



# West Coast Sailors

Official Organ of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific

SPECIAL EDITION



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# Sailors' Union of the Pacific 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

A history of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, particularly one marking its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, cannot begin without a preface: the conditions seamen worked under during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In Paul S. Taylor's *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, published in 1923, those conditions are starkly described.

"At sea, the treatment accorded the seaman was such as is scarcely credible to the landsman. Founded on the unequal legal status of seamen and under the guise of discipline as interpreted by the courts, brutal treatment of sailors aboard deep-water ships became flagrant and general.

"By the law of 1835, which remained unchanged until the passage of the White Act in 1898, beating, wounding, imprisoning, withholding suitable food, and other punishments inflicted by the master were punishable "if without justifiable cause." Read conversely,

this was interpreted to permit such punishment if in the reasonable judgment of the master it was justifiable.

"But even had the law been less favorable to the master, it would have been difficult for the sailor to secure actual jus-

mates. And if the seamen lodged a complaint against a captain, the latter prepared a bill of exceptions, filed bonds, and sailed away, but the poor seaman, without money or work, was told to wait two or three months until the court

"buckos" themselves, under the "justifiable cause" law courts and juries "consistently approved the declaration of accused persons that assaults upon seamen were justifiable, or, at any rate, they were deemed such.

under Captain Robert K. Clarke, sailed from New York to San Francisco in 1873. The abridged description of the voyage is as follows:

*As soon as the Sunrise got into the stream, the brutalities upon the crew commenced, and did not end until she took a pilot off the Golden Gate. They were knocked down, kicked, beaten with rope ends, iron belaying pins, tar buckets, staves, or anything that came handy. But the favorite punishment of the captain and his mate seems to have been the horrible torture known as tricing up, which consists of ironing a man by the wrists, passing a rope around the irons, and hoisting him up until his toes barely touch the deck. They were tortured on the Sunrise in this way for six, eight and ten hours for trivial offenses, or for no offenses at all. ... Five men seem to have been singled out for special cruelties. ... These men were maltreated in every possible way—beaten and kicked until they were a mass of bruises and discolored flesh, hung up by the wrists until their hands were black, kept without sleep and set to the hardest and most impossible tasks. One... escaped from his torture two days after the vessel left Sandy Hook, by going overboard. A second one ... followed his example soon afterwards; a third, a boy of about 17, found in the sea a refuge on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July—the anniversary of the great declaration of freedom and equality.*

Both captain and mate were convicted in this case, largely



On the back of this photo a shaky hand wrote simply "Shang Hai, 1927." Besides this early appearance of the emblematic SUP cap known later as the "Lundeberg Stetson," it is the youth of these shipmates that is striking: even the eldest seems a teenager. That fact is a function of organizing economics more than romantic wanderlust. Largely because of class-consciousness, limited ports on the rugged U.S. West Coast, and the superior skill required for the lumber schooner trade, the SUP was able to organize and negotiate agreements in the coastwise trades long before the international trades. As a result, the wages and conditions for sailors in the coastwise trades were for many years far better than those for "blue water" sailors. And since the most senior members would tend to ship out under the best agreements, the common opportunity for new sailors was in ships sailing for foreign ports. Photo from the SUP archives.

tice. To protect brutal mates, captains used to send them ashore so that they might escape as soon as the ship dropped anchor and before the seamen could leave ship to go before the courts. Later the mates would quietly return, perhaps under an alias, for the next voyage. Not until 1898 was it made the legal duty of masters to surrender guilty

could hear his case.

"Nor was there any remedy against the owners of a vessel whose captain committed wilful and malicious assaults on the seamen. As such assaults were regarded as without the scope of the master's authority, the seaman was without even a legal remedy against the owners who employed brutal masters. As against the

"Under these conditions life on American deep-water vessels became well-nigh intolerable, and the number of native Americans who went to sea grew steadily less. The abolition of flogging by federal statute in 1850 merely changed the forms of punishment practiced."

Taylor provides two of many examples: The ship *Sunrise*,

*continued on page 2*

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through the efforts of Henry George and his *San Francisco Post*.

A British writer, Basil Lubbock, in his 1903 book *Round the Horn Before the Mast*, similarly describes the happenings aboard American ships:

*On some of the Yankee hellships the things that go on are almost incredible, and the captains have to be skilled surgeons to cope with the work of destruction wrought by their mates.*

*Legs and arms broken were considered nothing, ribs stamped in by heavy sea-boots had to mend as best they could, faces smashed like rotten apples by iron belaying pins had to get well or fear worse treatment, eyes closed up by a brawny mate's fist had to see. There have been many instances of men triced up in the rigging, stripped, and then literally skinned alive with deck scrapers.*

*Thus the reputation of American ships has got so bad that none but a real tough citizen, or a stolid long suffering Dutchman (as sailors call all Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, or Russian Finns), will ship in them.*

"These instances, which were brought vividly to the attention of the San Francisco public, were representative in innumerable cases of cruelty with which the records of deep-water life were filled. In the coastwise trade, treatment was much better, but in deep-water vessels brutality was the rule.

"In defense of the conduct of ship's officers, it was suggested that the vigorous use of fore was necessary to maintain discipline aboard ship, and to teach the luckless and incompetent shoemakers, clerks, and tailors who awoke from a drunken stupor to find themselves shanghaied aboard ship as able seamen. As explained in the *San Francisco Alta* of November 18, 1866, referring to the common practice of shanghaiing, "...consequently, dissatisfied men compose of ship's company, who, by shirking their duty and frequently refusing to obey orders, bring upon themselves some of the punishment that we see so often spoken of as "cruelty to seamen."

## Quarters

"The sailor's quarters aboard ship were in the forecabin. In the very old ships the forecabin was located between decks. With a small opening onto the deck perhaps 36 inches square, the ventilation was exactly such as might be expected in a narrow-necked bottle. When in stormy weather this opening was covered over, the analogy was complete even to the stopper. In ships built after the Civil War the forecabin was more likely to be above decks, which was a considerable improvement. Most persons are familiar with the descriptions of forecabins in the romantic tales of sea life. Here is a description in 1874 by a surgeon of the United States Marine Hospital Service:

*No prison, certainly none of modern days, so wretched but life within its walls is preferable, on the score of physical comfort, to the quarters and the life of the sailor on the vast majority of merchant vessels. No gaol dietary so meagre, no penal servitude so exacting, no exertion of authority so unrestrained and brutal, no such utter want of care and forethought for health and life of convict or felon, as are the rule, and not the exception, for the man before the mast, would be tolerated, if comprehended, by the community.*

At best the old-time sailor's lot was a hard one. Sleeping and eating in a little, black, ill-ventilated, poorly lighted, unfurnished hole called a forecabin, with a hard board bunk and a bit of straw or a cheap mattress, if he provided it himself, he lived a life of great physical discomfort. Often working without change in garments soaked with salt spray, or scantily clad, he became a ready victim to rheumatism, and when improperly fed there was the additional menace of scurvy. At the master's disposal 24 hours a day, liable to all kinds of disasters at sea, waterlogged ship, fire, famine, shifting cargo, stranding in a gale, loss of vessels sometimes so heavily insured as to be worth more at the bottom of the sea than afloat-these are things of which the landsman has little conception, but they were most real in the life of the sailor at sea."

## Ashore

"At the end of the voyage "Jack" came ashore for diversion that would enable him to forget his troubles. But his pleasures were brief and expensive, for he found himself caught in a perfidious system that quickly stripped him of his money and independence and then again sent him to sea and to another port where the process was repeated. As stated by the California Labor Commissioner, he was "never out of the hands of sharpers, who coax, wheedle, debauch and pander to his worst vices, until his last dollar is gone." The "crimp" (who made his living by furnishing ships with crews) was chiefly responsible for this reception, and his welcome was in this spirit, "All you have to do is to be friendly to 'Jack' and you can empty his pockets and his soul."

## The Crimps

"The crimp, or shipping master, and the boarding master were sometimes two persons, but more usually one and the same. The deep-water boarding masters in the early 1860s, and later the coasting boarding masters, organized into associations to control the sailor market. These crimps maintained their hold upon the sailor by controlling his employment. The law allowing holding of sailors' clothing for debt strengthened this power over the sailor, and the payment of wages in advance made the business profitable. And because a sailor in a deep-water vessel was entitled to two, three, or four months' "advance," as it was called, and was especially helpless, the deep-water boarding masters were the first to gain control of their sailor market, and the last to give it up. The coasting boarding masters were never so powerful, nor was their reign so long. But during the decades in which the boarding masters were in control no master could get a crew except from the crimps, and then only after paying them the sailors' advance. Nor could a sailor get a ship except through the same agency.

Control of the market was gained by purchase from captains of the exclusive privilege of shipping men, if men were plentiful. When men were scarce, the



A "bucko" mate in action.

captains were forced to pay the crimps for crews. This practice was known as the payment of "blood money" and was so named because drugged or knocked-down men shanghaied aboard ship were frequently put aboard in an insensible condition, and sometimes covered with blood."

## Advance Money

"The crimps thus took all the wages earned by the seamen on the incoming voyage, and by means of the advance or allotment note, mortgaged most of his outbound wages. If the seaman protested his indebtedness, or objected to shipping as the boarding master ordered him, his clothes were held by the boarding master for debt. This was a very effective club held over his head, for without money or clothes the sailor could not get very far. The laws allowing advance or allotment to an "original creditor," and holding of clothing for debt were the cornerstones upon which the nefarious system rested.

It all meant virtual economic slavery for the sailor, and perpetual poverty, as he was usually working to pay off a "debt." His wages were seldom his own. And the premium was on the most reckless, improvident spender and heaviest drinker, for the sooner his money was gone, the sooner he got a ship. But the man who tried to be thrifty and save his money had to sit in a boardinghouse just so much longer; not until his money was all gone would the boarding master get him a ship."

## Blood Money

"Blood money also came out of the sailor, though not so directly. When men were scarce, instead of raising wages, blood money was increased, and more landlubbers were shanghaied aboard by foul means when drugged or intoxicated. More unfortunate landlubbers aboard meant more work for the real seamen, and more driving and brutality by the masters and the mates. Increased blood money meant less wages, so whichever way matters went it was always at the expense of the sailor."

## Shanghaiing

"The shanghaiing of unwilling, drugged, or intoxicated landsmen to serve in place of able seamen was attended by grave dangers to navigation as well as misfortune and harsh treatment to the crews. In 1884 the United States Consul at Hull, England, complained in a letter to the Commissioner of Navigation:

*The wheat ships arriving at this and other ports from San Francisco are manned by the most worthless set of men. Of the large ships here during the past four months, viz., the Reaper, Amy Turner, Solitaire, and Tam O'Shanter, the first named had but two, the second three, the third three, and the last, three men who could be trusted at the wheel to steer. These men were paid from \$20 to as high as \$40 per month, and, in addition to this, a bonus or "blood-money" is called for by the boarding master to the extent of \$15, and as high as \$25 for each man. It is little short of a miracle that vessels so manned should safely reach their destination. The large majority of these men are green landsmen, and, as a matter of course, being but of little use on board the ship, they do not receive the best of treatment, and on reaching port desert and become chargeable on some of the consulates. Three months advance pay is demanded at San Francisco, and this, as does everything else, goes to the boarding master. The men are put on board without clothing, and, according to many of them, in a state of intoxication, and without their own consent. Upon arrival here they are in debt to the ships, and, aided by the crimps, and not opposed by the officers, they desert.*



# The SUP: A brief history

by Dave Connolly

Enslaved by their trade, the year 1885 dawned for sailors bleak and hostile. A severe depression that started in 1883 stretched on. Many thousands of workers were unemployed. Those who still had jobs had taken massive wage cuts. On March 4, 1885, a notice was posted along the San Francisco waterfront announcing that wages for sailors would be cut to \$25 per month for “outside” or unprotected ports and \$20 per month for other ports. This was for a ten-hour day, six days a week in port and twelve hours a day at sea (four hours on, four hours off). In response, sailors walked off their ships and gathered and argued all along East Street (now the Embarcadero).

“At noon on March 5,” as told by noted labor historian Ira B. Cross, “Sigismund Danielewicz, a member of the International Workingmen’s Association (IWA), passing along the waterfront and noting the excitement, entered into conversation with some of the men, and advised them to form a Union. To the sailors the situation appeared hopeless and they scoffed at the suggestion. Earlier attempts at organization had failed, and the sailors had stories about it, but Danielewicz, loaded with the ardor of a radical, said he’d obtain assistance from his friends in the IWA and they would all be on hand the next evening at the Folsom Street Wharf.”

