

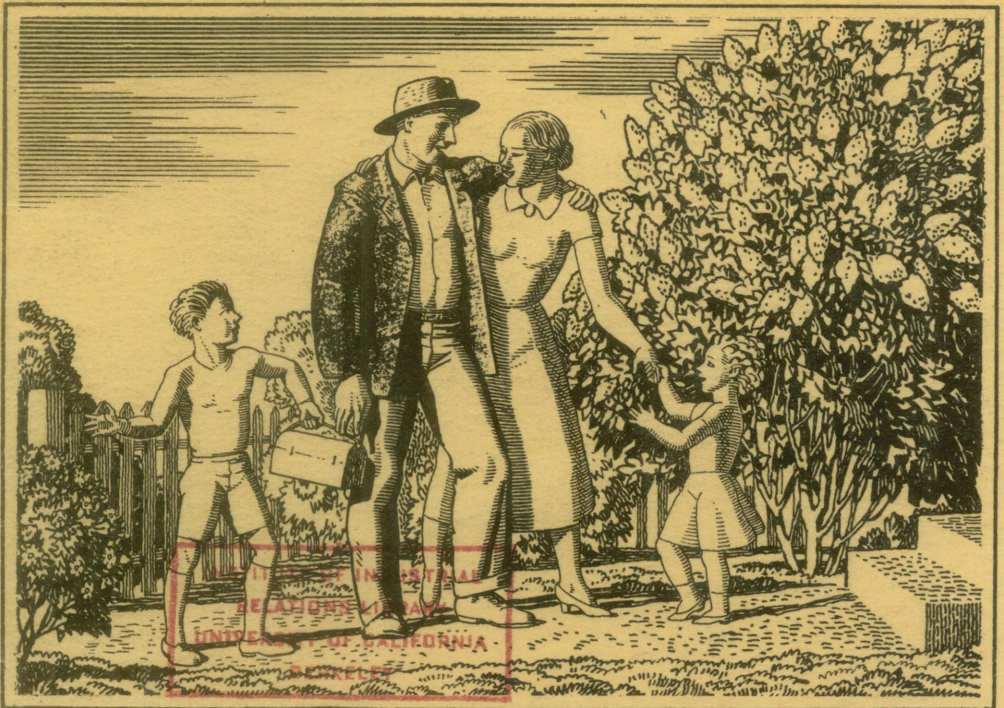
Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union  
Int'l. (1955)

50¢

# the ILWU STORY

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TWO DECADES  
OF MILITANT UNIONISM



FEB 2 1956

# THE ILWU STORY;

*two decades of militant unionism.*



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**INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN'S & WAREHOUSEMEN'S UNION (Ind.)**

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*Cover Design by Rockwell Kent*

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*ILWU President Harry Bridges speaks at a banquet on October 12, 1954, to celebrate twenty years of collective bargaining. He is introduced by Henry F. Grady, one time president of the American President Lines and former U.S. Ambassador to Iran, Greece and India. Attending were union members, shipping line executives and city officials and community leaders of San Francisco. Said Chairman Grady: "I doubt that this could happen in any other city in America."*

## **Preface**

**T**HIS IS THE STORY of a union; its start, its struggles, its growth, its gains and the principles under which it operates. It is an American story, exciting and bold and native in its traditions. It concerns workers of all races, creeds, political persuasions and various degrees of education from self-schooling to high college honors; most of them native to American soil, many of them of foreign birth, and all integrated into a fighting unit of single purpose — their common aim of advancing their economic condition and achieving a better life, culturally and otherwise for themselves and their families.

It is the story of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, known through the world as the ILWU.

ILWU pins — badges of membership — will be found on longshoremen up and down the West Coast of the United States and Canada, in Alaska and Hawaii; on warehousemen and women from the West Coast to as far East as Cleveland and Washington, D. C., and South to New Orleans; on sugar, pineapple and miscellaneous workers of Hawaii and on fishermen and cannery workers. They work on docks, in mills, in fields, in warehouses, in processing plants of all sorts, all with logical connection for mutual aid and protection.

**Says the preamble to the union's constitution:**

**"Since the beginning of history mankind has struggled individually and collectively for political, economic and cultural betterment and has found the greatest ability to make such advancement through democratic organization to achieve common aims.**

**"Therefore, we, who have the common objectives to advance the living standards of ourselves and our fellow workers everywhere in the world, to promote the general welfare of our nation and our communities, to banish racial and religious prejudice and discrimination, to strengthen democracy everywhere and achieve permanent peace in the world, do form ourselves into one, indivisible union and adopt the following constitution to guide our conduct and protect our democracy within the union."**

**The constitution which follows does indeed guide the conduct and protects both the individual and collective democratic rights of the membership.**

**There is a unique provision that calls for the automatic suspension and trial of officers upon presentation of petitions containing the signatures of but 15 per cent of the membership. On the other hand, the International President may appoint a receiver to take over the affairs of a local union in bad standing only when requested to do so by the membership of that local or by a petition signed by 20 per cent of them.**

**Time and again since its formation this union has confounded its enemies and amazed the public. It goes marching on in the face of political vendettas against it, in the face of outrageous slanders, in the face of laws aimed directly at its destruction and in the face of attempts at internal disruption. It has made and continues to make steady gains, raising not only the living standards of its members, but enriching by so doing the many communities in which it operates.**

**As for all things, there must be a reason. Why has this organization, so often consigned to death by journalistic prognosticators, grown only stronger through its struggles? The reason is not at all complex, it is simple. Control of the union has always been and remains today in the hands of the rank and file, which on the local level meets oftener and with more purpose than that of any other trade union in the United States. Issues are debated into clarity. Problems are examined and re-examined and decisions are made by the majority, not on the basis of anybody's axe to grind, but on the basis of the safety and advancement of the union and the welfare of its members.**

**The basic philosophy of this union is the source of its strength and fighting ability. When the rank and file members have all of**

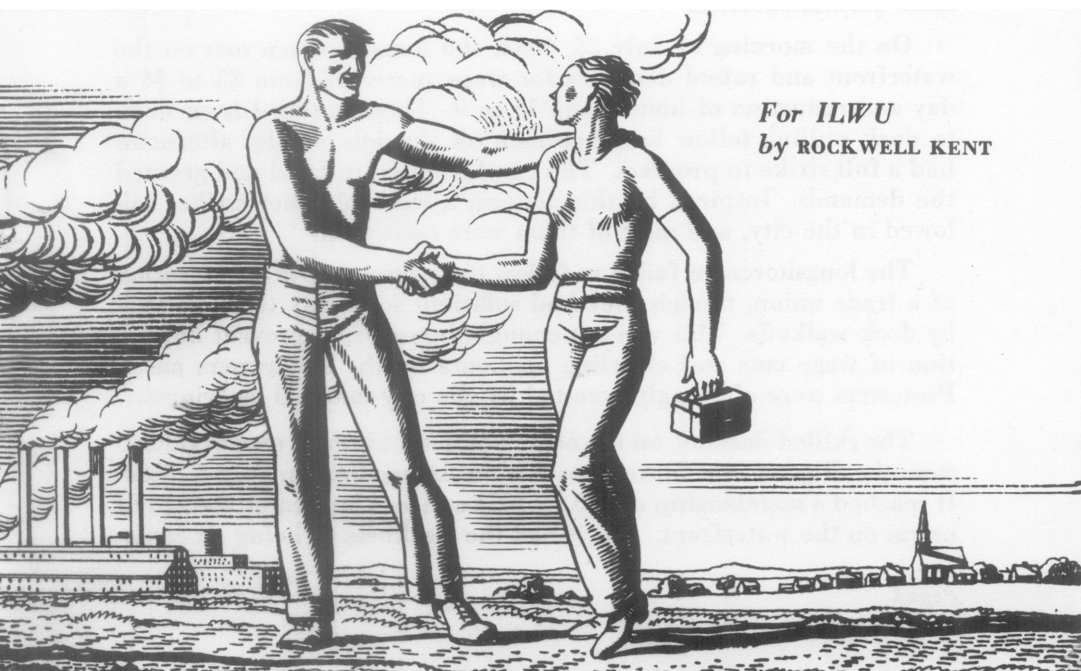


the facts and the alternatives of policy, when the members determine the policies and build the machinery to carry them out, then a power and vigor is uncovered which is greater than anything produced by mechanical discipline and direction. It is not new, this power of people moving in unity and understanding, but it seems to have been lost somewhere in most of the American labor unions today.

Tribute for this goes not alone to honest leadership, but mostly to the alertness of the rank and file which appreciates and exercises its democracy, and which refuses to be swayed away from its own interests by the enemies of democracy and the enemies of labor.

This booklet is not intended to be a detailed history of the union, nor a total chronology of its achievements. Such would be voluminously dull to the public and old hat to the union members. It can rather be regarded as a highlight story and a brief appraisal of a small but important and vigorous segment of our national life.

*Page 3*



*For ILWU*  
*by ROCKWELL KENT*

# Early Waterfront Struggles

**I**N THE OLD DAYS of clipper ships, longshoring was a skilled art insofar as it involved the work of riggers and stevedores. Sailings were unscheduled and unskilled labor was recruited from the beach by criers calling: "Men along the shore!"

San Francisco was the first fully union organized seaport in the world. It was organized without the assistance of East Coast unions and the longshoremen and seamen helped to make it the first closed shop town in the United States. The waterfront unions faced the first group of employers to be set up in America for the exclusive purpose of dealing with labor. Longshoremen gave up lives in three major San Francisco strikes before their union was smashed in 1919.

The first reference to any sort of economic action occurs 103 years ago in the newspaper, *Alta California*, which had this brief item in its issue of May 27, 1851:

"City Intelligence — a strike — a lot of stevedores and longshore sailors struck for wages yesterday, raising the banner of '\$6.00 a day' and paraded the streets during the morning."

It was two years later, in 1853, that longshoremen of the Pacific Coast actually formed a trade union. And between then and 1921, a period of 67 years, a whole series of maritime union movements rose and fell. Against the united violence of the employers, some of these movements were either defeated and wrecked in strikes or they lost their militancy and wasted away through compromises for mere formal survival.

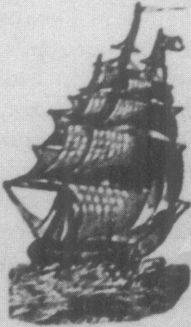
On the morning of July 25, 1853, 400 longshoremen met on the waterfront and raised demands for wage increases from \$5 to \$6 a day and reduction of hours from 11 to 9. They marched from dock to dock pulling fellow longshoremen off the job and by afternoon had a full strike in progress. The employers capitulated and granted the demands. Inspired by this victory, a wave of other strikes followed in the city, and most of them were successful.

The longshoremen failed to follow their success with organization of a trade union, though they had sufficient solidarity to stage dock by dock walkoffs. This was not enough, however, to prevent imposition of wage cuts and chiseling on hours by the shipowners anew. Protesters were obligingly arrested by the city marshal as "rioters."

The skilled dockers, on the other hand, set up their own organization, the Riggers and Stevedores' Union Association on July 5, 1853. It reached a membership of 350 by 1854 and was to become the oldest union on the waterfront. But it had the weakness of being an exclu-

*The Riggers and Stevedores organized in 1853, but were exclusive and select in membership.*

CONSTITUTION  
BY-LAWS and DUE BOOK  
OF THE  
**Riggers' and Stevedores' Union**



of the Port  
OF  
**SAN FRANCISCO**  
Organized July 25, 1853  
Headquarters 74 Folsom St.  
Telephone: Kearny 3892

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sive, selected body. It failed or refused to organize the unskilled longshoremen.

Other shoreside maritime unions of great militancy sprung up at about the same time. These included the crafts working upon the wooden ships of the day, such as shipcaulkers, sailmakers, shipwrights and ship and steamboat joiners. For a time these unions surpassed the skilled longshoremen in organization. The Riggers and Stevedores were effective in supporting them in the struggle during the 60's for the 8-hour day.

The Riggers were among the 2,000 laborers who marched in an 8-hour day parade in 1867. *The Morning Call* reported Market Street crowded "until that capacious avenue was so completely gorged that a passage along the sidewalks became a matter of almost impossibility."



However, the struggle for the 8-hour day was to be a long one. The waterfront unions, which won it in the 1860's, held it briefly and lost it.

It was not until the 1880's that a beginning toward real waterfront unity was achieved. In this the International Workingmen's Association, prominent in the San Francisco labor movement, played a leading role.

By this time all longshoremen had begun organizing. By-passing the Riggers and Stevedores, which had few members because of its prohibitive \$100 initiation fee, the Longshore Lumberman's Protective Association was formed in 1880 and the Steamship Stevedores' Protective Union in 1886. Thus there were three longshore unions. In 1885, 2,000 seamen organized the Coast Seamen's Union to win freedom from crimping, shanghaiing and the slave-type conditions to which they were forced to submit. Seamen up and down the coast struck that year against wage cuts. The three San Francisco longshore unions passed resolutions endorsing the strike. The strike, at times violent, was won — with the wage cut nullified.

In 1886 the marine firemen walked off the ships because of engine room temperatures of 165. A general strike was sought but only the Coast Seamen's Union voted for it. There was still no real unity among the crafts.

But the desire for unity and its fruits stayed alive. The Council of Wharf and Wave Unions was formed in 1888. It quickly folded as did the City Front Labor Council which followed. The affiliated unions, meanwhile lost members and influence.

At the same time, concerned with the growth of labor solidarity and strength the Shipowners' Protective Association was organized in 1886, the first organized group of employers in America to deal specifically with labor. It achieved a high degree of organization and began a campaign of wage cutting in the 90's.

San Francisco maritime workers began reorganizing at the turn of the century. The longshore unions affiliated with the AFL International Longshoremen's Association. The ILA group then helped form the powerful City Front Federation in 1901. This organization represented between 13,000 and 16,000 longshoremen, seamen and teamsters and it built a treasury — large for the time — of \$250,000.

In the same year, San Francisco employers set up a mysterious Employers' Association with secret officers and membership. They also raised \$250,000 and worked to keep open shop conditions in conjunction with a nationwide campaign initiated by the National Association of Manufacturers.

The big 1901 strike began when 6,500 teamsters, who refused to drive scab-handled baggage and were locked out by the Draymen's Association, called on the waterfront for help. The City Front Federation tied up San Francisco, Oakland, Redwood City and Benicia. Warehousemen also quit in Crockett and Port Costa.

Farmhands and University of California students were recruited as strikebreakers and brought to the docks in tugs. The resultant clashes caused five deaths and 250 injuries requiring surgical attention.

Police, acting under instructions of anti-labor Mayor Phelan, were rough and made so many arrests the courts couldn't handle them. The strike was lost after two months. Strikebreaking was successful and the City Front's funds ran out. Although the City Front lost the strike the Employers' Association was unsuccessful in making San Francisco into an open shop town.

Out of the struggle, a Union Labor Party was formed. It elected the first labor mayor, Eugene F. Schmitz, a union musician. The unity developed in the strike helped the unions to consolidate. Following it the Riggers and Stevedores' Union began to grow and kept San Francisco waterfront wages at the highest level in the United States, being 30 to 40 per cent higher than wages of New York longshoremen. It consolidated organization industrially for the Pacific District of the ILA over the entire Bay Area and won closed shop conditions and a reputation as a strong union.

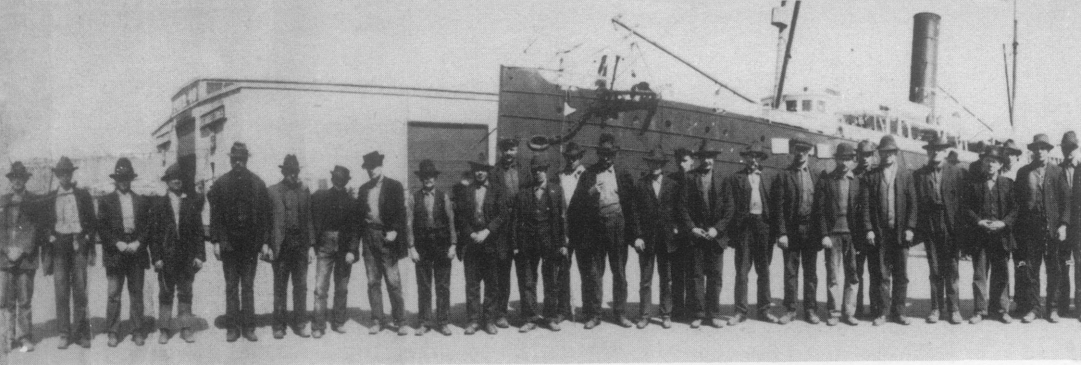
Employers, seeing the unions becoming entrenched, began agitation for the open shop in 1914. In a move to separate longshoremen and seamen, the shipowners set up the Waterfront Employers Association to deal with longshoremen only.

Following a convention in Seattle, the Pacific Coast District of the ILA in June, 1916, called a coastwide strike of longshoremen to enforce demands for a coastwide closed shop and higher wages. The strike produced pitched battles and deaths in Seattle and Tacoma.

San Francisco businessmen began an active campaign. On July 10 they gathered to the number of 2000 on the floor of the Chamber of Commerce to hear Frederick J. Koster, chamber president, declare: "Merchants are subjected to the shameful, tyrannous, and uninterrupted rule of the waterfront by officers of the longshore union."

And he concluded: "I want to stir the red blood in your veins and take this matter in hand as it should be done!"

A 5-man "law and order" committee — later expanded — was set up on the spot and within a week a million-dollar fighting fund was raised. "Open shop" was the rallying cry. To the great advantage of the "law and order" committee, the newspapers fanned anti-labor hysteria. An anti-picketing ordinance was passed. Tom Mooney,



leader of the streetcar strike of that year, was framed and sentenced to death on the charge that he bombed a Preparedness Day Parade. The longshoremen fought back against odds. John Kean, first vice-president of the ILA, in a press-recorded speech attacked the police for "protecting armed strikebreakers, preventing peaceful picketing and brutally attacking the men on strike." He went on to say, "Two innocent longshoremen have been shot down in cold blood by armed strikebreakers within the past two weeks and no attempt has been made to apprehend the murderers."

