBA, ARA, and Radio Officers Union for licensed officers. Longshoremen are not required in the loading and unloading of tankers.

Each tanker company, or oil company using tankers, bargains independently with the unions with which it deals, although eight of the nine tanker companies operating on the Pacific Coast are centrally organized in the Pacific American Tankship Association. Labor relations in the tanker section of the maritime industry have been comparatively peaceful since union representation was accepted by the various companies between 1938 and 1946. Tanker wages and conditions tend to follow the pattern laid down in the dry cargo field, with some variation from contract to contract in matters of form and detail. Employment practice is different on tankers in that continued work on a single ship is typical, rather than rotation of men on a one-trip basis. The strength of the Tanker Officers Association among all three officer groups, the dominance of the SUP in the unlicensed crafts, and the absence of longshoremen have reduced interunion frictions in the tanker field to a minimum.

Operators of coastwise dry cargo sailing ships and steam schooners, organized in the Shipowners Association of the Pacific Coast, began to bargain with seamen's unions in the early 1900's. However, the unions were unable to obtain agreements with offshore and intercoastal shipping companies until the middle thirties; in 1936 the Pacific American Shipowners Association, composed of these operators, was set up for the purpose of bargaining with the seagoing unions. Permanent associations to deal with shoreside unions appeared just before and during World War I in San

Francisco, Seattle, Portland, and Los Angeles. In 1937 the four groups joined forces in the Waterfront Employers Association of the Pacific Coast in order to match the coastwide organization of the International Longshoremen's Association-Pacific Coast District (later called the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union). In 1949 the present Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) was created through a merger of the Pacific American Shipowners Association and the Waterfront Employers Association.

Member companies of the PMA are divided into eight sections. Companies operating American flag ships make up five categories: passenger, intercoastal, coastwise, Alaska area, and offshore. Owners running vessels under foreign flag registry form a sixth group which bargains only with the ILWU. The seventh and eighth groups consist of stevedore companies and terminal operators, respectively. The sections are also divided into four geographical areas covering Northern and Southern California, Oregon, and Washington. There is considerable overlapping, as several companies operate in two or more service, as well as geographic, areas. Agreements with the unions are negotiated by the PMA on a coastwide basis and are consummated by the association on behalf of its members. Contracts are signed by PMA officials, rather than by each member company, and all companies are bound by the agreement following majority approval. A member who is unwilling to accept the terms must resign from the PMA within seven days of the confirming vote. Only one PMA company operates coastwise, and a separate contract is negotiated to cover these ships. The other four companies in the coastwise trade are organized in the still-extant Shipowners Association of the Pacific Coast which carries on separate dealings with the offshore unions, but negotiates with longshoremen through the PMA.

GROWTH OF UNIONISM

The life of the seagoing worker has never been easy; even today conditions are arduous. Seamen are separated for long periods from land and the home life possible for the average workman on shore. Aboard ship, quarters are close, there is little privacy, and the worker is subject to disciplined group labor seven days a

week. The range of activities which can be pursued in leisure hours is severely limited, as is the choice of companions. Boredom and loneliness are common. Day-to-day work is not exceptionally difficult; on the other hand, monotony is occasionally broken by periods of considerable danger, calling for courage and specialized skills of a high order. The legal position of the seaman varies from that of the landsman as do the conditions under which he works. Before he joins a crew, the seaman must sign a civil agreement, known as "articles of agreement," in which he surrenders, to a certain extent, his personal liberty for the length of the voyage. The seaman agrees to render "faithful obedience to the lawful commands of the officers" and to be diligent in carrying out his duties. Under articles there can be no legal withdrawal of labor unless a ship is tied at a dock in a safe harbor.

The economic and legal conditions of American seamen have been subjects of controversy, agitation, and legislation for some 150 years. Perfection of sailing vessels over the first half of the nineteenth century had an unfortunate effect on the seafarer. Shipping was prosperous, but extremely competitive. Speed was of the greatest importance. Absolute obedience was required and was guaranteed both by legal measures and by force aboard ship. Large crews were required to man the more complex ships, but the heavy premium upon space led to "overloading, undermanning, overcrowding, underfeeding, and squeezing the last possible ounce of energy out of every member of the crew."¹¹ Competent seamen became increasingly difficult to obtain owing to the unpleasant working conditions, and, inevitably, there was little incentive to improve conditions as crews grew less efficient.

The transition to steamship operation changed many aspects of shipping and eventually had a substantial impact on attitudes of seamen and, later, on working conditions. Voyages became shorter and more regular, with traffic concentrated in terminals. The small shipping firm was largely displaced by the corporation operating extensive fleets in an impersonal, standardized manner. Seamen were thrown together in sizable groups in major ports, and a well-defined group consciousness began to emerge. On shipboard

¹¹ Elmo Paul Hohman, *History of American Merchant Seamen* (Hamden, Conn.: The Shoe String Press, 1956), p. 7.

refined division of labor led to job consciousness. In addition, the new technicians and mechanics necessary to steam operation brought with them a knowledge and experience of standards far above those prevailing in the maritime industry.

But while these changes were taking place, the position of the average seaman remained much the same. Crews on steamships were allotted more living space, but hours were long and irregular, depending entirely on the wishes of the master. Wages were extremely low. Discipline was harsh, commonly taking the form of physical brutality. Quarters were poorly lit and inadequately ventilated. Food was of the lowest caliber. Legislation was almost solely concerned with discipline, and defining, punishing, and suppressing all tendencies toward disorder and disobedience, rather than with guarding the welfare of sailors.¹²

Before the sixties, conditions on the Pacific Coast were considerably better. As the primary market for seamen was in the coastwise lumber trade, periodic shortages of labor in the West and the frequency with which seamen made port forced operators to keep wages comparatively high. Pay fell rapidly after the Civil War, however, when associations of owners of boarding houses for seamen were formed for the purpose of controlling the labor market. For the next 50 years, the "crimps," as they were called, held coast seamen in virtual economic slavery. If men were plentiful, a captain was paid in exchange for the exclusive privilege of providing labor; if men were scarce, the captain was forced to pay a crimp for a crew. The latter payment was known as "blood money," owing to the fact that shanghaiing was a common method of recruiting in a time of shortage. Laws which allowed the payment of sailors' wages in advance and the holding of clothing for debt guaranteed the success and profitability of the system. Crimps, who generally supplied all shore services required by seamen, not only allowed but encouraged the men to run up large debts. Captains were then required to pay over the men's advances before a crew could be obtained. Sailors often found it difficult to get berths before they had been ashore long enough to spend a large portion, or all, of their advances. Attempts to ship independently were blocked either by collusion of masters and crimps or by

¹² For a description of this period, see *ibid.*, pp. 6-11, 20-26.

seizure of the seaman's clothing for a debt which might be artificially created.¹³

A short-lived attempt of sailors to fight the system was made in 1866 when the Seamen's Friendly Union and Protective Society was formed in San Francisco. But it was 1880 before an organization of some durability—the Seamen's Protective Association of San Francisco—appeared. The union lasted about two years, during which time it attacked shanghaiing and various brutalities at sea, agitated for a 12-hour day, and drafted an unsuccessful bill requiring a limitation on use of alien seamen. In 1883 marine firemen formed a union which was to grow into the present-day Pacific Coast Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders, and Wipers Association. The next year cooks and waiters on steamers joined together in the Steamshipmen's Protective Association, and officers organized the Licensed Officers Protective Association of the Pacific Coast. When news came in 1885 that wages of sailors on coastal vessels were to be cut to \$25 a month, the Coast Seamen's Union was formed. By July of the same year, the CSU, predecessor of the Sailors Union of the Pacific, claimed 2,200 of about 3,500 coasting seamen and had forced owners to concede higher wages. However, a bad set-back occurred in 1886 when the newly created Shipowners Association of the Pacific Coast managed to break a strike of sailors and firemen.¹⁴

The next few years were a time of retrenchment, planning, and growth in new directions for the unions. In 1887 a large, militant group of marine engineers in San Francisco joined the National Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, which had been formed in 1875 of several small groups on the Great Lakes. The same year, Andrew Furuseth, the man who was to guide the policies of seamen on all coasts for the next 48 years, became secretary of the Coast Seamen's Union and pointed out a path along which the union might progress. An act passed in 1874 had repealed all provisions relating to the coastal trades contained in

¹³ Paul S. Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1923), pp. 26-30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-52; see also the excellent book by Ira B. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California*, Publications in Economics, vol. 14 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935), which covers the early activities of seamen as well as the maritime unions' relationship to the general labor movement in the San Francisco area.

an act of 1872. The intention was to free operators on short routes from the necessity of signing men off and on at the end of each trip. However, as the original act was practically a codification of maritime law, one of the important and unintended results of repeal was to exempt seamen in coast trades from the penalties for desertion. Once Furuseth discovered this fact and described its implications, the union was in possession of a powerful economic weapon. In a campaign against employer measures designed to prevent organization, seamen denied union membership in order to gain a berth, then left the vessel just before sailing time, causing a delay while another crew was hired. By 1890 the employers had stopped discriminating against union men, membership in the Coast Seamen's Union had increased to about 3,100, and branches had been set up in all major ports. In the meantime, sailors on offshore steamers had organized the Steamship Sailors Protective Union, and in July 1891 the two organizations combined on equal terms to form the Sailors Union of the Pacific.

From the union point of view, the future seemed promising. Employer grade books, a method by which blacklists of union members could be kept, had been abolished, wages and conditions were good, a union shipping office for deck seamen was meeting with success, and several local agreements were in existence between sailors, firemen, and engineers and certain shipping companies. In 1892 the unlicensed unions affiliated with the newly chartered AFL National Seamen's Union, and the Licensed Deck Officers Protective Association of the Pacific Coast joined the National Organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots.

But business was slackening, and in November 1891 the Shipowners Association demanded a 25 per cent wage reduction. When the seamen resisted, employers started hiring nonunion men wherever possible. The struggle dragged on through 1892 with the unions managing to hold their own. However, when the shipowners seemed about to acknowledge defeat in the spring of 1893, the Manufacturers and Employers Association stepped in with assistance. A management shipping office was established and the grade book system was reinstated. Another blow to the unions was the extended use of a law passed in 1890 which applied the penal clauses, including arrest and imprisonment for desertion, of the

Shipping Commissioners Act to seamen in the coastal trades who shipped before a U. S. Shipping Commissioner. Coast seamen had been evading these penalties by refusing to ship before a commissioner. Now, with a surplus of labor owing to the severe depression of 1893, employers were able to force the signing of articles and could thereby nullify the most potent weapon of the coast sailor, his ability to leave a ship just before sailing time. The weakening of the crimping system which had been slowly taking place ceased. Membership of the Sailors Union of the Pacific quickly fell to about one-quarter of what it had been. A desperate strike was carried out in the winter of 1894 and the first half of 1895 in an attempt to force wages up to \$30 a month. But the struggle was useless, and the union retreated in complete defeat.¹⁵

Shift to Legislative Action

As long as the seaman lacked the shore worker's discretion with regard to his person and earnings, he could not hope to bring about permanent improvements in his working conditions. Arrest and imprisonment for desertion, advance allotments to creditors, and attachment of clothing for debt combined to create for the seaman a form of involuntary servitude from which there appeared to be no escape so long as the law remained unchanged.

Under the leadership of Andrew Furuseth, the SUP formed a committee in 1892 to work out a legislative program. The task was subsequently taken over by the International Seamen's Union-AFL (formerly the National Seamen's Union) of which Furuseth was head.¹⁶ With the support of seamen in San Francisco, the sympathetic Judge James G. Maguire was elected to Congress. Assisted by Furuseth, Maguire wrote and then introduced a series of bills on the subject of seamen. The result was the Maguire Act of February 18, 1895, which, in effect, exempted seamen in the coast trades from those provisions of the law which provided for imprisonment for desertion, allotments, and attachment of clothing.

Gains were made for seamen in other trades when the White Act was passed in 1898. The most important clause reduced the penalty for desertion of Americans in all American and nearby

¹⁵ Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-213; Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-74.

¹⁶ The NSU was formed in 1892 of unlicensed maritime unions in various parts of the country. The name was changed to International Seamen's Union in 1895.

foreign ports to forfeiture of wages due and loss of personal effects left on board. The penalty for desertion of foreign seamen in American ports and American seamen in foreign ports was reduced from three months to one month in prison, all corporal punishment was prohibited, minimum food scales and space requirements were raised, and in foreign trade only one month's advance wages might now be paid to an "original creditor."

Thus, although the union had lost its influence with the employers on the West Coast, great strides were being made in Washington. The plight of the seaman was kept continually before legislators by Furuseth. A record of the brutality common on American deepwater ships was published; bill after bill was drafted and circulated; speeches were made; pamphlet followed pamphlet; testimony was given before Congressional committees. The Maguire and White Acts dealt a fatal blow to crimping and gave American seamen in American ports the same freedom to give or withhold their services as men ashore. But the job was not yet finished. Furuseth and the legislative committee of the International Seamen's Union were interested in a more comprehensive seamen's act.

The campaign was proceeding with frustrating slowness when in 1912 the sinking of the *Titanic* stimulated a wave of public interest in safety procedures at sea. Furuseth's program was conveniently at hand when new maritime legislation was enthusiastically advocated by political spokesmen. Guided by Senator LaFollette, the ISU bill finally passed both houses with only one amendment, and became law on March 4, 1915. In general, the act followed three lines: it abolished imprisonment for desertion, established a set of welfare provisions, and provided specific safety measures.¹⁷ The only penalty for desertion in safe harbor was to be forfeiture of personal effects and wages earned. Seamen were also to have the right to demand one-half of wages earned and unpaid in any port of cargo loading or discharging. Both these sections were to apply to foreign seamen in American ports as well as to seamen on American vessels in all ports. All treaties providing for the arrest and return of deserters from foreign vessels were abrogated. The provisions fundamentally altered the status of the

¹⁷ For an analysis of the Seamen's Act of 1915, see Hohman, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-45, and Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-121.

seaman. He was now able to leave his ship and job in safe harbor and, at the same time, was assured of sufficient money to make such a move possible. The seaman had achieved a degree of legal and personal freedom unknown in maritime history.

Working conditions, too, were greatly improved. Food scales and space allotments were increased and certain requirements were made in regard to lighting, ventilation, etc. Engineerroom personnel were to be divided into at least three watches at sea, and sailors into at least two watches. Each man was to work only in the department for which he had been hired. A normal day's work in port was to be nine hours. Allotments to original creditors were totally abolished. Sections aimed at achieving greater safety at sea were lengthy and detailed. Requirements were laid down as to the provision, maintenance, and testing of various types of life-saving equipment. Manning scales for passenger vessels were to be based on the number of lifeboats carried. Sixty-five per cent of the deck crew of all vessels, exclusive of officers and apprentices, were to be Ablebodied Seamen.¹⁸ Seventy-five per cent of the crew in each department of a ship was to be able to understand any order given by an officer.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, 1898-1933

While Furuseth worked in Washington, the unions on the West Coast were struggling to gain a foothold on the economic front. As shipping picked up at the turn of the century, the unions began to recover from the defeat they had suffered in the mid-nineties. A new period of growth commenced which was to bring recognition, collective bargaining, and emergence of some of the interunion controversies destined to have such a profound effect on future maritime relations.

In 1898 several independent unions of longshoremen joined the International Longshoremen's Association-AFL and began an intensive organizing campaign. The following year, sailors struck the Shipowners Association of the Pacific Coast for a raise in the Mexican trade. The Sailors Union of the Pacific won, and membership began to rise.¹⁹

¹⁸ The qualifications for the rating of Ablebodied Seamen were set at 19 years of age and three years' service on deck.

¹⁹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

A new organization of cooks and stewards appeared in 1901. The Steamshipmen's Protective Association which had been formed in 1884 to represent these men had long since passed out of existence, as had two succeeding unions. Men in the stewards' departments were working under the most depressed conditions prevailing at sea. Their working day ran from 16 to 18 hours, seven days a week, without overtime; the standard wage was \$20 a month. A small group, including Gene Burke, who was to remain a leader in the movement for the next 50 years, established the Marine Cooks and Stewards Association. Within three months the organization acquired approximately 500 members and became an affiliate of the International Seamen's Union.