A mass meeting of about three hundred striking sailors assembled there on March 6, 1885. In fog and rain they stood listening to the speakers as they stepped up to address the crowd from a pile of lumber. Many of the sailors were off the coastwise lumber schooners, although there may have been some from the square-rigged windjammers in the Alaska salmon trade. Many were of Scandinavian descent, but there were English, Germans, Poles, Scots, Irish, and Polynesians too, united only by the ancestral lineage of their common trade. Some would have had their entire belongings with them, papers in their pockets, seabags at their feet. But their most valuable possession was meeting there in the freedom of San Francisco in the 1880s, carrying the built-in honor of their profession while inwardly raging against the bitter realities of the establishment—all as a mix of different strains of class consciousness whirled in their brains. It was this unique composite of will and political self-awareness that allowed them, against all odds, to be the first in history to question the authority of the seagoing employment scheme and declare their independence from the whole rotten system.

The words of the speakers are lost to history, but we can be sure that they urged these men to action against a sea of troubles. We can be sure they railed against the sadistic brutality of the day. We know that they rebuked the systematic economic slavery of both the boardinghouse system of employment run by crimps with its never-ending “debt” and its legal bulwarks (such as making desertion a federal crime punishable by imprisonment.) Add to that bad food and another wage cut, and it was as if the sailors on East Street that night were the perfect recipients for the potent ideas of the time, embodied by the passionate speakers on the lumber pile, who were the spark that inflamed a movement and changed maritime history forever.

We know what some of the speakers sounded like from writings that survives from the period. This 1886 strike card written by Burnette G. Haskell, a key IWA organizer and one of the speakers at that first meeting in 1885, gives us a sense of the rhetoric:

*“Carry this Strike Card on your person with your Union Card and show when demanded and while you have it on you go to no place where you would not show it with pride, and do nothing to put on the Stain of Dishonor. When the strike is over the Secretary will endorse upon this card the fact (if true) that you have assisted in saving the Union. And then when sailors are free enough (word illegible) to marry and have children this will be your certificate of honor to them. This strike was ordered to SAVE THE UNION, to enforce your rights as free men, as Americans, as haters of slavery. Never give it up until ordered by the Union. Never yield a single inch. Remember that BUCHANAN of Colorado called you the “Lookout of the American Labor Movement” the backbone of organized Labor on the Pacific Coast. Remember your glorious history and die in the streets of San Francisco of starvation before you think of yielding. And remember that if we have to beg the public of San Francisco for food, then I will be the first man to go from house to house for dry bread to keep life in our bodies while we are fighting for the right of the sailor to resist the blood-moned infamies of San Francisco.”*

We don’t have the words of the speeches, but we have the minutes of the meeting. George Thompson was elected chairman. Given the

rhetorical flourish of the day, the recording secretary, JJ Martin, summed up the speeches with a note ironically economical: “The meeting was addressed by various speakers who advocated unity of action and resistance to oppression in any and every form.” Martin added that “Great enthusiasm prevailed,” for laconic descriptive color.

At the suggestion of Haskell, who like Martin was a member of the IWA, it was agreed to form a permanent organization, two hundred and twenty-two names were enrolled, and another meeting was set for the following night. In a subsequent meeting they settled on a name—the **Coast Seaman’s Union**—and for the first time in history there was a bona-fide, formal, and enduring association, a trade Union, that existed solely to improve the lives of people that go to sea for a living.

## Andrew Furuseth

From the defiant brilliance of its beginning, the Union plunged into its first strike in 1886. It is important to understand that the radicalism of the IWA was fed by several intellectual cross-currents, especially the anarcho-syndicalist thinking of Mikhail Bakunin. Bakunin believed in the abolition of the wage system as a form of slavery and distrusted the state in any form. That was very different from the other wing of the IWA, embodied by Karl Marx which espousing collective action based on an authoritarian “dictatorship of the proletariat.” It is easy to see now why the anarcho-syndicalists of the IWA would be interested in the problems of sailors in 1880s: there were few industries where wage slavery was so evident and palpable. Another working class current of the era emanated from the Knights of Labor, the first American federation of labor, whose slogan was “An Injury to One is the Concern of All.” The language of the Knights of Labor had become openly revolutionary. “The attitude of our Order to the existing industrial system is necessarily one of war,” announced their credo. There was a successful railroad strike against Union Pacific in 1884, and again against the robber-baron Jay Gould’s Wabash Line in 1885. There was revolution in the air.

In June of 1886 the shipowners formed the Shipowners’ Association of the Pacific Coast. Employment was granted only for seamen in possession of a “grade book” (fink book) issued by the Association and only to those who surrendered their Union books. On August 25, 1886, the Union struck the entire coast, demanding an end to the crimping system and the grade book as well as wage increases. During this time the Union and the IWA and others were active in establishing the San Francisco Federated Trades Council, the forerunner of today’s San Francisco Labor Council. The employers conceded nothing and hired strike-breakers from the “blue water” or ships sailing in the foreign trade. In early September, the Union held a funeral for SUP member Charles Norgreen killed by a scab. In Eureka, twenty strikers were arrested and charged with inciting a riot, and by late September Union minutes show that although the strike had not been officially called off, members were authorized to find work wherever they could. The strike was crushed, but the Union survived.



Andrew Furuseth



The Seal of the Union

The role of the IWA moderated and then began to fade as more rank-and-file sailors stepped forward during the strike, including a young Norwegian named Anders Furuseth. The first mention of his name is in the minutes of a Union finance committee meeting in January of 1886. In March of 1886 he was elected Secretary of the Union but could not secure a bond. In January of 1887 he was elected again and this time took office. His emergence is probably the most significant event of the disastrous '86 strike because, except for the period between 1889 and 1891 when he returned to sea, and five months when he went fishing in 1892, he would hold the top post of the Union until relieved by Harry Lundeborg in 1936. Furuseth is not above criticism, but his life and the



early history of the SUP are inextricably entwined, and like the Union he experienced transcendent victories and horrible defeats. Through it all he was unwavering in his goal to end the legalized system of employment servitude that plagued the merchant mariners of his day.

### The Sailors' Union of the Pacific

Shortly after his election, Furuseth helped establish the *Coast Seaman's Journal*, the predecessor of the *West Coast Sailors*, the world's first regular periodical written by seaman for seamen. Furuseth then focused his attention on ending the jurisdictional battles between the Coast Seamen's Union and the Steamship Sailors' Union that had been ongoing since the latter organization was founded in 1886. Whenever a sailing ship was modified for steam, both organizations claimed jurisdiction. Having been a windship sailor himself, Furuseth first objected to the Steamship Union, but soon advocated an agreement providing for an exchange of books, which would allow members of both Unions to work on either sail or steam vessels. Several times Furuseth served on committees to negotiate their differences, but problems concerning the jurisdiction of particular vessels continued and no lasting settlement could be worked out. Showing some rare flexibility, Furuseth realized that merger would end the problem, and on July 29, 1891 signed his name to a formal agreement which provided for the amalgamation of both organizations into the **Sailors' Union of the Pacific**.

### The Battle of 1893

During 1892, the conflict between the SUP and the shipowners was neither a strike nor a lockout. The shipowners tried to hire men who would sail ships for less than Union wages. They enlisted the aid of crimps to find among the unemployed and the deepwater sailors enough men to crew their vessels. If they could not get a non-Union crew, they paid the Union scale, but they did everything they could not to hire through the Union hiring hall. The primary objective of the Sailors' Union during this period was to prevent anyone from sailing below Union scale. San Francisco's reputation as a "Union Town" aided the SUP in this effort; nevertheless the SUP had a hard fight on its hands and resorted to a variety of tactics. It took non-Union sailors out of the boardinghouses where they would be at the mercy of the crimps and sent them, at Union expense, "to live in the country." It shipped Union sailors in the deepwater trade, thus encroaching on a field of employment which until now the crimps had exclusively controlled. To harass the shipowners, the Union brought suit in court for the recovery of advances made to crimps above the amount allowed by law. And using a tactic called "The Oracle," (a tactic that would see many future uses) "dummy" sailors were sent aboard ship for the purpose of quitting the vessel at the very last moment, thus delaying the sailing. When these methods failed, SUP patrolmen used force to prevent scabbing. Blood flowed freely on the waterfront in 1892 as the crimps fought the Union for control of shipping.

In January, 1893, Furuseth confidently reported to the membership that many of the shipowners were ready to give up, but he warned that the San Francisco Employer's Association was urging a lockout. The Association reopened its own shipping office and issued instructions that all hiring must be done through it. The Union countered with a broadside asking sailors to stay away from the Association's office and offering to provide room and board until the men could be shipped out and provided a rented house out of town for this purpose. More than a fifth of the Union treasury, \$10,000, was withdrawn from the bank to finance the fight.

In May 1893, the situation worsened for the SUP. All shipowners who had so far refused to work with the Association now joined it. The Union increased the size of the patrols guarding the waterfront and drew out the balance of its funds from the bank. But by the end of July, it was evident that the Union had lost the fight. It ceased to patrol the waterfront and began to seek a basis for settlement. In September, 1893, it decided to lower its wage scale. According to Furuseth, this was not done because the SUP was defeated, as he said in the *Coast Seamen's Journal*, but because the economic situation had changed. The depression was no longer local or even national, but "universal." It got worse.

On September 24, 1893, a suitcase filled with dynamite exploded outside the crimp John Curtin's boarding house killing six British sailors. Furuseth was questioned by the police and argued that the Union had nothing to gain from such a crime. He said that the parties who might benefit were the shipowners, crimps and boarding house masters. The SUP offered a reward of \$1,000 for any information leading the arrest of the criminals. But there was little use in protesting, as the public and press—only seven years removed from the frame-up conviction of "anarchist" bombers of the Haymarket riot in Chicago—were convinced the Sailors' Union was behind the crime. A week after the Curtin bombing, the Union closed its hiring hall and allowed members to find work on whatever terms the shipowner set. The Battle of 1893 was over.

"Like a clap of thunder from the clear sky came the dynamite outrage," Furuseth wrote in the *Coast Seaman's Journal*, "setting the whole city against us." "We are innocent," he said, but recognizing that the tide had turned against them, Furuseth urged that members must "take our medicine like stoics and from our trouble shall we rise again ennobled and purified...They cannot prevent us from staying with the Union, paying our dues and joining other willing sailors into our ranks...and while we are true to ourselves time is passing and we remember that tomorrow is also a day... Like the bird sucking sweets from the poisoned flower let us from our troubles suck strength and devotion to our cause." The Battle of 1893 ended in stinging defeat for the Union, but in the smoking ruins there was Furuseth reminding the disillusioned membership that "Tomorrow is Also a Day" and we live to fight again.



Pictured above are SUP members Robert Robertson, John Bradley, P.H. Olsen and Morris Hansen forced to sail in the *Arago* despite the passage of the Maguire Act.

### The Legislative Fight

The defeat of 1893 was important because it accelerated a shift, already underway, where there would be less emphasis on direct action and more on legislative reform. In January, 1892, the SUP had elected a committee to formulate a legislative program. The result was an "Appeal to Congress" in which the Union proposed thirty different reforms.

In 1893, after Furuseth's decision to open the fight on the legislative front, the Union mobilized one of the earliest grass-roots political efforts on the U.S. West Coast. SUP members walked door-to-door in the then complete waterfront precinct of San Francisco to support the election of James C. Maguire, a federal judge who had pledged to support the SUP's program. He won the election, and in December, 1893, Furuseth reported to the membership that Congressman Maguire had divided the SUP program into six bills which he would introduce. At Maguire's urging, Furuseth testified before the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee in March, 1894. The process wore on as the shipowners rallied against it, but Maguire was re-elected to Congress in 1895 with strong SUP support and he asked Furuseth to lobby again for the legislation in Washington.

Furuseth and Maguire were successful and the Maguire Act was signed into law on February 18, 1895 by President Grover Cleveland. The law allowed American sailors the right to quit a ship while in domestic ports. It was the first time maritime law had been changed to favor the sailors on deck since the medieval Rolls of Oleron were promulgated in 1160.

The victory was short-lived. Shipowners backed the prosecution of the case of the *Arago* to undermine the Maguire Act. In 1895 SUP members Robert Robertson, John Bradley, P.H. Olsen, and Morris Hanson signed articles before the Shipping Commissioner in San Francisco to sail in the barkentine *Arago* to Knappton, Washington, then to Valparaiso, Chile, and other foreign ports, and return to the United States. In Knappton, they quit the ship believing they were protected by the Maguire Act. Hunted down, they were dragged aboard in irons. They refused to turn to and were transferred to police custody in Oakland for "refusing duty." Furuseth petitioned for a writ of *habeas corpus* and hired attorney H.W. Hutton to defend the men.

