Chapter One

Introduction: Workers, Unions, and Politics

"The more developed a society," Karl Marx wrote in reference to the United States, "the more glaringly does the social question emerge." Uncontaminated by European "backwardness" or residual feudal classes, late nineteenth-century America represented the purest example of a developing bourgeois society. "On such soil, where the worker dominates," Marx confidently predicted, a revolutionary working-class movement "is bound to strike strong roots."[1]

For a time, the American proletariat seemed destined to fulfill Marx's vision—even if Marx, who died in 1883, would not be present to witness it. In 1884 the demand for a universal eight-hour working day was picked up by local labor councils from coast to coast. For the next two years hundreds of thousands of workers, possessed by what the newspapers called "eight-hour madness," were drawn into an ever-widening struggle that, in calling for a general reduction in hours, challenged the central mechanism of exploitation on which the capitalist system itself rested. From New York to San Francisco, from Chicago to St. Louis, workers organized, marched, protested, and engaged in political activity on a scale never before seen in this country. This "Great Upheaval," as historians now refer to the period, culminated in the spring of 1886 when close to half a million workers downed tools as part of a national campaign to shorten the length of the working day.[2]

American labor had finally come of age, or so it appeared to many of Europe's hopeful revolutionaries. Friedrich Engels, ob-

serving from across the Atlantic, saw the sharpening conflict overseas as a clear sign that "the last Bourgeois Paradise on earth is fast changing into a Purgatoria." The awakening of the American proletariat, he wrote in June of 1886, "is quite extraordinary: Six months ago nobody suspected anything, and now they appear all of a sudden in such organized masses as to strike terror into the whole capitalist class. I only wish Marx could have lived to see it."[3]

What Engels himself lived to see, however, was hardly reassuring. Later that summer the eight-hour movement collapsed under the weight of increasing state and employer repression. By the fall, the largest labor organization in the country, the visionary Knights of Labor, was on the verge of collapse. In its place arose the more pragmatic American Federation of Labor. Unlike the Knights, whose program called for abolishing the wage system, the AFL accepted capital's preeminent place in the industrial environment. In time, the new unions became gravediggers not of capitalism, as Marx had predicted, but of socialism: in 1894, delegates attending the AFL's ninth annual convention narrowly defeated a resolution endorsing collective ownership of the means of production.[4]

In rejecting socialist doctrines, American labor at the turn of the century found itself moving against the main currents of trade union development in the West. The United States, in fact, was the only industrializing democracy whose labor movement was not explicitly committed to a socialist transformation of the existing order. Why the United States should be so different, why its organized working class—alone among advanced capitalist countries—turned away from socialism at this crucial historical moment, became the subject of Werner Sombart's provocatively titled essay "Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?" Sombart's answer, originally appearing in 1905 as a series of articles, focused on what he believed were the distinctive features of the class experience in the United States: the relatively high standard of living enjoyed by lower classes; the opportunities for upward mobility; western expansion as a safety valve for urban discontent; the democratic tenor of daily life; and early manhood suffrage, which, together with the two-party monopoly, facilitated the political incorporation of the working class.[5] In short, America was portrayed as a land uniquely insulated from radicalism, where both history and social structure conspired against the emergence of a working-class-based socialist movement.

Succeeding generations of scholars and political activists have kept Sombart's project very much alive, readily finding additional explanations for the failure of socialism wherever they happened to look. Those with a more panoramic view of the problem have tended to emphasize either the unusual economic success of American capitalism or the strength of liberal traditions, whereas others, focusing more narrowly on the workplace, have stressed the essentially "unformed" character of the working class, its economism, or the quality of union leadership. Still others have turned to more explicitly political factors having to do with the system of federalism, the structure of politics, and the role of the state.[6]

Given the many obstacles confronting socialists in America, perhaps the most arresting fact is that they were able to make any headway at all. Indeed, asking why socialists met with even limited success—or, as Wilbert Moore posed the problem some time ago, "Why are there *any* socialists in the United States?"—would seem to be the more interesting and significant question.[7]