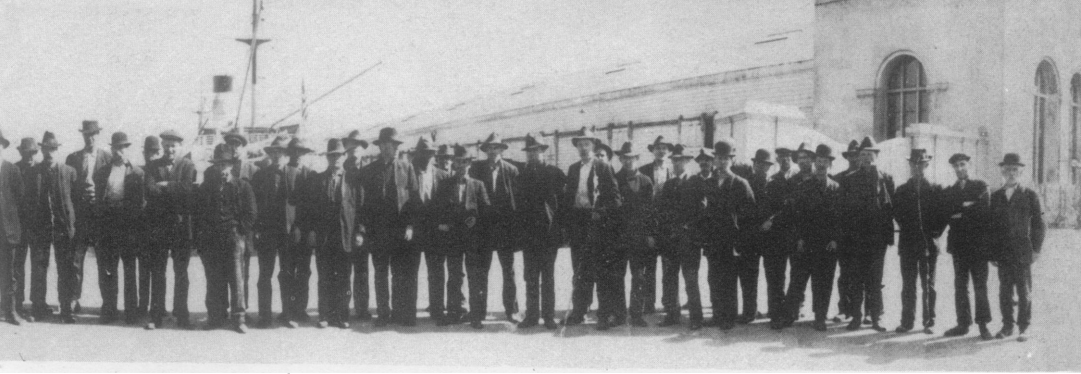
Captain Robert Dollar, head of the wealthy Dollar Lines and a leader of the law and order committee, told a San Francisco paper that in previous experiences of his "quietness had been secured in a few days when union men went to the hospital in ambulances."

The seafaring crafts failed to support the coast longshore strike. This was the latest example of the already long standing differences between seamen and longshoremen. On July 17 the Riggers and Stevedores went back to work at pre-strike conditions. This surprised and disappointed the longshoremen and in other ports they continued to strike. Also forced back to work were the longshore lumbermen. Three years later in 1919, following World War I, the longshoremen and employers battled again. The name of the law and order committee was changed to the Industrial Association but the determination to establish the open shop on the waterfront and in the city remained. Longshore demands for safety measures, increased gang sizes and sling load limits were rejected and the longshoremen struck.

The seafaring crafts again failed to support the longshoremen. Teamsters voted to drive cargo to the docks but not enter them.

On September 26, the San Francisco Labor Council, at first lukewarm about the strike, voted to endorse it. The longshore strike was only one of many occurring in the city that year and importation





*A group of ILA members near Pier 40 in San Francisco around 1909 or 1910. Some are now ILWU pensioners.*

of strikebreakers became a major industry in itself. The strikebreakers were paid \$10 a day. Their recruiters received \$20 a day plus \$15 per "man." The employers announced they had 1300 strikebreakers.

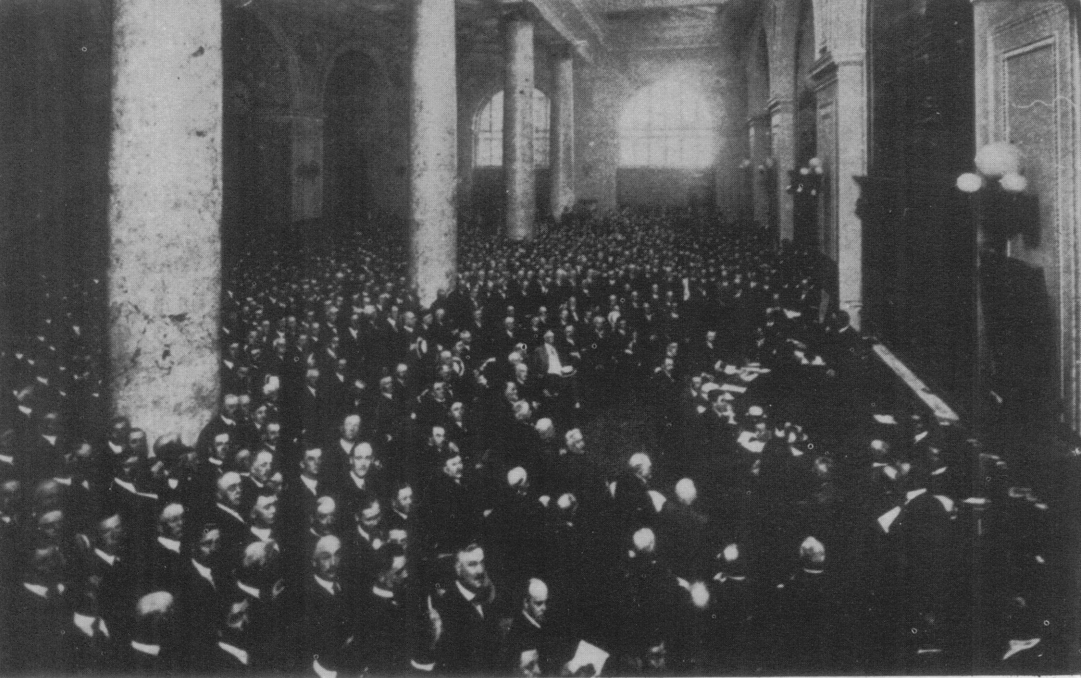
The Mexican Consulate cooperated with the longshore union in explaining the strike conditions to Mexican workers who had been enticed to work under false pretenses. Negro clergymen and lawyers also worked to prevent strikebreaking. The union, however, admitted no Negroes to its ranks and as a result many Negroes were among the strikebreakers, but were by no means in the majority. The press reported a union vote to admit Negroes in the early part of October, but there is no evidence that such action was ever carried out.

Among the lessons the longshoremen learned in the 1919 strike, to be recalled when they rebuilt their own union again in 1934, was that discrimination on any grounds weakens a union organization. The ILWU, born twenty-five years later, did not repeat these errors of the old Riggers.

The year 1919 brought postwar red scares and banner newspaper headlines attacking bolsheviks, anarchists and the Industrial Workers of the World, an organization then of considerable influence in the Northwest. The San Francisco employers seized upon this to attack the leadership of the longshore strike. San Francisco police gave notice that every IWW member must leave the city at once.

Although the negotiating committee had been elected by the rank and file, the Waterfront Employers Union refused to deal with it, attacking what it called the "radical group" in the Riggers and Stevedores' Union.

Thinking that "respectability" would soften the employers, the union members voted to put its negotiations into the hands of its executive officers headed by President James Roche. They were soon to learn that the employers could invent gimmicks as fast as needed.



*Picture from "Law and Order" brochure of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce showing meeting to form law and order committee in 1910.*

This time a framed murder charge against a union business agent who was on the new committee was used as an excuse to refuse to bargain, even though the union drastically reduced its demands.

The situation changed from strike to lockout and on October 28 the Chamber of Commerce announced: "The time has now come when the Chamber of Commerce must take definite action in order that the commerce of the port may continue to be moved...the Chamber feels that aggressive action must be taken to meet the situation."

Two days later George Briese, a 40-year-old longshoreman, was killed by a strikebreaker on Main Street.

The employers were active in securing the arrest and prosecution of strikers. Captain Dollar organized a "vigilance" committee which would invade trials of strikers en masse to force convictions. Dollar told a meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers in 1923 in New York of the difficulty he had with one judge who refused to go along. "We told him that because of his reluctance to prosecute we had found it necessary to form a vigilance committee and if the serious conditions along the waterfront did not stop at once, our first official act would be to take him and string him up to a telephone pole ...

## ONE MILLION DOLLAR FUND PLEDGED BY BUSINESS MEN FOR LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE

LAW AND  
ORDER IN  
SAN  
FRANCISCO

**W**ITHIN five minutes after the organization of the Law and Order Committee the announcement was made from the floor of the Chamber of Commerce that \$200,000 had been voluntarily subscribed for the purpose of the Committee.

This amount within a week was increased to \$600,000, and is constantly increasing. Today the Committee is operating in round figures with a fund of \$1,000,000.

### *Portion of page from SF Chamber of Commerce "Law and Order" brochure, 1910.*

"I can see that official yet. He could not believe we really meant it, so he said to me, 'Mr. Dollar, do you mean that?' I answered, 'I was never more earnest in my life.' My reply brought him to time and he at once promised to cooperate with us and he did . . ."

The strike continued until December of 1919 when a group of gang bosses with prodding from the employers formed the "Harmony Club." Quickly they formed the Longshoremen's Association of San Francisco, which later came to be known as the Blue Book (company) Union. A day later the employers signed a five-year contract with the new union under open shop conditions. The Riggers and Stevedores' Union, known as the red book union, for all practical purposes was smashed.

Captain Dollar summed it up before the NAM four years later when he said, "Up to the time of the strike San Francisco had been known as the tightest 'closed shop' city in the world. But when the last rumble of the dock strike had died away, the labor aspect in San Francisco had undergone a complete change. It became known as the most wide 'open shop' community in America. How shipping men brought about this change has lots of thrills."

What happened in San Francisco was pretty much repeated, with local variations, in the other ports up and down the coast. Some local unions survived after the Riggers and Stevedores went down in 1919. But everywhere the employers' pattern was the same, and everywhere they put it across in the post-World War I years.

In 1921 the seamen faltered through a disastrous strike which wrecked their organization; and the longshoremen, still recalling



***How San Francisco Chamber of Commerce boasted of putting over its anti-picketing ordinance in 1916 by telephoning every voter in the city.***



THE LARGEST "CALLING-UP" JOB ON RECORD—400 TELEPHONE GIRLS WORKING IN TWO SHIFTS CALLING UP THE ENTIRE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO THE DAY BEFORE ELECTION, NOVEMBER 6TH, AND URGING EACH CITIZEN IN THE NAME OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO "VOTE YES ON ORDINANCES AND PROHIBIT PICKETING." ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIALS OF THE TELEPHONE COMPANY THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN TELEPHONE HISTORY THAT AN ENTIRE CITY HAS BEEN "CALLED-UP" IN THIS MANNER

how the seamen had walked through their picket lines in 1919, reciprocated in kind.

In 1922 the longshoremen of Portland were forced into an unsuccessful strike. And the next year the men in San Pedro went through the same experience, with police and vigilante violence smashing the picket lines.

Genuine unionism was smashed for more than a decade and replaced by the fink hall, the company union, the open shop and the "American Plan." These were the days of the shape-up, kick-back, blacklisting, goon squads, wage cuts, speed-up and a staggering accident rate.

The shipowners of the day improved upon the "American Plan." Membership in the blue book union was made compulsory and the only function of the union and its officials was to maintain a spy system and a coastwide blacklist.

To this day old-time longshoremen who were able to work and to avoid paying dues to the "Blue Book" make proud boast of the fact.



*In May, 1934, longshoremen celebrated their revolt against the company union, known as the Blue Book union, by burning the books.*

## **The New Union**

**I**N THE YEAR 1933, the depression that began in 1929 hit the nation with full impact. West Coast longshoremen, who had long suffered their own special kind of depression, had only deeper woe. Genuine union organization became a matter of living or dying, and they had only misery to lose.

There was more than mere stirring among them. There came an upsurge of union spirit, pre-dating and undoubtedly greatly contributing to the later national upsurge of industrial union organization which inspired the Congress of Industrial Organizations under the generalship of John L. Lewis. The longshoremen applied for and obtained a charter from the International Longshoremen's Association, then in the American Federation of Labor, and they established their organization as a single unit on a coastwide and industry-wide basis, thus avoiding the mistakes of the past when isolated locals acting alone had been so easily crushed.

The men gathered, built a huge bonfire and burned their blue books — symbol of over twenty years of company unionism.

Now operating as District 38 of the ILA — forerunner of the present Longshore Division of the ILWU — the longshoremen on May 9,

1934, struck the entire coast and almost simultaneously the seagoing groups organized and struck with them. It was the first coastwide, industrywide strike in history.

Joe Ryan, then President of the ILA, flew to the West Coast and made a back-door agreement with the employers. It was overwhelmingly repudiated by the longshoremen.

Arrayed against the strike were the shipowners, the Associated Farmers of California, the Employers Industrial Associations up and down the Coast, the American Legion and several vigilante organizations which mushroomed overnight.

The employers decided to open the ports.

The result was tear gas, guns and bloodshed. Two strikers were shot down by police in San Francisco, two in San Pedro and two in Seattle. California's reactionary Governor Merriam called out the National Guard.

In Portland a group of strikers stalked into the Council Chamber of the City Hall and there, before a hushed and uneasy City Council

*Violence flared in the great strike of 1934 as police used tear gas and other weapons against the strikers. It was later proved that these instruments of industrial violence were furnished to the police by the employers' association.*



denounced the terrorism on the waterfront, flinging the bloodied shirt of a wounded longshoreman down before Mayor Joseph K. Carson, Jr. To this day he is known as "Bloody Shirt" Carson.

It was in Portland as well, at about this time, that the car of Senator Robert F. Wagner, while touring the strike-bound waterfront, was fired upon by the police, the bullets narrowly missing the Senator.

The violence increased up and down the coast.

San Francisco labor replied with a general strike — the first successful general strike in American history. General Johnson, chief of the National Recovery Administration, flew to San Francisco and pronounced: "This is revolution!" Newspaper screamers shouted, "Moscow-directed!"

The general strike lasted three days and brought appointment by the President of the United States of an arbitration board headed by the late Archbishop Hanna of the archdiocese of San Francisco. The longshoremen went back to work.

The board handed down a decision which brought the first coast-wide contract in history, with a hiring hall which provided for rotary dispatching and no discrimination, a 6-hour day, a 30-hour week and union-management grievance machinery. It was an important beginning which by 1955 has brought about the complete decasualization of the industry, an average annual wage of \$5,200, sling load limits, a safety code, vacations up to 3 weeks, free medical care and pensions of \$100 a month plus social security and health insurance at age 65 and after 25 years of service.

And the longshoremen were not the only beneficiaries. The communities of the West Coast have found these men transformed from drifters into solid citizens, the majority of them owning their own homes and taking their place in the community as respected citizens, while the employers have gained a stable labor relationship unmatched elsewhere in the country. Even those employers who once fought so hard to crush the longshoremen's aspirations for a decent life have benefited from the new kind of unionism these longshoremen have built.

The electrifying success of the 81-day strike of 1934 resulted primarily from the rank and file strength and solidarity of the men themselves. The almost daily meetings, the enlarged rank and file committees and the wide contacts with other unions brought about a confidence and understanding which kept the men united and determined in the face of every act of dissension, confusion and violence.

The carefully coordinated coastwide strike machinery and action

prevented the kind of divisive employer tactics which wiped out the longshore locals — one by one — between 1919 and 1923.

The labor solidarity behind the longshoremen, from all crafts and all unions, was not only in response to the battle on the waterfront but reflected the conviction of other workers that the victory of the longshoremen would mark the turning point for all labor on the West Coast. It did.

The support which the strikers received from overseas helped impress the employers with the impossibility of beating the strike with scab longshoremen and scab crews.

And finally the longshoremen's developing policy against racial discrimination for the first time helped line up most of the minority group workers on the side of the strikers; they refused to scab.

Out of the strike there came into being the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, composed of a majority of the waterfront and seagoing unions. Alarmed by the growing solidarity, the shipowners sought a test of strength in 1936. A strike ensued and lasted into 1937. For the first time in the history of any American waterfront the struggle was carried out without a single incidence of violence or attempt by the employers to use strikebreakers.

The result was a large measure of gains for the seamen, gains which the longshoremen had already won in 1934. Coast unionism, always before so perilously existing, became entrenched and ready to expand.

The Maritime Federation of the Pacific, however, was soon to fall apart as a result of the disruptive tactics of Harry Lundeberg, leader of the Sailors Union of the Pacific. But the MFP lasted long enough to demonstrate the tremendous advantage to be gained by unified consultation and action.

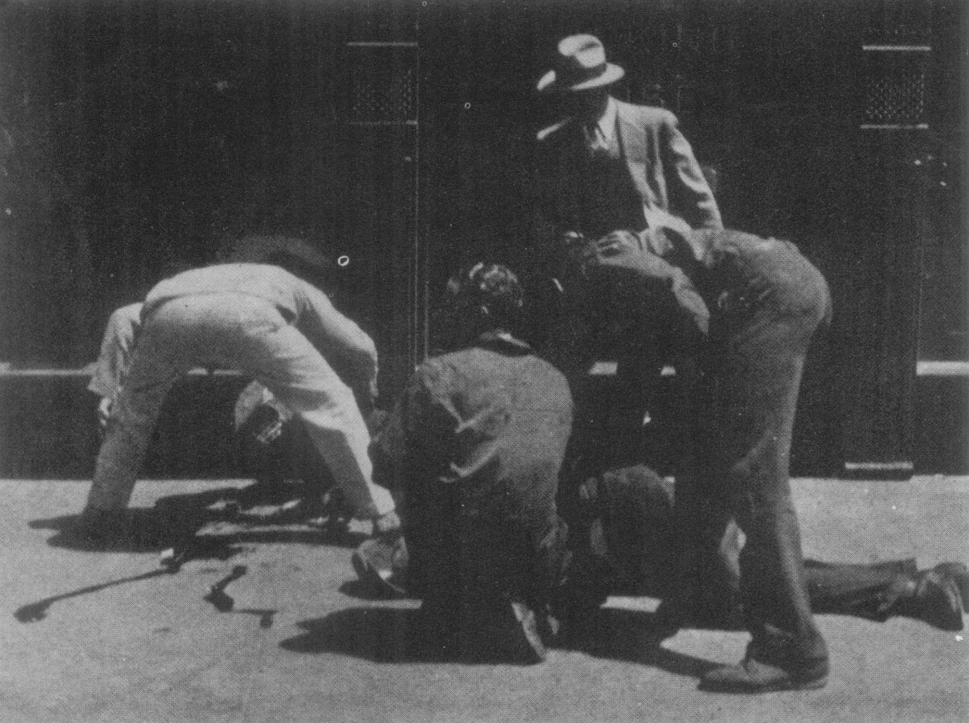
When the ILA-AFL offered an opportunity to organize the unorganized and to build a new union on the West Coast waterfront the longshoremen seized the chance.

And a dynamic rank and file union was built in the early 30's.

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*In all ports of the West Coast July 5 is commemorated as "Bloody Thursday" in honor of the martyred dead of the 1934 strike. At top is shown a guard of honor at the bier of longshoreman Howard Sperry who along with Nick Bordoise, a marine cook, fell before a fusilade of police bullets near the Embarcadero in San Francisco. Panels below show guards of honor and annual commemoration services in Portland and San Francisco. Others who died for the union cause in '34 were Helland and Daffron in Seattle, Parker and Knudson in San Pedro.*





The union made great gains as the result of the opportunity it gave the average worker to unite and to fight. Not only did this new organization develop the only successful general strike in the United States, but it also sparked the creation of the new unions in every industry up and down the Pacific Coast.