While the lawyers argued the case all the way to the Supreme Court, the sailors remained in Alameda County Jail. In January 1897, the Supreme Court shockingly upheld imprisonment for desertion on the grounds that "surrender of personal liberty" implied in the seamen's contract was not preempted by the Thirteenth Amendment, which outlaws involuntary servitude. Moreover, the Court sought comfort in the same special circumstances they used in the infamous Dred Scott decision to uphold slavery for African Americans—that sailors are sub-human

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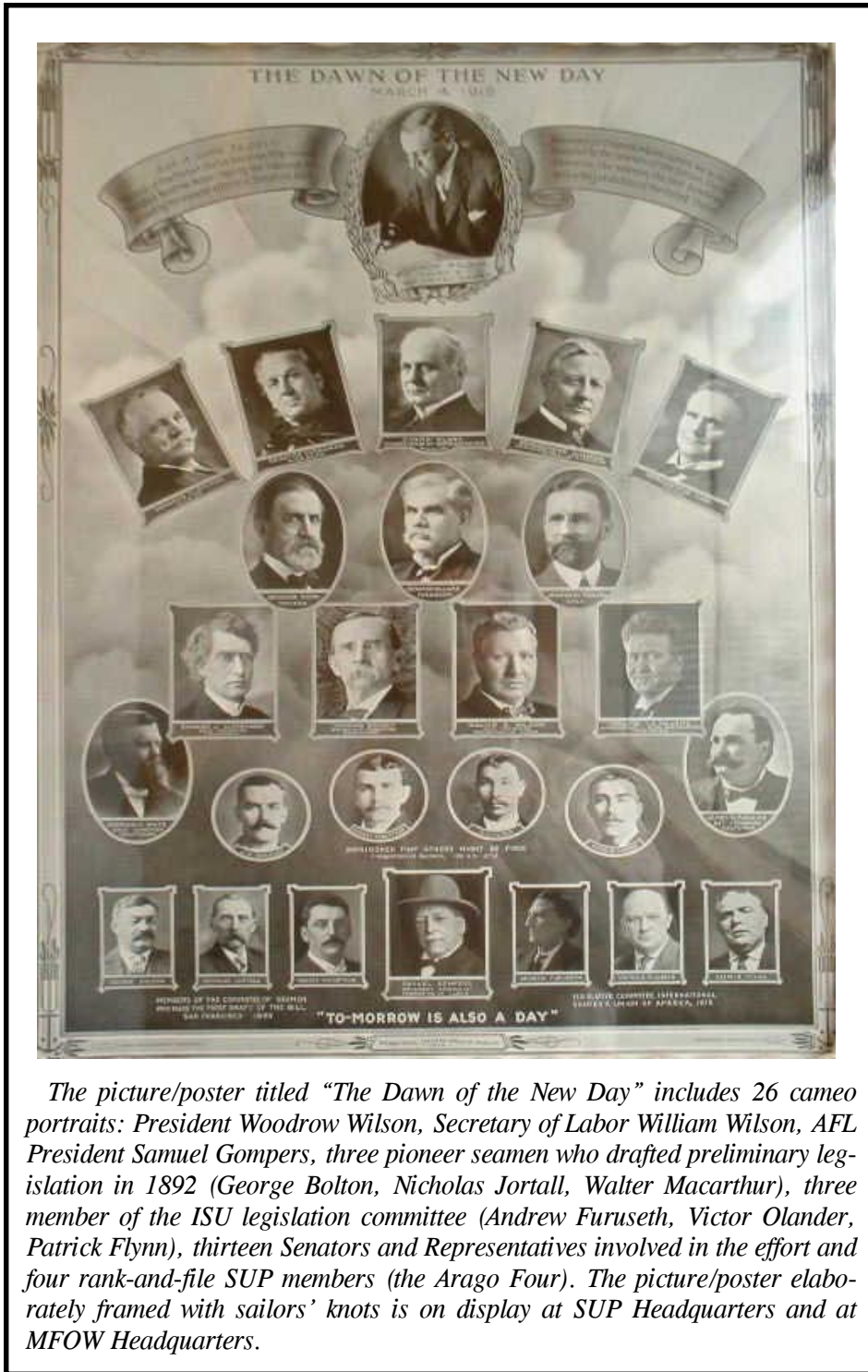
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The picture/poster titled "The Dawn of the New Day" includes 26 cameo portraits: President Woodrow Wilson, Secretary of Labor William Wilson, AFL President Samuel Gompers, three pioneer seamen who drafted preliminary legislation in 1892 (George Bolton, Nicholas Jortall, Walter Macarthur), three member of the ISU legislation committee (Andrew Furuseth, Victor Olander, Patrick Flynn), thirteen Senators and Representatives involved in the effort and four rank-and-file SUP members (the Arago Four). The picture/poster elaborately framed with sailors' knots is on display at SUP Headquarters and at MFOW Headquarters.

and since the provisions of the Constitution apply only to men, then seamen are not covered by the basic rights and freedoms accorded to others. The Court stated that "seamen are treated by Congress... as deficient in that full and intelligent responsibility for their acts which are accredited to ordinary adults." The decision became known as Dred Scott II, and it gave rise to efforts to strengthen the Maguire Act through the White Act in 1898, and finally, only through the Seamen's Act of 1915, Furuseth's crowning achievement, would sailors be completely free to quit a ship.

Ten years before the Supreme Court decision, in the first edition of the *Coast Seaman's Journal* on November 2, 1887, the editor Xavier Leder (who was a member of both the IWA and the Coast Seamen's Union) wrote: "Let us have a craft of intelligent men. We here, upon our coast, who have more advantages—we should see to it that a glimpse of light fall upon the mid-ocean. Let us read, let us discuss, let us educate ourselves; let the results of our education be sent broadcast across the ocean. This is the task of our Union—surely one worth of all the energy and good will within us." Leder's use of "intelligent" is tinged with the same connotations as in the later Supreme Court context, albeit to a reverse purpose. "Intelligent responsibility" from the Court's point of view meant basic human accountability expected of "ordinary adults." Leder for his part did not mean to suggest a craft of intellectuals; he was making a moral judgment by comparing the still deplorable conditions of coastwise sailors to the outrageous conditions of deepwater sailors and concluding that "we here upon our coast" have a responsibility to reserve for all seamen the ordinary rights of humans.

### The City Front Federation

In the period leading up to the strike of 1901, the SUP helped form a first of its kind waterfront coalition in San Francisco, consisting of sailors, longshoremen, teamsters, mates, engineers, marine firemen, marine cooks and stewards, pile drivers, freight-handlers and lumbermen and others. There were dozens of delegates representing 14 Unions. The employers, having grown irritated by persistent Unionism, formed in response a secret group called the Employers Association consisting of fifty companies, but only an attorney named M.F. Michael was named. The Association pledged to eradicate Unions and make San Francisco known as the home of the "Open Shop." [See section on the Taft-Hartley Act for more discussion on the open shop.] It was the Teamsters' refusal to haul cargo from a non-Union drayage firm that touched off the strike. Company after company locked out their workers who refused to haul the non-Union cargo. Soon hundreds of locked out Teamsters found themselves among others who had already been on strike: restaurant cooks and waiters, bakers and bakery wagon drivers, metal polishers, and all fourteen Unions of the Iron Trades Council, who were part of a national strike.

The City Front Federation voted to stage a waterfront strike, which began on July 30, and ran to October 2, 1901. Association bylaws forbade any member from settling with a Union without permission from the executive committee. The Employers' Association pushed aside attempts to mediate and enlisting Mayor James Phelan and his police force in their efforts. Their goal was to eliminate the Unions altogether: "The vital principle involved in the present controversy is that of non-interference by the labor Unions, or their representatives, with the conduct of the business of employers," they announced. Strikebreakers were brought in and city police rode with them. The police were instructed to beat people but to make no arrests.

Police behavior during this strike was a major factor in the fall Mayoral election which brought Eugene Schmitz and the Union Labor Party to power. After two months on strike, California's Governor intervened, bringing together the Teamsters and the representatives of the Drayman's Association, but excluding the Employer's Association. Within an hour an agreement was reached, and the Employers' Association disappeared, having lost on its "vital principle."

The strike toll: five dead, 300 injured. A gun battle on Kearny Street in broad daylight involved "special police," (hired goons) and strikers.

The City Front Federation was one of Union labor's first attempts at industry-focused coalition. It was led by Andrew Furuseth and it stood up to and defeated the employers of the day who had declared outright war against Unions and Unionism. It was similar in some ways to the battle of 1893, except that this time the Union came out ahead.

In December, 1901, the Union began five months of bargaining with the Shipowners' Association of the Pacific Coast, representing coasting sail vessel owners. The result was that after seventeen years of struggle, the SUP won full recognition from the shipowners. The agreement signed on April 3, 1902, marked the beginning of a period in which wages and conditions were determined by joint negotiations. The principal points agreed upon were: 1) Wages were to be \$45 per month for sailing vessels for inside ports, \$35 to Hawai'i and Mexico, and \$30 to South America, China, Japan and Australia; 2) A shipping office but not shipping master (crimp); 3) Outside of San Francisco agents of the Sailors' Union were to furnish crews; 4) A nine-hour day was recognized with overtime; 5) A standing committee was formed to adjust grievances. In 1903, a similar agreement was reached with the Steam Schooner Managers' Association.

In 1906 Furuseth would lead another successful strike. In 1916 the SUP and all other seagoing Unions received a \$5.00 a month wage increase and 25 cents extra per day for war zone pay. More important than a period of prosperity, the City Front Federation laid the groundwork for an even more effective coastwise coalition in the aftermath of the 1934 strike.

### The Seaman's Act of 1915

Furuseth finally realized his goal of abolishing the feudal relationship between shipowner and sailor only through the passage of the Seaman's Act of 1915. It was here that allotments to crimps were banned for good. It was here that the three man watch became standard, establishing the eight-hour day at sea. So many other basic conditions of humane seagoing employment were established by the Seaman's Act that it is easier to list than describe them. For example, it was here that the ability to understand orders spoken in English became a requirement. Minimum standards regarding food and living quarters aboard ship were set in this legislation. Safety rules, especially the requirement of lifeboats, were now a matter of law. The minimum percentage of sailors that must be Able Seamen in any seagoing crew was also established for the first time. The Act made basic competencies for seamen required, elevating the craft by setting standards that benefited competent seaman by excluding the incompetent. The Act also provided that the master or the owner of a vessel shall be liable in damages if the master fails to use due diligence in surrendering to the proper authorities the officer of such vessel who has flogged or administered corporal punishment to a seaman.

The Seaman's Act of 1915 took such a comprehensive view on regulating seagoing employment it is hard to find what it missed. Probably the most important oversight was the rules for seaman injured at sea, which would be addressed by the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, also known as the Jones Act.

The passage of the Seaman's Act of 1915 was a monumental task, requiring the near-fanatical dedication of Furuseth for more than 20 years. Aided by Senator Robert "Fighting Bob" LaFollette of Wisconsin,

#### A MESSAGE FROM SENATOR LA FOLLETTE.

Among other inspiring messages read at the meeting held at San Francisco on March 6th in honor of the thirtieth anniversary of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, was the following telegram:

Washington, D. C., March 6, 1915.  
Sailors Union of the Pacific,  
San Francisco, Cal.

As you meet to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of your organization I rejoice that in the Providence of God I am permitted at last to hail you as free men under the Constitution of our country. The fourth of March, 1915, is your emancipation day. The Act approved by President Wilson makes America sacred soil and the Thirteenth Amendment finally becomes a covenant of refuge for the seamen of the world. In the years to come, as you commemorate this great event, you should dedicate a part of the service to the memory of Andrew Furuseth. Except for his intelligent, courageous and unswerving devotion to your cause for twenty-one years you would be bondsmen instead of free men to-day.

ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE.



Furuseth spoke at countless meetings, wrote thousands of letters, and lived in Washington much of the time. He used his natural eloquence, his indomitable persistence, and his considerable political skills to overcome the financial advantages of the shipowners and their capitalist backers. The achievement is almost unthinkable by today's standards: to single-handedly convince a majority of Congress and a skeptical administration to enact a broad series of regulatory reforms that would force an industry to increase its costs and treat its workers with a modicum of respect. More than any particular skill or trait, Furuseth consistently compared the inhuman employment practices of the waterfront to the human rights provisions built into the U.S. Constitution, especially the Thirteenth Amendment. Furuseth took the moral high ground and never lost it despite a minimum of resources. For the seaman of the day this kind of moral courage easily called to mind the then not-too-distant example of Abraham Lincoln and eventually the informal title of "Emancipator of Seamen" was applied to Furuseth.

