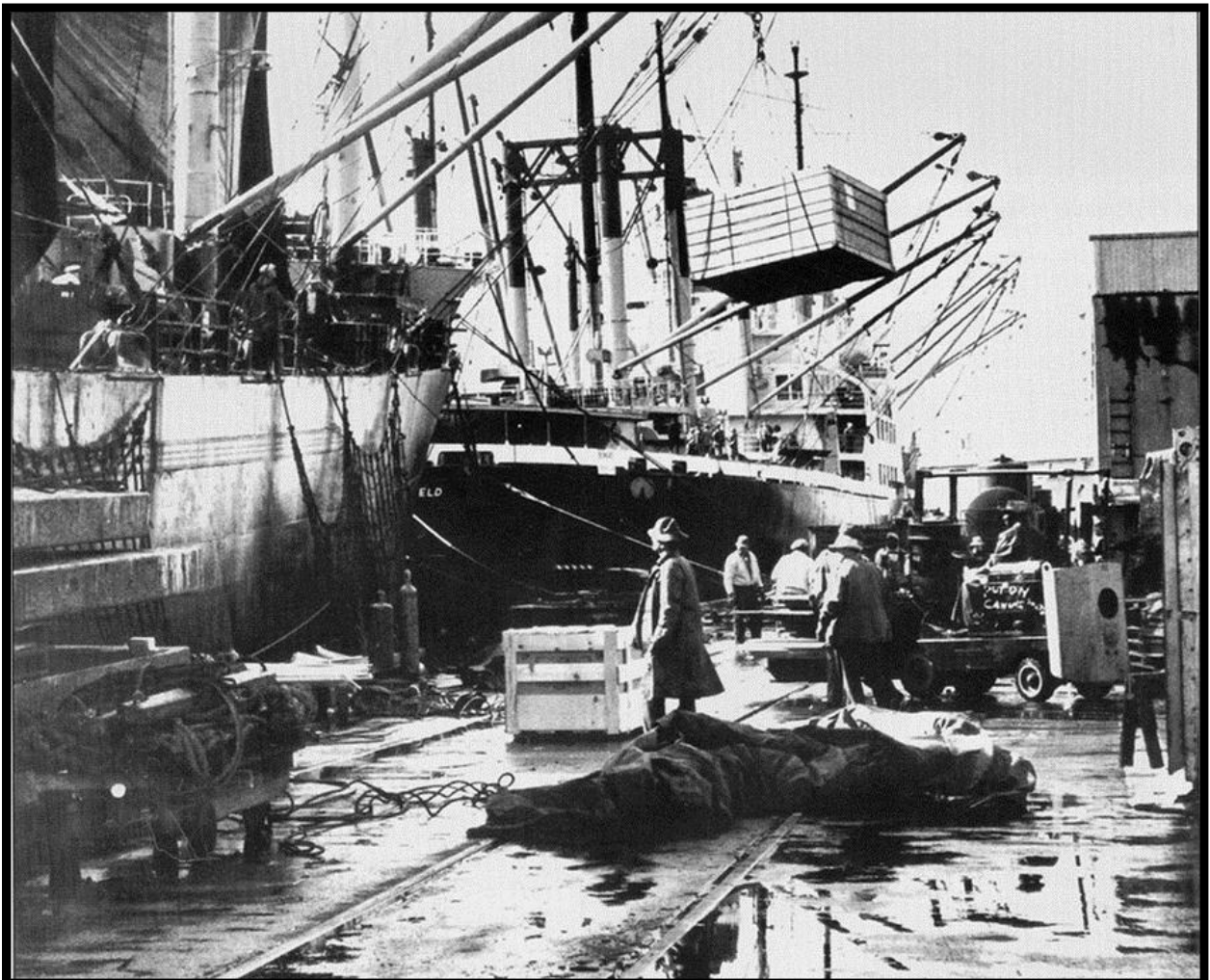


The Global Social Factory & Supply Chains

Challenges to Capital and Changing Class Composition

MODULE ONE READER



The Bay Area Public School
2012

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The Global Social Factory & Supply Chains

READING LIST

MODULE ONE

Challenges to Capital and Changing Class Composition

- Read chapter “California Labor: Total Engagement,” in *California: The Great Exception* (1949) by Carey McWilliams about near-general strikes on the San Francisco waterfront in 1886, 1893, 1901, and 1916 (setting the stage for the waterfront general strike in 1934), pp. 127 – 149
- Read excerpts from *Men and Machines: A Story about Longshoring on the West Coast Waterfront* (1963) jointly produced by ILWU and PMA to announce the Mechanization and Modernization Agreement of 1960.
- Read “Effects of Automation in the Lives of Longshoremen,” in *Singlejack Solidarity* (1983) by Stan Weir, pp. 91 – 106

MODULE TWO

Neoliberalism and the Rise of Cargo Containers

- Read chapter titled "The Rise and Limits of Lean Production," in *Workers in a Lean World* (1997) by Kim Moody for background on Toyota-ism and the use of networks of subcontractors in manufacturing, pp. 85-113
- Read excerpts from *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005) by David Harvey for political, economic and ideological changes that wrought neoliberal globalization
- Read excerpts from *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger* (2006) by Marc Levinson
- Watch *The Box that Changed Britain* (2010), 58-minute documentary history of intermodal cargo containers and changes in transport industry

MODULE THREE

Global Supply Chains the Logistics Revolution

- Read “Logistics – The Factory Without Walls” (2006) in *Mute Magazine*, by Brian Ashton (<http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/factory-without-walls>; see also <http://www.labournet.net/docks2/0703/logistics1.htm>)

- Read excerpts from *Wal-Mart: The Face of 21st Century Capitalism* (2006) edited by Nelson Lichtenstein
- Read “Pulling the Plug: Labor and the Global Supply Chain” (2007) in *New Labor Forum* by Edna Bonacich
- Review maps and charts in “The Cargo Chain: Workers Who Make Our Economy” (2008), produced by a collaboration of The Center for Urban Pedagogy, *Labor Notes*, and The Longshore Workers’ Coalition (<http://welcometocup.org/cargochain.pdf>)
- Watch *Is Wal-Mart Good for America?* on PBS’ Frontline (can be viewed online: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/walmart/view/>)

MODULE FOUR

Internationalist Class Struggle Across Borders and Oceans

- Read “On the Front Lines of the World Class Struggle: The Cargo Chain” (March, 2010), *CounterPunch* by JoAnn Wypijewski (<http://lwcjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/counterpunch-on-cargo-chain-march-2010.pdf>)
- Read “Offshoring US Transportation Jobs to Mexico – The Looming Deadline” in *Monthly Review*, (2006) Volume 57, Issue 09 (February) by Richard Vogel (http://combatingglobalization.com/articles/Offshoring_US_Transportation_Jobs_to_Mexico-The_Looming_Deadline.html)
- Read “North American Free Trade Zones (FTZs): Undermining US and Canadian Transportation Workers” from a LaborFest presentation on July 19, 2009 at ILWU Local 6 Hall in San Francisco (http://combatingglobalization.com/articles/north_american_free_trade_zones.html)
- Read “Logistics and Opposition” (August 2011) in *Mute Magazine*, Vol. 3 No. 2 by Alberto Toscano (<http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/logistics-and-opposition>)
- Read “Supply Chains in Capitalism Today: From Foxconn to Wal-Mart – From Longview to FamilyMart” (2012: work-in-progress) by Will Barnes and Gifford Hartman
- Read “Eight Days in May” (2004) Daniel Borgström's account of the 8-day wildcat action at the Port of Oakland's APL gate in 2004 (<http://danielborgstrom.blogspot.com/2004/05/for-8-days-in-may-truckers-closed-port.html>)
- Watch *Race to the Bottom* (2008) 20-minute documentary about *troqueros* working the Port of Oakland

MODULE FIVE

Web of Food Supply Chains

Multimedia presentation:

BREAD RIOTS Along Global Supply Chains: From Cairo to Longview

The world's most bountiful wheat harvest ever was in 2008 yet bread riots broke out in 33 countries, adding in that year another 250 million to those without enough to eat everyday — pushing the world's "food insecure" to over 1 billion. Food as a percentage of total household consumption costs has reached 73% in Nigeria, 63% in Nigeria and 61% in the Ukraine. Bread riots in Egypt were preceded by the April 6, 2008 general strike of textile workers, who demanded higher wages to cope with wheat prices that had risen 130% (rice also went up 74%).

Egypt is the world's leading wheat importer; the U.S. is the world's top wheat exporter.

The Goldman Sachs Commodity Index of 18 foodstuffs was created in 1991 to allow speculators to invest in financialized futures on ingredients like hard red spring wheat, the world's most popular high-protein ingredient in bread. After the 2008 food bubble collapsed, 200 million bushels of wheat were sold for animal feed while hundreds of millions went hungry. As Asian countries become more affluent, they eat less rice and more meat and bread. EGT Corporation in Longview, Washington has built a rapid just-in-time grain delivery system to allow speculators to move wheat, corn and other grains for food and animal feed down global supply chains to growing markets in Asia. Japan is the world's #1 corn importer; the U.S. is the #1 exporter. EGT is doing what Wal-Mart does, but in reverse. Multinational food giants like EGT monopolize commodities from the farms of North America to food consumers across the planet. This multimedia presentation of recent struggles will be followed by an open discussion of ways we can contribute to the decommodification of not only food, but our lives and society as well.

- Read "The Food Bubble: How Wall Street starved millions and got away with it" by Frederick Kaufman (<http://frederickkaufman.typepad.com/files/the-food-bubble-pdf.pdf>)

- Read "It's the Baladi, Stupid" by Wendell Steavenson (<http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/wendell-steavenson-egypt-cairo/>)

- Further readings to-be-decided

- Watch *Revolution Through Arab Eyes: The Factory* (<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/revolutionthrougharabeyes/2012/01/201213013135991429.html>)

All of this is tentative. This would be done on a seminar model where participants could alter, add, delete, or modify any of the materials and topics as needed. Another proposed activity is physically following the supply chains to-and-from the ports, while ideally interviewing as many supply chain workers as possible.

CALIFORNIA LABOR: TOTAL ENGAGEMENT

THE CALIFORNIA labor movement has long occupied an altogether exceptional niche in the history of American labor. San Francisco, it has been said, is one of the best laboratories in the nation for the study of industrial relations. Developments have taken place here in a fortnight of history that in other cities have been spread over several decades. The California labor movement, to a degree that is not generally appreciated, has had an important influence on national labor trends. San Francisco was the first major seaport in the world to be thoroughly organized, and it was in this port that the first permanent sailors' union was formed. As the labor capital of the West, San Francisco sent organizers throughout the entire region west of the Rockies and furnished the funds which were used in many western organizing drives. It has been the *total engagement* of labor in California that has, from the beginning, given the California labor movement its distinctive character. The labor struggle in the state has not been partial and limited but total and indivisible; all of labor pitted against all of capital. From time to time, in fact, at fairly regular intervals, California has been convulsed by violent labor struggles. The repetition of this pattern of violence indicates the existence of underlying dynamics of a most exceptional nature. It is the purpose of this chapter, first, to point out the respects in which the California labor movement is exceptional; and, second, to give an account of the how and the why of these deviations.

"NO AFFINITY WITH BONDAGE"

The most striking characteristic of the labor movement in California is its deep-rooted and indigenous character. Unions are as old as the state itself. "One is tempted to believe," wrote Lucille Eaves, "that the craftsmen met each other on the way to California and agreed to unite." The mining camps were, in effect, embryo unions which regulated working conditions and prevented unfair competition. The first strike in California took place in the winter of 1849 when the carpenters and joiners of San Francisco struck in support of a wage demand for \$16 a day (the prevailing rate was \$10). Within a week, the strike was settled on the basis of a compromise of \$13 a day which was shortly upped to \$14. Sailors first struck in the new seaport of San Francisco in 1850, and the shore workers began to organize in 1853. San Francisco had strong unions before the eastern labor leaders were even aware of the fact that a labor movement existed in this remote outpost of the American frontier. Not only did unions spring into existence overnight -they were born with the founding of San Francisco-but these unions remained local, unaffiliated groups until as late as 1886. No one organized San Francisco; it organized itself.

There seemed to be something in the air, in the social atmosphere of San Francisco, that prompted workingmen to organize. Historians have noted, for example, that the sailors of the port of San Francisco were always "more articulate" than sailors in other American ports. When a slave-owner tried to return Archy Lee, a young Negro, to Mississippi in 1853, the miners of the state, with one voice, prevented the removal of the former slave. Andrew Furuseth, a great California labor leader, once said that the "sea has no affinity with bondage" and so one might say that California has no affinity with any form of bondage. For there has always been some special elixir about California that has prompted men to assert their rights.

From the beginning, also, labor has always been politically orientated in California. A mechanic's lien law was passed in 1850 and a ten hour day statute was enacted in 1853. As early as the 1860's California labor was showing an active interest in politics. In 1877 the

Workingmen's Party elected numerous local and state officials; exerted a dominant influence in the adoption of a new state constitution in 1879; and, for a few years, made political history in California. The rise of this new political party represents, as William M. Camp has observed, "the nearest thing to a workers' revolution the West has ever seen." For the first time labor had played a dominant role in the political affairs of a western state. Later, at the turn of the century, the Union Labor Party dominated San Francisco politics for a decade. This early political involvement of labor in California is merely one of many manifestations of the "total engagement" of labor. In no other state has labor been so continuously involved in political action, and from such an early date.