The year 1901 was important for all coast maritime workers. Prosperity had brought strength and increased confidence. Following the example of the unified building trades unions in San Francisco, maritime unions created the City Front Federation in February. Almost immediately the Employers Association of San Francisco was formed to combat what promised to be an extremely powerful combination. A show-down was not slow in arriving. In July, a group of Teamsters affiliated with the Federation was locked out following a refusal to handle cargo with nonunion men. The Federation, representing 13,000 to 16,000 members, proceeded to strike in support of the Teamsters and for employer recognition of the right to organize and bargain collectively. Two months of deadlock resulted in a partial victory for the employers. The men were forced back to work, but with a promise that union members would not be discriminated against. However, the unions were not badly weakened by the defeat as had happened so many times in the past; instead the Employers Association was obliged to disband, so strongly did public opinion respond to some of the methods employed to break the strike.²⁰

The show of strength eventually resulted in gains for unlicensed seamen. After the strike, the Shipowners Association proposed set terms to the SUP. When the union suggested negotiations, the employers agreed. Five months of bargaining ensued, resulting in the first formal wage and condition agreement with

²⁰ *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor*, Report of the Committee on Education and Labor, U. S. 77th Congress, 2d Session, Senate Report 1150, Part 2 (1942), pp. 70-84.

owners of sailing vessels. The contract was to be in force for six months and thereafter until 30 days' notice was given by either party. New wages, overtime, and a nine-hour day were established. The Shipowners Association was to maintain a shipping office in San Francisco, and in other ports the SUP was to furnish crews. A standing committee was set up to adjust grievances. As a concession, the union declared itself opposed to the policy of sympathetic strikes.²¹ In 1903 and 1904, the Sailors Union of the Pacific, Marine Firemen's Association, Marine Cooks and Stewards, and Marine Engineers obtained similar contracts with owners of steam-operated coastal vessels, organized in the Steam Schooner Managers Association.²²

In 1906 the unions came up against the steam schooner owners who apparently were desirous of challenging the newly entrenched position of the maritime crafts. During regular negotiations in the spring, the steamer owners refused to accept the unions' case for improved wage scales. Meetings were suspended during the disastrous earthquake and fire, but once shipping had been restored to normal, owners of sailing vessels voluntarily increased wages of all crafts by \$5. When steamer owners continued to hold out, the unions threatened a strike. Refusing all offers of arbitration, the employers concerned locked out both union seamen and longshoremen in June, evidently in an effort to split the still-operating City Front Federation. In this, at least, they were successful. The seamen's unions withdrew from the Federation to prevent victimization of other groups. Longshoremen in many areas then proceeded to work cargo in spite of the seamen's strike and the union affiliation or nonaffiliation of crews.²³ After a five-month struggle, steam schooner owners gave up and granted the \$5 increase. Agreements similar to those previously in effect were signed with sailors and firemen. Cooks and stewards gained a reduction in hours to 12 a day and improved working conditions.²⁴

Attempts of the coastal operators to weaken or destroy the unions were abandoned for the time being. Owners of sail and

²¹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

²² Robert C. Francis, *A History of Labor on the San Francisco Waterfront* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1934), pp. 126-127.

²³ See *Coast Seamen's Journal* for June 13 and June 20, 1906.

²⁴ Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-107; Albert M. Bendich, *A History of the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union* (M.A. dissertation, University of California, 1950), p. 7.

steam vessels merged to form one negotiatory organization—the Shipowners Association of the Pacific Coast. Until 1921 conflict between unions and employers in the coast trade was rare. Shipping was fairly prosperous. Seamen had made good economic gains and were deeply involved in the campaign to improve their legal status.

Interunion Conflict

The efforts of maritime unions to establish jurisdictional rights during the early period of employer recognition led to many interunion frictions, the most pronounced of which were those arising between sailors and longshoremen. Disputes began to occur as soon as unionism gained headway in the eighties. Various local unions of longshoremen were concerned with acquiring control of all loading and unloading operations. On the other hand, it was common practice for seamen, particularly on lumber schooners, to assist in cargo work. In spite of the invaluable protection and support the two groups might have given each other, the need to secure firmly all possible jobs in a casual labor market made conflict more common than cooperation.

For example, in 1887, employers discharged seamen working on the wharves in San Pedro in an effort to force them back to sea. A strike of seamen and longshoremen resulted, but longshoremen returned to work in a few days, causing the sailors to fail in their effort to protect members temporarily working ashore. Various attempts were made by longshoremen to dislodge sailors from cargo jobs during the nineties, but seamen continued to work cargo and to discharge it to or receive it from union and nonunion longshoremen alike. In 1900 San Francisco longshoremen made a secret agreement with the Teamsters to the effect that cargo going to Hawaii would be delivered only to longshoremen. Following an appeal from the Sailors Union of the Pacific, the Teamsters broke their agreement and announced they would deliver freight to either group. The controversy led to the first of a long series of longshore-offshore agreements regarding scope of work: seamen were to work inside the ship's rail only; each union was to refuse to handle freight with nonunion men; longshoremen were to recognize the right of a union crew to work cargo aboard ship.²⁶

²⁶ See Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56, 65, 95.

Longshore-offshore competition became more complicated in 1898 when the various West Coast organizations of longshoremen affiliated with the International Longshoremen's Association. In the same year, the ILA accepted into membership a large group of Great Lakes marine firemen, oilers, and watertenders. Concern developed on the seagoing side when the ILA indicated its intention of spreading still further. Such fears were realized in 1902 when the ILA changed its name to the International Longshoremen, Marine, and Transport Workers Association, and claimed jurisdiction over all maritime workers. The International Seamen's Union promptly rose in wrath and emphatically reiterated the claim of its affiliates to all persons making a living on sea, lake, or river in any capacity in steam or sailing vessels.

The battle was carried on through several conventions of the American Federation of Labor before it was resolved in favor of the ISU. In the meantime, relations between sailors and longshoremen grew more strained. In Seattle and Portland, longshoremen went so far as to offer to furnish nonunion crews to masters in order to break the hold of the Sailors Union on loading in the Northwest. San Francisco longshore locals refused to support the expansionist policies of the ILA and withdrew from the international at the request of the City Front Federation, but the longshoremen would not discontinue their efforts to take over all cargo operations in the port.²⁸

The struggle between the ILA and the ISU over general jurisdiction and between the ILA and the SUP over cargo handling finally led in 1907 to an agreement by all parties to accept arbitration by Samuel Gompers, president of the AFL. The Gompers Award, issued on June 26, first required that the ILA drop its new, all-inclusive title and restrict itself to its original jurisdiction. So far as cargo handling was concerned, Gompers stated that all such work belonged to longshoremen, with two exceptions:

“(a) In the coastwise trade, when seamen bring a vessel into port, remain with the vessel for its onward course or for its return to the initial port, the work of loading or unloading the cargo to the extent of the ship's tackle may be performed by the seamen.

“(b) Seamen may load or unload cargoes beyond the ship's

²⁸ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 102; Francis, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-134.

tackle but only with the consent of or by agreement with the Longshoremen.”

Cargo was worked in the coastwise trade for about 25 years under the Gompers formula, with only sporadic breakdowns. Unfortunately, the decision did not cover cargo work in the offshore trade. Controversies continued to arise, particularly in the Northwest where coast seamen members of the SUP undercut longshoremen on loading work and then quit the vessel, allowing it to sail at deepwater rates or with a nonunion crew.⁷⁷ By World War I, however, longshoremen had gained control over all cargo work on deepwater vessels, both aboard and ashore.

A significant occurrence in the history of the relationship of West Coast longshoremen and seamen was the withdrawal of the seamen's unions from the City Front Federation during the 1906 strike. The stated object of the disaffiliations was to protect other maritime trades, particularly those on land, from employer retaliation at a time when labor was abundant and cheap. It is clear that detachment from the Federation was thought to be desirable for other reasons also, as no attempt was made to reaffiliate with the central body after settlement with the employers. In fact, from that time to 1934, the Sailors Union in particular demonstrated a strong aversion to entanglements which might involve the union in strikes not of its own making. In 1914 longshore and offshore unions in San Francisco created the Waterfront Federation, but two years later the seamen refused to support an important strike of longshoremen. Again in 1919 longshoremen struck without the support of seamen, who withdrew from the Waterfront Federation and announced a policy of performing cargo work regardless of the affiliation of assisting longshoremen; the stoppage ended in the collapse of the longshore unions.

During these years there is no record of trouble between sailors, firemen, and cooks on the Pacific Coast. Fairly rigid craft lines and coexistence in the ISU-AFL served to prevent trouble. The National Organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots also had no difficulty maintaining its territorial integrity. On the other hand, marine engineers were in a particularly vulnerable position, as

⁷⁷ Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.

their work was not greatly different from that covered ashore by other organizations of engineers.

The Marine Engineers Beneficial Association had, in the decades before World War I, followed an almost completely independent line of action, avoiding involvement either with other unions or with the AFL. This was largely because of the act of February 28, 1871, which provided for license revocation if a marine engineer refused to serve in his licensed capacity without submitting in writing, "good and sufficient reasons therefore." The act, in effect, precluded strike action and caused the MEBA scrupulously to sidestep situations which might call for sympathy stoppages.

Around the turn of the century, groups of engineers, affected by the general air of militancy, began to ignore the restrictions on refusals to work. Then, an amendment to the law in 1905 provided license suspension instead of revocation for a withdrawal of labor. In 1915 another amendment gave engineers the right to quit at the expiration of a contract whether or not continued services were demanded by an employer. But the loosening of restrictions on striking did not cause the immediate development of a more fraternal feeling toward other maritime unions. The only exception to the union's policy of detachment was close ties which were developed between local units of the MEBA and the Masters, Mates, and Pilots. For example, joint meetings were often held in San Francisco, and in 1898 the locals in that city formed a mutual assistance alliance which lasted five years. Members of both organizations were forbidden to sail with licensed officers who were members of neither organization.²⁸

The reluctance of the MEBA to integrate with the greater labor movement soon led to jurisdictional trouble. In 1902, following the temporary widening of ILA jurisdiction, MEBA lost a substantial group of members at the Great Lakes to the longshoremen. In an effort to gain protection the MEBA applied to the AFL for a charter, but withdrew the request once the International Seamen's Union had been successful in its fight to halt the incursions of the ILA. By 1910 the marine engineers were again in difficulty

²⁸ Howard A. Thor, *A History of the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association* (M.A. dissertation, University of California, 1954), p. 78.

when the AFL-affiliated International Union of Steam Operating Engineers began to recruit in the marine field. Another overture was made to the AFL, but negotiations fell through when the operating engineers insisted MEBA accept a subcharter of IUSOE.

The situation had become somewhat more urgent for MEBA by 1915. The wartime flow of land engineers to ships meant that the Steam Engineers were likely to make overwhelming gains. AFL affiliation was again proposed by the MEBA, with the proviso that the union receive full jurisdiction over marine engineers. The IUSOE protested, and was joined by the International Association of Machinists which proceeded to demand jurisdictional rights over much repair work historically done by marine engineers. Finally, in 1917, the MEBA accepted an AFL charter which was considered in many locals of the union to be detrimental to the organization. Delegates from Seattle to the MEBA convention withdrew in protest and San Francisco delegates refused to be bound by the convention's ruling, in spite of the fact that these locals originally had been strongly in favor of affiliation.²⁹

The Masters, Mates, and Pilots were obliged to affiliate with the AFL in 1916 for a slightly different reason. Following the failure of an officers' strike in New York in 1910, several dual unions of deck officers appeared and applied to the AFL for charters. To protect its jurisdiction, the MMP joined the AFL. The move was made with comparative ease, however, as MMP territory in no sense overlapped that of any other AFL union.³⁰

World War I

The war did not have a substantial effect on Pacific Coast shipping, as most traffic to the war zones moved from Atlantic and Gulf ports. However, gains for maritime unions on all coasts were impressive. On the East Coast, policies toward seamen were determined by agreement between shipowners and the International Seamen's Union, and were underwritten by the government. The Atlantic Agreement, signed in August 1917, was the first written contract ever made between the ISU and the Atlantic operators as a group. On the West Coast, agreements were negotiated by the

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-78, 81-87.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

owners and the unions as had been customary, and the U. S. Shipping Board automatically accepted the same terms and conditions of employment for the vessels under its control. As a result of the cooperation of all parties in utilizing collective bargaining and arbitration there were no strikes in the maritime field at any time during the war.

In 1916 the wages of West Coast unlicensed sailors and firemen were adjusted for the first time since 1908. Rates reached \$55 a month on coast steam vessels, \$50 on coast and Hawaiian sailing vessels, and \$40 on offshore ships. As the cost of living and the demand for seamen increased, wages rose again. By 1919 sailors and firemen were receiving \$90 a month and had gained the long-sought eight-hour day in port and at sea on steamers. Wages were over twice prewar rates; hours were down; union delegates had access to docks and ships. Between 1915 and 1920 the membership of the International Seamen's Union on all coasts increased from less than 20,000 to more than 100,000.²¹ The future was bright for the maritime unions. Only the collapse of most of the International Longshoremen's Association's western locals in a disastrous strike in 1919 and the rapid substitution of a company-dominated long-shore union in San Francisco gave a hint of what was ahead.

Defeat of the Unions

The shipping industry was faced with severe economic dislocation at the end of the war. Vessels were being tied up by the hundreds. There are estimates that by January 1921 the slump had caused the retirement of 46 per cent of the United States Shipping Board fleet and 15 per cent of privately owned vessels. In an effort to stay in business and to meet threats of stiff foreign competition, ship operators turned their attention to cutting the cost of labor.

In January 1921, the American Steamship Owners Association, an East Coast organization, and the U. S. Shipping Board, in anticipation of the expiration of contracts with the International Seamen's Union and the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association on April 30, submitted proposals for elimination of all overtime pay, a 25 per cent reduction in wages, and certain other adjustments in charges required under current agreements. Similar pro-

²¹ *Report to the President and to the Congress, March 1, 1940*, Maritime Labor Board (Washington: 1940), pp. 34-35; Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-137.

posals were made by employers on the West Coast, but the unions in the latter case refused to discuss reductions, and the contracts, which expired in January, were continued on a 30-day basis pending developments on the Atlantic seaboard.

When both the seamen and the engineers turned down the requests of the East Coast operators and the Shipping Board, the employers made use of a technique which had usually proved effective on the West Coast and which has seen much use over the years in waterfront affairs—an attempt was made to divide the unions. In answer to a request for a general negotiating conference, the American Steamship Owners Association notified the MEBA that the employers did not wish to discuss the wages and conditions of engineers with unlicensed seamen, as such a procedure would threaten discipline. However, when the engineers agreed to meet separately they were presented with a demand for a 35 per cent reduction in wages. The deadlock continued.³³

Three days before expiration of the East Coast contracts, Admiral Benson, chairman of the Shipping Board, called union leaders to Washington and made a final offer including a 15 per cent reduction and abolition of overtime as “foreign to the spirit and customs of the sea.” A union demand for preferential hiring clauses was dismissed with the statement that, “The Shipping Board, as a government institution, must stand for that equality in its relations to the Government which is guaranteed to every citizen by the constitution of the United States.”³⁴ When Andrew Furuseth, president of the ISU, later asked the Admiral to state future Shipping Board policy on shipboard visits of union agents, Benson said presence of union representatives indicated a lack of confidence and a desire for interference, and that he did not see why union leaders should be permitted on board to interfere with the men employed there.³⁴ Thus ended the brief period of government support of trade unionism and collective bargaining in the maritime industry. The employers accepted the terms Benson had proposed and the unions rejected them.

In a last effort to retrieve the situation, the unions offered to submit the entire matter to President Harding for arbitration. The

³³ Thor, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

³³ Walter J. Petersen, *Marine Labor Union Leadership* (San Francisco: 1925), p. 26.

³⁴ Thor, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124.

owners and the Shipping Board refused, and when the contracts expired on April 30 a lockout was ordered. Left with no other choice, the MEBA and the ISU group of unlicensed seamen declared themselves on strike on both coasts the following day.

The hopelessness of the situation from the union point of view became evident as time passed. The employers refused to negotiate and turned down an offer of mediation made by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. The Shipping Board and private owners operated ships with nonunion crews. The Board succeeded in alienating the unions not only by siding with the shipowners but also by warning private operators that those companies operating Shipping Board ships would have their vessels withdrawn from service if men were signed on at the old wage scales.³⁵ Toward the end of May the owners announced that owing to the violence and sabotage which had followed several attempts to man ships, they would make no further agreements with the engineers' or seamen's organizations as then constituted.³⁶

Ignoring the unlicensed crafts, the Shipping Board meanwhile had been concentrating on the engineers. The MEBA's leadership agreed on May 5 to accept a 15 per cent reduction if certain other features of the old agreement, such as overtime pay, could be retained. Admiral Benson agreed to the plan, but it was subsequently vetoed by the shipowners and by the MEBA membership who were still confident of eventual victory.

More and more ships began sailing under nonunion conditions. Torn by internal quarrels over the advisability of settling on the 15 per cent reduction and cutting losses, the MEBA hesitated past the point where a favorable deal might have been made with the Shipping Board and the operators at the expense of the unlicensed seamen, and then proceeded to desert the International Seamen's Union in a profitless panic. On June 13 the MEBA president signed an agreement with the Shipping Board which was inferior to that accepted by Admiral Benson previously. In addition to a 15 per cent cut, no overtime was to be paid except in emergencies, vacation pay was eliminated, the contract was to run for only six months instead of a year, and no reinstatement clause could be

³⁵ Thor, *ibid.*, p. 128.