The rationale for Moore's question is not unlike that which prompted Sombart's original query. Though the two questions aim in different directions, both target the "deviant case" in order to explain the failure of socialism.[8] For Sombart as well as for practically all students of "American exceptionalism," the problem is to understand why the labor movement in this country deviated from the socialist path followed by most of its European counterparts,[9] whereas Moore, looking only at the United States, chooses to examine the same problem by asking why a small minority of the population deviated from the national consensus and found socialism attractive. The first of these questions has received considerable attention, but the second has scarcely been addressed.

This study takes up the neglected question: Why some socialism? In doing so, it approaches the perennial problem of exceptionalism from a fresh perspective. Instead of asking why the American left failed, for the most part, to convert the labor movement to socialism, I begin by asking why radicals, particularly Communists and their closest allies, attained positions of prominence within the industrial union movement spawned by the Great Depression. For more than two decades the Communist Party wielded significant power in some of the nation's most vital and strategic industries, including auto, electronics, metal mining, machinery, maritime, and public transportation. With nearly one of

every three organized industrial workers enrolled in unions that were euphemistically characterized as left-wing or progressive, radicals of one stripe or another controlled a larger portion of the American labor movement by the end of World War II than at any time since the founding of the AFL.[10]

What accounts for the left's surprising—most specialists would say totally unpredicted—success? Was it largely a result of "historical accident," of simply being in the right place at the right time? Or were deeper sociological processes at work, such as the history and structure of certain industries, the characteristics of their workers, and the nature of the struggles these workers engaged in? And what of the radical unions themselves? What does their existence suggest not only about the historical possibilities of working-class insurgency during the New Deal and beyond, but also, more generally, about the socialist potential of organized labor? Conversely, what do these radical enclaves suggest about the alleged conservatism of American workers? Or, put differently, what can the limited *presence* of labor radicalism in the United States teach us about the wide range of theories that purport to explain its *absence?*

I explore these questions through a deviant case analysis of the West Coast International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), one of the most radical labor organizations created by the mass working-class insurgency of the 1930s. Formed in 1937 when the Pacific Coast district of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) bolted the AFL, changed its name, and affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), the ILWU was a hotbed of labor militancy. In the first few years of its existence, the ILWU conducted literally hundreds of job actions, or "quickie strikes," that progressively eroded employer control over the labor process. By wedding direct action tactics to vigorous contract enforcement, the longshoremen won some of the most restrictive work rules of any industry, rivaling those of the more established printing and railroad trades.[11]

But what was perhaps most distinctive about the ILWU was its refusal to separate politics from "pork chops." Unlike the rest of the labor movement, including most other left-wing unions, the ILWU committed its considerable economic muscle to efforts aimed at realizing larger political objectives.[12] During the late

1930s, for example, with fascism menacing Europe, the ILWU imposed a boycott on all German, Italian, and Japanese shipping to protest the militarization of the emerging Axis powers. In later years, the ILWU consistently sided with the left, from its early opposition to the Cold War through its support for the 1948 Progressive Party candidacy of Henry Wallace, to its protracted fight for the rights of Communists to participate in unions.[13]

Combining militancy and radical politics, the ILWU was widely recognized as the strongest bastion of Communist unionism on the West Coast, if not in the entire country. Over the years, scores of rank-and-file dockworkers passed through the "revolving doors" of the Communist Party, with the number of dues-paying members averaging around two hundred. Surrounding this critical mass was a much larger circle of "fellow travelers," including the nearly five hundred West Coast longshoremen who subscribed to the Communist Party newspaper, the *Daily Worker.* Reviewing the party's accomplishments on the docks, Nathan Glazer, in his authoritative study on American communism, concluded that the ILWU was "one of the great successes of the Communist Party in establishing a native working-class base . . . approximat[ing] the Leninist image." On that point there is a remarkable consensus, cutting across contending theoretical perspectives and political positions. Indeed, if students of American labor agree on little else, most would describe the ILWU as the most radical union in the country, except for possibly the International Fur and Leather Workers Union.[14]

