

CHAPTER VIII
Rebel Workers

(1935-1950)

In its depth of consciousness, regional impact, and audacity, the West Coast maritime strike movement of 1934 clearly stands apart from other notable chapters in the epic of American union organization. Like the great railroad uprising of 1877 and the steel strike of 1919, the 1934 maritime movement was genuinely industrial in its thrust: it called on all the workers in maritime to join together for common as well as sectoral goals. But unlike these forerunners, the 1934 movement impressed itself on the community from which it sprang in a special way. The waterfront workers came out of the battle as labor's standard bearers for the entire coast.

Aftermath of 1934's gains emerge as key achievements: the weapon of job action, most notably, was recovered by the sailors, who began utilizing 'the oracle' with a vigor and intensity that had probably never been seen even in the glory days of Andrew Furuseth's leadership. The at first unfulfilled emphasis on the union hiring hall showed a renewed belief in the union as an autonomous institution in society, not limited to on- the-job issues such as pay and conditions, but with a scope encompassing hiring *and firing*. But, above all, the post-1934 movement *remained* a movement. The energies of the maritime workers did not dissipate with the end of the strike, as had so often happened: rather, they seemed to become continuously replenished, as the workers increasingly understood their power in public affairs.

The post-1934 developments reached their height with the founding of the unfortunately short-lived Maritime Federation of the Pacific, under the slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all." The Maritime Federation, set up by the dockworkers and seamen, represented, simultaneously, a fulfillment of the traditional sympathies in that direction evinced by the longshoremen, and a return to the ideals of the Knights of Labor and the I.W.W. It also stood as a harbinger of the Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.), in gestation at that time. The goal of the Federation was a single coastwise maritime contract with a single expiration date, so that the workers could continue to present their employers with the kind of common front that had proven effective in the big strike.

Unfortunately, the great upsurge inaugurated by the 1934 strike and exemplified by the Maritime Federation began its decline within less than three years. By early 1937 the Federation was doomed. The great post-1934 movement succumbed to the destructive effects of a political polarization that divided the unionists between a "left wing" faction, controlled by the Communists, and independent groups that came together on nothing more than anti-Communism, and which in the end had too little to offer in the way of a positive program. In an atmosphere of war fears and unease over fascism, tendencies too critical of the Communists could easily be thrown into the "reactionary" camp, at least in the mind of the public. The Sailors' Union in order to protect its *fundamentally radical* program for the protection of the workers' interests, eventually found itself at violent odds with the Communists.

In January 1935 the federal authorities, acting through the arbitration board for coastwise shipping, issued an "award" for the deck, engine, and stewards' departments in the coast trade. The document established union preference for members of the S.U.P., the Marine Firemen, and the Marine Cooks and Stewards, all affiliated with the I.S.U. The award also did away with the fink halls, although it preserved non-union shipping "off the dock," alongside the union hiring hall. Wages were set at \$70 per month for sailors and firemen, with an 8-hour day, and overtime at 70 cents per hour. The next month, the board released its decision for the offshore trades. Union preference, the hiring hall, and "off-the-dock" shipping were established, as in coastwise shipping. 48

50th Anniversary

March 1935 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Coast Seamen's Union. For those pioneers, including Pete Gill, Nick Jortall, and Furuseth, who had manned the vessel of the Union from near its first voyage, prospects should have seemed bright. The Union had regained its position as the leading labor organization for the U.S. seamen, and on virtually uncompromised terms. After years of Depression, American labor was forging ahead.

However, on the Atlantic and Gulf, some basic grievances continued to fester. Crimping had blossomed in the wake of the 1921 defeat, and it was still common on the East and Gulf coasts for men to find jobs through seamen's hotels and boarding houses that

demanded rent in advance, with no refund if the man was shipped out immediately. Clothing dealers and other parasites continued to prey on the seamen in his quest for work. The crimps maintained contracts with the shipping companies or vessels, and received compensation at the rate of so much per head, exactly as in the 19th century.