³⁶ *Report on Marine and Dock Industrial Relations*, United States Shipping Board (Washington: 1922), p. 15.

gained to protect the strikers. In fact, two days after the agreement was signed, the Shipping Board issued a general order forbidding discharge of strikebreakers to make room for returning engineers.⁸⁷ Engineers on the West Coast refused to acknowledge the agreement with the Board and continued the strike, as did all MEBA locals insofar as private operators were concerned.⁸⁸

In July the Shipowners Association of the Pacific Coast broke from the ranks of the employers and offered a contract to the Sailors Union of the Pacific. The terms were far from ideal from the union point of view, involving a wage reduction and an informal open shop arrangement for one year, but they included overtime payments and maintenance of union working conditions. In view of the rout taking place elsewhere, Furuseth, who was in Washington, urged acceptance. However, the proposed agreement included a clause guaranteeing that sailors would work with longshoremen whether the latter be union or nonunion men. Under the influence of new local leaders who were promoting closer affiliation with all marine workers, the union overwhelmingly rejected the SAPC's offer.⁸⁹

By July 20 all MEBA locals had admitted defeat and had called off their strikes. A week later Furuseth returned to San Francisco and convinced the Sailors Union that defeat was inevitable. The unlicensed seamen of all coasts finally voted to return to work with no contracts. The Masters, Mates, and Pilots, whose agreements expired on July 31 and hence were not involved in the strike, found themselves in the same position as the rest of the unions: private operators simply refused to make new contracts. Subsequently, the Shipping Board signed agreements with the MMP and longshoremen on the East Coast, as it had earlier with the engineers. But neither the Board nor private operators chose to deal with the unlicensed crafts.

Six months later, all wages were again reduced. Within a year's time most of the gains not only of the war period but of the years before were wiped out. Collective bargaining had all but disappeared. The wages of ablebodied seamen had fallen to \$56 from a peak of \$90. With the crushing defeat of the International Sea-

⁸⁷ Thor, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁸⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁸⁹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

men's Union came a swift fall in membership and an intensification of the revolt which had been developing within the organization on the part of a large group of members, some of whom were influenced by the doctrines of the Industrial Workers of the World and others of whom were primarily interested in industrial unionism for all marine transport workers. As for the engineers, the expense of the strike drove many locals of the MEBA into bankruptcy; in addition, disagreement over the conduct of the strike caused the creation of several competing engineers' unions after 1921. There was a turning away from trade unionism among officers generally and a regrowth of interest in the "professionalism" popular in the nineteenth century. And, as we have seen, with the exception of a few locals in the Northwest, the International Longshoremen's Association had disappeared from the West Coast.

Open Shop Period

The next 12 years were difficult both for maritime workers and for their unions. In large part, this was due to the unfavorable economic conditions under which private operators and the Shipping Board strove to function. Owners faced high domestic costs of construction and operation, inadequate and unbalanced freights, surplus tonnage, strenuous competition, and a drift toward higher tariffs, autarky, and other handicaps to international trade; the Shipping Board had the same problems in the operation of its own vessels plus the responsibility of attempting to liquidate a fleet of wartime vessels. The depression of the early thirties hit the shipping industry not as a reversal but merely as an intensification of the decline which had been under way since 1920.⁴⁰

Following the defeat of the maritime unions, employers moved determinedly to ensure future control over labor costs. In San Francisco, longshore employers had signed a five-year, open-shop contract in 1919 with the company-dominated Longshoremen's Association. In a few years, membership in the organization had been made compulsory by most shipowners and stevedores. Elsewhere on the coast longshoremen were in much the same situation. Until 1934 no independent unions of longshoremen were recog-

⁴⁰ Hohman, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52. For a detailed treatment of the economic problems of the Pacific Coast maritime industry, see Wytze Gorter and George H. Hildebrand, *Pacific Coast Maritime Shipping Industry, 1930-1948*, vols. I and II (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1952 and 1954).

nized for the purpose of collective bargaining. In San Francisco, workers were hired off the docks by means of the shape-up; in Seattle, Portland, and San Pedro, company-controlled hiring halls were set up. Although the halls included registration systems by which an attempt was made to stabilize and decasualize the workforce, at the same time, the system was effectively used by the employers to combat unionism.⁴¹

The Shipowners Association of the Pacific Coast, the Waterfront Employers Association, and the Pacific American Steamship Association, an organization formed in 1919 to promote the open shop,⁴² joined together and offered the Marine Service Bureau as a successor to unionism for the seagoing crafts. The Bureau became the agency through which the owners' associations hired shipboard personnel. Under the general management of Walter J. Petersen, former Oakland Chief of Police, halls were set up in the four major West Coast ports. To prevent hiring by other methods, the Bureau issued assignment cards and sent inspectors to ships immediately before sailing time. Grade books containing assignments, discharges, and employer comments were required. Employment exchanges were also run for government-owned ships by the government's Sea Service Bureau. These halls were charged subsequently by the workers of practicing discrimination in hiring by operating blacklist systems.⁴³

To combat the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, West Coast operators introduced a company union called the American Society of Marine Engineers. Members of the MEBA were forced to resign and to join the ASME in order to get jobs. However, the ASME was offered no contract by the employers. To prevent depletion of its membership, the MEBA refused to acknowledge resignations.

As the twenties progressed and there came no relief in the shipping depression, wages dropped and conditions deteriorated both on the docks and at sea. Longshoremen complained of dan-

⁴¹ See Betty V. H. Schneider and Abraham Siegel, *Industrial Relations in the Pacific Coast Longshore Industry* (Berkeley: Institute of Industrial Relations, 1956), pp. 7-9.

⁴² The PASA included all companies in the SAPC, most offshore dry cargo operators, and five oil companies.

⁴³ R. J. Lampman, *Collective Bargaining of West Coast Sailors, 1885-1947: A Case Study in Unionism* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1950), pp. 139-141, 145-146.

gerous speedups, split shifts, lack of grievance machinery, and of evils which arose under the hiring system—favoritism, bribery, and blacklisting for union activity. At sea, manning scales were reduced and the working day was lengthened in many instances. Little effort was made to enforce various provisions of the Seamen's Act. The complaints of seamen against the new hiring system were similar to those of longshoremen. Although the Marine Service Bureau was supposed to fill jobs on a rotation basis, it was claimed that bribery was common and in some cases a normal procedure.⁴⁴ All efforts of the International Seamen's Union to approach the shipowners failed. The Sailors Union of the Pacific sponsored two attempts to get court restraint of the owners' hiring halls and finally by these means forced the Bureau in 1927 to cease requiring that all seamen be hired through the halls. However, the change in policy had little effect on the employers' hold on the labor market.

The ISU unions of sailors, engineroom men, and stewards were unable to cope with the drastic reversal they had experienced. Immediately after the 1921 strike, the attentions of the leadership were temporarily diverted by factionalism between the old guard and the advocates of more radical theories of unionism.⁴⁵ Then, following the victory of the moderate Furuseth and his followers within the federation, came apathy. Rebuffed by the employers and the Shipping Board, the ISU fell back on the legislative approach to maritime problems which had proved effective in the early days of the century. Internally, organizational and financial control passed in stages from the unions to the International, while local organizations went into a state of stagnation.

By 1929 the total membership of the ISU had declined from a peak of more than 100,000 to approximately 14,000.⁴⁶ In the early thirties, seamen in the intercoastal trade were receiving as low as \$32.50 a month. Membership in the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association dropped to 4,800 on all coasts, the lowest since before 1899. In 1933 the Marine Firemen of the Pacific Coast had only 300 paid-up members and was in bankruptcy.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-146.

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 106-108.

⁴⁶ The ISU at this time also included sailors', firemen's, and stewards' unions of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts and the Great Lakes, and several regional fishermen's and ferryboatmen's unions. *Seamen's Journal*, XLIV (March, 1930), 97.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESENT BARGAINING PATTERN

The New Deal restored life to the maritime unions. In June 1933 the National Industrial Recovery Act was passed, including Section 7(a) which guaranteed the right to organize, to bargain collectively, and to be free of employer interference or intimidation. The bitterness which had been engendered by deterioration of working conditions and pay to a level reminiscent of the nineteenth century found an outlet. Seamen, licensed and unlicensed, poured into unions. Locals of the ILA were re-formed on the Pacific Coast, and within a matter of a few months the employer-run Longshoremen's Association of San Francisco had collapsed.

The act also provided for creation of "self-governing industry codes" covering prices, wages, hours, and working conditions. Through this provision the reviving International Seamen's Union hoped to regain its former position in the industry. The leadership anticipated that shipowners would recognize the right of the ISU to participate in the formulation of a code, even though the employers gave no sign of such an intention, and, in fact, proposed a code in November which almost ignored the problem of wages and employment practices. In spite of indications that the outlook of the employers had been in no wise altered by passage of the NIRA, ISU leaders chose to take a soft line. By May 1934 the unions had not yet been recognized and hearings were still being held on codes. In the meantime, longshoremen on the West Coast had seized the initiative for maritime workers.

In March 1934, the Pacific Coast District of the International Longshoremen's Association, in a move independent of the international union, presented demands, including a six-hour day, thirty-hour week, minimum rate of \$1 an hour, and time-and-a-half for overtime. Most important, the employers were asked to agree to a single coastwide contract and union-controlled hiring halls. When the employers rejected most of the proposals, a strike was set for March 23, but was postponed when President Roosevelt requested additional time for government investigation and media-

tion. In the interim, West Coast unlicensed seamen broke from the "wait and see" policy of their parent body, the International Seamen's Union, and demanded recognition and collective bargaining, abolition of blacklisting, control of hiring halls, higher wages, and better conditions. Western members of the Masters, Mates, and Pilots and the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association followed suit with requests for recognition and collective bargaining rights.

Mediation failed when the longshoremen refused to accept anything less than bargaining on a coastwide basis, and on May 9 the strike started. A week later, locals of sailors, firemen, and stewards walked out, although the ISU would not approve strike action. On May 19, engineers, masters, and mates struck in sympathy.⁴⁷ Picket lines were thrown up on all waterfronts and were highly effective in bringing shipping almost to a standstill. What proved to be one of the most violent and widespread labor-management wars in American history was under way. The forceful initial demonstration of the intensity and extent of grievance was followed by statements by the various unions that individual settlements would be shunned until all had gained what they desired from the employers.

Leadership of the strike was maintained throughout by West Coast longshoremen. Although Joseph Ryan, national president of the ILA, struggled from April until the middle of June to bring the situation under his control and to end the controversy with the employers, his efforts were rejected by the membership and he was obliged to withdraw, leaving the field to a radical and uncompromising committee of local leaders led by a militant rank-and-filer, Harry Bridges. A Joint Marine Strike Committee, headed by Bridges, was formed to conduct negotiations for all crafts.

The employers' answer to the successful revolution within the ILA and the unification of all crafts was to make a concerted effort to open the port of San Francisco, which had become the center of union activity. With the aid of the Industrial Association, a city-wide, American Plan organization formed in 1921, strikebreakers in large numbers were moved across the unions' formidable picket lines. The forces subsequently brought into play against the strik-

⁴⁷ Wholesale desertions from the antiunion American Society of Marine Engineers caused its disbandment shortly thereafter.

ers, including police and the National Guard, and the violence, bloodshed, and deaths which resulted, stimulated a wave of public sympathy for maritime workers. When Harry Bridges urged that the strike be more widely supported, first Teamsters' locals, then the rank and file of several other unions responded with stoppages. Finally approval came from the San Francisco Labor Council and its 115 union affiliates. Between July 16 and 19, a general strike brought almost all business in the San Francisco Bay Area to a halt.

As public opinion began to swing back against the strikers in reaction to the magnitude of the upheaval, the National Longshoremen's Board, appointed by the President to assist in settling the strike, stepped in with a suggestion that the parties submit to arbitration. Although neither side would have considered such a solution previously, a compromise was agreed upon. If the longshoremen would agree to arbitrate disputed issues, including the union shop and the hiring hall, the shipowners would arbitrate all unresolved issues involving the offshore crafts, following representation elections and formal negotiations. Pending final settlement, the stevedores and shipping companies agreed to discharge strikebreakers, refrain from discriminating against strikers, make wage adjustments retroactive to the date the men returned to work, and allow the arbitration board to supervise existing hiring halls. The Shipowners Association of the Pacific Coast, operators of coastal schooners, separately agreed to recognize the unions affiliated with the ISU and offered to abandon the employers' hiring hall. On July 29 the longshoremen, masters, mates, and engineers voted to call off their strikes. The same action was taken the next day by the sailors, firemen, and stewards.⁴⁸

The National Longshoremen's Board, which had been accepted by the longshore parties as a board of arbitration, presented its award on October 12, 1934. Gains for the workers were impressive: an increase in base pay; a 30-hour basic week; jointly operated hiring halls in each port, with dispatchers chosen by the union; a coastwide settlement, binding on all ports. The closed shop was

⁴⁸ For more detailed information on the events of these months, see Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-262; Paul Eliel, *The Waterfront and General Strikes* (San Francisco: Industrial Association, 1934); Mike Quin, *The Big Strike* (Olema, California: Olema Publishing Co., 1948); Paul S. Taylor and Norman Leon Gold, "San Francisco and the General Strike," *Survey Graphic*, vol. XXIII (September, 1934).

not granted, but choice of dispatchers gave the union the control it desired.

Some three months after the end of the strike, elections among seamen indicated overwhelming votes for the SUP, Marine Firemen, and Marine Cooks and Stewards. Separate arbitration proceedings were then instituted for the steam schooner and offshore trades. In January 1935, the coast board awarded a preferential hiring system to the three unions. Employer halls were abolished and hiring was to be either through the unions or off the docks. Wages were raised, and an eight-hour day and 56-hour week were established. The following month the offshore board made a similar award.

Contracts were negotiated and completed in March between the Shipowners Association of the Pacific Coast and the MMP and MEBA, without resort to arbitration. Representation elections were held in the offshore and intercoastal trades and resulted in victories for the officers' unions in all but two companies. Agreements were signed in April and May, and in the case of the Marine Engineers provision was made for arbitration of wage and condition issues. In both settlements it was specified that deck and engine officers would be hired without regard to union affiliation. At about the same time, a new organization formed in 1931, the American Radio Telegraphers Association, signed contracts including preferential hiring clauses with various offshore operators.⁴⁹

Seamen's gains fell short of those made by the longshoremen in that control of hiring was not placed in union hands. The Marine Service Bureau was abolished and the unlicensed crafts obtained preferential hiring, but not union or joint hiring halls. While officers received generally satisfactory wage increases and many improvements in conditions, they were left without any sort of union security guarantee. These results, plus the fact that the pace-setting ILA-Pacific District had called off the strike before the seagoing group had got general recognition from the employers, left a reservoir of resentment among seamen. It would appear, however, that the action of the longshoremen on July 29 was not solely the matter of selfish indifference that the sailors later chose to claim

⁴⁹ R. M. Robinson, *A Study of Inter-Union and Employer-Union Relations on the San Francisco Waterfront, 1933-1937* (M.A. dissertation, University of California, 1937), pp. 61-62.

in the heat of interunion battle. Prolongation of the maritime strike after the general strike had been called off and the bulk of public opinion had turned against the waterfront workers had decidedly negative aspects from the point of view of tactics. Secondly, it was quite evident that the shipowners, except coastal operators in the SAPC, were not prepared to grant the unions' demands without a longer fight which, in the end, might be won by the employers. In light of the expected results of the proposed elections among offshore workers and the fact that arbitration was assured all crafts it is not surprising longshore leadership felt free to quit at this juncture. There is nothing in the facts available which points to any profit the longshoremen might have stood to make at the expense of the offshore crafts. Rather, it would appear that by the end of July each union, considering individual strength and staying power, had pushed the situation to its limit.

Maritime Unity

Recriminations were to come later. In 1934 and 1935 solidarity was the theme and permanent strength in unity was the goal of each maritime union. The unpleasant experiences of the twenties and early thirties and fierce employer opposition in 1934 to workers' efforts to act within the meaning of Section 7(a) of the NIRA were fresh in the minds of those who had endured hardships and indignities and had, in the end, seized the power to help themselves. In the spring of 1935, the Pacific District of the International Longshoremen's Association issued a call to fellow unions to join under the banner of industrial unionism. The resulting Maritime Federation of the Pacific was formed of representatives of the ILA, the three Pacific Coast affiliates of the ISU (SUP, MCS, and MFOWW), the MEBA, MMP and the American Radio Telegraphists Association (ARTA). Not even in 1901 had the unions been so closely allied.

