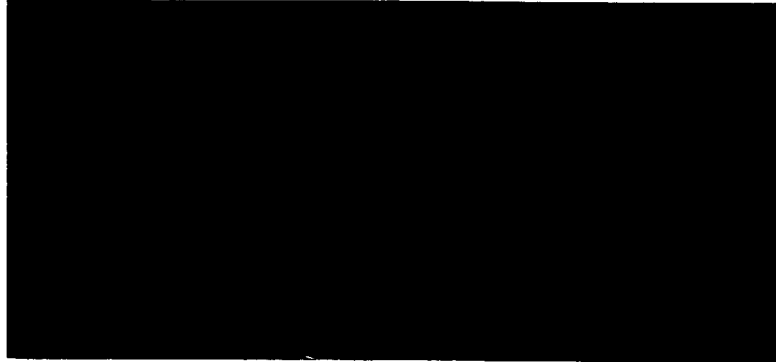




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WORLD WAR TWO AND THE  
DERADICALIZATION OF AMERICAN LABOR:  
A 'DEVIANT CASE' STUDY

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World War Two and the Deradicalization of American Labor:

A "Deviant Case" Study\*

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## World War Two and the Deradicalization of American Labor:

### A "Deviant Case" Study

#### INTRODUCTION

The fate of radical working class movements in the west has been closely tied to the experience of modern warfare. Indeed, the twentieth century's two most powerful expressions of proletarian insurgency--the socialist and communist movements--were both decisively influenced by the outbreak of World Wars.

The impact of World War I on the international socialist movement has been well documented. Revolution in Russia, labourism in Britain, bloody reaction in Germany, and the demise of socialism in America--all were in some measure by-products of war. Ushering in such momentous changes, World War I stands out as "an intervening variable of such overwhelming significance that," as Aristide Zolberg argues, "it provides a theoretical warrant for periodizing the analysis of working-class formation into distinct pre- and postwar segments."<sup>1</sup>

An equally strong case can be made for periodizing World War II into "distinct pre- and postwar segments" of working class formation. For the developing communist movement in the west, the war was a great watershed, reviving some parties and destroying others. In France, for example, Communist trade unionists came out of World War II greatly strengthened; in England, however, the revolutionary left remained marginal to the working class, while in Belgium Communist influence fell off sharply from prewar levels.<sup>2</sup>

But it was in the United States, the belligerent power most insulated from the actual fighting, where the left sustained some of its heaviest wartime losses. On the eve of World War II, Communists and their allies were a major force in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), wielding significant power in some of the nation's most vital and strategic industries. With nearly one of every three organized industrial workers enrolled in unions that were euphemistically characterized as left-wing or progressive, radicals of one type or another controlled

a larger portion of the American labor movement than at any time since the founding of the AFL. Then came war--the critical "intervening variable"--followed by ideological retrenchment. Despite swollen memberships and inflated treasuries, the CIO emerged from World War II a shadow of its former self. Gone was much of the organizing energy, political idealism, and larger sense of purpose that had given birth to the industrial union movement a decade before. Facing the difficult peacetime readjustment, most unions resembled, in the words of a contemporary observer, "big, giant shells with vast membership figures but no insides."<sup>3</sup>

Labor's wartime evisceration disarmed the left at a critical point in its development. With the Cold War closing in on the CIO, Communist-supported forces suffered a string of defeats, beginning in 1946. In the politically pivotal United Auto Workers union (UAW), a progressive leadership bloc lost important ground to the growing anti-communist opposition led by Walter Reuther. Close on the heels of Reuther's ascendancy, East Coast transport workers, led by "Red" Mike Quill, broke with the Communist Party. Then, most devastating of all, the Communists lost control of the National Maritime Union when some of the party's most able and admired representatives, including several founders of the NMU, were defeated in union elections by three-to-one margins. Following similar anti-communist eruptions among furniture, wood, chemical, and shoe workers, rightward-moving CIO leaders confidently took matters into their own hands. In 1950 the remaining Communist-led unions--eleven affiliates with a combined membership of almost one million--were put on trial by the national CIO, convicted of "following the Communist Party line," and summarily expelled.<sup>4</sup>

In explaining the postwar rout of the left, most analysts focus on labor's experiences during the war. Their arguments run in two general directions. One, a more structuralist explanation, traces the left's defeat to the changing and increasingly conservative composition of the labor force. In this view, the key wartime development was the displacement of veteran CIO militants by new workers lacking union experience or ideological attachments to the left.<sup>5</sup> The other leading explanation sees the demise of the left in more historical terms. From this

perspective, the fatal blow was delivered by the left itself, as a result of the "class collaborationist" policies pursued by many Communist-supported union leaders during the war.<sup>6</sup>

This article examines both arguments in light of the wartime experience of one particular union--the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). Led by the outspoken and controversial Harry Bridges, the ILWU was a favorite target of ideological cold warriors. Indeed, "Red Harry" was on everyone's "most dangerous" list: West Coast shipowners denounced the Australian-born Bridges as "that foreign monster" and repeatedly refused to negotiate with him; representatives of the federal government tried on numerous occasions to deport him as an "undesirable alien;" Congress went so far as to pass a special bill, mentioning Bridges by name, which included language written specifically to expedite his deportation; even some of his fellow unionists jumped onto the anti-Bridges bandwagon, accusing him of treason and calling for his resignation. Bridges "is the national bogey-man," wrote labor reporter Richard Neuberger on the eve of World War II, "a symbol within our own country of revolutionary tendencies and dangerous ideas."<sup>7</sup>

As the hot war turned cold, ideas that had been seen as dangerous came to be regarded as subversive, and the men and women who held them, from the lowliest rank-and-filer to the highest union official, were either driven from the house of labor or forced to recant. But not Bridges. He kept hammering away at "the system," continually raising his voice on behalf of unpopular causes, whether it was the civil rights of Japanese-Americans or the rising tide of McCarthyism. While turning back an increasingly active opposition within his own union, Bridges also managed to fend off numerous raids directed against the ILWU by competing organizations. No other left-wing union--not even the half-million-member United Electrical Workers Union (UE) nor the militant Mine, Mill, and Smelters Workers--could make the same claim. During the darkest days of the Cold War, when the rest of the left was fighting for its very survival, the ILWU was actively enrolling new members, appearing as invincible as ever.<sup>8</sup>

The question is why? Why was the ILWU, one of the country's most radical unions, so resilient? Put differently, why was left-wing leadership so much more durable in the ILWU than elsewhere?

Part of the answer has to do with the conditions attending the birth of the ILWU. Longshore unionism on the Pacific Coast was reconstituted in the fall of 1934 following a long and especially violent walkout by 30,000 West Coast marine workers. The "Big Strike" produced a union contract for the longshoremen and, what was more important in the long run, a deep sense of loyalty to Bridges and other insurgent leaders who led them into combat against the shipowners. This generation of "'34 men," having been forged in the heat of battle, constituted a solid base of support for radicalism on the docks.<sup>9</sup> That fall, Bridges defeated an old-line craft unionist for the presidency of the San Francisco local of the International Longshoremen's Association. Representing much more than a routine changing of the guard, Bridges's ascendancy signalled a new and more militant spirit, which soon found expression in literally hundreds of small scale "quickie strikes" that were aimed at fundamentally transforming working conditions on the job.<sup>10</sup> These isolated skirmishes came together in the winter of 1936 when marine workers struck the West Coast once again, this time paralyzing commerce for over three months. Riding this wave of militancy, twelve thousand longshoremen followed Bridges out of the AFL into the CIO, forming the ILWU in the summer of 1937.

As much as the 1930s was a time of expanding political opportunities for Bridges and the left, World War II was a period of contraction. Like most of organized labor, the ILWU underwent a major transformation during the war, as older workers departed, new ones arrived, and union priorities shifted. But that is where the similarity ends, for the ILWU, while committed along with the rest of the left to winning the war at home, also won the battle for survival that followed. Returning to our earlier question, what explains the extraordinary durability of radical leadership on the docks? In particular, what was it about the ILWU's wartime experience that made Bridges so much more resilient than his left-wing contemporaries?

## WARTIME UNION POLITICS AND THE LEFT

The left's "plunge to disaster," writes Bert Cochran, began with Communist party leader Earl Browder "taking on unsolicited the task of war manager on the home front." Guided by the party's slogan "Everything for Victory" and driven by his own single-minded obsession with maximizing productivity, Browder's enthusiasm for the war effort knew few bounds. "We have to find out ways to make the capitalist system work better," he pleaded before a gathering of New York unionists in 1943. "And since the capitalists themselves, who are in charge of that, are not doing a job that satisfies us, we have to help the capitalists to learn how to run their own system under war conditions."<sup>11</sup>

Browder's stunning metamorphosis from one of the country's leading class antagonists to its self-appointed "captain of industry" had been triggered by Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, which, in the mysterious dialectic of communism, transformed the basic character of the developing European conflict from an "imperialist squabble" into its opposite: a popular "war of national liberation" against fascism. In calling for national unity to defeat the Axis powers, Browder counseled union leaders to set aside their peacetime differences with employers. Labor's enemy, he stressed, was no longer capital per se but rather the small "defeatist wing" of the bourgeoisie who failed to support the American-Soviet wartime coalition. "If J. P. Morgan supports this coalition and goes down the line for it," Browder declared in a burst of patriotism, "I, as a Communist, am prepared to clasp his hand on that and join with him to realize it. Class divisions have no significance now except as they reflect on one side or the other of this issue."<sup>12</sup>

Browder's support for the war effort was nothing if not sincere, stirring the party faithful in a way that the ignominious Hitler-Stalin pact never could. Within nine months of Pearl Harbor, 15,000 members of the party and its major youth affiliate, the Young Communist League, had enlisted in the armed forces, including fully 30 percent of the leadership. So as not to antagonize "progressive capitalists," Communists took the lead in liquidating their own presence in industry by abolishing Communist Party clubs, the basic unit of shop-floor organization. The next casualty of wartime cooperation was the party itself, which was officially dissolved in 1944 and replaced by



the Communist Political Association. With the dissolution of the party, it was clear that the Communists would stop at nothing to realize their principal wartime objective of defeating fascism.<sup>13</sup>