Away from the West Coast, even after 1934, the sailor who shunned the crimps could avail himself of meetings with officers and other company representatives in the personnel offices. The point was visibility; eventually, if one stayed around and introduced oneself, discharges could be presented and a job secured. A similar process took place at the docks themselves. Shortly after arrival,

one might board the vessel, find the chief mate, first assistant engineer, or steward, and ask for work. One could also wait outside the dock gates for an officer to appear, look the crowd over, and pick certain men or solicit certain ratings. And there were the bars and "sporting" houses. One anonymous militant in both the I.W.W. Marine Transport Workers and S.U.P. recalled in recent notes the main point in all such transactions: to have one's discharges ready, and to be submissive during interrogation.

Once aboard the vessel, the sailor was still expected to work hard, prove one's skills, and remain silent about such matters as long hours, small pay, poor food, bad quarters, and dangerous conditions. Any seamen could be fired in any port, for any reason, "real or imaginary." Seamen could still be forced to work off debts for wages paid in advance.

After 1934 the situation began to change. Once union hiring was erected as an unchallengeable practice the solidarity of the men in fighting for shipboard conditions could be secured by elimination of finks. It was not until after the second "big strike" of 1936-37 that hiring halls were established throughout the nation, and many of the old practices were discontinued; "enraged seamen ganged

up and in their own fashion put many places out of business through violence and vandalism." Many abuses were finally done away with through legal and political influence, as well as by direct action.

One part of the picture that alarmed certain elderly S.U.P. stalwarts, particularly Furuseth, was the hold of the Communists over young militants. As months and years went by, many criticisms of the Communists that marked men like Furuseth, Scharrenberg, and Larsen as so-called "reactionaries" would seem to be proven correct. The C.P. did not represent a force *within* the labor movement, but a political faction bent on control of the workers *from outside*. Had the Communists been content to work within the Sailors' Union as one among many factions, defending their program on its merits, they might have retained support, far longer than

they did. But, particularly, in the S.U.P., they were dissatisfied with such a role. They wanted much more. They had tasted a certain power in the Longshoremen's union, and wanted the same in the S.U.P. In the end, when they could not gain full control over the Sailors, they were prepared to destroy the organization.

April, 1935, saw a conference in Seattle set up the Maritime Federation as an umbrella organization for the I.S.U., officers, and longshore unions. Harry Lundeberg was chosen as the first president, a representative of the shipping crafts, although the latter were a minority in the Federation. Many historians have interpreted the choice of Lundeberg as an action by the C.P. and Bridges to gain Lundeberg's allegiance. At the time, Lundeberg was clearly seen as a "progressive" by the left-wing forces.

Although the dominant elements in the Federation sought a surrender to the Federation leaders of the power to strike, the Sailors refused to give up this decision-making right. Still, the left was growing in authority. Former members of the Communist Marine Workers Industrial Union were officially allowed to transfer into the S.U.P. after June, 1935, and the *Voice of the Federation*, organ of the coastwide Maritime Federation, which included many attacks on Furuseth, Scharrenberg, and the other I.S.U. leaders, became the official publication of the S.U.P.

Nationally, 1935 had seen more evidence of radical changes in the outlook of American workers. At the October convention of the American Federation of Labor, held in Atlantic City, John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers presented the assembled delegates

with forceful arguments against a continued attachment to the older, craft-based form of union organization, demanding a full pledge to industrial organization. The A.F.L. leaders opposed Lewis, who began the process that would culminate in the emergence of the C.I.O. as the nation's second major labor grouping.

"Anarchosyndicalism " -Charter Revoked In 1936.

Turbulence within the Sailors' Union reached a new high point, as the organization faced major challenges from the employers, the I.S.U. international leadership, and the government. The temper of the rank-and-file was so militant at this point that commentators

of the time as well as labor historians have identified the S.U.P. of 1936-37 with the "anarcho-syndicalism" of the I.W.W. Job actions, now called "quickie" strikes, became the rule. Since federal authorities had been remiss in their guarantees of the organization's rights, there seemed to be only one way to secure full respect for the Sailors: continued direct action on the vessels, utilizing "the oracle."

In January, 1936, the 33rd international convention of the I.S.U. revoked the S.U.P. charter. The Pacific Coast organization was represented at the convention by Al Quittenton and by Edward Coester, a militant from Seattle. In an interview several decades later,

Coester stated that Quittenton "made no bones about being a commie." A major basis for the revocation of the S.U.P. charter was the Union's admission of former members of the Communist M.W.I.U.

