(Alameda and Contra Costa counties) or "up country" (Marin, Napa, and Sonoma counties).

2. This is not to suggest that each and every job was liked, but rather that the men liked longshoring "as a line of work." It may be necessary to also note the obvious–the work was frequently tiring, dirty, hard, and dangerous.

3. Granted the optimism with which the new technology was initially viewed, it should perhaps be noted that with the termination of the second five-year contract under which that technology was introduced and utilized, the West Coast longshoremen went on strike. As it happened, that 1971-1972 strike was also destined to be the longest maritime strike in the history of the nation. As for the ways in which their experience with the new technology underwrote the San Francisco longshoremen's support of that strike, that, too, will be the subject of a subsequent essay.

4. Except on "volunteer" cargoes (e.g., hides), a man who had below-average hours had to "take average" (i.e., a sign-in with average hours) if he refused a job or was not present when his work number was called by a dispatcher. A man who had above-average hours in these circumstances had to add six hours to his total hours when he again signed-in for work.

5. Men who stayed on different shifts for years routinely got acquainted through (1) the two monthly union meetings, one of which was a compulsory "stop-work" meeting during which only a few essential (and "excused from meeting") jobs would be worked; (2) the meetings of a considerable number of both permanent and temporary committees, all of which were always "open" to any rank-and-filer; (3) the two monthly meetings of the volunteer Stewards' Council; and (4) the not infrequent overlapping of shifts. On any given day, night men and the day men who were not working frequently "went by the hall" to transact some union business, to inquire of some matter, to get the latest union bulletin, or to simply hear "the latest."

6. Part of a man's pride and "sense of masculinity" rested upon accomplishing the work at hand. This circumstance was also made collectively manifest in the work and posture of "a good gang." In this connection, it should perhaps be noted, too, that in any given operational circumstances a man might experience a certain tension between his "sense of masculinity" and a principled desire to secure a particular working condition. By the same token, a conflict (which would generally remain good natured) could be generated when one man felt there was a genuine grievance against an employer, while another man felt that the grievant was "just bellyaching." On the other hand, it was also understood that "militancy" on a conventional longshore operation could not routinely take the form of "not doing anything." Thus it could happen, as will presently be observed in the text, that the men who were most effective on behalf of the union (both on the job and elsewhere) were almost always very good longshoremen.

7. While the night work of the port may here be ignored, it will be discussed in the forthcoming article dealing with the port's labor-management relations.

8. The walking bosses were members of the longshore local until 1948, but were in that year chartered as a separate ILWU local. This development, with the effects which the modernization of the industry has had on the nature and functioning of the employer's operational chain of command, will also be discussed in the forthcoming article dealing with the labor-management relations of the San Francisco longshore industry.

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"The San Francisco Waterfront:
The Social Consequences of
Industrial Modernization,
Part Two: 'The Modern Longshore
Operations' "

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THE SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT

The Social Consequences of Industrial Modernization, Part Two: "The Modern Longshore Operations"

HERB MILLS

BEGINNING IN THE EARLY 1930s, the longshoremen of San Francisco commenced to fashion a truely extraordinary community. That community was socially rooted in (1) the nature and structure of the work those men performed, (2) the manner in which that work was allocated amongst them, and (3) the on-going relationships which for these reasons they had with one another. By the end of that decade, these circumstances had produced a widely shared sense of self-esteem and mutual regard, as well as a collective sense of dignity, vitality, and confidence. With the production of such sentiments and the introduction of ideology, that community also began to express itself in uniquely democratic and progressive terms. These items were argued in some detail in Part I of this paper (Mills, 1976).

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Thanks are again due to a fellow longshoreman, Jake Arnautoff, this time for the use of some of his more recent sketches (Copyright 1975 and 1976 Jake Arnautoff).

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It was also argued that these interpenetrating sources of personhood/community were in turn sustained and refined by the structural and political articulation of both the local and the international union into which the men had organized themselves—Local 10 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). Thus, to put the matter briefly: the community which had been fashioned by and amongst the San Francisco longshoremen by the late 1930s was uniquely democratic and diverse, unified and stable, militant, impetuous, and audacious, progressive, and embattled because of an unusual unity that had come to exist between the daily occupational experience of its members and their organizational and political experience.

The sociotechnical basis of this community of individuals remained essentially intact for over 30 years. During those years, it underwrote the structural evolution, politics, and public pronouncements of that community. By the same token, the social relationships spawned by the technological organization and character of the industry were the very sinews of what was to become an encompassing and highly valued way of life. To again recapitulate: the history of this community from the late 1930s forward simply cannot be understood except in the light of the concrete occupational experience of its members.

Part I delineated the historic, "baseline" work experience and job-related social experience of the San Francisco longshoremen. To portray the ways in which the utilization of a new technology has directly affected these interrelated dimensions of that life, the discussion will now focus upon (1) the nature and structure of modern longshore work, (2) the manner in which that work is allocated amongst the men, and (3) the social relations that—for these reasons—have been produced amongst them. Occasionally, note will also be taken of the ways in which that technology has threatened the job security of the men, because that, too, as will later be detailed, has profoundly affected their community with one another. Having thus pictured the changing sociotechnical character and organization of the San Francisco longshore industry, the social consequences of its technological modernization will become evident.

THE WORLD OF MODERN LONGSHORING

Before turning to a description of modern longshore work, the three basic ways in which the new technology has directly affected the men and their community–and hence the *leit motif* of the description which will thereafter follow–should be set out.

The Routinization of Work

Conventional longshoring routinely entails widely varying and constantly changing operational circumstances. This being the case, the efficiency with which a conventional operation is conducted is fundamentally dependent upon the initiative and ingenuity of the longshoremen, both individually and collectively. A wide range of skills is routinely called upon. The "bank" of one's experience is repeatedly brought into play; there is an on-going and vital need for cooperative innovation. In a word, conventional longshoring requires a very broadly defined decentralization of initiative and must proceed as a collective and cooperative enterprise.

Circumstances of this order allow the individual longshoreman to take pride in his work. So also may a gang of men enjoy a collective sense of pride. Because conventional longshoring must proceed as a collective and cooperative enterprise, each man can express and concretely "embody" his sense of community and union with his fellow workers via his on-going contribution to the operation. One can simultaneously earn the reputation of being a good longshoreman and a good union man.