Despite its extreme radicalism, the ILWU was the union most impregnable in the face of red-baiting, remaining so even at the height of the Cold War. The real test of strength for the left came in 1950 when the national CIO, facing growing pressure from the right, expelled eleven of its affiliates, including the ILWU, for "following the Communist Party line." Expulsion dealt a severe blow to the newly independent unions, few of which were strong enough to survive on their own. Stripped of the jurisdictional protection they had enjoyed as members of the CIO, they became sitting ducks for rival CIO affiliates who raided their memberships with impunity. Only three industrial unions—the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union (UE); the International Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union; and the ILWU—rallied behind their embattled left-wing leaders. But neither the UE nor the Mine,

Mill workers were able to hold out for long. Within a few years the UE lost more than half its members to the anti-communist International Union of Electrical Workers, while the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, following a string of piecemeal losses to rival CIO unions, was itself eventually swallowed up by the United Steel Workers of America. Again the ILWU was the exception. Fending off repeated raids by CIO organizers, the Sailors Union of the Pacific, the Transport Workers Union, and even the powerful Teamsters, the ILWU emerged from the Cold War with its basic longshore division wholly intact and growing.[15]

The intense and enduring quality of radicalism that distinguished the ILWU from the rest of the left was embodied in its international president, former Australian seaman Harry Bridges, who led the ILWU from its founding in 1937 until his retirement in 1977 at the age of seventy-five. As a past member of the revolutionary syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World, as well as a long-time ally of the Communist Party, Bridges was "far to the left of any other American labor leader ever to attain equal prominence," observed labor reporter Richard Neuberger in 1939. "Bridges," he wrote, "epitomizes labor revolt and extremism. . . . He is . . . a symbol within our country of revolutionary tendencies and dangerous ideas. His name, far more than that of Earl Browder, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, is practically synonymous with radicalism."[16]

Class struggle was the touchstone of Bridges's trade union philosophy. When a student at the University of Washington in the mid-1930s asked him to summarize his views, Bridges replied with characteristic candor: "We take the stand that we as workers have nothing in common with the employers. We are in a class struggle, and we subscribe to the belief that if the employer is not in business his products will still be necessary and we still will be providing them when there is no employing class. We frankly believe that day is coming."[17]

Such outspokenness did little to endear "Red Harry" to more privileged groups in society. To West Coast shipowners he was "a very dangerous man" whose views "simply don't fit into the American scheme of doing things." Federal authorities agreed, attempting on five separate occasions to deport Bridges as an "undesirable alien," based on his close and intimate association with

the Communist Party. Though Bridges denied ever being a member of the party, he never retreated—in court, in the media, or before his own union membership—from his commitment to socialism. It was simply not Bridges's style to hide his politics, as a reporter for *Time* magazine learned in covering the first deportation trial in 1939. "Defendant Bridges," the journalist wrote, "painted himself Red" as he expounded on the evils of capitalism, the inevitability of class war, the desirability of socialism, and the solid contribution of Communists to the labor movement. After hearing Bridges's testimony, a Seattle banker fumed: "He's the most radical labor leader in the country. Yet those longshoremen would follow him into a fiery furnace."[18] The question remains, why? Why did Bridges, one of the most radical men ever to lead an American union, command such loyalty from the rank and file?

