

50. TLA, February 22, 1918.
51. TDL, February 29, 1918.
52. Ibid., April 8, 1918. ST, April 9, 1918. PCDILA 1918, p. 12.
53. Ibid., p. 13. Copy of Letter from W. C. Dawson to Henry M. White, written on April 18, 1918.
54. Ibid., p. 14.
55. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
56. NAC, pp. 229-231. Checkers, weighers, and spotters received 75 cents an hour straight time and \$1.10 overtime.
57. TLA, June 21, 1918.
58. Ibid., January 24, 1919.
59. Ibid., November 27, December 6, and 20, 1918.
60. Ibid., November 15, 1918.
61. TDL, November 7, 1918.
62. Letter from the Employers Association of Washington, Tacoma Branch, to Pacific Steamship Company, October 15, 1918.
63. *Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Waterfront Employers' of Tacoma*, October 31, 1918.
64. TDL, January 13, 1918. *The Port of Tacoma*, p. 59. Ole Kay Moe, *An Analytical Study of the Foreign Trade Through the Port of Seattle*, pp. 25 and 29.
65. *Seattle Port Warden's 1917 and 1919 Reports*. P1, January 1, 1916.
66. TDL, August 18, 1918.
67. Ibid., August 20, 1918.
68. Ibid., August 22, 1918.
69. Ibid., August 24, 1918.
70. Ibid., August 25 and 28, 1918. The City Council appointed ten business and labor leaders on August 25, 1918. On August 28, twenty-three Commercial Club, Kiwanians, and Rotarians were added.
71. Ibid., August 26, 1918.
72. TLA, August 30, 1918.
73. TDL, September 5, 1918.
74. Ibid., September 17, 1918.
75. Ibid., June 9, 1919.
76. Ibid., October 1, 1918.
77. Ibid., November 4, 1918.
78. *Port of Tacoma Minutes*, November 19, 1918. Hereafter cited as Port.

## CHAPTER VII

### POSTWAR TURMOIL

As World War I wound down in Europe, forty Seattle businessmen and labor leaders established with the assistance of local NAC officials, a Puget Sound Industrial Conciliation Committee. The new organization would resolve disputes between labor and management before lockouts and strikes occurred. The conciliation committee considered the waterfront the most likely place for industrial trouble to arise after the war. On November 8, 1918, the ILA Pacific Coast District Executive Board and WEU officers met with the conciliation committee to consider the formation of a Puget Sound Court of Adjustment and Conciliation. The court would be composed of three ILA members, three WEU representatives, and presided over by a NAC official. The ILA and WEU would have to agree beforehand to give the court jurisdiction over all wage and working conditions disputes.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of the discussions on a conciliation court a telegram from Washington D.C. to Tacoma newspapers confirmed the victorious ending of World War I. The smelter whistle blew first, followed by a chorus of loud pipings from waterfront sawmills that could be heard in Puyallup. Stores, offices, theaters, and factories closed. Shipyard workers, sailors, and long-shoremen left the waterfront to join thousands of people milling around Pacific Avenue. During the afternoon, 10,000 men, women, and children gathered at Stadium Bowl to demonstrate their patriotic fervor. A deafening roar sounded the moment several hundred young boys and girls began unfolding a huge American flag in the center of the field. Tears flowed as the audience sang the *Star Spangled Banner*. Cheers rang out when a group of boys dragged an effigy of the Kaiser around the field. When the speeches ended, Tacomans were ready to start a new era.<sup>2</sup>

The Armistice had hardly been signed when William H. Barr, president of the open-shop National Founders' Association, called for labor to take a cut in wages and to put in a longer working day to enable the United States to compete with foreign industries. Barr was certain that returning soldiers would not put up with any "maudlin sympathy for experimental industrial socialism."<sup>3</sup> On November 16 Samuel Gompers countered Barr. The AFL president warned American business that no general reduction of wages or lengthening of the workday would be accepted by organized labor without a "bitter fight." "We will resist in that attempt to the uttermost," declared Gompers.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, Puget Sound ILA locals were balloting on the conciliation court proposal. Tacoma Local 38-3 voted 469 to 15 in favor of the court, but

a majority of ILA members turned down the recommendation.<sup>5</sup> At the same time ILA members instructed the district board to prepare a counterproposal for consideration at their December 1918 union meetings. The men wanted to see the closed shop included in the agreement. The bosses' preferred gangs must be replaced with each local's stevedore and trucker lists.<sup>6</sup>