### The Lockout of 1921

In the years following the passage of the Seaman's Act, the SUP and its first international, the International Seaman's Union of America (ISU), which was founded by the SUP, experienced enormous growth and improved wages and conditions. Some of that growth was fueled by World War I, with its voracious need for tonnage and sailors. The *Coast Seaman's Journal* opposed the war, but the SUP sent thousands of sailors into harm's way delivering critical war supplies to Europe. The United States government was in dire need of qualified seamen and they began a powerful public relations campaign to recruit any able-bodied male to serve the war effort. Union sailors knew that this huge increase in personnel would mean there would be an imbalance in labor supply and demand after the war was over. The impact was even worse than they imagined as the economic depression of 1920-21 combined with the huge decrease in seagoing jobs due to the lay-up of ships dedicated to the war effort.

Admiral William S. Benson, head of the U.S. Shipping Board and supported by the American Steamship Owners' Association, decided in January of 1921 that the time was right to crush the Unions. He sent a letter to the ISU demanding a 15% wage cut, a complete elimination of all overtime, replacement of the three watch system (eight hour day) with a two watch system (12 hour day), and exclusion of Union officials from visiting ships. Worst of all, Benson proposed a non-Union open shop and continued operation and expansion of the government operated hiring halls (fink halls).

Furuseth made counter-proposals and, as an indication of the weakness of his position, even suggested arbitration with President Warren G. Harding as arbitrator. With the war over, the government no longer needed seamen, Benson had the upper hand and Republican Harding was pro-shipowner anyway. Benson refused the counter-proposals, and in a time before the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, had no obligation to bargain.

On April 30, the government imposed the wage cut and ordered the lockout of Union sailors. Shipowners recruited strikebreakers and the Unions picketed tying up ships up and down the Pacific Coast. In June an injunction against the pickets was issued against the Union. In July the shipowners restored the continuous discharge book (fink book) and later that month Furuseth admitted defeat. In the *Coast Seaman's Journal* on August 3, he wrote ***"The battle is fought and lost. To the real fighter for ideals a battle lost means nothing. You will not be able to make any money to speak of, but you never did except for a short time, and only a few of you."***

The Union treasury was busted after defending members in the injunction hearings. More than three-quarters of all West Coast shipping was dispatched by the fink halls. Within the SUP, there were bitter internal battles between Furuseth and what he perceived to be radicals, Communists, and members of the Industrial Workers of the World, or Wobblies. Wages continued to fall and conditions worsened. The ISU existed in name only. SUP jobs out of the hiring hall, were limited mainly to the coastwise steam schooners, the Alaska ships, and only those ships (Oceanic Steamship Company) trading with Australia where dockers refused to work non-Union ships.

In 1956, in a speech at the dedication of the new hiring hall for the Marine Cooks and Stewards in San Francisco, Harry Lundeberg would recall the era bitterly. ***"It is true that in the 1921 strike or lockout as you may call it, when the shipping industry together with Admiral Benson of the Shipping Board chose to join hands to break the Unions, we know we lost that strike. We know also that the Unions went back many, many years. And those of us who sailed in those days, we know the conditions we enjoyed under non-Union conditions. We had no strength, because they broke us, at least temporarily. As a result of that, a man who went to sea for a living was paid the big sum of \$40.00 a month. On some of the intercoastal ships you made \$32.50 a month and they made you work 56 hours a week and if you squawked, they fired you. If you carried a Union button, you couldn't get a job on a ship. They had their fink halls, up and down the Coast, east and west and south and you had to go in like a crumb to look for a job with your cap in your hand just like a dog to get the lousy job for \$32.50 a month. Those were the conditions the shipowners gave us when we were not strong."***

The lockout of 1921 was a complex and long-lasting disaster for the SUP and the rest of maritime labor, and the internecine battles that followed between Furuseth, the Communists, the Trotskyites, the Wobblies and the rank-and-file sailors created a period of both internal and external labor chaos. Wages and conditions plummeted. A universal Union hiring hall was distant dream. But the pain and the ignominy of the era forged an iron will in the sensibility of many sailors working then, among them Harry Lundeberg, who would be ready for action when the wind shifted.

### Norris LaGuardia Act

For decades Furuseth had fought against injunctions, (a court order that provides a provisional and temporary stay on an activity before trial could be held). Because they were so easily obtained from a judge, and immediately made picketing illegal and subject to police dispersal or arrest, Furuseth understood that injunctions undermined the ability of Unions to make the public aware of the injustices of employers. These injunctions were often extremely broad and in terms of labor disputes they acted as a summary judgment on the validity of the dispute. Violators risked criminal and civil penalties and any damages sustained by the plaintiff. Before the 1921 lockout they were a nuisance, but after 1921, where the Union not only lost the ability to picket but also had to defend itself against penalties and damages associated with various injunctions, they were the enemy's most effective weapon. And so Furuseth leveled his sights on Washington, and took up specific action against the legal procedure. As in other battles, Furuseth connected the anti-injunction movement with an abridgement of rights—the right to due process and the right to free speech.

Some historians have suggested that Furuseth wrote the text of Norris-LaGuardia. We can be sure that he lobbied hard for its passage, using all of his contacts and rhetorical gifts. It might be considered his last most effective act.

On March 23, 1932, President Herbert Hoover signed the bill, marking the first of many pro-Union bills that Congress would pass in the 1930s. It made it illegal for a federal court to issue an injunction against a labor Union for a nonviolent protest, and initiated other procedural obstacles. Although the act only applied to federal courts, numerous states would pass similar acts in the years afterward. Additionally, the act outlawed "yellow-dog contracts," which were contracts that some employers forced their employees to sign to ensure they would not join a Union; employees who refused to sign were terminated from their jobs. The passage of Norris-LaGuardia, while a substantial victory in itself, was also presage of change in the mood of the country as the Great Depression continued to wreak havoc on the working class of America.

### The 1934 Strike

The 1934 Big Strike marked the modern emergence of America's working class, and ranks among the two or three truly pivotal occasions in the history of the American working class. On a national level, the militancy of 1934 helped create the legal foundations of the modern labor movement, beginning with the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935. Also known as the Magna Carta of labor law, the NLRA gave American workers the right to form or join a Union. For the SUP, the Big Strike laid the groundwork for the successes of 1936, and the era forms the foundation of many of the Union's present day contracts, rules and traditions.

In the depths of the Great Depression, seamen were again out of work. Wages were rotten even by depression standards. Conditions aboard ship had been deteriorating since World War I. If hiring was done at all, the employers or government controlled halls of the Shipping Board were responsible.

The strike began on May 9, 1934 and lasted eighty-three days. Longshoremen and sailors walked out first, followed by the Teamsters and many others. The companies hired strikebreakers, kept them in protected areas and brought them to work under police protection. Two strikers protesting at the stockade of strike-

## Burning the Fink Books



*In the last days of the 1934 strike, Andrew Furuseth convinced the membership to make a grand gesture before returning to work, a symbolic event that would be picked up by the national press and "shown on screens around the country." His idea centered on the hated "fink book," which was required to secure a job from the government-sanctioned but corrupt and shipowner-controlled Shipping Offices. The Union had fought against the indignity since it was introduced in the 1890s, but only the Big Strike could deliver the killing blow. So the sailors gathered in a vacant lot next to the SUP hall and built what Furuseth called a "beautiful and horrible bonfire." Each man dipped his fink book in gasoline, and then tossed it into the fire. It was a brilliant and effective maneuver, and although the battle was not over, it announced to the world that henceforth the Sailors' Union would control the hiring process. Andrew Furuseth is fourth from right in suit and tie.*



breakers were shot and killed by an employer's private guards in San Pedro on May 19. Up and down the Coast shipping slowed and then stopped. Soon the railroads all but stopped, and the Teamsters refused to handle "hot" cargo.

On July 5, in San Francisco, police shot tear gas into crowds of strikers and the mounted police charged. The strikers fought back and police fired into the air at first, and then into the crowd. When the smoke cleared a striking seaman, Nicholas Bordoise and sympathizer Howard Sperry, lay dead on the sidewalk near the corner of Spear and Mission Streets. That night California Governor Frank Merriam called in the National Guard to patrol the waterfront.

The next day there was a massive funeral procession down Market Street to honor the fallen strikers. The police stayed away from the event, and most historians agree that the funerals swayed public opinion in favor of the strikers. This enabled the initiation of a General Strike, in support of what heretofore was a maritime strike. The San Francisco General Strike lasted only four days but it swung the momentum in favor of the strikers and pushed the dispute to resolution. July 5 became known as Bloody Thursday and still is observed every year up and down the Pacific Coast.

### Emergence of Harry Lundeberg

Harry Lundeberg was sailing as third mate in the coastwise steamer *James W. Griffiths* when he learned about the strike. He led the gang off the ship in Oakland and they rode boxcars back to Seattle to be at the center of the action there. At the conclusion of the strike, Lundeberg was elected Seattle Patrolman, and in 1936 Secretary-Treasurer, a post he was re-elected to until his death in 1957. Because of his central role in the strike, he was also elected president of the newly formed coastwise coalition of maritime Unions call the Maritime Federation of the Pacific. That position helped form Lundeberg's understanding of how coalitions are built and maintained, especially that mutual Union support depends on preserving the individual autonomy of a coalition's component parts. Although it would last only a few years and be officially dead by 1938, the Maritime Federation of the Pacific was a shining moment in world labor history. It was characterized by nearly perfect solidarity, where any member Union with a problem could count on the full support of all the other Unions. For a brief period, the Federation's motto that "An Injury to One" truly was "An Injury to All."

Despite the importance of 1934 as a turning point, the main improvements for sailors came after the strike was settled. As Lundeberg later testified before Congress: "The sailors did not get anything out of the strike. As a matter of fact, the sailors wanted to stay out longer, but through the pleading of the other Unions we were forced to go back after the 1934 strike without any gains whatsoever, and without any recognition... So the sailors had taken it upon themselves through their own activity to kick the shipowners into line by tying up ships. We had a period of job action. We tied up ships in every port we got hold of them. By the time the so-called Board made up their minds to settle the wages for the seamen, firemen and cooks, we already had superseded those conditions by our own activities. It was a hit-and-run deal, but it did its purpose."

In the last days of the strike before returning to work, Andrew Furuseth convinced the membership to make a grand gesture that would be picked up by the national press and "shown on screens around the country." His idea centered on the hated "fink book," which was required to secure a job from the government-sanctioned but corrupt and shipowner-controlled Shipping Offices. The Union had fought against the indignity since it was introduced at least a decade earlier, but had its roots in the "grade books" of the Shipping Association's hiring offices in the Battle of 1893. As a final flourish, Furuseth staged the event with all the skill of a modern public relations expert. The sailors gathered in a vacant lot next to the Union hall in San Francisco and built what Furuseth called a "beautiful and horrible bonfire" while the cameras rolled. Each man dipped his hated "fink book" in gasoline and tossed it into the fire. It was a maneuver both brilliant and effective, and although for the Sailors the battle was far from over, (in fact the SUP would be involved in dozens of smaller strikes and job actions over the next few years) it announced to the world that henceforth the Sailors' Union would control the hiring process.

It was among his last gestures. Paul S. Taylor described his "Norse profile...like the prow of Viking ship." The starkness of his visage evokes his single-minded devotion to the sailors cause. His successes would earn him the monikers of "St. Andrew the Sailor," and "the Abraham Lincoln of the Sea." Samuel Gompers called him a "genius of extraordinary power," and the often disparaging journalist George West said he was a "gaunt figure of courage, of stark sincerity, of consecrated devotion..." His critics berated him as draconian, overbearing, and unforgiving, but even they freely admitted that Andrew Furuseth worked with tireless energy, passionate dedication, and unwavering resolve. He formed some of the earliest coalitions in maritime labor, coalitions that would become blue-



The SUP float in the 1946 Labor Day Parade in San Francisco honored merchant mariners lost in World War II.

prints for the future. Furuseth helped organize the Atlantic Coast Seamen's Union, the San Francisco Labor Council, and the California State Federation of Labor. He personally delivered many of the Union's great legislative successes including the monumental effort to free sailors from the bondage of their employment. He created the first maritime international Union, the International Seamen's Union, and served as its president from its inception in 1895 until his death. He helped settle some of the thorniest problems of the day such as cargo-handling jurisdiction with the longshoremen. Furuseth continued his efforts for minimum maritime safety and working conditions at the international level at various European conferences of the International Labor Organization. He spearheaded the fights to have the ILO adopt the Minimum Wage (Sea) Convention (1920), Shipwreck Convention (1920), Placing of Seamen Convention (1920), Medical Examination of Young Person's (Sea) Convention (1921), Seamen's Articles of Agreement Convention (1926) and the Repatriation Convention of Seamen Convention (1926). These groundbreaking international laws were recently subsumed into the all-encompassing Maritime Labor Convention of 2006. In a famous Labor Day speech Furuseth described his almost mystical devotion to craft, to seamanship. "Work is worship... It matters not if the labor be the writing of a thesis or the digging of a ditch... It is skill that puts the mechanic nearest the gods." Furuseth "crossed the bar" in January 1937.