The pat answer is that Bridges was supported because he looked after the immediate economic interests of his members. In the language of business unionism, he delivered the goods. His personal political views simply did not matter one way or the other. Thus historian David Shannon claims that Bridges was supported "despite, rather than because of, his politics" and because he "runs a union that 'delivers' in the Gompers's bread and butter sense." Other students of the ILWU offer a similar interpretation, arguing that Bridges was able to survive the Cold War because, as a *Business Week* reporter sardonically put it in 1950, "it mattered little to the members that Bridges's left hand was steeped in the waters of Communism so long as the right hand kept wringing concessions out of their bosses."[19]

To be sure, Bridges would not have remained in office for long without wringing concessions from the employers. But while a tough bargaining stance may have contributed to his popularity, Bridges's actual measure of success as a negotiator depended ultimately on the resolve of the rank and file, particularly their willingness to back him up at the bargaining table. The mere fact that he ran "a union that delivers" is almost beside the point, for his ability to deliver was more a consequence than a cause of his popular support, having less to do with Bridges's own skills as a negotiator than with the militancy of the longshoremen themselves.

The impact of the rank and file on the collective bargaining process can be seen by comparing the negotiating strategies pursued

by the ILWU's longshore and warehouse divisions. Although experienced left-wingers headed both divisions, employer relations with the warehouse local were "not significantly different from the customary . . . pattern of business unionism," according to Paul Eliel, a labor relations specialist and former representative for the waterfront employers. In sharp contrast, relations with the longshore locals were "among the most troubled" of any industry in the country. The difference resulted not only from the strategic advantages enjoyed by the longshoremen, as Eliel contended,[20] but also from the more violent history of conflict on the docks and the resulting traditions of occupational solidarity and militancy that enabled longshore negotiators to take a more aggressive posture at the table and eventually walk away with better contracts. To conclude from this that Bridges remained popular with the longshoremen because he delivered the goods ignores the underlying sociological forces at work that allowed him to do so. The capacity to deliver, then, rather than explaining leadership durability, is precisely what needs to be explained.

At the same time it is clear that success at the bargaining table is only part of the answer. After all, the history of American labor includes scores of radical union leaders who, like Bridges, delivered the goods but who nonetheless failed to retain support among the rank and file. What little evidence there is strongly suggests that many of the unions led by socialists around the turn of the century were every bit as effective as the AFL in protecting the job territory and immediate economic interests of their members. Nevertheless, socialist leadership had all but disappeared by the end of World War I whereas rival craft unions flourished for many years to come—a difference that cannot be attributed to the relative efficacy of either group at the bargaining table. Much the same was true for the next generation of radicals who helped to organize the CIO. During the initial organizing drives of the 1930s, Communists and their supporters were widely regarded as among the toughest, most militant bargainers. And yet, despite delivering the goods, most "fellow travelers" were later swept aside by anti-communist challengers who were certainly no better, and in some cases much worse, at delivering the goods.[21]

As this suggests, leadership dynamics within trade unions cannot be reduced to what takes place at the bargaining table. If the

traditional emphasis on economic performance is read as an argument that leaders who deliver are more likely to remain in office, then it is little more than a meaningless tautology; if, more ambitiously, it is intended as an argument that delivering the goods is a guarantee of job security, then it is simply wrong. Either way, economic interpretations of trade union loyalty are at a loss to explain why, among equally efficacious leaders, some are more resilient than others. Perhaps all that can be said with any certainty is that success at the bargaining table, while necessary, is not a sufficient condition for remaining in office.[22]

For Communists, it has been argued, the key to remaining in office was their "indisputable organizational adroitness." In this view, which gained currency during the Cold War, Communists did not so much win union posts as capture them; they did not lead unions but rather dominated them; and because their radical political philosophy was never embraced by the rank and file, they were forced to operate in secrecy, often in violation of union democracy. Relying primarily on "their mastery of the techniques of group organization and manipulation" and the strategic placement of party cadre in "key union posts," and then "reinforced by clever tactics," Communists managed to infiltrate the highest command posts of the CIO.[23]

This portrayal of the omnipotent "red machine" is a caricature. At the very least it grossly exaggerates the party's ability to organizationally manipulate its environment. To suppose that a relative handful of party functionaries, numbering in the tens or hundreds in most industries, became leaders of the industrial working class as a result of their alleged organizational adroitness is to fall back on an inflated view of the party—shared by red-baiters and Communists alike—as possessing, in John Laslett's words, "superhuman powers of organization and control."[24] Even considering all that we now know about the importance of "mobilizing agents" in building social movements, it is inconceivable that a few thousand militants, isolated in tiny cells and scattered across the country, could have captured some of the largest industrial unions without substantial rank-and-file support.