As compared to the work associated with conventional operations, modern longshoring is utterly routine. There is very little variation of operational circumstance. This essentially results from the integration of a standardized sling-load (i.e., a standard cargo unit), (2) a vessel which is designed for such sling-loads, and (3) the dock equipment and hoisting gear which are necessary to move the sling-load from the dock to its place of

stow aboard the vessel and vice versa. Each unit of cargo can be loaded to a predetermined place of stow or, as the case may be, discharged to a predetermined place of dock storage. Loading and discharge operations can thus be completely planned (and computer simulated) prior to the arrival of the vessel, with all of the shipboard and dock work being so sequenced, monitored, and controlled as to be completely routine. The integration of the sling-load, the vessel, and the equipment necessary to move the sling-load has simply eliminated the need for innovation and ingenuity–there is no on-going need for initiative. Indeed, circumstances in which a man might "take the initiative" are rare. The range of skills and experience which routinely comes into play has been drastically narrowed. By the same token, circumstances which require a collective and innovative approach on the part of the men are all but unknown. It also follows that the work can be closely directed, continuously supervised, and subjected to an on-going review and audit. Since the operational situation and concrete tasks are essentially unchanging, modern longshore work is universally viewed as dull and monotonous–at least as compared to conventional longshoring. It is simply not as interesting. It is not as challenging. The new technology eliminates the variety of work to be performed and the problems to be solved. The sling-load is always the same. The movement of those loads to and from the vessel is always the same. The shipboard work is always the same. With respect to the vessels which figure as a part of each new system of transport, even the amount of work to be performed and the sequencing of that work–and hence the very structure and duration of the operation–are relatively constant.

Thus, and to sum these matters up: the operational circumstances which for many years allowed the San Francisco longshoreman to enjoy his work, to take pride in its performance, and to thereby express his sense of community and union with his fellow workers have been almost completely eliminated by a new technology.

The "Sprawl" of Modern Technology

As was observed in the discussion of "the good old days," a very rich, day-to-day social contact underwrote the emergence and maintenance of a community and union amongst the San Francisco longshoremen. There were several main arenas for that social intercourse. The hiring hall had an extremely important social dimension. Hundreds of men were present for the early morning or late afternoon job dispatch. The hall was also a natural gathering place throughout the day and into early evening. Conversations which there ensued were frequently "recessed" and thereafter "reconvened" at one of the many nearby cafes or bars. The Embarcadero piers were surrounded, too, by cafes and bars, missions, store-front churches, and clothing and surplus stores. There were gun shops and pawn shops, recreation centers and locker rooms, corner groceries, inexpensive hotels and flop houses, and boarding houses and rooming houses. There were movie houses that never closed. Abound were liquor stores, smoke shops, and pool halls. One could always find a card game, a bookie, or a floating crap game. One could always find a companion, a new political tract or leaflet, a place to drop a crab pot or wet a line, or simply a place from which to watch the passing parade and the waters of the bay in solitude. In a word, the social setting of the work and union life of the San Francisco longshoremen were richly varied and exceptionally vibrant. The relationships they had with one another by reason of their work and union were necessarily strengthened and deepened by the experiences and activities which that setting afforded them. Life along the Embarcadero also broadened their horizons—the seamen who were "on the beach" had sailed under every flag and to every corner of the globe.

On the piers themselves, and this, too, was noted earlier, the men who were working as a unit could converse as the work proceeded. The same was true of the men who were working in a gang aboard ship. It should now be added, however, that on the piers and ships the distance between the men was never very

great. Most vessels had a length of from 350 to 450 feet. The "C-4," which was introduced during World War II and could frequently be found in the harbor of San Francisco into the late 1960s, was "big"—it was some 550 feet in length. As for the length of the piers and cargo sheds, the average was perhaps 700 feet. As a result of these distances, one knew who was working on a given ship and dock within a hour or so from starting time. Since there was a considerable fluctuation in the pace of the work and a frequent shifting of men about the vessel and around the dock, those who were not working together might seek each other out for at least a brief exchange. In any event, and because there was a great deal of coming and going amongst the men, brief salutations—which were always very heavily laced with good natured banter—were very frequent.

As might by now be supposed, the setting of the San Francisco longshoreman's work and hence the social dimensions of his on-the-job experience have been radically affected by the new technology. Modern operational facilities are now scattered around the bay on previously vacant or land-fill sites because the area required by that technology is much greater than that afforded by the "finger-piers" of the old waterfront. These sprawling and widely dispersed facilities are therefore in no way surrounded by the kind of neighborhood which distinguished the Embarcadero. Indeed, unless one has packed a lunch from home or is willing to buy from a coffee truck ("roach coach" or "ptomaine wagon") or a mechanical vending machine, a drive "into town" is necessary at lunch time. The opportunities which the men so long enjoyed to socialize, converse, and sight-see have thus been drastically reduced. As one reported it: "You know, drinking a can of beer that you've brought from home and drinking it in your car just isn't like going off a pier to hoist a couple and shoot a game of pool."

The old piers usually cover an area of about five acres. The modern facility covers from 50 to 100. Since their layout follows the basic division of labor, men who are working a vessel at such a facility are isolated from those who are employed in other work. They will also be isolated from those

who may be working a second vessel simply because the vessels are moored in line, "bow to stern," along the face of the pier and because they routinely exceed 850 in length. By contrast, ships were frequently moored at both sides of a finger-pier at the same time.

The "Atomization" of the Workforce

As will presently be noted in some detail, much of the work carried on in a modern operation is also performed in near isolation by individual men. Such circumstances simply do not obtain in conventional operations. At the same time, such groupings of men as are employed in this work are also much smaller than those required for conventional work. While, then, the new technology has affected a quite general "diaspora" of the longshoremen's community and an extraordinary routinization of their work, the workforce on each of the modern operations is "atomized" by a division of labor that is distinguished by individual and small group tasks which can be performed in relative isolation and with a minimum of cooperative communication and interplay.

MODERN LONGSHORE WORK

Building the Sling-Load

The most widely publicized of the modern sling-loads is the "container." This is a rigid, steel-framed, rectangular/oblong box into which a wide variety of cargoes can be (as we say) "stuffed," secured against shifting, sealed, and then transported. In this way, nearly 25 tons of cargo can be moved as a unit through differing modes of transport. Having been "unstuffed" at its destination, the container can of course be used again.