On January 14, 1919, the waterfront employers' unions of Seattle and Tacoma met Pacific Coast District ILA officers, representatives from NAC, and the Industrial Conciliation Committee to formally sign a closed-shop agreement. The settlement provided that the final court of appeal on wages and working conditions would be a Puget Sound Industrial Conciliation Committee presided over by former Judge George Donworth. Under no circumstances would work stop during a dispute. Hearings and records would be open to the public. A WEU-ILA complaint committee would be created at each port to handle local grievances. The agreement would continue until either party gave fifteen days notice of cancellation.<sup>7</sup>

### The General Strike

With the longshore situation resolved, the Industrial Conciliation Committee turned to bringing about "an amicable settlement" between western Washington shipyard workers and the federal Macy Adjustment Board.<sup>8</sup> Eighty percent of the men working in the shipyards received \$4.64 a day. The shipyard unions demanded \$5.50 for these laborers and helpers.<sup>9</sup> The conciliation committee failed to get the federal officials to negotiate.<sup>10</sup> On January 21, 1919, over 40,000 Seattle, Tacoma, Aberdeen, and Anacortes shipyard workers struck for higher wages. During the following week the chairmen of the Seattle and Tacoma metal trades councils appealed to central labor councils to call general strikes. Both councils referred the pleas of the metal tradesmen to affiliated unions. In Seattle, 107 locals voted to participate in a general strike on February 6. Three unions opposed the walkout.<sup>11</sup> In Tacoma, forty unions responded to the strike poll out of sixty-five affiliated with the council. Nine shipyard unions already on strike and seven uptown affiliates favored the general strike, twenty-one opposed, and three unions responded by stating they would abstain from voting.<sup>12</sup> Lumber Handlers' Local 38-30 was among the unions that refused to vote.<sup>13</sup>

General Cargo Local 38-3 voted against participating in the general strike on January 30. To strike would break their "hard won" closed-shop agreement with the waterfront employers.<sup>14</sup> That same evening, Seattle Local 38-12 members decided, 1,310 to 1,129, to break the contract with WEU and participate in the sympathy strike.<sup>15</sup> The next day, President T. V. O'Connor wired all Puget Sound locals that the ILA would lift charters of locals that joined in an unauthorized strike.<sup>16</sup> On February 5, WEU informed all Puget Sound locals that if they struck the agreement would be cancelled.<sup>17</sup>

During the week that council affiliates voted on the strike, the *Tacoma News Tribune* warned union members not to vote for the sympathy strike. The *Tribune* was certain radical foreign agitators were pushing the idea for an

ulterior purpose. The "Reds" were using the shipyard workers' strike, "to overturn existing conditions and set up the same form of government that is now cursing the Bolshevik-ridden Russia." The *Tribune* claimed that sedition had been openly preached at union meetings, the red flag praised, and the Stars and Stripes referred to as a rag.<sup>18</sup> The *Labor Advocate* responded with both barrels. The daily papers were controlled by "well-manicured and sweet-scented" businessmen bent upon stopping organized labor from improving conditions. "With a cold, relentless purpose, the conservative stand-pat press of this city has deluged the labor movement with a flood of journalistic filth that for bitterness of expression, wealth of invective, and indifference to truth, has exceeded anything in the history of local journalism."<sup>19</sup>

During the evening of February 5, Local 38-12 sent twelve delegates to Tacoma to plead for reconsideration of Local 38-3's vote not to strike. Chairman of the Seattle delegation was Walter Burdette, charter member of Tacoma's first longshore union in 1886 and veteran of seven Puget Sound longshore strikes. Burdette and other Seattle longshoremen, as well as representatives from various shipyard unions, spoke to the Tacoma local for hours. Finally, Local 38-3 voted to join the general strike. Beginning at 10:00 a.m. on February 6, and continuing for five days, 65,000 Seattle workers shut down the city's commerce. On the other hand, in Tacoma only Timber Workers, Streetcar Men, Meat Cutters, Barbers, some Retail Clerks, General Cargo Longshoremen, and the rest of the Metal Trades struck. On the third day, Tacoma Streetcar Men returned to work. That same day 800 Local 38-3 men gathered for a special meeting. The longshoremen voted overwhelmingly to call off the strike. Although no vessels had been in port, it was too late. WEU informed August Seitz the contract had been cancelled.<sup>20</sup>