Former distaste for alliances and preference for clear craft divisions had suddenly disappeared. It seemed that one overseeing federation was the most desirable objective. There were a number of reasons for the new point of view. The record of failures of unions acting singly since World War I and the increasing strength of the employers' associations underlined the danger of traveling alone even after a measure of recognition and security

was accorded a union. In the atmosphere created by, and lingering after, the bloody waterfront and general strikes of 1934, former differences of opinion over borderline jurisdictions or mutual aid seemed inconsequential. Cooperation was not only the easier but the more desirable course. Secondly, in most cases the actions of West Coast unions before and during the strike were taken without consultation with the international unions or, occasionally, in direct contravention of instructions. Seizing control, local leaders had moved swiftly to take advantage of a highly fluid set of circumstances. The urge to independent, opportunistic action continued after the strike, causing traditional or technical objections the international unions might have had to such a federation to be trampled underfoot. It should be noted too that the ideological differences of opinion which were soon to split the unions into violently antagonistic groups had not yet arisen. The new crop of local leaders were almost all radical in their views. There was no argument, for the moment, over the role of the unions; the events of the day were seen in terms of class conflict.

The general aims of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific as it was set up were to facilitate industrywide cooperation in action against the employers and to serve as an agency to organize all marine employees. During formative meetings, the ILA representatives urged that sovereign powers be given the Maritime Federation regarding negotiations and strikes of all crafts. The sailors held out for union autonomy within the Federation, a plan which was finally accepted. All constituent organizations pledged to terminate and renew collective bargaining agreements simultaneously and to take no strike action without first notifying all member unions. The first slate of officers was from the seagoing unions, and those elected were either from the rank and file or had held very minor union posts. Harry Lundeberg, a SUP patrolman from Seattle, was elected president through the support of the powerful longshore group.⁵⁰

The revolt of the unions against international control and the tenets of craft unionism was duplicated on the rank-and-file level in a magnified form. At the conclusion of the strike, the leadership principle was rejected in favor of uncoordinated, spontaneous ac-

⁵⁰ Lampman, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-165.

tion by small groups. Although both longshoremen and unlicensed seamen were in favor of leadership from the bottom, it was the latter group, under the influence of Lundeberg, which moved the farthest toward anarchy. The job action, or single job stoppage, first used successfully by Furuseth in 1887, became the means by which the men, usually of their own volition, enforced provisions of the award, expressed their anger at a particular employer, supported the position of another union, or squeezed new concessions from reluctant shipowners. At its convention in 1935, the Maritime Federation accepted and approved job action, even though stoppages were in violation of the various contracts. At the same time, the MFP attempted to exert limited control over the situation by resolving that "quickie" strikes should be strictly local and should be approved by the various maritime groups affected.⁵¹

As might be expected, job actions or the threat of such were highly effective in the maritime industry where minimization of costs is directly related to the speed and efficiency of a ship's turnaround in port. Not only were the men on individual jobs able to secure results from employers desperately anxious to keep a ship moving but the seamen's unions were able to achieve general improvements in the same way. There were strikes to prevent non-union men from sailing, to prevent hiring on the docks, to prevent hiring other than from rotation lists the unions had set up, to obtain a six-hour day. Between April 1935 and October 1936 there were approximately 250 separate short strikes of seamen. The unions were principally concerned with gaining the control over jobs and hiring which had not been granted by the offshore awards. In this effort they were quite successful. The sailors, firemen, and stewards set up their own hiring halls in each major port, and soon had a virtual monopoly over the supply of seamen.⁵²

Longshoremen used the job action to achieve a slightly different end. As job security and control of hiring were already assured by the 1934 award, attention could be devoted to strengthening the position of the ILA by extending membership and organizing allied trades. A series of disputes arose with employers

⁵¹ *Voice of the Federation*, November 27, 1935.

⁵² Waterfront Employers Association, *Maritime Strikes on the Pacific Coast*, statement of Gregory Harrison before the U. S. Maritime Commission (November 26, 1936), *passim*; Lampman, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

over the definition of longshore work as the union sought to expand its jurisdiction under the award. However, far more serious trouble was created on the waterfront as a result of the longshoremen's so-called "inland march" on other industries. The fact that the longshoremen were directly involved in organizing warehouses, for example, multiplied the possibilities for sympathy strikes on the docks. Liberal use was made of the "hot cargo" stoppage. Cargoes were refused if they originated or were handled in mills or warehouses where a labor dispute was in progress, where strikebreakers were employed, or where union recognition had been refused.⁵³ Although the Coast Longshore Arbitrator ruled "hot cargo" strikes in violation of the agreement in 1935, the stoppages continued, as did job actions over interpretation of the agreement. Approximately 456 local strikes of longshoremen were recorded during 1935 and 1936.⁵⁴ Between October 1934 and September 1939, 94 arbitration awards and opinions were issued.⁵⁵

Of course, sea and shore personnel also used sympathetic strike actions to protect each other. Licensed officers did not initiate job actions, but they made no effort to interfere and usually observed picket lines. At sea, however, fraternal feelings became somewhat strained. Discipline disintegrated in all departments. Members of the MMP and MEBA complained that their Federation colleagues were often insubordinate and abusive, that drunkenness aboard had become more prevalent, piferaage of cargo had increased, and that the authority of those in command had been questioned. It was strongly felt among many groups of officers that these occurrences were the direct result of affiliation of licensed and unlicensed organizations.⁵⁶ But the desire for maritime unity was still strong throughout 1936, and the officers' unions made no moves to dissociate themselves from the MFP.

One of the results of the unrest on the West Coast was the separation of the Sailors Union of the Pacific from the International Seamen's Union. In November 1935, Harry Lundeborg, almost unknown before he had been lifted to the presidency of the Mari-

⁵³ *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor*, Report of the Committee on Education and Labor, U. S. 78th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Report 398, Part 1 (1943), pp. 712-714.

⁵⁴ Gorter and Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, vol. II, table 18.

⁵⁵ *Report to the President and to the Congress, March 1, 1940*. . . , pp. 165-166.

⁵⁶ Thor, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186; *Maritime Strikes on the Pacific Coast*. . . , pp. 16, 22.

time Federation through the support of Harry Bridges and the longshoremen, was elected secretary-treasurer of the SUP, the union's highest full-time office. Two months later, the charter of the SUP was revoked by the ISU in punishment for a series of actions which included the admission of IWW members to membership, violation of the award by striking, refusal to communicate with the international, and refusal to honor the union status of East Coast ISU members. The SUP fought the revocation as illegal, but refused to compromise its policies. The ISU's answer was to tie up the SUP's funds and to propose establishment of a new union of seamen on the West Coast. For protection the SUP fell back on the power of the MFP.⁵⁷

Thus the SUP was the first West Coast union to find itself free of the old-line leadership it had been resisting since the beginning of the 1934 strike. A few months later, Harry Bridges, the rank-and-file leader who had seized control of the strike and had subsequently become president of the San Francisco local, was elected district president of the ILA-Pacific Coast District. The two largest and strongest maritime unions were now firmly in the control of the rebels.

Employer Activities, 1936-1936

The two years after the settlement of 1934 was a time of widespread rank-and-file irresponsibility, innumerable contract violations by the unions, lack of interest in collective settlement of disputes, and indifference to the results of arbitrations. Certainly a measure of the disturbance was due to the desire of individuals and unions alike to test their newly acquired strength. Also, the prevailing ideology—a sort of rough syndicalism—emphasized economic action to gain workers' control rather than refinement of a collective bargaining system. But it would be a mistake to think of the workers and their unions as wholly to blame for the tone of the period.

The employers' defeat in 1934 did not put an end to organized antiunionism. Faced by militant, aggressive unions, the employers chose to make use of a variety of opposition techniques. For example, members of the operators' associations, regardless of their

⁵⁷ Lampman, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-180.

new "negotiatory" status, continued membership in, and contributions to, the open-shop Industrial Association of San Francisco. This sort of action plus the memory of past experiences with employer organizations were undoubtedly partly responsible for the unions' attempts in the middle and late thirties to extend and ensure security by obtaining greater job control and by assisting the growth of unionism in allied trades. The strategic character of the waterfront, pipeline as it was for the goods of the as yet unorganized warehouses, mills, factories, and vast agricultural areas, meant that maritime unions could offer invaluable aid through boycotts to workers struggling to organize. In turn, the emergence of strong unions in the cargo-supplying fields would help guarantee the future of the maritime organizations. In anticipation of just such a chain of events, the Industrial Association, with the active collaboration of the waterfront employers, launched a campaign of obstruction and encirclement of unions in 1935.⁸⁸

Aside from cooperation with the Industrial Association, the shipowners' and stevedores' associations utilized techniques designed to influence, restrict, or eliminate the labor organizations with which they had contracts. For example, the strained relations between the ILA and ISU and their West Coast affiliates offered openings for attempts to undercut local leaders repugnant to the employers. There is evidence that the Waterfront Employers Association of San Francisco made persistent efforts to isolate the leadership of San Francisco longshoremen by negotiating directly with the district and national officials of the ILA, and, at the same time, was in contact with a local group which was seeking to set up a rival organization. Within three months after the offshore awards were handed down, those waterfront employers who were operating under agreements with seagoing personnel sought to correspond with national officers of the International Seamen's Union as part of an effort described by an employers' official as, "looking toward the revocation of the Communist controlled marine union; a program similar to that of the International Longshoremen's Association." When the ISU revoked the charter of the SUP, the Pacific American Shipowners Association chose to assume its contract was with the ISU and ignored the SUP.⁸⁹ Eventually the SUP estab-

⁸⁸ *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor*, Part 3, pp. 1031-1046.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1053-1058.

lished its representation rights following an election and NLRB hearings in 1936, but not before relations suffered further serious damage.

When the moves mentioned above produced no satisfactory results, employer strategy was changed in the fall of 1935. First, an attempt was made to bar from employment those longshoremen who, in violation of the agreement, refused to handle "hot cargo." When the penalty was prohibited by a decision of the arbitrator, attention was turned to a more elaborate scheme which came to be known as the Suspension Program. A series of conferences were held between representatives of the Waterfront Employers Association of San Francisco, various steamship companies, the Industrial Association, and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. The purpose was to win shipper and community support for a plan to ensure continuity of service. As subsequently described, the Suspension Program:

"... calls for the suspension of agreements with the I.L.A. for violations of the Award; employers would continue to operate under the provisions of the Award and pay the same wages and grant the same conditions, but would hire the men at the docks and relations with the I.L.A. would not be resumed until the violations were corrected. . . ."

The WEA announced that the program would not be started until it had been referred to industrial groups and promises had been made of both moral and financial support. Although a certain lack of unity was experienced at the outset, the desired backing eventually came from dominant business groups both in San Francisco and in other major cities on the Pacific Coast. A committee was sent east and obtained the support of Atlantic shipping lines on the understanding that suspension activities would be concentrated in San Francisco.

During February 1936 the groundwork was laid by clearing up "hot cargo" situations elsewhere on the coast. At the same time, sympathetic action which might be instigated by the Sailors Union was presumably stymied by an arrangement whereby sailors would be furnished from the ISU. An appropriate incident on which to launch the program was presented in April with the arrival of the *Santa Rosa*. The ship had been declared unfair by the Maritime Federation because it allegedly carried substitutes furnished by

the ISU during the course of a strike in Atlantic ports. When San Francisco longshoremen refused to unload the ship, the WEA suspended relations. The conservative William A. Lewis, who was still ILA district president, was informed that the suspension was, "directed solely against the radical and subversive leadership of the Local. . . . Employers have no desire or intention to abrogate the Award or break off dealing. . . . [we] are prepared to meet with you at any time." But the plan came to nothing. Neither the Bridges nor the Lundeberg group could be dislodged. After a series of negotiations between the WEA, representatives of the district and local ILA, and the local arbitrator, a new agreement to resume relations was signed within a week of the suspension.⁹⁰ Plans to hire sailors from a new ISU union failed; the international was unable to gain even moderate West Coast support.

1936–1937 Strike

It seemed a showdown between employers and unions would be unavoidable when contracts expired on September 30, 1936. The employers were determined to cut back the power of the unions in general and, particularly, to win the joint control of the longshore hiring hall which had been outlined in the 1934 Award, but which the union had successfully prevented. The seagoing unions were resolved to obtain union-controlled hiring halls (SUP, MFOWW, MCS, and ARTA) or preferential hiring (MMP and MEBA). Soon after failure of the Suspension Program in April, the maritime employers appointed the Coast Committee for the Ship-owners to take over coming negotiations and thereby eliminate the dissension common in the past among various autonomous port associations. On the other side, the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, now under the presidency of a longshoreman, William Fischer, was beginning to suffer from internal political difficulties, but a solid front was mustered as the deadline neared.

Approaching the longshoremen first, the Committee asked that issues not settled by September 1 be submitted to arbitration so that a decision could be rendered before September 30. The union responded by insisting that work be continued under the existing award until disputes could be settled by negotiation.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1058–1070.

Obviously the ILA was not prepared to risk voluntarily a possible reduction of the gains made in 1934. On the other hand, the employers apparently hoped, by pressing arbitration, to swing public opinion to their side in the event of a strike. An employer ultimatum on August 25 stated that if the award were allowed by the union to terminate on September 30, "we will then be obliged to advise you of the conditions under which we would be willing to continue the relationship." In answer to employer charges that union leaders were not acting in accordance with the desires of their membership, the ILA submitted the arbitration issue to referendum vote. The proposal was rejected by an overwhelming majority.⁶¹

The longshoremen were the employers' focal point. Negotiations with the other maritime unions were prolonged and delayed as the Coast Committee concentrated on the ILA and the arbitration request. The contract termination date had already passed before the Committee was able even to meet with the three licensed groups. As a result, although the arbitration demand applied to the other unions, there was no opportunity for it to become a critical issue on the seagoing side.⁶²

Following an appeal of the employers for government intervention, the Assistant Secretary of Labor arrived in San Francisco at the last minute and managed to secure an extension of negotiations after the expiration date. Throughout the month of October the newly appointed U. S. Maritime Commission unsuccessfully attempted to assist the parties in reaching an agreement. Negotiations collapsed, and on October 29 a Maritime Federation strike began.⁶³

The battle, which was to last 98 days, bore little resemblance to that of 1934. The coast was closed down completely from the beginning, there was no attempt on the part of the employers to move cargo or hire strikebreakers, and violence was almost entirely absent. Little contact took place between the parties until December when the employers opened unexpected separate negotiations with Harry Lundeberg of the Sailors Union. On December 18 a settlement was announced which gave the sailors most of what

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1081-1082.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 1083-1084.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1084-1086.

they had asked: union hiring halls with a rotation system, higher wages, and more liberal overtime. The departure from the united action agreed upon in the Federation was bitterly attacked by Bridges. However, Lundeberg stated that the SUP would not return to work until all crafts had gained satisfactory settlements.⁶⁴

Within a month the remaining parties were engaged in productive negotiations. By February 4 agreements were signed and the Maritime Federation declared the strike over. The longshoremen managed to retain what they had won before and made a slight gain by causing the employers to agree to the creation of joint committees to fix coastwide maximum sling-load limits and penalty cargo rates. The firemen and stewards won the same sort of union hiring halls as the SUP. Radio operators now had recognition for collective bargaining and preference in employment. The MMP and MEBA failed in their effort to get preferential hiring.⁶⁵

The 1936-1937 strike was an important turning point in West Coast maritime industrial relations. The inconclusive nature of the struggle in 1934 was unsatisfactory to all parties. A new test of strength was required, and from the expensive trial the unions emerged stronger than ever. The employers were unable to recapture their former position relative to the workforce. Then, in April 1937, the constitutionality of the National Labor Relations Act was confirmed by the Supreme Court. Demands were heard from many companies for a reappraisal of policy and a more realistic approach to labor relations. The result of both the strike and its aftermath was a more general acceptance of the inevitability of unions and a new emphasis on operating within the collective bargaining framework. To this degree stability entered the waterfront situation.

INTERUNION CONFLICT

Between 1933 and the conclusion of the 1936-1937 strike, the course of industrial relations was determined largely by the results of the struggles of the unions to gain security as institutions and the efforts of the employers to resist incursions into their sphere of authority. With the February 1937 settlements it became ob-

⁶⁴ Corter and Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

vious that the unions were firmly situated in the industry, and succeeding events indicated that management was prepared to attempt to adjust to the requirements of collective bargaining.⁶⁸ At this point, interunion friction, a factor which had had little or no influence on events for over 15 years, assumed critical importance. Even while the unions had been cooperating in their efforts to organize the industry and to bring the employers to terms, there had been a revival of old hostilities. In 1937 and 1938, in spite of the work of many who firmly believed in the necessity of maritime unity, the Federation broke apart. What had been tensions between factions became anger and bitterness between unions.