The container has had a revolutionary impact on the entire transportation industry because it can be stuffed and unstuffed at any location which is serviced by the trucking equipment

and/or the hoisting and rail equipment that can move it when loaded. In this way, the container reduces the otherwise recurrent need to "handle" the cargo as it is moved from shipper to consignee via the available modes of transport. Indeed, in a fully "inter-modal" container system, a container can be moved in any sequence by truck, rail, plane, or ship; but the cargo itself will be handled only by the shipper and the consignee. The thrust of "the container revolution" is to thus eliminate the historic interfaces of the transport industry. It essentially makes the work of freight loading, consolidation, and forwarding redundant. For example, an outbound container which arrives at a San Francisco dock by truck or rail is moved directly to the ship or placed in storage until the arrival of the vessel upon which it is scheduled to be loaded (see Figure 1). The sling-load, which in the most conventional operations still consists of about one ton of cargo that has been placed on a pallet board by longshoremen, has already been built.

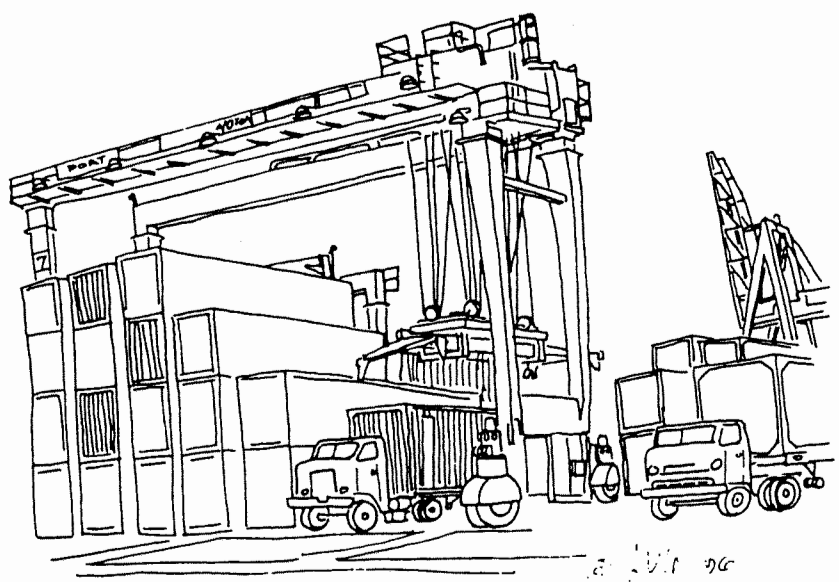

Figure 1: Container Yard

While the container has therefore occasioned a very considerable "underemployment" amonst the men, they do stuff and unstuff some containers when the cargoes in question originate from or are destined to some point relatively close to the docks. Operationally, this work is a modern-day equivalent to the hold work of a conventional operation. However, the conventional skills involved in getting cargoes to and from the hold are in no way required. The cargo is simply moved to and from the container by lift-truck (see Figure 2). Then, too, the stowing and unstowing of shipboard cargoes is much more challenging. As compared to shipboard stowage areas, any container is small. It is free of structural members and stanchions. It invariably offers something which is rare aboard ship—an excellent, even-surfaced flooring. Finally, its box-like configuration eliminates the substantial problems posed by the molded curvature and sheer of the hold and sometimes by its declivity. As a result, the stuffing and unstuffing of a container and the overall "flow" and organization of such work is utterly routine. It does not require the innovative skills and cooperative, self-starting initiatives essential to shipboard operations. Its performance can

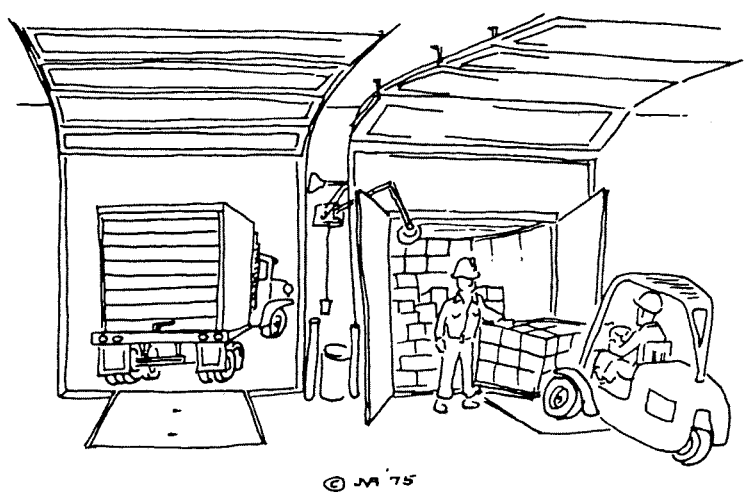

Figure 2: Container Work

be much more closely monitored and supervised. So, also, may the productivity of any given operation be much more easily measured.

In many respects, the most modern of sling-loads is not the container, but the barge which is carried by the "lighter aboard ship" or "LASH" vessels. With dimensions of 61'6" x 31'2" x 13', these barges have a 19,800 cubic feet cargo capacity. They have a tonnage capacity of 415 (short) tons. Cargo is loaded through watertight, folding hatch covers. The 54 barges which a LASH ship can carry are on- and off-loaded at the vessel's stern by an onboard crane that nearly spans the vessel rail to rail. This huge crane also travels between the stern of the vessel and a point just forward the midship so as to stow and unstow the barges (see Figure 3).

Most LASH barges are themselves loaded and discharged of cargo at the dock of a specially constructed "Lighter Station." This dock fronts on a sheltered channel which leads to the open