Closely related to this characteristic is the fact, noted by Camp, that "vehement radicalism has marked almost every stage of the growth of the labor movement in San Francisco." Elsewhere radicalism was a late growth in the labor movement; in California it was born, so to speak, with the labor movement. In the 1880's the International Workingmen's Association, a Socialist organization, played a key role in the labor movement; in the period from 1905 to 1920 the Industrial Workers of the World played a similar role; and, in the period from 1920 to 1940, a somewhat similar role was played by the Communist Party. One should note, also, the role which the Socialist Party played in the development of the labor movement in Los Angeles which, for a decade or more, had one of the strongest municipal socialist movements of any American city. This more or less indigenous radicalism which has always gone hand-in-hand with the labor movement is still another indication of the "total engagement" of labor in California.

Another characteristic of the labor movement in the state is to be found in the early and continuous emphasis on joint action. The first central trades assembly was formed in San Francisco in 1863; the first statewide federation of labor in 1867; and the first effort to unite the waterfront unions took place in 1886. The tendency of labor to federate in California has paralleled a similar tendency on the part of employers to unite. Some of the first employer organizations in the nation were formed in San Francisco, and as early as 1888, one finds unions being pitted against employers as a group. Industry-wide collective bargaining, in fact, had its genesis in California. The history of labor relations in California, as the La Follette Committee discovered, is essentially a history of the struggle between "associations of employers" and "federations of unions." "To a greater degree than this Committee has found elsewhere," reads the report, "associations of employers in California have played a leading role in fixing labor policies, and have been able to impose their influence upon the social and economic structure of the state." In short, the history of labor in California is really not a history of the struggle of unions to achieve recognition but of a struggle for power between organized labor and organized capital. From the outset, both sides have been fully engaged, totally committed. The nature of this engagement accounts for the periodic convulsions in the state's social history in which periods of intense conflict have alternated with periods when labor's resentment smoldered beneath an apparently tranquil surface. Both the scale and bitterness of the labor struggle in California are most remarkable when one realizes that California did not become a major industrial center until well after the turn of the century.

A final characteristic of the labor movement in California is to be found in the fact that, at various periods, labor has spoken for large masses of people in the state who were not functionally a part of the labor movement. For many years, the California labor movement also included within its ranks a large petty bourgeois element. In fact it has only been of recent years that industrial workers, as such, have come to be the mainstay of the labor movement. Obviously special influences have shaped the labor movement in the state; otherwise it would be difficult to account for the paradox of a strong labor movement in a non-industrial state.

This brief specification will suffice to make the point that there has always been "something peculiar" and different about the labor movement in California. As with other aspects of the state, the key to an understanding of California's peculiar labor dynamics is to be discovered by concentrating attention upon the exceptional qualities of the state itself, the things that make it different.

"THE MAGIC SCEPTER"

That a strong labor movement should have arisen in early-day San Francisco is in part to be explained by the key location of the city. Here was a centrally located harbor on a coast where, as Miss Eaves points out, "the mountains crowd close to the oceanside and where but few indentations permit a safe entrance for commerce." Until the completion of the transcontinental railroad, San Francisco was the key point of entrance and exit from the state. With the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers entering into the bay, San Francisco was in a position to control the commerce between the outside world and the gold camps. It was to San Francisco that the rich came to spend their money; that the unemployed came in search of new opportunities; that the discouraged came to seek exit from the state. This city assumed a political power comparable to its social and economic power. Over a period of many years, control of San Francisco, more particularly control of the waterfront, was tantamount to control of the entire state. The unique geographical position which San Francisco occupied in relation to the rest of the state, and to the entire West, gave labor its great opportunity in California.

What invested the centrally located position of San Francisco with such extraordinary significance, however, was the discovery of gold. Gold, in relation to labor, was indeed "the magic scepter." For reasons already pointed out, the California mining frontier was unlike other mining frontiers because of the extraordinary democracy of opportunity which prevailed. "Nowhere in the world," writes Miss Eaves, "has there been a more favorable economic environment, nor more freedom for social and political experiments than in California." It is significant that the first labor legislation adopted in the state was an ordinance of 1847 aimed at preventing the desertion of ships by sailors. Men simply could not be kept at jobs other than mining. "Desertion," in fact, was the major labor problem—desertion from ships, mills, farms, stores, foundries. "In the days of '48 and '49," writes Dr. Ira Cross, "the employer as such was virtually unknown." The shortage of labor and the wealth of economic opportunities which existed created an extraordinary, and never fully recaptured, opportunity for labor. The circumstances suggested organization. No precedents were needed; no external stimulus was required.

Social factors, born of the same situation, re-enforced the economic factors. "Every man was a laborer," writes Dr. Cross, "whether or not he had previously been a teacher, lawyer, mechanic, preacher or sailor. Physical labor was honorable. Class lines and class distinctions were forgotten, and a universal spirit of rough democracy prevailed. This wholehearted democratic spirit of the mining days permeated virtually every phase of early California life." To illustrate the universality of this spirit of labor, suffice it to say, that in a strike of thirty carpenters in 1849 it was discovered that three of the strikers were preachers, two lawyers, three physicians, six bookkeepers, two blacksmiths, and one was a shoemaker. Long after the gold rush had vanished, the tradition of high wages, of the honor and dignity of labor, continued to create a congenial social milieu for trade union activity. Over a period of many years, as Miss Eaves has noted, "the workmen as a rule had the sympathy of the public."

The geographic isolation of California also strengthened labor's position. In the crucial decades prior to the completion of the Central Pacific, it was quite impossible to recruit strikebreakers, or to flood the labor market with new recruits. Distance threw a protective tariff, so to speak, about the local labor market. No picket line could have been more effective than the distance which separated San Francisco from the centers of population. When the bakers of the city struck in 1863, the employers had to send to Hamburg for strikebreakers and by the time they arrived the strike had been settled. Not only did workers have a magnificent opportunity to organize but they had the ability to enforce their demands. The factor of distance operated in still another way for it invested the local unions with an almost complete freedom of action. Even if the San Francisco unions had been affiliated with national organizations, it would have been quite impossible for the parent union to have imposed its discipline upon them. "So isolated was the city itself from Eastern centers of labor," writes Camp, "that the strongest point in favor of solid labor unionism was its independence." Hence the strong tradition of local autonomy which has long prevailed in the labor movement in California. By and large, local autonomy makes for strong unions that stand on their own feet and fight their own battles.

Labor's opportunity in California was, of course, capital's special disability. From the outset employer groups felt compelled to experiment with strong-arm tactics in order to offset the advantage which labor possessed. The tradition which sanctions the use of extra-legal tactics by employer groups is almost as old as the labor movement in California. The difficulty which shipowners faced in maintaining crews accounts for the fact that San Francisco was the first major port to permit unrestricted crimping, i.e., the procurement of sailors by decoy, fraud, and violence. In fact the word "shanghai" originated in San Francisco. Crimping was sanctioned from the earliest time by both the ship-owners and the municipal authorities. The system existed for so long that it came to be regarded as part of the business of shipping itself and no more to be questioned than one would question the accuracy of a nautical chart.

Since capital was for so many years at a distinct disadvantage in its dealings with labor, a tradition of violent tactics arose which, of course, had an enormously stimulating effect on labor organization. Each side was driven to take strong measures against the other: labor to exploit its extraordinary opportunity; capital to cope with an exceptionally powerful labor movement. It is this peculiar relation between labor and capital which Camp had in mind when he wrote that "just as San Francisco was the first major port to permit unrestricted crimping, so also was San Francisco to become the first airtight 'labor town.'" The tradition of strong-arm employer tactics also accounts for the vehement radicalism which has gone hand-in-hand with labor organization in California. The "direct action" of the Wobblies was the counterpart of the "direct action" of the employer groups.

The wonderful opportunity which labor possessed during the gold rush period was not, moreover, something that once existed and then was lost; to a considerable extent it has continued to exist. San Francisco was not only the first boom town in the West but the one town that continued to boom. Although the bonanza days soon passed, nevertheless the rapidity with which California continued to grow created a most favorable economic environment for labor organization. Not only was the growth of the state phenomenal, but it recovered more rapidly than other areas from periods of depression. In a study of business cycles in California, Dr. Frank L. Kidner has found that "there is an apparent tendency for economic activity in California to recover from a business depression more rapidly and more fully than is true of the United States as a whole." In the booms which invariably followed the periods of depression, labor possessed marked advantages in relation to capital and it never hesitated to exploit these advantages. This recuperative power, the ability to bounce back quickly from depressions, reflected the continued

migration of population to California and the fact that the state remained a land of new and expanding business opportunities. It has been this phenomenon of "quick recovery" which explains the fact that trade unionism has flourished in California during periods when labor in other sections of the country has been caught in the backwash of the economic cycle. Boom times, as organizers know, are good times to organize and the history of California is a history of booms.

Another secret of labor's power in California consists in the selective force of migration. A large part of the skilled labor force of San Francisco was made up of foreign-born workers who brought a knowledge of trade-union organization to California. For example, there were unions of German-speaking cigar-makers, brewers, bakers, and cabinet-makers. The Sailors' Union, which served as a training school for trade unionists in San Francisco, was largely made up of men who were natives of Sweden, Norway, and Finland. Between 1889 and 1903, 13,796 men left this organization to enter other occupations; half of them were natives of these three countries. "In a society where all were strangers," writes Miss Eaves, "the possession of a common trade would furnish the most natural and promptly recognized bond of union." And this bond, of course, was strongest where it happened to be identical with the bond of a similar language and cultural background.

The selective force of migration, however, operated in still another way. The presence of a large number of Chinese restricted to undesirable jobs had the effect of discouraging the migration of unskilled workers. The fact that the types of jobs most difficult to organize fell to the Chinese made it all the more easy to organize the skilled trades. Ordinarily the existence of a large pool of unskilled labor operates as a threat to the standards which labor seeks to establish in the skilled trades; but, in this case, the unskilled were racially distinguishable and were under a great handicap by reason of the language barrier and other factors. It was extremely difficult, therefore, to recruit apprentices from this group, a fact which served to invest the skilled trades with a special degree of protection. The absence from the labor market, also, of women and children tended to protect the standards which organized labor had established.

Still another factor underlying labor's exceptional opportunity in California is to be found, as Miss Eaves noted, "in an entire absence of that conservatism that comes with the more gradual accumulation of wealth." California has always been a rich state and richness makes poverty anachronistic. The quickness with which fortunes were amassed had bred in California a remarkable fondness for luxury which was ostentatiously exhibited. America has surely produced few millionaires who were less inhibited than the millionaires of early San Francisco. The circumstance that everyone knew that much of this wealth had been won by sheer luck created a disposition to demand a cut, to insist on high wages. Once the tradition of high wages was established, the ex-miners were psychologically unprepared and unwilling to accept a return to "normal" wage rates. As one historian has pointed out, they insisted "on the wages to which they had become accustomed." At this point the recurrence of booms becomes an important factor. Experienced Californians know that the state's booms do not last forever and that they must be quickly exploited. Hence every boom has touched off a hot labor-capital conflict.

Lastly it should be noted that the rise of San Francisco to world importance as a seaport occurred during the most formative years of the world labor movement. The year 1848 is of crucial importance in the history of European and American labor, and 1848 is the natal year for California.

THE ECONOMICS OF EXTREMISM

Labor unions in California have been compelled by the nature of the economy of the state to federate, to seek alliances, and to found assemblies. The second largest state in the union, California is a highly developed economic area. All forms of economic activity are embraced within its borders. Its high level of cash farm income; the value of its mineral and forest products; its fisheries and oil fields; its canning and processing industries-these and other factors have served to make it an economic empire in itself. Since it is not one thing economically, but many things, labor has been compelled to reach out, to expand the area of organization, and to consolidate its gains. The labor market is as large, as interrelated and as interdependent as the state's economic activities. In such an economic area, nothing less than complete organization can possibly safeguard the interests of labor.

In California, also, agriculture has a unique relation to industry which arises from the dependence of agriculture on the export market and the accompanying reliance upon the processing, handling, and transportation industries. The very nature of many California crops brings a host of industries into close and intimate relation with agriculture. In 1948, some 6,352 trucks were used in transporting produce from the Imperial Valley alone, which suggests the reliance of agriculture upon transportation. In fact, it is often difficult to classify a particular industry in the state as being primarily "agricultural" or "industrial." The type of labor used in many agricultural operations shades off imperceptibly into the type of labor used in the handling and processing industries. The interdependence of so many industries has naturally encouraged labor to achieve, if possible, total organization. For many years the economic life of the state has been dominated by two urban centers, San Francisco and Los Angeles, and the existence of these two competing centers has tended to divide the state into two major economic areas. The fact that large agricultural and tributary areas have been so highly dependent upon two major urban areas has given the urban areas an enormous power to influence labor relations in their respective hinterlands. The determination of labor policies in these two urban areas has affected labor policies throughout their respective regions; conversely, control of labor policies in the tributary areas is vital to control of labor policies in the urban centers. If the two major urban centers had not been highly competitive, each might have been able to ignore or to tolerate conditions in the hinterland areas which were inconsistent with or tended to undermine urban labor policies; but they have never been able to afford this tolerance.

The rivalry between the two centers, moreover, has always been accentuated by the fact that San Francisco was vitally dependent upon its port; whereas Los Angeles was late in developing a manmade port. The close relation between the Port of San Francisco and California agriculture can be shown by reference to the principal commodities which were exported through the port in 1938. Agricultural products totaled \$75,744,046; other extractive products, such as wood, bulk oil, etc., totaled \$44,276,415; and other products \$19,599,524. So far as the economic activity of the northern and central portion of the state is concerned, the Port of San Francisco is the bottleneck. On more than one occasion, therefore, control of the San Francisco waterfront has carried with it, as a rich prize, indirect control over a large part of the economy of the state. Just as the waterfront has been the scene of innumerable labor struggles, so San Francisco labor subsidized the fight to organize Los Angeles, for to the extent that commerce and industry shifted to Los Angeles the advantage of waterfront control was weakened. Labor had to expand, therefore, in order to protect what it had achieved.