This grand strategy hinged on winning "the battle for production" on the home front. Accordingly, many party loyalists in the labor movement called for relaxing hard-won work rules and voluntarily giving up any that seemed to hamper the war effort. At the same time they vigorously advocated a number of proposals--including those traditionally opposed by unions, such as piece rates and no-strike pledges--that might speed up workers and raise output.<sup>14</sup>

This accommodating posture proved to be a serious liability in several unions. In the UAW, party support for incentive pay turned militant rank and filers into enemies. Communist autoworker Nat Ganley, a leader in the Detroit UAW, later admitted that the opposition's "most effective slogan was 'Down with Earl Browder's piecework.'" Still more damaging was the Communists' militant enforcement of labor's no-strike pledge. Wartime walkouts in auto were condemned by party leaders in the most vituperative terms, as "disgraceful . . . nothing less than a stab in the back of our armed services." Striking UAW members were accused of sabotaging the war effort and, argued the Communist Daily Worker, "should be treated as scabs." Even as the war in Europe was approaching a favorable outcome late in 1944, pro-Communist leaders clung tenaciously to their policy of "labor sacrifice" by leading the opposition to a UAW referendum aimed at rescinding the no-strike pledge.<sup>15</sup>

Communists were just as obstinate in other unions. In the East Coast NMU they instructed new members on the essentials of avoiding strikes and threatened to turn over the names of recalcitrant seamen to local draft boards. In the UE they supported both incentive pay and the establishment of government-sponsored "War Production Speed-Up Committees," which were later renamed "Labor-Management Committees" in the interest of gaining rank-and-file support.<sup>16</sup> Besides working to dampen militancy within their own unions, Communist-supported leaders were kept busy trying to stamp out insurgency in other industries as well. When the nation's coal miners struck in 1943 over an unresolved pay dispute with the War Labor Board,

Julius Emspak, UE secretary-treasurer, urged President Roosevelt "to make it impossible for John L. Lewis and his henchmen to continue to organize disruption of coal production." Lewis's failure to prevent the walkout made him, in Bridges's opinion, "the single most effective agent of the fascist powers within the ranks of labor." In denouncing Lewis in this way, Emspak, Bridges, and other prominent leftists merely echoed the sentiments expressed by more mainstream union leaders. But if the left was no less timid than the rest of organized labor, neither was it any bolder; and that in the end proved to be its undoing.<sup>17</sup>

The wartime absorption of the Communist Party into labor's mainstream disoriented many rank-and-file unionists who had previously looked to it for militant leadership. Disillusionment turned increasingly to anger as CP functionaries, preoccupied with their various productivity campaigns, neglected conditions on the shop floor. With many CIO veterans deriding the party's new approach as a form of "red company unionism," younger workers who might have been won over to the left on union issues were instead driven into the growing anti-communist camp. Where these disaffected forces coalesced around a militant and charismatic leader--such as Reuther in the UAW, Curran in the NMU, or Quill in the Transport Workers--the party suffered some of its worst setbacks after the war.<sup>18</sup>

In the ILWU the pro-Soviet left heartily embraced the "labor sacrifice" line, at least in words. "The program for production and supply and victory must supersede all things and all desires," Bridges told a group of civic leaders in 1942. "Labor's enemy is not management," he explained. "Its enemy--our enemy--is Hitler and Japan. Only that employer or that representative of management--or union representative, for that matter--who is not first of all concerned with the full war effort and victory is the contemporary enemy of all of us." Getting down to brass tacks, Bridges told the San Francisco CIO council exactly what it had to do to win the war: "The majority of the time of officers, of grievance committeemen, of the unions as a whole must go to winning the war. How? Production. I'd rather say speed-up, and I mean speed-up. To put it bluntly, I mean your unions today must become instruments of speed-up of the working people of America."<sup>19</sup>

Bridges's rhetoric aside, the reality of the war for most longshoremen was not all sacrifice or speed-up. In fact, as we will see, the ILWU's left-wing leadership managed to strike a fairly reasonable balance between the demands of increased production and the protection of the rank and file's immediate economic interests. Carefully avoiding the kind of super patriotism that contributed to the CP's demise in auto and elsewhere, these leaders met their wartime obligations without sacrificing the union's coveted job control. As a result, Bridges and the left came out of the war in a more secure position, with their trade union credentials intact and their stewardship of the union secure.

#### The Battle for Production on the Docks

The ILWU's commitment to the war effort was embodied in a document titled "A Plan for Maximum Production in Maritime Transport of War Materials and Supplies." Known as the "Bridges Plan," it called for the creation of a tripartite industry council--composed of representatives from the waterfront employers, the union, and the government--for the purpose of "securing more efficient operation" on the waterfront. As part of its sweeping authority, the council would be empowered to recommend "changes in or suspensions of working rules that interfere with maximum production." The entire package was presented to San Francisco longshoremen at a special "stop work" meeting a few days after Pearl Harbor. Without a single voice raised in opposition, the membership voted unanimously to put the plan into effect at once.<sup>20</sup>

Longshoremen in the Northwest were less enthralled with the plan, viewing with suspicion any arrangement predicated on union and employer collaboration. Following their deeply ingrained syndicalist inclinations, locals in Portland and Seattle, as well as in the smaller Washington ports of Aberdeen, Everett, and Bellingham withheld their formal endorsement for three months. The employers, though responding favorably to the plan's emphasis on improving efficiency, also expressed reservations. They, too, objected to the council idea, characterizing it as an unnecessary "invasion of management" and accusing Bridges of "trying to socialize the industry." Pressure from the War Shipping Administration finally brought the shipowners around

in March 1942 when, with the creation of the Pacific Coast Maritime Industry Board, the Bridges Plan became operative in all West Coast ports.<sup>21</sup>

Fears that the board might serve as a beachhead for socialism or as an instrument of class collaboration proved groundless. Neither the employers nor the union, after years of bitter struggle and deep mutual distrust, were prepared to concede any real ground. Steering away from the highly contentious issues of union job control and managerial prerogatives, the board confined itself to surveying port conditions, monitoring the labor supply and generally working to eliminate any obvious bottlenecks in loading and discharging cargo. The result was a slight gain in productivity. In June, board chairman Paul Eliel, representing the government, reported that longshore output had increased at least 10 percent since March. One month later the Pacific Shipper, a reliable industry journal, placed the increase at between 10 and 15 percent.<sup>22</sup>

Much of this improvement, however, was a result of the board's rationalization of production, rather than any retreat by the union. "The bald fact is that the notorious inefficiency of cargo handling in our Pacific Coast ports continues almost unabated," reported employer spokesman Frank Foisie. Speaking before San Francisco's elite Commonwealth Club in July, he placed the blame on the union's refusal to lift its "restrictive practices":

The Board guarantees to restore any and all restrictive rules at the end of the war if the Union will abandon them for the duration. The responsibility for this refusal rests squarely on the Union leadership. The argument advanced is that the morale of the men will suffer.

In addition to restrictive work rules, restrictive practices which are fastened on the industry by job-action of the last eight years have also been continued in full vigor. These restrictive practices are evident on much if not most of the work and witnessed daily; feet still drag; loafing is widespread; leaving the job and the dock while on pay is common; early quitting and late starting is general; use of unnecessary men; the list is long. The facts are evident.<sup>23</sup>

Foisie's assessment was shared by a host of government officials assigned to the industry. Military officers in San Pedro attributed the port's "inefficient" loading operation to sling load restrictions imposed by the union. Following a War Shipping Administration report that was highly critical of the ILWU's sling load limits, the board retained Captain Joseph Tipp, an expert in maritime transportation, to conduct an on-site inspection of cargo-handling procedures on the West Coast. Tipp's final report, based on observations of 113 vessels, showed that as many as one-third were plagued by "bad operations" of various kinds.<sup>24</sup>

The union defended its efforts before a Congressional subcommittee formed in March 1943 to investigate Foisie's latest allegation that the ILWU was, as he put it, "practicing an organized slowdown." Bridges testified that the longshoremen were fully prepared "to tear up our trade union contract. Anything that will increase production we will do." He and other witnesses attributed any inefficiencies to employer mismanagement, citing numerous cases of improperly stowed and damaged cargo, inadequate loading gear, and unnecessary delays in sailing. After hearing several days of testimony from both sides, committee chairman Senator Sheridan Downey decided that Foisie's charge was without foundation.<sup>25</sup>

Yet if union leaders were not promoting a deliberate slowdown, they were not exactly tearing up the contract either. On paper, it is true, the longshoremen gave up far more than the employers: of the 41 Orders issued by the Board through 1943, all but 5 entailed some degree of sacrifice on the part of the union. But, according to Eliel, the ILWU did not really concede very much in the end. "I have gone over the Orders issued by this Board, one by one," he wrote:

and I fail to see how any of them, without exception, can be considered as entailing a real sacrifice on the part of the Union or of the longshoremen. It is true that some of them have been directed toward practices which have accumulated over the years but which no one can defend. In these instances . . . [union leaders] have merely carried out what the Union was already obligated to carry out under the terms of its contract with the employers.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, Eliel acknowledged that many longshoremen had shouldered great personal sacrifices as part of their patriotic obligation. Though not required to work more than ten hours in any one stretch, many gangs routinely worked shifts of twelve hours or more for days on end. "You could refuse to work overtime," recalls San Francisco longshoreman Asher Harer, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, a Trotskyist organization that opposed the war, but "there was such pressure to win this war, to get those supplies going, that if you had raised any hell about it, you would have been sort of a half-way traitor."