Working through the federal hiring hall, Local 38-3 gangs unloaded the *Manila Maru* on February 10 without the appearance of strikebreakers. But Seattle and Tacoma waterfront workers knew another attempt would be forthcoming to establish the open shop on Puget Sound.<sup>21</sup> On March 4 WEU posted on docks a notice to longshoremen and truckers. The announcement proclaimed that the only qualification necessary to secure employment was American citizenship or intention to become naturalized. "Members of the IWW, Anarchists, Bolsheviks, or any man who does not support the principles of the American Government will not be employed."<sup>22</sup> Tacoma WEU President Edwin Orrett authorized Harvey Wells to secure a hiring hall at 703 Pacific Avenue on March 14.<sup>23</sup> Seven days later the federal government closed its longshore hiring halls in Seattle and Tacoma. Congress had failed to appropriate funds. WEU offered to hire federal hall managers Jack Bjorklund in Tacoma and Robert Howland in Seattle, but both men refused.<sup>24</sup> ILA district officers countered with an offer that the ILA and WEU jointly finance a Seattle hall. The Tacoma hall would be funded solely by Local 38-3. The employers ignored the district's offer.<sup>25</sup> Quickly, WEU established labor dispatch halls on the central Seattle docks and at Smith Cove. In Tacoma, renovation of the new hiring hall proceeded slowly.

On April 14, Local 38-3 business agent and port commissioner Ed Kloss appealed to "Mr. Citizen" to oppose the Seattle Waterfront Employers' Union's plan to open a Tacoma fink hall. "This hall, if established," wrote Kloss, "will be a harboring ground for every agitator and undesirable who can hide under the cloak of being a waterfront worker." Kloss added that Local 38-3 did not want to fight, but if employers opened their hall, there would be no choice. "Our members do not propose to give up their rights as union men to go down and patronize a hall conducted for the purpose of breaking our union." Kloss felt that the turmoil surrounding the opening of an employers' hall would "vitaly affect" the upcoming Port of Tacoma bond issue. Kloss called on all citizens to protest to the WEU, the Commercial Club, and city officials against the opening of the open-shop hiring hall.<sup>26</sup>

Kloss's letter had the desired effect on prominent businessmen and city officials. Many called on Mayor C. M. Riddell to stop the opening of WEU's hall.<sup>27</sup> The Board of Business Representatives of the Tacoma Central Labor Council informed WEU on April 16, "that we are afraid that if the hall is opened, it will precipitate a fight on the waterfront, and spoil what chances we have to get the (Port of Tacoma) bond issue across."<sup>28</sup> The next day, WEU officers met with Mayor Riddell, port commissioners Chester Thorne and Ed Kloss, banker Ralph Stacy, and other leading Tacoma businessmen. The group decided to postpone the opening of the WEU hall. Harvey Wells told the press, "The larger interests of Tacoma might be seriously jeopardized if the Waterfront Employment hall, which is now ready to open, be put into operation at the present time."<sup>29</sup>

Local 38-3 longshoremen were instrumental in the campaign to gain public approval of the first Port of Tacoma bond issue and master plan for port development. William Eagen and C. J. McIntyre again coordinated the "quiet campaign."<sup>30</sup> They organized the distribution of printed materials to homes and farms in the city and county. The brochures emphasized the great success of Seattle's Smith Cove. Tacoma would have a better deep-water facility than Smith Cove if voters approved the purchase of 240 acres between Sitcum and Wapato avenues. The bond issue would also pay for a transit shed, lumber dock, cold storage plant, and warehouse. The central labor and building trades councils publicly supported the two propositions.<sup>31</sup>

ILA Vice President Jack Bjorklund and Local 38-3 Secretary Edgar Harris rebutted critics of the bond issue and master plan in a series of newspaper articles. To "knockers" who could not see the importance to Tacoma's future in buying land and constructing new facilities, Harris pointed out that American-Hawaiian, Blue Funnel, and Matson had stopped coming to Tacoma. Existing finger piers could not accommodate their new large vessels.<sup>32</sup> The bond issue would pay for modern equipment, wrote Bjorklund, that would make the Port of Tacoma competitive with Seattle's Smith Cove terminal. "Take a walk along the docks here and see them unloading heavy cases such as gas engines from boxcars. See a piece of rope around a case and a dozen men on the rope trying to move the case out of the car, taking hours to do the work that could be done in minutes with mechanical appliances, then ask yourself if ships and shippers were not justified in going elsewhere."<sup>33</sup>

At polling stations on May 31, 1919, Tacoma and Pierce County voters approved the port master plan 7,041 to 3,845 and the \$2.5 million bond issue 5,625 to 5,562. The Port of Tacoma began a two-year phase of land purchase and construction.<sup>34</sup>