A large part of the California labor market has always been seasonal in character. Employment expands and contracts in the canning, processing, and handling industries as it

expands and contracts in agriculture. The casual nature of waterfront employment invests it with some of the characteristics of a seasonal labor market. Faced with this situation, unions have been compelled to extend their control over the entire labor market; in fact the fight to control the *supply* of labor has been, perhaps, more important than the struggle to raise wages or to improve working conditions. For precisely the same reason, employers have strenuously resisted every attempt by labor to control the entire labor market. With seasonal employment being of such crucial interest, it is extremely important, from the employer's point of view, that the labor market should be kept unorganized and fluid. Seasonal industries in California cannot tolerate any interruption in work schedules. Peaches must be picked at a certain time; they must be processed on schedule; and they must be shipped on time to reach distant markets.

In short, the nature of the state's economy has always catapulted labor and capital into an intense struggle for control of the labor market. Since the labor market is as diverse as the products produced, both sides have sought to gain strength by combination. They have reached out, also, for allies and have constantly sought to enlist the public on their side. It has been the compulsion to reach out and control *related* lines of economic activity that accounts for the continued emphasis which the California labor movement has always placed on such weapons as the secondary boycott, the sympathetic strike, and "hot cargo" tactics. To keep the Chinese relegated to the unskilled trades, California labor made the first extensive use of the boycott in this country. The union label, which has long since become part of labor's arsenal of weapons, was first used in California. These various weapons, the boycott, the union label, the refusal to handle "hot cargo" and so forth, have been of great importance in a state whose economy was so interrelated and interdependent as that of California's.

The same compulsions have driven both labor and capital in California to achieve, in their respective fields, total integration. "Labor unions and employee groups," reads the report of the La Follette Committee, "have been driven to cooperate with one another to a greater degree, perhaps, than in any other section of the nation." The same, of course, is true of the employer groups. The Ship Owners' Protective Association of the Pacific Coast, formed in San Francisco in 1886, was the first association among employers to be formed in this country for the exclusive purpose of dealing with labor. Not only was industry quick to use the collective approach to labor problems in California, but employer associations are almost as old as the trade union movement itself. California has always had a pattern of organized anti-unionism. Industrial employers in the state have been more solidly arrayed, as a class, against labor than in any other state. To such an extent has this been true that, with the formation of the Board of Manufacturers and Employers in San Francisco in 1893, the day of the independent, isolated businessman in labor relations was gone. From 1900 to 1940, the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association in Los Angeles coerced the small industrialist and businessman into following the labor policies which its directors had decided upon. In no respect is this control-by-association more strikingly illustrated than in the "license system" which the Industrial Association of San Francisco used to wreck the building trades unions in 1921. Under this system, every contractor had to agree in writing to operate an open shop before the material dealers would furnish him with materials and supplies. Confronted with this type of united opposition, unions have been compelled to resort to extraordinary tactics in order to survive.

LABOR'S CURIOUS DUCKLINGS

The major paradox about the labor movement in California consists in the fact that a powerful labor movement should ever have arisen in a state which, prior to 1900, was largely nonindustrial. Yet by 1900 San Francisco was recognized as not only the most tightly organized city in America but as the stronghold of trade unionism in the United States. Obviously the labor movement in California must have included elements which are not ordinarily thought of as part of labor. In California there were three such elements: the small shopkeeping element; a large section of the rural population; and a sizable element of what today would be called "white collar" workers. How was it that these elements became allies and, in some cases, integral parts of the labor movement?

The answer is to be found in Camp's statement that the fear of Chinese competition in California "brought about the rise of such a great wave of emotional class consciousness that it swept obscure opportunists into public office." But it did more than sweep opportunists into office; it drove thousands of shopowners, farmers, and clerical workers into the camp of organized labor. If the gold rush had not brought a tidal wave of white settlers to California, it is altogether possible that the whites might have formed a tightly knit plantation-like economy based on the use of Chinese labor; but the whites were too numerous in relation to the Chinese to form a ruling clique. The alternative was to organize and thereby force the Chinese into the undesirable positions. A better alternative, of course, would have been to organize the Chinese also, but the language and cultural barriers were too great to make this a feasible alternative. It was, in any case, the threat of competition from Asiatic labor that made for solidarity and invested labor in California with a political power far stronger than it has ever possessed in any other state.

The potency of anti-Chinese agitation as "an emotional class consciousness" consisted in the fact that it tended to fuse with class lines. At an early date, J. Ross Browne reported that he could find "among the influential and respectable class" little antagonism to the Chinese. "The objections against them," he said, "are purely of a local and political character and come from the lower classes of Irish." By and large, the upper classes consistently favored unrestricted immigration; the lower classes as consistently opposed it. By utilizing this unity of feeling against the Chinese, labor was able to build the most powerful alliances. Nor was anti-Oriental agitation a passing phase in California politics; in various phases it persisted for seventy years or longer. It goes without saying, of course, that this movement had some extremely ugly implications; but it was certainly the force that held labor together.

After 1900 anti-Japanese agitation was used for the same purpose as anti-Chinese agitation had been used over a period of thirty years, i.e. to build a powerful labor movement. From 1900 to 1910 a union charter in California was, in some respects, primarily significant as an authorization to engage in anti-Japanese agitation. The Japanese represented a more potent threat to the lower middle class and middle class than the Chinese for they demonstrated a remarkable ability to move up into the self-employed and farm-owner category. The threat of this competition, real or imagined, drove thousands of people into labor's ranks not only in the cities but in the small towns and rural areas. After 1900, as one labor journal put it, the unions experienced a "Pentecost breeze." In fact it is doubtful if any state ever felt the ardor for organization that then prevailed in California. All sorts of occupations and callings were organized and charters were "signed for and hung in meeting houses until they covered the four walls." But, as this same labor journal pointed out, "very few of these unions were trade unions. . . . The labor council gathered under its wings a most varied collection of eggs and

hatched some curious ducklings and labeled them trade unions." As one reads through lists of unions formed during this period one notices butchers, barbers, bakers, picture frame makers, cloak-makers, tailors, milk wagon drivers, art glass blowers, blacksmiths, and many similar occupations which usually fall into the "little business" category.

Ordinarily there is no more inveterate if misguided opponent of organized labor than the small shopkeeper. It is the history of small shopkeepers that they are usually more capitalistic than the capitalists. They are also notoriously chauvinistic; in fact it was their tendency toward chauvinism that brought them into the California labor movement in droves. Many of these elements, of course, were never thoroughly integrated with the labor movement and they began to drop out as the anti-Oriental agitation passed out of the control of the labor leaders. These were the elements that kept some of California's most corrupt "labor" politicians in power for many years, thereby bringing great discredit to the labor movement.

Regardless of the price that labor ultimately paid for its espousal of the anti-Oriental movement, there can be little doubt that this movement, from an opportunistic point of view, paid great dividends to labor. In 1911, 39 out of 49 labor measures placed before the state legislature were adopted and a similar record was made in 1913 and 1915, with the result, as Dr. Cross has pointed out, "that California took a prominent place among states interested in conserving the welfare of the working class"—that is, the non-Oriental working class.

THE PATTERN OF VIOLENCE

Since labor was totally engaged with capital from the earliest date, it is not surprising that the history of labor in California should be a history of labor's strenuous and often violent thrusts for power, and of the equally violent counter-repression invoked by capital. It has been this periodic outbreak of class warfare on a large scale which has been so largely responsible for the continued political instability of the state. Even in those periods in which labor has held the upper hand, fear of the expected and inevitable counter-attack from the organized anti-union forces has driven labor to seek still further power. "Cease fire" orders have been given from time to time but until the federal government began to intervene in labor relations there was no real peace between capital and labor.

Without going into the full details, it can be said that there have been four major labor-capital battles in California. The first, which occurred in the period from 1886 to 1893, had its genesis in a determined effort on the part of the employers to break the power of the unions. In 1886 there had been a serious waterfront strike, which is generally taken to mark the beginning of San Francisco's famous waterfront warfare, and an important strike by the brewery workers. In both cases, the contest had quickly developed into a fight between groups of unions and groups of employers. The employers were particularly disturbed by the formation in 1891 of the Coast Seamen's Union, a truly remarkable labor organization and the first stable organization of its kind to be formed in the world. Embracing the entire Pacific Coast, the union was centrally directed from San Francisco with agents in every west coast port. Wherever the coasting sailor went, into whatever port, his membership card was recognized and he enjoyed the same protection as every other sailor in that port.

There had also occurred, in 1890, a bitter fight between the Iron Trades Council, a federation of metal workers, and an employer organization known as the Engineers' and Foundrymen's Association. In each case, an issue had been fought out between a group of unions on the one hand and a particular employers' association on the other. The employers, therefore, decided to form an all-inclusive employers group—the Board of Manufacturers and Employers formed in

1891—and to break up, if possible, the combinations of unions that had developed. This particular struggle culminated in a second waterfront strike in 1893 which labor lost largely because the explosion of a bomb on Christmas Day in front of a non-union boarding house, killing eight men and wounding many others, alienated public support. As a consequence of this defeat, the unions of San Francisco were, for the time being, largely destroyed or at least demoralized to the point where little unity or strength remained. This first battle, therefore, resulted in an unqualified victory for capital.

But, by the turn of the century, California was again booming. The Spanish-American War, the annexation of Hawaii, the gold rush to Alaska, and other factors stimulated a flurry of industrial activity in the state. Both sides, of course, immediately began to prepare for a resumption of the earlier battle. In this case the unions took the offensive since they feared that the employers were plotting another systematic campaign against them. In a great organizing campaign the number of union members was doubled in a year. The State Federation of Labor was formed in 1901, and the City Front Federation, a loosely knit federation representing some 13,000 waterfront workers, came into being the same year. The employers promptly formed an all-inclusive employers' group, the Employers Council, and proceeded to raise a war chest of \$250,000 which was precisely the amount the City Front Federation had in its treasury. The second great struggle began on July 30, 1901, when the waterfront workers struck, but the situation quickly developed into a tangle of sympathetic strikes as the two great contending forces moved into action. For three months the harbor was crippled. In the course of this strike, 5 men were killed and 300 assaults were reported. The violence was so great that both sides seem to have exhausted themselves and a mutual cessation of hostilities was finally negotiated without either side having won a clear-cut victory. In effect, however, the unions won this round because they emerged from the battle stronger than when they had entered it. "There is a kind of fighting which makes the enemy stronger," reported Ray Stannard Baker at the time, "and that was the method of the San Francisco Employers' Association. It was an example of how not to combat unionism." A few weeks after the strike was called off, the Union Labor Party won a smashing political victory in San Francisco and remained in undisputed control of the city administration for a decade. In the wake of this strike, in fact, San Francisco emerged as the first "closed shop" city in America.

The third great battle developed shortly after the outbreak of the first World War. The war, of course, immediately brought about a sharp increase in the volume of cargo moving through the port and both sides promptly squared away for another slugging match. In 1916 the longshoremen went on strike, bottling up some \$2,500,000 in exports. As in the prior struggle, the farming and business interests of the hinterland demanded that the San Francisco employers' group should break the strike. The murder of a striking longshoreman on June 21 seemed, for a few days, to tip the scales of public opinion in favor of the unions. But, while the strike was still on, the tragic Preparedness Day bombing took place (on July 22nd) in which some 10 people were killed and 40 seriously injured. Out of this fateful event, of course, came the infamous frame-up of Tom Mooney. The bombing threw the weight of public opinion against the unions, the strike was lost, and, at the height of the excitement, the city adopted an antipicketing ordinance by a vote of 73,993 to 68,570.

Following its earlier victory in 1901, organized labor in San Francisco had decided that the time had come to organize Los Angeles, "the open shop citadel of America." Just how important this organizing drive was, in terms of protecting the closed shop in San Francisco, can be shown by the fact that in 1900 San Francisco had 66 per cent of the total organized trade union membership of the state by comparison with 6 per cent in Los Angeles. In 1910, 65 per cent of

the trade union strength was in San Francisco and only 8 per cent in Los Angeles. Viewing open shop Los Angeles as a threat to everything it had achieved in San Francisco, the labor movement proceeded to raise nearly \$500,000 for an organizing campaign. There the trouble started on May 19, 1910, with a strike of brewery workers, followed by a strike of metal workers and of Mexican workers on the street railway. To break these strikes, the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association drafted an anti-picketing ordinance which is known in the labor histories as the model for all the anti-picketing laws and ordinances in the country.

Within a few weeks after the adoption of this ordinance on July 16, 1910, over 470 workers had been arrested; but, almost as fast as they were arrested, Los Angeles juries acquitted them. This particular struggle culminated in the dynamiting of the Los Angeles *Times* on October 1st, 1910, in which 21 men lost their lives. This dreadful explosion, and the plea of guilty which the McNamara brothers entered a year later, set the cause of labor back for at least two decades in Los Angeles. Previously uncompromising in their anti-union attitude, the open shop employers of Los Angeles used this event in a most spectacular and devastating manner to swing community sentiment to their narrow purposes. What the dynamiting of the *Times* was to Los Angeles, the Preparedness Day bombing was to San Francisco: both events symbolized a crushing defeat for the labor movement.