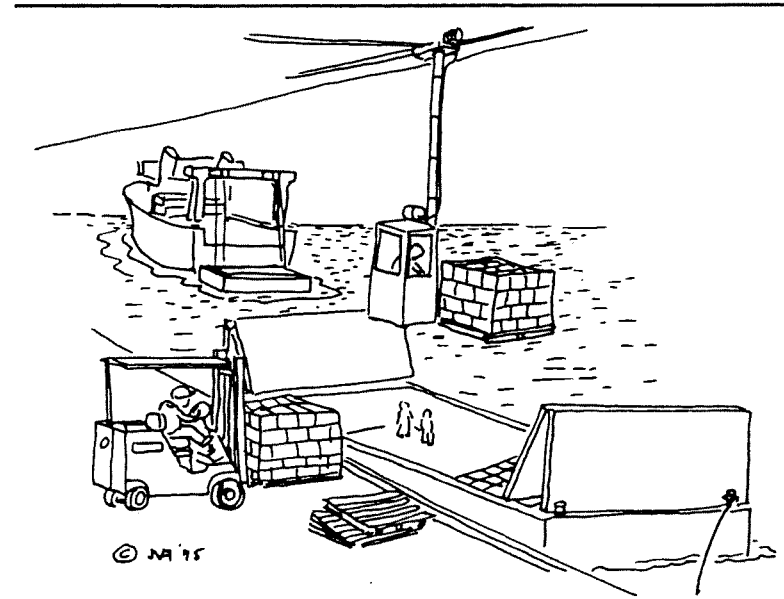

Figure 3: Lash

waters of San Francisco Bay and the dock to which the LASH vessels are moored for loading and discharge. Adjacent the channel, there is a large staging area where barges are moored while awaiting the discharge and/or loading of cargo or movement to a vessel. The barges are moved between the vessel, the station dock, and the staging area by tug. Since, however, a barge can be loaded and discharged of cargo at points far removed from the mooring site of the vessel, LASH, too, has undermined the job security of the longshoremen. The barge may become a floating, "run-away shop." Indeed, if the container, as has been said, is "the longshoreman's coffin," it can also be imagined that the LASH barge will become his mausoleum.

The freight which can be carried by these barges extends from the largest of containers, through the smaller, odd-sized and expendable wooden "van-packs," to hand-handled and unitized cargoes, and to all manners of bulk and general cargoes (from buses to rails). Indeed, the LASH barge can accommodate a mix of cargoes similar to that which can be loaded to a hatch of a general cargo vessel. Much of the cargo handled at the Lighter Station is unitized. In that event, the operation can often be performed by a single man operating an overhead, cantilevered (and extremely versatile) crane which travels along the dock. As a rule, however, one or two men will be aboard the barge so as to assist the crane operator even when unitized or some similarly standardized cargo is being worked. Naturally, a mix of cargoes is not at all uncommon, but this crane cannot handle containers or most van packs, or, of course, such things as buses or bulk cargoes. Such freight must be loaded and discharged by other dock equipment. When cargoes must be hand-handled in some manner, four men will be assigned to the barge. Four men will also work a mix of cargo. As might then be supposed, the work of the barge men often approximates that which is performed by the holdmen in a conventional operation. On the other hand, the box-like configuration of the barge means that few of the problems posed by a ship's hold will be encountered. Then, too, there are no structural members

or stanchions to worry about, nor is the flooring anything but excellent. The mobility/versatility of the dock crane also precludes many of the problematic circumstances which are not infrequently encountered in a conventional shipboard hoisting operation. Often, then, a considerable variety of cargo is handled in these operations, but even then the challenge is not that of conventional shipboard work for either the men aboard the barge or the crane operator.

To and From Shipside

Once a container ship has arrived on berth and is ready to be worked, the dock equipment operators will begin shuttling back and forth between "the hook" and the container yard with inbound and outbound containers (see Figure 4). The hook is a towering, cantilevered crane which can travel the length of the dock on an enormous, four-legged pedestal. In many operations, as many as three such cranes are simultaneously used for the hoisting of containers from the dock to their place of stow and vice versa. Four to six dock equipment operators usually work "against" each crane—i.e., four to six dock machines are used to move containers to and from each crane. The operators must, of course, be informed as to the yard location of the containers they are to successively move to and from the hook. This is accomplished in a number of ways, but the men on these "merry-go-rounds" are in any event simply told throughout their shift where to pick up or place the next container. There is no occasion for initiative or innovation on their part, nor is there any on-going operational need for their employer to in anyway consult with them. Since their work can be and is performed in the almost total isolation of an operator's cab, they have little opportunity, less occasion, and no on-going need to converse with one another, nor, indeed, with anyone else.

The men who operate this equipment will tell you "We do a lot of driving during a shift and that's what you might call 'city' driving, not 'country' driving." There is, as a matter of course,

"a lot of driving"—a lot of stop and go, a lot of gear shifting and setting of brakes, a lot of hook-up's and let-go's, a lot of backwards and forwards, a lot of maneuvering. Since the employer can easily monitor one's performance, "There's a lot of pressure, too. They just don't like delays one damn bit." While, then, the performance of from eight to ten hours of such work is taxing under any circumstances, the operation of the straddle-trucks is the most taxing and stressful. This is partly because of the "blind spots" with which the operator must contend. Since they afford very poor visibility, these machines are equipped with a warning device from which issues a loud and raucus "beep-beep-beep." This circumstance, together with the extremely loud engine noise, heightens the strain of being constantly alert for foot and vehicular traffic. Ear muffs which dampen the noise are available, but many operators find the reduction of sensory input even more taxing than the noise, at least over a shift of eight to ten hours. Then, too, the operator of other types of dock equipment can at least get out of the cramped isolation of his cab—so as "to relax and shake a

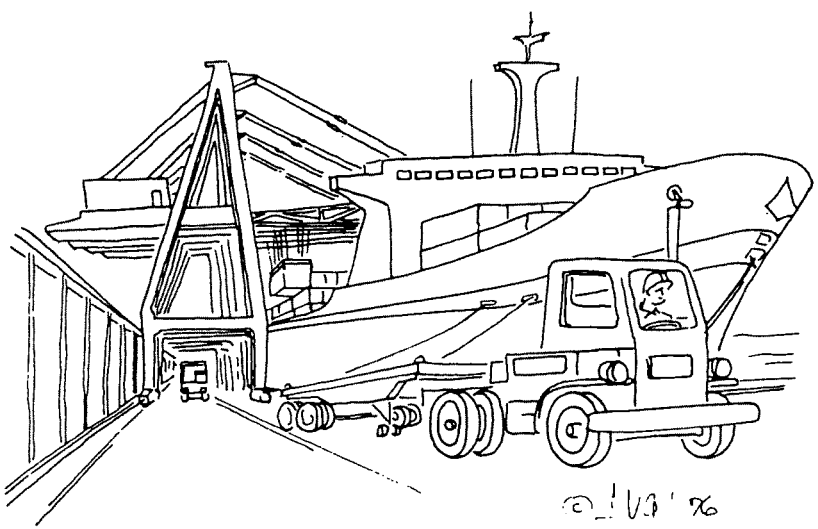

Figure 4: Tractor-Chassis

leg"—when some sort of delay occurs, but the operator of a straddle-truck will only descend from his cab when a major delay has developed.