Lundeberg and the West Coast militants replied to the revocation of the S.U.P. charter by putting the union on an "emergency program" footing. Substitute membership books were printed, in which each member signed a pledge to support the "expelled" union's elected officers. Thousands of sailors responded to the emergency call, and the now-independent S.U.P. was able to maintain its strength as the representative of the West Coast seamen. Distinguished figures from the early days of the Union, including Pete Gill, Nick Jorrtall, and Walter Macarthur, strongly supported the "new" S.U.P.

With the "expulsion" of the S.U.P., decay in the I.S.U. could no longer be dissembled; in the face of the new and more modern spirit alive in the rank-and-file, the gradualist philosophy of the Furuseth age was unarguably obsolete. Furuseth's trust in a paternalistic government to look out for the sailors' interests received a further rebuff in 1936, when the fight over the "Copeland fink book" emerged. The "fink book" struggle was a chapter in the history of the S.U.P. nearly as important, in its way, as the 1934 strike.

The "Copeland fink book," officially known as the Continuous Discharge Book, had been introduced into the Congress under HR. 8555, the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, passed into law under the style of the Copeland-Bland Act. The act called on seamen, in

lieu of discharge certificates for each voyage, to carry a permanent identification booklet on the British model, in which a man's entire record of voyages and "conduct" would be revealed to each new employer. It was obvious that conservative interests, alarmed at the upsurge of the post-1934 maritime movement, sought a means to reinstitute blacklisting of known militants. The "fink book" was met by deep anger among the sailors; over 50,000 throughout the U.S. signed pledge cards refusing to take the book.

The "fink book" campaign became the basis of a new conflict between the S.U.P. and the Communists. By 1936, the latter group had exploited growing labor unrest to attain nationally a position of some power in unions, including in the East Coast maritime industry. But a major difference between the Communists and the S.U.P., over the "fink book" soon became obvious. After 1935, the

Communist International had, in response to the Hitler threat, changed its line with regard to liberals and left-leaning non-communists. While the Party had previously attacked all possible "competitors" as capitalist and fascist agents, the emphasis was now on a "popular front" that would unite all "antifascist" elements. In effect, the Russians could no longer wish away the growing specter of world war, and were anxious to develop advantageous alliances wherever they could. In the U.s., this meant working with the "liberal-left" elements in the Roosevelt administration, and therefore quieting criticism of the New Deal, which had previously been assailed as a "fascist scheme." Although the Communists at first supported the fight against the "fink book," it became apparent they were unhappy opposing some- thing that had the backing of ED.R. and his cabinet. Their new attitude was that since the "fink

book" was the product of the "progressive" Roosevelt administration, it must be a "progressive fink book." The Sailors did not concur with this reasoning.

1936-37 Strike

The undercurrent of conflict over the "fink book" was to prove an issue in the second maritime "big strike" of the 1930's, the 100-day walkout of 1936-37, in which the split between the S.U.P. and the Communist "ruling cadre" in the West Coast maritime movement came into the open. On October 1, 1936, came expiration of the longshore and seagoing contracts. In the strike that

followed the sailors hoped to make up for what they had not gained in 1934, for although the longshoremen had come out of the first "big strike" with a joint union-employer hiring hall and some control over conditions, the status of the Sailors' hiring hall was still ambiguous. The employers had announced that after October 1, all hiring would be done by shipping off the dock, unless disputed matters were submitted to arbitration. The Maritime Federation, acting as the leadership in the strike, formulated five demands:

.Union employment preference for ships' officers.

All unlicensed crew members to be shipped through the hiring halls.

Sailors' overtime to paid in cash, rather than in compensatory "time off."

.A work day of eight out of 12 hours on duty for the stewards' department-
.The six-hour day and the hiring hall for dock workers, reaffirming what had been set up in '34.

The strike began on October 30, 1936. Unlike the great battle of '34, it was peaceful on the West Coast, although attempts to widen the strike into a national action, by extending it to the East and Gulf Coasts, saw violence on the Atlantic. The strike was on its way to being won, when political differences came into the open. The split in the leadership of the maritime movement came over a number of issues. First, Harry Bridges declared that if the strike could not be settled without the sailors accepting the Copeland "fink book," they should take the book.