All this while, however, there was another "labor movement" in California spearheaded by an outlaw, revolutionary organization, the Industrial Workers of the World. There was only one delegate from California at the meeting in Chicago on June 27, 1905, at which the I.W.W. was formed but, by 1910, the wobblies had 11 locals in the state and nearly a thousand members. It was Local No. 66, which Frank Little had organized at Fresno, that launched the first of the famous wobbly free speech fights in California. The campaign opened with an outdoor meeting on October 16, 1910 at which Frank Little, one of the speakers, was arrested and given a jail sentence by a jury which he contemptuously referred to as "composed of Bourgeois cockroaches and real estate grafters." In subsequent meetings, first 10, then 15, then 25, and 50 people were arrested and, finally, lawless elements in the community burned the wobbly headquarters. Fire hoses were used by irate police in an unsuccessful effort to keep the arrested wobblies from singing in jail. The campaign was finally settled, six months later, by the appointment of a mediation committee and at least a partial vindication of the right of free speech was secured.

The wobblies, of course, were quite free of the chauvinism which prevailed in the California labor movement at this time. They repeatedly attacked the "yellow peril" agitation and sought, without too much success, to organize Mexican field workers and other minority groups. Although many of the labor leaders of California of this period were of foreign birth, most of the wobbly leaders, ironically, were Old Americans with names like Dunn, Ryan, Olson, Sherman, and Eaton. The wobblies had real influence with the casual and seasonal workers of California, notably the waterfront workers, the lumberjacks, and the field and cannery workers. Their informal organization, the tactic of organizing on the job, the use of quick strikes, and the roving and migratory nature of the organization itself, made the wobblies effective pioneers in the effort to organize seasonal and casual workers.

Following the Fresno free speech fight, San Diego adopted on January 8, 1912 an ordinance limiting the right of free speech. The wobblies promptly moved in and launched a sensational fight to have the ordinance revoked. Although they had not more than 50 members in San Diego, it has been estimated that nearly 5,000 people took part in this campaign. Michael Hoy, a wobbly, was kicked to death in jail and another member, Joe Mikolash, was shot and killed. When jailings failed to break the spirit of the wobblies, a vigilante mob aided by the police rounded up several hundred men, made them "run the gauntlet," beat them with clubs and fire hoses, and

drove them out of town. The issue reached such a pitch of excitement that Governor Hiram Johnson sent Harris Weinstock to San Diego to make an official report and investigation. In part because of this excellent, clear-headed report, the wobbly campaign was finally successful and the right of free speech was vindicated.

The wobbly campaign in California came to a climax with the famous Wheatland "hop pickers" riot of August 3, 1913, in which four people were killed.

Some 2,800 hop pickers, representing a wide diversity of nationalities, had been recruited by ads for work on a ranch owned by one of the largest employers of farm labor in the state. The pickers included a large number of women and children. On arriving at the ranch, the pickers found that the wage rates varied from day to day, depending on the number of pickers on hand, and that the "bonus"-which was advertised-was actually a "hold-back" forfeited if the worker left the job. Widely distributed, the ads had brought in about 1,000 more pickers than were needed. Average daily earnings were found to be about 90¢ or \$1. The conditions at the camp may be indicated by the fact that 8 small toilets had been built to accommodate 2,800 people and that there were no separate toilets for women. The riot was touched off when law enforcement officials attempted to break up a protest meeting which a group of wobblies had called on the ranch.

To the wobbly movement, the Wheatland Riot had much the same significance that the Preparedness Day bombing and the dynamiting of the Times had for the labor movement; the three events, in fact, were part of a much larger pattern of violence in industrial relations. The Wheatland Riot is of great historic importance for it marked the beginning, in a sense, of intense labor strife in California agriculture. There had been earlier incidents, of course, but this case focused national attention for the first time on the miserable plight of seasonal field workers in California. Out of this incident came the prosecution of Richard Ford and Herman Suhr, both of whom were convicted in one of the most famous "labor trials" in the state's history. Along with Tom Mooney, J. J. McNamara, and J. B. McNamara, "Blackie" Ford and Herman Suhr acquired legendary fame as "labor martyrs." In the context of this chapter, the Wheatland affair is of importance for two reasons: it marked the extension to agriculture of the pattern of "total engagement" which had long characterized labor relations in California; and it emphasized, once again, the manner in which repressive employer tactics consistently precipitated radical protests.

In a broad historical sense, the third chapter of labor violence in California came to its climax with the adoption on April 30, 1919, of the Criminal Syndicalism Law. Although Idaho has the unenviable distinction of having adopted the first statute of this kind, the California act received the most notoriety because it was more widely enforced than any similar legislation. Criminal syndicalism acts in the other states soon became "dead letter" statutes but the California act was systematically enforced. In a five-year period following its adoption, 504 persons were arrested, bail was usually set at \$15,000, and 264 of those arrested were actually tried. At least 34 cases, arising under this act, went to the appellate courts. Of those arrested, 164 were convicted and 128 of these were sentenced to San Quentin Prison for terms which ranged from one to 14 years. The emphasis given the enforcement of this act in California is not surprising for its adoption represented the culmination of seventy years of intense anti-union activity on the part of employer groups. It was, in effect, the logical end-product of the "total engagement" between capital and labor in California.

The fourth "engagement" took place in the 1930's and involved, first, a recrudescence of the waterfront warfare which had become more or less endemic in San Francisco, and, second, a series of great strikes in agriculture. Between January 1, 1933, and June 1, 1939, approximately 180 agricultural strikes were reported in California; farm labor strikes were reported, in fact, in

34 of the 58 counties of the state. All in all, some 89,276 workers took part in these strikes for which no parallel of any kind can be found in the history of American labor. Civil and criminal disturbances were reported in 65 of the strikes, with hundreds of arrests, 14 "violent" strikes, several deaths, and considerable property damage. The ferment of these years reached its climax with the "general strike" in San Francisco, July 16th to 19th, 1934, which was called to protest the killing of two waterfront workers on "Bloody Thursday," July 5th. Although the general strike collapsed, the waterfront workers won a great victory which was followed up, one year later, with the formation of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific. As much as anything else, perhaps, it was this upsurge in labor activity, following the suppressions of the period from 1910 to 1924, that brought about the election of Governor Culbert L. Olson in 1938 whose first official act was the issuance of a pardon for Tom Mooney. The fourth round, in short, was won by labor and, with the adoption of the National Labor Relations Act in 1936, the labor movement achieved a new maturity and succeeded, at long last, in breaking the power of the employer organizations and in organizing "open shop" Los Angeles.

This greatly abbreviated statement of the pattern of attack and counter-attack should indicate the all-out character of the labor struggle in California. The unevenness of this struggle, with first labor and then capital, achieving the upper hand, largely accounts for the marked political instability of California. With the enactment of federal legislation assuring labor's right to organize and safeguarding the principle of collective bargaining, some of this political instability has disappeared and there has been a noticeable leveling-off of the sharp peaks and valleys of industrial conflict. But the end is not yet in sight if only for the reason that the processes which have finally brought a measure of peace to industry have still not been applied in agriculture. For California suffers from an ancient, malignant, and festering cancer-its notorious farm labor problem-which it is the purpose of the next chapter to describe.

From Carey McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception* (Santa Barbara, CA: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1976 [original 1949]), 127-149.

Effects of Automation in the Lives of Longshoremen

In the late 1950s the longshore industry began to experience its first major technological change in almost a century, or since the introduction of steam-driven cargo hoisting machinery onto the decks of ships. The decade following World War II saw the development of large containers in which freight could be hauled by trucks as trailers or on railroad flatcars, "piggyback." Maritime shipping was left as the one obstacle to a totally integrated freight transport system.

By 1975, more than two-thirds of all dry cargoes moving across the docks of the major American ports were containerized in metal boxes, 40x8x8 feet in length, height, and width. Ships of traditional design whose double bottoms and sweat battens once felt the burdens of sacked coffee, spices, sugar, and various cartoned goods and absorbed their smells became unusual sights at long-used piers. More common were new or remodeled ships whose holds are slotted exactly to receive and nest the rectangular, locked, sealed, clean, and odorless containers.

The automation of the cargo shipment process continues apace. The ships of newest design do not require the presence of longshoremen on their docks or in their holds. The interlocking containers are stowed or discharged by giant shoreside cranes with automatic hook on and hook release devices. Not only is it increasingly rare for one longshoreman to touch the same piece of sweated cargo touched by another longshoreman somewhere in the world, longshoremen of different ports and countries are seldom anymore allowed to sense each other's presence. The old ships which carried break-bulk cargoes provided hold and dock longshore men around the world with physically identical work environments. The workplaces traveled the globe and were the same. What changed in each ship as it went from port to port was the cargo and the nationality of the men who worked on it. As each longshore gang boarded a ship and uncovered the hatches, they found each other's city and union newspapers, cargo hand hooks lost or left behind, and evidences of secret feasts made possible by edible or imbibable articles in the cargo. This very special form of international communication is becoming extinct. More and more, longshoremen work exclusively on the dock in the shadow of the ships, but not inside them.

The movement of traditional break-bulk cargoes demanded that longshoremen form partnerships. Most cargoes came in sacks, boxes, cartons, bales, or barrels which were too heavy to be lifted by an individual. Then too, the stowage of each piece within a vessel or its discharge from its place of rest within the vessel onto a sling, board, or net regularly presented one or more logistical problems. Improper stowage could cause shifting at sea and consequent unseaworthiness of the ship. Incorrect stacking of loads could cause cargo damage and serious accidents. The problems were best solved by consultation and the critical double checks allowed by the partner system. Moreover, a partner provided another set of eyes for the detection of a dangerous condition in an industry where the number of accidents is second only to those in hard coal mining.

The longshore partnership was and still is (when and wherever it survives) a total social institution. Partners not only move cargo together and communicate their moves, the casual nature of the industry demands that they seek job assignments together, an activity made easier if both live near one another. Counting the time spent traveling to the union hiring hall to obtain a job assignment, the waiting, the trip to the pier, work, lunchtime, coffee-time, and the trip back to the hiring hall to sign in for the next day's or night's work, longshore partners in large number were commonly within each other's reach for twelve hours a day. Longshore partnerships are in a

way respected by longshoremen at least as much as marriage partnerships. Laugh, argue, "bruise and heal quick." Personality flaws are overlooked in order to retain the mergers because "there's no one any better than him when it comes to work." Having a steady partner builds at least one "known" into the work in an industry where the ships and piers being worked, like the cargoes and bosses, change daily.

"How long you two guys been working together now?" was (until the 1970s) an often-asked question. The pride contained in the answer was seldom feigned. There was no need for hardened artificiality. Also, the partners were free to separate at any time, and there was no physical property to be divided at the time of the split. In West Coast ports prior to the late 1960s when job opportunity was still equalized by union decree, there would never be an occasion for separated partners to compete against one another for jobs. Separations were usually friendly. When the post-separation question came—"Hey, why did you split up with your partner?"—the answer almost always sustained old loyalties.

As break-bulk cargo has come to provide a minority of jobs, the partnerships that remain have changed radically in character. They are utilized whenever possible on days when the old style work is available, but the operation of the large pieces of capital equipment that move containers provides solitary jobs. Diminished work opportunity has demanded that many obtain a second job which places them away from the waterfront several days a week and out of easy communication with members of the "old" occupation.

The 1934 longshore strike in all West Coast and Hawaiian ports which peaked with the San Francisco General Strike provided participants with what William Pilcher calls a "social charter."¹ Just as the War of Independence remained for so long the common emotional linkage for American citizens, Pilcher explains, the 1934 victory became the social glue of the Pacific longshore community. During the following twenty-five years, these men would live the largest, longest, and most successful formal experiment in workers' control ever conducted in the United States. By defeating the employers, they won the right to control the process of job assignment in what (in name) was a "jointly operated employer-union dispatch hall" in each port. But the union longshoremen won the right to elect all job dispatchers in a democratic annual election. With that power they had de facto control over recruitment to the industry, in itself an institution that will warrant mention again here later. By 1939 every longshoreman in each port had to be ordered and dispatched from a single central dispatch hall. The stevedoring companies were thus denied the right to hire steady men or gangs. Favoritism, the most insidious of weapons and the practice creating the deepest resentment, became a minor, rather than a major problem. Many longshoremen hold that the elimination of steady men and "preferred longshore gangs" (gangs that did not have to participate in the work opportunity equalization process) was the biggest single victory obtained in the battles of the '30s.

"The 1934 Award" to longshoremen by the Franklin Roosevelt administration, which ended the strike, also provided the men of the West Coast longshoremen's union with a number of on-the-job controls. By both formal negotiation and direct on-the-job action, the union men established firm manning scales and definite gang sizes for all cargoes.² Protection against employer retaliation for on-the-job militancy was established by eliminating the employers' right to fire members of a longshore gang as individuals. To fire a particular man, a walking boss had to fire the entire gang of which the man was a member. The fired gang was then regularly dispatched to another (or even the same) ship on the following day without penalty, unless or until the stevedoring company in question filed formal charges against the gang. In the latter event, the gang could continue to work for that company without penalty until found guilty. The

gang then stood trial, first before a union grievance committee. Only if found guilty there did it have to stand trial before a joint employer-union labor relations committee.

Additionally, out of the 1934 award the union established a hatch seniority system on each ship while it was in port. If, for example, a gang was assigned to number three hatch as work began on a ship newly arrived in port, the work in that hatch belonged to that gang during the ship's entire stay in port. Thus, if the gang incurred the wrath of a walking boss, the boss was unable to victimize its members by moving them to another hatch containing less tonnage (less work opportunity), or dirtier or harder-to-work cargo than the hatch to which they were originally assigned.