The patriotic consensus was overpowering at times. When the situation demanded it, longshoremen turned in nearly superhuman efforts. Numerous ship turnaround records were set, as vessels carrying urgently needed military supplies were discharged in about half the normal time.<sup>27</sup> The ILWU's no-strike pledge, reflected in popular slogans like "Keep It Moving," produced a marked decrease in work stoppages. In San Francisco, job actions declined from an average of 43 incidents a year before Pearl Harbor to fewer than 5 each year during the war. And, unlike earlier stoppages, most wartime job actions were small scale and defensive in nature, often directed at petty military regulations against smoking on the job or bringing lunchboxes aboard ship.<sup>28</sup>

But wartime patriotism, though certainly powerful, was not omnipotent. When Bridges proposed an incentive pay scheme to the membership of San Francisco's Local 10, reaction was decidedly hostile. Jerry Cronin, a former Wobbly and a veteran of the 1934 strike, spoke in opposition. "I've listened very respectfully to everything you've said, President Bridges," he began, "but it boils down to piecework, the very thing the trade union movement has always fought. When I was a Wobbly we fought piecework . . . in 1934 we fought it . . . . We wouldn't take it then, and we're not going to take it now." Whereupon Bridges quietly dropped his proposal rather than engage the membership in a drawn-out and potentially divisive fight.<sup>29</sup>

Bridges's flexibility on the issue of incentive pay contrasts sharply with the role of the left in other unions. In the UAW, for instance, the Communist Party and its allies waged a much more determined effort on behalf of incentives. Ignoring clear and mounting opposition from the

rank and file, the Communist-supported left pushed its unpopular piecework proposal for more than four months. Finally, after being voted down by practically every governing body within the union, the issue of incentive pay died on the floor of the 1943 UAW convention--only to be resurrected a few years later by anti-communists who pointed to it as an example of the party's collaborationist posture during the war.<sup>30</sup>

If the ILWU's left-wing leadership showed greater sensitivity to the interests of the rank and file it was partly because Communist marine workers on the West Coast were less determined in carrying out the CP's "national unity" line. Many seamen found Browder's argument for inter-class cooperation difficult to accept. Bill Bailey, for one, refused to follow the new line. After reading the first three pages of Teheran and America, a widely distributed pamphlet in which Browder elaborated his vision of class collaboration, Bailey, an open Communist and official in the Marine Firemen's Union, had seen enough. "I was supposed to sell a hundred copies, but I couldn't sell a book," he recalls.

I could see something was wrong here. Marx had said we are in a constant class struggle. And here we're coming up saying this struggle is being taken over by a group of so-called "progressive capitalists," that the lamb is gonna lay down with the lion. Who are they talkin' to? Here you are, I'm getting my face beat in, kicked around, half dead for talking about class struggle and now they're gonna say everything was all wrong. We got a beautiful society. Bullshit! It doesn't work that way.<sup>31</sup>

The seamen's gut-level militancy rubbed off on some of their comrades within the waterfront section of the party, creating a rift in some ILWU locals between hard-line followers of Browder and those who adopted a more flexible approach. In San Francisco this split surfaced in the fall of 1942 during a special membership meeting called to discuss the Maritime Industry Board's recent action ordering the union to raise its sling load limit for cement from 22 to 30 one-hundred-pound bags per load. Browderite John Schomaker, a highly respected veteran of the 1934 strike, announced that the Communist Party supported the proposed 3,000-pound limit as a means

of aiding the war effort. Moreover, he argued, increasing the sling load was consistent with the union's own policy of doing everything within its power to maximize production. Another member of the party, Archie Brown, then jumped to his feet, demanding to be recognized. Turning to Schomaker, he insisted that the party had not yet reached a decision concerning load limits but that in his opinion the men should resolutely oppose any increase. "It simply ain't true," he said, "that that is what's gonna win the war." The membership agreed and voted to retain the existing 2,200-pound limit.<sup>32</sup>

Other locals followed suit. Union leaders in Seattle reported that the men were "up in arms" over the board's ruling and that "many of them have threatened to leave the industry if orders of this kind keep coming in." In San Pedro, defiant dockworkers continued building 2,200-pound loads, much to the dismay of local waterfront employers whose repeated threats of disciplinary action failed to bring compliance. Without the active support of union leaders for the 30 bag limit, the board's order soon became a dead letter on the docks.<sup>33</sup>

The sling load controversy illustrates the complexity of working-class consciousness during the war. In objecting to heavier load limits for cement, union leaders cited safety concerns. But this was largely a smokescreen, for inexperienced army recruits had been building 30 bag loads for some time without problems. What was really at stake was not so much a question of safety as it was a question of control. The longshoremen worked longer hours, put up with annoying military regulations, and even speeded-up when they were convinced that doing so would aid the war effort, but they alone decided how, when, and to what degree such sacrifices were to be made. In contrast, the directive ordering the union to raise its sling load limits for cement was seen as threatening the men's autonomy on the job and hence their ability, achieved through years of struggle, to control the terms of their own sacrifice. By resisting the board's order, the longshoremen were saying, in effect, that any sacrifices on their part would be made voluntarily and without coercion, or not at all.

In this way, the wartime ethic of personal sacrifice was held in check by the strong tradition of job control that came out of the violent waterfront struggles of the 1930s. Although



certain contract provisions were watered down by the board's actions, the union's position was never seriously compromised. Even some of Bridges's most vocal left-wing critics, when pressed on the question of the union's wartime record, admit that the ILWU avoided many of the excesses committed in other "Stalinist unions." According to Asher Harer, the ILWU was one of the few Communist-led unions where, in his words, "working conditions didn't deteriorate too much. This is a union that had just come out of two strikes, had a very militant rank and file, and they just weren't about to work themselves to death."<sup>34</sup>

Comparison of labor productivity rates before and during the war also suggests that there was no widespread speed-up. Time-series data, available for both San Francisco and San Pedro, show little change in productivity between the two periods. From 1936 to 1939, San Francisco longshoremen loaded and discharged an average of 2.19 tons of cargo per work hour, compared to 2.21 tons from 1942 to 1945. In San Pedro labor productivity actually declined from a prewar average of 2.44 tons per work hour to 2.18 tons during the war.<sup>35</sup>

In Portland, the pace of work slowed so much that newer workers "were spoiled" by their wartime experience, recalls veteran longshoreman Joe Werner. Younger men who secured work on the docks at that time "thought longshoring was a picnic." Indeed, one of the union's most restrictive work rules originated during the war. Known as "four on/four off," it grew out of the standard procedure of splitting the eight-man hold gang into two teams, each working its side of the hold, handling every other draft. Normally, this division of labor kept both teams constantly occupied, for as one was busy stowing, the other was finishing up and getting ready to catch the next load. But as the nature of cargo changed during the war from fairly uniform civilian commodities to more bulky and irregularly shaped military supplies such as jeeps, tanks, and planes, the work area beneath the hatch was no longer spacious enough to accommodate both teams working simultaneously. The necessity of working only one team at a time soon evolved into a full-blown system of "four on/four off," in which one team worked continuously for the first half of the shift, then rested while the other team worked the second half. With tacit approval from stevedoring operators who saw this arrangement as a way of padding their cost-plus

contracts with the War Shipping Administration, "four on/four off" became an institutionalized practice in many ports, remaining one of the union's most potent work rules for years to come.<sup>36</sup>

On balance, then, the longshoremen surrendered very little while maintaining and in some cases increasing their control over the job. No amount of rhetoric calling on the longshoremen to sacrifice could change one simple but important fact: the workers, not the union or Bridges, "owned" their jobs, and they were the ones who, torn by the conflicting loyalties of nationalism and class, ultimately determined the proper mix of accommodation and resistance on the docks during the war.

On those rare occasions when union leaders veered too far in either direction, they paid for it. In May 1944 Bridges called upon the membership to continue the no-strike pledge for the duration and "indefinitely thereafter," provided that the employers agreed to respect the union's security after the war. Arguing that such a "security preamble" belonged in every union contract, Bridges told the membership of Local 6, representing 5,000 Bay Area warehouse workers, that "we reject any hostility of labor to capital as such, and any hostility to unions as such, knowing well that such approaches are luxuries that neither can now afford." The motion passed with only three dissenting votes.<sup>37</sup> Bridges had greater difficulty selling the security preamble to the more militant dockworkers, however, whose representatives, meeting in a coastwide longshore caucus that summer, voted 120 to 55 in favor. Less than a month later James Kearney, a leading anti-communist, defeated a Bridges-supported candidate for the presidency of Local 10. Although the security preamble was not a central issue in the campaign, Kearney's election was seen by many as a slap in the face of the pro-production left.<sup>38</sup>

Kearney's upset victory was a powerful statement of just how far the rank and file was willing to go to win the war. In weighing the nation's interests against their own as workers, the longshoremen were deeply influenced by the militant work culture of the waterfront, which exerted such pull on the men that few were willing to sacrifice their union's class struggle principles on the altar of national unity.