Inevitably the ILWU led the campaign for industrial unionism, and inevitably this conflicted with vested interests and the narrow approach of the AFL leaders. As a result the AFL, which had been an aid to union growth, became an obstacle by continuing to oppose industrial unionism.

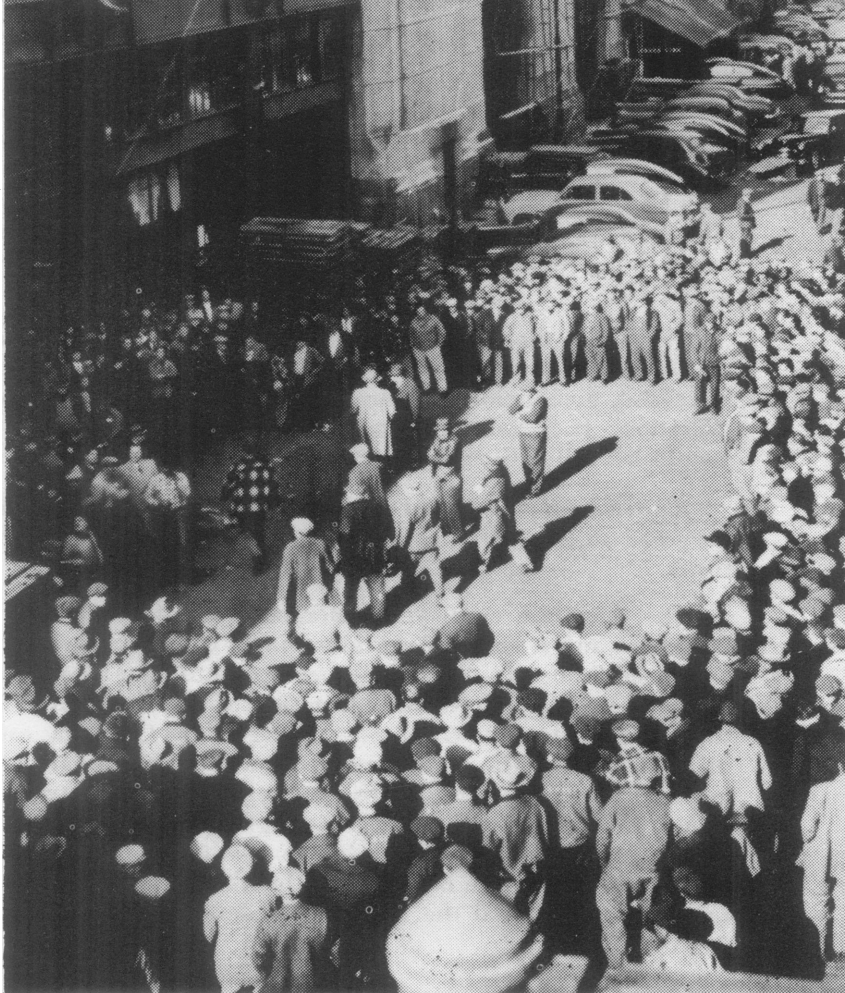
Only after fighting, unsuccessfully, within the AFL to change its policy did the ILWU turn to the CIO.

In 1937 the longshoremen and warehousemen who had begun to organize with them in 1934, both in District 38 of the ILA, formed the ILWU and affiliated with the newly-born Congress of Industrial Organizations.

In those days the CIO offered precisely the kind of program to which the ILWU was — and still is — dedicated. This was a program of industrial unionism, of genuine non-partisan political action and the beginning of a real fight against racial, religious and political discrimination.

It was inevitable that the kind of rank and file unionism for which





*Typical shapeup scene in New York. This sort of long-shore hiring, which entails favoritism, kickbacks and job buying, was abolished on the West Coast after the 1934 strike and men are now hired on a rotary basis which brings them equal work opportunity. Hiring halls in every port are jointly administered. The shapeup system is still being fought in the Port of New York where a Bi-state Port Commission has only recently transferred the shapeup with all its evils intact from pier fronts to a central hiring place with a roof.*

the ILWU stood would spread under the CIO. And it did, paying off in more gains and greater security for the members of the ILWU and for all American workers.

When the CIO later drifted away from its founding principles and stagnated into an organization relying on political deals instead



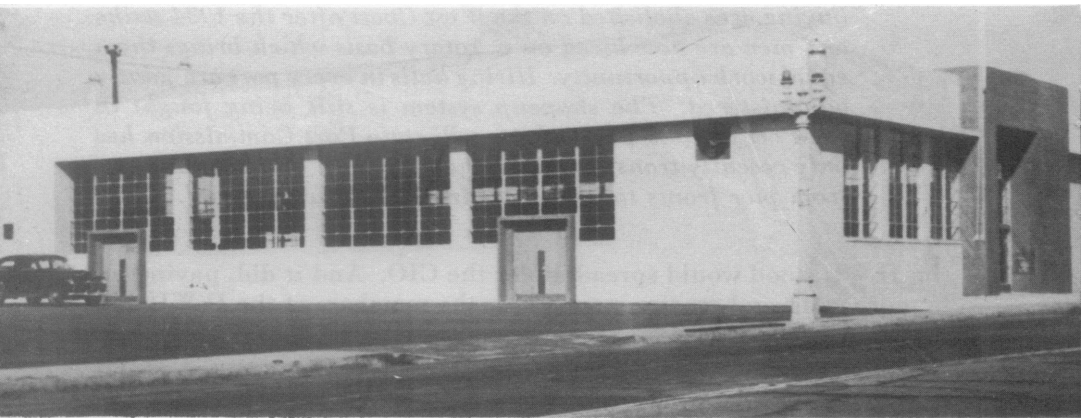
of rank and file fight, the ILWU affiliation with this body came to an end. For continued affiliation with CIO had a new price — the sacrifice of autonomy and of rank and file determination of policies; the rank and file members of the ILWU decided that they weren't prepared to pay this price for whatever few benefits remained in being in the CIO.

The lesson the members of the ILWU learned is that the important thing in advancing the unity of the working people, and thereby increasing their fighting strength, is not primarily affiliation or non-affiliation. It is not the labels which do the job for the working people, but rather the more basic union principles and union purposes.

A good example of what the ILWU means by union principles and purposes were the 1946 achievements of the Committee for Maritime Unity.

The maritime employers emerged from the war with swollen treasuries and a united determination to come to a reckoning with organized labor. In anticipation of the anti-labor drive, the ILWU played a leading role in the formation of the Committee for Maritime Unity, extending from coast to coast. The CMU was established in 1946, and in the same year it conducted the nearest thing to national maritime negotiations ever seen in this country — negotiations which culminated in the greatest gains for seamen in their entire history. That NMU President Joe Curran and Vince Malone of the Marine Firemen were later able to break the unity of CMU, just as Lundeberg disrupted the Maritime Federation a decade earlier, in

*Modern hiring and dispatching hall at Wilmington, Calif., servicing piers of the Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbor.*





*A San Francisco longshoreman signs in for work at the dispatching hall, another is called by number to receive assignment slip. Men with lowest number of hours worked are first to be dispatched.*



*The Maritime Federation of the Pacific lasted a short while but brought significant gains and demonstrated the potency of maritime solidarity.*

no way diminishes the historic benefits which derived from its temporary unity.

When the CMU opened national negotiations in Washington, D.C., on May 30, 1946, the railroad strike had just been broken. President Truman had ordered the Army to take the railroads over and the workers were forced to abandon their strike under threat of being drafted into the Army. This new tactic of strikebreaking worked so perfectly that Truman decided to use it against the maritime workers. He announced that in the event the CMU struck on June 15, as scheduled, the Navy would man the ships and the Army would load them.

CMU immediately called upon its friends abroad to support the American workers in what promised to be a struggle between labor and the armed might of the government. Within hours the wires pledging support began to stream in from maritime unions all over the world — New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, France, England, Poland, the Scandinavian countries, Japan and others. In each instance the workers abroad warned that any ships loaded by the Army and manned by the Navy to break the CMU strike would be declared scab ships and tied up the instant they entered foreign ports.

President Truman and his advisors had the answer to smashing the railroad strike, but even they — and they were experts at the business — couldn't devise any method to get the U.S. Army and Navy to handle ships in foreign ports. The admirals and the generals



*Speakers on San Francisco waterfront during CMU drive to organize and unite all maritime workers.*

and the President beat a hasty retreat; and the CMU negotiations committee, with ILWU President Harry Bridges as spokesman, drove through to a great victory for all the maritime crafts.

A more recent test of longshore strength came in 1948 when the then-dominant group of employers in the Waterfront Employers Association decided that the time had come to use the Taft-Hartley law to deprive ILWU of all its gains. They accordingly served demands upon the ILWU which in effect ordered the union to give up the hiring hall on the grounds that it was "illegal." The ILWU countered with a demand for continuation of the hiring hall, plus a series of contract changes; higher wages, shorter hours, revised vacation rules and improved safety conditions.

The White House rushed to the aid of the employers by calling on the courts to issue a Taft-Hartley injunction forbidding the strike for an 80-day so-called "cooling off" period. As the injunction period drew to an end the employers made a final offer of five cents an hour on wages and another five cents in lieu of vacations. They renewed their insistence on making the hiring hall practices "legal" — which was to say, emasculating them. The union, sticking to all previous demands, now added to them a call for health insurance, a pension

plan and a guaranteed minimum number of hours of work opportunity.

The NLRB decided to try out, for the first time, its new employers' "last offer" poll, just as it had first tested the 80-day cooling off period on the ILWU. The Coast longshore caucus recommended to the rank and file that they boycott the NLRB poll as a protest against government restrictions on the union's bargaining power. The result of the poll, as certified by the NLRB after three days of attempted polling was, from the government's point of view, worrisome. The voting report read:

Number of eligible employees.....	26,965
Ballots marked "Yes".....	0
Ballots marked "No".....	0
Challenged ballots.....	0
Total ballots cast.....	0

The NLRB has never again attempted to impose a last-offer vote on any union.

The strike started on September 2. The employers withdrew all their previous offers and announced there was really but one issue in the strike: "communist leadership." The union refused to be divided by this phony and time-worn issue. The strike wasn't over until November 26.

Before the strike ended the shipowners took large advertisements in the newspapers, and finally pulled a gigantic hoax on the public. They found a picture of Harry Bridges hoisting a toast with Russia's foreign minister Molotov, and they published it in an advertisement with the mere caption: "H. Bridges, M. Molotov."

The clear inference to be drawn was that Bridges had visited Moscow and received instructions to pull the longshoremen out on strike.

The hoax boomeranged.

The union replied with an advertisement of its own, titled: "Who Is Misleading the Public?" It republished the Bridges-Molotov picture along with others taken on the same occasion, particularly a picture of a leading shipowner shaking hands with Molotov. The occasion was a cocktail party given for Molotov when the United Nations was formed in San Francisco. The guest list was also published. It was a roster of San Francisco socialites, civic leaders and industrialists. Bridges was among the labor leaders who were also there.

The men hung tough, their powerful solidarity and understanding finally carrying the day. Then the break came. Leadership was

changed, but not as demanded by the shipowners. The longshoremen stood by their leaders to a man. The shipowners changed theirs. They reorganized, called the union back to the bargaining table and announced: "Gentlemen, there is a new look!"

And there was a "New Look." Gone were the rabid bitter-enders on the employer side of the table, and after 95 days on the bricks one of the finest trade union agreements ever made was negotiated in the new atmosphere.

The hiring hall continued as it was; wages were increased 15 cents an hour, union security was reaffirmed and improvements were made in the hours and vacation provisions. Neither the court injunctions nor the NLRB had been any more successful than the Army and Navy in breaking the union.

There has not been another West Coast longshore strike since. The contract has been renewed amicably at every expiration date with steady improvement each time, and the stability of labor relations on the West Coast waterfront is today unmatched elsewhere in the nation. Grievance machinery has been tightened to the point where the Coast impartial arbitrator draws pay for virtually no work — a tribute to both parties.

And there is pride. The employers have expressed pride, as well as the union, in the pioneering advancements. These include, among other things, one of the best welfare plans with the lowest administrative cost in the country. It includes the non-contributory (on the part of the workers) pension plan paying \$100 a month exclusive of social security to workers over 65 with 25 years of service, and finally the country's first dental care program for the children of union members. Trustees of the welfare and pension plans, three from the employers and three from the union, serve without pay and the administrative cost of the pension plan is less than one per cent of its contributions. In its first ten years it will retire 22 per cent of the working force. It had in the month of March, 1955, a reserve of more than \$11,000,000 invested in interest-bearing bonds and securities.

The union is here to stay and go forward.

## The Warehouse Industry

**T**HE NEW KIND of unionism which was born with the 1934 maritime strike was not confined to the docks. The warehouse workers, with their close ties to the waterfront, also helped build the ILWU and they too shared in the benefits of its achievements.

Warehousing is primarily a storage, processing and distributing industry; it also includes some manufacturing. Historically it has been an industry with low wages, speed-up and job insecurity. Hourly rates were as low as 30 cents an hour in 1934; a take-home pay of \$40 a month was not unusual. The men and women who eked out a precarious living in the distribution centers up and down the West Coast had never been considered as potential union members by the old AFL craft organizations. In fact, in the San Francisco Bay Area their interests were bartered away for the benefit of a small organized group.

Early in 1934 teamster union officials in San Francisco struck a bargain with the warehouse employers. In return for a 50-cent daily increase they agreed to a 50-cent wage cut for the unorganized warehousemen; and they further bound themselves not to unionize the warehousemen who were already beginning to take matters into their own hands.

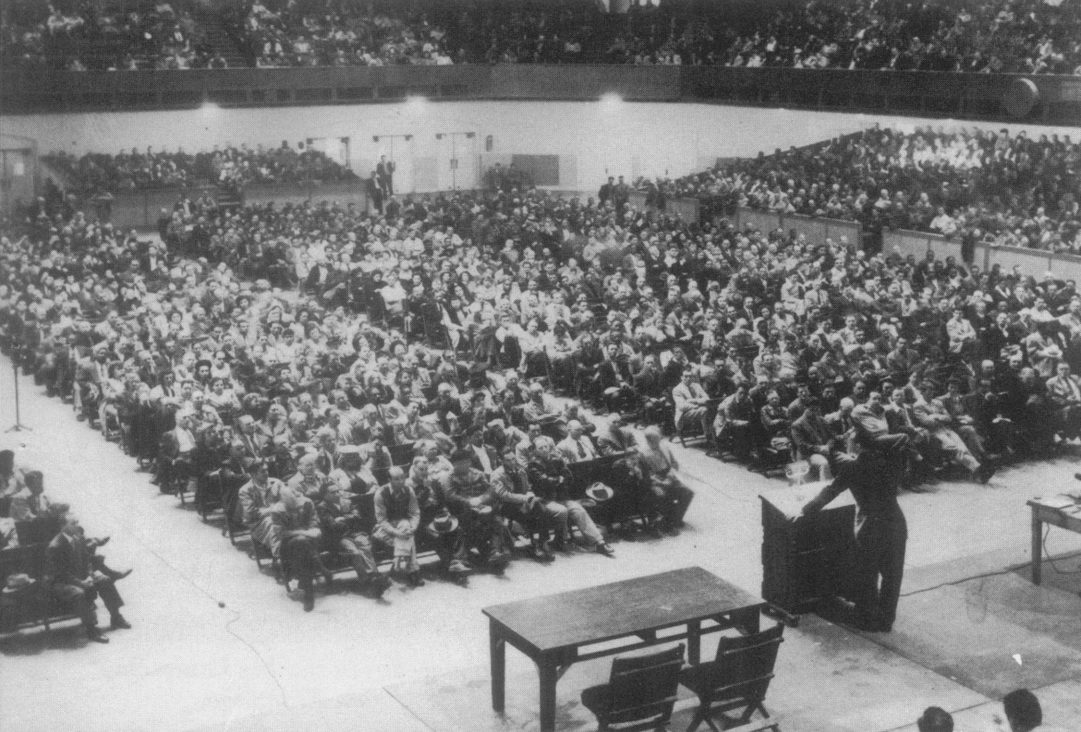
As a result of this deal the warehousemen employed along the waterfront — primarily in the East Bay — turned to the longshoremen's union, and they found both a welcome and a concrete practical union program there.

The pre-'34 warehousemen's union had been disbanded in 1920. But under the impetus of the successful 1934 maritime strike the warehousemen reorganized their organization. In August, 1934, Weighers, Warehousemen's and Cereal Workers Union Local 38-44 received its charter from the ILA. It immediately proceeded with a vigorous organizing campaign which was wholeheartedly supported by the more far-seeing longshoremen.

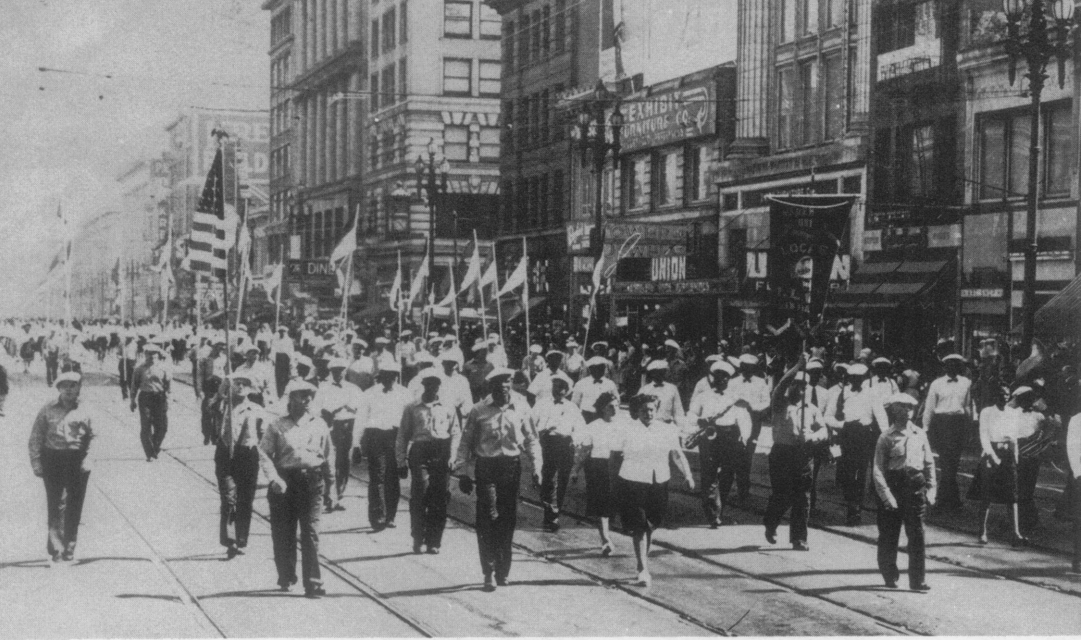
The leaders of the newly reorganized longshoremen's union realized that unless the warehousemen too enjoyed union conditions and worked under a union contract that they would both threaten long-

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*The big San Francisco unit of ILWU Local 6 (warehousemen) meets in the Civic Auditorium, top. Frequent noon-time house meetings (below) are held in ILWU warehouse locals. Current issues and union problems are discussed.*







*Local 6 marches in the big Labor Day parade of 1947 in San Francisco.*

shore standards and be a source of low-paid labor. As a result, therefore, of the vigor of the warehousemen's own activities and of the active support of the longshoremen, by the spring of 1935 the new union was firmly established on waterfront and already moving uptown — or “marching inland” as this move from the waterfront houses came to be called.