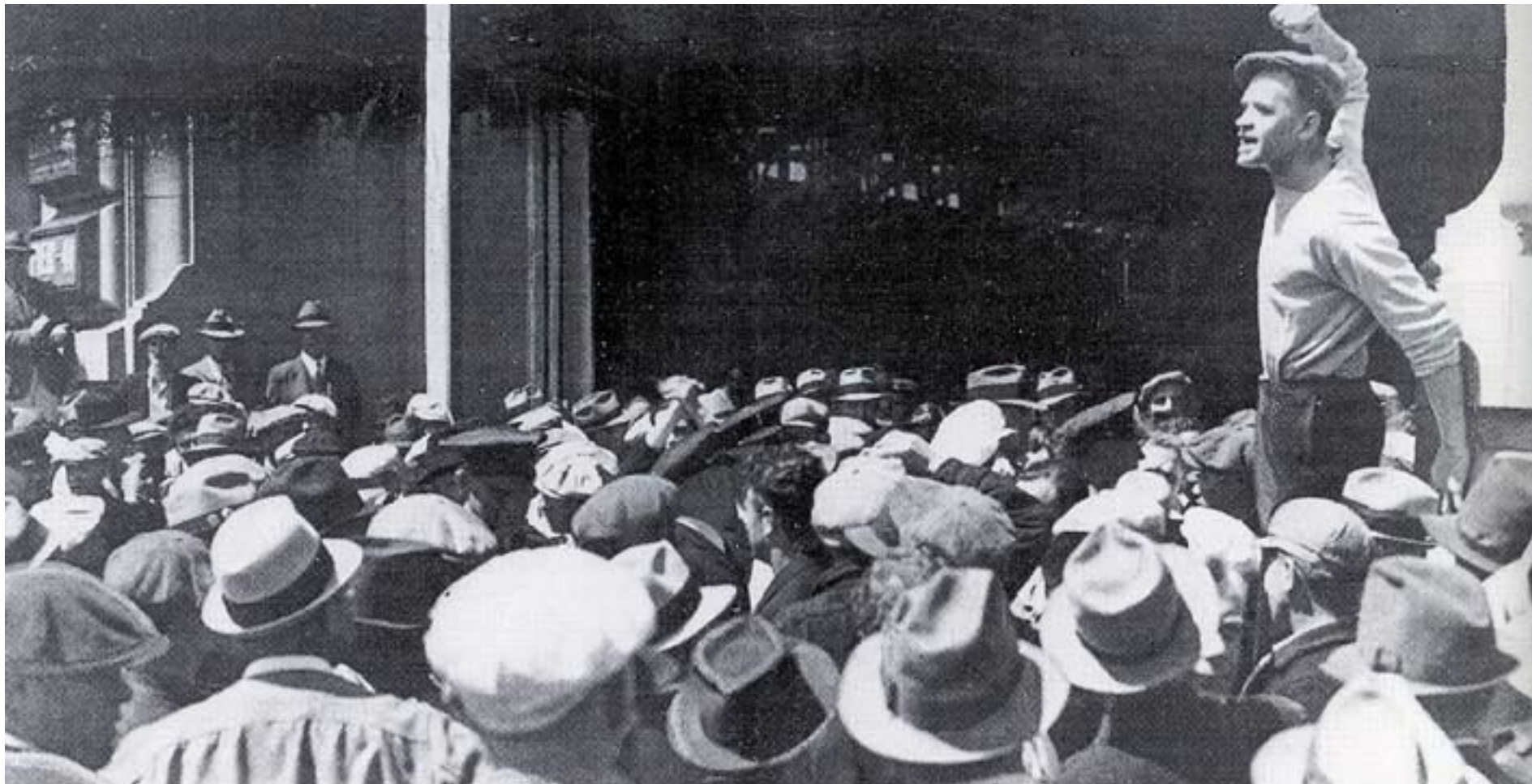
### The Second Big Strike

The "period of job action," as Lundeberg recalled it, began in 1935 and stretched into 1937. With a militant membership at its core, this was a time of "quickie" strikes, including fresh use of the "Oracle" but with new intensity. The era's new emphasis on the hiring process made sailors aware of the Union as an organization not limited to on-the-job issues but concerned about — and able to influence — all aspects of employment. In this way the "explosion" of 1934 remained for the SUP a vigorous and shifting movement in the subsequent years, and it was then that the Union made its gains.

The longshoremen in September of 1935 renewed their arbitration award (which provided for Union hiring halls) from the previous year, which became an agreement, but the Sailors were still angry. "SAILORS DENIED COLLECTIVE BARGAINING," proclaimed *The Voice of the Federation*, which was the newspaper of the Maritime Federation. "Embittered toward all forms of negotiating by the deliberate stalling on the part of the shipowners, the seamen have turned their back on 'negotiations' in favor of job action." But *The Voice* was controlled by Communists, and an editorial in the same issue urged referral of job action to an emergency convention of the Maritime Federation. Harry Lundeberg declared in a letter to *The Voice* that "THE MEN ON THE SHIPS ARE CAPABLE OF PICKING THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE" for job action and that "THOSE WHO WANT TO SUPERVISE ARE LOYAL TO THE PRINCIPLE OF DEFEATISM." Throughout the strike Lundeberg and the SUP would battle Communist intervention using the Trotskyites as allies. Later Lundeberg would write that he "was not a Trotskyite, or another kind form of political emancipator, and never will be... my policy is strictly trade Union; along militant lines."

The strike began on October 30, 1936 and lasted 99 days. Chief among the demands of the SUP were elimination of the "Copeland fink book" (the latest incarnation of the "grade book") and that all unlicensed crew would be shipped through the Union hiring halls. Also in the mix was the demand that overtime be paid in cash rather than time off, that the steward department would have a work day of eight hours spread across twelve hours, and a six hour day in port. In the meantime, Communists succeeded in gaining control of the Federation, and there waged a complex ideological war between the SUP and its many enemies of the period. When they went back to work in January 1937, the Sailors had won the strike, eliminating the need for a Copeland fink book, re-establishing the Union hiring hall and gaining a \$10.00 per month wage increase.





*Backed by a handful of SUP pickets, Lundeberg tells a CIO mob, "You Shall Not Pass!" A historic incident in the Shepard Line beef when the CIO-NMU attempted a raid on the s/s Sea Thrush at Pier 41, San Francisco in 1938.*

## The Shepard Line Beef

On April 18, 1938, Harry Lundeberg stood on the cornerstone of Pier 41 in San Francisco and told the crowd that moored behind him was an SUP ship, the intercoastal *SS Sea Thrush*, and that any non-member sailor who sought to board the ship would do it through an SUP picket. *"This is a fight against the Shepard Line,"* he said, *"against an open shop drive, for protection of seamen's hiring halls. If these shipowners, who hold a contract with the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, are able to get away with this, it means the opening wedge of an open shop drive on the Pacific Coast."* It was a reasonable and measured explanation for a militant stand, but the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) longshoremen and NMU sailors did pass through, crashing the line. Blood flowed as brother slugged brother. It marked the end of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific coalition formed in the 1934 Strike.

Although the line was broken, the ship sailed short-handed; she was later picketed in New York on arrival and the company eventually gave in and recognized the SUP agreement. In her book, *Maritime Solidarity*, Otilie Markholt described the final victory. "Against the combined pressure of the company, the federal government, the waterfront employers, and Communist bloc seamen and longshoremen, the Sailors' Union compelled Shepard to recognize its agreement."

The Shepard Line Beef made it clear to rank-and-file sailors of the SUP that the Communist faction of the CIO had united with the employers and the police to swipe the legitimately gained work of the Union. It not only cracked open the shell of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, it also exposed the defunct ISU as an ineffective federation of seagoing Unions. Faced with an affiliation structure that was no longer beneficial to the SUP, Lundeberg created a new one, not only to simply fight the shipowners and Communists, but to more effectively defend against all the enemies of the Union. Established between Gomper's successor William Green and Lundeberg, the new affiliation came in the form of a charter issued on October 14, 1938 by the American Federation of Labor to the Seafarer's International Union of North America, created by the SUP and to which the SUP became an autonomous affiliate. That structure continues to this day.

## The Taft-Hartley Act

After World War II had ended, and after hundreds of SUP members made the supreme sacrifice, it became clear that the sacrifices that workers had made for the war effort were not going to be rewarded at the bargaining table. There were a series of strikes in the steel and auto industries, and in Oakland, with the assistance of Lundeberg and SUP sailors from Matson there was a General Strike in 1946. Public response was generally negative and a threatened 1946 rail strike was perceived as potentially catastrophic for the U.S. economy.

In response, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 which amended the National Labor Relations Act. It placed restrictions on employers. Taft-Hartley placed restrictions on Unions, such as banning the closed shop and prohibiting jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts. It made Unions subject to "unfair labor practice" charges, and giving sixty days notice before authorizing a strike. The Taft-Hartley Act also allowed individual states to prohibit a collective bargaining agreement's Union security clause creating the so-called "right to work" states. The legislation was bitterly fought by all Unions, including the SUP, and it was vetoed by President Harry Truman. On June 23, 1947, Congress overrode his veto and the bill became law.

One of the most contentious parts of the bill was the idea of the open shop, a goal of employers on the Pacific Coast since at least the 1901 strike where Union membership was not only not required at the outset, it was not required as a part of continued employment either. The open shop would have also prohib-

ited any financial support for the Union. In its most extreme form, the open shop would have completely prohibited the employment of Union members. Its opposite is the closed shop, where every employee must be a member in good standing. A related form of hiring opposed to the open shop is the agency shop, where every employee must become a member in good standing within a period of time or else pay a fee equivalent to dues or representational costs.

As negotiations for the final text of the legislation wore on it became clear that the closed shop would be outlawed, and that the open shop was the preferred choice of Congress. The benign-sounding open shop was, in fact, a direct attack on the hard-fought benefits of Union control of hiring. For the SUP, who had over the past 62 years spent so much blood and treasure to secure control of the hiring process, it struck at the heart of its identity. Lundeberg rose to the challenge and intervened as described by SUP historian and former Vice-President Duane Hewitt:

*"The open shop section of the bill would have outlawed the hiring hall. Since that was at the core of Union strength, this would be a catastrophe for all Unions. When Senator Robert Taft came to Santa Cruz, California, to attend a convention, Lundeberg made arrangements to meet with him along with a representative of the shipowners. Lundeberg wrote and presented to the Senator a "preferential hiring" clause. Senator Taft, after hearing the argument for the clause, approved it as written. The hiring hall was saved, was copied by other Unions, and is the mainstay of the Union today."*

The preferential hiring clause known as the "Lundeberg Formula" (which lives today in Section 2 of the SUP Work Rules in the Agreements with APL and Matson, and with other contracted companies) was an elegant solution to a particularly thorny problem: giving some recognition to the employers need for quality personnel while retaining control of the dispatch procedures. The clause also contained the requirement that employees become and remain members in good standing, which became the blueprint for Union security provisions in agreements in many other industries. In the anti-Union climate of the day, where Congress overrode a presidential veto to establish massive new restrictions on Unions, Lundeberg's successful proposal to Senator Taft was a legislative tour-de-force at a critical moment that had far reaching implications for Union labor. It is almost completely overlooked by labor historians.

## The Strike of 1952

It is easy to consider progress entirely in legislative terms. There is always considerable historical detail available regarding any act of Congress, much less so in other matters, particularly the history of collective bargaining. That's why the Status Quo Agreement of 1952, the product of a 90-day strike and a dispute between the longshoremen and the sailors, is of particular value. Its historical value, though significant, is dwarfed by its daily practical value since the Status Quo confirmed the SUP "Scope of Work" based on more than five decades of past practice and set the standard for another five decades of relative jurisdictional peace. The history of the West Coast dispute between longshoremen and sailors over the handling of cargo, cargo equipment, and stores goes back to at least 1900, when Furuseth brought it to the attention of Samuel Gompers, the president of the American Federation of Labor. The SUP contended that, especially in coastwise steamships, the operation of the booms and winches for the loading of cargo had always been within their scope of work. To be sure, the sailors had been doing the work in an organized fashion for decades before the longshoremen had organized even the largest West Coast ports. Gompers de-



laid an answer on the question, hoping it would get worked out. Finally in 1919 Gompers “split the baby” declaring that sailors held jurisdiction “inside the rail” and the longshoremen “outside the rail.” Of course the practical implementation of such a decree was problematic if not impossible, so an uneasy settlement was worked out where the ships were divided up between the two groups: sailors took the “long hatch” or the largest hold forward of the house, and the longshoremen handled the rest. This compromise continued until 1952, where after the dispute and strike-induced settlement, it was confirmed again. Since it reconfirmed existing conditions, the settlement was named “the Status Quo Agreement of 1952.” As Duane Hewitt observed in his understated style in 2001:

*“After saving the hiring hall in 1947, Lundeberg saved the scope of work of sailors in 1952 in the last major strike of his life. Some Unions were attempting to claim the Sailors’ work. [And] although there was a scope of work section in the agreement, the employers continuously violated it. Lundeberg would not concede any part of the scope of work and eventually the strike was won. The scope of work remained and enforcement was assured.”*

Although the cargo handling aspects of the Agreement were rendered useless by containerization, parts of the Agreement still apply, especially with regard to what exactly is sailors work.