### THE "GREAT TRANSFORMATION" OF LABOR

The wartime mobilization of American society created deep and lasting social dislocations in the civilian labor force. Within a year of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the number of men in uniform skyrocketed from a previous peacetime high of 800,000 to over 6 million. Despite the large number of former civilian employees entering the armed services during this period, the national labor force grew by more than 5 million workers. In 1943, as the war entered its decisive stages, a second wave of recruits was inducted into the military, creating gaping holes in the civilian work force. Their places were filled by putting the unemployed to work and redirecting hundreds of thousands of already employed workers, including many women, into more essential war industries. With workers coming and going in all directions by the end of the year, the resulting "structure of our labor force," noted the director of the War Manpower Commission, "represented a great transformation from what it was in 1940."<sup>39</sup>

This great transformation was mirrored in the changing membership base of the CIO. National mobilization removed from the shop floor many of the youthful insurgents who had participated in the mass social struggles that built the new unions. Some were among the 11 million draftees or volunteers who entered the armed services. Others followed the movement of capital rather than the flag, seeking occupational deferments and higher wages in the expanding defense sector. In certain "essential industries," it is true, the prewar labor force was frozen in place for the duration. But even where mobility was most restricted, many experienced workers moved out of their old jobs and into more skilled or supervisory positions. Each of these paths--whether leading to the armed forces, defense production, or occupational upgrading--drew many of the CIO's founding cadre out of their familiar workplaces and away from trusted co-workers, thus shattering the social combinations inside the shops which up to that point had provided much of the impetus and rank-and-file direction for the industrial union movement.<sup>40</sup>

In the wake of these departing CIO militants came a flood of less union-conscious workers. Recruited largely from among the urban unemployed, the surplus agricultural labor force, and other nonunionized sectors of the economy, most lacked even a rudimentary understanding of basic

trade union principles. Compared to the veteran unionists they were replacing, these newer workers held more "negative or passive attitudes" toward the CIO's progressive social unionism, writes Joshua Freeman. "Some were still deeply immersed in rural, preindustrial cultures. Many had racial attitudes formed in the South."<sup>41</sup>

The membership turnover was greatest in the mass-production unions, especially those based in the defense sector. Consider the case of the UE. During the war more than 200,000 of its members, including many local officers, union organizers, and even an international official, left for the armed forces. At the same time, tens of thousands of incoming workers filled job vacancies as fast as they were being created by the mass exodus of military conscripts, on the one hand, and the war-stimulated demand for labor in electrical and machine-working plants, on the other. In 1943 the annual rate of turnover for UE workers was around 50 percent. By the end of the war more than 400,000 new members had passed through the UE's revolving doors. The turnover in leadership was so high that, at the union's biennial convention in 1944, more than half of all voting delegates were attending for the first time.<sup>42</sup>

This wartime disruption of the labor force undermined the political base of the UE's left-wing leadership. Newer workers, in particular, proved to be unstable allies of the left. Unlike the union pioneers they replaced, the "war babies" lacked strong attachments to the older generation of radical leaders.<sup>43</sup> Hardly any were even aware, much less appreciative, of the Communists' role as militant founders of the UE. Of course, the party's own wartime policy of concealing its identity by hiding behind various patriotic "fronts" did little to counter this lapse in historical memory. But the characteristics of the "war babies" themselves--their comparatively weak ties to the left, their lack of union experience, and their generally more conservative outlook--also led them to side with the anti-communist International Union of Electrical Workers after the war.

The UE's experience was replicated in other large industrial unions. In the UAW, wartime mobilization radically altered the composition of the labor force. Figures are not available on the number of union members who left the industry during the war, but in Detroit, the center of auto production, almost 30 percent of the city's male workers entered the military.<sup>44</sup> This massive

exodus, combined with countless voluntary withdrawals from the industry for personal reasons, set off a large counter-migration. Between 1940 and 1943 an estimated 500,000 migrants came to Detroit in search of work. Of this total, all but 60,000 were white, and many were from the South and Appalachia. The wartime restructuring of the labor force in auto, as among electrical workers, was accompanied by a shift to the right in union politics, contributing in no small measure to Reuther's victory a few years later.<sup>45</sup>

On the docks, as we will see, the transformation of labor was neither as great nor as destructive of the left. Compared to other industrial unions, the ILWU lost far fewer militants to the war effort. And, most important, many of those who did leave, especially in the critical San Francisco local, were replaced by leftist sympathizers whose active participation in the union's political life helped to neutralize the wartime influx of more conservative workers.

#### Restructuring the Dockside Labor Force

The demographic convulsion that shook the social foundations of radicalism in basic industry was less of a destabilizing force on the West Coast waterfront. Unlike both the UE and the UAW, which lost many of their founding militants to the war effort, the ILWU emerged from the war with its original membership base fairly intact and solidly behind its left-wing leaders.

A good indication of the longshoremen's greater stability is the low rate of military withdrawals from the industry during the first several months of the war. According to labor turnover data compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), roughly 15 percent of the nation's manufacturing labor force entered the armed services within a year of Pearl Harbor.<sup>46</sup> Although the BLS failed to collect equivalent data for the longshore industry, the available evidence, culled from union documents, suggests that the rate of military separations on the waterfront was well below the national average reported for manufacturing workers. The most complete information concerning labor turnover on the West Coast docks was compiled by union officers in San Pedro. Their records show that a total of 77 longshoremen were inducted into the armed forces during the first eleven months of the war. Given that the local's membership was around 2,500 at the time,

only about 3 percent of the work force had entered the military by the end of the year; this was about one-fifth the rate of induction for manufacturing workers.<sup>47</sup>

If the figure for San Pedro seems low--almost unbelievably so when compared to the tens of thousands of electrical, auto, and other manufacturing workers who were then entering the military--it was by no means unusual on the waterfront. Similarly low rates of military separation were reported elsewhere on the West Coast. In San Francisco, the only other port for which such data are available, 850 longshoremen served in the military between 1942 and 1945. At this rate of withdrawal spread out over four years of war, fewer than 20 of the local's 9,500 members left the waterfront each month for military service. Overall, less than 10 percent of the port's longshoremen served in the armed forces<sup>48</sup>--compared to 30 percent of Detroit's auto labor force and what was probably an even higher proportion of inductees in electrical manufacturing.

The low rate of military separations on the docks was partly a consequence of the strategic importance of the marine transport industry to the war effort. Following the designation of longshoring as an "essential activity," most men became eligible for occupational deferments. But it was not only their draft exempt status that held the longshoremen in place. An even more important source of stability was their intense occupational loyalty, which had been built upon years of collective struggle and enduring generational bonds, and conditioned by a high degree of job satisfaction. This sense of occupational identity was so developed among ILWU inductees that several hundred continued working together discharging military cargo as members of the army's "Longshore Battalions." Even as soldiers, many longshoremen managed to stay in close contact with the waterfront.<sup>49</sup>

Of course, military separations were neither the only nor the most important source of labor force instability during the war. What the BLS classified as "voluntary quits" were a far more frequent cause of turnover, representing anywhere from one-half to two-thirds of all wartime separations, depending on the industry.<sup>50</sup>

In the longshore industry, the quit rate soared during the first months of the war. The near total collapse of commercial shipping following Pearl Harbor and the consequent return of

Depression-era levels of unemployment triggered a massive exodus from the waterfront. In San Pedro, where commercial activity was limited to one banana boat per week throughout the first half of 1942, almost 1,200 men left the docks in search of steadier work. Longshore employment in the Northwest also plummeted as the bulk of overseas shipments, consisting almost entirely of military cargo, was rerouted through the army's main port of embarkation in San Francisco.<sup>51</sup>

But the dispersal of the dockside labor force was limited in both time and space. In November, with fighting in the Pacific escalating, the army opened up San Pedro as a port of embarkation to handle the increasing overflow from San Francisco. Almost overnight cargo began piling up on the docks. When the call went out for experienced longshoremen, hundreds of San Pedro dockworkers returned to the waterfront to claim their former jobs. Nearly 500 men came back from San Francisco where they had been working as temporary "permit men." After the first of the year another group of 400 longshoremen began returning from the nearby shipyards with statements, signed by local waterfront employers, specifically requesting their services. By the middle of 1943, with all but 150 men back on the docks, San Pedro's prewar labor force had been largely reconstituted.<sup>52</sup>

Portland's labor force went through a similar cycle of disruption and reconstitution. After the initial drop-off in commercial shipping, many of the local's 800 members were forced to find work in the shipyards or to transfer to the busy San Francisco waterfront. Some were able to return from the shipyards after Portland was declared an auxiliary military port late in 1942. But most stayed put until the spring of 1944 when, with the revival of shipping in the Northwest, all the rest of the local's members were called back from the shipyards and San Francisco.<sup>53</sup>

As this information suggests, the high quit rate on the docks during the first months of the war paints a very misleading picture. Many longshoremen did leave the industry at that time, but the number of permanent quits represented only a small fraction of all separations. Most of what appeared as "voluntary quits" through the first half of 1942 were really short-term withdrawals; practically all were either intraunion transferees who never left the industry or men who, if they did venture from the waterfront, typically returned at the first possible opening.

Although the existing dockside labor force remained relatively stable, thousands of new workers entered the industry during the war. San Francisco's labor force more than doubled, growing from 4,400 men in 1938 to more than 9,000 by the end of the war. The rate of increase was even greater in San Pedro, where the number of registered longshoremen grew by 160 percent between June 1943 and January 1945. In Seattle, which supported a prewar labor force of 1,500, more than 5,000 new recruits were put to work during the last three years of the war.<sup>54</sup>

The political impact of this wartime influx varied somewhat from local to local, depending on the social backgrounds and ideological propensities of the new workers. In San Francisco, many of the earliest recruits were radicals of one type or another who had transferred into Local 10 from ILWU "sister locals" in the Bay Area. Attracted by the more congenial political climate on the docks, more than a few of the warehousemen, shipscalers, and cargo checkers who applied for membership in Local 10 early in 1942 did so out of personal political convictions. Several were products of the city's vital left-wing political movement. Many had been active for years on the fringes of the Communist Party, and some were members of the Socialist Workers Party, while others simply admired Bridges's courage and the militancy of the longshoremen. Far from depleting the left, these activist "war babies" infused the local with fresh radical blood.<sup>55</sup>

Outside of San Francisco, most early wartime recruits joined the union through its program of sponsorship in which current members nominated sons or close relatives for membership. Known as the "brother-in-law" system of hiring, this practice facilitated the transmission of dockside political culture from one generation to the next. Consequently, many of the younger men brought in during the initial phases of the war entered the union with a generally favorable view of Bridges and the left.<sup>56</sup>

But intraunion transfers and "hereditary recruitment" were stopgap measures at best. As the flow of military shipments out of San Francisco began picking up in the summer of 1942, the growing demand for labor soon outstripped available supplies. Later that year, the ILWU, led by Local 10, opened its doors for the first time to industry outsiders.