That such support was frequently based on the Communists' ability to outorganize their opposition did not mean that they were therefore more manipulative, diabolical, or underhanded. It did

mean that they were usually more effective organizers, as even their harshest critics were forced to admit. Robert Ozanne, for example, in his otherwise critical study of Communist trade union leadership, reluctantly conceded that party membership was "a real asset" in organizing the CIO. "Let us 'give the devil his due,'" he wrote in 1954 in the midst of the Cold War:

> Communists were more willing than the average worker to face gross employer discrimination and even violence. In the labor relations climate of employer espionage, discrimination and violence . . . such qualities as indifference to being fired, willingness to work night and day and courage to face threats of physical violence were prerequisites for successful organizers. These qualities the Communists possessed.

Ozanne is equally candid in discussing the issue of Communist organizational domination. He acknowledges that "most organizations . . . are controlled by a small group of activists" who "meet or caucus in advance of rank and file meetings to plan strategy. Non-Communist unions have long practiced this policy." Yet Ozanne ends up attacking Communists for using this same method because, he claims, in their disciplined hands it "produces results far beyond that of the ordinary union clique of ambitious, rising leaders."[25] Of course, this still begs the question of why Communist leaders were able to produce such results. The obvious answer is that they were better organizers—a claim rejected out of hand by most Cold War analysts. Their answer, for which the evidence was far less compelling but the political climate more favorable, was that Communists, armed with what Philip Selznick once described as the "organizational weapon" of bolshevism, were able to worm their way into power through a deliberate strategy of factionalism, disruption, and manipulation.

However accurate this Cold War scenario may have been in the case of other left-wing unions, it scarcely applies to the ILWU, where Communist-supported insurgents rose to power by winning over the rank and file to their trade union program. Once in office, one of their first acts was to replace the old ILA constitution, which centralized power at the top of the union, with a more open and democratic set of procedures designed to guard against the kinds of organizational abuse that Communists were normally ac-

cused of practicing. The terms of all local officers were reduced to one year, reviving an old syndicalist tradition. In addition, most locals established a limit of two consecutive terms for each office, after which incumbents either "returned to the beach" as working longshoremen or sought some other elective position. Between elections, accountability was maintained by a simplified recall procedure: under provisions of the new constitution, recall proceedings could be initiated against any elected official on the basis of a petition bearing signatures from as few as 15 percent of the members. In a final assault on the privileges of leadership, salaries for all elected union officers were capped at no more than 10 percent above the earnings of the highest paid workers, thereby diminishing any purely economic incentive for seeking and remaining in office.[26]

The relationship between these formal procedures and the actual degree of union democracy is more problematic. Indeed, the two most detailed case studies of the ILWU's internal political process reached rather different conclusions. The first, a master's thesis written in 1949 by Wayne Hield, argued that despite the ILWU's formally democratic structure, union governance was effectively confined to a "distinct oligarchic group" of circulating elites. Hield's conclusion was challenged in 1963 by Jay Goodman, whose master's thesis contended that the ILWU was highly democratic and that it represented an exception to the rule of trade union bureaucracy. In support of Goodman's interpretation, Lipset, Trow, and Coleman, in their classic study *Union Democracy,* singled out the ILWU as "very democratic" and favorably compared its internal political process to that of the International Typographical Union, their model of union democracy.[27]

This is not to say that the ILWU was at all times a paragon of democracy. More than once, Bridges himself spoke out against the excesses of "rank-and-file-ism." In the most celebrated such case, he argued at the ILWU's 1947 convention against running competing slates of candidates on the grounds that for the union to be effective it had to operate as a "totalitarian government" with a single, unified will.[28] It would be ridiculous to think that Bridges never violated the spirit of union democracy during his forty years in office. But when he did so it was more out of simple expediency than political necessity; no one, not even his strongest critics, ever

argued that his continuity in office depended on violating democratic procedures.[29] In truth, it is more accurate to say that Bridges held on as long as he did despite his infrequent transgressions, not because of them.