### The Flag of Convenience Campaign

Beginning in earnest after World War II, at first to avoid becoming the target of Nazi U-Boats and later for profit, U.S. shipowners began to flag their ships under foreign flags of convenience. The tactic allowed them to lower costs by paying nothing in taxes, rolling back safety and environmental standards, and paying slave wages to foreign crews. Harry Lundeberg traveled to Oslo in 1949 for a convention of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and there helped establish the “Flag-of-Convenience (FOC) campaign” whose goal was to drive ships back to the national registers.

Lundeberg had considerable success in gaining jurisdiction over such ships, as the SUP picketed the foreign-flagged Kaiser ship *Pho Pho* in 1950. Shipowner Henry J. Kaiser famously bet Lundeberg that he would name a ship after him if he could successfully organize a foreign flag ship. Lundeberg succeed and in 1951 the *Pho Pho* became the *Harry Lundeberg*, part of a four ship gypsum carrier fleet. Whether or not the SUP had anything to gain was not a consideration in the fight to improve wages in FOC ships. The *Riveria* beef, for instance, in which the SUP argued the case of the foreign sailors all the way to the Supreme Court and lost, or the *Makiki* beef, where the SUP picketed and collected back wages for an Italian crew, were a few of the early examples. The flag-of-convenience campaign continues to this day, although the ITF has since shifted its focus away from driving ships back to the national registries to improving wages and conditions for FOC mariners.

### The Cargo Preference Act of 1954

As American ships laid up after World War II and the Korean War in mothball fleets or were sent to the breakers, and while foreign-flag registers continued to add American-owned tonnage, America’s post-war Marshall Plan directed massive economic assistance to Europe. This ironic fact of foreign aid helping flag-of-convenience or runaway flag shipping was exploited by Lundeberg on moral grounds. He argued over and over that American cargo should be reserved exclusively for American ships and that argument ultimately compelled the attention of Congress.

There were dozens of legislative battles as corporate interests attempted to cut the proposed division of the cargo from at least 50% in American bottoms to 5% or less. One such battle, was known as the “Hoffman fight” after the administrator of the European Cooperation Agency which was charged with implementing the Marshall Plan. In his letter of December 9, 1948 to Hoffman, Lundeberg shows a mix of moral outrage and calm deliberation:



*The Hawaiian Merchant tied-up in Wilmington during the 1952 strike. From left are pickets C.E. Kehler, W.W. Walker, SUP Patrolman Tony Finale, Strike Committee member H.C. Wiggins, picket H.W. Wiggins and picket Captain D. Renaker.*

*“Your threat of using foreign ships exclusively in carrying relief cargo under the Marshall Plan to Europe is definitely against the policy established by the late Congress. We condemn and protest your sell-out of the American merchant marine in your proposed policy. All American products going to Europe under the Marshall Plan are made by American workers under American wages and all products are sold by American employers at large profits, including your own corporation. We can see no reason why you should single out the American merchant marine and put thousands of seamen out of work, thereby weakening the American merchant marine, which is weak enough as it is. You are superseding your authority in playing ball with the cheap foreign shipping companies and we intend to use all our power, including economic power, to see that American ships receive fifty percent of the relief cargoes.”*

Invoking patriotism and the lack thereof, national security, the demand for equal access to a (labor) market, adherence to democratic process, and finally threatening “economic” action, Lundeberg is operating on many levels while maintaining the simple speech of a sailor. After eight years of nearly constant lobbying, Congress passed and President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Cargo Preference Act on August 26, 1954. The law required 50% of all government-impelled cargo be shipped in U.S.-flag ships. Although it is often subverted by waivers, this law still stands on the books. It was the only successful legislative defense against the scourge of flag-of-convenience shipping. Accordingly, it deserves a place amongst the pantheon of great legislative efforts such as the Maguire Act, the White Act and the Seamen’s Act of 1915. Lundeberg’s role in its passage, not particularly well understood in his time, is nearly forgotten now. But the American shipowners knew what it meant and understood clearly Lundeberg’s pivotal role. A telegram from Robert B. Mayer, President of the Pacific American Steamship Association, sent the same day as the President signed the bill into law: **I KNOW WHAT YOU DID AND WE ARE GRATEFUL. FURTHER, THIS TAKES ME BACK TO THE TIME SEVEN YEARS**

**AGO WHEN YOU PERSONALLY WENT TO WASHINGTON AND TESTIFIED FOR THE FIRST 50-50 BILL UNDER THE MARSHALL PLAN. ... YOU PLAYED A BIG PART IN THE BEGINNING OF THIS AND NOW IN ITS FINAL CULMINATION IN A PERMANENT OVERALL LAW. CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS.**

### Wartime service

Because of the interest of historians, Hollywood, and to a certain extent the preservation of museum ships such as the Liberty ship *Jeremiah O’Brien* in San Francisco, the role of merchant seamen during wartime, at least during World War II, is better understood than other eras of maritime history. It is less well-known that the American merchant marine predates the United States of America, and not only in terms of commercial activity. In early June 1775, the British ships *Unity* and the *Polly* carrying mostly food supplies arrived in Machias, Maine under the armed escort of the schooner *HMS Margaretta*. The role of the *Margaretta* was to ensure that the



*SUP members in 1950 picket the foreign-flag ship *Pho Pho* in Redwood City, California. Owned by Kaiser Gypsum, the SUP won the beef and the vessel was renamed *Harry Lundeberg*.*



supplies were traded for lumber to build barracks for the redcoats in Boston. But many of the townspeople were opposed to helping the British war effort, less than two months after Lexington and Concord, and tensions built as the British were ridiculed and taunted over a period of days. On the night of June 12, 1775, the young Jeremiah O'Brien and 40 other private citizens, armed with guns, swords, axes, clubs and pitchforks attacked and seized the *Unity* under fire from the crew and the *Margaretta*. Most of the British escaped in the *Margaretta*, but O'Brien in command of the sloop *Unity* gave chase, eventually ramming into the British naval ship and engaging in hand-to-hand combat. After an hour of fighting, the patriots had killed or wounded twenty-five of the British, including their captain, and emerged victorious in the first sea battle of the Revolutionary War.

In World War I, despite a deep distrust of the official government reasons for the war, the SUP participated in sending thousands of crews into the periscope crosshairs of the German U-Boats. The naval theater of the war was critical since both England and Germany depended on imports to feed their populations and supply their war industry. That meant that the war became in part a war on shipping, and as the United States mariners delivered supplies via merchant ship they came under the increasingly unrestricted fire of German submarines. During World War I nearly 5,000 merchant ships had been sunk by u-boats, with the loss of 15,000 Allied sailors lives.

In World War II, beginning in September 1939, the war on shipping resumed with new technology and on a larger scale. Winston Churchill called it the "Battle of the Atlantic." The German commander of the U-Boats, Vice-Admiral Karl Dönitz called it a "tonnage war" in which his aim was to use groups of submarines (the so-called "wolf pack" tactic) to sink Allied ships faster than they could be replaced. But the Allies developed new technology, such as sonar, depth charges and "hedgehogs," as well as new tactics such as convoys and anti-submarine air support began to limit losses. In the U.S. shipyard production surged, and SUP merchant mariners turned to despite the extreme personal risk, rising to a challenge of personal sacrifice that is unmatched in U.S. maritime history. All told 733 American cargo ships were lost in World War II. Of the 215,000 merchant mariners who served, 8,651 were killed in action, a rate of nearly one in twenty-four, and surpassed only by the Marine Corps.

While the Union was urgently recruiting and training new members for naval support ships, it was also defending against a military takeover of the merchant marine. One aspect was a program which attempted to place vast numbers of naval "cadets" aboard merchant ships. Perhaps more insidious was an attempt by the Maritime Commission which had assumed jurisdiction over all United States-flagged vessels at the outset of the war, and working for the War Shipping Administration, to abrogate all agreements. SUP Headquarter minutes from May of 1942, for example, show Lundeberg trying to "explain the attempt of Navy to take over Merchant Marine," to the membership "which was blocked with the aid of President William Green of the AFL." He went on to discuss "the attempt of the War Shipping Administrator to do away with our agreements and take away all overtime and setting and breaking watches at the option of the Master." Lundeberg noted that the National Maritime Union (NMU) had proposed reducing overtime and limiting work rules while establishing a war labor board to adjust disputes. **"The Board was to be composed of equal representation of shipowners and Unions and the Chairman and Vice Chairman were to be appointed by the War Shipping Administration. This phoney move was fought tooth and nail by your Representative in conjunction with the representatives of the SIU Atlantic, the MCS, the MFOW, and the MEBA and the MMP of the West Coast. Also succeeded in beating all their phoney moves with the aid of the AF of L ... and we came out of there with everything we had."** The experience led Lundeberg and the SUP to reconsider the importance of a presence in Washington, and in the same meeting he proposed the appointment of Mathew "Duke" Dushane as the Union's first paid lobbyist at the rate of \$30.00 per week.

When forces of North Korea crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and invaded the Republic of Korea (South), the event coincided with a transition of the sealift arm of the U.S. Army. The Army Transport Service became the new Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) with an aggressive mission of supplying all of the seagoing transportation needs of the U.S. military. (MSTS is the predecessor of today's Military Sealift Command.)

At the time of the invasion in 1950, MSTS had only a few ships in the region. By July of that year, when faced with the movement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division from Ft. Lewis Washington to Korea, but the MSTS chartered ten troop transports and eleven general cargo ships through commercial shipping companies. Many of the ships were World War II Victory ships, broken out of the mothballed National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF). This went on throughout the war.

The manning of "dead" ships is an especially difficult task and the records of the era show the Union was totally dedicated to that purpose. This pattern stretches back further than the Korea War, the modern version of the military's general peacetime disregard for the merchant marine and especially its labor force, and then depending on it for immediate performance in times of war or crisis here more was firmly established. In Vietnam the same sudden crew requirements emerged, as ships were broken out and laid up and then broken out again. In 1966, in support of military activity in Vietnam, the U.S. government had activated 161 ships from the NDRF under general agency agreements with various ship operators.

In 1990 when Saddam Hussein's tanks rolled into Kuwait on August 2, the pattern emerged again. By August 7, the U.S. and coalition forces were deploying forces in Operation Desert Shield to protect Saudi Arabia from the Iraqi Republican Army. This operation was followed by the liberation of Kuwait in



*The Liberty Ship s/s Andrew Furuseth pictured above at her launching on October 8, 1942. Build at Permanente Metals Corporation Shipbuilding Division in Richmond, California in less than a month, the Furuseth was designated a War Shipping Administration Transport with a capacity of 550 men and was operated by Matson Navigation Company. During World War II the Furuseth served in the Atlantic and Mediterranean Theaters. In 1947 she was sold to Norwegian interests and was renamed the Essi. In 1959 she was sold to the Japanese and renamed the Niobe. She was scrapped in Nirao, Japan in June, 1967.*