Some men take a certain pride in driving the modern dock equipment, but that is not quite the same thing as taking pride in one's work. It is more a matter of prestige or status. Some sense of that comes from the size, power, cost of the equipment, and so on, and, perhaps, even from the noise which it produces. In any event, there is agreement on one thing: "Well, the guys talk about 'the good old days' and all of that, but, say what you will, one of these fine days you'll just be sitting in the hiring hall or be in line at the unemployment office unless you learn this equipment when you get the chance. The fact is, man, the containers and everything else are here and they're here to stay."

Another operation in which a variety of strads, pickers, lifts, and tractor-chassis may be used is the "roll-on/roll-off" or "RO/RO" type of operation. In such operations, there is no "sling-load" because there is no hoist. Instead, the RO/RO vessels are loaded and discharged via one or more ramps (either ship or dock mounted) which span the distance between the vessel and the dock and a series of internal deck ramps like those of a multi-storied parking lot. These ramps permit the longshore operators of the dock equipment to move the cargo directly from the dock to its place of stow and vice versa. Since the decks of these vessels resemble the flight and hanger decks of an aircraft carrier, they can carry a unique variety of cargo. They can accommodate unitized cargoes, van packs, containers, and trailers. They are especially unique, however, in their flexible, below-decks capacity for heavy, lengthy, and large volumed cargoes (e.g., prefabricated steel structures). Large volumed cargoes which can be driven or rolled to and from their place of stow (e.g., the exceptionally large, self-propelled ore hauling equipment which is used in strip-mining operations) may also be uniquely accommodated. Given this capacity, a fully loaded deck aboard a RO/RO vessel can look like an industrial warehouse.

The variety of dock equipment which is used in a RO/RO operation is of course a function of the range of cargoes worked. Some RO/RO vessels also have a number of specialized cargo-moving machines aboard which will be driven by longshoremen when used. Because of the variety of equipment which may be used, the variety of cargo, and the changing configuration of the decks, such operations can challenge the skill and experience of the machine operator, but his physical and operational isolation is comparable to that experienced on a container operation. The noise levels are also substantially higher because the RO/RO ships have very loud, high capacity ventilating systems so as to keep the carbon monoxide content of the below-decks atmosphere at "acceptable" levels. The strain of this work, as will presently be detailed, is multiplied, too, by the presence of longshoremen who are aboard the vessel for the purpose of lashing and unlashing its cargo.

Since the LASH barges are moved about by the members of another union, that work will not be detailed. It should be added, however, that a LASH ship can also accommodate the equivalent of 550 20-foot containers. In San Francisco, these containers are moved to and from shipside by straddle-trucks and "pickers." The hoist is made by a dockside crane, but occasionally the ship's container crane is also used.

The Hoisting Operation

A container operation begins with the crane operator positioning his gear abreast the first row of containers to be worked. Having extended the crane boom over the width of the vessel, the final adjustments in that positioning are made. As he proceeds to test the fail-safe devices and limit switches of his gear, the men who will be stationed on the dock ready such shipboard and dock gear as will be needed. The dock equipment drivers begin to warm the engines of their machines. The lights, brakes, parking brake, air and hydraulic systems, horn, and warning device of that equipment are successively tested.

Meanwhile, the men dispatched to the vessel will go aboard and move to the containers which are to be discharged first. They immediately proceed to "let-go" such lashing and other fasteners as have secured these containers against shifting at sea. With that done, the hoisting operation and the merry-go-round of dock equipment may begin. As that work proceeds, the shipboard men will be instructed to move in a preplanned sequence to the remaining containers, again for the purpose of letting-go lashings. Needless to say, the crane operator(s) follows the same sequence, but the details are necessarily communicated to him via "squawk box." Subsequently, the shipboard men will of course double-back behind the crane so as to lash the newly loaded containers.

As compared to the driving of conventional shipboard winches, the work of a crane driver in any modern operation is utterly routine. There are no unusual circumstances. There is no rigging and re-rigging of the gear. The hoist is always the same. The sling-load is always the same. There is seldom any need for initiative and innovation. The range of experience and skill which is routinely called upon is by comparison very narrow. There are no holdmen who are necessarily endangered as the gear is activated. Nor is there any need for a "lasher" or dock man to be in anyway endangered during a hoist. That only happens when there is a speed-up and containers are traveled over the men. There is no need for the communication and cooperation which is essential in conventional operations. This work is essentially performed in total isolation and, for the most part, without interruption. Indeed, and because of the climb involved, most crane drivers will not come down from their cab at "coffee break," nor even at lunch time, if they have packed a lunch from home and there are heavy rains.

Shipboard Work

The only longshore work aboard a container ship is that of "lashing"—the securing and letting-go of lashings which prevent

the containers from shifting while the vessel is underway and the placing and removing of "cones" which also prevent such shifting. Twelve to 18 lashers are usually dispatched from the hall to such a ship, but the men work in groups of two. Each two-man "gang" works in near isolation from the others. They are also isolated, of course, from the crane operator(s) and the machine operators on the dock. Indeed, because of the beam and freeboard of the vessels in question and because they also work either in front of the crane or behind it, the lashers are even isolated from such dock men as may be employed.

Lashing is quite arduous. Heavy wire rope lashings and turnbuckles (or other fasteners) must be dragged about the deck. As a rule the lashings must be hoisted to and from the topmost above-decks containers. These are generally stacked at least three high. Often enough, they are four high. In most operations, heavy steel cones which fit between and lock the corners of these containers must also be hoisted and lowered. Lashing is also utterly routine. It presents no challenge to one's experience, skill, or innovative abilities. However, it may at least be intermittent simply because it is only rarely necessary to lash a below-decks container.

The shipboard work of loading and discharging a mix of LASH barges and containers is essentially the same as that just described, but the lashings and turnbuckles used against the barges are substantially heavier. Since the barges are stacked two high atop the hatch covers of the weather deck, the "top men" work 30 feet above that deck. However, there is no need to handle cones because the barges are themselves constructed with such fittings.

Lashing aboard a RO/RO vessel typically offers some variety and a fluctuating pace and cycle simply because of the differing cargoes and the various deck configurations. Since most of the cargo units cannot be stacked, it is also less arduous and dangerous than that performed against containers and barges. On the other hand, the men are constantly subjected to very high noise levels from the ship's ventilating system and the

various machines which shuttle back and forth to the dock. Because of the noise and the amount of traffic, the men have typically likened the situation to that of working "in the middle of a god-damned Los Angeles freeway at rush hour." After a series of work-stoppages and arbitrations resulting from these conditions, an arbitrator ruled that the employer had to provide ear-muffs for the men. However, since a very substantial percentage of the accidents which occur result from "a breakdown of communication," many consider this "a remedy worse than the disease" and refuse to wear such "protective equipment."