## The Radical Challenge

Since the Panic of 1893, radicals had spoken on Seattle's Skid Road and Tacoma's downtown street corners. In the early 1900s Socialists and Wobblies attracted large crowds. The soapboxers advocated action to correct intolerable working conditions and low wages. Before World War I, unemployed lumber workers, fishermen, harvest hands, and urban laborers made up most of the audience. During the war, boilermakers, machinists, bakers, and waterfront hand truckers were attracted by the ideas expressed by the soapbox orators.<sup>35</sup>

In a demonstration of the IWW principle of industrial unionism, on February 8, 1918, Tacoma Wobblies working on the *Shinsei Maru* persuaded several ILA gangs and unorganized hand truckers to join them in an impromptu strike for higher wages. According to the *Industrial Worker*, the strikers marched from the vessel two-abreast to the IWW Hall where they held a mass protest meeting. The next day, the dock superintendent transferred enough men from the *Somedono Maru* to finish loading the *Shinsei Maru*.<sup>36</sup>

A sizeable number of Wobblies became members of Puget Sound ILA locals when the United States Employment Service required the longshore unions to accept all men who had worked on the waterfront prior to July 1, 1918. The Seattle Riggers and Stevedores' membership grew from 1,100 in 1917 to 3,500 in 1919. By December 1918, federal intelligence agents estimated 75 percent of Seattle's ILA local were Wobblies.<sup>37</sup> During the same years, Tacoma's Local 38-3 increased from 800 to 1,100.<sup>38</sup> According to Army intelligence officers, Tacoma unions were not taken over by Wobblies because police put the IWWs out of business on October 21, 1918. The Wobbly office was torn apart and not allowed to reopen.<sup>39</sup>

There were prominent Wobblies who held dual cards in Local 38-3. MTW Local 700 Secretary-Treasurer J. W. LeMar, organizer Henry Pinkerton, and soapboxer Henry J. Gehrig were not expelled from the ILA local.<sup>40</sup> Nor were dual members James Costello and William Palmer asked to turn in their ILA books when they were jailed in Seattle for parading on "Behalf of Russia."<sup>41</sup> The major discrimination suffered by IWWs in Local 38-3 was the refusal of business agents to issue waterfront passes to known IWW men to work government cargo.<sup>42</sup>

## The One Big Union

In March 1919 at Calgary, Alberta, a convention of western Canadian labor unions called for a membership referendum on amalgamating into One Big

Union along industrial lines. One of the leaders of the OBU movement in British Columbia was Jack J. Kavanagh, president of both the provincial Federation of Labor and Vancouver ILA Local 38-52. On May 5 Kavanagh keynoted the Pacific Coast District ILA convention in Seattle. Kavanagh predicted the Canadian OBU would soon institute industrial unit organizations, blanket agreements, and universal transfer cards in the transportation industry.<sup>43</sup>

Everett Local 38-8 offered a resolution that the district convention adopt and put into operation a new industrial organization covering maritime workers on the Pacific Coast. Every worker in the marine transport branch would be admitted, regardless of race, creed, or color. A special appeal would be made at the International Seamen's Union convention to solicit support from that group for the Marine Transport Workers organization. The Everett plan called for the district ILA to make no further per capita tax payments to the international.<sup>44</sup> Local 38-3 delegate A. C. Hill, David Madison from Local 38-12, and Kavanagh amended the Everett resolution to provide that a referendum be taken of the district membership on whether or not to form an MTW with a view to affiliating with the Canadian OBU.<sup>45</sup> On a roll call vote the resolution and amendment passed with only California delegate Otto Olson dissenting.<sup>46</sup>

District convention delegates Jack Bjorklund and Ed Kloss had concerns about OBU. Bjorklund wondered what kind of a position longshoremen would be in if they seceded from the ILA only to find that railway unions and Teamsters would not join OBU.<sup>47</sup> Kloss stated later that in British Columbia the economic education of the workers was more advanced. "Hence they are more ready for such a revolutionary change in the method of organization." Bjorklund and Kloss predicted that the referendum vote would fail in Tacoma.<sup>48</sup>