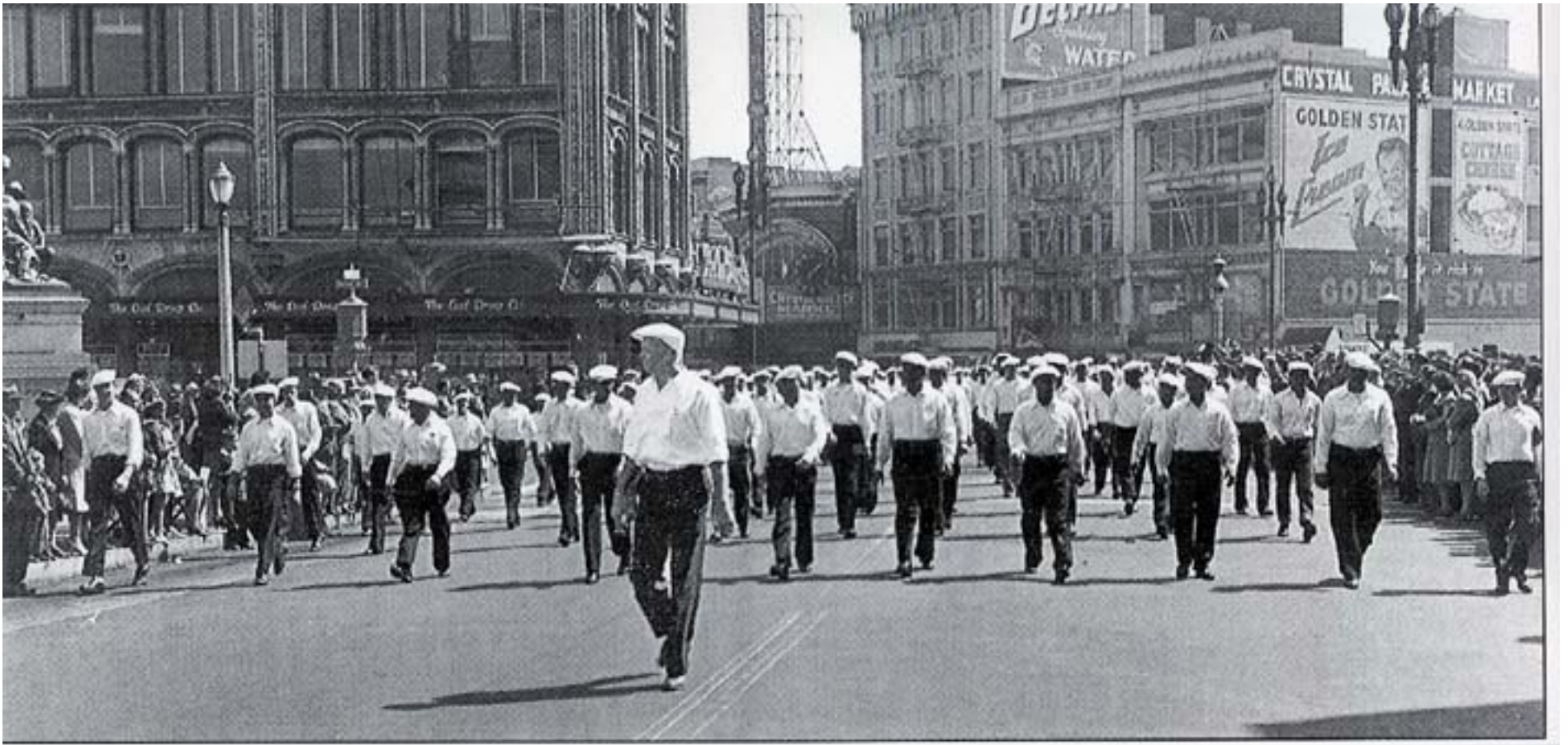
Operation Desert Storm in January 1991. Both operations adhered to the "Powell Doctrine" of a clear mission pursued with overwhelming force, a strategy that required immediate and enormous sealift. Almost all available tonnage was broken out, as the U.S. maritime industry in general, and the SUP again answered the call. The aging of the Ready Reserve Force, and the lack of adequate Roll-On/Roll-Off tonnage, led to the construction of the Large Medium Speed Roll-On/Roll-Offs (LMSRs). They would be needed soon. In months leading up to March of 2003, aboard eleven of these enormous ships, the SUP responded to the immediate needs of the military in the second Gulf war, officially known as Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In each of the wars of the United States, the merchant marine has risen to meet her needs despite severe obstacles. Yet just as the story of Jeremiah O'Brien is largely forgotten, so are the wartime contributions of merchant mariners throughout the decades. Many members have made the supreme sacrifice, but despite its integral role the nation maintains a mostly neglectful relationship with its "fourth arm of defense," leaving it to fend for itself in peacetime and then requiring absolute urgency and dedication in times of war.

### The Collective Bargaining History

As noted above, the collective bargaining history of the SUP deserves separate and comprehensive recognition. That history informs the work of sailors and is both the basis of our daily working lives and the foundation for future bargaining. There are far too many collective bargaining issues and events, too many negotiations, too many elections, strike resolutions, and settled contracts to list here. The impact of containerization on the SUP Work Rules that were written mainly on break-bulk experience would need careful attention in a comprehensive history. The lessons of 1978, where Pacific Far East Lines and States Lines were lost to bankruptcy, the same year where Prudential-Grace Lines was sold to Delta Lines, with all the job loss and ensuing impact to the various benefit plans, should be revisited. The 1981 closure of the Marine Hospital by President Reagan and its effect on benefits followed by the membership allocations to support health care from wage packages needs at least a chapter. The 1996 replacement of the Operating Differential Subsidy with the Maritime Security Program and its subsequent renewals — they all require in-depth study. More recently the 1999 affiliation of the Exxon Seaman's Union with the SUP, its historic context and the mutual benefit for both Unions should have dedicated space. The resurgence of the SUP as a critical part of the nation's sealift infrastructure with the 1999 award of 11 Large Medium Speed Roll-On/Roll-Off ships operated by Patriot Contract Services for the Military Sealift Command, and the innovative training methods of the Andrew Furuseth School of Seamanship would receive more than mere mention. The 2003 renegotiation of the Matson agreement to bring the *Manukai*-Class vessels under SUP contract and preventing the outsourcing of our historical work deserves a thorough review. The 2005 commitment of APL to manage and operate its ships with the SUP onboard and the 2006 return of APL to the U.S. East Coast after an absence of 29 years should be outlined. Any full history of the SUP would deal with the





*The Sailors' Union contingent struts up Market Street in the 1948 Labor Day Parade with Harry Lundeberg setting the pace. Rig for the day: white shirts, Frisco jeans and "Lundeberg Stetsons."*

landmark 2007 agreement with Chevron Shipping Company ensuring member retention of tanker work in an expanding fleet and the same year's industry-leading improvements to the contract with San Francisco Bar Pilots. The same goes for the 2008 agreement with Foss Maritime Company that built on the major changes of lengthy negotiations of 2004.

Add to this the countless defensive actions against the enemies of the Jones Act, the fight against drug testing, the fight against background checks, the fight against unnecessary training or medical requirements, the fight against the anti-worker provisions of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002, the fight against the TWIC, and the one hundred and twenty-five year fight for thousands of contract improvements, large and small. These stories and many, many others are also the history of the SUP; they deserve more complete historical treatment and await the indefatigable student. For now they are told monthly, at the Union meetings and in the *West Coast Sailors*.



"Remember your glorious history and die in the streets of San Francisco of starvation before you think of yielding!" declared Haskell in 1886. When future SUP members look back from the Union's 150<sup>th</sup> or 200<sup>th</sup> birthday there will still be some element of its history that will not be told but may be remembered. The late San Francisco folklorist and SUP historian Archie Green wrote in a 2004 article on Furuseth's famous credo ("You can put me in jail...") that Walter MacArthur, himself a sailor and one-time editor of the *Coast Seaman's Journal*, argued that it was the rank-and-file that supported Furuseth. High-minded leadership, Archie warned, was nothing without that support. "Like a seaman facing a fanatical Old Man aboard ship, the editor [MacArthur] struggled to balance respect for authority with independence in the ranks. In a letter to Ira Cross, MacArthur attempted to place his associate's status in perspective:

*"In some minds the idea prevails that Furuseth is entitled to the credit for the very existence of the Union. The fact is the other way around. From the very beginning the Sailors' Union has contained a large proportion of capable men, to whose courage and initiative is due the continuous existence of the Union and the progress made in the practical conditions of their lives. These men did not make speeches in public, but they spoke the only language that was understood by the crimps and runners on the waterfront. They patrolled the beach and boarded vessels in all sorts of weather and under all sorts of conditions. They took the chance of being clubbed on the docks or thrown overboard in the bay. In short they 'took the gaff' and by so doing preserved the life of the Union."*

Credit the existence of Furuseth to the Union; it was the rank-and-file, as Archie Green goes on to emphasize, that made possible the "ascent of a hero." MacArthur's point is a good illustration of forcing a balance to the bias most historians have for the printed word and the famous individual. Just as there is an inclination to anchor SUP history in legislation, it is easy to frame it via its great heroes. After all, Andrew Furuseth and Harry Lundeberg were uncommon visionaries with charismatic personalities. But SUP history does not succumb to the trap of hero-worship because at bottom they were only representatives and the real tide of history ebbed and flowed with the will of the rank-and-file. From the point of view of the sailor, that is what makes SUP history so unique, vibrant and informative. It was not decreed by executive order and cannot be encapsulated by any political argument. It does not exist to advance any academics: no historical method can be proven or debunked in the personal association a sailor has with his Union forebears. Our SUP history is not written for historians. It is written by our own experiences and recorded in our memories. It was written mostly by seamen for seamen, written to be understood on watch and lived out on deck, and written like MacArthur said, by men who risked the chance of being clubbed on the docks or thrown overboard in the bay in exchange for the chance of progress in the practical conditions of our lives.

## PREAMBLE OF THE SUP CONSTITUTION

We, the Seamen of the Pacific Coast, members of the Coast Seamen's Union and Steamship Sailors' Union, having been organized separately since 1885 and 1886, respectively, and having thoroughly learned the value of organization, and further, that two organizations of the same craft at the same place are not for the interests of men working at the said craft, we have determined to form one union, which shall be based upon the following principles:

Whatever right belongs to one member belongs to all members alike, as long as they remain in good standing in the Union.

First of these rights is the right of each member to receive fair and just remuneration for his/her labor, and to gain sufficient leisure for mental cultivation and physical recreation.

Further, we consider it our right to receive healthy and sufficient food, and proper forecables in which to rest.

Next, is the right to be treated in a decent and respectful manner by those in command.

Next, is the right of engagement without the interference of crimps or other parties not directly interested.

We hold that the above rights belong to all seamen alike, irrespective of nationality or creed.

Recognizing the foregoing as our inalienable rights, we are conscious of corresponding duties to those in command, our employers, our craft and our country.

We will, therefore, try by all just means to promote harmonious relations with those in command by exercising due care and diligence in the performance of the duties of our pro-

fession and by giving all possible assistance to our employers in caring for their gear and property.

Based upon these principles, it is among our objectives:

To use our influence individually and collectively for the purpose of maintaining and developing skill in seamanship and effecting a change in the maritime law of the United States, so as to render it more equitable and to make it an aid instead of a hindrance to the development of a Merchant Marine and a body of American seamen.

To support a journal which shall voice the sentiments of the seafaring class, and through its columns seek to maintain the knowledge of and interest in maritime affairs.

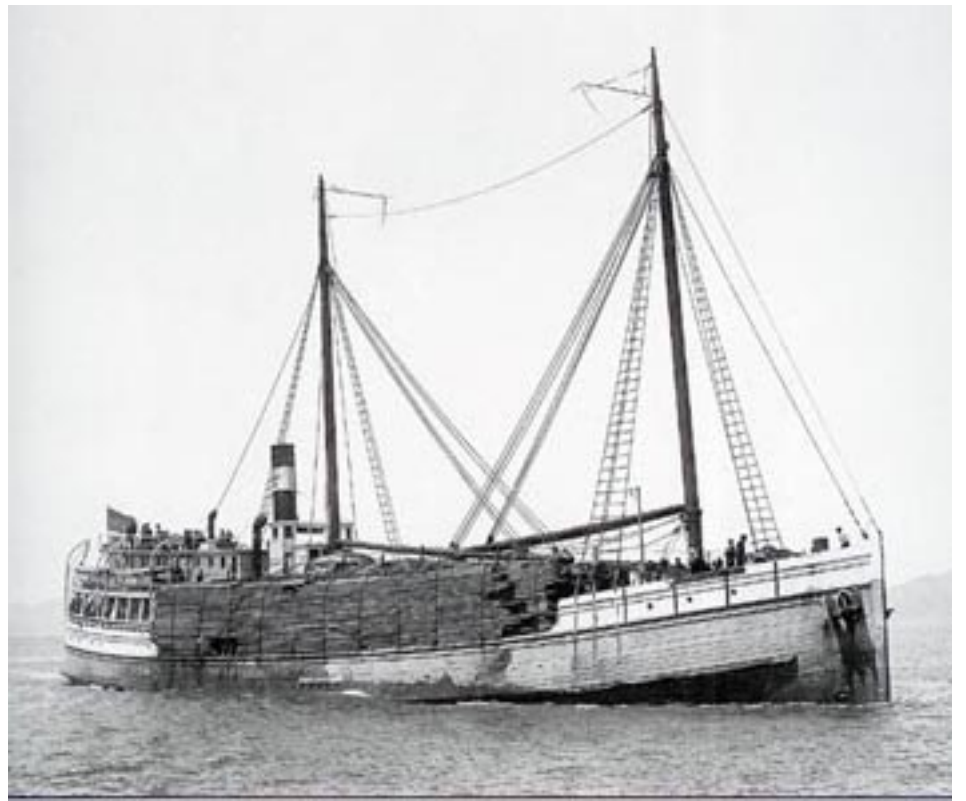
• assist the seamen of other countries in the work of the organization

and federation, to the end of establishing the Brotherhood of the Sea.