But truth had little if any relevance by the time the national CIO brought the ILWU up on charges of violating union democracy by "following the Communist Party line." In a classic example of Cold War reasoning, the union's support for the party line was adduced as prima facie evidence that the interests of the rank and file had been systematically ignored. Bridges bristled at the accusation. "The Union that I speak for," he declared in 1949 at the national CIO convention, "takes second place to no organization in the CIO or anywhere else in the matters of trade union democracy." He then proceeded to tick off a long list of democratic practices. His presentation was apparently convincing, so much so that National Maritime Union President Joseph Curran, by then a staunch opponent of Bridges and the left, admitted that the ILWU was, in his words, "a democratic union."[30] The three-man trial committee that heard the case the following spring saw it differently, however, and ruled that the ILWU should be expelled from the CIO. The verdict was hardly a surprise. Paul Jacobs, an ex-Trotskyist who prepared the case against the ILWU, later wrote that "the committee's decision to recommend expulsion was so certain that I began to work on the writing of it while the trial was still in progress."[31]

National CIO leaders saw the expulsion of the ILWU and ten other "Communist-dominated" unions as the first step toward freeing the industrial working class from the party's clutches. But when the moment of liberation arrived, few workers actively sought refuge from Communist domination. Congressional aide Max Kampelman, who helped orchestrate the purge, was confounded. "The power of nationalism and patriotism is great," he wrote in 1957, "and their hold on American citizens has been a potent fact in our history. Yet many thousands of American citizens have supported Communists as their union leaders, and even today continue to vote for those leaders in secret elections under government supervision."[32] Clearly, something other than Communist trickery was at work.

The competitiveness of left-wing leaders in open union elections, coupled with the resurgence of communist influence in the

French, Italian, and British labor movements after World War II, called into question the view that political radicalism was foreign, if not actually hostile, to the values of contemporary blue-collar workers. Accumulating survey data pointed to the saliency of class position in determining voting behavior and attitudes. But as social scientists began exploring the correlates of working-class leftism they discovered significant internal variations seemingly rooted in industry.[33]

This was the context in which Lipset advanced his now famous theory of the "isolated occupational mass." Drawing on Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel's earlier work on the interindustry propensity to strike, Lipset argued that certain industrial settings, because of their isolation, serve as breeding grounds of radicalism. Where workers reside in occupationally homogeneous communities that are cut off by geography or deviant work schedules from conservatizing middle-class influences, and where as a result of their isolation they are bound together by a tight network of intraclass communication, left-wing political parties have normally enjoyed their greatest mass support. The militancy and political radicalism so often displayed by miners, seamen, loggers, commercial fishermen, and dockworkers was thus attributed to a lack of contact "with the world outside their own group."[34]

This argument rests on the assumption that isolation removes workers from the conservative values of the surrounding society. Sometimes it does; but at other times it may insulate them from left-wing political groups instead—in which case isolation can become an *obstacle* to radicalism.[35] In short, the mere fact that a group of workers is isolated tells us next to nothing about the *content* of their politics. Whether isolation makes them radical or conservative depends ultimately on whether the values being screened out are of a "proletarian" or a "bourgeois" nature.