Then, a controversy broke out over the *Voice of the Federation*, the weekly newspaper, now edited by one Barney Mayes. Mayes, a Trotskyist, was charged with undermining the strike by printing, truthfully, in December, that the S.U.P. was near a settlement with the shipowners. Although the strike was universally felt to be the Sailors' game, in that it was their turn to win a firm hiring hall, Harry Bridges and his allies refused to brook any action that might distract from his central role as West Coast maritime labor leader. In the fight against Communist control, Lundeberg depended for support on the I.W.W.-M.T.W 510 organization, still strong on the Gulf Coast, as well as a significant number of former Wobblies, such as Lloyd "Sam" Usinger and independent individuals strongly influenced by the I.W.W. outlook, such as Bob Dombroff. In the aftermath of Mayes' removal from the helm of the *Voice of The*

Federation, the newspaper had briefly been run by Wobbly poet Ralph Chaplin. Chaplin was equally hostile to the Communists and supportive of Lundeberg and the S.U.P. Chaplin's own interpretation of the situation was significant, and pregnant with meaning for the future. Chaplin found a parallel in Europe: a civil war had begun in Spain in July, 1936, when an attempt by military and fascist elements to overthrow a left-wing elected government had provoked massive resistance by the working class. Spain divided into a fascist and a revolutionary zone. In the latter area, the Communists were openly fighting for total control, seeking to liquidate their critics on the left portrayed as "Trotskyite agents of fascism." For Chaplin, the comparison between Spain and the U.S. West Coast was horribly obvious, and ominous.

Lundeberg and his colleagues in the S.U.P. leadership accumulated political debts to the Trotskyists, paid in a number of ways. They allowed them membership and employment in the S.U.P., and in addition, they performed such small acts as the endorsement, by S.U.P. San Pedro patrolman H. J. "Blackie" Vincent and San Pedro dispatcher Joe Voltero, of a "counter-trial" launched in Mexico, in April, 1937, under the presidency of the philosopher John Dewey, to clear Trotsky of Stalinist charges aired in Moscow. For at least a decade the Trotskyist "faction" in the S.U.P. played a leading role in the Trotskyist movement, and it was in maritime that the U.S. Trotskyists gained their only chance to compete head-to-head with the Communists for mass leadership of workers. But the Trotskyists, however useful they may have been to the S.U.P., succeeded no better than the Communists in establishing themselves as the S.U.P.'s "vanguard."

Beginning in 1937, the S.U.P. was forced to chart a risky course between its opponents among the conservative forces in the union movement and the Communist enemy, who while preaching radical solutions had been drawn into postures that were, if anything, even worse than conservative. Of course, the general labor public seldom clearly saw the reality of the situation. The Communists gained major influence in the new C.I.O. movement and in the Roosevelt administration's National Labor Relations Board, as well as in the daily press and at large. It was relatively easy for them to label Lundeberg as a "conservative." Lundeberg and the S.U.P. remained anything but conservative, as their future actions on rank-and-file issues would prove. In mid-1937, the S.U.P. investigated

entry into the C.I.O., then seen as the radical pole in the union movement. However, this effort proved unsuccessful after the top leadership position in the California C.I.O. was given to Harry Bridges by C.I.O. leader John L. Lewis.

Steady As She Goes

Perhaps the best statement of the position of the S.U.P. at this time is included in a short pamphlet, titled *Steady As She Goes*, issued to the membership late in 1937. The leaders of the then-independent union affirmed that 'today there is a bitter struggle going on between the old-line craft leaders of the A.F.L. those old-line craft leaders of the A.F.L. who constituted themselves into the C.I.O.,

and are engaged in a quarrel with their former associates over respective fields of influence and jurisdiction in the American trades-union movement. It is inevitable, therefore that the S.U.P., while having no quarrel with the rank and file of either the A.F.L. or the C.I.O. should be drawn into the riptide created by this bitter struggle.”

The pamphlet contained a list of the achievements won by the S.U.P. and its new leaders in the post-1934 period, affirming that the union had:

.Defeated the I.S.U. leadership.

.Established 100 percent control of shipping through the hiring hall.

.Doubled wages and abolished optional overtime. .

Done away with blacklisting.

.Added some 1,000-1,500 jobs on the West Coast.

.Established its own strike-and-lockout fund, with the result that the union was the only one with its own strike fund in the 1936-37 strike, disbursing a total of \$3,000 in benefits.

.Beat the Copeland fink book.

.Reestablished its branch in Honolulu, and set up new branches in Aberdeen, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia, and an office in New York.