But this organizing effort was brutally opposed by the warehouse employers and by certain AFL Teamster officials who insisted that the uptown warehouses — and the waterfront ones as well — were their exclusive jurisdiction. The year 1935 in the San Francisco area was marked by bitter battles in which the employers, the police and teamster thugs were lined up against the organizing and bargaining efforts of Local 38-44. In Crockett around the California and Hawaii sugar refinery, in Stockton where strike leader Ray Morency was killed and in the savage violence during the Santa Cruz lock-out, the warehousemen were called upon to defend their organization and their affiliation with the longshoremen. It is to their everlasting credit that they remained unintimidated, stuck fiercely to their program and came through these trying early months with flying colors.

Meanwhile organizing efforts were going on with equal success elsewhere at the same time.

In Seattle, for example, Local 9 cut its teeth on a strike against the Fisher Mills on October 2, 1935. It became a symbolic fight throughout the Northwest as the Chamber of Commerce brought



*Warehouse picket lines. In order from top down, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco.*

financial support and strikebreakers to open the mill; the newly formed union, on the other hand, was backed by the entire infant labor movement of the area. After four months of hardship and suffering the warehousemen's strike and boycott produced an outstanding victory. The boycott of Fisher Mills products was one of the most effective in labor history; bakeries were struck as far away as Richmond, Virginia, and in Gulf cities, logging camps were shut down and the longshore gangs and ships crews all over the world walked off ships rather than handle Fisher flour.

Similar organizing proceeded in Portland, Los Angeles and other port cities.

As a result of the victory of the Santa Cruz lockout — which was in small part due to the loyal support the warehousemen received from rank and file teamsters and sailors as well as longshoremen — and the initial successes elsewhere, the “march inland” took on real



*An annual activity of Local 26 in Los Angeles is the Christmas party for the kids.*

organizational emphasis in early 1936. And in June 1936 the warehousemen held their first coastwise conference to develop a program for a coastwide membership drive.

The warehousemen struck with the maritime crafts in October, 1936. To the warehousemen the strike victory was both an organizing success as well as a collective bargaining one. At the end of 67 days the warehousemen emerged with one of the most unusual victories in American labor history. They had almost doubled their membership in the course of the strike! Moreover, through the strike action they won the union hiring hall, preferential hiring, a substantial wage increase, seniority rights in place of the continuous turnover which had always characterized the industry, and paid vacations.

The warehousemen returned to work on January 5, 1937. The maritime crafts were still out. And in demonstration of great labor solidarity, the warehousemen contributed \$1000 each week to the strike fund until the maritime strike ended successfully on February 4.

This magnificent victory in the San Francisco Bay Area had its effect on warehousemen up and down the coast. New organizations spread widely through every port city and later to many key communities in the interior of the United States and on the East Coast as well.

When the national AFL, in 1937, under the prompting of Teamster chief Dave Beck and Longshore leader Joe Ryan tried to strip the West Coast longshore union of their warehouse affiliates, both the warehousemen and the longshoremen fought back. The longshoremen recognized that the loss of the warehousemen would not only have ended effective union organization in that industry but it would have weakened the waterfront unions as well.

The decision by the Pacific Coast district of the ILA to join the CIO — carried out in mid-'37 — was thus in some part determined by the recognition of the entire union that the longshoremen and the warehousemen had to remain in a single organization for their mutual advantage and benefit. So the successor organization became in name, what it had long been in fact, a union of longshoremen and warehousemen — the ILWU, affiliated to the CIO.

But the struggle of the warehousemen was not over. In the months that followed CIO affiliation, the warehousemen were called upon time and time again to fight to preserve their union against raiders and to maintain their close relationship with the longshoremen.

In the fall of 1937 Teamster chief Dave Beck pulled a blockade and boycott of the port of San Francisco — and threatened to close



*ILWU celebrated 20 years of progress  
at its Tenth Biennial Convention in 1953.*

down the whole coast — to force the longshoremen to give up their warehouse membership. The boycott fizzled out in the face of the united strength of the entire ILWU.

The following spring, at the very time when the ILWU was to held its first convention, striking warehousemen in Crocket, California were assaulted by AFL goons with rubber hoses, aimed at breaking the strike and driving the warehousemen from the ILWU. But the pickets retreated into the union hall where they remained under siege until the next day when union members arrived from San Francisco to route the thugs.

The following year, in 1938, the warehouse employers in San Francisco made their major effort to return to open shop conditions by deliberately locking out the Bay Area warehousemen who remained steadfast in their union principles and refused to work on a boxcar loaded by strike breakers.

This “hot box car” was deliberately moved from house to house and the workers in turn were ordered off the job when they refused

to unload it. Despite the fact that the car had been loaded with school supplies it was shuttled to liquor warehouses, to drug warehouses and to many others that by no stretch of the imagination would ever handle school supplies. At the same time over one hundred warehouses laid off their workers as part of the lock-out scheme, without even being visited by the car. Meanwhile the employers flooded the city with statements about "strikes," union conspiracies and red plots. But the ILWU warehousemen hung tough and refused to be intimidated by the hysteria that was whipped up around the "hot box car."

Their solidarity finally paid off and they returned to work with substantial gains plus a master contract covering more than 200 houses in San Francisco and Oakland. This was the first industry-wide area agreement ever signed in the warehouse industry. In signing it the employers thus recognized the warehouse union — ILWU Local 6 — as the sole bargaining representative for their employees. At the same time the new agreement established improved seniority rights, uniform wage rates and hours of work and improved working conditions and vacation provisions. The warehouse industry had entered the threshold of stable, constructive labor-management relations.

Years later an employer spokesman confirmed the union's picture of the 1938 lock-out conspiracy which had been used against the longshoremen.

Meanwhile the "march inland" of the warehousemen had been proceeding. The movement from the docks into the uptown warehouses had spread to distribution centers distant from the port cities of the West Coast and almost simultaneously the ILWU started organizing warehouses in the major distribution centers of the mid-West and South.

At this writing most of these initial organizing efforts away from the West Coast are history, washed up by the jurisdictional raiding of other unions and the inability of the ILWU to bring its waterfront strength to bear on these situations. Nevertheless, today organized and functioning warehouse unions are at work in these cities; and these unions exist primarily because of the ILWU efforts of fifteen years ago.

Over the past fifteen years the warehouse division of the ILWU has grown and matured. Attacks and raids have been frequent; there are few longshore locals in the ILWU which have been under the kind of pressure with which the warehousemen have lived for years. However, after each victorious battle against the poachers and the invaders the warehousemen's own organization has come forth

strengthened and its collective bargaining achievements have become more outstanding.

This proved true in 1949 around the dispute with Sears, Roebuck Company; a dispute which teamster and sailor officials seized upon in the hope of disrupting the ILWU. And it was true more recently when certain teamster elements plotted long and spent a quarter of a million dollars in an unsuccessful attempt to take over the San Francisco warehousemen through internal disruption.

This pattern of bitter fighting to survive and to win gains can be found repeated in every area where ILWU warehousemen have built their unions. Local 26, for example, has built a secure organization, continuously improved wages and has successfully combatted racial discrimination on the job in the city of Los Angeles — notorious as the toughest anti-union city on the West Coast.

Today the warehouse division of the ILWU is a powerful segment of the union, tested and fortified by rank and file struggle and victory. Its members, men and women of all races and beliefs, are employed in public warehouses, coffee warehouses, spice warehouses, liquor and bottling plants, sugar refineries and chemical plants, flour and feed mills, food processing establishments and grocery and hardware warehouses. Some work in good-sized establishments, others in companies with but a handful of employees. Everywhere they carry the democratic program of the ILWU with them.

The most recent collective bargaining gains, marked up in 1953-1954, were the result of the mobilization of the entire membership of the ILWU behind the 1953 convention resolve to make that year "Warehouse Year."

Although not at a par with the longshoremen, the warehousemen now enjoy reasonably fair wages, decent conditions and health and welfare care and insurance.

Pensions for the older members are the next order of business.

Meanwhile the warehouse division of the union has established an enviable record in fighting racial discrimination on the job and in helping to bring younger workers from various minority groups — Negroes, Mexican-Americans, Filipinos and women of all races — forward into positions of union leadership.

There are none in the ranks of the ILWU today who harbor doubts about the usefulness of the warehousemen and women to the union. Twenty years ago many longshoremen were still skeptical about organizing the warehouse workers. But longshoremen and warehousemen have both since learned the benefits each receives from their common organizations and their unified policies.





*Panel of mural by Pablo O'Higgins in  
ILWU Memorial Building, Honolulu,  
T.H.*

## **Organization in Hawaii**

**P**ROBABLY NOWHERE in the history of the ILWU has there been a more severe testing of the union's principles in action, and a more magnificent proof of the success which rank and file unionism can bring about, than in Hawaii.

The ILWU's major organizing efforts in the Islands were completed between late 1944 and the spring of 1945. NLRB election victories took place in the midst of an illegal military occupation of the Islands and in the face of the most powerful opposition from one of the strongest, best integrated group of employers in America. These election victories and the subsequent strikes and collective bargaining achievements were no accidents, nor did they result from happen-chance or mere good fortune. Each gain was fought for and won by the sacrifice and the unity of the rank and file members of the union.





*Before ILWU organized the workers in the sugar mills and fields four to ten persons were crowded into company shanties like this one. The “homes” were supplied in lieu of pay under a perquisite system which amounted to annual rent higher than the cost of building the shacks. The union put an end to this feudal practice.*

The basic economic control of the Territory of Hawaii is completely in the hands of five big holding companies, whose interlocking directorates and close cooperation assure them the ability to act as one great combine. The dictates of this combine reach into every corner of Island life, not only financially and industrially but politically and culturally as well; it exerts its will upon the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the Territorial government.

Taking over the bulk of the arable land of the islands in the early 1800's, the Big 5 followed policies designed to bind workers to their jobs in the fashion of the old feudal baronies. They dealt severely with protesters and smashed every attempt of the workers to organize or to act in concert to improve their lot. They stimulated racial suspicion with the result that when the workers were finally forced by

their misery to organize into unions, they made the tragic mistake of following racial lines.

Thus, when Japanese plantation workers struck on the island of Oahu in 1919 and 1920, they were driven from their company-owned homes and forced to camp in Honolulu parks where some 1200 of them and members of their families died of influenza. Their places on the plantations were taken by Filipino and other national groups imported for the purpose.

In 1924 and again in 1935 the Filipinos organized and struck similarly along racial lines, and with similar results. They and their families were evicted from their homes and left to shift for themselves on Wailokou Beach. Their leaders were jailed. The Japanese continued to work.

These failures demonstrated that without racial unity there could be no trade union advancement on the islands where the population is made up of Japanese, Filipinos, Haole (Caucasian), Chinese, Portuguese, Puerto Ricans, Polynese and Melonese. It is probably the greatest mixture of races and nationalities to be found in any area of similar size.

As early as 1935 the Hilo longshoremen, chartered by the old Pacific Coast District of the ILA and inspired by the achievements of the mainland longshoremen in the 1934 strike, carried out a valiant strike to force the reinstatement of a group of discharged men. They won the battle and survived as a union group — albeit on the fringe of the mass of the Hawaiian workers employed in sugar and pineapple and without satisfactory agreements.

Again in 1938 longshoremen and island boatmen struck. Police attacked their picket lines and some 50 of the strikers were injured. With this strike broken, it appeared that the latest resistance to Big 5 exploitation had been stamped out.

The chief lesson of the early efforts to organize was the need to be tied in closely with the West Coast waterfront on the one end, and to be integrated into the whole economy of Hawaii on the other. No union could hope to survive unless it organized the workers of Hawaii in as complete a manner as the Big 5 dominated the Island's economy. Any successful union would have to be Territory-wide, covering all companies, all plantations, all mills and all ports — paralleling the Big 5.

The structure of the ILWU and its reliance upon rank and file machinery facilitated the acceleration of an organizing drive along these lines in 1944 and 1945. Despite the arbitrary restrictions on the union organizers imposed by the military, the ILWU policy

of no racial or other discrimination, the vigor and enthusiasm of the campaign and the solidarity of the mainland ILWU members sparked off one of the most successful union organizing drives in American labor history. Never before had so many workers joined a union in so short a span of time.

Even before the war with Japan was over — in the summer of 1945 — the ILWU had negotiated a new longshore agreement and the first contract covering the entire sugar industry in the Hawaiian Islands. An earlier longshore agreement had been permitted to lapse during World War II while for the sugar workers this marked the first union protection they had ever had.

The first test of what the ILWU had built came about in the fall of 1946 after the sugar employers, during negotiations which ended on August 31, made clear that they had no intention of meeting the demands of the workers. The great sugar strike began on September 1.

*Sugar cane shoots are  
planted by machine  
and...*





*... covered by hand and hoe.*

**This most critical strike in the history of the ILWU on the islands from its outset was fought by the employers as an all-out effort to smash the union and to impress upon the sugar workers that the ILWU kind of unionism was not for the likes of them.**

**From the union's point of view the only chance for victory in this strike which had been forced upon them lay in the fighting power of the membership, its willingness to take on a protracted strike and its ability to hold the ranks firm in spite of the employers' overwhelming power — never heretofore successfully challenged.**

**Twenty-eight thousand workers on 33 plantations struck as one man on the four major islands of Hawaii. After seventy-nine days of bitter fight, in which many strikers and members of their families were arrested for "unlawful assembly" and violating anti-picketing**

***Pineapple cannery  
workers in Honolulu.***



injunctions, the sugar workers had one of the biggest victories in ILWU history. And they had proved that the ILWU was in Hawaii to stay.

The structure of the ILWU assured the embattled sugar workers during the strike that scab sugar would never be moved from the plantations through the mills, and over ILWU docks in the Islands and on the West Coast, and through ILWU organized refineries on the mainland. And the fighting unity tradition of the union helped end, once and for all, the employers' formerly successful division of the workers along lines of race, color, skill and marital condition.

The employers tried to drive a wedge between the workers and the union. The kept press red-baited, Jew-baited and union-baited. They tried to starve out the Islands and to set the entire community against the ILWU and the sugar strikers. They tried to start back-to-work programs. They used court injunctions and they had many strikers and union leaders arrested. Every one of these time-tested union and strike busting measures failed miserably.

The victory resulted in substantial wage gains. It ended discrimination on the job and in promotions. It ended the vicious perquisite system under which the sugar workers had been cheated for years by receiving part of their earnings in bad housing, lights, inadequate medical care and so on. But over and beyond these economic gains this first major strike victory marked the beginning of the political liberation of the Island workers; it was the first substantial blow to Hawaiian feudalism and paternalism.

While the Big 5 prepared for another onslaught on the ILWU, the union — anticipating the new struggles ahead — took off from the high level of unity and understanding developed during the strike to consolidate the union's operations, to build a strong steward system and generally to solidify the Hawaii membership around the union's program.

In July 1947 the pineapple workers were locked out. The employers thus gained a temporary victory; the pineapple union itself remained intact in the face of this blow only through the loyalty and faith of the membership. Meanwhile, the Islands were swamped with hysterical red-baiting and union-baiting propaganda against the ILWU. Internal revolts were stimulated within the union. The employers tried every possible device to split and weaken the union. They failed, but not from want of trying. The rank and file saw through the smokescreen of confusion and double-talk.

In January 1948 an Island-wide convention debated and aired the issues. In a subsequent referendum the membership voted over 98 percent to stick with the ILWU.



*Wives and secretaries of employer executives picketed union offices in Honolulu during the 1949 longshore strike, called themselves a broom brigade. A few young Japanese-American women said they were employes of a beauty school and had been ordered to picket by their employer.*

Through 1948 and early 1949, while the union continued its consolidation program to build the unity within the union, the employers pushed a program of wage cutting, forced a 68-day lockout on the workers at the Olaa plantation, and kept up a relentless search for weak points in the union structure.

By 1949 the Big 5 felt ready for a showdown. They started by holding firm against the demands of the longshoremen. The strike of the Hawaii longshoremen which began on May 1, 1949, was fought to preserve the unionism which the 1946 sugar strike had established in the Islands. It was a long and bitter test of every fibre in the union organization in Hawaii. And the eventual victory marked the achievement of the same kind of recognition and status that was won by the mainland longshoremen in 1934.

This was a major victory over the colonial wage theory of the Big 5. It was the major test to determine whether workers in Hawaii were entitled to mainland standards.

The strike lasted 157 days. The ILWU membership fought against enormous odds which included:

- All the power and wealth of the Big 5
- A community structure dominated and controlled by employer interests
- Unprecedented newspaper and publicity attacks
- A hostile governor and his hand-picked "Fact Finding Board"
- Refusal of the employers to arbitrate the strike issue
- Official government scab-herding and strike-breaking
- Innumerable arrests and court actions
- Scabbing by both AFL and CIO maritime unions
- Refusal of assistance and outright sabotage by CIO

Despite these difficulties, the union won out.

They won, because of the union solidarity and the perseverance of the men on strike and the faith and strength of their wives and families. Second, because of the support they received from their fellow workers in Hawaii and on the mainland. The support of the

*An attempt to settle the Hawaii longshore strike was made in New York with Cyrus S. Ching, then chief of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, acting as mediator. Ching is shown with ILWU President Harry Bridges and Dwight W. Steele, president of the Hawaii Employers' Association. The strike was settled later by direct negotiation in Hawaii.*



*Ripened pineapple in the field.*



West Coast longshoremen especially was a solid bastion in protection of the Hawaii union and its demands.