One of the largest and most politically important groups to enter the union at this time was made up of black longshoremen from the Gulf, who had been drawn to the West Coast after shipping in their home ports was sharply curtailed by German submarine activity. Many had belonged to dissident locals of the ILA, particularly around the ports of New Orleans and Houston, which had long histories of opposing the Jim Crow and collaborationist policies of international union leaders. By the middle of 1943 several hundred black dockworkers from Louisiana and southwest Texas were at work on the waterfront, mostly in the busy port of San Francisco.<sup>57</sup>

The predominantly white work force did not roll out the red carpet for these black workers, especially in the outlying ports. In San Pedro, two union members, exercising the "choose your job" clause, quit work when three blacks were dispatched to their gang. Local leaders promptly investigated the incident and, after determining that the walkout constituted a violation of the union's no-discrimination policy, threatened the two with immediate expulsion unless they made a full public apology for their actions and returned to work at once. In Portland, where blacks were first introduced to the waterfront as strikebreakers in 1922, the reception was colder still. Facing growing pressure from the international, the local union agreed to accept blacks as probationary members, but refused to dispatch them from the hall or extend full union voting rights to them. Bridges, in a letter to the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, promised to take "immediate and drastic steps...to correct this situation." But despite continuing efforts by the international, Portland's membership remained lily-white throughout the war.<sup>58</sup>

Opposition to the international union was based mainly among the large number of "Okies" and "rednecks" who had migrated to the West Coast in search of work during the war. Still deeply influenced by their rural cultures, and guided at every turn by the ideology of rugged individualism, traditional morality, and conservative religious beliefs, these white "war babies" fought the union's left-wing leaders every bit as vigorously as they fought the shipowners.<sup>59</sup> In San Pedro, where "rednecks" led the fight against the ILWU's no-discrimination policy, their vocal opposition and continuing harassment of blacks kept the port's racial cauldron boiling, while in Portland, they, along with returning shipyard workers, launched a vicious smear campaign against

local progressives, denouncing them as "reds" and "commies" and threatening to lead a mass defection from the "communistic" ILWU. Summing up their case before the membership in 1943, a leading right-winger declared that "when the local voted to keep out the 'niggers' they should have voted to kick out the 'commies' also--and maybe they will."<sup>60</sup>

Blacks found the political climate more to their liking in San Francisco. Beginning with the 1934 strike, when two black longshoremen--both members of the Communist Party--served on the San Francisco strike committee, the local had distinguished itself as a haven of racial equality.<sup>61</sup> By the time the 1936-1937 strike rolled around, 15 black workers were serving on the local strike committee. That year, after three blacks were elected to its executive board, Local 10 instituted a special anti-discrimination committee to see that no worker was discriminated against because of race or color. Then in 1938 a black longshoreman was elected to the all-important post of job dispatcher. The local continued its color-blind policies throughout the war, clamping down hard and fast on anything that even remotely smacked of racism.<sup>62</sup>

Local 10's commendable civil rights record attracted the attention of minority workers in other West Coast industries. When the shipyards began laying off in mid-1944, many blacks headed for the docks, drawn by the promise of social equality and steady postwar employment. In San Pedro, nearly one-fifth of the 2,600 men added to the labor force between July 1944 and July 1945 were black. During the same period Seattle put 3,100 men to work, including a small number of blacks. Only Portland remained unaffected, taking in 557 men, most of them white former members of the local returning from other ports or the shipyards. But the racial composition of Local 10 was radically transformed. Of the 6,600 men added to the port's labor force during the last twelve months of the war, nearly half were blacks who had recently been released from the shipyards. By the end of 1945 the San Francisco local was almost one-third black.<sup>63</sup>

These later black arrivals, taking political direction from their predecessors, fell in with the left--a relationship that deepened with the growing political sophistication of the new recruits. In 1943 the union instituted a mandatory educational program designed to acquaint its newer

members with the ILWU's progressive traditions. It proved to be an eye-opener for many "war babies," especially blacks whose earlier union experience had been in the shipyards. Cleophas Williams's response was in many ways typical. Describing his introduction to Local 10 in the fall of 1944 as "almost a religious experience," he recalls:

I knew nothin' about trade unions before I went into the ILWU. As a child I read about the strikes on the West Coast, in the coal mines, auto and steel. And I was in a right-to-work state, and the newspapers had everything slanted against unions, talkin' about the benevolence of Henry Ford and all that kind of stuff. I had no idea that the purpose of the union was to upgrade the way the ILWU did. The electrical union [in the shipyard] was inert, so far as moving you from one position to another. But the ILWU made you politically aware.

As part of their political socialization, probationary members of Local 10 had to become registered voters and attend required classes at the city's left-wing California Labor School before being considered for full union membership. "Once you went to the California Labor School and were among other workers, hearing different talk, different rhetoric, you began to question, you began to see. It was a conversion," Williams explained, again using religious imagery to convey the depths of his personal transformation.

It was "All this time I've been in the dark, and now I'm beginning to see the light. Why did you keep my eyes closed for so long?" It was a beautiful experience to see how you could be in concert with other workers to improve your lot, and not be out there saying "You gotta hustle, hustle, hustle and you can get ahead, son." That's what I was taught--not to come together with the energies of other people and combine those energies for the cause of all.<sup>64</sup>

White radicals played a key role in winning over San Francisco's increasingly active black membership. As the war was winding down and cutbacks in the labor force became imminent, different factions within the local began jockeying for position. Conservatives called for restoring the work force to its prewar level by laying off workers on a strict seniority basis. The left,

charging that this would eliminate most black newcomers, countered by advocating less severe cuts. Both plans were aired in the spring of 1945 at a special "stop work" meeting of the entire local. At a critical point in the discussion, a white worker rose and asked Bridges to spell out exactly how he intended to deal with the "excessive number" of blacks once the war was over and work slacked off. Bridges replied evasively at first, saying that the real problem was not the apparent surplus of blacks but rather the capitalist system itself, which forced workers to compete with one another for jobs. Then, returning to the original question, he added that if work ever slowed to the point that there were only two workers left on the docks, he personally believed that one should be black. Williams, along with most other blacks in attendance, was taken aback. Bridges's statement, he remembers,

was very shocking to me because there was no political gain for him by making this statement. There was no gain even among blacks at that particular time because many of the blacks were still on probation, so they couldn't vote. I considered it a statement of conviction. I was shocked. I had read and been exposed to some of the left-wing forces, but I had never heard anyone put his neck on the chopping block by making a public statement of this kind.<sup>65</sup>

Work remained plentiful for some time after V-J day as troops and material still had to be brought home from across the Pacific. With the demand for labor running high, the union's "indefinite" no-strike pledge did not last very long. In the fall of 1946 the ILWU struck the West Coast for 52 days. A year of labor peace followed while the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act worked its way through Congress. Then in 1948 the longshoremen hit the bricks again in a protracted and often bitter walkout reminiscent of the union's prewar battles. The shipowners, armed with Taft-Hartley, demanded that Bridges "disavow communism" and sign the non-communist affidavit as required by the act's Section 9(h) or step down from leadership. Bridges refused, and the longshoremen, registering their opinion in a coastwide referendum, supported their leader's decision by a twenty-to-one margin. The impasse was finally broken after 98 days when the union

agreed to accept a stricter system of arbitration and an unprecedented three-year contract in exchange for most of its other demands.<sup>66</sup>

The postwar strikes evidenced a widening breach between ILWU leaders and youthful strike activists for whom 1946 and 1948 were the "Big Strikes." Bridges, the militant leader of an earlier generation, was now seen by some as being too soft on the shipowners. During the 1946 walkout, Bridges and the left came under fire for agreeing to work military cargo, a policy that insurgents denounced as "half a strike." In 1948, with young militants determined to conduct a tighter strike, the union extended mass picketing to the major military docks.<sup>67</sup>

Dissidents from 1946 and 1948 joined together with a few older syndicalists and the war-swollen ranks of ideological conservatives to form a viable right-wing opposition in many locals. For some, opposition to the Communist-supported left made good political sense in Cold War America, whereas for others it was more a matter of dollars and cents. Sometimes the two concerns overlapped, as in the spirited 1950 debate over U.S. policy in Korea, when rightists defended the government's actions both on patriotic grounds and because it would mean an increase in military shipments from the West Coast.<sup>68</sup>

When the postwar slump in shipping finally hit early in 1949, conservatives coalesced around a defensive strategy of job control unionism. In Local 10, leaders of a recently organized "Blue Slate"--so named to distinguish it from "reds" who were running in the upcoming local election--circulated petitions calling for sharp reductions in the number of workers. When black leaders voiced their concerns, a spokesman for the Blue Slate tersely replied: "We can work together, we can eat together, but we can't starve together." The left, as in the past, came out strongly against any system of layoffs that singled out blacks as its primary victims. The left-wing president of the local, Henry Schmidt, proposed cutting equally from "the top, middle, and bottom" of the seniority ladder. Both plans were eventually rejected by the rank and file, with the result that no cutbacks were made.<sup>69</sup>

The political factionalism that had been growing in many locals spilled out onto the floor of the ILWU convention a few months later. Meeting behind closed doors, delegates representing

nearly 100,000 longshoremen, warehouse workers, and farm laborers from the West Coast, Alaska, and Hawaii engaged in what one correspondent described as "a masks off, no holds barred" exchange over Bridges' refusal to go along with national CIO policy that supported the Marshall Plan and favored withdrawing from the left-wing World Federation of Trade Unions, in which Bridges served as president of the maritime division. The showdown came on a resolution declaring that "the ILWU stands fast on its autonomy" in opposition to the national leadership of the CIO. "If they are right," Bridges said just before the vote, "you delegates had better reorganize this union and get a different set of officers because the ones that I am speaking for now are going to carry on as they have in the last couple of years." The delegates voted 632-1/2 to 11-1/2 in support of Bridges.<sup>70</sup>

The final tally was surprising only for its lopsidedness. Less than a year before, West Coast longshoremen had voted by a narrower margin against the Marshall Plan and for Henry Wallace's Progressive Party candidacy. Even in the politically charged San Francisco local, which was then headed by Kearney and other pro-CIO leaders working openly with the anti-communist Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, the rank and file ended up supporting the International's position on both issues.<sup>71</sup>

As the Cold War descended on the waterfront, the interracial progressive coalition in Local 10 solidified. Increasingly, black "war babies" and veteran white radicals found themselves in the same camp, both victimized by the growing anti-communist hysteria sweeping the country. In May 1950 the Coast Guard began screening "security risks" off the waterfront. Of the 243 longshoremen in San Francisco who were eventually denied Coast Guard passes to work on military docks, fully two-thirds were black, according to a survey conducted by the union.<sup>72</sup> The screening of individual subversives turned out to be a dress rehearsal for the screening of entire unions. A few weeks later the national CIO expelled the ILWU, along with ten other Communist-influenced unions.