The fourth and final major control obtained by the West Coast longshoremen as a result of the 1934 award was the 2,100-pound load limit. No more than that amount of break-bulk cargo was allowed to be hoisted in or out of a hold at any one time on any sling, board, bridle, or net. Beyond being a safety measure, it became a major restriction on the employer's ability to conduct speedups.

The on-the-job controls or union work rules listed above continued in force for twenty-seven years—until 1961. Together with the union controls over job dispatch, work opportunity equalization, and recruitment, they made possible a "new way of life" for West Coast longshoremen. At the same time, the ILA East and Gulf Coast dockers were still (until the late 1950s) victims of various forms of the shape-up or employer controlled hiring and were protected by only minimal union work rules. In effect, the West Coast longshoremen had decasualized the industry on their coast, mainly on their own terms. They eliminated the helot and near-migrant worker status of longshore labor and became respected citizens of their communities, bought homes, and raised families. No more were so many of their members relegated to living as involuntary singles in skid row rooms and apartments.

With the new security and freedom, the longshore work community took on a personality characterized in large part by the individuality of the dress, comportment, and avocations of its members. "Dress-up Danny" provides, for now, an example. His fame was based on the dress suits he wore while doing hold work, and on his ability to work well while remaining sartorially immaculate. There were, and are, many like him. Necktie Charlie, Books Cartwright, Bicycle Kovacs—all actual people, their work names more real than the ones appearing on their birth certificates. Wise men, clowns, shamans, and eccentrics—they and men like them were and are conduits of expression for those around them. They perform and hold court while moving freight, during the wait for jobs in the dispatch halls, and in the pier cafes. Not all have nicknames or are extroverted, but all are known on the waterfront and sometimes beyond. There is presently a nationally recognized small press book club operated by a lone San Pedro longshoreman. There are teachers, artists, realtors, and poets.

Eric Hoffer is another case in point. It is probable that his writing career would have been quite different without the gains won by longshoremen in the 1930s. Union control of hiring made it possible for him as a union member to work only two or three days a week and write during the remaining four or five, and still retain regular employee status with full hiring, pension, and health benefit rights. Whether the other San Francisco longshoremen were angered or liked what he wrote, he could do the work and was accepted. Then too, there was pride in the understanding that his publishing accomplishments, if not his ideas, were in significant part a product of workers' institutions.

In 1960-1961, ILWU president Harry Bridges negotiated the first of two five-year "automation" or mechanization and modernization (M&M) contracts with the Pacific Maritime

Association (PMA). Despite the fact that the containerization process had only just begun and break-bulk cargo would still provide most of the jobs until 1969, the contract sold all the on-the-job controls or work rules back to the employers. Not even the load limit was retained.

In 1959, or at the beginning of the two-year period during which the top PMA-ILWU officials worked out the formula for the first M&M agreement, an appointed and select union-management committee was allowed to recruit Class B longshoremen in every port. They were registered fulltime employees. They worked under the jurisdiction of the union, paid dues to the union, but were not allowed to join it or obtain its protection. Thus, for the first time since 1934, there were regular working non-union longshoremen. It was made mandatory that the B men work in the holds of the ships after the A, or union, men had taken their pick of the daily jobs. Most of the A men, however, were older and worked on the deck or dock. When youth is gone it becomes more difficult to climb the long vertical ladders in and out of the holds or work on irregular cargo floors. In most ports this division of the production process by union status and age allowed the employers maximum insurance against an outbreak of job actions when the rank and file union longshoremen would begin to learn what it meant to move cargo without work rule protection. The ship's hold or point of production was always decisive to any job action and the area that traditionally produced militants. But the majority in the holds were now B men who were assured of being fired for the simplest infraction of employer rules. The A men on the decks and docks, manipulated to the position of an aristocracy by age and the lack of leadership, were disarmed.

The price to the employers for purchase of the union work rules was a \$7,900 bonus to be collected by every man who reached age 65 with 25 full years in the industry. It could also be collected in the form of early retirement benefits at age 62, again with the twenty-five-year stipulation. Relatively few collected. Death still comes to the average West Coast longshoreman between 58 and 60.

The contract containing the sale was ratified by a two-to-one vote of the longshoremen up and down the coast. The opposition was largely unorganized, isolated within each port, and without an alternative proposal. Many among those who voted for the contract had deep misgivings, but they still had trust in the Harry Bridges leadership. They were told that the oncoming automation had already stripped them of their power to resist the employers and that they had better sell their work rules while they could still "exact a good price." Lost in the confusion was the fact that the M&M agreement also took essential control of recruitment to the industry away from the local unions in each port and centralized it in the hands of the top PMA-ILWU officials.

Only in one port was there organized resistance to the top officialdom's "automation program." It came from longshoremen in the port of Los Angeles. Their opposition was crushed as the employers, with high-level union support, diverted ships bound for Los Angeles to other ports in California, and then trucked their cargoes overland to and from the Los Angeles area. Ignorant of the struggle going on in Los Angeles, ILWU longshoremen in San Diego, Port Hueneme, and San Francisco became party to the tactic.

The second M&M agreement (1966-1971) was ratified by a seven-to-five vote. The majority was significantly narrower than the one obtained for the preceding contract, but the opposition remained fragmented, still forced to deal with the demoralization created by the first M&M contract, and still disoriented by the magnitude of the change facing them. The idea that automation is progress "and you can't fight it" is deeply ingrained in all American society. Then, too, the 1966 contract upped the retirement bonus to \$13,600 at a time when the average age of the A men in a major port like San Francisco was over fifty-five. In that advanced state of

confusion, there was little debate over the contract's clause 9.43 that allowed the employers to return to the pre-1939 practice of hiring steady men. Union officials assured the workers that this would involve only a "few handfuls" of men in each port. Actually, another sale was being made. Clause 9-43 gave up the foundation of the longshoremen's control over daily hiring in the dispatch hall and its commitment to work opportunity equalization.

With the mass introduction of containerization in the last years of the second M&M agreement, the employers began quietly to hire steady men in large numbers. Soon, ever-larger numbers of men were daily going directly to jobs without having to wait their proper turn in the hiring hall. Disgust, then open anger, and finally resistance began to develop. Among the men who continued to get their jobs from the hall, it became a mark of honor to be able to say that a steady job had been offered, "but I turned it down."

The expiration of the second M&M contract was met with the longest longshore strike in U.S. history, occurring in two segments separated by a Taft-Hartley injunction, and lasting 134 days. The contract was ratified with great difficulty in 1972, only after the ranks were many times outmaneuvered and long without paychecks. It contained a significant wage increase of over seventy cents an hour (which the government's Wage Stabilization Board later cut almost by half). In San Francisco, the main drive behind the strike was created by the steady man issue. Buttons with "No 9.43" appeared by the hundreds, first in San Francisco, and then in the other ports from Seattle to Los Angeles. This constituted the first organized multi-port opposition to the top union officials in ILWU history. One of the first acts of the striking locals was to call all steady men back to the hall. Morale skyrocketed with the accomplishment. That the contract that was finally approved still contained 9-43 was a monument to the ability of bureaucracies to close ranks against the rank and file. A few years later, in 1975, it took three coastwide referendums to get ratification of the contract currently in effect. Modest but determined opposition continues to mount, even though no alternatives to the ideas of incumbent officials have been formulated. The longshoremen now fight the knowledge that it is late, that not only their hard-won working conditions, but their occupation itself is in danger of extinction.

The Matson Navigation Company is the largest shipping line on the West Coast. It is owned by the "Big Five" family grouping that dominates Hawaii. Matson in turn dominates the Pacific Maritime Association. Prior to its assumption of leadership in the capital investment program that automated longshoring mainly in the ports of San Francisco and Los Angeles, it used the major ports of the Hawaiian Islands as testing areas. The results are well known to ILWU longshoremen. Displaced Hawaiians are to be found in all major West Coast ports. In February of this year I talked at length with a small group of "Kanakas" working a Terminal Island pier in San Pedro. The major spokesman for the group was a man from Hilo in his mid-fifties of Japanese-Hawaiian descent. I explained who I was and the purpose of my study. He talked willingly:

When we began to see the results of automation in about 1956, we raised so much sand that Harry [Bridges] flew over for one of our meetings. We told him: "Wherever the containers go, even if it's to a supermarket uptown, we want to follow it and do the unloading." He said, "Now wait a minute you Pineapples, it's not going to work like that." And it didn't. Man, I made a trip back home just last year. When we used to load sugar onto the ships in 125-pound sacks, each ship was a seven-day job. Now, with the bulk ships, they blow in a full load in eleven hours. There were 370 longshoremen in the port. Now there are thirty-five. That's how much air the balloon has lost. I was in the first bunch let go. That was 1958. They called us the "First Phase." They gave us all 850 dollars to get ourselves and our families to a West Coast port. I been here

now seventeen years. Harry was a good man in his time, but look at us now. In this port it's the same bad joke.

There is no exaggeration in the statements of the man from Hilo—one of the battlegrounds of the 1934 strike. Matson and the giant Sea Land company very early in their preparations for the "container explosion" found that longshore productivity at their container terminals increased 13 to 18 times over what it was in break-bulk operations. As one study revealed, "20 to 25 tons of cargo were regularly loaded by container in 2 and a half minutes as against the 18 to 20 man-hours required for breakbulk handling: "³

Automation on the waterfront is not limited to the use of computer-regulated containers or break-bulk carriers. Lighter Aboard Ship (LASH) operations provide equally startling results. In San Francisco, for example, entire lighters or barges are loaded with rice in the Stockton delta area and towed down the river. When they reach the Bay, they are hoisted onto ships and locked into place, becoming integral parts of the ship's hulls. In effect, LASH ships have mobile holds or hatches.

Roll on-Roll off or Ro-Ro ships offer shippers still another option. Instead of hatches, Ro-Ro ships have large openings in their sides just higher than average pier height. These ships pull alongside a dock, open the side ports, and drop ramps from the side ports to the dock. Containers on wheels or unitized loads are then driven on, parked, and locked in place on one of the many deck levels until they reach the port of their destination—where they are driven off into giant marshaling yards. The insides of these ships resemble a multilevel parking lot, but the traffic, fumes, and speed of movement is far greater. These ships are able to enter a port, discharge up to sixteen thousand tons of cargo, and then load and leave in eighteen hours. It was not unusual for traditionally designed ships of this tonnage to remain in a port for seven days working two shifts with five times the number of men.

The new ships that bring autos from Japan and Europe also use the basic Ro-Ro design. The Datsun ships, for example, regularly discharge a thousand cars in Los Angeles in eight hours, then move on to Northwest ports where they load bulk wheat in the holds and logs on deck. The productivity improvement over the older ships is better than 200 percent.

None of the above-listed changes in cargo handling methods could have been accomplished without radical change in ship design. The new construction not only cut down drastically on the number of men needed for the loading of cargo in and out of holds, the new container, auto, and Ro-Ro ships generally have no masts, booms, or hoisting machinery on their decks. Shoreside cranes move the containers. Autos and trucks move on and off auto and Ro-Ro ships by ramp. Moreover, these ships, like all others built in the last decade, have steel hatch coverings that open and close electronically with the push of a button. On ships of traditional design it was not unusual for the rigging of booms and guys, plus the handling of hatch boards, battens, strongbacks, and heavy canvas tarps to involve a longshore gang's time for as much as 15 percent of a shift.

At the present time, the longshoremen who work steady for the various container terminals perform the bulk of the work needed to load and unload the container ships. Men are ordered from the dispatch halls to these ships mainly for the purpose of putting on or taking off the heavy cable lashings which hold down the containers that are loaded three and four high on deck. Ships are now under construction which have automatic lashing devices.

All this does not mean that ships of traditional construction are no longer conducting trade. They are, and will continue to perform a role for another decade or two. The average life expectancy of a ship is thirty years. Many of the traditional ships have gone into shipyards for

design modification and cargo handling methods on them have been rationalized. While they may be unable to receive standard-size containers in their holds with ease, they easily accept unitized loads. It is not uncommon for entire ships to be loaded out with the cartons stacked on pallets forming eight-foot cubes weighing five tons each. The hatches are opened on a particular ship and two forklift trucks are hoisted into each of the holds being worked. The units (or cubes) hoisted in one at a time are landed in the square of the hatch and are then picked up and driven or hoisted to their place of stowage by the forklifts. Four men work in each hatch, including the lift drivers, as opposed to eight on a break-bulk operation, and the ship gets loaded in better than one-third the break-bulk time.

Automation began to significantly decrease longshore jobs in the early 1960s. The first total victims were of a category of longshoremen not yet discussed here and who are all but invisible in the literature on the industry. They are the casuals who have no formal ties to the employer or to the longshore section of the ILWU. They worked on the waterfront by the day, received the hourly wage, but none of the fringe benefits. During the 1950s, there were years during which the casuals of San Francisco performed as much as 10 percent of the longshore work. Some were able to average two days' work per week during peak shipping periods, and had become skilled in the occupation. For hundreds of the working poor, the work they got on the waterfront was their margin of economic survival. Few casuals are to be found on the West Coast waterfront today.