The wage demands of the Hawaii longshoremen was equal pay for equal work. Longshoremen in Hawaii do the same work on the same cargoes on the same ships, for the same companies, and are members of the same union as the longshoremen in the West Coast ports. Yet they had always been paid substantially lower wages and worked under far inferior conditions.

The strike victory came in the form of 21 cents per hour increase — a solid step toward closing the gap between Hawaii and mainland wages.

It was in the course of this strike — one in which, to quote Senator Wayne Morse, the Hawaii employers practiced “jungle law” — that the then Attorney General Tom Clark made his infamous remark that the criminal indictment of ILWU President Bridges would “clear up the situation in Hawaii.” But instead of softening the union’s ranks, this attempt to behead the union in the midst of a critical strike only hardened the determination to fight through to victory.

An incidental achievement in the union’s mobilization to win the strike was the amendment to the West Coast longshore agreement providing that West Coast longshoremen would not have to work cargo to or from an “American port where there was a bona fide strike.”

This solidarity of the entire ILWU was illustrated in the incident in The Dalles.

The Big 5 in their frantic effort to break the dock strike in the Islands sneaked a cargo of pineapple, destined for a cannery in California, across the Pacific. It was towed up the Columbia River into the foothills of the Cascade mountains to the remote grain port of



The Dalles, after the major West Coast ports had refused to touch the strikebreaking tug as it was moved from place to place.

The Hawaii longshoremen stretched their picket line all the way from Honolulu to Wasco County, Oregon, and the longshoremen in Portland gave them (or him) "a large Aloha." Scabs tried, unsuccessfully, to smash the picket line. Although the strikebreaking didn't work, out of this effort developed a Taft-Hartley suit against the Portland longshoremen which has already cost the union much and is still in litigation. The charge was that the men conspired to prevent the unloading of scab pineapple.

The ILWU came out of the 1949 strike with the fighting strength and unity of the membership unimpaired.

Since 1949 there have been no major strikes in Hawaii.

In sugar and pineapple the union has moved steadily for a shorter work week and other contract improvements. Increasingly, the efforts of the union were aimed at sociological gains, built upon the solid foundation of a going union organization. The union program was initially met by an employer attempt to break down industry-wide bargaining, starting first with pineapple because it appeared to be the weakest section of the ILWU. The pineapple workers of Lanai, notwithstanding the fact that other groups in the pineapple industry had accepted the employers' wage offer in 1951, hung tough and fought it out in a strike lasting seven months. They won, with the entire union behind them. And they returned to work with a settlement which exceeded their original strike demands!

The whole union learned the lesson that the full economic strength of the ILWU must be brought into play as the only guarantee of industry-wide bargaining. And that guerilla fighting works both ways, in this instance forcing the employers into stabilized, industry-wide negotiations.

As a result, the separate local unions in Hawaii were further consolidated to increase the union's fighting strength and to bring it to bear whenever necessary. Today all ILWU workers in Hawaii — longshoremen, sugar workers, pineapple and miscellaneous workers — are in one big union, Local 142 of the ILWU, 25,000 strong.

Meanwhile, the union's mobilization continued. The longshoremen won a unique pension plan, fitted to their needs, and subsequently gained a medical and health program as well. And in the course of the 1954 negotiations, less than 5 years after the outbreak of the 1949 strike, when the wage spread with the mainland was 42 cents, agreement was reached to raise the Hawaii longshore rate

by three stages to \$2.16 an hour — the wage rate then prevailing on the West Coast. The principle of parity was won.

In sugar, the ILWU has established an industry-wide medical program, sick leave, vacations with pay and holidays with pay — all unique in the agriculture industry; and, in 1954, after an intensive mobilization and strike vote, a pension plan as well. This is probably the only pension plan ever negotiated for agricultural workers in the United States.

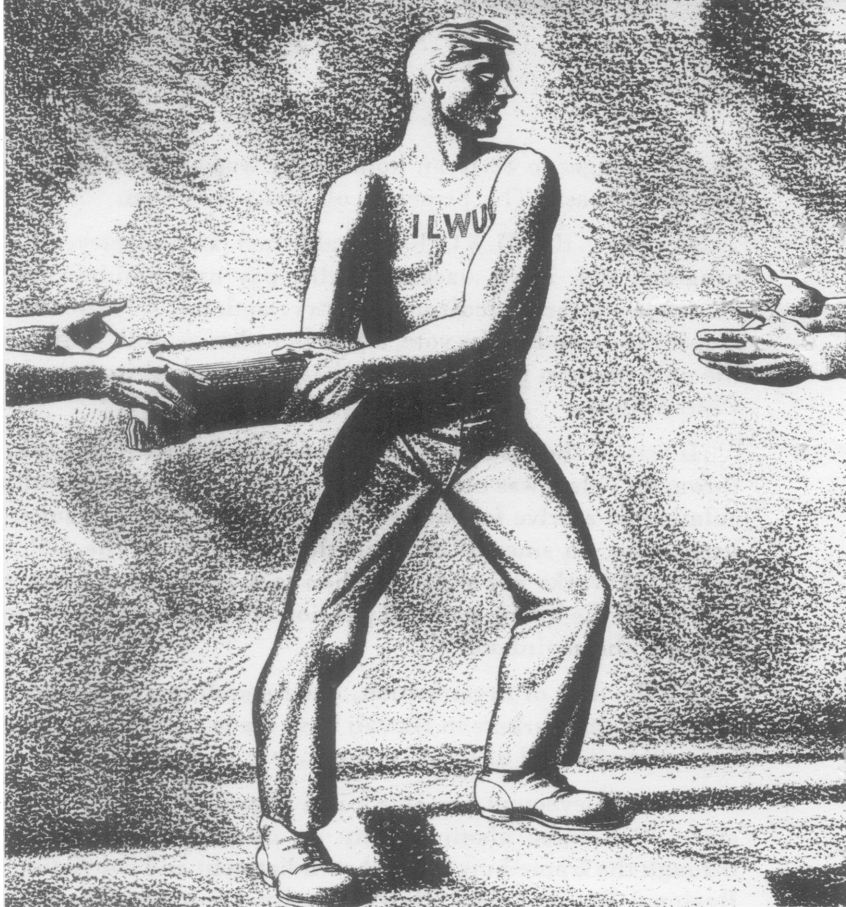
It was in these same negotiations that the 40-hour week, Monday through Friday, was established for the first time in agriculture. This culminated a drive for shorter hours in pineapple and sugar that had been going on since 1950. And the extension of the 40-hour week, first to 38 weeks per year and then to a year round basis, stands on a par with the hiring hall and pension achievements of the longshoremen on the mainland.

By the dint of organization, understanding and genuine unity in the ranks, the workers in Hawaii have made a great step toward working to live instead of living to work.

The achievements in Hawaii in sugar, pineapple and longshore since 1950 came about despite an attempt to disrupt the union through the framed-up Smith Act indictment and conviction of ILWU Regional Director Jack Hall. The Un-American Committee of the House of Representatives likewise made a stab at wrecking the union during this same period. But the workers refused to be intimidated. And the unanimity with which the ILWU members in the Territory downed tools in protest and anger when Hall was convicted showed that he has the full backing of the union.

During 1954, Hawaii celebrated the Tenth Anniversary of ILWU organization of its basic industry — sugar. The celebration, participated in by the workers of all plantations on all islands, and by the communities and industry leaders, not only reviewed the material gains made through ILWU but also registered the new status achieved by the working people in Hawaii. Through the union they have gained new dignity, respect and standing in the community. In fighting and winning their trade union rights they built their own personal freedom in the finest traditions of the American labor movement.

*How Rockwell Kent depicted ILWU's role in World War II.*



## **The ILWU in War**

**A** UNION WHICH UNDERSTANDS that working people everywhere are the same, with common problems and common aspirations, has little difficulty in deciding what policies to adopt in the face of international developments which deny the common people the right to work out their own destinies in their own way and in their own interest.

In the years preceding the outbreak of World War II the ILWU understood the menace to all people and to their union organizations of the growing fascist movement. And the union acted, to the best of its ability, to bring attention to this menace and, in every way possible, to hinder and obstruct it. In so doing the ILWU was publicly castigated, attacked, ridiculed and slandered.

When Hitler came to power in 1932 locals of the Union, then affiliated to the AFL, were the first to press for resolutions in the AFL labor bodies for a boycott of all German goods. The Union



*Chinese picket lines against shipment of scrap iron to Japan were respected by ILWU longshoremen. As the longshoremen predicted, much of the scrap came back in the bodies of American boys.*

protested the destruction of German trade unions and used its influence to stimulate similar actions by other American labor organizations. San Francisco longshoremen unhesitatingly refused to handle supplies for the German training ship *Karlsruhe* when she docked in that port.

When Mussolini moved against Ethiopia the Union refused to load supplies destined for the "Italian Red Cross." While leading civic figures and government officials pressured the union, working longshoremen tied up the Italian ship *Cellini* in San Francisco.

In other ports up and down the Coast longshoremen — and warehousemen too — joined in the anti-Hitler, anti-Mussolini policies sweeping the ILWU.

Not much later, as the Japanese war machine started gearing itself up, importing scrap iron and war supplies from the United States, the longshoremen did everything possible to prevent these shipments. The entire union and its contracts were voluntarily placed in jeopardy as longshoremen engaged in thirty-five different work stoppages in a vain effort to shut off this flow of material to fascist Japan.

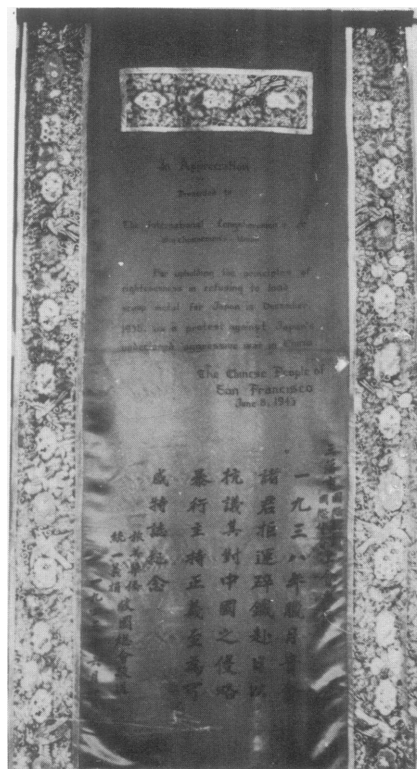
During the Spanish civil war the union took the same resolute stand against Franco that it had already taken against the other fascist leaders.

The ILWU was anti-fascist long before it became fashionable to be so. It remains anti-fascist today, in 1955, when so much is being done to rehabilitate our former fascist enemies into democratic allies.

The U.S. finally found itself at war in 1941; the union shifted its entire resources over to helping win the war against fascism — an enemy which every member of the ILWU understood and hated.

While devoting its strength and unified organization to speeding the day of victory, the union did not neglect to protect the basic trade union gains which had been won so dearly. And when the situation

*This silk scroll was presented to ILWU by the Chinese people of San Francisco on June 8, 1945. In English and Chinese the inscription reads: "For upholding the principles of righteousness in refusing to load scrap metal for Japan in December, 1938, as a protest against Japan's undeclared aggressive war in China."*





*ILWU longshoremen not only speeded military supplies to help win World War II, they also invested in war bonds. This longshoreman putting all his savings into bonds was Florin B. Lotar of Local 13, Wilmington, California.*

warranted it the ILWU pressed for — and won — new gains and even started its successful organizing campaign in the Hawaiian Islands, while the war was still being fought.

The members of the ILWU never had the illusion that a military victory over fascism would automatically settle all of their problems as working people or guarantee a rosy future into the hereafter. When their long-time enemies overnight became the country's enemies as well, the ILWU was already on the battle line; the members understood that at stake in the war was the chance — in the future — to be able to fight once again as a union for their union demands. Nothing less.

The Officers Report to the Fifth Biennial Convention in April, 1943, put it in these words:

*"It has become a people's war, a war which will determine whether we as laboring men and women will have a choice,*

*in concert with workers of all the world, to mold a life of freedom, security, education and happiness. The war in itself may not give us these things, but the war will determine whether we will be given a fair chance to work and fight for them."*

"A fair chance to work and fight" — this has been the demand of the union in peace, and to maintain this was the underlying purpose of its mobilization in World War II.

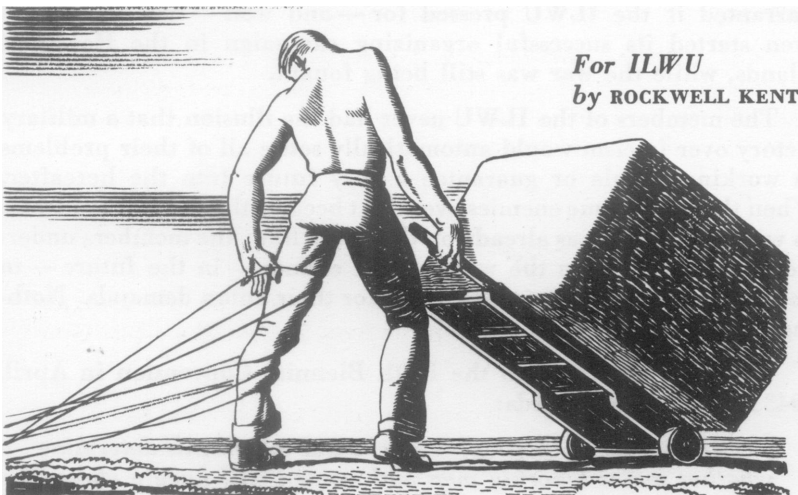
During the years of the Cold War, the fighting in Korea and tension and hysteria at home, the ILWU has hewed — as closely as it could — to policies which would keep the chance to work and fight unimpaired.

Today, when the new thermo-nuclear weapons are capable of destroying people, cities, animals, plants and even poisoning the atmosphere itself for centuries the union is unanimous in concluding that any major war can mark the end of the path for this union and the policies and programs for which it stands.

Only in a stable, secure, peaceful world can this, or any other union, hope to be able to fight for and win those improvements in the lives of the members to which the union movement is dedicated.

In the 1955 convention of the ILWU the delegates unanimously agreed that:

"Just as the ILWU threw itself into World War II without qualification and without stint until victory had been won, so we must throw our resources into the fight for peace today — for the duration and until peace has been achieved."



## The Everlasting Bridges Case

**W**HEN JUDGE LOUIS E. GOODMAN handed down his historic and devastating opinion on July 29, 1955, upholding ILWU President Harry Bridges and throwing out the charges of the US Department of Justice, he marked what should be the end — once and for all — of twenty-one years of the most shameful and unprecedented persecution in the history of the United States.

For twelve of the past twenty-one years Harry Bridges has been *actively* involved in one trial or another, aimed at removing him from the leadership of the ILWU and from the United States.

Judge Goodman, after listening to fifteen days of testimony, remarked with discernment that,

*“Only a weak yielding to extra-judicial clamor would excuse acceptance of the testimony in this case as proof of the allegations of the complaint.”*

Bridges said simply: “This is a victory for the union and for all the people who stood with us so solidly for so long.”

The words of the Eleventh Biennial Convention of the ILWU, held in April 1955 just prior to the last trial, are an accurate reflection of the union members’ appraisal of the Bridges case:

*“Bridges holds his office because he carries out the program of the rank and file and because under his leadership the members of this union have all advanced forward to a better life for themselves and their families.*

*“The defense of Bridges is a defense of the ILWU. It is a defense of the right of union men and women to run their own lives and their own organizations, elect whom they choose and act as they think is in their own best interests.*

*“And we have no doubt that more and more Americans from all walks of life who have never heard of Bridges or the ILWU will soon be fighting along with us for these same things.”*

An investigation in 1934 and 1935 of Bridges by the District Director of Immigration and Naturalization in San Francisco concluded with a report which said, in part:

*“The investigation of the alien referred to above has failed to show that he is in any manner connected with the Communist Party, or with any radical organization.”*



And the investigation further reported that,

“... whenever any legal ground for the deportation of Bridges has been brought to the attention of the Department of Labor, it has been investigated, but invariably it has been found that he was in the clear, and that his status as an immigrant was entirely regular.”

In February of 1936 the first investigation of Harry Bridges was held in Congressional Committee, during which the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization testified that, although his men had followed Bridges “unremittingly for years,” there was *“no shred of evidence . . . to indicate that he is in any way subject to provisions of the immigration law.”*

A little more than a year later, in 1937, Bridges was the subject of still another investigation which inquired into possible grounds for his deportation. This was conducted by George D. Reilly, then Solicitor of the Department of Labor who, after an exhaustive proceeding, dropped the matter on the grounds that there was no basis for any action.

Despite this, and after Congressional threats of impeachment against Secretary of Labor Perkins for inactivity in regard to Bridges,



*Harry Bridges as chairman of the joint strike committee, 1934.*

a deportation warrant was issued against him in March of 1938. The warrant was amended in order to make it stronger; and in July of the same year eleven weeks of hearings were held during which 7,742 pages of testimony were taken. In December of 1939, Dean James M. Landis, before whom the hearings had been held, handed down his verdict: *"The evidence therefore establishes neither that Harry Bridges is a member of nor affiliated with the Communist Party of America."*

The Landis findings were accepted by the Department of Labor, the deportation warrant was cancelled and the proceedings were dismissed. In June of 1940, the House of Representatives passed the Allen Bill (HR-9766) which specifically commanded the deportation of Harry Bridges. The Bill ordered the Attorney General *"... notwithstanding any other provision of the law"* to take into custody and deport Harry Bridges, *"whose presence in this country the Congress deems hurtful."*

After strong objections by Attorney General Jackson that the bill represented the first time in American history that *"an Act of Congress has singled out a single named individual for deportation,"* the bill died in the Senate. Congress replied, however, with the Hobbs Bill which, as its author declared, *"changes the law so that the Department of Justice should now have little trouble in deporting Harry Bridges and all others of similar ilk."* The bill was clearly ex post facto and, as such, forbidden by the Constitution.