The CIO's actions provided an opportunity for anti-communist forces to more openly challenge the ILWU's political direction. In July, a resolution was introduced in Local 10 pledging

unconditional support for Truman's invasion of Korea and promising "not to join in, condone, or recognize any phony Communist demonstrations...to halt or... sabotage shipments of war materials." Bridges then introduced an alternative resolution in support of the United Nations-ordered cease-fire. In the emotional discussion that followed, punches were thrown and the police had to be brought in to restore order. Bridges, who was out on bail pending appeal in his latest deportation case, was promptly whisked off to jail as a threat to national security. In his absence, the coastwide longshore caucus voted 63 to 9 to sever relations with the World Federation of Trade Unions for its stand against U.S. intervention in Korea.<sup>73</sup>

Bridges, languishing in jail, appeared to be on his last legs, headed for the same fate as the rest of the left. His incarceration, noted an observer, was the latest in a series of events all pointing to "the possibility of a drastic debilitation of leftist leadership in the ILWU." But it was not to be. The more Bridges came under attack, the more his traditional allies rallied in defense of their embattled leader. "I felt like he was being abused same as I was," explained black longshoreman Odell Franklin, "The only thing different about it was he was a white man gettin' it."<sup>74</sup> With support from the large wartime influx of blacks, from his allies among the '34 men, and from the political left, Bridges was able to ride out the Cold War turbulence that toppled so many of his contemporaries in the American labor movement.

### CONCLUSION

The social and political forces unleashed by World War II deflected the radical potential of American labor. Once postwar reaction set in, left-wing unionists faced an increasingly hostile environment, both within the larger society and within their own unions. Besieged on all sides, former activists fell silent or shed their unpopular political commitments. By the early 1950s, the radical impulses that had spawned the industrial union movement were little more than a distant, ever fading memory--except on the docks, where Bridges and the left were to remain in power for many years to come.

The relative stability of the prewar labor force, combined with the political neutralization of more conservative workers who entered the union during the war, contributed to the resiliency of the ILWU's radical leadership. In most locals, the pro-Bridges generation of '34 men remained fairly intact, thus avoiding the mass disruption and social decomposition that occurred in auto and electronics where the left sustained heavy political losses after the war. Like many industrial unions, the ILWU also took in a large number of ideologically conservative "war babies". But their political impact was partially offset, particularly in San Francisco, by the early recruitment of radical activists from other ILWU locals and by the large wave of sympathetic blacks who came onto the docks in the later stages of the war.

Anti-communist forces on the waterfront were also held in check by the relatively flexible and balanced union policy pursued by Bridges and other leftists during the war. Despite the rhetoric of labor sacrifice emanating from ILWU headquarters, the union stubbornly "refused to give up a single provision of its contracts," as Bridges himself admitted years later.<sup>75</sup> To the extent that the dockworkers relaxed certain conditions, they did so voluntarily out of a genuine desire to aid the war effort, not because Bridges or some other leader forced them to sacrifice.

The left's more balanced approach on the West Coast was partly a matter of conscious choice and partly a reflection of the militant work culture on the docks. Having just emerged from a decade of protracted and often violent struggles against the shipowners, the rank-and-file longshoremen were not about to surrender anything without good reason. It was their uncompromising militancy that kept Bridges honest during the war. Without it, he no doubt would have strayed closer to the position of all-out sacrifice advocated by Communist leaders in other unions.

The ILWU's refusal to give up basic contract conditions significantly narrowed the parameters of postwar union factionalism to a more limited range of issues. By delivering the goods, the ILWU's pro-production leaders managed to escape the charge of "red company unionism" that proved so damaging to the left in the UAW and elsewhere. Consequently, when anti-communists began organizing in the ILWU after the war, they were unable to fault Bridges



for his handling of trade union matters. Focusing instead on the union's alleged un-Americanism, the right was forced to confine its attack to the political terrain of foreign policy and domestic anti-communism, where Bridges and his supporters were on firm enough ground to repel its advances.

The ILWU's durability, then, was largely a product of its deviant wartime experience. Just how deviant the ILWU was, however, is open to question. Lacking a sufficient number of good case studies, generalizations about the war's impact on labor have been based almost entirely on the experience of one union--the UAW, about which a great deal has been written. But was the UAW, with its high rate of membership turnover and intense political factionalism, all that representative of American labor? Is it not possible that these were exceptional features of the transportation industry under wartime conditions? The simple truth is that we do not know, for the necessary comparative research has yet to be done; when it is, we may find that the UAW's "model" wartime experience was no more paradigmatic than the ILWU's.

Given what we already know about the histories of particular unions, it seems misleading to even speak of the wartime experience, as if all workers experienced World War II in the same way. If, in some general sense, the working class as a whole was subject to many of the same pressures during the war, the particular situation facing, say, an autoworker in Detroit or a longshoreman in San Francisco was quite different. By investigating such differences in the actual lived experiences of autoworkers, longshoremen, and others we can begin to reconstruct the wartime history of American labor from the ground up, capturing its richness and complexity in a way that may eventually provide more satisfactory explanations for the subsequent triumph of business unionism as well as the persistence of labor radicalism in unions such as the ILWU.

However varied the war's impact may have been, it is clear that World War II was a major watershed in the formation of the American working class. Just as the First World War undermined the socialists, the Second World War helped to bury the communists. The attack on the left may have been carried out differently in each period--the socialists were faulted for not being patriotic enough, the communists for being too much so--but the results were substantially

the same: the outbreak of war disarmed a growing working-class insurgency, leaving it vulnerable to attack afterwards.

In treating World War II as an important "intervening variable" in class formation, our analysis runs counter to the largely ahistorical thrust of most social scientific theorizing on the deradicalization of American labor. In this view, the war is dismissed as a mere "event," preceding a structured sequence of determined outcomes in which postwar prosperity sets off a chain reaction of growing working-class affluence leading to the disintegration of proletarian communities, the rise of blue-collar suburbs, changing lifestyles, "embourgeoisement," and, finally, the disappearance of the working class itself.<sup>76</sup>

The problem with this received view is that it never really explains what holds this causal chain together, since the individual links in the argument have no intrinsic meaning outside of their socio-historical context. Postwar affluence, for example, has had very different consequences for workers' consciousness, producing blue-collar Republicans in America and "rich Communists" in France. In both countries, a rising standard of living in and of itself proved less significant than the specific political conjuncture in which American and French workers made sense of their new-found affluence. That such contingencies are likely, in Zolberg's words, to "wreak havoc with theory construction"<sup>77</sup> is all the more reason for incorporating notions of history and human agency into prevailing social scientific explanations of American labor's postwar trajectory.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Aristide R. Zolberg, "How Many Exceptionalisms?" in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg (eds.), Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 406-407. On World War I's impact on working class struggle, see James E. Cronin, "Labor Insurgency and Class Formation: Comparative Perspectives on the Crisis of 1917-1920 in Europe," in James E. Cronin and Carmen Sirianni (eds.), Work, Community and Power: The Experience of Labor in Europe and America, 1900-1925 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), pp. 20-48.

<sup>2</sup> The cases of France and Belgium are discussed in Richard F. Hamilton, Affluence and the French Worker in the Fourth Republic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 285. The impact of World War II on France and Britain is covered in Duncan Gallie, Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983), chap. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Sidney Lens, Left, Right, and Center: Conflicting Forces in American Labor (Hinsdale, IL: Henry Regnery, 1949), p. 359. This is not to say that the situation facing the left was altogether rosy before the war. As early as 1938, as Harvey Leventstein demonstrates in Communism, Anti-Communism, and the CIO (Westport: Greenwood, 1981), chaps. 3-6, several large industrial unions were already split into rival pro- and anti-communist factions. Clearly then, the war did not create the anti-communist impulse, but it did invigorate it in such a way as to make the postwar triumph of the right much easier.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of the left's postwar decline, see Levenstein, Communism, Anti-Communism, and the CIO, chaps. 9-17; Bert Cochran, Labor and Communism: The Conflict that Shaped American Unions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), chaps. 10-12; George Lipsitz, Class and Culture in Cold War America: "A Rainbow at Midnight" (South Hadley: J. F. Bergin, 1982), chaps. 7, 8. The 1948 NMU election results are reported in the New York Times, July 27, 1948, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Joshua Freeman, "Delivering the Goods: Industrial Unionism During World War II," Labor History 19 (Fall 1978): 587, 588; Stanley Weir, "U.S.A.: The Labor Revolt," in American Society Inc.: Studies of the Social Structure and Political Economy of the United States, Second Edition, ed. Maurice Zeitlin (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1977); James Green, "Fighting on Two Fronts: Working Class Militancy in the 1940s," Radical America 9 (July-August 1975): 38, 39.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Art Preis, Labor's Giant Step (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1964); Joel Seidman, American Labor from Defense to Reconversion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); Nelson Lichtenstein, "Defending the No-Strike Pledge: CIO Politics During World War II," Radical America 9 (July-August 1975): 49-75; Martin Glaberman, "Vanguard to Rearguard," Political Power and Social Theory 4 (1984): 37-62; Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), p. 348; Michael Goldfield, "Recent Historiography of the Communist Party USA," in The Year Left: An American Socialist Yearbook 1985, ed. Mike Davis, Fred Pfeil, and Michael Sprinker (London: Verso, 1985), pp. 349-350. The arguments reviewed here about labor force composition and class collaboration represent the standard interpretations of the war's impact on labor radicalism. A third interpretation, which largely grows out of the first two, traces postwar conservatism to the wartime bureaucratization of the CIO. See Mike Davis, Prisoners of the American Dream:

Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class (London: Verso, 1986); Nelson Lichtenstein, Labor's War at Home (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> Harvey Schwartz, "Harry Bridges and the Scholars: Looking at History's Verdict," California History 59 (Spring 1980): 66-79; Charles P. Larrowe, Harry Bridges: The Rise and Fall of Radical Labor in the U.S. (Westport: Lawrence Hill, 1977), pp. 221-222; Richard L. Neuberger, "Bad-Man Bridges," Forum 101 (April 1939): 195.