THE MODERNIZATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The Historical Preface: "The ILWU is the hiring hall"

As a result of the West Coast longshore strike of 1934 and the cataclysmic San Francisco General Strike which erupted out of it, a "hiring hall" became *the* central institution of the port's longshore industry. It ended the brutal and fiercely exploitative "shape-up"—the employers' practice of hiring each day's work-force from those who showed up in the wee hours of the morning at the pierheads. By contrast, the hiring hall meant a rotational job dispatch amongst union members and, by the same token, a rotational hiring by all employers. This essentially equalized the work opportunity of the men. It also precluded the discrimination and favoritism which had marked the shape-up. As an institution, the hiring hall also embodied a system of job categories, job promotion, and seniority which was universally viewed as sensible and just. As was noted in Part I: "The hiring hall was indeed 'the union'. It was *the* institution whereby the reality of community could be fashioned and maintained by men who had agreed to structure and divide their work on a fair and equal basis and who, through great strife and

conflict, had won the right to do so." Since it was the very bedrock of their profoundly egalitarian community with one another, the San Francisco longshore could put the matter briefly: "The ILWU Is the hiring hall."

The social roots and bonds of that community were destined to be very much weakened by the nature, structure, and physical layout of modern longshore work. They were destined to be rent asunder, however, once the individual employer secured the contractual right to remove men from the functioning of the hiring hall by offering steady machine operator work (and a monthly pay guarantee) to those of his own choosing. This occurred with the ratification of the industry's second, five-year "Mechanization and Modernization" ("M & M") agreement (1966-1971). As the San Francisco employers each began to exercise the right of thus selecting "the key men" for their modern operations, a complex, bitter, and sometimes explosive division arose amongst the men. The reason was simple. The hiring hall and hence their community with one another had been breached. As for how that happened, that's a long story that can only be touched upon here.

The New Technology: Myths and Images

Beginning in the latter years of the 1950s, the employers relentlessly argued the following kind of generality on behalf of technological change within the industry: "You can't hold back progress. You just can't fight the machine." In the absence of anything to the contrary from the leadership of the union, this quite general view of things became rather common coin amongst the San Francisco longshoremen. Indeed, by the time the first M & M agreement (1961-1966) was submitted to the membership for discussion and vote, this view had an articulate champion in the international leadership of the union (see Goldblatt, 1963).

Following the very handy ratification of that contract, the employers began to argue that a stable group of operators was

required for safe and efficient crane work. Within a year, that argument led to a "Crane Supplement" to the contract. A man who had been promoted to "crane driver" (i.e., jointly trained, certified, promoted, and dispatched) could henceforth be steadily employed by a single employer for the purpose of driving cranes. He would in return receive a monthly pay guarantee from that employer.

Having thus "modernized" the terms under which a crane driver might be employed, the employers turned their attention to securing a more inclusive right—that of employing "a stable core of key men as machine operators." To that end, they began to openly argue along the following lines: "The equipment and machinery of the coming era of modern longshoring will be too sophisticated to be properly operated by hall men who might occasionally be dispatched to such work from a rotational skill board." An efficient and safe operation would require steadily employed men. Overall efficiency, the argument continued, would also be greatly increased by machine operators who were thoroughly familiar with the entire operation and its physical setting. Then, too, the cost of the new technology would mean that the choice of operator "simply could not be left to chance."

Granted the extraordinary barrage which had been laid down in favor of the first M & M and the Crane Supplement, it appeared to many men that the employers had a good case. The new machines and ships—or at least the images which were studiously and tirelessly advertised of those things—seemed indeed to be more "complicated" and "complex" than those encountered in "conventional" longshoring. It also seemed to follow that the employers' interest in having a stable group of (what had to be billed as) very well trained, highly skilled, and extremely versatile machine operators was reasonable.

Since the views just outlined were voiced by the leadership of the International, it will come as no surprise that they became especially current amongst the men who had been in the industry and union since the 1930s. There was good reason for

that "loyalty factor": the lives of those men had been literally transformed during the tenure of that leadership. On the other hand, many of those men had also been intimidated by what had been relentlessly advertised as "the new ships, machines, and skills of a truly modern industry." it must be remembered, too, that "the old timers"—who up through the ratification of the second M & M constituted a full 50% of the San Francisco longshoremen—had a direct and lively interest in the basic quid pro quo of the industry's modernization, namely, an earlier and financially attractive retirement. In any event, however, it was primarily from that quarter that one could hear reference to "the unskilled work of old style longshoring" and "the skilled work of modern operations."

As was briefly noted a moment ago, the employers' campaign for this "modernization of employment" also bore fruit. Section 9.43 of the second M & M read as follows:

> In addition to other steady employees provided for elsewhere in this Agreement, the Employers shall be entitled to employ steady, skilled mechanical or powered equipment operators without limit as to numbers or length of time in steady employment.

Having next referred to a matter which is irrelevant here, this section then concluded: "The employer shall be entitled to assign and shift such steady men to all equipment which, in the opinion of the employer, they are qualified." While 9.43 caused some fear, most San Francisco longshoremen were reassured when the negotiators stressed the fact that the employers had simply been afforded the right *to ask* men to go steady. No man had to accept such an invitation, nor could the local be forced to provide such men. It was both possible and comforting to imagine that "maybe they never will get their steady men."

As their vote was destined to indicate, a great majority of the men were on balance satisfied with the second M & M. There was a substantial wage hike, heavily "front-loaded" into the first year. There was a substantial increase in the pension benefit. Presumably, retirements would counter-balance the loss

of work opportunity which might result from new machines and operations. It seemed, too, that not a great deal had changed under the first M & M. Indeed, for these reasons the negotiators had even agreed to drop the weekly pay guarantee which the first M & M had included as insurance against underemployment. As for the concern which was generated by the length of the contract, that was largely defused by a certain posturing on the part of its supporters: "If this contract doesn't work out, we've got the muscle to just tear it up." In a word, there were some gains and many reassurances.