No regular or registered West Coast longshoremen have been put out of the industry as a result of automation. New recruitment ceased entirely in the latter 1960s, but the total of those registered began to shrink even earlier. The cutback was accomplished by attrition. As the men died, were killed, disabled on the job, or retired, they were not replaced. In New York, then the busiest port in the world, the number of employed longshoremen declined from over 50,000 in 1953 to 23,000 in 1967. Since then the number has dropped to under 16,000. The cuts on the West Coast have been equally dramatic. There are now fewer than 10,000 regular longshoremen in all thirty-two ports of the West Coast. In the four major ports of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle, the men who are not "steadies" are lucky if they average three days' work each week. The 1975 contract between the PMA-ILWU which was rejected by the ranks in two all-coast referendums before final acceptance contained a Paid Guarantee Plan (PGP). Registered longshoremen who are available in hall or gang for work five days each week are supposed to receive thirty-six hours straight-time pay. The amount is cut in half (eighteen) for B men. There has not been a week in which those amounts have been collected in full since the contract went into effect. The employers allotted ten and a half million dollars for payments during the first of the contract's three years and nine million dollars for each of the remaining years. By plan, they divide the amount to be paid out during each year by fifty-two (weeks) and payout no more than that amount in anyone week. The men are now receiving checks with as little as 58 percent of the amount guaranteed. So many are drawing on PGP that the payments threaten to go below 50 percent. A record is kept of the growing amounts the PMA owes each man, or the difference between the guarantee, which is just under \$250, and the amount actually received. It has been inferred that the PMA will pay its debts at the end of the year or on the expiration of the three-year contract. I have found no longshoremen who believe this will happen. Boston longshoremen negotiated a similar plan over a year ago called the GAI, or Guaranteed Annual Income. They have yet to receive their first payment. They now number only four hundred. In December of last year they struck the employer to force payment and failed.

The changing nature of longshore work and diminished work opportunity destroyed much of the basis on which traditional longshore partnerships were founded, but PGP has created a new basis for their formation and sustenance. Hundreds of Los Angeles longshoremen, for example, go each morning or evening to the dispatch hall in Wilmington. Few of their number get called up to the window to receive a job assignment. If by chance they were called unexpectedly and were absent, they would not be eligible for the PGP that payroll week. Many have paired off into partnerships. Each goes alone in turn to the hall for the dispatch. When their numbers are called, the partner at the hall picks up both jobs, and phones his partner at home, telling him the job's pier location, gang number, and the nature of the cargo to be worked. They then meet at the ship in time for the shift start. The arrangement makes life easier, but it is not like the "old days" when a partner was chosen because of his work skill, temperament, and on-the-job social skills. PGP provides some income for which longshore work was not performed, but it is a symbol of their occupational crisis. It is a "dole" and is put upon them by a contract few wanted. The disgust and involuntary time off sets minds to the development of schemes by which to beat the PGP on an individual or partner basis. It's like Las Vegas: a few can "beat the tables" but "the house never loses." Gambling, like the PGP, can be a pastime, but even for those who win there is no fundamental enrichment.

How and why have longshoremen allowed all this to happen to them and why hasn't their resistance taken on greater form are questions that logically arise. First of all, like so many segments of the population who are in crisis, the longshoremen are handicapped by a lack of ideological and organizational alternatives. No union leadership has yet put forth the idea that "industrial progress" is reactionary when it contains no consideration for the bulk of humans in the industry wherein it occurs. Further, the longshoremen designed their union to fight employers, but they did not foresee the degree to which the institution of collective bargaining—by its very nature—would develop bureaucratic conservatism in their officialdom. They, for example, gained control over their hiring system and built few controls to keep union officials from corrupting the system so as to victimize rank and file dissidents. It has not been uncommon for serious critics of Harry Bridges in the ILWU headquarters port of San Francisco to experience temporary or even permanent losses of earning power. Thus, his opponents have had to work, in a way, on an "underground basis."

The Container Landbridge as Holocaust

In the last year, the ever-deepening problems of longshoremen have forced rank and file opponents of the ILWU leadership into the open. The bind of automation has shown no signs that it will ease. The introduction of what has come to be known as the "landbridge system" has created further unknowns, despair, and demoralization. Japanese shippers are now discontinuing use of the Panama Canal. Containers from Yokohama are put ashore in Oakland, California, railroaded to Newport News, Virginia, put on ships, and taken to European destinations. The time saved more than makes up for the additional handling costs. The landbridge works from Atlantic to Pacific and to and from the Gulf as well. Also, containers loaded in or bound to any American city can be put aboard the bridge at any one of a number of freight stations. Reno-Sparks, Nevada, has now become the freight transport node for the eleven western states, and a major port. Envisioned for the near future is a refinement of the landbridge system called "mini-bridge." Each coast is to have one or two superports. The remaining ports are to receive minor

traffic or be made extinct. Boston is already an outpost for New York, despite the fact that it is one day's sailing time closer to northern Europe.

The Government's Role in Automation

Increasingly, the longshoremen who refused to be steady men express the feeling that they did "what was right and got shut out for it" Younger hiring hall men more and more look around not only for a second job, but for a job that could provide a total alternative to what they see as a "murdered occupation." Most will probably stay on in longshore, but they are not optimistic. They are aware that they are opposed by their employers, union officials, and the giant shoreside corporations recently attracted to container transport, but they know as well that the government too is deeply involved in the campaign. In fact, the government was and is the prime mover in the drive to automate cargo handling. For over half a century the government has subsidized the merchant marine. It pays 55percent of all ships' operating and construction costs. Over 75 percent of that amount is represented by labor costs.⁴ Operating on ever-greater deficits in the post-World War II period during the 1950S, the government began to order a number of maritime studies. The goal was to obtain qualitative cuts in cost. This established what Joseph P. Goldberg, of the U.S. Department of Labor, calls "the virtual inevitability of the central role of the federal government in the press for modernization making for crew reductions."⁵

In 1963, the U.S. Maritime Administration began to require that to be eligible for subsidy, all future ships would have to have simplified machinery and work area design, centralized engine room control, and generalized control from the navigation bridge. Put into practice, this cut crew sizes 30 percent and recouped the increased capital (ship construction) costs in a maximum of five years.⁶ Studies had also shown that berthing plus longshore loading and discharging operations accounted "for almost half of the total sea carrier costs."⁷ The result was that ships began to come up with designs that cut longshoring as well as crew costs. Hence, the rapid appearance of container ships, bulk carriers, Ro-Ro and LASH ships, and the rapid takeover of the stevedoring industry by shipping companies. The stevedores, with few exceptions, did not have the funds to buy the capital equipment and waterfront land space necessary to handle the cargoes as transported intermodally by the new ships.

Longshore Work Loses Its Boundaries

The increasing capital intensiveness of the industry stimulated by the government has stacked ever-greater burdensome problems on longshoremen. The machinery itself has become an enemy. This is not meant in the Luddist sense, although it would come as no surprise if the present crisis on the waterfront produced some twentieth-century form of that phenomenon. Rather, the machinery has caused the boundaries of the longshore industry to become fluid and without exact shape. The maintenance of longshore machinery no longer requires the skills of marine riggers so much as it does that of electricians and truck mechanics. The shoreside cranes are of the type normally run by members of the Operating Engineers Union. The enormous amount of rolling stock that moves containers in the marshaling yards requires the performance of labor that little resembles traditional longshore work. The Teamsters Union has already claimed a portion of this work with some success. It is Eric Hobsbawm's thesis that longshoremen were in the past able to organize strong independent unions around the world because of the very clear perimeters around their industry.⁸ They put the cargoes brought to them by truck drivers onto the ships and

seamen took it away. Seamen brought them ships from which they removed the cargo and truck drivers in turn hauled it away from the docks. The loading and discharge of ships now involves ever-fewer humans. The actual stowage and discharge of cargo, in and out of the containers, which is still labor intensive, now in most instances takes place far from the docks, at "uptown" factories, warehouses, stores, and hinterland distribution centers like Reno-Sparks, Nevada.

The Hobsbawm thesis has withstood another major testing. The blurring of longshore occupational fences makes it difficult for longshoremen to sustain their union organization. During the past ten years Harry Bridges has made several attempts to merge the ILWU with the ILA, and having failed, made even more attempts to dissolve it into the Teamsters. Each time the ranks have refused his proposals. They are increasingly aware that their union president has become willing to play mortician for both their union and their occupation. They fear that if they merged with the Teamsters and then got lost in that far larger bureaucratic jungle, the struggle to save something of their way of life that is now taking form would have little public visibility.

Many younger longshoremen have already obtained second jobs or are looking for them. It is probable that some will move out of longshoring altogether, but most will stay as long as there is any hope at all for survival. Their investment in their jobs goes far beyond economic considerations. Working on the front has provided them with lifestyles that they like. It is common to hear factory workers say: "If my kid had tried to hire into this kind of place I'd have kicked his ass." Not so with longshoremen. Longshore recruitment has long been accomplished in large part through family associations. In port after port the majority are the sons, nephews, and brothers-in-law of longshoremen. In most ports the condition is a permanent part of the subculture, although established by informal processes. In the port of Los Angeles, however, the longshoremen have formalized one segment of the custom: if a longshoreman dies and leaves a son on whom responsibility for his family's support falls, the son gets his job by contractual right.⁹

Recruitment by family is not limited to this country or century. It has been documented, for example, that for the fifty-year period from 1814 to 1864, Marseilles longshoremen took control over their hiring, recruitment, and division of work. For most of that period 73 percent of their number were sons of longshoremen, let alone nephews and other relations.¹⁰ It might be claimed that this phenomenon occurs because waterfront communities have often been geographically and socially isolated from their overall urban communities. The claim may have some validity, but does not withstand full test. Since 1934, concentrated longshore neighborhoods in West Coast ports have by and large dispersed. The men have for nearly half a century raised their families in a variety of areas in their port cities. This has been more the case since the "automobile explosion" and suburbanization, yet father-son continuity has persisted.

Longshoring today has at least four certainties: (1) Humans will continue to be needed to move the containers, lighters, unitized loads, trucks, and autos on and off the ships. They will as well be needed to move the equipment around the dock areas and to maintain it. (2) Fewer people will be involved in these tasks. Whether or not they will be steady men is not definite, but it is certain that these people will have far more economic power per person than longshoremen of the pre-automation era. (3) The increase in value of the equipment they operate and the increase in tonnages they move in a day will enlarge job-related responsibilities and internal tensions. (4) Longshore work will increasingly decasualize and more resemble warehouse or factory work with its quite different forms of close quarter labor-management confrontation.

(c. 1983)

From chapter entitled “Effects of Automation in the Lives of Longshoremen,” in Stan Weir’s *Singlejack Solidarity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004)

¹ William W. Pilcher, *The Portland Longshoremen* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1972), vii.

² At the time of the award and until 1937, the Pacific District of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) handled the formal contract negotiations on the West Coast. With the formation of the CIO as a separate federation in 1937, the unions of the ILA's Pacific District disaffiliated and formed the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), as a charter CIO affiliate with Harry Bridges as its president.

³ Harold M. Levinson, Charles M. Rehmus, Joseph P. Goldberg, and Mark L. Kahn, "Simplism and Diversity in Maritime Labor Relations" in *Collective Bargaining and Technological Change in American Transportation* (Evanston, IL: Transportation Center at Northwestern University, 1971), 269.

⁴ Samuel A. Lawrence, *U.S. Merchant Marine Shipping Policies and Politics* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 1966), 205-6.

⁵ Levinson et al., "Simplism and Diversity in Maritime Labor Relations."

⁶ Ibid., 267.

⁷ Ibid., 261.

⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, "National Unions on the Waterside:" in *Labouring Men* (New York: Basic Books, 1964), 241-71.

⁹ Because of this right, America got its first regular longshorewoman. In 1979 a San Pedro longshoreman died and his daughter successfully claimed his job.

¹⁰ William H. Sewell, "The Workingclass of Marseilles under the Second Republic," in Peter N. Stearns and Daniel J. Walkowitz, eds., *Workers in the Industrial Revolution* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1974); Victor Nguyen, "Le Portefaix Marseilles: Crise et déclin, survivances," *Provence Historique* 12 (1926).

APPENDIX I

FACTS ABOUT PORT OF OAKLAND



Berth Terminals

Berths 20 – 26: Ports America Outer Harbor Terminal

Berth 30 – 32: TraPac Terminal

Berths 33-34

Berths 35 – 38: Ben E. Nutter Terminal (STS/Evergreen)

Berths 55 – 56: Total Terminals International (Hanjin)

Berths 57 – 59: Oakland International Container Terminal (SSAT)

Berths 60 – 63: Global Gateway Central Terminal (APL)

Berths 67 – 68: Charles P. Howard Terminal (Matson)

Intermodal Railway Terminals

Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railway

Union Pacific Rail Terminal

INTRODUCTION

The Port of Oakland is a neoliberal institution, being run as a public/private enterprise. It consists of a container port, an airport, retail – including big box stores like Wal-Mart and businesses at Jack London Square, commercial buildings, and business and industrial parks. Future plans include more commercial and residential real estate development. The Port of Oakland claims to directly involve approximately 73,000 jobs in the Northern California region, which it is claimed impact 827,000 jobs nationwide. The Port of Oakland proper employs 465 workers.

Until 1927 the port and Oakland's waterfront was controlled by the Southern Pacific Railroad. Once the city took back control, it has been ruled undemocratically by a Board of Port

Commissioners, nominated by the mayor of Oakland and appointed by a vote of the City Council. The Port funds its own operations, receiving no tax money from the city, and floats its own revenue bonds.