In February of 1941, basing itself on the Hobbs Bill, the government issued a new warrant of deportation. In March of the same year new hearings were held before Presiding Inspector Charles B. Sears, lasting over ten weeks and producing 7,546 additional pages of testimony. In September of 1941 Judge Sears held Bridges deportable on the basis of the testimony of only two witnesses. A four-man Board of Immigration Appeals reviewed the Sears decision, and in January of 1942 unanimously overruled it with the verdict: *"We find that the evidence in this record does not establish that Harry Renton Bridges was at any time a member of or affiliated with any organization proscribed by the statute."*

In May 1942, Attorney General Biddle, in an unprecedented action, overruled his own Board and, without prior notification, ordered Bridges deported. Bridges filed for a hearing before Biddle, which the Attorney General promptly denied. In June 1942, Bridges appealed to Judge Martin Welsh of the District Court. In February 1943, Judge Welsh upheld the Biddle order. In March of the same year, Bridges appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. In June of 1944, the Circuit Court upheld the Biddle order by a vote of three

**Dean James M. Landis as he arrived in San Francisco in December, 1939, as a special trial examiner to hold the first "full dress" hearing on charges against Bridges. He concluded: "The evidence therefore establishes neither that Harry Bridges is a member of or affiliated with the Communist Party of America."**



to two. The court said it was bound by law to so hold, if only some evidence was produced to support the charge.

Judge Healy observed, in the course of rendering a classic dissent in the case:

**"It is notable that the alien, in one fashion or another, has been under almost continuous investigation for a period of more than five years. Prior to and during the course of the second trial the Service has enlisted the powerful cooperation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The country has been**



**The "crime" for which the Department of Justice sought to send Harry Bridges to jail. He took the oath of a citizen in 1945. Administering the oath was Superior Judge Thomas I. Foley of San Francisco.**



*Bridges, Robertson and Schmidt are shown with their attorneys who guided them through their trial, the fourth for Bridges, in Federal Court in 1949. Left to right are: Henry Schmidt, William Cleary, of counsel, J. R. Robertson, Bridges, James Martin MacInnis and Vincent Hallinan. MacInnis and Hallinan by their vigorous defense incurred the wrath of District Judge George B. Harris and drew jail sentences for contempt of court.*

scoured for witnesses, every circumstance of Bridges' active life had been subjected to scrutiny, and presumably no stone left unturned which might conceal evidence of the truth of the charges which the alien so flatly denied. *The most significant feature of the inquiry, as it seems to me, is the paucity of the evidentiary product as contrasted with the magnitude of the effort expended in producing it."*

A petition for rehearing was filed by Bridges, and denied in September. In December of the same year, Bridges appealed to the Supreme Court.

In June of 1945 the Supreme Court overruled the District Court, the Circuit Court and the Attorney General, holding the warrant of deportation to be unlawful. Wrote Justice Frank Murphy: *"Seldom if ever in the history of this nation has there been such a concentrated and relentless crusade to deport an individual because he dared to exercise that freedom which belongs to him as a human being and is guaranteed him by the Constitution."*

On June 23, 1945, Harry Bridges filed for citizenship — something which more than a decade of federal charges had hitherto prevented him from doing. On September 17, 1945, he appeared before a naturalization court with his witnesses, J. R. Robertson and Henry Schmidt, both of them officials of the ILWU, and was admitted to citizenship. In May of 1949 Bridges, Robertson and Schmidt were



*Courtroom scene at opening of the fourth trial of Bridges with co-defendants J. R. Robertson and Henry Schmidt. Seated around the defense table at left are Attorney Vincent Hallinan, Bridges, Attorney James Martin MacInnis, Schmidt and Robertson. At near corner of prosecution table is Special Prosecutor F. Joseph (Jiggs) Donohue. After conviction Donohue successfully persuaded Judge George B. Harris to revoke Bridges' bail and jail him because of his opinion that there should be a cease-fire in Korea and settlement by the United Nations. "There can be no minority opinion on Korea," said Donohue. Bail was reinstituted and Bridges was released twenty-one days later on order of the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Bridges' minority opinion eventually became majority opinion and official U.S. policy.*



indicted on three counts of criminal fraud and conspiracy based on the fact that Bridges, in answer to the usual query as to whether he was or had ever been a member of the Communist Party, replied, "I have not, I do not."

To the contention of the defendants that the matter had already been adjudicated by the highest court, that the indictment clearly placed Bridges within the Constitutional prohibition of double jeopardy, and that the three year statute of limitations rendered a criminal indictment void (three years and eight months having passed since commission of the alleged "fraud") the Government insisted that the case go to trial and the Court agreed. There was an ILWU longshore strike in Hawaii, and U.S. Attorney General Tom Clark clearly stated the purpose of his charges against Bridges: *"If we are successful in our present prosecution of Bridges, it may be that we can break the Hawaiian situation without any other intervention."*

On November 14, 1949, Bridges, Robertson and Schmidt went to trial before Federal Judge George B. Harris in San Francisco. There



*A few minutes after the verdict in the fourth trial in 1950 as reporters and photographers sought pictures and a statement from Bridges.*

ensued a parade of paid government witnesses, ex-convicts and confessed perjurers — the terms are used literally and were established in the trial record out of the mouths of the witnesses themselves — at the conclusion of which the three defendants were found guilty on April 4, 1950. Bridges' citizenship was revoked and he was sentenced to five years in prison. Robertson and Schmidt were sentenced to two years each. Their attorneys were also sentenced to prison on "contempt" charges for their vigorous presentation of the defense case.

Bridges was released on \$25,000 bail pending appeal. On July 31, 1950, the Government demanded that the bail be revoked on the grounds that the Korean crisis had rendered him a menace to public security. Bridges' proposal, made at a union meeting, that the local union of San Francisco go on record for an immediate cease-fire in Korea and the settlement of all outstanding issues through U.N. negotiations was the basis for the government's demand that he be jailed forthwith.

In the course of the bail revocation proceeding, U.S. Prosecutor Donahue, in insisting that Bridges be jailed, emphatically pointed out that,



“... this is the hour at which all men must declare themselves as for us or against us. In this common cause, for which not only Americans are united but in which we are united with our fellow nations in the family of nations, *there can be no minority opinion*, for we are not fighting for mere security; we are fighting for survival.”

Judge Harris obediently complied and Bridges went to jail. The revocation of bail was appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court. On August 25, 1950, the Circuit Court ruled against the government and Bridges was released after twenty-one days of imprisonment. Wrote Judge Healy in the majority opinion: *“But it is one thing to refrain from interference (where public safety is involved) and quite another for the courts to become themselves the tools of the military; and we say now . . . it is the duty of the courts to set their faces like flint against this erosive subversion of the judicial process.”*

The conviction of Bridges, Robertson and Schmidt was appealed to the Circuit Court and the Court sustained Judge Harris. Turning to the Supreme Court, an appeal was argued on May 4, 1953, in Washington, and on June 15, 1953, the Supreme Court announced its verdict: *The verdicts of the District Court and the Circuit Court were overthrown. The sentence was set aside and Bridges' citizenship was restored.* The contention of Bridges' attorneys that the government had no right in law to even institute the proceedings was sustained, although by this time his attorneys had already served their prison terms for having dared to make the contention.

The 1949 trial before Judge Harris in San Francisco actually constituted two actions: (1) a criminal charge of fraud and (2) a civil

*The favorable Supreme Court decision of 1945 opened the way for Bridges to apply for citizenship, which led to the renewed prosecution in 1949.*





# INDICT THESE PERJURERS!



PAUL CROUCH



LAWRENCE SETON ROSS



MANNING JOHNSON

These Witnesses in the Fourth Frameup Trial of Harry Bridges Have Been Proved to be Outright Liars! One of Them Has Confessed It in Open Court. Read How They Swore Bridges Was at a New York Communist Meeting When Documented Records Show Bridges Was in California.♦

## A DEMAND FOR EQUAL JUSTICE

*Front page of a leaflet circulated by the Bridges-Robertson-Schmidt Defense Committee in January 1950 to the amount of half a million. The demand for punishment of these notorious perjurers was ignored by the Department of Justice.*

action to revoke citizenship based upon the alleged fraud charged in the criminal action. The government chose to set aside the civil charge and to go to trial on the criminal one. Upon conviction, Judge Harris revoked Bridges' citizenship, thus accomplishing the government's purpose in instigating the civil action. When the Supreme Court reversed the criminal conviction, citizenship was automatically restored, although the civil action was still technically pending.

In December 1953, the government announced that it intended to push the civil action, and asked that the case be put on the calendar for the fall of 1954. Despite the contention of Bridges' lawyers that this civil action to denaturalize — and then deport — the ILWU leader was illegal, the government's moves were sustained by the court.

On June 20, 1955, Bridges appeared before Judge Goodman for his *fifth* proceeding on the same charge.

The fifth trial was built not only on the standard parade of paid professional witnesses but more especially on a handful of disgruntled ex-union officials. Bitter and vengeful, these men are still trying to settle a score with the rank and file union members who found them inadequate and voted them out of their salaried jobs.

They appeared before Judge Goodman and recited a tale of outside control and direction of the ILWU which had union members up and down the West Coast clamoring for a chance to come into court to tell the truth about the rank and file control of the union and the great achievements won by the organized strength of the members. The truth is the story which is found in these pages.

It was the *Pacific Shipper*, house organ of the West Coast maritime industry, which demanded of the Department of Justice — prior to the last trial — that this time it produce "fresh evidence" and some respectable undercover agents who weren't ex-Communists and ex-union leaders.

After the Bridges victory the disappointed magazine had to announce that:

*"In advance of the trial we called upon the government to introduce some undercover witnesses; it did not do so, because, as we suspect, it did not have them."*

It concluded by calling upon the government to give up and to let Bridges function "as a labor leader for better or worse."

At the conclusion of the Supreme Court's second favorable decision on the Bridges case in 1953, reasonable men might have assumed the case to be closed. In view of Judge Goodman's sweeping decision

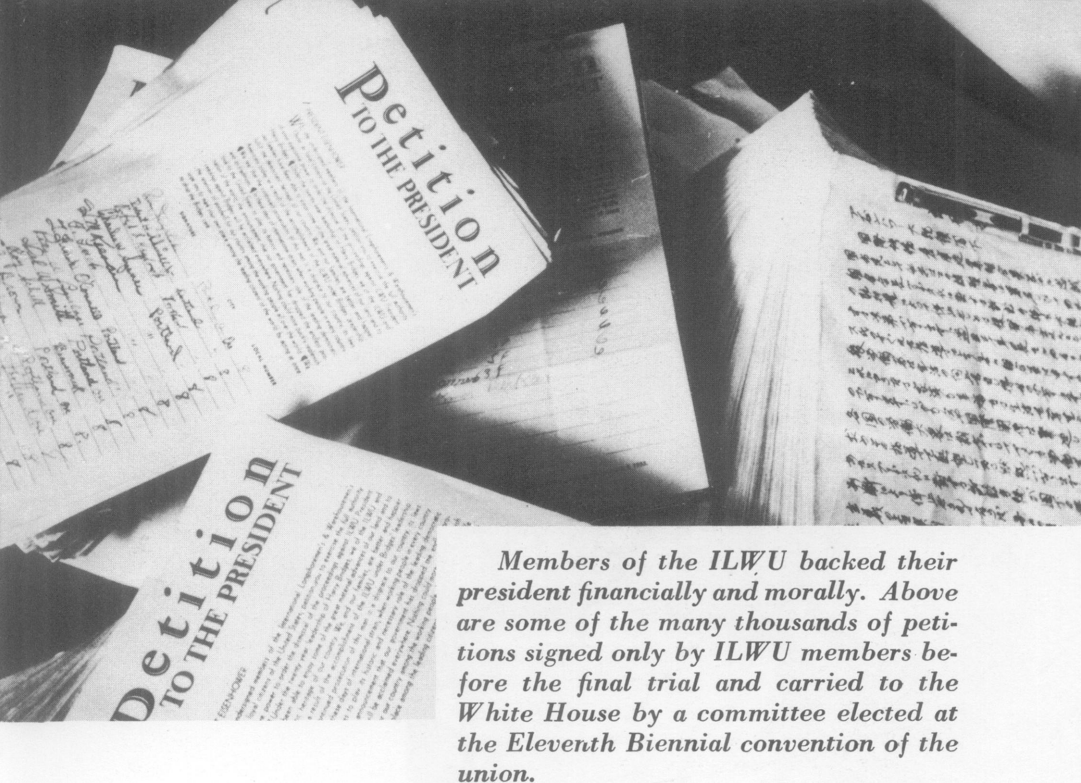
for Bridges in 1955, there can be no basis for ever opening this case again.

For twenty-one years Bridges has been a defendant before the courts. For twenty-one years he has been under the constant surveillance of police, the FBI, and a swarm of private operatives. For twenty-one years he has lived with the knowledge that every telephone call he made was illegally tapped; that the very rooms in which he lived and worked — even hotel rooms when he traveled — were unlawfully wired; that his personal correspondence did not carry the immunity accorded either by law or decency. If the life of any living American is an open book it is the life of Harry Bridges.

He has, additionally, been made the subject of a Congressional investigation and of two pieces of Federal legislation, one of which was enacted into law. He has undergone two deportation hearings and a denaturalization proceeding and twice has been vindicated in other actions before the Supreme Court — all four actions having been based upon the same false charge, i.e., his alleged Communist affiliation. He has been wrongfully convicted, illegally imprisoned, fraudulently stripped of citizenship, and his attorneys have been sent to jail for defending him. No other person in the history of the United States has been so wantonly hounded for so long a time by a government with so little respect for its own laws. Not without reason did Supreme Court Justice Murphy declare at the time of Bridges' first vindication before the highest court that, "*The record in this case will stand forever as a monument to man's intolerance of man.*"

These everlasting proceedings have long since lost whatever legality they might have had — as for morality, this they never had.

The question of why the government has chosen to degrade itself before the whole world in order to destroy Harry Bridges can be answered only by considering the man in relation to the union with which his life's work has been identified. Is it because the ILWU has achieved for longshoremen, as an example, an average yearly wage of \$5200 on the West Coast? Is it because the union brought about rotary dispatching and a hiring hall for the longshoremen to replace the waterfront jungle with its shape-up, kickback, favoritism and discrimination? Is it because the union has established pension programs for its members and medical coverage for them and their families? Is it because accidents and speed-up have been eliminated from the jobs by an efficient shop-steward system for the enforcement of union agreements? Is it because the union's organization in Hawaii has brought about increased economic security, political liberty and a measure of human dignity to the workers there? Is it because the union bases itself on democratic principles which the



*Members of the ILWU backed their president financially and morally. Above are some of the many thousands of petitions signed only by ILWU members before the final trial and carried to the White House by a committee elected at the Eleventh Biennial convention of the union.*

**Federal Government fears to have extended to other unions, or even to its own citizens? Is it because the ILWU banned racial discrimination and segregation twenty years before the United States Supreme Court found the courage to do so?**

**All the legal technicalities and double-talk can't obscure the facts.**

**Millions of working people in the United States and in every other country of the world know of the ILWU and respect it for its ideas and its deeds. They know the kind of democratic rank and file unionism for which Bridges stands and which brought about the achievements of this union.**

**These trials have been more than legal onslaughts against the ILWU as a union. They have aimed to stifle the independent voice of the union and to shackle the rank and file nature of its operation.**

**To silence, restrict and confine this union because of what it is and what it stands for, and to change it into a compliant and conforming body — this has always been the purpose of every Bridges trial.**

**It is a tribute to the members of the ILWU that they have seen this to be so and have preserved their union by defeating the Bridges frameups.**



*Informality in  
the dental clinic in-  
spires confidence.*

## **Welfare and Health**

**S**INCE 1950 THE ILWU has moved into new fields and pioneered in the types of pension and welfare plans it has negotiated. Most ILWU members and their families, particularly where industry-wide bargaining prevails, are now covered by complete health service or health insurance at little or no cost to themselves.

In developing the welfare program the union established a policy of aiming for prevention of illness rather than seeking mere catastrophic insurance. It found this lack of preventive medicine to be a fundamental weakness among leading plans in existence, such as commercial insurance, California Physicians' Service and others. These plans, in many ways, merely benefit the doctors when an individual becomes ill, and the more illness to treat and the more opera-

tions to perform, the more revenue for the doctor. Since the physician receives nothing for preventing illness, there is no inducement for him to develop a preventive program.

The ILWU succeeded in reversing this, particularly where service plans are available. Pre-payments of so much per person are paid to a hospital or group of physicians and the payment is the same regardless of the number of visits, operations or other services. It therefore impels the doctors to catch and arrest diseases and disorders before they become critical and expensive. The less the illness, the more the physicians' profit. And the union members and their dependents benefit by staying well.

In furtherance of this program, the union has promoted and cooperated in multiphasic examinations. Whole groups of members and their families covered by the plan are x-rayed, given heart and blood tests, eye examinations and other study which can reveal disorder or disease in incipient stages. The results are confidential and revealed only to the individual who, when necessary, is referred for proper treatment.

Even insurance companies, which are involved wherever service plans are not available, or where the workers have a choice between an insured or service plan, have taken an interest in the preventive program. Recent multiphasic tests for all ILWU members of several locals residing in or near Stockton, California, found the union, the insurance company and the County Medical Society in enthusiastic cooperation.

And 80 percent of the workers eligible participated in the tests.

Wherever possible the union has negotiated plans to cover the entire family of each individual. In some cases, to achieve this it was necessary to have a partial contribution by the workers.

*Multiphasic health tests are an important feature of the ILWU-PMA welfare plan. Diseases and disorders are detected in the incipient stage and treated. Here a warehouseman has his blood pressure checked.*





***A bonanza of dental care accrues to the six children of longshoreman Joseph Bitz of Portland, Ore.***

Recently, on demand of the union, a pilot dental program to care for the children of West Coast longshoremen from birth to the 15th birthday was inaugurated. For this plan, currently an experiment, the trustees of the ILWU-PMA Welfare Fund appropriated \$750,000 of their surplus. It is the first dental plan of its kind in the United States.