Strain between the unions was not a new thing. Sailors and longshoremen had never satisfactorily settled their jurisdictional problems. On shipboard, the nineteenth century growth of a three-department system had led naturally to the division of seamen into job-conscious craft groups with different interests in several areas. Too, the traditional barrier between officers and men had not been greatly affected by the organization of licensed seamen; both groups tended to be suspicious of the motives of the other. Only in 1901 and 1934 had the unions been able to work together successfully.

Almost as soon as the Maritime Federation of the Pacific was organized and efforts were made to form common policy it became evident that divisive influences were far from minor, regardless of the general desire for unity. Clashes of ideologies and personalities were followed by power struggles within the Federation. Superimposed upon this unstable situation were the problems which stemmed from the new industrial union movement. The creation of the CIO and the National Maritime Union raised jurisdictional threats which threw the Federation into a turmoil. The subsequent rearrangement of the unions by affiliation with the AFL or CIO served to accentuate differences which already existed and to create new reasons for antagonism. Insecurities attributable to the

⁶⁸ For example, in June 1937 the various port associations organized the Waterfront Employers Association of the Pacific Coast for the purpose of negotiating, administering longshore contracts, and formulating policies. The previous year, West Coast dry cargo operators had joined together in the Pacific American Shipowners Association which subsequently became an organ for communicating centrally with the seagoing unions.

employers had been reduced only to be superseded by insecurities the solution to which was far less apparent.

There have ensued extended struggles not only between the SUP and the ILWU but among all the unions in various changing combinations. Minor demarcation disputes have become major issues in the fight for prestige. Bargaining has rarely been free of the politics and intrigue stimulated by intense union rivalry. In short, interunion conflict has had a serious and almost continuous effect on labor-management relations since 1937. For this reason, the last 20 years will be covered in the following section by means of an examination of various aspects of the interunion situation, such as realignment of the unions in 1937 and 1938, development and progress of the SUP-ILWU feud, territorial ambitions of the SUP and the new Seafarers International Union, and sporadic attempts of the unions to achieve unity.

Realignment of Unions

The first hint of the trouble which was to develop among the unions came at the organizational convention of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific in 1935 when the question of craft autonomy versus central MFP control was debated. Sailor delegates, clinging to the traditional concept of craft sovereignty as supported by Furuseth for some 40 years, refused to surrender their individual right to call strikes. Regardless of the opposition of Harry Bridges and his followers who were strongly promoting unity, a decentralized structure was finally adopted. For the moment there were few other disagreements.

When Harry Lundeberg resigned his presidency of the Maritime Federation in February 1936 after winning the top position in the Sailors Union, the question of the degree of power to be allotted the Federation was reopened in the form of a struggle to gain control of the organization. Bridges, now president of the Pacific Coast District of the ILA, was again frustrated in his efforts, and a slate of officers committed to supporting union autonomy was elected, headed by William Fischer, a Portland longshoreman.⁶⁷

By the time the 1936 convention of the Federation met in June, Bridges and Lundeberg had clearly emerged as the repre-

⁶⁷ Fischer described the Federation at this point as divided into "Communists, industrial unionists, and craft unionists." *Voice of the Federation*, June 18, 1936.

sentatives of two quite different bodies of opinion on the future of the MFP and maritime unionism in general, in spite of the fact that Lundeberg had been closely identified with Bridges since the formation of the Federation. The Lundeberg group's attentions were focused primarily on fortifying the unions within the existing framework, while the Bridges group viewed strong unions and job control not as ends in themselves but as steps toward the ultimate creation of a single industrial organization of maritime unions.⁶⁸ Also, Lundeberg, who had in his early years as a sailor been associated with the IWW and certain European maritime unions of a syndicalist bent,⁶⁹ favored the reliance of unions on economic power and rejected the use of political action. Lundeberg apparently found it impossible to reconcile his ideas with Bridges' program, which in 1936 included support of the Farmer-Labor Party. As the 1936 strike deadline neared, relations between the two factions deteriorated badly, but a unified front was maintained for the sake of dealing with the employers. Then came the unexpected negotiations of the SUP with the employers in the middle of the strike and the following torrent of criticism from Lundeberg's opponents in the Maritime Federation.

Aside from the conflicts which had arisen within the Federation, the SUP was also faced during these months with increasingly troublesome jurisdictional problems. The longshoremen were once again attempting to take over sailors' loading rights on steam schooners.⁷⁰ More important, in May 1937 the industrially organized National Maritime Union had been formed on the East Coast, and was recruiting sailors, firemen, and stewards by the thousands; by June, the International Seamen's Union had lost the major part of its strength on both coasts. The potential danger for the SUP in this situation was intensified when Harry Bridges established cordial relations with the NMU-CIO's president, Joseph Curran.

The middle months of 1937 saw considerable debate within the SUP over the advantages to be gained by either affiliation with the CIO or reaffiliation with the ISU. It has been suggested that

⁶⁸ Gorter and Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-196.

⁶⁹ See *Current Biography, 1952* (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1953), pp. 362-364.

⁷⁰ *Statement of the Sailors Union of the Pacific. Re: Historical Background of Sailors' Right to Work Cargo in Steam Schooners* (San Francisco: November 30, 1950), pp. 4-5.

Lundeberg favored industrial unionism, but questioned the correctness of the CIO's emphasis on political matters.⁷¹ The possibility of accepting a district charter from the National Maritime Union-CIO was rejected. The CIO proposed a single all-maritime union, but both the SUP and the Marine Firemen were reluctant to make any move which might end in loss of autonomy and the chance of domination by numerically stronger shoreside unions. In August, Pacific Coast longshoremen, who had left the ILA, joined the CIO as the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). The CIO also gained in rapid order the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, Marine Cooks and Stewards Association, and marine radiomen, who had reorganized as a division of the American Communications Association. Refusing to join the CIO without specific commitments as to autonomy, the SUP opened new negotiations with both the CIO and AFL regarding a charter covering *all* unlicensed seamen. The AFL offered to meet the SUP's demands in entirety; the CIO suggested a conference of seamen's unions for the purpose of working out a unity structure under the CIO. A ballot of SUP membership in December 1937 rejected both federations in favor of remaining independent. For a short time afterwards an alliance with the Teamsters was regarded as a possibility.

In the spring of 1938, a move of the ILWU brought matters to a head. The SUP and NMU had been engaged in a jurisdictional battle over Shepard Line ships. When the company hired NMU crews on the basis of NLRB certification before a contract with the SUP had expired, the Sailors Union declared all the company's ships "hot." On the arrival of one of the Shepard ships in San Francisco, Harry Bridges personally led his longshoremen through a SUP picket line, thereby violating the cardinal principle of the MFP—solidarity. The action, which bore signs of being an attempt to force the SUP into the CIO, had the reverse effect. At the June convention of the Maritime Federation, the SUP, MFOWW, and MMP delegates withdrew when the gathering refused to seat representatives of the few remaining West Coast members of the ILA-AFL. Within weeks the sailors voted to quit the Maritime Federation and turned to the AFL. The charter of the 46-year-old

⁷¹ *Fortune*, XVI (September, 1937), 134.

International Seamen's Union was revoked by the AFL at its convention in October, and the leadership of the SUP was given administrative control of a newly created national organization, the Seafarers International Union (SIU), with jurisdiction over unlicensed seamen of all departments and fishermen on all coasts and waters of North America.⁷²

Instead of the regional security which the SUP had originally sought, it now possessed an AFL *carte blanche* in the whole field of seagoing labor. Also in the AFL camp were the International Longshoremen's Association, centered on the East and Gulf Coasts, and the Masters, Mates, and Pilots; the Commercial Telegraphers Union-AFL had created a marine division in 1937 to combat the American Communications Association-CIO. In the CIO were the ILWU, MCS, MEBA, ACA, and the NMU. The MFOWW, even more autonomy-minded than the SUP, refused to join either national federation and, under the skilled leadership of V. J. Malone, managed to steer a lonely, but amazingly successful, independent course through the chaos of the next two decades.

After the withdrawal of the SUP and MMP from the Maritime Federation in 1938, control finally passed into the hands of the pro-Bridges group. However, no change in structure resulted and member unions continued to retain their identities and full autonomy. Affiliated organizations—the West Coast CIO maritime and fishermen's unions, the Marine Firemen, and various marine sections of the Boilermakers, Carpenters, and Machinists—merely pledged to terminate and renew agreements simultaneously and to take no strike action without notifying the Federation.⁷³ The MFP finally dissolved in June 1941 in favor of the CIO Maritime Committee which was then examining the possibilities of establishing a national maritime organization.

SUP versus ILWU

The affiliation of the SUP with the AFL ended all hope of a unified maritime labor force and, at the same time, symbolized the return of the sailors to orthodox trade unionism. It had become clear as early as 1937 that the SUP was beginning to reject the

⁷² Lampman, *op. cit.*, pp. 198–206; Philip Taft, "The Unlicensed Seafaring Unions," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 3 (January, 1950), 204–205.

⁷³ *Report to the President and to the Congress, March 1, 1940. . .*, pp. 83–85.

radicalism born of the 1934 strike in favor of more traditional behavior. Recognition, collective bargaining, and job control had been won; it was a time for deliberation on what the functions of the union were to be over the long run. In July 1937 the leadership called for a limit to the job actions of which the seamen had been such enthusiastic users. A few months later, rank-and-file freedom was sharply curtailed when the union assumed authority for dismissing what it termed, "bum beefs." A schedule of penalties was drawn up for contract violations by individuals. By 1938 the SUP was well on the way back to Andrew Furuseth's "business unionism" of the 1906-1920 period, with concentration on short-term economic goals, respect for contracts, rank-and-file discipline, and acceptance of the employer's role in society. The SUP's metamorphosis was accompanied by a gradual centralization of authority which continued at an accelerated pace during the war years. Various forms of factionalism within the union were ruthlessly suppressed. Anarchy gave way in short order to well-ordered craft unionism. As if to underline the transition, Furuseth, who had been so bitterly criticized and violently rejected at the time of the break of the SUP from the old International Seamen's Union, was acclaimed after his death in January 1938 as a hero of the sailors' movement.⁷⁴

The situation was quite different in the case of the longshoremen. Aside from a desire to achieve regular economic improvements, the ILWU showed no inclination to accept the goals and methods of conventional trade unions. On the contrary, the doctrine of class conflict remained as secure a cornerstone of the ILWU's ideological framework after 1937 as it had been before. Cooperation with the "bosses" was impossible. Irresponsibility in the realm of contract observance reflected a contempt for the whole concept of collective bargaining. For example, although the employers obtained an agreement from the union in 1937 that grievances were to be settled without stoppages, job actions continued to disrupt cargo operations. Infractions of discipline on the job were ignored by the union, the only party in a position to administer penalties effectively.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Gorter and Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-251; Lampman, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-218.

⁷⁵ Gorter and Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-276.

The existence of incompatible ideologies creates an environment in which conflict between two unions in a close, though not necessarily dual, relationship is understandable. In the case of the SUP and ILWU the results have been extreme. It is difficult to assess to what extent personal grudges originally affected attitudes, but a major manifestation of the friction between the two organizations from the late thirties until Lundeberg's death in January 1957 was the increasing ferocity of the verbal attacks of Lundeberg and Bridges on each other. Lundeberg repeatedly charged Bridges with subversive ambitions, conspiracy, manipulation of the ILWU to achieve political ends, and efforts to destroy other unions. Bridges, in turn, accused Lundeberg of collusion with the employers, of riding roughshod over the interests of other unions in order to benefit the sailors, of creating jurisdictional disputes to bring discredit on the ILWU, of union-busting for the purpose of extending the jurisdiction of the Seafarers International Union. Squarely backed by their respective organizations, the two men engaged in a vituperative battle astounding in its duration and intensity.

Obviously in such a situation any position the employers might take or any move they might care to make would be likely to aggravate one union or the other and, hence, increase tension. There is fairly good evidence that until 1949 the employers not only demonstrated a greater sympathy with the aspirations of the SUP but also pointedly favored the sailors in the collective bargaining arena. The lucrative separate offer to the SUP in the middle of the 1936-1937 strike and subsequent similar maneuvers in 1946 and 1948 suggest the operators may have hoped to weaken the political position of Bridges.⁷⁸ They were consistently unsuccessful if this was the case. The ILWU was hostile to the employers, but there was little in the employers' approach to the ILWU between 1934 and 1948 which indicated to the membership that any other union policy was realistic. Blatant criticism of the union's leadership, justified as it might have been from time to time, only served to draw the membership more closely together behind Bridges. That employer attempts to dislodge union leaders can be a hazardous undertaking was never shown more clearly than in the

⁷⁸ See Schneider and Siegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-63; Gorter and Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 141 and 267 n.

1948 maritime strike. An all-out campaign against ILWU leadership, including a refusal to bargain, ended in an unheaval within management's ranks when the plan failed, a change in employer negotiators, an excellent contract for the ILWU, and adoption of an entirely new approach to relations with the ILWU, known as the "New Look."⁷⁷

Relative harmony between the ILWU and the employers, or at least a lack of strong animosity, has lasted from the end of 1948 to the present. In terms of the feud between the ILWU and SUP the change produced a new set of reactions. The employers, trying to maintain friendly relations with both unions, suddenly found themselves ostracized by the SUP and described by Lundeberg as "Commie-loving."⁷⁸ For example, during an SUP dispute with management in 1952 the question of jurisdiction over the loading of ships' stores was brought up. Because the issue was not settled decisively in favor of the SUP, the Pacific Maritime Association⁷⁹ and the ILWU were subsequently accused of conspiring to raid sailors' work and attempting to break up the SUP.⁸⁰ A later incident of a jurisdictional nature called forth a statement by Lundeberg that:

"Ever since they organized this association called the Pacific Maritime Association, what they call the new look on the waterfront, the new look has become an appeasement instrument to the Communist Party by giving them everything they asked for."⁸¹

Nor were tensions eased by the fact that during the perjury trial of Bridges in 1950 four employers' representatives appeared to testify as to Bridges' good reputation in his dealings with the shipowners and stevedores.⁸²

The differences between the SUP and ILWU which spring from irreconcilable personalities and philosophies characterize a

⁷⁷ See Schneider and Siegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-80.

⁷⁸ *Labor-Management Problems of the American Merchant Marine*, Hearings on H. R. 5734, U. S. House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, 84th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: 1955), testimony of Harry Lundeberg, p. 471.

⁷⁹ The coastwide negotiatory body formed in 1949 by a merger of the Waterfront Employers Association and the Pacific American Shipowners Association.

⁸⁰ *Labor-Management Problems of the American Merchant Marine*, testimony of Harry Lundeberg, pp. 470, 472.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

⁸² *In re Harry Bridges* (1950), U. S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit, Case No. 12597, see proceedings for January 25 and 26, 1950.

fairly modern phase. As we have seen, frictions were common between sailors and longshoremen as early as the eighties. It is necessary to consider whether certain older factors may account in part for the dislike which has divided the two unions. Divergent political orientations have not in the last two decades prevented limited cooperation between the ILWU and such unions as the Masters, Mates, and Pilots and the Marine Firemen. Only in the case of the ILWU and SUP has the breach become evidently unbridgeable.

Before the attainment of security and job control, the fate of unions of sailors and longshoremen often depended on the support each chose to extend to the other in a critical situation. At the same time, there was little else to draw the two groups together and much that contributed to discord. Seamen were generally away from home ports for months out of the year, while longshoremen constituted comparatively large groups in almost day-to-day contact with each other. For this reason, sailors feared a general union or confederation which could be controlled by the longshoremen and turned to their specific interests. Many of the concerns of sailors—food, living quarters, allotments, corporal punishment, undermanning, etc.—were not shared by landsmen. In addition, the legal barriers to action of men under articles were a major obstacle to cooperation with shore workers in a strike or boycott situation. Finally, in the casual maritime labor market, where the supply of men was usually far greater than the demand, seamen and longshoremen were often in direct competition for jobs both on and offshore. Later, when unionization reduced the crossing of craft lines, the same oversupply of labor stimulated vigorous competition between the unions to extend their jurisdictions as far as possible over the jobs on the borderline between ship and shore work.

Most of the past causes of suspicion and dissension are no longer influential, although they would probably all assume weight if a merger were under consideration. Only jurisdiction is still of importance owing to the nature of the maritime labor market and the pressures periodic shortages of jobs place upon the unions. Perhaps, then, the cleavage which exists between the SUP and ILWU can be explained in terms of economic stress as well as in

terms of the events of 1936 to 1938. At any rate, border wars have gone on for years over the right to such in-port jobs as scaling, painting, repairing, handling ship's stores, hold cleaning, securing cargo. The tighter the job market, the greater the efforts made to hold or gain control of these small jurisdictions.