Oakland and the ports in Elizabeth and Newark, New Jersey were the first ports in the world to specialize in the intermodal container operations. Since 1962, the Port has spent more than \$1.4 billion to construct 1210 acres of marine terminals, intermodal rail facility, and maritime support area. \$700 million will be spent in the future for development of two new maritime terminals (created where the Army and Navy Supply Depots once stood), a new intermodal rail facility, deepening channels and berths from -42' to -50', and a new public park. Oakland's 20 deepwater berths and 36 container cranes, 29 of which are Post-Panamax size (which are ships too large for the Panama Canal), are backed by a network of local roads and interstate freeways, warehouses and intermodal railyards

Ten Container terminals and two intermodal rail facilities serve the Oakland waterfront (see map above). The Union Pacific and BNSF railroad facilities are located adjacent to the heart of the marine terminal area to move cargo between the marine terminals or transload facilities and the intermodal rail facilities.

The Port of Oakland loads and discharges more than 99 percent of the containerized goods moving through Northern California, the nation's fourth largest metropolitan area. Oakland's cargo volume makes it the fifth busiest containerport in the United States; San Francisco Bay is one of three major West Coast containerized ports, along with San Pedro Bay in southern California (Ports of Long Beach & Los Angeles, the busiest container port complex in the Western Hemisphere) and Puget Sound in the Pacific Northwest (Ports of Seattle and Tacoma). 58.9 percent of Oakland's trade is with Asia. Europe accounts for 10.3 percent, Australia/New Zealand and South Pacific Islands about 4.7 percent and other foreign economies about 8.8 percent. 17.3 percent of Oakland's trade is domestic (Hawaii and Guam) and military cargo. California's three major containerports (L.A., Long Beach & Oakland) carry approximately 50 percent on the nation's total container cargo volume.

CONTRAST BETWEEN PORTS OF OAKLAND & L.A./LONG BEACH

Value of Cargo (combined import & export)

	Oakland	Los Angeles/Long Beach
per year	\$39 billion	\$376 billion
per day	\$106 million	\$1,030 million

Economic Trends at Port of Oakland 2011

PORT OF OAKLAND'S MAJOR PRODUCT CATEGORIES

Principal Exports

Edible Fruit and Nuts, Meat/Prepared Meat/Fish/Etc., Machinery, Vehicles, Beverages, Inorganic Chemicals/Rare Earth Metals, Metal Scrap, Hides & Skins, Misc. Chemical Products, Woodpulp/Paper/Paperboard, Organic Chemicals, Cereals/Grain/Seed/Fruit, Preserved Food, Plastic, Cotton & Yarn/Fabric

Principal Imports

Machinery, Beverages, Furniture & Bedding, Vehicles (Not Railway), Apparel, Toys & Sports Equipment, Plastic, Iron/Steel Products, Wood, Footware, Spices/Coffee & Tea, Medical Instruments, Misc. Textile Articles, Aluminum, Paper/Paperboard

Export product and value

Edible fruit and nuts:	\$1.08B	Machinery:	\$4.51B
Meat:	\$1.06B	Electrical equipment:	\$2.31B
Machinery:	\$652M	Furniture and bedding:	\$1.16B
Beverages:	\$546M	Beverages:	\$1.1B
Inorganic chemicals/rare earth materials:	\$521M	Knit apparel:	\$965M

Import product and value

Current economic conditions:

At the beginning of 2011 the main California ports (L.A./Long Beach and Oakland) were doing well, with volume slightly better than 2010. That began to fade by midsummer, and has continued to decline to the present. From August to October they suffered the following drops:

- Oakland: down 4.1%
- Long Beach: down 13.8%
- Long Angeles: down 0.8%

Yet exports from Oakland are up, as changing diets in Asia means more exports of fruits, nuts and meat. Most of this produce originates in California's Central Valley.

So Port of Oakland officials are worried about the planned West Coast Port Shut Down on December 12th being organized by the Occupy Movement. Isaac Kos-Read, director of external affairs with the Port of Oakland, said:

"A disruption at that time of year is really serious for us, this is a peak season for us for agricultural products."

(from: http://www.mercurynews.com/business-headlines/ci_19412538)

HISTORICAL APPENDIX #1

The tradition of radicalism on the San Francisco Bay waterfront (see Howard Kimeldorf's *Reds or Rackets: The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront* for a comparison of the history of militancy on the West Coast with the Mafia-run unions on the East Coast) dates back to the first sailors' strike in 1850. But from a class consciousness perspective, that legacy faced periodic blows with each technological innovation that was designed to disempower dock workers and replaced human labor with machines – which, in a nutshell, is the history of capitalism – which happened in 3 distinct phases. Which were:

–**1st phase:** the 19th century introduction of the steam-driven cargo hoisting machinery mounted on decks of ships, displacing system of ropes, pulleys and purely manual labor.

–**2nd phase:** the Mechanization and Modernization (M&M) agreement pushed by ILWU president Harry Bridges in 1960-1961, that containerized the port (which a decade later sent all port operations across the Bay to Oakland – directly adjacent to the Army Depot – to accommodate the massive expansion necessary for supplying the Vietnam War), eliminated “work opportunity equalization” (work rules that prevented favoritism by sharing work evenly), and weakened the union-controlled job dispatch hiring hall system (which had been the greatest victory of the 1934 General Strike because it completely eliminated the “shape-up”). M&M not only allowed longshore workers to avoid the hiring hall by working directly for the employers as “steady men,” it broke the shopfloor solidarity by creating “B men,” a quasi-casualized 2nd-tier of workers.

Basically, the 1st M&M began to replace the break-bulk system of loading and unloading of ships in gangs, who stowed individual cargoes that came in “sacks, boxes, cartons, bales, or barrels,” with standardized metal containers that essentially are 20 or 40x8x8-foot boxes. Also eradicated was the shopfloor solidarity built into that system. The changes resulted in a 90% overall reduction in the workforce and the atomization of individual workers in cranes over 100 feet in the air. After 27 years of the best rank-and-file control of the work process for any industry in the U.S., the ILWU's radical experiment of worker-control was ending.

The final nail in the coffin was the 2nd M&M agreement from 1966-1971. The new contract granted the right of container terminal employers to hire permanent “steady men” to work the new capital intensive machinery, reducing those working out of the hiring hall to do the remaining manual work, with nearly half as many hours and at a fraction of the pay of the steady men.

At the expiration of the 2nd M&M in 1971, there was the last strike in ILWU history, and at 134 days it was also the longest longshore strike in U.S. history. One issue was the attempt by the rank-and-file to eliminate “clause 9.43” in the contract, allowing “steady men” to work directly for the bosses, nullifying the solidarity of the hiring hall. It was also the first rank-and-file opposition to the bureaucrats running the union. As Stan Weir put it (in 1983),

“... the longshoremen [had] designed their union to fight employers, but they did not foresee the degree to which the institution of collective bargaining – by its very nature – would develop bureaucratic conservatism in their officialdom” (from “Effects of Automation in the Lives of Longshoremen” in *Singlejack Solidarity*).

Fast forward to today. Here's the brutally honest appraisal of JoAnn Wypijewski (from an article titled "On the Front Lines of the World Class Struggle: The Cargo Chain," in *CounterPunch*, March, 2010):

"... the ILWU milks its militant history when opportune but is increasingly undemocratic and politically backward..."

She goes on to mention how in an act of class betrayal, the ILWU cut a deal with "maritime bosses" and stole work from "Machinists in Seattle," sadly demonstrating how the ILWU is no longer the victim – as it was in the 1930s and 1940s – of raids by AFL unions, but in this case is itself a predator (and this was in 2010).

–3rd phase: the coming of capital intensive displacement of living workers by mechanical AND digital technology at the ports. And with the lack of class consciousness by the ILWU in regards to port *troqueros*, who are the most advanced proletarian sector on the waterfront with the most recent wildcat striking experience, it seems that the ILWU won't fare too well in the future unless they start fighting back.

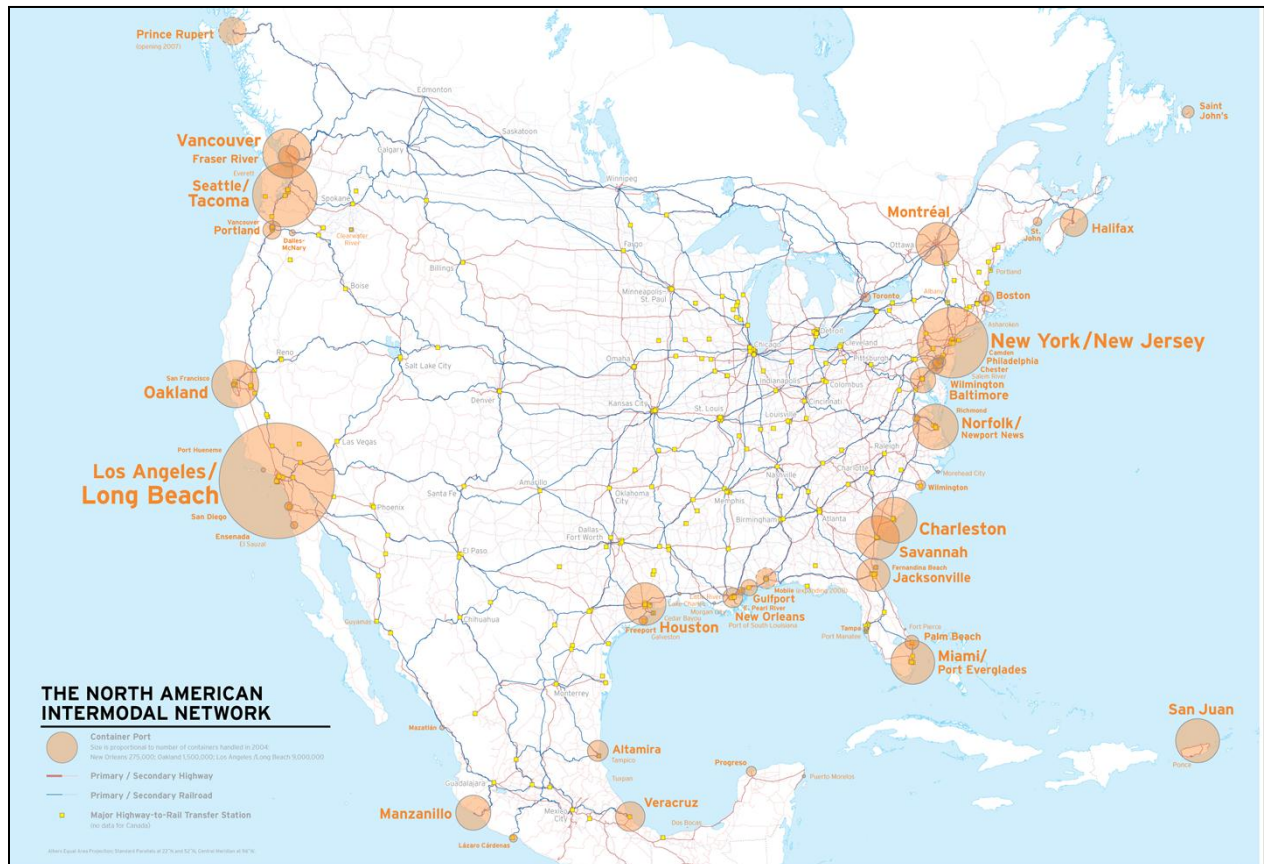
Here's what Edna Bonacich writes in "Pulling the Plug: Labor and the Global Supply Chain," in *New Labor Forum* journal in 2007, about the major changes in how capitalism produces commodities within global divisions of labor and the logistics revolution with supply chain management, and how it affects the ports and workers all along the chain. An excerpt from the article:

In Hamburg and in Rotterdam there are docks that operate with no visible human presence. Once a container is moved off a ship, it is picked up by an automated crane, which puts it on an automated guided vehicle, which transfers it to the yard, where two automatic rail-mounted gantry cranes, or ARMGs, stack and retrieve containers. Sensor technology creates a grid around the yard, and GPS systems keep track of where each container is. No need for crane operators, no need for clerks. Where, typically in the U.S.A., two operators, and sometimes a marine clerk, are assigned to each rubber-tired gantry crane that moves containers around the yard, here a single worker can oversee the independent functioning of many machines from a control tower. Maybe a clerk is on hand in the event of an error. Port truckers are given a code or a card that they insert in another machine, which gives the order to the ARMG to pick up the containers they have come for. The driver is signaled to a bay, where the machine puts the coded container on the truck. The truck and its cargo are checked at the gate with automatic character recognition, and cameras photograph the vehicle and its license plate. The closest U.S. equivalent is APM's new terminal in Norfolk, Virginia, where six yard cranes run by GPS, cameras and computers are operated at once by one worker in a computer booth.

This is a revolution in dock work at least as dramatic as containerization, which in the 1960s cut the gang unloading a ship from 125 longshoremen to 40, with phenomenal increases in speed. A number of U.S. and European terminals not yet fitted with full automation have already reduced worker hours by installing GPS and other technology to eliminate work formerly performed manually by clerks.

And from the JoAnn Wypijewski article, about the class composition of the supply chain workers:

As ‘The Cargo Chain’ outlines [map below], in the U.S.A. that means smooth acquiescence not only from 60,000 longshore workers, but also from 28,000 tugboat operators and harbor pilots, 60,000 port truckers, 850,000 freight truckers, 165,000 railroad workers, 2 million warehouse and distribution workers, 370,000 express package delivery people, and 160,000 logistics planners – and from similarly interlocked clusters of workers all around the world. They are not all organized, but then they would not all have to say No: just enough of them, acting in concert, at vital points in the chain.