• assist other bona fide labor organizations whenever possible in the attainment of their just demands.

• regulate our conduct as a Union and as individuals so as to make seamanship what it rightly is - an honorable and useful calling. And bearing in mind that we are migratory, that our work takes us away in different directions from any place where the majority might otherwise meet to act, that meetings can be attended by only a fraction of the membership, that the absent members, who cannot be present, must have their interests guarded from what might be the results of excitement and passions aroused by persons or conditions, and that those who are present may act for and in the interest of all, we have adopted this constitution.





*The SUP-crewed bark Star of Shetland (ex-Edward Sewall), of the Alaska Packer fleet. Photo by Gabriel Moulin, c.1922. The Alaska Packers Association (APA) was a San Francisco-based manufacturer of Alaska canned salmon founded in 1891 and sold in 1982.*

*The APA is perhaps best remembered for operating one of the last fleet of tall ships. Although this invoked the romance of the days of sail, reliance on wind rather than steam was a way for the company to economize. Shortly after the turn of the 20th century, the APA began to replace its wooden ships with iron hulled vessels. The first of these vessels bought by the APA was the Star of Russia and the company liked the name so much they incorporated this pattern with their other vessels. By 1930, most of the sailing ships were replaced with steam or diesel powered ships. Only two survive.*

*The Star of India is now berthed at the San Diego Maritime Museum. The Star of Alaska, originally named the Balclutha, was given back its original name and is berthed in San Francisco as part of the Maritime National Historical Park. The SUP played a major role in saving the Balclutha from the scrap heap in the 1950s.*

*McCormick Steamship Company's wooden steam schooner Willamette around 1910. McCormick operated twelve coastwise steamers during this period, each with its familiar, star-design funnel marker. The ships were known as good ships and good feeders, carrying between twenty and fifty passengers plus a full deck load of cargo. Photo by Walter Scott. Lumber was the principal cargo of the steam schooners, whose very existence was due to the need for ships of that type to get forest products from rugged north coast of California to San Francisco and other ports as far south as San Diego. Southbound manifests showed such items as dimension lumber, railroad ties, shingles and tanbark. General merchandise for the northbound voyage would comprise of groceries, mill supplies, machinery and liquor for the hard-drinking lumberjacks. For the gentler folk, the various refinements of civilization suitable for snug homes at the fringes of the forests. Later in the century the SUP-crewed steam schooner Daisy Freeman carried priceless luxury goods to William Randolph Hearst's estate at San Simeon.*



*Port Blakely Mill Company dock, Puget Sound, in the winter of 1905. The SUP-crewed vessels from left are: the four-masted barks Englehorn and Bracadale, the barks Albania and Wanderer and the schooners Lyman D. Foster and Crescent. Note the stern ramps to load lumber. Photo by Wilhelm Hester.*





*SUP sailors in the steam schooner Trinidad hand stowing her load at Santa Fe Wharf, San Diego, around 1920. After 29 years of service, the 974-ton vessel, built by Hammond Lumber Company at Fairhaven, California, met her end on Willapa Bay, Oregon in 1937. Caught in a fierce gale, she was driven on the bar and smashed to pieces. All but one of her crew were rescued by the lifesaving crew from Grays Harbor.*



*The Los Angeles Steamship company's Harvard, on the left, at her Terminal Island berth in Los Angeles in the 1920s. The Golden State Laundry launch Golden State is at center and the steamer Acme is in the channel with an unidentified tug crossing her stern. With her sistership Yale, the Harvard made regular bi-weekly trips from San Francisco. During World War I, the two ships ferried troops between England and France before returning to their regular Los Angeles-San Francisco run. The Harvard was wrecked in 1931 and the Yale was retired in 1936. Both were built in Philadelphia in 1907.*

*Pictured at Hunter's Point, San Francisco in 1932, on the right, are: the 535-Class steamer President McKinley and on the left, the two-stack steamer President Coolidge. The Coolidge and her sistership President Hoover were the largest ships in TransPacific service before World War II both were owned by the Dollar Steamship Line which in 1939 became American President Line.*

*With expiration of the Operating Differential Subsidy, APL threatened throughout the 1990s to flag its vessels foreign unless it received government support. The Maritime Security Program (MSP) was passed by Congress in 1996 and the company was awarded nine operating "slots." However, the following year APL was bought by Singapore-based Neptune Orient Line. From late 1997 to 2005 APL's U.S.-flag fleet was operated by American Ship Management. In 2005, APL took over direct operation of its vessels.*







*The Manulani built at Moore's Shipyard in Oakland in 1921 is pictured on the left. She was the first Matson vessel to bear that name. Pictured above is the third Manulani which is approaching Diamond Head on her maiden voyage in 2005. The current Manulani, built at Aker Philadelphia Shipyard, operates from Long Beach to China via Honolulu and Guam.*



*American President Lines Mariner-Class freighter President Garfield alongside in Tacoma, Washington in the 1950s. This dockside shot accurately depicts the breakbulk cargo handling gear and methods before containerization changed everything.*

*The decade of the 1960s was one of sustained growth for APL. Eight Mariner-Class freighters had replaced the C-3 Class ships in its fleet and two new semi-container ships, President Lincoln and President Tyler would soon join them.*



*The President Grant, a 535-Class passenger/cargo ship departing Seattle on her maiden voyage to Asia in 1921. The Grant was one of ten World War I Emergency Fleet Vessels operated by Dollar Line's Admiral Oriental Line. In 1923, Dollar purchased the ships and began around-the-world service the following year. In 1928, Congress passed and President Coolidge signed the Jones-White Act. The law provided for generous mail subsidy for ships under American registry and a revolving construction fund administered by the U.S. Shipping Board. The law also provided that half of the crews of U.S.-flag vessels could be aliens during the first four years of any given mail contract. In the late 1920s and early 1930s more than half the crews on Dollar Lines vessels were Chinese nationals.*



*The Standard Oil Company of California's Richmond Long Wharf, in the late 1940s, is chock-a-block with company tankers. The Sailors' Union, after a long organizing campaign, signed its first contract with the company after the conclusion of World War II.*





*Three States Line ships at San Francisco's Pier 15-17 in the early 1970s: on the north (left) side of the pier is the Oregon, on the face is the Washington, and on the south side is the C.E. Dant. Founded in Oregon, the company was noted in its later year for the distinctive red seahorse on its stacks.*

*The lumber merchant Charles Dant of Portland founded the line to handle his lumber schooners as well as the vessels he had leased from the U.S. Shipping Board for his Columbia Pacific Steamship Company. Columbia Pacific, founded in 1919, operated from Portland to the Far East and Europe. In 1928, Dant dropped the Columbia Pacific name and operated everything under the name States Steamship Co., or States Line. States ended its European service by the 1930s and eventually focused mainly on service to the Philippines. It suffered from strong foreign competition and the failure of its owners to make the shift to containerization in the 1970s. High fuel prices in the late 1970s finally drove the company into bankruptcy in 1978.*



*The Pacific Far East Line C-3 freighter Thailand Bear (ex-President Harding, ex-President Harding, ex-President Van Buren) alongside in Oakland in the early 1960s.*



*Pacific Far East C-8 Class LASH (Lighter Aboard Ship) vessel Thomas E. Cuffe built in 1971 was sold to American President Lines after the company went bankrupt in the 1980s; her cranes were stripped and she became the containership President Hoover. Sold again to Matson in the 1990s she was renamed Lihue and is in service today.*



*The Mississippi Voyager (ex-Seabulk Mariner) was pictured on May 3, 2007 departing the Richmond Long Wharf enroute on her maiden voyage to Barber's Point, O'ahu. In the background are Angle Island to the left, and the Tiburon Peninsula to the right, separated by Racoon Strait. The towers of the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco can be seen in the far distance. Since 2007, Chevron Shipping Company has added the California Voyager and Oregon Voyager to its U.S.-flag fleet. The SUP represents all unlicensed personnel in the fleet.*



*In 1982, the SUP, along with the rest of the labor movement, was in support of the Polish Union "Solidarity." Pictured at demonstration in San Francisco are from left: Charlie Tinsley, Knud "Andy" Anderson, SUP President Paul Dempster, Roy Tufono, Jim Graham, John Alioto, "Blackie" Hin and Chuck Smith. Brother Dempster was President/Secretary-Treasurer of the SUP from 1978-1990.*



*Pictured at a maritime gathering in 1959, are from left: Marine Firemen's Union President Sam Bennett, SUP President Morris Weisberger, SIU President Paul Hall, NMU President Joe Curran, Marine Cooks & Stewards President Ed Turner, Pacific Maritime Association President J. Paul St. Sure, and AFL-CIO Representative Louis Waldman. Brother Weisberger was President/Secretary-Treasurer of the SUP from 1957-1978.*



# The Dry-Cargo Wage History of SUP Able Bodied Seamen

The following rates are per month:

1885:	\$25.00 for outside ports (Mexico, Hawai'i, South Pacific) 20.00 for inside ports (West Coast ports)
1886:	\$40.00 for outside ports 35.00 for inside ports
1901:	\$45.00 for outside ports 40.00 for inside ports
1908:	\$30.00 for outside ports 45.00 for sailing vessels on the Coast 50.00 for steam vessels on the Coast 0.50 per hour overtime, 9-hour work day
1916:	\$55.00 for steam vessels 50.00 for sailing vessels (Coastwise, Mexico, Hawai'i) 40.00 for sailing vessels (foreign voyages)
1917:	\$60.00 for all vessels
1918:	\$75.00 for all vessels
1919:	\$90.00 for all vessels
1921:	\$72.50 for all vessels; Overtime abolished by U.S. Shipping Board
1922:	\$65.00 for Coastwise lumber schooners \$50.00 for sailing vessels (Coastwise and Hawai'i) \$40.00 for sailing vessels (foreign voyages)
1925:	\$55.00 (American Steamship Owners' Association) \$62.50 (US Shipping Board) \$80.00 (Alaska Packers)
1925-1936: With the beginning of the depression wages continued to drop. Although the wages were lousy, Oceanic Steamship Company, the Alaska Packers and the steam schooner operators called or crews from SUP hiring halls. All other companies used the government run "fink halls."	
1937:	\$72.50      \$0.70 overtime per hour
1941:	\$100.00      \$0.85 overtime per hour
1950:	\$228.00      \$2.24 overtime per hour
1960:	\$478.00      \$3.19 overtime per hour
1970:	\$652.00      \$4.35 overtime per hour
1980:	\$1,485.17      \$10.00 overtime per hour
1990:	\$2,328.92      \$15.66 overtime per hour
2000:	APL (MSP) \$2,862.66*      \$22.56 overtime per hour Matson (commercial) \$2,840.04*      \$22.40 overtime per hour
2009:	APL (MSP) \$3,351.69*      \$27.36 overtime per hour Matson (commercial) \$3,569.70*      \$26.09 overtime per hour
2010:	For Matson, effective July 1, a 3% increase in wages and wage-related items. For APL, effective October 1, a 2.5% increase in wages and wage-related items.
*Does not include \$25.00 per day contribution to the SUP Money Purchase Plan.	



*The President Cleveland and her sistership President Wilson were built at Bethlehem-Alameda Shipyards. The Cleveland sailed on her maiden voyage to the Far East on December 27, 1947, and was followed by the Wilson on May 1, 1948. The vessels carried about 550 passengers and had a crew of 352. The Cleveland was sold to the C.Y. Tung Group in 1973, and renamed Oriental President and was scrapped in Taiwan the following year. The Wilson was also sold in 1973 and renamed Oriental Empress after a eight-and-a-half year lay-up in Hong Kong. She was scrapped in Taiwan in 1984.*

## Officers & Staff of the SUP 2010

**President/Secretary-Treasurer: Gunnar Lundeberg**

**Vice President/Asst. Secretary-Treasurer: Dave Connolly**

**Seattle Branch Agent: Vince O'Halloran**

**Wilmington Branch Agent: Vern Johansen**

**Honolulu Branch Agent: Mike Dirksen**

**San Francisco Business Agent: Bill Berger**

**Building Corporation Trustees:  
Bill Berger, Paul Calais, Norm Christianson  
Dave Connolly, Gunnar Lundeberg**

**Dispatcher: Knud-Bent "Andy" Andersen**

**Controller: Toby Chiurazzi**

**Editor, West Coast Sailors: Teresa Anibale**

**Secretary: Martha Vizcarra**

**Headquarters Building Manager: Terry Lane**



*The Matson Navigation Company liner Lurline departs San Francisco for Honolulu on her maiden post-war voyage, April 15, 1948.*