Probably the most important and best known case in point involves cargo handling on steam schooners, the coastwise vessels primarily engaged in carrying lumber. In the nineteenth century, it was common practice for longshoremen to discharge and load deep-water vessels, whereas on coastwise ships this work, except in San Francisco, was done by the crew. When in the 1900's the longshoremen began to press a claim to all cargo work, the issue was temporarily settled by the Gompers Decision of 1907 which specified that on coastal vessels seamen were to maintain jurisdiction over cargo handling to the extent of the ship's tackle, that is, aboard ship. There were a few skirmishes thereafter, but generally the decision was observed until the early thirties. The fact that approximately 150 steam schooners were operating on the Pacific Coast during the twenties indicates how important this area of work was to the union holding jurisdiction.

Following the 1934 strike the longshoremen reasserted their claim, and eventually through the Maritime Federation of the Pacific managed in 1936 to get the SUP to agree that on steam schooners carrying general cargo or loose lumber sailors would be restricted to one hatch; however, crews would continue to have first call on all cargo work on schooners carrying packaged lumber or pilings.⁸³ The withdrawal of the SUP from the MFP invalidated the agreement, but the longshoremen continued to claim the same jurisdiction. A rash of local work stoppages led to an agreement by the employers in 1937 that sailors would be employed in the performance of cargo handling only on those ships where the work was customarily performed by them.⁸⁴ This represented a gain for the ILWU in that several recent port adjudications had resulted in settlements favorable to the longshoremen.

⁸³ Sailors Union of the Pacific, *Statement Re: Historical Background of Sailors' Right to Work Cargo in Steam Schooners* (San Francisco: November 30, 1950), pp. 4-5.

⁸⁴ *Statement of Waterfront Employers Association and the Pacific American Shipowners Association*, Pacific Coast Section Board of Inquiry, pp. 99-101.

Controversy and stoppages have continued to harass the industry since the war, in spite of the fact that the movement of cargo to trucks and railroads has caused the disappearance of almost all coastwise shipping. Common practice at present is the one-hatch assignment scheme originally agreed upon in the MFP in 1936. Neither union is satisfied, and even *pro tem* acceptance of the plan does not guarantee peace. The coastal freighter *Pacificus* was tied up for months in late 1954 and early 1955 owing to a complicated, legalistic disagreement over which particular hatch sailors were to unload.

Longshoremen have also shown some gains in the realm of shore work. Jurisdiction over such jobs as handling ship's stores and cleaning the holds had always been held by the SUP, but during the war the shortage of seamen caused many of these jobs to pass to longshoremen by default. So far as the ILWU was concerned a precedent was established. In 1949 the PMA was persuaded to accept in the ILWU contract a redefinition and expansion of the shore work which longshoremen could be called upon to perform on the basis of past practice. The SUP immediately demanded that the shipowners add an exclusive grant of the same in-port work to the SUP-PMA contract. This, amazingly enough, the PMA also did. Neither union will consent to ease the PMA's quandary. The employers meanwhile struggle to keep peace by allotting the work on a ship-by-ship, port-by-port, past-practice basis.⁸⁵ To date the SUP retains a clause in its contract allowing 15-days' notice of cancellation in the event of a disagreement with the employers over scope of work.

The effect of rivalry between the SUP and ILWU on the industry and on contracts has been substantial. Unresolved jurisdictional problems have guaranteed a continuing series of minor work stoppages as well as occasional use of costly "hard timing" devices, whereby less direct pressure is put on employers. The latter tactic was used during the *Pacificus* incident mentioned above when sailors and firemen refused to work overtime in Pacific Coast ports.⁸⁶ Contract negotiations have been less subject to the influences of

⁸⁵ *Labor-Management Problems of the American Merchant Marine*, testimony of J. Paul St. Sure, pp. 43-45.

⁸⁶ See *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 2, 1954; see also *Labor-Management Problems of the American Merchant Marine*, statement of the Pacific Maritime Association, p. 896.

rivalry in the last few years owing to the new moderate approach of the ILWU and the employers to each other, but previously bargaining sessions involving either the SUP or the ILWU could be described as battles in which precious, all-important prestige was won by the leader gaining the lushest settlement. That strikes will be more likely in such an environment and once started will be difficult to settle is to be expected. The machinations of the SUP and ILWU during the controversies and strikes of 1946, 1948, and 1952 certainly indicate that interunion competition was a prime mover.

Although the Sailors Union and the ILWU are the principal antagonists on the waterfront scene, where wages and conditions of employment are concerned stiff competition is common among all the maritime unions, none of which is content to be outdone. The "whipsaw" is the means by which the unions have attempted to equal or better the conditions of their fellows. As J. Paul St. Sure, president of the Pacific Maritime Association, has described the situation:

"By reason of the diversity of unions . . . as well as the rivalries that exist as between unions, different affiliations, different jurisdictional claims, and by reason also of a relationship between unlicensed and licensed wage-wise as well as a relationship between the various coasts wage-wise, any negotiation with any individual union on either coast is likely to touch off a complete wage round for all seagoing personnel under the American flag."⁸⁷

In practice the whipsaw is extremely effective. For example, when the 40-hour, straight-time week at sea was established on the Pacific Coast in 1951 and 1952:

" . . . the sailors union originally said they did not want the 40-hour week, they wanted something else. They got the something else and the other unions took the 40-hour week and then, of course, the sailors union on the west coast wanted the 40-hour week on top of the something else.

"This caused the other unions to say, 'We want the something else that the sailors union obtained.'⁸⁸

Varying contract termination dates facilitate whipsawing. At present, the contracts of the ILWU, NMU, and licensed seamen either terminate or open for wage review on June 15; the date for the SIU unions—SUP, MFOWW, MCS—is September 30. Unions

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

bargaining early in the year tend to set their limits high to compensate for concessions which may go to those settling later; unions terminating later in the year attempt to better the gains already made by other crafts. The recent inclusion of the marine cooks and stewards and firemen in the SIU and the shift of the MCS and MFOWW from a June 15 to a September 30 termination date have reduced whipsawing somewhat, but efforts to move all unions to a single date have so far proved fruitless. Most of the unions have stated that they are in favor of a uniform date, so long as it is the one they presently have. The current ILWU-PMA agreement was written to run to either June 15 or August 1, 1958, in order to match a date to be chosen by longshoremen and employers on the East and Gulf Coasts. However, a recent arbitration settlement in the East ignored the western overture and established October 1 as a termination date. The decision has caused much resentment in the ILWU where hopes were for simultaneous, if not joint, national negotiations. Further work on a common date for longshoremen may well now be postponed indefinitely.

A good example of the careful attention which has been paid by the unions in the past to parity is the "most favored nation" agreements gained by the SUP in 1947 and the MFOWW in 1948. The agreements provided that the SUP and MFOWW contracts with the PMA could be reopened at any time on 30-days' notice (later changed to 60 days) should higher average rates of wages or overtime go to another unlicensed department by either negotiation or arbitration.* The clauses, which have since been dropped, were brought into use several times by both unions.

The most notable case was in early 1952 when the SUP served notice of cancellation, approximately four months after settlement, in order to gain compensation for certain overtime improvements which were being negotiated by the firemen. Apparently, the fact that the SUP was at the same time deeply involved in a fight with the NMU over the MCS jurisdiction had some little influence on events. A large number of economic improvements were also asked of the employers, including a basic 40-hour week at sea and a five per cent general wage increase. Once a strike had started, the ILWU was drawn into the situation after publicly supporting the

* See *Labor-Management Problems of the American Merchant Marine*, pp. 991, 993.

employers' position. In retaliation, the SUP proceeded to raise its scope of work dispute with the longshoremen as a further major issue. Nothing came of the latter question, but a 62-day stoppage ended with the SUP in possession of most of its demanded economic improvements.

Contests between the unions have been carried on over the years against a background of economic decline and instability. The reasons for the industry's ill health are many, including adverse shifts in world trade and increased use of inland transport. At the same time, inflation plus the upward pressure exerted by the unions have caused costs to soar. Labor represents nearly half vessel operating expenses and approximately 90 per cent of longshoring costs. Concern over what is known as the "plight of the industry" has been expressed by certain of the unions in recent years, but, as yet, fear of the effects of a further shrinkage of trade does not appear to be acute or general enough on the labor side to cause elimination of interunion competition or to stimulate an interest in cooperating with management to increase productivity on shore or more efficient operation at sea. If anything, a reduction in the number of jobs under the rotary hiring scheme encourages demands for higher wages in order to compensate for the fewer hours each man will spend working. As for the operators, those receiving government foreign-trade subsidies are spared the effects of increased labor costs; among the employers who are not subsidized, many have been more likely in a given situation to insist on accedence to "parity" rounds than to risk the staggering losses attached to a coastwide strike.

Territorial Ambitions

The long struggle between the SUP and ILWU has been accompanied by unceasing efforts to maintain or extend influence over other maritime unions or their jurisdictions. As we have seen, in 1938 the territorial advantage lay with the CIO group, or what at that time might have been loosely termed the pro-Bridges segment of the movement. The SUP and the MMP stood alone on the AFL side; the successor to Furuseth's International Seamen's Union—the Seafarers International Union—existed only on paper. Although the SUP was strong on the West Coast, it faced in the

East the far larger NMU-CIO which could count on the full support of CIO affiliates in any jurisdictional controversy.

Over the last 20 years there has been a slow but steady shift in the balance of power to the favor of the SUP-dominated SIU-AFL. Lundeberg's untiring efforts had brought the majority of West Coast maritime workers back into the AFL fold before the merger of the CIO and AFL in December 1955. At that point, the AFL claimed the SUP, MFOWW, MCS, and Brotherhood of Marine Engineers, all in the Seafarers International Union, and the MMP and Radio Officers Union (a branch of the Commercial Telegraphers Union). Left in the CIO were the MEBA, American Radio Association (formerly part of the American Communications Association), and NMU. The ILWU had become independent, following ejection from the CIO in 1950 on a charge of Communist domination.

How were Lundeberg and the SUP-SIU able to alter the pattern of union affiliation so drastically? The jurisdictional structure of the Sailors Union was constitutionally widened. New SIU unions were created to challenge established organizations. Attitudes and policies of employers, the Teamsters, and the International Longshoremen's Association-AFL proved helpful at certain junctures. In other cases, threats of economic reprisal served to obtain necessary support. The CIO political purges encouraged raiding in one important area.

SUP expansion started by accident in connection with the organization of West Coast tankers. After the 1934 strike, representation elections were held in the tanker companies as well as on dry cargo carriers, and the old International Seamen's Union showed a majority in all companies but Standard Oil. Attempts to negotiate agreements in the tanker trade were rebuffed, however, and a strike conducted in 1935 ended in dismal failure. In March 1938, the NLRB called for new elections in the coast companies, with the exception of Standard which had an agreement with an independent, one-company union. The SUP won in four companies, the MCS in three, and the MFOWW in two. In no case were the unions able to gain contracts. Finally, in 1939, the SUP made agreements for deck personnel with Richfield and General Petroleum. By this time, the split in the Maritime Federation had

taken place and the industrially organized National Maritime Union was prepared to step into the Pacific Coast tanker field in opposition to the SUP. The course of the NMU was eased in 1941 when elections were ordered by the NLRB at Union Oil and the MCS and MFOWW defaulted their claims to jurisdiction on tankers. In self-defense the SUP was obliged to reconsider its one-department structure. The solution proved relatively simple: an SIU district union of firemen and stewards was set up within the SUP.⁹⁰

A heated contest ensued between the NMU and SUP-SIU, and was complicated by the antiunion sentiments prevalent among tanker operators. However, by the end of 1942 the SUP-SIU had gained representation in all companies but Union Oil which went to the NMU and Standard which managed to evade the efforts of both. Finally, in 1944, Standard fell to the SUP-SIU. The NMU continued to represent unlicensed seamen on Union Oil tankers until 1948. In that year members refused to cross picket lines of the CIO oil workers and the SUP moved in, supplied seamen in the three departments, signed an agreement with Union Oil, and has since represented all unlicensed personnel on West Coast tankers.⁹¹

After the war, the SUP settled down in earnest to jar its principal antagonists, the ILWU and NMU, and to weaken its new jurisdictional competitors, the MCS and MFOWW. The sailors' first move was to incorporate the SIU-Pacific District into the SUP by constitutional amendment, thereby making the Sailors Union of the Pacific a legitimate three-department organization, covering sailors, engineeroom personnel, and cooks and stewards. The odds against SUP expansion on a large scale were still impressive. In February 1946, at the recommendation of the ILWU, the six CIO maritime unions and the independent MFOWW had formed the Committee for Maritime Unity, an organization designed to negotiate with all employers on a national basis, authorized to call nationwide strikes, and intended to evolve eventually into a single national union.

⁹⁰ See Lampman, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161, 269-275.

⁹¹ See *Pilot*, September 24 and October 1, 1948; also *Report of a Three-Man Commission Investigating the Facts Leading to the Tie-Up of the S. S. Mello Franco at Coos Bay, Oregon* (August 17, 1946), appendix A.

While the members of the CMU were busily engaged in important nationwide negotiations in the spring and summer of 1946, a portentous incident occurred on the West Coast. The SUP signed an unprecedented agreement with an individual company for bargaining rights for unlicensed seamen in all three departments on five West Coast dry cargo ships. The Los Angeles Tanker Company, operating as a general agent for the War Shipping Administration, had taken over the operation of 14 dry cargo ships under WSA interim charter, in addition to the tankers it already possessed, and had changed its name to the American Pacific Shipping Company. Five of the vessels were delivered in Pacific ports and under a previous WSA ruling would normally have taken on unlicensed men according to the traditional three-union pattern.⁹²

The three-department agreement with the SUP was signed on June 1. On June 30 the ILWU responded to requests for aid from the Marine Firemen and the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards⁹³ by refusing to load one of the company's ships, the *Mello Franco*, then in the lumber port of Coos Bay, Oregon. The Marine Engineers also declined to work with the SUP. In retaliation, the SUP froze all ships in Coos Bay carrying SIU members. Basing their position on former agreements with the company regarding tankers, the sailors claimed the contract with American Pacific was perfectly valid, particularly as the company operated both tankers and dry cargo ships and therefore required crews which could be called upon to work either sort of vessel.⁹⁴ The Committee for Maritime Unity promptly declared all ships of the company "hot." The AFL Maritime Council in New York struck back at the CMU by tying up Staten Island docks for five days.⁹⁵

An investigating commission, appointed by the Secretary of Labor, conducted extensive hearings and suggested in August that the aggrieved unions could by application to the NLRB determine

⁹² Operation of a combination fleet is an exceptional occurrence. At the time, only Matson operated both sorts of ships; its one tanker employed members of the SUP, MFOWW, and MCS, in conformity with Matson's practice on its dry cargo ships. Tanker companies, under their agreements, were using SUP men only in unlicensed positions.

⁹³ The name of the union was changed from Marine Cooks and Stewards Association in 1945, following the writing of a new constitution.

⁹⁴ *Report of a Three-Man Commission*. . . , p. 18.

⁹⁵ *West Coast Sailors*, July 26, 1946.

whether or not the agreement between the SUP and American Pacific was discriminatory and hence invalid.⁶⁶ This solution the unions refused to accept, and the tie-up at Coos Bay dragged on. Two months later, the recently formed Maritime Trades Department-AFL (SUP, SIU, MMP, ILA, and Commercial Telegraphers) issued a policy statement that all new shipping companies would be obliged to deal exclusively with AFL unions or suffer the consequences.⁶⁷

By mid-November American Pacific had been forced to lay up its Pacific Coast ships and the *Mello Franco* had been sold to a French line. But victory, in the end, went to the SUP. In November the ILWU was nearing the end of a 52-day strike over contract improvements. At a point when settlement seemed certain and maritime workers were unlikely to take kindly to unnecessary prolongation of the stoppage, the SUP publicly threatened to strike the entire Pacific Coast unless a guarantee was given that American Pacific ships would be allowed to sail unmolested under the SUP three-department agreement.⁶⁸ The threat was effective. Bridges was forced in negotiations to agree that the ILWU would handle cargo on all ships, including those of American Pacific.

For the SUP-SIU, the jurisdictional situation became increasingly more favorable in 1948. Harry Bridges and Hugh Bryson of the Marine Cooks and Stewards were under attack within the CIO for their political activities and, at the same time, were facing the most violent employer opposition experienced since 1934. In November Lundeborg stated:

"It is the mandate of the American Federation of Labor that the SUP organize all seamen under the A.F.L. banner, and consequently the SUP has no right to give away this jurisdiction which in reality belongs to the A.F. of L., the SUP acting only as its agent.

"... It is the job of the Sailors' Union to expand and organize... After all, the Sailors' Union is concerned with getting work for its membership and improving conditions in these jobs. That is its reason for being in business. It is not in business for the purpose of being shoved around by a bunch of half-baked Commies."⁶⁹

The SIU introduced a new expansionist tactic in 1949 by

⁶⁶ *Report of a Three-Man Commission*. . . , p. 27.