.Established a shipwreck benefit, a hospital benefit, and a large burial plot.

.Had no debts, a bank account of \$30,000, owned its own building in San Francisco, worth \$60,000, and a lot in San Pedro worth \$10,000.

(It should be added that in May 1937 the Union gained a valuable further weapon in the form of a weekly newspaper, the *West Coast Sailors*.)

The pamphlet concluded by stressing the greatest asset of the S.U.P is "*control (of) our destinies. No top committees: no executive boards can tell us what to do. The membership runs the union, and we are our own masters!*" Although sympathetic to the aims of the mass of C.I.O. members, the S.U.P. was clearly disturbed by the anti-democratic, "top-down" methods established by the Communists inside the National Maritime Union, which was set up in the ruins of the East Coast I.S.U., and granted the C.I.O. charter for organization of seamen. In addition, with the final disappearance of the I.S.U., the A.F.L. had shown interest in a rapprochement with the S.U.P.



Coming of the Second World War

The final incident that marked the year 1938 in the historical calendar of the S.U.P. involved an attempt by the federal authorities to set up government-controlled hiring halls for seamen. The U.S. Maritime Commission under Admiral Emory S. Land had dictated a policy on the East Coast whereby ships operated under the account of the Commission could only be crewed by sailors who

signed articles before a shipping commissioner, and under which men from union hiring halls were barred from service. Once Admiral Land attempted to transfer his policy to the West Coast, where Maritime Commission ships had previously not operated, the S.U.P. met the challenge in a forthright way, supported by the Marine Firemen and the I.W.W. Marine Transport Workers. The N.M.U. refused to oppose the new government fink halls, since, like the Copeland continuous discharge book, they purportedly represented "progressive" Rooseveltian policies. The S.U.P. won, and the government withdrew its "fink hall" from the West Coast until the onset of the second world war.

By 1939, the indicators of a new war, in which the U.S. would almost certainly become involved, had become overwhelming. In February, Pete Gill, who had been the S.U.P.'s pioneering leader in the Northwest for so many decades, retired, although he remained on full pay from the union until his death in 1945. During his retirement, he worked with Otilie Markholt, a young woman labor historian then married to S.U.P. activist Bob Dombroff, on the magnificent manuscript history, *The Sailors Union of the Pacific, 1885-1929*.

In September, 1939, war began between Hitler's Germany and an allied Britain and France. The immediate cause was the German invasion of Poland, which Hitler carried out with the support of Stalinist Russia, as the two dictatorships were then allied in the

notorious Hitler-Stalin pact. Soon Russia invaded Finland. However, although Finland was allied in principle with Germany, many radical workers in the U.S., including Scandinavians in the S.U.P., reacted to the Russian attack on Finland with disgust. Few in the union were enthusiastic about a war, whoever might wage it. But when war finally came to the U.S., in December, 1941, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, S.U.P. members served their country, with many losing their lives on vessels sunk by submarines as well as in battle. 6,000 U.S. seamen died in the conflict. The merchant marine casualty rate (2.8 percent) was higher than that of any U.S. service except the Marine Corps (2.9) but the men who manned the ships have, even at the time of this writing, received no recognition from the U.S. Veterans Administration. An argument that is often put forward to justify the denial of veterans' benefits to seamen is precisely that the seamen enjoyed union wages and conditions; but when a ship went down, the

survivors, if such there were, who suffered days and weeks of exposure on floating wreckage or in lifeboats (if they were lucky) received no pay for time after the ship had sunk, while a soldier drew pay for every day he was in uniform.

Wartime Sacrifices

Much could be written about the sacrifices of the seamen during the war. With the beginning of U.s. involvement, the shipowners, handsomely paid by the federal government for their contribution to the military machine, secured the denial of war bonuses for seamen shipping between the U.s. West Coast and Hawaii, on Pacific or Atlantic coastwise voyages, or to Alaska, the West Indies,

and South America. In all these trades shipping was menaced by enemy sub-marine action; eventually a federal Maritime War Emergency Board granted one-hundred percent bonuses for most offshore voyages, including West Coast to Hawaii, with forty percent bonuses to Alaska and the West Coast of South America.