On the waterfront, in fact, isolation was inversely related to radicalism. Consider the contrast between the two principal California ports. In San Francisco, dockworkers were not at all isolated from the general population. Rather than being territorially confined to the flophouses, bars, and cafés that hugged the waterfront, they freely roamed the city, congregating especially in the nearby North Beach district, home to many bohemians and political activists during the 1930s. Partly as a result of their integration

into the vibrant intellectual life of North Beach, San Francisco's longshoremen were recruited to radicalism in far greater numbers than anywhere else on the coast. In contrast, San Pedro was perhaps the most isolated port. Located some twenty-five miles south of metropolitan Los Angeles, ringed by mountains, and lacking many connecting roads or rail lines to neighboring cities, San Pedro closely resembled the classic isolated working-class community. Cut off from any kind of intellectual or radical influences, longshoremen in San Pedro, while militant on the job, were much less responsive to radical politics.[36]

The conservatizing impact of isolation is most clearly revealed, however, in the political development of longshore unionism in the Port of New York. For unique historical and geographical reasons, the city's longshoremen tended to live and work together in many of the same dockside neighborhoods. As much as is possible in an urban milieu, theirs was a largely self-contained world, insulated from the outside by the peculiar rhythm of casual employment and held together by a strong and enduring sense of community. Yet New York's isolated dockworkers belonged to one of the most conservative unions in the country. If they were "radical" at all it was only in their intense hostility to communism.[37]

Indeed, the union representing dockworkers on the East and Gulf coasts, the old ILA, was as conservative as its West Coast descendant, the ILWU, was radical. The ILA's international president, Joseph Ryan, was a fanatical anti-communist. Ryan began his lifelong crusade against communism in the early 1920s when, as the ILA's youthful vice-president, he served on an AFL labor committee assigned to investigate "Soviet infiltration" of the New York City labor movement. From that point on he never looked back. A decade later Ryan was sharing his convention platforms with some of America's staunchest supporters of Hitler and Mussolini—at the same time that dockworkers on the West Coast were boycotting German and Italian shipping. As Ryan's "patriotic" fervor peaked, he began soliciting contributions for a secret "anti-communist fund." Over the years, thousands of dollars were collected under the table from East Coast shipowners, with much of the money ending up in Ryan's personal bank account. Not that he was insincere or only in it for the money, for, as Harry Lundberg, president of the Sailors Union of the Pacific, observed in 1951, "no

official in the maritime field or the American trade union movement . . . has fought the Commies any better, any harder than Joe Ryan."[38]

Ryan's conservative values also spilled over into the collective bargaining arena, where the ILA distinguished itself as one of the least effective unions in the country. Judged by even the minimal standards of business unionism, the ILA was an abject failure: it restricted neither the number of jobs nor the size of the labor force; it never established any system for equalizing or distributing employment opportunities; it tolerated cutthroat competition and conditions of chronic job insecurity. In sum, the ILA violated practically every tenet of job control unionism.[39]

Industrial conflict was completely foreign to Ryan's trade union philosophy. Beginning in 1927 when he was first elected to the presidency of the ILA, and continuing until 1942 when his position was ceremonially extended for life, there was not a single union-authorized strike in the Port of New York. During his long reign, "King Joe's" relationship with the waterfront employers was characterized as "exceedingly close and friendly," though collaborative would be a more accurate description. Facing an increasingly restive rank and file after World War II, East Coast shipowners literally bought labor peace. From 1947 to 1951 a total of forty-three shipping and stevedoring companies paid out more than $180,000 in bribes to 101 officials of the ILA in New York. Disclosures of this sort, together with evidence of extensive underworld connections, led to the ILA's expulsion from the AFL in 1953.[40]

By the early 1950s, then, both longshore unions had been expelled from their respective labor federations: the ILWU for following the Communist Party; the ILA for collaborating with the shipowners. It would be difficult to imagine a sharper political contrast, particularly within the same industry, or one that more clearly demonstrates there is no necessary connection between the structural characteristics of certain industries and the political orientations of their workers.[41]

This contrast between the two coasts allows us to situate our deviant case analysis of the ILWU within a comparative framework that, in effect, "holds constant" certain key aspects of the industrial environment as possible sources of radical leadership. By