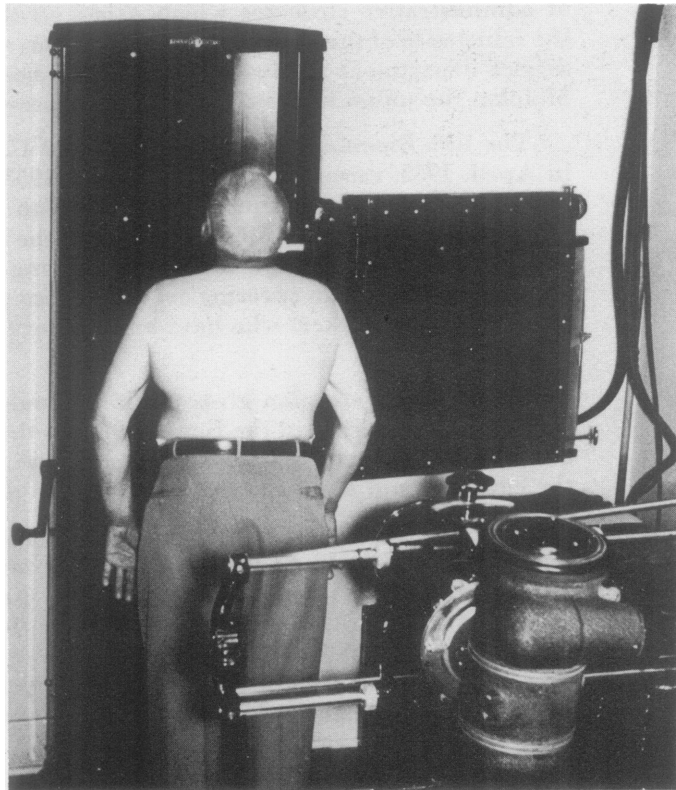
The plan was originally confined to the four major ports, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland and the Los Angeles Harbor area. Workers have for each of their children a choice between an insured and a service plan. The service plan provides unlimited care — excepting for orthodontia, or dentistry purely for appearance — by a group of dentists in California and by any dentists participating in the service plans set up by the Dental Societies in the Northwest. The insured plan allows the patient to go to any dentist belonging to, or

eligible to belong to the Dental Society and pays up to \$75 a year for necessary work for each child in California and up to \$95 in the Northwest where the dental needs are greater. The last negotiations removed the \$750,000 limit on dental program expenses and extended dentistry to all the smaller ports under the longshore agreement.

Sugar workers in Hawaii, since the 1946 strike, have had provision for medical care in their contract. The coverage is the most extensive of all plans, although the quality of medical care varies from plantation to plantation. Workers in the sugar industry have long wanted a form of medical plan which would more clearly define their coverage and also bring added benefits in the way of specialists' care. They have finally secured agreement from the employers to negotiate a formal plan, and initial proposals have been exchanged. Joint union-management committees to assure the quality of medical care have been established.

In the case of Hawaii longshoremen and pineapple workers, they too have moved into the field of insured medical coverage, but again governed by the standards laid down by ILWU. One of the difficulties confronting the union has been the fact that in Hawaii there are no

*Chest x-rays  
guard against tu-  
berculosis.*







*Frequent checkups guard against illness.*

large-scale medical groups which can offer comprehensive prepaid medical care, such as the Kaiser Foundation on the West Coast. Consequently, the union has had to negotiate a type of insured medical plan.

A principal problem in Hawaii, and one on which a great deal of work still needs to be done, is the administration of the medical plans. The union is confronted here with the same paternalistic, company-by-company attitude which it has had to contend with since its formation. Although the employers are forced to concede that centralized administration and careful policing bring added protection and benefits to the workers and their families, they still resist the efficient type of administrative structure which exists on the mainland. Despite the reluctance of the employers, the union has set up a medical claims service department so that the entire membership gets service. On Molokai the union has also set up a pilot pre-paid drug plan.

The 10th Biennial Convention of the ILWU, held in San Francisco in April, 1953, raised as a slogan: "Make 1953 a Warehouse Year!" And only two months later, on June 2, San Francisco Warehouse Local 6 made a first step in transforming the slogan into reality by negotiating a new 3-year contract that, among other things, set up a pre-paid medical plan covering every member and his family, including even casual workers who have never before been covered by such benefits.

The new welfare plan gives the individual a choice of Kaiser or insured plan coverage in the Bay Area, with the right to change from one to the other once a year. The benefits are secured for the life of the contract, and any increased costs will be paid by the employers.

Welfare benefits are also provided for Alaska longshore locals under a Trust Fund. At this time it is the most comprehensive set of benefits of any plan in Alaska. It also provides transportation outside of the Territory, for medical services that cannot be rendered there. The International, by use of the large funds, has been able to assist smaller locals in the purchase of welfare benefits such as the warehouse local in Seattle and cold storage locals in Alaska.

## ILWU PENSION PLANS

**T**HE ILWU MOVED with deliberate care before shaping its demands in the field of pensions.

The pension plans of unions such as auto and steel were looked over and rejected. Nowhere could a completely satisfactory pattern be found. The plan of the United Mine Workers of America came nearest to what the union felt might meet the needs of its members, but even it had outstanding weaknesses from the ILWU point of view. Principal among these were the possible reduction of pensions under certain circumstances (which unhappily has come to pass) and the failure to combine an adequate pension with early retirement.

ILWU had, therefore, to develop its own pension program to meet the needs of its members. The union resolved upon these standards: pension benefits must be in addition to social security benefits; they must be adequate for full retirement; administration must be of the trustee type with the bargaining parties retaining joint control over payments, eligibility and handling of funds; the plan must be non-contributory as a cost of industry operation; efficient adminis-

*A marine view features the ILWU pensioners' club-rooms in San Francisco.*





*Strong men, strong faces —*

tration must be assured; the union must maintain continuing responsibility for the pensioner, including medical care, life insurance and recreational opportunity, and, finally, the union must preserve the pensioners' membership in the union with the right to continue union activity.

This program was completely achieved by ILWU West Coast longshoremen, ships clerks and walking bosses. Under a ten-year agreement pensioners receive \$100 a month, plus social security payments, plus life insurance and plus health care for life for themselves and their dependents. They remain members of the union and are active in the union's councils. Every longshore local on the coast has provided them with special recreation facilities and they are today revered as genuine elder statesmen who made the sacrifices that built the ILWU. They are a credit to the union and the union is a credit to them.

Pensions start at the age 65 after 25 years of service. At age 68 after 25 years of service retirement is mandatory. Pension payments can be increased by the trustees. They cannot be decreased. Should the plan be in danger of going broke, new methods of financing would have to be negotiated. But the plan is far from broke. It has more than \$10 million dollars in reserve, all of it invested in solid bonds yielding high income. And its administration cost is but 0.87 percent of the income of the fund.

The funds come from payment by the employers of 15 cents for every manhour worked by longshoremen, ships clerks and walking



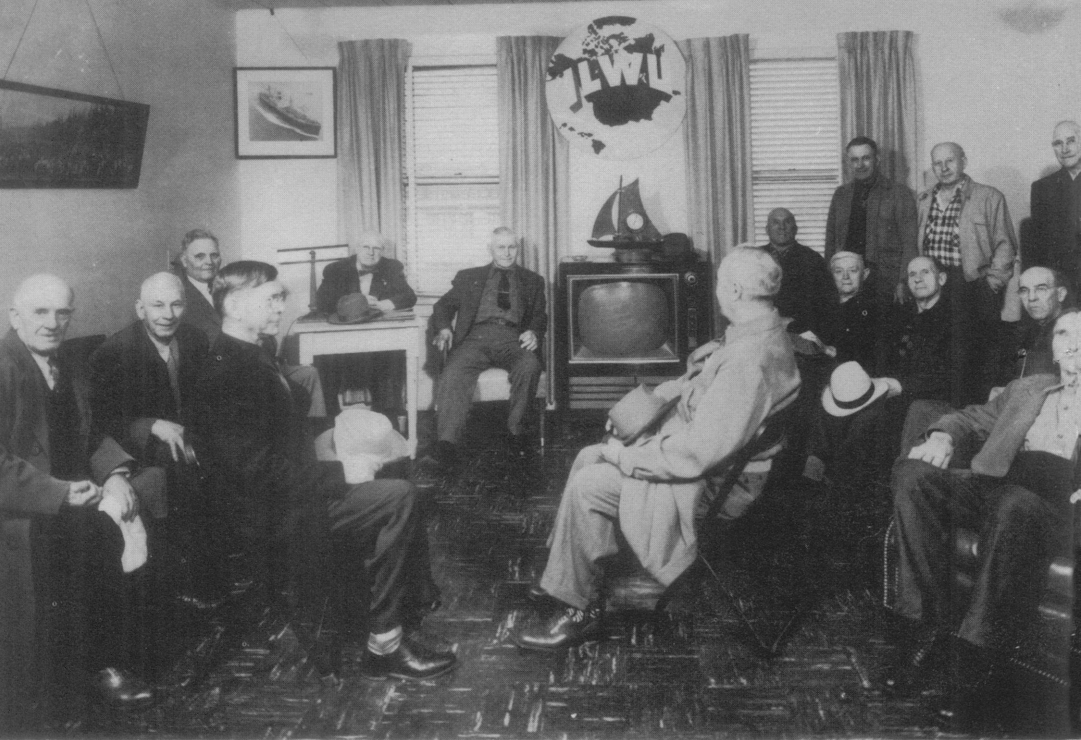
**—ILWU Pensioners.**

bosses. The fact that the life of the pension agreement is ten years has nothing to do with the pension payments. They must go on for the life of the pensioner. What will be negotiated anew at the end of the 10-year period will depend upon the state and strength of the union at that time.

The plan provides for the highest number of retirements of any plan in the country. A total of some 3,760 men are eligible to retire out of a total work force of approximately 15,000 — or 22 percent. Retirements, which began on July 1, 1952, now number 1,411 or nearly 10 percent of the work force.

As against the figures for ILWU and UMW, there is the Auto Workers General Motors Plan, where the total number of retirements was 3,047 out of 278,000 (just over one percent); Chrysler, where 95 retired out of 94,000 (less than one percent); Ford, where 4,430 retired out of 125,000 (between 3 and 4 percent). Or, measure ILWU's plan against the East Coast longshore plan which provides \$50 a month at age 65, and has retired a total of 480 men out of a work force of 36,000 — slightly more than one percent.

No greater tribute can be paid to the union strength of the ILWU up and down the West Coast than that the old-timers were able to stay in the industry because of their union and their hiring hall, long enough to secure their pensions. Without the union they would have long ago been replaced by younger men and would not have been around to benefit from the pensions.



*ILWU pensioners in Portland club room.*

In Hawaii the application of the ILWU's pension principles took another form. Here the problem of longshore pensions was complicated by the special conditions existing on the Islands. The work force is considerably younger and hence the number of men currently eligible is very small. A large section of the membership consists of Filipino workers, some of whom are planning to return to the Philippines at a future date, and therefore require a different pension settlement. Furthermore, the ILWU was not able to overcome the employers' insistence on some form of insured plan, rather than the trusteed fund which the union has found most efficient.

After protracted negotiations over a two-year span, an agreement was reached in the autumn of 1952 for an insured pension-plan which differs from any other in the country.

The plan is non-contributory. The employer pays 14c per straight-time hour and 21c per overtime hour — or somewhat more than on the Pacific Coast. The minimum pension payment is \$75 per month plus social security, payable at age 65 after 25 years' service. Pension payments, however, can go considerably in excess of the \$75 minimum in cases of longer service or higher than average earnings. The monthly pension equals 1 percent of a man's annual earnings for

each year of service. Thus, a worker whose earnings are \$4,000 and who has been in the industry for 30 years would receive \$120 per month.

In the event payments by the employers are not sufficient to meet the minimum requirements for pensions, then the employers are obliged to make up the difference. But if the payments are more than is required to meet minimum requirements, the employers do not get the surplus. It remains in the fund and the parties negotiate as to how it shall be spent for additional pensions. This is in sharp contrast to the usual type of insured plan where the employers secure credits against their premium payments because of favorable mortality, high turnover and other factors. These credits may be so large in the case of contributory plans, where the workers and employers in theory contribute equally, that the actual employer contributions gradually become substantially less than the workers'. In the Hawaii plan ILWU avoided all such insurance and employer gimmicks.

The plan also embodies a disability provision which permits any man declared to be disabled (disability being defined as "not able to continue as a longshoreman," even though able to do other work) to have the option of leaving his money in the fund and receiving it back in the form of a pension at age 65, or of picking up his entire pension reserve immediately in cash. In the event a longshoreman decides to return to the Philippines or to any other country of his choice, he can take with him in cash all monies credited to his account.

Following the lead of Pacific Coast longshoremen, Local 6 of the warehousemen established a terminal workers' pension plan embody-

*A genuine Hawaiian troupe entertains for the annual pensioners' picnic in the Los Angeles area.*

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ing the broad general principles adopted by the International to govern its pension negotiations, although in certain features it differs from both the West Coast and Hawaii longshore pension plans.

Thus, through the industries in which the ILWU has so far set up pension programs the union's approach has been adhered to with variations to meet differing conditions yet withal following an all-over pattern which is unique in collective bargaining today.

## How The Union Operates

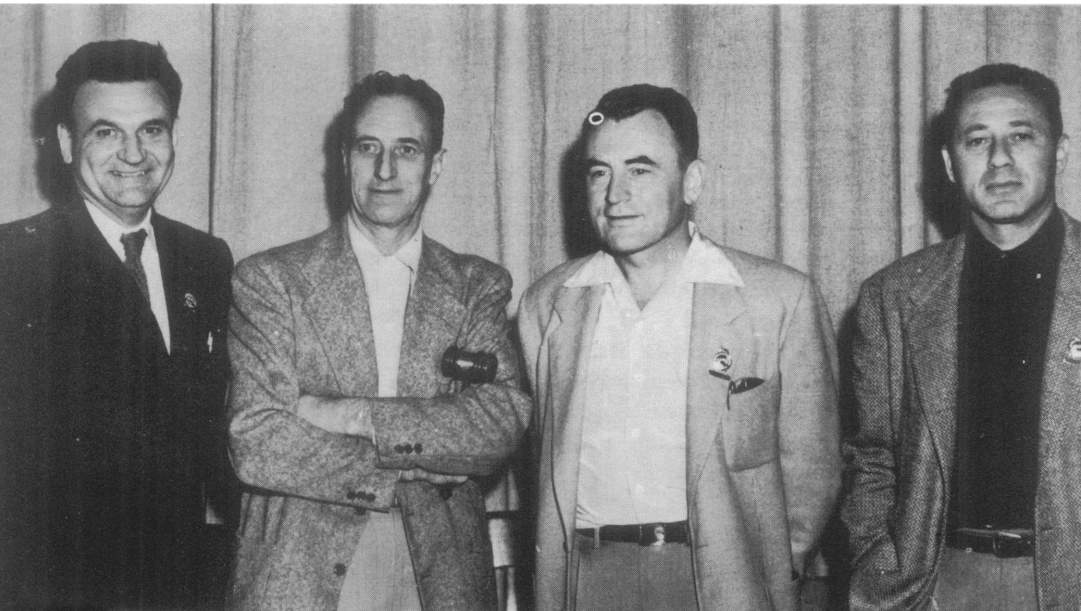
**T**HE ILWU IS A FEDERATION of autonomous local unions. The heart of this affiliation is its voluntary character. It is an affiliation which gives to the membership—and to the membership alone—the right to determine their own destiny, to enter into their own contracts, to vote on all issues, to gather and spend union funds as they see fit.

Every two years the locals elect delegates to a biennial convention and these delegates deliberate and decide upon the international policies. They also nominate the officers and members of the executive board, naming not more than two to run for any one office.

The nominations are submitted to the rank and file in secret referendum ballot along with any constitutional changes which may have been approved by the biennial convention. Members of the executive board, other than the titled officers, are elected from seven different regions.

*Titled officers of the ILWU. J. R. Robertson, first vice president, Harry Bridges, president, Germain Bulcke, second vice president, and Louis Goldblatt, secretary-treasurer.*

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*Coast Labor Relations Committee-men Howard Bodine and L. B. Thomas.*

The present titled officers are Harry Bridges, president; J. R. (Bob) Robertson, first vice-president; Germain Bulcke, second vice-president; and Louis Goldblatt, secretary-treasurer. Bridges and Robertson are each serving their ninth terms, Bulcke his fourth and Goldblatt his sixth. All were unopposed for their present terms.

The present executive board members are Frank M. Andrews of Olympia, Wash., Charles Appel of Seattle, Wash., Charles Ross of Portland, Ore., Charles Becker, Charles (Chili) Duarte and Henry Schmidt of San Francisco, Al Caplan and Gordon Giblin of the Los Angeles area, Newton Miyagi of Honolulu, Regino Colotario of Molokai, T. H., William Wah Yick of Hilo, T. H., Watson Jones of Vancouver, B. C., and Bernard Lucas of Chicago. The titled officers are members of the board by virtue of their office.

The executive board meets quarterly or oftener, if necessary. It acts to implement convention policies, considers appeals where a local or the international constitution may have been violated, and is the supreme body of the union between conventions.

Another official body of the union is elected by the longshore division. This is the Coast Labor Relations Committee which consists of the international president and two other members, one from the Northwest and one from California. These members are nominated by a Coast longshore, ships clerks and walking bosses caucus which meets following the biennial convention and whenever occasion demands, for consideration of contract demands or other matters affecting the waterfront division. The caucus also names the members of the Coast negotiating committee.

The Coast Labor Relations Committee administers the Coast longshore, ships clerks and walking bosses agreements and meets regularly with a counterpart committee from the Pacific Maritime Association which represents the employers. Present members of the Coast Labor Relations Committee are President Bridges, Howard Bodine of Portland and L. B. Thomas of Los Angeles. During their term of office they reside in the headquarters city. In cases of dispute which cannot be resolved by the CLRC, the services of the Coast impartial arbitrator are invoked. There are also area labor relations committees which process disputes wherever possible at the point of production.

***Five newly elected members of the executive board take their oath of office. Board members are elected by referendum and represent regions.***



Any of the officials above named can be suspended from office and tried upon the petition of but 15 percent of that part of the membership which elects them. This is a democratic safety valve against misfeasance and malfeasance that is not to be found in the constitution of any comparable union organization.

The president of the union presides at the convention and at board meetings. He interprets the constitution, directs the activities of the information department and is responsible for all the union's publications, including the union's newspaper, *The Dispatcher*, which constitutionally must be published not less than 26 times a year. The paper is a fortnightly and is delivered by mail to the homes of the members. The first vice-president is director of organization and the four titled officers compose the organizing committee. The secretary-treasurer, in addition to his obvious duties as custodian of the union's funds and property, supervises research and education. The second vice-president assists the president and is also currently coordinating the diverse welfare activities of the union.

The union's research department with its trained economists services both the international and its locals with data for negotiations, arbitrations, etc. It maintains one of the finest and most complete trade union libraries in the country, which is widely used by labor historians and students.