The New Technology: "It's no big thing"

The struggle against 9.43 was largely carried on by younger men who had recently entered the industry. Their struggle was rooted in a very fundamental circumstance—they were in no way intimidated by new machinery. As compared to "the old timer," they had been socially conditioned to be comfortable with machinery. Their view was simply this: any piece of machinery obviously requires a competent and reliable operator, but the operation of modern longshore equipment "is no big thing." As this view emerged and spread, the employers' rationale for Section 9.43 was also increasingly seen as nothing more than a rationale for injustice.

These views were concretely reinforced and made current by a particular operational circumstance. When the port was busy, the employer(s) was obliged to "supplement" his 9.43 men by hiring skilled hall men to drive his new machines. This practice simply contradicted the elitist rationale which had been manufactured on behalf of Section 9.43. While the struggle could therefore be broadened and deepened, it also became increasingly bitter—the operation of the equipment in question was reserved for 9.43 men when work was slack because they were of course receiving a monthly pay guarantee.

The rationale for 9.43 was challenged, too, as younger men were promoted to the hall skill boards and thereby had this

opportunity to learn the operation of the new equipment. In time, these men *knew* that driving conventional shipboard hoisting gear required greater longshore knowledge and skill than did the operation of container cranes. That work was also much more demanding in that the on-going safety of the holdmen, as well as those on deck and on the dock, was in the hands of the winch driver who controlled the movement of the cargo hook and sling-load. Indeed, by 1968 a common view (which, perhaps for emphasis, was chauvinistic) had emerged—"Your grandmother could drive the biggest container crane in the world." Much the same thing occurred as men were promoted to the hall's lift board and thereby gained experience with the dock equipment operated by the 9.43 men. Most of these men had previously worked in the "skilled holdman" category, a job which frequently involved the operation of a lift machine (of varying capacities) in the hold of the vessel. Granted the circumstances which are generally encountered in such work, they invariably concluded that it demanded much more skill, experience, and ingenuity than "simply running between a crane and the yard with one of these new pieces of equipment." The employers' carefully sown and cultivated myth regarding the introduction of "highly sophisticated" equipment which required an elite corps of operators was thus eroded away. To put the matter briefly: the men were learning in concrete terms that there is no necessary correlation between the size, capacity, or cost of a piece of machinery and the skills and experience which are required to operate it efficiently and safely. Indeed, the mechanization and modernization of their industry were teaching them that the skills and experience required may be inversely related to such factors.

As these things occurred, the employer rested his case on the notion that a steady machine operator was necessary for an efficient and safe operation of at least most of the equipment involved. The 9.43 man was said to be more efficient because he was intimately familiar with overall operation, the facility within which it was carried on, and the equipment used. The

"productivity figures" which were always close at hand to "prove" this point were of two kinds: (1) the average number of hoists which the 9.43 crane operator made each hour, as compared to the average of the hall crane drivers, and (2) the average number of moves which he made each hour to and from the hook, as compared to the hall lift driver. As it happened, these figures were presented in a comprehensive and convincing manner, at least for the most part, and many men came to believe them. On the other hand, most men also came to believe that "If the average 9.43 man can have a better showing than the hall men, that's because he's willing to go along with a speed-up and risk the safety of other guys." Thus, in the nation's second most hazardous industry, the watchword became: "Keep your eyes open around that guy, he's nine point four three." As for the employers, they presently stopped citing such figures and shelved their argument about needing steady men so as to insure the safety of others.

Within this framework of circumstances, the relationships between the men who had accepted an invitation "to go nine point four three" and those who had refused became particularly strained. That was especially true also when the 9.43 man was younger and possessed of less seniority. Older men who had never been asked to go steady sometimes faced another sort of circumstance. Some felt themselves insulted or discriminated against because they were "just as good on those machines as anybody else." Most were quick to add, however, that the real insult was to be asked. That meant the employer thought you were the kind of man who would accept. By the same token, the lack of any invitation was usually understood to mean that "The employers know I'm too good a union man to go steady."

Given the nature of the community which the San Francisco men had so long enjoyed with one another, Section 9.43 also posed what may be viewed as a still more fundamental contradiction. The employers had fashioned an abstract and intimidating image of "a new era and a new technology" in their extended effort to develop "an understanding of the

industry's need for steady machine operators." For a variety of reasons, many San Francisco men came to embrace that image and the correspondingly abstract image of a "technological elite." On the other hand, as the employers proceeded to invite *real* men (and old acquaintances) to that station, there were few men who did not feel that the skills and abilities of those selected were in any way superior to those of many others. To put it briefly, since the skills of good longshoring were so widely shared and since the men were so widely acquainted with one another, *any* selection could only be viewed as fundamentally arbitrary. By the same token—and this circumstance would have been obtained *even* if the new technology had proved "complex and sophisticated"—there simply was nothing like a "natural" technological elite amongst the men. It thus could happen that most men felt that at least some of the 9.43 men were "no great shakes as a longshoreman." Indeed, and given the images which had been so assiduously cultivated, most men felt that some selections were "downright ridiculous."

The Men and Their Union

As these sorts of views and understandings spread amongst the men, the inflationary spiral which an escalating Vietnam war was to impose upon the nation caught up with them. By 1968, their wage gains had been wiped out. By then, "the container revolution" was also there for all to see. Indeed, the greatly accelerated pace of that revolution was partly occasioned by the fueling of the tragic and immoral adventure of Vietnam. As work fell off, anxiety mounted. There was a full three years to go with a contract which in nearly 200 pages made no mention of a "container." In an effort "to get at least some of the container work," there was a series of "wild-cat" strikes in San Francisco and Los Angeles, but the contract was not, of course, "torn up."

Within this framework of developments, the functioning of Section 9.43 became the source of an on-going and all-pervasive

instability within the San Francisco industry. By late 1967, there were over 150 such men. By 1968, their number had swelled to nearly 300. At any given time, they constituted about 10% of the available workforce. By the spring of that year, the on-the-job struggle against "going nine point three" had also been dramatically escalated and made visible through leaflets. Indeed, and as a result of a number of arbitrations, the men and some local officers had been warned several times about the use of "coercion" against the steady men.