<sup>8</sup> Harvey Schwartz, "A Union Combats Racism: The ILWU's Japanese-American 'Stockton Incident'," Southern California Quarterly 62 (Summer 1980): 161-176; The post-expulsion performance of the left-wing unions is surveyed in F.S. O'Brien, "The 'Communist-Dominated' Unions in the United States Since 1950," Labor History 9 (Spring 1968): 184-209; During the early 1950s, the Teamsters, the Sailors Union of the Pacific, the Transport Workers Union, and national CIO organizers all attempted futile raids on the ILWU's membership. The Teamsters reportedly spent over a quarter of a million dollars on a series of raids against the ILWU's warehouse stronghold in San Francisco, netting a total of 250 members. However, the longshore division, which is the focus of this analysis, was never pierced; see Robert E. Randolph, "History of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union" (M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1952), p. 185.

<sup>9</sup> Howard Kimeldorf, Reds or Rackets? The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

<sup>10</sup> Bruce Nelson, "'Pentecost' on the Pacific: Maritime Workers and Working-Class Consciousness in the 1930s," Political Power and Social Theory 4 (1984): 141-182.

<sup>11</sup> Cochran, Labor and Communism, pp. 209, 211.

<sup>12</sup> Levenstein, Communism, Anti-Communism, and the CIO, pp. 160-163.

<sup>13</sup> James West, "Communists in World War II," Political Affairs 48 (September-October 1969):

94. Party clubs or "cells" were dissolved in many industries by 1943; see Robert W. Ozanne, "The Effects of Communist Leadership on American Unions" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1954), p. 136; and Maruice Isserman, Which Side Were You On? (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982) pp. 187-192.

<sup>14</sup> See sources in footnote 6 above.

<sup>15</sup> Ganley is quoted in Cochran, Labor and Communism, p. 220. The party's denunciations of wartime strikes are taken from Roger Keeran, The Communist Party and the Auto Workers Union (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p.243.

<sup>16</sup> The NMU's wartime record is mentioned in Henry Spira, "The Unambiguity of Labor History," in Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor, ed. Burton Hall (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1972), p. 251. On the UE's "Speed-Up Committees," see Hugh G. Cleland, "The Political History of a Local Union: Local 601 of the CIO Electrical Workers Union" (Ph.D. diss., Western Reserve, 1957), p. 202.

<sup>17</sup> Emspak is quoted in Albert S. Epstein and Nathaniel Goldfinger, "Communist Tactics in American Unions," Labor and Nation 6 (1950): 41; Bridges is quoted in Larrowe, Harry Bridges, p. 255.

<sup>18</sup> It is significant that Reuther, Quill and Curran all consolidated their positions by attacking the Communist Party for its wartime lack of militancy, not by red-baiting per se; see James R.

Prickett, "Communists and the Communist Issue in the American Labor Movement, 1920-1950" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1975).

<sup>19</sup> Bridges's speech to the group of civic leaders is quoted in William Davis Waring, "Harry Renton Bridges and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union" (M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1966), p. 67; Bridges's comments before the CIO council are taken from Preis, Labor's Giant Step, p. 185. For a discussion of waterfront syndicalism, see Kimeldorf, Reds or Rackets?, chap. 2.

<sup>20</sup> The Bridges Plan is briefly outlined in Richard P. Boyden, "The West Coast Longshoremen, the Communist Party, and the Second World War" (Department of History, University of California, Berkeley, 1967, typescript). San Francisco's endorsement of the plan is reported in Longshoremen's Bulletin, December 16, 1941. Minutes from the "stop work" meeting show no sign of any opposition.

<sup>21</sup> The position of the Northwest locals is reported in Longshoremen's Bulletin, April 14, 1942; employers are quoted in *ibid.*, January 13, 1942.

<sup>22</sup> Productivity data are from C. Thomas, West Coast Longshoremen and the "Bridges Plan" (1943), p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> Foisie is quoted in *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> Correspondence from Abbott Boone to Brehon Somervell, dated August 25, 1943, Army Service Forces Papers, Record Group 160, Port of Embarcation 1942-1944, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; correspondence from Hugh Fulton to Maxwell Brandwen, dated July 27, 1943, War Shipping Administration Papers, Record Group 248, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Tipp's report is found in "Analysis of Captain Tipp's Reports," Box 8, MS. 1438, Francis Murnane Papers, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon (hereafter cited as Captain Tipp's Reports).

<sup>25</sup> Foisie's statement appeared in the New York Times, March 12, 1943, p. 22. The union's reply is in "Notes on Downey Hearing," dated April 23, 1943, p. 5, World War II file, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Papers (hereafter cited as ILWU Papers), San Francisco.

<sup>26</sup> "The Union's War Record," dated February 1947, p. 6, World War II file, ILWU Papers. "Statement of Chairman to Pacific Coast Maritime Industry Board, February 4, 1943," pp. 5, 6, Maxwell Brandwen Papers, Record Group 248, Box 12, Records of Maxwell Brandwen October 1942-April 1944, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>27</sup> Asher Harer interview conducted by author, May 25, 1982, San Francisco. Ship turnaround times are reported in "Wartime Shipping: A Plan and a Memorandum," Prepared and Submitted by Maritime Unions Affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, dated February 1943, p. 24, World War II file, ILWU Papers.

<sup>28</sup> Work stoppages are recorded in "Chronological Index of Work Stoppages," compiled March 4, 1948, Pacific Maritime Association Papers, Pacific Maritime Association, San Francisco. Minutes from the joint union-employer Labor Relations Committee indicate that most disciplinary cases involved single individuals who were accused of violating military regulations or slacking off on the job. In 1942, for example, Portland's LRC heard eight cases involving a total of only eleven men. Six of these cases, involving nine men, concerned either drunkenness or smoking aboard ship. See Labor Relations Committee Minutes, Index to Local 8 Minutes, 1942, ILWU Papers.



<sup>29</sup> Cronin's words were reconstructed in an interview included in Boyden, West Coast Longshoremen, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Keeran, Communist Party and the Auto Workers Union, p. 238.

<sup>31</sup> Bill Bailey interview conducted by author, September 15, 1981, San Francisco.

<sup>32</sup> Archie Brown interview conducted by author, September 7, 1982, San Francisco.

<sup>33</sup> Seattle's position is reported in T. R. Richardson et al. to Labor Relations Committee, dated October 26, 1942, Local 19 file, Correspondence--General, 1936-1944 folder, ILWU Papers. Information on San Pedro is found in correspondence from N. Miller to Mr. McGowen, dated October 28, 1942, Labor Relations Committee Minutes, Local 13 file, ILWU Papers. When Bridges initially tried to sell the idea of a thirty-bag limit in San Pedro, he met with little success; see Larrowe, Harry Bridges, pp. 256, 255.

<sup>34</sup> Harer interview. Another left critic of Bridges, Ed Harris, in "The Trouble with Harry Bridges," International Socialist Review 34 (September 1973): 10, conceded that the longshoremen "maintained job control and working conditions" during the war.

<sup>35</sup> Productivity data are from James Chester Armstrong, "A Critical Analysis of Cargo Handling Cost in the Steamship Industry" (M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1947), pp. 133-135.

<sup>36</sup> Joe Werner interview conducted by author, December 14, 1981, Portland. "Four on-four off" evolved for different reasons in different ports. This account is based on a conversation with five retirees from the San Pedro local. In San Francisco the practice was already widespread by 1942;

see Captain Tipp's Report. Employer support for redundant labor is from Germain Bulcke interview conducted by author, September 4, 1981, San Francisco.

<sup>37</sup> "Excerpt from William Winter Broadcast--CBS--10:15 P. M. Friday May 26, '44," World War II file, ILWU Papers. Bridges's security preamble was denounced as "un-American" and worse by scores of union leaders; see PM Magazine, May 31, 1944. Even Communist leaders were reluctant to go along with an indefinite no-strike pledge; see Joseph R. Starobin, American Communism in Crisis 1943-1957 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 59, 77, 91.

<sup>38</sup> ILWU Dispatcher, August 11, 1944, p. 6, and October 6, 1944, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> "Can We Allot Manpower by Voluntary Methods?" by William Haber, Director, Bureau of Program Planning, 1943, p. 1, War Production Board Papers, Record Group 179, Log no. 775, Class. no. 832.2, Manpower Distribution, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>40</sup> Stanley Weir, "American Labor on the Defensive: A 1940s Odyssey," Radical America 9 (July-August 1975): 167-169. The dynamics of union membership growth during the war are examined in Judith Stepan-Norris, "The War Labor Board: The Political Conformity and Bureaucratization of Organized Labor," in How Mighty a Force? Studies of Workers' Consciousness and Organization in the United States, ed. Maurice Zeitlin (Los Angeles: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1983), pp. 198-230.