A number of West Coast-contracted ships were captured by the Japanese, including the *President Harrison* owned by American President Lines, and the *Admiral Williams*, owned by the American Trading Company. Other seamen were captured after their ships were sunk while some were interned in Japanese-held territory on the Asian mainland. The crew of the *O. Henry*, operated by Moore-McCormack, was commended by the War Shipping Administration for fighting its way through German dive bomber raids and

bringing down one bomber, while losing not a single man, in its run to besieged Malta. The *Coast Farmer* crew operated their ship from Australia to the Philippines, running the Japanese blockade, at the height of enemy military strength in the area.

In the fight for Dutch Harbor, Alaska, in June, 1942, the crew of the *President Fillmore* assisted navy deck gunners and army antiaircraft artillerymen in preventing Japanese bombing planes from carrying out their raids on the port. The Liberty ship *Stephen Hopkins* was sunk off South Africa by enemy raiders, but its merchant marine and gun crews put up a great and terrible fight.

Survivors, including some badly wounded men, landed in a lifeboat in Brazil 31 days later. Two brave West Coast Liberty ships were the *Mark Hanna*, and the *James Smith*, both attacked in a Caribbean convoy by enemy submarines. After barely surviving a

destructive raid, the two vessels drifted for days, but their crews declined to abandon them, and eventually they returned to the U.S. for repair and new voyages.

Perhaps the most terrible story to come out of the second world war is that of the *Jean Nicolet*, a Liberty ship operated by Oliver J. Olson & Co., of San Francisco, for the War Shipping Administration. On July 2, 1944, the vessel, with a West Coast crew, was attacked and sunk south of Ceylon by a Japanese submarine. All crew members got off the ship safely, but the submarine crew picked up 95 of the 100 survivors, leaving 5 men in one life raft. The U.S. seamen were then shot, stabbed, beaten to death, and

drowned, before the arrival of a U.S. plane caused the submarine to crash-dive, allowing a grim escape for a few, who then faced the sharks. Of 100 men aboard the ship, only 23 came back.

West Coast-manned supply ships served in every theatre of the war, proving that when called by their country, the seamen were prepared to show courage and honor. Today, the very least Americans can do is to honor these men as they honored their flag, by granting them full veterans' benefits.

Postwar Changes

With the coming of peace, it was apparent that the mood of the country's working class had changed perceptibly. The veterans who returned from the war that had been fought for freedom streamed into jobs old and new, with an impatient attitude. In the period between 1945 and 1947, the nation's trade unions were pushed into action by members whose expectations were dramatically different from those of workers even a decade before. The unions gained improvements in living standards and an increased role in decision-making both in the workplace and in the society at large. Most of the basic industries were shaken by transforming strike waves.

The S.U.P. pursued its own course with the shipowners, in favor of direct bargaining with the ship operators. In June, 1946, a series of day-to-day strikes by the union gained a wage hike of \$22.50 per month, reduction of the straight-time week in port by four hours, and the eight-hour day at sea. In the meantime, the NMU had settled in Washington for an increase of only \$17.50 per month, with various improvements in hours. In the words of West Coast maritime historians Wytze Gorter and George H. Hildebrand, with this action, "the S.U.P. ...won the contest for prestige with the maritime rank and file." However, the federal government soon rescinded the \$5.00 "S.U.P. differential," and on September 4, 1946, the Sailors called the first of the postwar national maritime strikes. On September 11, the Marine Firemen joined the S.U.P. on the picket line. The NMU then joined as well. The strike lasted 21 days, and

"was an impressive show of power by the maritime unions, especially the S.U.P.," Gorter and Hildebrand aver. The "S.U.P. differential" was won back.

In the following months Bridges and his cohort carried out a fumbling attempt to match the Sailors' gains, but with little success. The honeymoon between the I.L.W.U. and the N.M.U. soon ended, with N.M.U. head Joseph Curran, a long-time ally of the Communists, suddenly attacking the Muscovites for their campaign against the S.U.P.

In 1947, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act, which outlawed employment of workers through hiring halls run exclusively by unions. To preserve the S.U.P. hall, Lundeberg met personally with Senator Robert Taft, Republican of Ohio, who had sponsored the

legislation, and the S.U.P. secured an exemption from the ruling. The Communists leaped on this incident to paint Lundeberg as a reactionary more at home with the likes of Taft than with ordinary working men. The simple reality however, was that the hiring hall, the cornerstone of the union's strength since 1934, had been saved.