⁶⁷ *West Coast Sailors*, October 4, 1946.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, November 15, 1946.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, November 26, 1948.

creating a subsidiary organization, the Brotherhood of Marine Engineers, in an effort to tap the strength of the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association-CIO. On the West Coast, the MEBA was suddenly the recipient of a stream of attacks designating it as a pawn of Harry Bridges and a victim of Communist influence. Some rapid successes were scored on the East Coast where the MEBA was considerably weaker owing to the presence of competing one-company unions. When the MEBA in the East struck Isbrandtsen ships in August 1949, SIU replacements were hired and the company signed a new agreement with the BME. Later, the Isthmian steamship company, a subsidiary of U. S. Steel, refused to follow the MEBA-American Merchant Marine Institute pattern contract, as it had for years. Rather than risk another SIU backdoor agreement by striking, the MEBA was obliged to extend its old contract with Isthmian in 1949 and 1950.

The MEBA opened new negotiations on the East Coast in May 1951 with the intention of gaining parity with the West Coast. An excellent settlement was made with AMMI, including the hiring hall. Isthmian rejected the terms and the MEBA proceeded to strike the company's ships. The engineers requested all unions to recognize its picket lines, but were turned down by the SUP, SIU, MMP, and ILA. Instead, the SIU, which held jurisdiction in the unlicensed departments of Isthmian ships, sent BME replacements to the company.¹⁰⁰

It seemed likely the SIU would have little serious trouble with the unions on the West Coast in this foray. In 1950 the charters of the ILWU and NUMCS had been revoked by the CIO. The NUMCS was being raided by both the NMU and the SIU. The Teamsters and the ILA were looking calculatingly at the extensive ILWU jurisdiction. In addition, the ILWU was making an obvious effort to preserve its new peaceful relationship with the Pacific Maritime Association. In theory, the ILWU would be more intensely concerned with its security and that of its close ally, the NUMCS, than with risking a disturbance over the CIO's MEBA.

Such was not the case. When the Isthmian ships, *S. S. Clearwater Victory* and *S. S. Steel Artisan*, arrived in Los Angeles in

¹⁰⁰ Thor, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-243.

July, longshoremen together with teamsters and ship repair crews observed MEBA picket lines. Isthmian obtained a temporary restraining order and work was performed, but both ships were again boycotted by the longshoremen when they arrived in San Francisco. On August 14 the Los Angeles court dismissed Isthmian's complaint that the MEBA was engaged in an illegal strike for the closed shop. The union's action was upheld on the grounds that engineers were supervisory employees and, hence, under California law could legitimately strike for a closed shop. Nevertheless, the company negotiated and signed a contract with the BME-SIU four days later.

A new Isthmian complaint was filed charging that the MEBA strike was jurisdictional in nature and so illegal. Another injunction was issued and pickets were withdrawn, but longshoremen still refused to work. The Longshore Coast Arbitrator subsequently ruled the ILWU was not in violation of its contract by the action as the dispute between MEBA and Isthmian was not jurisdictional in essence.

In the meantime, the SIU picketed selected PMA vessels in Atlantic ports, evidently in the hope the PMA would exert effective pressure on the ILWU and MEBA. Lundeberg dramatically announced in October that, "we will do everything we can to induce the AFL [ILA] to unload those ships." Rumors were heard that Isthmian had started negotiations to bring ILA men to San Francisco to work its cargoes.

Isthmian ships in San Francisco were finally handled by the ILWU in November when the strike was ruled jurisdictional and illegal. However, a ship which moved north was picketed by the MEBA and ILWU in Seattle, and then in Portland. Two months later, Isthmian gave up, and announced suspension of its freighter service between the Gulf and Pacific Northwest. Operation was continued to California ports only.¹⁰¹

In spite of the successful battle put up on the West Coast, the MEBA was finally forced to leave Isthmian to the BME. There was widespread ILA rank-and-file support of the MEBA in Atlantic ports, but official ILA backing of the SIU and the inability of the NMU to provide the MEBA with the same degree of protection

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 243-249.

they could get from the ILWU in the West made an extended fight hopeless.

Another series of events led to the SUP-SIU's most spectacular triumphs yet in the jurisdictional field—the decision of the Marine Firemen to affiliate with the SIU in 1953 and the acquisition of Pacific Coast jurisdiction for all stewards' department personnel in 1955.

Rearrangement of the maritime unions in 1950 into three, rather than two, basically antagonistic groups—AFL, CIO, and ILWU-NUMCS—and the increasing strength of the SUP-SIU led the MFOWW to reconsider its independent position on the waterfront. The MFOWW's devotion to autonomy had been explained in a handbook of 1943:

“Our experience with the executive board czars of the International Seamen's Union was such that the majority of our membership swore never again to have anything to do with an international union with control dominated from the top.”¹⁰²

Through the years the blandishments of both CIO and AFL had been ignored. Full maritime unity, on the other hand, was a goal which the MFOWW could accept wholeheartedly and which led it to participate in the Maritime Federation of the Pacific until dissolution and in the Committee for Maritime Unity after World War II.

A holder of moderate political views, MFOWW president Vincent Malone (now retired) was able to steer his union away from close identification with either the Lundeberg or Bridges blocs, while he cooperated discriminately with various unions in different circumstances. And as the MFOWW's strength in the engine department made it reasonably safe from raids, the firemen were usually in the enviable position of being wooed for influence purposes by both the SUP and the ILWU. The general policy of the MFOWW from year to year appeared to depend almost exclusively on the relationship between its members and their jobs and employers, rather than partially on the mass of political, jurisdictional, and personal factors operating in the industry. It can not be assumed that a constant awareness of the

¹⁰² Pacific Coast Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders, and Wipers Association, *The Story of the Marine Firemen's Union* (revised edition; San Francisco: February 10, 1945), p. 112.

forces at work between other unions was not crucial to the MFOWW's equilibrium. Undoubtedly the detached course was the more difficult to pursue. However, the independent nature of the MFOWW gave it great flexibility in an industry in which the quality was in notoriously short supply.

The creation of a third power bloc on the waterfront in 1950 disturbed the pattern to which the MFOWW had adjusted. With the CIO and the ILWU-NUMCS set against each other, it was questionable whether support could be depended upon from either group should the SUP-SIU force its claims to engineroom personnel. Help from the CIO might involve pressure to associate closely with the National Maritime Union. On the other hand, too intimate a relationship with the ILWU-NUMCS in the new political environment might encourage attacks by both the SIU and the CIO. The comfortable middle road had disappeared to be replaced by a potentially far more hazardous path.

In early 1953 approaches were made to the AFL and CIO to determine what terms of affiliation could be obtained through either the SIU or NMU. The SIU refused to release its engineroom jurisdiction, but agreed to a *status quo* arrangement pending a permanent settlement of the MFOWW within the SIU, at which time all engineroom jurisdiction might be merged. The MFOWW was also offered autonomy over selection of officers, finances, negotiations, and ownership of property. The NMU, by virtue of its industrial structure, could offer only full integration. The MFOWW recommended the SIU to its membership, and a referendum in late 1953 resulted in a two-to-one vote in favor of affiliation.¹⁰⁸

SUP-SIU absorption of stewards' department jurisdiction was a far more lengthy and complicated procedure. In 1948 the Seattle branch of the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards-CIO expelled over 100 members for strikebreaking and dual unionism. Claiming the act was merely a means of stifling opposition, a group of those expelled, with the encouragement of the SUP, filed charges with the NLRB in 1949, complaining that the NUMCS hall was operated in such a manner as to discriminate in favor of the employment of NUMCS-CIO members.

¹⁰⁸ See *The Marine Fireman*, April 9 and October 9, 1953.

While the Board was considering the charges, the NUMCS suffered the first of the three blows which were to drive it out of existence. On August 29, 1950, the CIO revoked the charter of the NUMCS, following charges of Communist domination. The inevitable followed: first, organizers of the National Maritime Union arrived in San Francisco with the blessings of the CIO, and, then, Lundeberg offered the NUMCS autonomy within the SIU. A particularly violent jurisdictional battle ensued. As the NUMCS contained a high proportion of Negro members, the NMU played heavily on the SUP's traditional restrictive practices. Promising no race bars, the SIU proceeded to charter a new union, the MCS-SIU. Both the NMU and MCS-SIU petitioned the NLRB for a representation election, but neither union could show the required pre-election support among cooks and stewards.

On March 12, 1952, the second blow fell on the NUMCS when the NLRB upheld the charge of those ejected from the union, ordered the men reinstated, and declared the PMA-NUMCS coast-wide contract void until a new election could be held to determine whether or not the stewards' department still wished to be represented by the NUMCS-Ind. As all the parties concerned were opposed to the unregulated hiring which would follow the abolition of the NUMCS hiring hall, a settlement agreement was entered into which provided for elimination of hiring abuses but allowed continuation of a hall, known as the Central Registration Office. The PMA maintained the same wages and conditions for cooks and stewards.

Early in 1953 the NUMCS was weakened again when its president, Hugh Bryson, was indicted on a perjury charge arising from his signing of the Taft-Hartley Law's non-Communist affidavit. At this point, the ILWU, which had been giving full support to the NUMCS in its fight against the NMU and the SIU, entered the contest as a major participant. With the approval of the NUMCS, the ILWU started to organize its own department of cooks and stewards. The campaign was the first attempt of longshoremen in West Coast maritime history to organize in the seagoing section. In the meantime, the National Maritime Union had retired from action, leaving the field to the ILWU and SIU.

The NLRB finally ordered an election in January 1954, with

a choice of NUMCS-Ind., MCS-SIU, or Neither Union. The ILWU was refused a place on the ballot, but propagandized strongly for a "neither" vote. "Neither Union" won by a large majority and the ILWU promptly requested bargaining rights. However, the PMA refused to grant rights until the NLRB could designate a specific bargaining agent.

The battle wore on through 1954. A new approach was tested when the SUP and MFOWW urged the NLRB to grant another election on a three-department basis, that is, taking the unlicensed departments on the West Coast as a single unit. Obviously such a procedure would give the SIU a majority regardless of how stewards voted. The plan was backed by the PMA,¹⁰⁴ and in January 1955 the NLRB ordered a three-department election. Legal efforts of the NUMCS and ILWU to force the NLRB to hold a one-department election were unsuccessful. The NUMCS withdrew from the election, and balloting started on a choice of SIU, ILWU, or Neither Union. The results were: SIU, 3,931; ILWU, 1,064; Neither, 327. On June 21, 1955, the MCS-SIU was certified as the proper bargaining agent.

No sooner had the decisive NLRB election been ordered than Lundeberg struck out in a new direction. In February 1955, the SUP and the International Shipping Company signed a contract under which the SUP was to supply all shipboard personnel from masters to stewards. The contract also specified a seven-man reduction in the manning scale and incorporation of penalty rates into base pay. As announced by the SUP, the agreement was the first step in a plan to allow more economical operation of American ships and to stem the flow of ships to "runaway" flags (i.e., Panama, Liberia).¹⁰⁵

While the company's only vessel, a bulk carrier known as the *Tonsina*, made a trip to Korea and Japan with an all-SUP crew, a controversy raged among the unions. At one stroke the SUP had cut into the jurisdictions of the MMP-AFL, MEBA-CIO, ARA-CIO, and MFOWW-SIU. In addition to accusing the SUP of raiding, the unions, plus the NMU, claimed the agreement sacrificed fundamental gains. Lundeberg retorted that the crew had lost nothing in pay and that the economical *Tonsina* plan, if extended,

¹⁰⁴ *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 4, 1954.

¹⁰⁵ *West Coast Sailors*, March 18, 1955.

would recapture hundreds of jobs for American union seamen. One concession was offered, however: it was announced that the trip was purely experimental and that in the future crews on the *Tonsina* and other vessels operating under the same scheme would be supplied from the various appropriate AFL unions rather than just from the SUP.¹⁰⁶ In the end nothing came of the plan. Bulk carriers continue to use the regular West Coast unions (MMP, MEBA, ARA, SUP, MFOWW, MCS) in the conventional manner.

Perhaps the most unexpected result of the *Tonsina* disturbance was the serious breach which developed between the Pacific Coast branch of the Masters, Mates, and Pilots and the SUP. Not unnaturally, the separately chartered MMP-AFL resented the infringement of the SUP on its autonomy. But the bitterness and length of the dispute which followed indicated that the MMP may have been subject to more than just incidental pressure. Throughout 1955 and into 1956, the MMP and its president, the late Charles F. May, were vilified in the *West Coast Sailors* for incompetence, collusion with CIO unions, and for supplying men to nonunion vessels. In February 1956, the SUP newspaper went so far as to support indirectly the creation of a new union for masters, mates, and pilots.¹⁰⁷

Aside from its unsuccessful attempt to represent cooks and stewards, the ILWU has never followed a maritime expansion program in the manner of the SUP-SIU. Rather, the policy in the past has been to stimulate fraternal feelings within other organizations by various techniques, including a running attack on Lundeberg as a "labor czar" and "tool of reaction," an emphasis on the overriding importance of rank-and-file maritime solidarity in opposition to the "bosses," and, probably most effective, a willingness to give powerful aid to weaker unions in strike situations.

Successful as the ILWU has been from time to time in capturing the affections of another union's leadership or of sections of various memberships, its influence has diminished rapidly since World War II. The unions which have passed into the SIU orbit have immediately ceased to be susceptible to ILWU appeal, even on strictly nonpolitical issues. The CIO drive against Communist infiltration in trade unions after the war and the cutting off of the

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, April 1, 1955.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, February 17, 1956.

ILWU in 1950 has had a similar isolating effect. Once the strongest CIO leader on the West Coast and a regional director, Harry Bridges wielded great power in respect to other affiliated organizations. This power is gone and so far as the CIO, now part of the AFL-CIO, is concerned, Bridges ranks as a pariah. Those unions who wish to retain the continued good will of the AFL-CIO must necessarily bear this in mind.

The ILWU is now without an ally among the maritime unions, but its strength as an organization cannot be said to have been perceptibly weakened. Efforts of Lundeberg to shake the confidence of longshoremen in their leadership were as unsuccessful as were those of the employers in earlier years. Good contracts and a sensitivity to the needs of the membership have reaped excellent dividends in loyalty. The recurring troubles suffered by the East Coast International Longshoremen's Association make the possibility of raids from that direction extremely remote. A new longshoremen's union—the International Brotherhood of Longshoremen—set up by the CIO in 1953 has made progress only on the Great Lakes. Stripped of friends and satellites and subject to a variety of hostile forces, the ILWU nevertheless continues to thrive.

Recent Unity Movements

The conflicting interests of maritime unions have ensured the failure of long-term cooperation, but, at the same time, the search for a means of unification has never been abandoned for long. Solidarity appears to have a powerful emotional and practical appeal in the industry, quite apart from periodic political or power considerations motivating various union leaders. The unavoidable isolation of the seagoing crafts from other segments of society, the long history of economic hardship shared with the longshoremen, and the impressive results of unity in 1934 have without doubt helped to lay the foundations of a strong sense of group identity. For an indication of the force of this feeling, one need only reflect on the excellent record of seamen (licensed and unlicensed) and longshoremen in their observance of each other's numerous picket lines, even on occasions when leaders may have indicated different action was desirable. The benefits which unity would bring today

are obvious to most maritime workers. Aside from greater strength as regards the employers, a single union or federation would provide more security for weaker crafts. But the many factors which effectively divide the unions continue to operate. It is easy to see how ambivalent feelings have been aroused by the question of a single labor front and why the unions have fluctuated over the years between promoting and rejecting unity.

In 1940, the CIO, fearing that wartime pressures might lead to a weakening of unions, suggested its maritime affiliates consider establishing one industrial organization which could eventually expand to include all maritime unions on a national basis. The CIO Maritime Committee was created to coordinate action, and the Maritime Federation of the Pacific dissolved itself in 1941 in favor of the new group. The first CIO unity conference recommended as a primary step the merging of the Marine Cooks and Stewards with the National Maritime Union. However, a referendum on the subject was defeated within the MCS after a campaign characterized by generous redbaiting of the CIO by the union's right wing and criticism of a plan which promoted affiliation to the NMU before similar action was taken by other West Coast unions.¹⁰⁸ The entry of the United States into the war a few months later brought a temporary end to CIO unity discussions.

The question was reopened immediately after the war when both inflation and retrenchment of the merchant marine were presenting serious problems to the unions. In December 1945, Harry Bridges invited all maritime unions to a conference to be held in Washington, D.C. The SUP-SIU and the MMP rejected the invitation, but representatives of the NMU, MFOWW, MCS, MEBA, ACA, ILWU, and Inland Boatmen's Union (IBU) were in attendance. All but the Marine Firemen were CIO affiliates. At the meeting, a plan for a national union was outlined and the Committee for Maritime Unity was set up, with Harry Bridges of the ILWU and Joseph Curran of the NMU as cochairmen.