<sup>41</sup> "Can We Allot Manpower by Voluntary Methods?" by William Haber, 1943, p. 1, War Production Board Papers; Freeman, "Delivering the Goods," p. 587.

<sup>42</sup> James J. Matles and James Higgins, Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank and File Union (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974), p. 137. The UE's rate of turnover is based on industry rates

reported for the electrical, radio, and machine-working complex in United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Handbook of Labor Statistics, 1947 ed., Bulletin no. 916 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 43-46 (hereafter cited as Handbook of Labor Statistics 1947). The description of convention delegates is reported in Cleland, "Political History of a Local Union," p. 218.

<sup>43</sup> This conclusion is based on Ronald Schatz, The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse, 1923-1960 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), esp. pp. 195-197. Analyzing the bases of factionalism in the UE, Schatz finds that supporters of the anti-communist IUE were "comparatively young workers" whereas the UE's support came from "considerably older" men and women belonging "to that generation of workers born about 1900 who had founded local unions during the Great Depression."

<sup>44</sup> Martin Glaberman, Wartime Strikes: The Struggle Against the No-Strike Pledge in the UAW During World War II (Detroit: Bedwick Editions, 1980), p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> The demographics of Detroit's war population are reported in Keeran, Communist Party and the Auto Workers Union, p. 231. Communist leaders in the UAW, according to Levenstein, also traced their defeat to "wartime changes in the auto industry's work force, especially the influx of new workers from the South and Appalachia and the failure of many prewar militants to return to the industry after their mobilization" (Communism, Anti-Communism, and the CIO, p. 204).

<sup>46</sup> The 15 percent figure, representing the combined monthly totals for 1942, includes a small number of nonmilitary withdrawals from the labor force, which are reported as "miscellaneous separations" in Handbook of Labor Statistics 1947, p. 42.

<sup>47</sup> "Local 13 Members in U. S. Army," dated November 9, 1942, Local 13 file, ILWU Papers.

<sup>48</sup> ILWU Dispatcher, November 2, 1945, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> "Essential activities" are identified in "List of Essential Activities," 1944, Document 7, Class. no. 832.11, Manpower Requirements, p. 4, War Production Board Papers. The "Longshore Battalions" are covered in the Daily Commercial News, July 3, 1942, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Handbook of Labor Statistics 1947, p. 42.

<sup>51</sup> Elmer Mevert interview conducted by author, January 13, 1982, San Pedro. Werner interview.

<sup>52</sup> L. B. Thomas to Clarence R. Johnson, dated May 15, 1942, Local 13 file, Correspondence--General, 1936-1944 folder, ILWU Papers; Al Langley interview conducted by author, February 4, 1982, San Pedro.

<sup>53</sup> Werner interview. Longshoremen's Bulletin, May 25, 1944.

<sup>54</sup> Waterfront Employers to Eliel et al., dated July 1, 1942, Pacific Coast Maritime Industry Board file, Manpower--General, ILWU Papers; "Increase in Membership of ILWU Longshore Locals Pacific Coast States--1943-1946," Membership Statistics file, ILWU Exhibit, Fact Finding Panel, April 1946, ILWU Papers; "Number of New Men Recruited Each Month in San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles-Long Beach, and Tacoma, June 1943-August 1945, Incl.," Pacific Coast Maritime Industry Board file, Manpower--General, ILWU Papers.

<sup>55</sup> Harer interview.

56 Ibid.

57 Odell Franklin interview conducted by author, January 23, 1984, Berkeley. For background on the "maverick" reputation of ILA locals in New Orleans and Houston, see Maud Russell, Men Along the Shore (New York: Brussel & Brussel, 1966), pp. 88, 134, 144; and Herbert R. Northrup, "The New Orleans Longshoremen," Political Science Quarterly 57 (December 1942): 539, 540.

58 L. B. Thomas to Clarence R. Johnson, dated May 15, 1942, Local 13 file, Correspondence--General, 1936-1944 folder, ILWU Papers; Bridges to Malcolm Ross, dated December 20, 1943, Local 8 file, Correspondence--General, 1937-1943 folder, ILWU Papers.

59 This combination of militancy on the job and ideological conservatism was characteristic of white "war babies" in other industries, especially auto; see Nelson Lichtenstein, "Auto Worker Militancy and the Structure of Factory Life, 1937-1955," Journal of American History 67 (September 1980): 335-353.

60 Personal correspondence from Gus Rystad, retired Seattle longshoreman, to author, dated February 26, 1984; Langley interview, February 4, 1982; Matt Meehan to Harry [Bridges], dated January 1, 1944, Local 8 file, Correspondence--General, 1937-1943 folder, ILWU Papers.

61 Karl Yoneda and Elaine Black-Yoneda, interview with author, San Francisco, January 26, 1984. Yoneda's own case is illustrative of the ILWU's commitment to fighting racism. A known Communist and San Francisco longshoreman, Yoneda was sheltered by his all-white gang when government officials came to the docks early in the war to take him into custody for internment in a relocation center. The Communist Party suspended Yoneda's membership during the war, and the shipowners opposed his registration in the industry. Only the ILWU came to his defense, as

they did for other persecuted Japanese-Americans; see Schwartz, "A Union Combats Racism," pp. 161-176. Also see Lester Rubin, The Negro in the Longshore Industry (Philadelphia: Industrial Research Unit, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, 1974); and David E. Thompson, "The ILWU as a Force for Interracial Unity in Hawaii," Social Processes in Hawaii 15 (1951): 32-43.

<sup>62</sup> Philip S. Foner, Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1973 (New York: International Publishers, 1974), p. 225; Philip S. Foner and Ronald L. Lewis, eds., The Black Worker: A Documentary History from Colonial Times to the Present (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), vol. 7, The Black Worker from the Founding of the CIO to the AFL-CIO Merger, 1936-1955, pp. 129, 130; Bulcke interview, September 4, 1981.

<sup>63</sup> The number of men recruited in each port is from "Number of New Men Recruited," Pacific Coast Maritime Industry Board file, Manpower--General, ILWU Papers. Information on racial composition is based on Langley interview, February 4, 1982; Werner interview, December 14, 1981; and Cleophas Williams, interview with author, Oakland California, January 25, 1984.

<sup>64</sup> Williams interview.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Pacific American Shipowners, White Paper: West Coast Maritime Strike (San Francisco: Waterfront Employers' Association of California, 1948), p. 14; Randolph, "International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union," pp. 105, 106. The 1948 strike inaugurated the "new look" in maritime labor relations, ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence on the docks. For an analysis of the 1948 strike as a turning point in labor relations, see Bruce Dancis, "San Francisco Employers and Longshore Labor Relations, 1934-1949: A Reinterpretation"

(Department of History, Stanford University, 1975, typescript); and Clark Kerr and Lloyd Fisher, "Conflict on the Waterfront," Atlantic Monthly 184 (September 1949): 17-23.

<sup>67</sup> Harer interview. The Cold War made strange bedfellows. In Local 10, for example, Trotskyists usually sided with their old nemesis, the pro-Soviet left, rather than allying with the anti-communist opposition.

<sup>68</sup> Seldon Osborne interview conducted by author, September 11, 1981, San Francisco.

<sup>69</sup> Franklin interview.

<sup>70</sup> "Indestructible Bridges," New Republic 120 (April 18, 1949): 7. In his many Cold War skirmishes with the right, Bridges counted not only on the veteran longshoremen but also on the ILWU's warehouse division and the huge Hawaiian locals, where his support on certain issues was even stronger than on the docks; see Wayne Hield, "What Keeps Harry Bridges Going?" Labor and Nation (January-March 1952): 38 ff.; Sanford Zalburg, A Spark Is Struck: Jack Hall and the ILWU in Hawaii (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1979).

<sup>71</sup> Paul Eliel, "Industrial Peace and Conflict: A Study of Two Pacific Coast Industries," Industrial and Labor Relations Review 2 (July 1949): 497. Longshoremen's Bulletin, May 14, 1948, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> ILWU Dispatcher, July 20, 1951, p. 2, and August 17, 1951, p. 6. The waterfront screening program is discussed more extensively in David Cate, The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), chap. 21; and Peter Trimble, "Thought Control on the Waterfront," The Nation 173 (July 14, 1951): 27-29.

<sup>73</sup> Randolph, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, p. 219.

<sup>74</sup> David Levinson, "Left-Wing Labor and the Taft-Hartley Law," Labor Law Journal 1 (November 1950): 1088. Franklin interview.

<sup>75</sup> Bridges is quoted in "To All Longshore, Shipclerks and Bosses Locals," dated September 19, 1950, p. 2, World War II File, ILWU Papers.

<sup>76</sup> This, of course, is the classical statement of "embourgeoisement" which, with the more recent addition of the disappearance claim, continues to dominate research and thinking on the contemporary working class. For a brief, largely critical review of this literature, see James W. Rinehart, "Affluence and the Embourgeoisement of the Working-Class: A Critical Look," Social Problems 19 (Fall 1971): 149-162; and Elizabeth Jelin, "The Concept of Working-Class Embourgeoisement," Studies in Comparative International Development 9 (Spring 1974): 1-19.

<sup>77</sup> On the French case, see Hamilton, Affluence and the French Worker. The evidence on the American case is somewhat mixed, with Richard F. Hamilton, in Class and Politics in the United States (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), arguing that affluence has not significantly eroded traditional blue collar support for the Democrats, whereas Arthur B. Shostak, in Blue-Collar Life (New York: Random House, 1969), maintains that well paid, highly skilled manualists have become pro-Republican. More recently, David Halle, in America's Working Man (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), suggests that Republicanism has a limited appeal among blue collar workers, including highly paid oil workers, who are the subject of his study. The quote on theory construction is from Zolberg, "How Many Exceptionalisms?," p. 406.



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