The community and union of San Francisco longshoremen were thus threatened with collapse. Section 9.43 and its adjudication through the grievance machinery negated the otherwise "sacred" contractual principles of rotational job dispatch, seniority, joint training and skill certification, and joint promotion. It also undercut the "one man, one job" principle of restricting a man's work to the job category in which he had been dispatched. Finally, and because the relevant contract language was not sufficiently precise, union efforts to utilize the grievance machinery for the purpose of equalizing the work opportunity of the skilled hall men and the 9.43 men were unsuccessful. In short, this modernization of the terms of employment totally undermined the basic principles of the hiring hall. It therefore represented not merely a very broad and fundamental departure from the historically relevant contractual and institutional past, but a break with something still more fundamental—the profoundly egalitarian sense of justice which the hiring hall had concretely institutionalized.

With respect to the social relationships that came to exist amongst the San Francisco longshoremen by reason of Section 9.43, it is of course important to remember that those relationships were being quite generally weakened by the sprawl of the industry. They were being weakened, too, by the relative isolation which was routinely experienced on the modern operations of the port. The nature and structure of those operations afforded the men but little, if any, opportunity to concretely express a sense of brotherhood via their skill and

initiative. In broad terms, the bonds of community and union were being atrophied in some measure as a result of the new technology and in the absence of any concerted effort on the part of the elected leadership to have it otherwise.

Within this evolving social framework, the circumstances of the 9.43 men were extreme. They, for the most part, avoided union meetings and activity. They seldom came to the hiring hall or union offices. They lost touch with old friends and acquaintances. At best, they were only slightly acquainted with the newer men. Because of the nature of their work, they simply could not in any way assist either shipboard or dock men. They could only "produce" for their employer and by so doing perhaps subject those men to a speed-up and/or an unsafe working condition.

The motives and attitudes of those who "went nine point four three" were various, of course. To begin with, and this was repeated by those who had supported the contract: "Nine point four three is in the contract. The men voted for it when they voted the contract up. If they didn't want it, they should have gone on strike." Older men who were asked "to go nine point four three" frequently consulted with the leadership and were quite generally encouraged to accept that status. Upon inquiry, they explained: "Section nine point four three is in the contract. It's part of the union program and good union men can take the job." On the other hand, they also routinely added: "When the union has another program, I'll sure as hell be back in the hall."

Younger men generally explained themselves in these terms also, but they were inclined as well to a more positive defense. They frequently viewed the man who had refused to take a 9.43 job as "scared of this equipment and these kinds of operations." As for those who had never been asked to go 9.43, but who had expressed opposition to such status, they were not infrequently viewed as "just plain jealous." Then, too, the younger 9.43 man often felt that because a younger person generally has better eyesight and better reflexes and coordination, it was best that

they should do the work in question. There was yet another and similar notion: "A lot of the older men just shouldn't be climbing a hundred feet into some crane cab. It's as simple as that." Thus, and while the notion of an elite in terms of skill was generally shied away from, it was not infrequently argued that the work of the 9.43 man required an excellent physical condition. On the other hand, there was also a common response: "We ain't talkin' about no cripple. We don't have no cripples drivin' winches, either. We're talking about a guy who's ready and able to do the work and gets in line at the hall just like everybody else."

Occasionally, however, a 9.43 man admitted to something which everyone understood as really basic: "I make a better living. It's also where the future is and I've got a family. It's as simple as that."

Given the evolution of circumstances of this order and the simultaneous collapse of any creditable rationale for the 9.43 status of employment, it was increasingly understood that a shape-up had simply been reintroduced under the guise of the industry's need for a technological elite. By the same token, Section 9.43 was increasingly viewed as having introduced a "cancer" into the local: "It's a cancer. It's the cancer of wanting to make more money than anybody else. It's the cancer of looking to the employer for your future and not the union. It's a cancer because for every 9.43 man on the job, there's three or four other men trying to get that job. It's the cancer of a shape-up and with it the employers are out to destroy the hiring hall and break the union."

A VERY BRIEF POSTSCRIPT

The experience which they had with the new technology and Section 9.43 underwrote an emergent argument from the men. The selection of machine operators should be based on what job promotions had always been based on, seniority, training, and

qualification. With that accomplished, the men in question should be dispatched as other men, from a hall skill board. As for providing the men on each board with enough work to maintain their income and skills, that could be accomplished as it had always been accomplished, by regulating the number of men promoted. The issue was clear by the end of the contract (1971). The notion that "the ILWU is the hiring hall" was not a mere slogan. It expressed an undeniable social reality. It gave expression to a social system which was profoundly valued by its members. Section 9.43 cut directly across the fundamental principles of that social system and the basic sense of justice which underlay those principles. It undermined what the hiring hall had concretely institutionalized: an equitable and egalitarian system of justice. It literally tore the fabric of a highly valued and uniquely encompassing "way of life."

It followed from these circumstances that for most San Francisco longshoremen the slogan "NO 9.43" would largely underwrite what was destined to occur at the end of the second M & M–the longest maritime strike in the history of the nation. Indeed, that strike was widely viewed partly as a replay of 1934 because the manner of assigning and distributing work was central. Thus, in their first major strike statement the men expressed themselves as follows:

> We are being asked to accept a set of PMA demands which would destroy the system of job dispatch which has always prevented discrimination and favoritism, while insuring an equal work opportunity to all of us. Since these demands seriously jeopardize our immediate economic welfare and long-term job security while threatening *the very existence of our union,* they are in fact *a basic issue in our strike*!!!

At a minimum, the strikers were thus harking back to something which had been acknowledged within the industry nearly a decade earlier: "the men have been adamant in their refusal to protect themselves by deserting a part of their fellow workers on the beach. Thus they must all be equally beneficiaries or victims of the machine as it comes into the industry" (Goldblatt, 1963: 39).

In this connection, then, it need only be added that Section 9.43 has remained in the contract to the present day . . . but that, too, is yet another long story.

REFERENCES

GOLDBLATT, L. (1963) Men and Machines. San Francisco: International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and Pacific Maritime Association.

MILLS, H. (1976) "The San Francisco waterfront: the social consequences of industrial modernization, part one: 'the good old days'." Urban Life 5 (July).

ERRATA

Several inadvertent errors appeared in Part One of Herb Mills' "The San Francisco Waterfront" (*Urban Life*, Vol. 5, No. 2, July 1976). Corrections should be made as follows:

page 228, last line:	longshoremen. Having delineated these relationships, the discussion will then move to the third set of
page 233, line 25:	average ability? The answer to this has several dimensions.
page 234, line 18:	which were current on the waterfront: (1) "When it comes to longshoring, you can always learn" and (2) "When it comes to longshoring, you can learn from any man."