There were troubles from the start. The SUP opened a barrage of criticism, including accusations that the Committee would be controlled by Communists and led into political strikes.¹⁰⁹ The Firemen, although participating in the CMU, were openly skeptical of

¹⁰⁸ Bendich, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-115.

¹⁰⁹ *West Coast Sailors*, February 22, 1946.

“unity” which did not include the AFL group. Toward the middle months of 1946 there were indications of friction between Curran and Bridges over procedures. Then, in August, the AFL chartered the Maritime Trades Department, composed of Maritime Trade Councils with jurisdiction in various port areas. All AFL maritime unions were members, and in some districts were joined by the Teamsters. The purpose of the MTD was to perform a watchdog function in the interunion area.

Despite growing internal difficulties, the CMU carried out a successful nationwide strike in September to gain increases similar to those which had gone to the SUP.¹¹⁰ Ten days after a general CMU settlement, the ILWU, MEBA, and MMP struck at the expiration of their contracts. In an effort to help the MEBA gain a union security clause, the ILWU prolonged the strike for 52 days. Finally, under pressure from the other unions, the ILWU and MEBA were forced to accept failure on the MEBA’s security issue.¹¹¹ Resentment over the length of the second strike in 1946 and criticism of Bridges’ talents as a strategist caused the already tottering CMU to fall. By an overwhelming majority vote the MFOWW rejected the Committee. In December, Curran resigned as CMU cochairman, because of what he called the subordination of the NMU to the “shot-gun” unity of smaller West Coast craft unions.¹¹² In February 1947 the Committee for Maritime Unity was dissolved.

New calls for unity were made at different times in 1947 by the MFOWW, the CIO, the NMU, and the ILWU. However, the violent upheavals which were taking place in several unions over the Communist issue obscured all but the political reasons for supporting or condemning federation, and doomed both a cool approach to the subject and any hope of the necessary industry-wide approval.

As in most crises which had involved the employers in the past, the unions were able to muster a limited degree of unity in 1948 when the hiring hall was at stake. In April, the five West Coast unions whose contracts were to expire on June 15 (ILWU, MFOWW, MCS, ACA, MEBA) agreed to adopt a stand that the

¹¹⁰ For details, see Schneider and Siegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-26.

¹¹¹ Thor, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-211.

¹¹² *Pilot*, December 27, 1946.

employers must bargain with the five together or not at all. Although the SUP and MMP reached peaceful settlements, the CIO bloc and the MFOWW were forced to strike and managed to stand together for 95 days.¹¹³

The most recent large-scale attempt to cooperate was the formation of the Conference of American Maritime Unions in January 1954. All seagoing unions, AFL and CIO, were members of the informal organization, designed to provide a place for discussing mutual problems and a possible instrument for taking action on such issues as the hiring hall and the continuation of government-supported marine hospitals. The CAMU lasted 14 months. Between the call for the second general conference and the time it met on March 21, 1955, the *Tonsina* sailed from the West Coast with its all-SUP crew. Apparently enraged by attacks on his action and his motives in the maritime labor press, Lundeberg walked out of the CAMU conference within 20 minutes of the time it convened, taking all AFL representatives with him. Later, the withdrawal was explained as a response to the NMU's decision some seven months earlier to open its books and hiring halls to all comers, thereby, by the SUP's interpretation, threatening the security of maritime workers.¹¹⁴

With AFL-CIO merger plans rapidly nearing completion in 1955, the SUP felt it necessary to formalize its attitude to the inter-union situation in the industry. At the SIU convention in May, the SUP presented a resolution which condemned the principles and policies of the CIO in the maritime industry, accused the CIO of following policies advocated by the Communist Party, named the NMU as guilty of abandoning the hiring hall and allowing sub-standard conditions, and then recommended that the SUP have no part of any merger until such time as the NMU matched the conditions of AFL unions. The resolution was passed unanimously.¹¹⁵ An appeal from Curran to Lundeberg in October for a conference to work out common economic problems was rejected out of hand.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ See Schneider and Siegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-74; Gorter and Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-215.

¹¹⁴ See *West Coast Sailors*, April 1, 1955.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, May 27, 1955.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, November 11, 1955.

The antagonism between the SUP-SIU and the NMU remains unchanged to the present. Nor is there any immediate likelihood of a merger among officers' unions; those discussions which have been held indicate a strong reluctance on the part of each union to submerge its identity or risk loss of autonomy.

Employer Disunity

We have briefly examined the factors which have created controversy among West Coast maritime unions and some of the effects dissension has had on both the unions and the industry. It would be an oversight not to touch quickly also on the rather disorganized state of affairs on the management side.

Frictions among employers have been almost as common, although perhaps not as unsettling, as among the unions. Most employers on the Pacific Coast are organized in the Pacific Maritime Association for the purpose of dealing with seagoing and waterfront labor. Member companies represent a variety of functional interests; for example, there are subsidized and unsubsidized operations, passenger services and lines carrying freight only, and coastal, overseas, intercoastal, and noncontiguous trade groups. Unfortunately, operators in different trades have few similar problems, while operators in the same trade are intensely competitive. An apathetic attitude to cooperation in the former case and factionalism in the latter have been frequent results. And as most companies are doing business under financial pressure as well as in specialized fields, the situation has obviously not been particularly conducive to cohesiveness in policies regarding labor, by far the greatest operating expense in shipping.

The PMA has suffered principally from the opportunistic actions of its members in times of crisis. With the choice of facing ruin through a lengthy strike or capitulating to a union all too willing to shatter the employers' front, the small or weak company may be tempted to choose the easier if more ignominious course. A desertion to gain preferential treatment from a union or unions not only threatens the competitive standing of other companies should the renegade resume operations but also introduces the possibility of the whipsaw. With one favorable settlement, the union has a lever by which it can move the whole industry to a similar conces-

sion. So long as employer defections occur, union whipsawing is unavoidable.¹¹⁷ Simple threats of separate action by a company can have as potent an effect by stampeding the Association into settling at a higher price than might have been necessary had all employers been equally willing to wait out predetermined strategy. Such an incident in 1952 was the alleged basis for a series of events which led to the SUP receiving more at the conclusion of the strike than had been demanded originally.¹¹⁸

Attempts of certain companies to curry favor with one union or another can have especially devastating effects on the PMA's bargaining power. In 1955 Paul St. Sure, president of PMA, stated:

"There are the employers who favor the ILWU because they think the ILWU might hurt them more than some other union. There are the employers who favor the philosophy of Mr. Lundeberg to fight the ILWU, and there are those who try to get along with both and have men assigned within their organization: 'You are a Lundeberg man.' 'You are a Bridges man.'

"This kind of political on top of economic maneuvering has led to some of the employers . . . disclosing information that goes on within the employer discussions."

Regarding the effort of the industry to stand together in 1952:

" . . . I found very quickly that every time that we would publicly or officially take a position in negotiations that the unions claimed, and it later developed they were correct, that some of those represented by PMA were actually directly dealing with the union, advising them that the PMA policy was not a firm policy.

"This sort of thing is a continual problem."¹¹⁹

Operators in foreign trade have been the unhappiest in the past with the PMA industrywide bargaining structure. Both the American President Lines and the Pacific Far East Lines, two of the largest companies on the Pacific Coast, withdrew their bargaining authority from the PMA after the 1952 strike, claiming the 1948 and 1952 strikes had been unnecessary from their point of view. As foreign trade is extremely difficult to regain if lost during a strike, there was a reluctance to submit any longer to the majority voting power of those in other trades. Interest has been expressed

¹¹⁷ See *Labor-Management Problems of the American Merchant Marine*, testimony of J. Paul St. Sure, pp. 46-47.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

by the two companies in the formation of a foreign shipping segment of the PMA, with power to bargain separately on issues special to the trade.¹²⁰ In the meantime, the companies continue to negotiate separately, but retain membership in the PMA and follow the general contract patterns set in the industry. As no major strike has occurred since 1952, it is impossible to know whether or not the APL and PFEL would be able to stand clear of a stoppage affecting the rest of the industry and, if it were possible, what effect a separate settlement in the overseas trade section would have upon central PMA negotiations.

The problems which stand in the way of cooperation between western operators are repeated to a certain extent on a national scale among the Pacific, Gulf, and Atlantic Coast groups of employers. Each coast has generally functioned independently, with little regard to the effect individual actions will have on other coasts. The result is that the unions have been conveniently provided with another means of whipsawing higher wages and improved conditions.

Unity, or at least a better-organized employer approach to labor-management relations, is an objective in which most operators are deeply interested. However, the difficulties involved are well-illustrated in the recent comment of an industry leader:

“We have had cohesion. We have started out . . . with all flags flying and a full head of steam, only to lose it after we hit the first obstacle . . . somebody changes his mind.”¹²¹

The problem of coordination has been less acute since 1952, undoubtedly owing to the lack of major disputes with the unions and the current easing of interunion tensions. In 1955, for the first time in many years, PMA member companies held a series of pre-negotiation planning conferences which extended over a six-month period. There are now indications that the APL and PFEL may return their bargaining powers to the PMA. Whether the present level of cooperation among employers could be maintained under renewed, concentrated pressures from the unions is an open question. Certainly the reasons for the tendency of the employers to

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, testimony of George Killion, pp. 287-296; *ibid.*, testimony of Thomas E. Cuffe, pp. 332-334.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, testimony of Randolph Sevier, p. 201.

split in a difficult situation—their divergent economic interests and problems—have not disappeared.

CONCLUSION

The major characteristic of recent labor-management relations in the West Coast maritime industry appears to have been their sensitivity to frictions among the unions. In comparison, conflicts arising directly from differences between employers and unions have been of increasingly less importance since the immediate post-war period. The truce declared between the ILWU and the employers after the 1948 strike has lasted to the present; not only has the union called no major strike but longshoremen have engaged in far fewer port stoppages and job actions. The SUP has not struck the Pacific Coast since 1952. But the development of a less violent relationship between employers and unions was not accompanied by a rapid reduction in the tensions which had been present in the waterfront labor affairs since about 1937. Competition among the unions continued to involve manipulation of the employers and the industry for the sake of temporary propaganda, jurisdictional, or financial advantages. Contacts between management and unions were still colored by much suspicion and scepticism. The substantial decrease in the number of strikes was a major accomplishment in the industry; at the same time, the very lack of large-scale disturbances brought into sharp focus the magnitude of the obstacles still in the way of responsible industrial relations and, also, the possible fragility of the armistice.

However, the last 18 months have produced an unexpected further development: a sudden and almost complete absence of interunion trouble. The long fight of the ILWU and SUP over steam schooner loading has not been renewed since 1955. Disputes and stoppages over scope of work have all but disappeared. Whip-sawing tactics among the unions have been missing in recent contract negotiations. Bargaining, on the whole, has proceeded rapidly and efficiently, with a minimum of contentiousness.

In the preceding pages, various phases of maritime industrial relations have been investigated with a view to discovering why conflict and irresponsibility have been common in labor-management affairs, how interunion rivalry developed, was perpetuated,

and came to be the primary influence on the course of relations, and why employers have had so little success in counteracting the effects union warfare has had upon the industry. To this list must be added the questions, what explains the peace which has just descended upon the industry, and does the change appear to be of a permanent nature?

It is not necessary to look far to find the origin of labor's attitude to maritime management. The violent history of the unions explains much of the force behind the emotional, opportunistic approach to collective bargaining, although there is little in the recent environment which could call forth such a reaction. There is no question that maritime workers had an exceptionally long, difficult, and frustrating experience in their efforts to correct severe abuses. The anger which spilled over in 1934 was not spent after one strike. Nor was it likely to expire quickly when the employers continued their obstruction of unionism until the late thirties. On the employers' side, the normal competitiveness of the industry plus the painful effects of contraction and depression in the twenties and thirties discouraged a graceful relinquishment of control over labor costs. All basic differences with the unions were fought out rather than negotiated. The long and forceful resistance of the employers had its effect: dislike for management became almost a habit. And when the employers ceased to be an important threat, they were then fair game in the newly important interunion competition.

A certain amount of tension had usually existed among maritime unions. As we have seen, disagreements between sailors and longshoremen started in the last century. In order to maximize their strength, the unions needed each other's support, but, at the same time, controversies over jurisdiction made frequent or extensive cooperation impossible. Aboard ship, a rigid occupational hierarchy and the formation of unions along the same lines reduced the chance of territorial trouble, but also prompted wariness and distrust between organizations of workers in the separate deck, engine, and stewards' departments and between unions of officers and unlicensed seamen. However, there appeared little in the pattern of union interrelationships before 1934 which promised to be productive of serious trouble once security and economic strength were achieved.

Circumstances altered with the revolt of the rank and file from their internationals in 1934. Responding to the needs of the workers, Harry Bridges and Harry Lundeberg rose to leadership, bringing with them radical political philosophies which encompassed the class struggle, challenged the goals of the pragmatic business unions of the AFL school, and opened new, fruitful sources of future controversy. Ideological disagreement was not long in coming. After a violent split with Bridges over procedures and policies in the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, Lundeberg rejected radicalism, led the sailors back to the AFL, and wholeheartedly accepted the tenets of conservative unionism. The two men who had been friends and allies and who now controlled the largest and strongest organizations in the industry became bitter enemies in a right-left break.

Following the 1936–1937 strike there were indications that the employers were reconciled to the events of the previous four years and were willing to work with the unions within a cooperative framework. But, almost simultaneously, the upheaval occurred in the Maritime Federation. Any opportunity the parties might have had to work out their relationships slowly and rationally in terms of the industry's particular problems was lost. Lundeberg and Bridges became involved in schemes to undermine each other. The remaining unions, by choice or through strategic convenience, chose sides.

Caught in the middle, the weakly united employers were usually unable to resist the unions' use of negotiations and contracts as weapons in their civil war. The pressures of competition made a single wage policy, as well as a uniform labor policy, extremely difficult to maintain. Employers who could afford to meet annual or semiannual demands might be prepared to pay the price for peace; on the other hand, they might be willing and able at certain junctures to call a union's hand. Employers who were less secure financially might be reluctant to allow labor costs to rise, but at the same time, might see a lengthy coastwide strike as disastrous. Faced by a seemingly endless series of unpredictable demands and actions, the operators responded expediently, forming labor and wage policies on a day-to-day basis. The long-term economic problems of the industry were disregarded, more often than not, for the sake of short-term considerations.

Because of its structure and particular problems, the industry cannot avoid remaining susceptible to whipsawing and threats of economic action. It follows that if rivalry were again to be a major motivating factor on the labor side, the unions would more than likely resume their struggles to gain power and influence, as in the past, at the expense of the employers and the industry.

It is fair to say that the effects of disruption both among the unions and among the employers have been noted and condemned by the parties. The formation of the Pacific Maritime Association was a positive step toward coordinating employer policy. On the union side, a series of unity movements have been attempted, but each has failed as soon as autonomy, jurisdiction, national affiliation, or leadership has become an issue. The cost-reducing measure proposed by Lundeberg in the *Tonsina* plan for manning bulk carriers showed an awareness of the need for a new approach to the economic difficulties of American operators and, not just incidentally, the need to preserve the jobs of seamen. But the manner in which the plan was introduced—a scheme by which all crafts would be supplied by the SUP—indicated a continued unwillingness to pass up opportunities to gain ground at the expense of other unions.

It is impossible to name the precise reasons for the present lack of interunion trouble in the industry, although there are a number of factors which in combination help to explain the change in attitudes and atmosphere. So far as Bridges and the longshore section of the ILWU are concerned, there has been an obvious reluctance for some years to be drawn into any disputes, either with the employers or with other unions. The new partnership of the cooks, stewards, and firemen with the sailors has certainly diminished the area in which disputes can arise. In addition, shipping has been reasonably stable during the last two years, thereby reducing the economic pressures which encourage scope of work and jurisdictional controversies. Over the same period there have been changes in union leadership. Charles F. May of the MMP has died and Vincent J. Malone of the MFOWW has retired. Harry Lundeberg's death in January 1957 removed one of the most powerful and influential figures from waterfront affairs. Unquestionably, Lundeberg's forceful efforts to gather all maritime workers

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into the SIU fold have been a major factor in creating unrest among the unions since the end of the war. In any case, the highly personal element which appeared to underlie the dispute between Lundeberg and Bridges can no longer be productive in itself of trouble.

It is a time when substantial changes would seem possible. The last 18 months have demonstrated the fact that many inter-union problems which have seriously affected employer-employee dealings and which have been deemed virtually insolvable in the past can be successfully cleared up or disregarded. If the present state of affairs takes on qualities of permanency it is likely that the development of stable, more constructive labor-management relations will come within the realm of possibility for the first time in over 20 years.

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