The bosses – led by Wal-Mart – created the West Coast Waterfront Coalition, an “industrial union” of all businesses using the port, much like the collective bosses did on the waterfront in the 19th century. The sad fact is that labor unions compete and jockey to beat the other to get dues payer’s money and don’t practice class solidarity – while the ruling class clearly does. But groups like the City Front Federation that united ALL waterfront unions at the turn of the 20th century, and which fought together – with longshore and maritime workers and Teamsters – as one in the 1901 strike, would be impossible with such opportunist and conservative unions (in stark contrast with the rank-and-file in many cases) like the Teamsters and ILWU of today.

Here’s an alternative scenario (completely imagined) about how this global supply chain could act as a radical pole of internationalist class conscious working class self-activity (based on how in 1971, striking GM autoworkers involved in an “alienation” wildcat against the world’s fastest assembly line at the brand new Lordstown factory in Ohio, proposed sending a delegation to the

West Coast ports during the ILWU longshore division's 134-day strike to ask longshore workers to refuse to unload Japanese cars until they resolved the strike at their UAW shop; as predicted, UAW International president Woodcock killed the proposal). Imagine today another strike wave like the one in spring 2010, starting with a walkout of workers at the Nanhai Honda transmission factory in Foshan China, which spread to other Honda and then Toyota car plants, but also to factories in other industries like electronics, plastics and even breweries – and completely shut down ALL production of Honda cars in China. What if independent truckers (casualized in a similar way to the West Coast *troqueros*), in the world's busiest container port in Shanghai, refused to haul the "hot cargo" produced by scabs in struck factories and went on strike and blockaded the port (like they did this past April)? Short of that, what if Chinese longshore workers refused to load the hot cargo onto any ship? Baring that, what if maritime workers refused to sail with hot cargo containers loaded on their ship? And lacking that, what if ILWU Local 10 (or Local 13 at LA/Long Beach) refused to unload the hot cargo in California? With that not feasible, what if warehouse/distribution workers refused to handle the hot cargo? With that impossible, what if the militants in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers refused to load the hot cargo containers onto trains? That not happening, what if UPS drivers refused to take the hot cargo off the train and deliver it to a Wal-Mart in the heartland of the U.S.? And if that was prevented, what if Wal-Mart workers organized a sit-down strike, occupied their store, and refused to allow the sale of scab hot cargo from China, in a defiant act of internationalist solidarity?

We now live in a globalized social factory and must start strategizing in a way commensurate with the current organization of the capitalist production process – and level of class composition. Sound impossible? Perhaps, but who would have expected a 44-day general strike in the French-controlled Caribbean island of Guadeloupe against unemployment, poverty and austerity in 2009 would not only succeed due to overwhelming class unity, but also spread to another successful general strike in the nearby island of Martinique – as well as spread unrest to Réunion island in the Indian Ocean. We need to take a closer look at the working class self-activity that made the "Arab Spring" rebellion possible in Tunisia, which spread to Egypt and culminated a half-decade strike wave in a popular revolt deposing Mubarak. But the international cycle of struggle inspired other uprisings in Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Kuwait, Morocco, and Oman. And Greece has had nearly 10 general strikes, with much insurrectionary activity that just doesn't quiet down; the French working class seems to have incessant strikes too. Spanish *indignados* sparked off a nationwide mass movement in the streets on the scale of the revolt in Egypt. We need to find ways to draw connections between these struggles and make internationalist actions to unite them. What if ILWU workers had shut down the 29 West Coast ports in solidarity with the hundreds of Suez Canal workers who had occupied offices and completely shut down the canal last February? That would have rocked the whole fucking world! To do that, we'll need to invent new *forms* of fighting that make those linkages across borders and organically rise out of the organic *content* of our anti-capitalist practice. It's not the question of "organization" – union, party or otherwise – it's the question to how to organize and further the fight; phrased different, it's how to spread and intensify class struggle. And be true to the internationalist implications of the IWW/ILWU slogan: "An injury to one is an injury to all."

To paraphrase Rosa Luxemburg about the St. Petersburg Soviet in 1905:

"The level of active struggle is more important than the degree of formal organization."

HISTORICAL APPENDIX #2

Working Class Solidarity Actions at the Port of Oakland, Mid-1970s through Present

- In 1974 the ILWU participated in an international boycott of Chilean cargo following the overthrow of President Salvador Allende by a CIA-backed military junta. In 1978, Local 10 refusal to handle bomb parts bound for Chile.
- In 1981 ILWU refused to load military cargo bound for the dictatorship in El Salvador and in 1989 was active in a national boycott of Salvadoran coffee organized to protest torture and other human rights abuses in El Salvador, including the bombing of a union headquarters.

1984 Anti-apartheid Solidarity at Port

- In 1984 an 11 day boycott of South African cargo on the Nedlloyd Kimberley at pier 80 in San Francisco was launched by longshoremen who were twice daily dispatched to the ship, went to the ship, looked at the South African cargo, told supervisors that they were refusing to handle the cargo and then went home. A large number of people assembled twice daily at the pier gates and were there in support of this action that was initiated and implemented by longshore workers.

In 1986, when longshore ILWU Local 10 was still under a federal court injunction against taking concerted union action on apartheid cargo a large group of anti-apartheid activists blockaded the entrance to pier 80 when another Nedlloyd Line vessel was docked with South African cargo. For two shifts the blockaders fought off police attacks. The contract area arbitrator ruled that the longshoremen were justified in not entering the pier on the basis of the “health and safety” provisions of the contract. On the second day the blockade was broken by Mayor Dianne Feinstein’s Tac Squad who arrested over a hundred demonstrators, ending the blockade.

—based on account of Howard Keylor, ILWU Local 10 (retired)

1997 Neptune Jade solidarity action

- On September 28, 1997, a picket line was set up in the port of Oakland against the scab cargo-laden ship, Neptune Jade, in solidarity with 500 sacked Liverpool dockers.[...]

Members of ILWU Local 10 refused to cross the picketline for three straight days. The Neptune Jade then left Oakland with its cargo still unloaded, but workers in its later ports of call having been inspired by the actions in Oakland, also refused to unload the ship!

Global shipowners, represented by the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), sued the labor activists who picketed and the longshore union locals whose member honored that picket line. The Liverpool Dockers Defense Committee was organized to build a united front defense campaign to demand PMA drop their case against the Neptune Jade defendants.

Through a campaign of global solidarity, the working class organizers and militant rank & file transportation union workers and their allies were able to beat back the backlash from the Pacific Maritime Association (from IWW.org)

- On April 24, 1999 ILWU invoked its contractual right to a “work-stop” meeting and shut down all port on the West Coast in solidarity with the struggle of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

2003 Anti-War Demo at Port of Oakland



Unprovoked attack by OPD pigs, Port of Oakland, April 7, 2003

- On April 7, 2003. In less than a month, Direct Action to Stop the War who'd emulated the "Seattle-model" from the 1999 WTO protests and organized 20,000 into the streets of San Francisco when the war started on March 20, 2003, called for another demo on April 7 at the Port of Oakland – that's the demo where the Oakland pigs came out shooting — literally — and without the slightest provocation fired wooden and rubber bullets and used their "BUMP" (for "Basic Use of Motorcycle Push") tactic where they rode their Harley-Davidson motorcycles into the crowd. The brutality showed that we chose a target that could effectively cause damage to our enemy, although we didn't have the forces nor the working class solidarity from workers there, to truly shut it down (a successful model would be the way the short-haul truck drivers, the *troqueros*, were able to shut down, by a factor of 90%, the Los Angeles/Long Beach port complex, the busiest cargo port in the western hemisphere, on May Day 2006. We need more tactical insight like that in choosing targets, but have to realistically assess what we're capable of given our numbers. The Olympia, Washington protests, starting in May 2006, against the Stryker Brigade had the same quality of being the correct target at right time).

2004 *Troquero* 8-day Wildcat APL gate Port of Oakland

From Daniel Borgstrom's blog (<http://danielborgstrom.blogspot.com/2004/05/for-8-days-in-may-truckers-closed-port.html>):

- **For eight days in May 2004**, the [American President Lines' gate at the] Port of Oakland was virtually shut down by truckers striking for better conditions. The same port had been closed down by antiwar protesters just three weeks before...

The strike actually began in central and also in southern California as a one-day protest, but on reaching Oakland it lasted from April 30th to May 7th. Movement of cargo was reduced to 25 percent of normal and on some days to only 10 percent.

Several hundred of the striking drivers occupied the gate area of the APL terminal along Middle

Harbor Road. They'd moved in and made themselves to home. Some were also spending the nights there. Most of these truckers were immigrants, coming from all over the world, some from the Punjab, others from Haiti, and a good many from the various countries of Latin America. Nevertheless, these diverse ethnic groups had gotten together for this action.

- On 19 May 2007, anti-war activists and members of the teachers' union in Oakland maintained a picket line outside the gates of the Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) before the morning shift. An arbitrator ruled the picket line safe to pass through, but members of ILWU Locals 10 and 34 voted to not to cross the picket line, forfeiting a days' pay, which was repeated by the evening shift – thus three ships were delayed for a day.
- On May 1, 2008, the Longshore Caucus of the ILWU on the West Coast, invoked a “work-stop” meeting to shut down all 29 ports for three reasons: 1.) to celebrate international workers' day, 2.) to demand an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, 3.) in solidarity with immigrants workers, documented or not – but especially the *troqueros* who drive “sweatshops” on wheels.
- On October 23, 2010, the ILWU used their work-stop meeting to shut down all Northern California ports in protest against the murder of Oscar Grant, a young worker, by a BART transit cop on January 1, 2009.
- On April 4, 2011, the ILWU organized an unauthorized work-stop meeting for a National Day of Action coordinated by the AFL-CIO in solidarity with the fight against anti-labor legislation passed by Governor Walker in Wisconsin. The Pacific Maritime Association sued and the ILWU is presently defending themselves against this attack on their ability to engage in solidarity actions.

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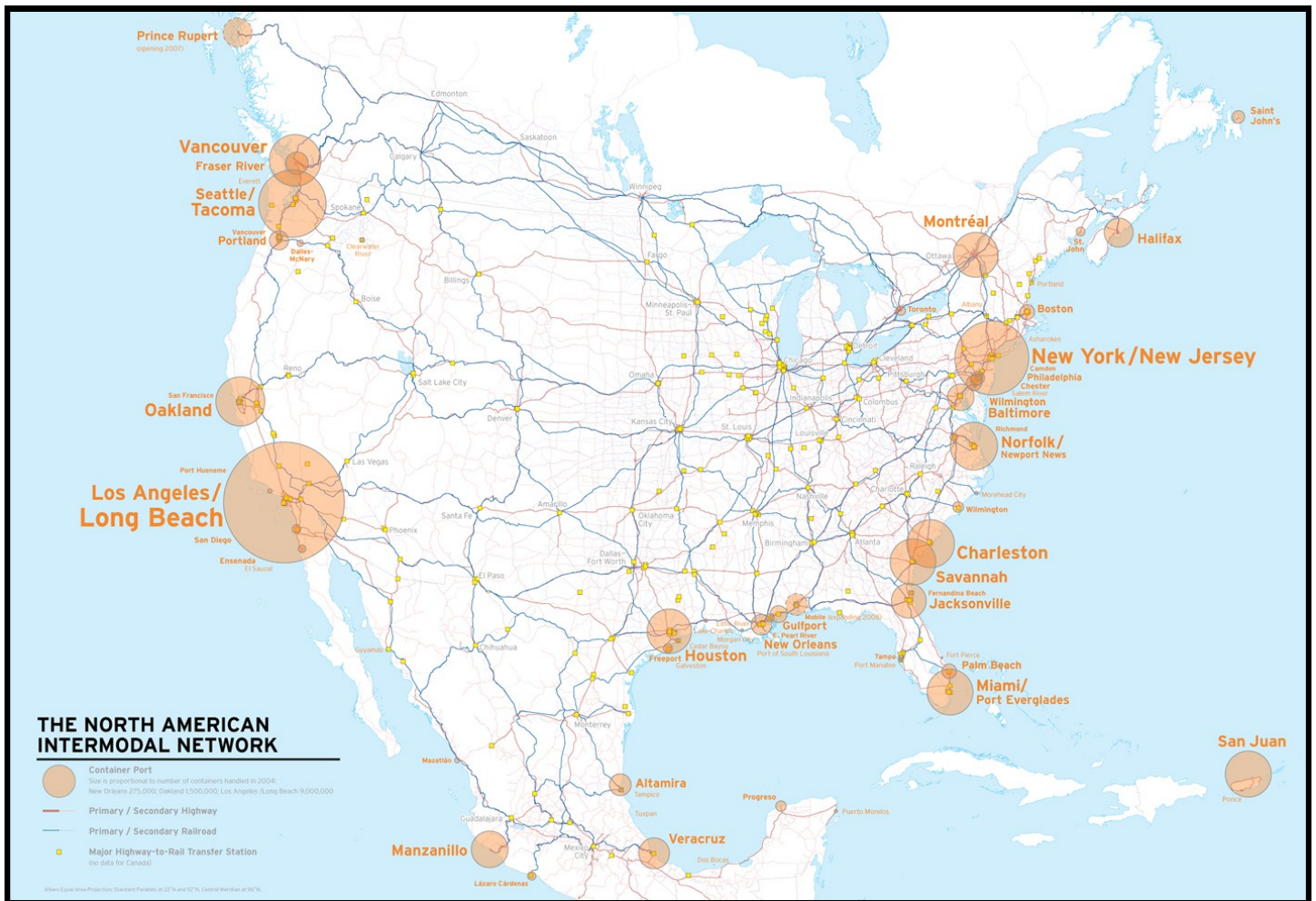
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The Public School website:

<http://thepublicschool.org/>

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