Quarterly financial reports are made in detail after audit by a firm of certified public accountants. The union works with a minimum operating treasury; that is, it does not assess a high per capita in order to build huge reserves. The per capita is only 85 cents per month per member and is set by the convention subject to referendum vote.

Each quarter the executive board approves a budget for administration, organization, the union's newspaper, research and education, publicity and other services and operations.



*How convention delegates line up for their turn to "hit the mike" for debate. ILWU conventions are uniformly "democratic and orderly."*

Locals have complete autonomy in their affairs save for those matters for which the membership has delegated authority to the international union. No one can tell the local unions what policies to vote up or vote down, when to contribute or not to contribute, to donate or not to donate any more than they can be told what contract terms to take or to reject. Of course, local constitutions and by-laws must conform to the democratic pattern of the international constitution and the low limit of \$10 is placed upon initiation fees. Also, no local is permitted to exploit non-member permit workers in its jurisdiction through high fees. In the case of long-shore work, for instance, permit workers pay only a pro-rata share for the union's part of the cost of maintaining the hiring hall. Meanwhile, they get all the trade union protection accorded to members.

All locals maintain a stewards system which keeps the union at all times close to the membership and sensitive to membership will. Stewards meet frequently in council and carry to the job information that enables the members to attend membership meetings prepared to speak out on the most pressing issues and problems.

Coordinating the activities of locals in a given area are ILWU District Councils, made up of elected delegates from the locals of the area. There are presently five such District Councils, in Northern California, Southern California, the Columbia River, British Columbia and Hawaii.

In case of three large locals that are widespread in territory, membership meetings are held on a division basis and principal

policies are made by annual conventions. These are Local 6 of the San Francisco Bay Area, Local 26 of the Los Angeles area and Local 142 of Hawaii.

While such complete reliance upon democratic principles may occasionally slow up negotiations, experience has shown that once a policy has been adopted by the rank and file it carries with it the allegiance, the loyalty and the united fighting spirit of the entire membership. The rank and file of the ILWU is able to act with such solidarity because the rank and file itself has analyzed the problem, debated the solution and voted the final decision.

ILWU rank and file unionism means that the members participate in organization, negotiations, strike machinery, contract enforcement and every other aspect of union life.

Because the contract has value only as it actually applies on the job, the steward system was established to enforce the contract at the point of production. Dock and plant grievance machinery were perfected to keep the union from drifting back to the days of the "walking delegate."

The referendum, particularly on the calling and settlement of strikes, became mandatory.

Stop-work meetings were inaugurated and continuously utilized to insure the rank and file's control of its own affairs.

Compulsory attendance at membership meetings has been established on the ground that the work of the union was every man's job and that each member had to assume his full responsibility for decisions.

*The ILWU Federated Auxiliaries meet biennially in conjunction with the union's conventions.*

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*The ILWU Executive Board in action.*

Limitations were imposed on initiation fees to make certain there would be no drift back to the old line unionism of high initiation fees and excessive authority on the part of officers.

The membership likewise provided machinery for the recall of officers, fixed their salaries by convention and provided other constitutional guarantees against any possible excess or abuse of authority.

The finances of the locals and of the International itself became the direct property of the membership, and still are. Rank and file elected trustees regularly inspect all financial transactions. And the International has no control over the properties, funds or other assets of the local unions; they belong to the respective members.

In contrast with the business unionism so widespread in 1954, which bases its strength upon the size of its treasury, the ILWU has always operated with the barest minimum of funds. This grows from the conviction that the proper place for the financial reserves of the union is in the pockets of the members, to be available when the members deem necessary.

Any policy or program which requires special financing gets it when the members vote to approve the policy. If the members aren't prepared to assess themselves from their own pockets, then there's something wrong with the policy.

The new union formed in 1933, which is today the ILWU, had to work out the ways and means to put these new union principles into effect. The methods were found, and they worked. They sprang directly from two basic facts: complete democracy, enabling the members to control every aspect of the union's life; and self-imposed discipline based upon membership participation in each decision, with consequent understanding of every issue involved. This has since become the hallmark not only of the ILWU but of every other genuine, militantly fighting labor organization.



*Egg-breaking in a food processing plant. This is one of many tasks performed by ILWU warehouse members.*

## **Independence and Autonomy**

**W**HEN THE ILWU LEADERS charged in 1949 that the CIO was bent on taking away the longshore union's autonomy, this claim may not have meant much to the CIO leaders or to newspaper readers of the CIO dispute with the ILWU. But to the rank and file members of the ILWU it was a rallying cry to action. Only someone familiar with the tradition of independence and freedom which has always marked the West Coast longshoremen would have predicted that on this issue they'd never compromise. And they never did.

"Autonomy" means to the ILWU that there isn't any top level dictation of policy or any top level veto. It means that in the last analysis the rank and file members make the decision, and no one else. "Autonomy" has always been the reverse side of the coin whose other face reads "rank and file unionism." The idea goes way back.

The old Riggers and Stevedores Union of San Francisco, when it died in 1919, was the oldest trade union in that port. The organization and its members early developed an independence and a self-confidence in their own ability to solve their union problems, which they never lost. In fact, this undue reliance on their own strength and on taking on alone whatever came along, eventually became the shoal on which the San Francisco dockers union came apart and went down.

But in the early days in San Francisco every man in town was a laborer. And it paid well because if wages and conditions were not up to par a laborer could take to the hills and try to make his stake

in the gold fields. Among the longshoremen this made for high wages, an eight hour day and a confident, successful union.

In the West Coast port cities the longshoremen's unions were founded early, and quickly were acknowledged by both employers and other workers as a rough, tough lot who asked no favors and gave none. By the end of 1901 the longshoremen were loosely affiliated with the AFL's International Longshoremen's Association; but the ties were weak, the distances were great and the unions pretty much ran their affairs their own way.

In the revival of unionism which took place in 1906, the longshoremen of the West Coast reappeared in the garb of independent unions. Their affiliation with the AFL in the East had been permitted to lapse. Most of their fellow workers in the maritime industry were in the AFL, the locals moved to strengthen their bonds with each other on the West Coast. They moved slowly and gingerly; each local was suspicious of the other and none was ready to give up to any federation the power which resided in each local union to carry out its own affairs as it saw fit.

In 1909, at a convention in Portland, an independent federation of Pacific Coast longshore unions was established; the autonomous local unions were not ready to form a close-knit organization. They drew together primarily to fight more effectively against the seamen who were continuing to do longshore work, and whose 1902 contract promised the shipowners that seamen would man any ship regardless of whether the longshoremen who worked her were unionized or not.

It was at the 1910 convention of this federation in San Francisco that the longshoremen decided to reaffiliate with the ILA. T. V. O'Connor, then president of the ILA, appeared at the convention personally to plead for reaffiliation. He was successful in his mission, but only after guaranteeing that the newly-chartered Pacific Coast District of ILA would be completely autonomous in conducting its own affairs.

The locals were autonomous within the District and the District was autonomous within the International union.

Over the years the problem has been how to develop from that local autonomy and the rank and file control a strengthened unity of coastwise action. When local autonomy became so intense as to result in local-by-local strike action and strike settlement, the longshore locals were picked off and destroyed. The Riggers and Stevedores disappeared in 1919 after embarking on just such a "go-it-alone" policy. The other ports followed in order.



*Rigging gear on an ocean liner. Gear riggers board ship in stream and make ready for immediate handling of cargo when ship docks.*

After the years of company unionism in the 'Twenties, an independent longshore union was re-established when the ILA was revived on the West Coast in 1933-34. And the Pacific Coast District in 1934 operated with the same freedom of decision and same self-government that its predecessor organization had insisted upon and won in 1910.

When ILA President Joe Ryan tried to settle the 1934 strike on terms he had personally worked out with the shipowners, he was driven out of San Francisco by the striking longshoremen who made clear that they were capable of running their own affairs their own way. They needed no outsider from New York to make their decisions for them.

The Maritime Federation of the Pacific was the strongest unified grouping of all the West Coast maritime unions in the few years of its life in the Thirties. And within it, each affiliated union had full autonomy, as they did in the post-World War II Committee for Maritime Unity.

In 1937, when the Pacific Coast District of the ILA decided to leave the ILA-AFL and join the CIO, the rank and file secret vote to make this change came about as the result of the efforts of ILA leadership back East to move in on the West Coast unions and force them into line, and only after CIO Director of Organization, John



Brophy, gave specific guarantees to the maritime workers — guarantees of full autonomy within the new CIO federation.

It was around this same issue that the ILWU was expelled from the CIO in 1950. When the national CIO officialdom insisted that major political endorsements, associations with trade unions overseas and policies on current U.S. foreign policy were to be made by national CIO and accepted by all affiliates — including ILWU — the ILWU had had enough.

Phil Murray, then chief of the CIO, never understood what autonomy meant to the ILWU. He lost any chance to hold onto the union when he met face to face with some of its members.

A rank and file delegation from the ILWU talked with Murray during the 1949 CIO convention and tried to iron out the differences between the union and the federation. Bridges insisted that the only issue was the autonomous right of the ILWU members to vote CIO policies up, down or sideways, and, he argued, in the ten years or so of affiliation this right had never been questioned.

Reminded that Bridges' positions on issues in the councils of CIO were nothing more or less than the instructions he received from the ILWU members, Murray snapped, "Then the ILWU membership is wrong."

In the ILWU you can be right or you can be wrong or you can be indifferent. But no one will insist that you fall in line, or else. When the CIO told the ILWU how it was to be — or else — the ILWU left CIO to continue as the independent union it is today.

At the present writing the AFL and CIO have agreed upon the terms of a merger of these two labor organizations.

The ILWU approach to the present merger development is from the point-of-view of the effect it will have on the basic principles of rank and file unionism. These are the principles which have a dual aim — to unify workers and to give them a chance to fight more effectively.

Whether labor unity does in fact grow out of this AFL-CIO merger will be shown by such policies as:

- Organizing the unorganized

- Ending jurisdictional raiding

- Ending all discrimination on grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, political belief or sex

- Removing all restrictions on rank and file control and determination of union policy

ILWU will judge the purpose and efficacy of the merger by the extent to which it reflects the interests and the desires of the rank and file to advance their own welfare.

*Stowing lumber  
in a northwest port.*



## **International Relations**

**T**HE ILWU, PROBABLY more than any other union in the United States, has had close working relations with unions in other parts of the world. There is a simple, trade union reason for this.

The collective bargaining strength of any longshore union is immeasurably strengthened by the assurance that in the event of a strike no scab-loaded vessels will be discharged by fellow dockers overseas. The longshoremen on the West Coast, who have learned that their survival demands coastwise unity among the local unions on the coast, have not hesitated to extend this to include close fraternal bonds with longshoremen in ports throughout the world.

Probably nowhere in the United States were the reports on the London Dockers strike in 1889 read more closely than by the longshoremen on the West Coast. And the lesson — that unity of the maritime crafts and unity of world labor helped bring about victory — was not lost on these longshoremen in the United States.

It was not uncommon during the formative days of the West Coast maritime unions to send and to receive delegates from New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere at critical stages in bargaining or in strikes.

The men responded to calls for help from overseas just as readily as they asked for such help themselves.

In 1919, the Seattle longshoremen, backed up by the Pacific Coast District of the ILA and AFL State Federation of Labor in Washington, refused to handle arms for the Allied Expeditionary Forces fighting in Siberia. Consistent with their trade union policy of the autonomous right of union organizations to run their own affairs, the Seattle longshoremen pointed out that

*“... the settlement of all Russia’s affairs, including her form of government, should be left entirely to the Russian people themselves, without interference from any source.”*

It was this refusal to supply union men to load arms which became the issue around which the employers eventually destroyed the longshore union in Seattle.

The relations with overseas unions took strange twists and turns. During the 1919 longshore strike the dockers in New Zealand and Australia declared all ships from San Francisco black. They made clear that if San Francisco became non-union and open shop, the ships would never be worked “down under.” So, San Francisco in contrast with the other major ports stayed union all through the Twenties. The union, to be sure, was the Blue Book company union, directed and financed by the employers. But a union it was — for the record — and a union port San Francisco remained, to get under the boycott of 1919!

And so again in 1934, when the maritime workers struck, the unions “down under” offered their support and their aid.

In the years since, no matter what its affiliation or non-affiliation with the labor federations in the U.S. — AFL, CIO or Independent — the ILWU has continued to respond to calls for help from workers overseas, and to call upon them when the need arose.

Out of this identity of trade union interests has grown an understanding of workers’ problems and workers’ aspirations in countries all over the face of the globe.

Thus it was not surprising that when the newly-formed World Federation of Trade Unions met in San Francisco, at the time of the founding session of the United Nations, the ILWU was recognized as the host union for the affair — and deservedly so.

In the first major post-war maritime struggle, that of the Committee for Maritime Unity in 1946, these international fraternal bonds paid off well. When President Truman threatened to smash the pro-



*Warehousemen  
at work in whole-  
sale drug house in  
Los Angeles.*

jected maritime strike with Navy-manned vessels and Army long-shoremen, the call for help from the ILWU produced a worldwide wave of union support. Pledges that these scab cargoes and hot ships would rot overseas poured into the CMU. And the great gains of the successful negotiations, without a strike, followed soon after. The support from overseas was the turning point in convincing the employers that they'd lose a strike.

The ILWU sugar workers too have cemented their ties with sugar workers everywhere. And delegates have gone from the ILWU to the Philippines, to Mexico, to Puerto Rico and to Cuba to plan joint action and to pool knowledge and information on how best to advance the interests of sugar workers everywhere. Similarly, sugar union representatives from these areas have journeyed to San Francisco to meet and coordinate activities with the ILWU.

ILWU members know that workers are the same everywhere, and that they all want the same things out of life. These union men need no education in internationalism. They have learned what it means on the docks and on the job.

## ILWU PRINCIPLES

**I**F THERE BE a main key to the solidarity and success of the ILWU as a union, it possibly can be found in the principles and philosophy to which it has unwaveringly adhered over the years. These principles were not concocted overnight by a man or by a group of men. They were developed by and belong to the rank and file. They grew out of bitter experiences and struggles, particularly out of the historic struggle of 1934. They are genuine and sacred in the continuing life of the union and woe be to any officer attempting a departure, for they have become in the union an unwritten Bill of Rights as important as the first ten amendments to the Constitution of the United States:

Briefly stated, they are:

**BANISH DISCRIMINATION.** Workers are indivisible. Discrimination because of race, color, creed, national origin or religious or political belief destroys not only its victims but the union as well. The pitting of worker against worker has always been a weapon of the boss. Hence the ILWU tolerates no discrimination of any kind under any circumstances.

**PRESERVE INTERNAL UNITY.** Any union which seriously sets out to advance the welfare of its members must put aside all internal differences and issues. No union can successfully fulfill its purposes if, after a course of action has been democratically approved, it allows itself to become distracted by issues which cause division in the ranks and undermine the unity which is essential against the invariable solidarity of employer groups.

**HELP ALL OTHERS.** "To help every worker in distress" must guide each action of the union and its members in their day-to-day life. "The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relationship," Abraham Lincoln said, "should be one uniting all working people of all nations and tongues and kindreds." Labor solidarity means just that. Unions must recognize that the solidarity of labor stands even before the so-called sanctity of contracts. Union leaders who, because of a contract, insist that members continue to work behind picket lines are wrecking that very solidarity which is the only security of organized labor.

The solidarity of each union with all other unions is the whole secret of labor's advancement. Any group of workers which tries to put itself above other workers through craft interests or through



*Loading green logs in a Northwest Port.*

temporarily advantageous deals at the expense of its fellow workers will inevitably lose, both for itself and others, far more than it gains.

Jurisdictional warfare and inter-union raiding must be outlawed by labor itself. They not only jeopardize public support; they weaken the entire labor movement as well. No matter how difficult the going, each union must work in every way to insure its unity with all other unions. Not to do so is to betray the interests of the entire labor movement.

The ILWU respects every picket line as rigidly as if it were its own.

**INDUSTRY-WIDE UNITY.** No union can deal with employers one by one. Labor can no more advance through the ancient practice of striking against a single employer in an industry than it can bargain by withholding its skill until an employer sues for peace. The employers are part of a well organized, carefully coordinated fighting machine. Their solidarity against labor is not only industry-wide, it is nation-wide. They can be met on equal terms only through industry-wide bargaining, backed by the utmost economic strength of all organized labor.



*Work in a coffee  
warehouse, San Francisco*

**WORLD UNITY.** Workers are workers the world over. The aspirations of all workers throughout the world are the same and employers throughout the world generally also pursue identical lines. They have established through cartels, trusts, monopolies, trade associations, interlocking ownership arrangements and pooled resources in international banking houses a worldwide organization of ruthless efficiency. Clearly the workers must counter with their own worldwide unity. International solidarity among workers — and particularly among maritime workers — is essential for their own protection, and as a guarantee of reserve economic power in times of strife.

**ORGANIZE THE UNORGANIZED.** Wages, like water, invariably flow to the lowest level wherever a considerable portion of workers are still unorganized. The day of craft unions — the aristocrats of labor — ended with the mass production of goods. To organize the unorganized must be the aim of any union worth the name; to do so is not only in the interest of the unorganized, but of the organized as well.

**SEEK MORE THAN PORK CHOPS.** A new type of unionism is demanded which does not limit its perspectives and demands to higher wages alone. Conditions of work, security of employment and adequate provisions for the workers and their families in time of need are of equal, if not greater importance than a high hourly wage.

**HOLD RANK AND FILE LEADERSHIP.** A union is built on its members. The strength, understanding and unity of the membership alone can determine the union's course and its achievements.



**The men and women who work, who make up the union and support it with their dues can best determine their own destiny. If the facts and alternatives of policy are made known to the members themselves, they will always be the best judge of what should be done and how it should be accomplished; not the officers, not the employers, not the politicians, not the fair-weather “friends of labor”—but the workers themselves.**

**Control of the ILWU has always been and remains today in the hands of the rank and file. Issues are debated into clarity and agreement. Decisions are made and policies are agreed upon by the same men and women who carry them out — the ILWU members.**

**This has resulted in a union membership which is not only strong, united and proud, but which has absolute faith in the ability of common people like themselves to handle any problem which comes along.**

**Everything the members have built they have built on the structure of rank and filism. Every strength the union has today flows from this source.**

**Democracy, autonomy, unity, the ability to fight and the unfettered responsibility of the rank and file to make policy and to carry it out — these explain the ILWU. And these are the specific features of the union which must be preserved and extended into every union in America.**



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