While Bjorklund and Kloss spoke pessimistically about the future of the OBU movement, Tacoma longshoreman Henry E. "Harry" Wright exuded confidence that the new organization would solve the problems of union workers. After years as a railroad worker, Wright had turned to longshoring in 1918.<sup>49</sup> During June 1919 he was elected one of four Local 38-3 delegates to the Washington State Federation of Labor Convention in Bellingham. Wright introduced Resolution 44 calling on the state federation to recommend to each affiliate that a vote be taken on the "advisability of forming one big union along industrial lines." If the membership voted in favor, the state federation would issue a call for a special conference to be held no less than sixty days after the final count. Supported by twenty-seven delegates from Seattle Local 38-12, Wright's resolution passed.<sup>50</sup>

As West Coast ILA locals balloted on the formation of a transport workers' union, OBU advocates carried the campaign to Central Labor Council meetings. On July 16, 1919, delegates to the Tacoma Central Labor Council approved by a roll call vote, 35 to 16, the hiring of an organizer to lay before affiliated locals the state federation's OBU referendum.<sup>51</sup> During July and August, Wright penned a series of letters that were printed first in the *Seattle Union Record* and then in the *Tacoma Labor Advocate*. Wright denied that One Big Union meant secession from the AFL. Rather, OBU would reform the

labor movement from within. Scientific methods would be applied along industrial lines "with agreements expiring at the same time, with jurisdictional squabbles eliminated, a universal transfer system of cards from industry to industry and from craft to craft as much as possible for people who are qualified to change."<sup>52</sup>

On August 2, AFL Secretary Frank Morrison wrote the Washington State Federation of Labor that if the OBU referendum was not immediately halted the AFL Executive Council would revoke the state federation's charter. The federation's executive board withdrew the OBU referendum.<sup>53</sup> On August 20, Wright introduced a motion at the Tacoma Central Labor Council calling for the formation of a special committee composed of the Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma labor councils and other interested groups. The committee would raise funds to defray expenses for the promotion of the OBU referendum. After lengthy and heated exchanges, the council approved Wright's motion.<sup>54</sup>

Harry Wright achieved another major success on August 20. Representatives gathered that day to create a Tacoma Waterfront Federation. Among the unions represented were longshore locals 38-3 and 38-30, cereal and flour workers, structural iron workers and pile drivers, building laborers, millwrights, operating engineers, electrical workers, and teamsters. Based on the industrial unit concept, the new organization planned to negotiate blanket agreements with employers and to take concerted action when needed. The Tacoma Waterfront Federation would not affiliate with the Tacoma Central Labor Council.<sup>55</sup>

OBU successes in Tacoma were not matched in Seattle. In fact, the Seattle Central Labor Council delivered the "fatal blow" to the Washington State OBU movement at its weekly meeting on August 20. The council voted by a wide margin to sustain the action of the executive council of the state labor federation in withdrawing the OBU referendum. After the Seattle council vote, interest in OBU receded rapidly. The Tacoma Waterfront Federation, like so many previous attempts, disappeared quietly.<sup>56</sup>

## ILA-WEU Negotiations

The year 1919 turned out to be a banner year for the Tacoma waterfront. General cargo men discharged and stowed 2,676,827 tons of cargo, up 622,716 tons over 1918. Lumber handlers loaded 149,950,000 board feet in 1919.<sup>57</sup> Good economic times led to the resumption of negotiations between the ILA district and the Seattle Waterfront Employers' Union. At first bargaining centered on pay scales. ILA district negotiators asked that the same hourly wage be paid to all Puget Sound longshoremen, checkers, and truckers. Employers rejected the parity proposal. On August 12, WEU offered, and ILA officials accepted, a pay scale providing longshoremen and checkers 90 cents an hour straight time and \$1.35 overtime. Truckers received 80 cents for the first eight hours and \$1.20 overtime. During the negotiations the list

argument resurfaced. Seattle Local 38-12 insisted the contract include a provision that the men be dispatched alphabetically in order to equalize earnings. Employers demanded the right to pick any man in the union hall.<sup>58</sup> In Tacoma, the tradition of allowing the employer to request particular men had not caused a problem in equalizing earnings.<sup>59</sup> WEU finally accepted Seattle's rotary dispatch system, but told the union bargainers "that if it proved as obnoxious as anticipated, they would give notice of cancellation."<sup>60</sup>

On the same day the ILA-WEU agreement was signed, shipping lines, stevedore companies, and wharf operators in British Columbia and Washington State established the Northwest Waterfront Employers' Union. NWEU's primary role was to keep members informed about labor relations in the various ports. NWEU also served as the bargaining agent for the employer unions. On August 23, NWEU and ILA district officials extended the Washington-British Columbia agreement to include Oregon ports. For the first time a closed shop existed from Prince Rupert, British Columbia, to Bandon, Oregon.<sup>61</sup>

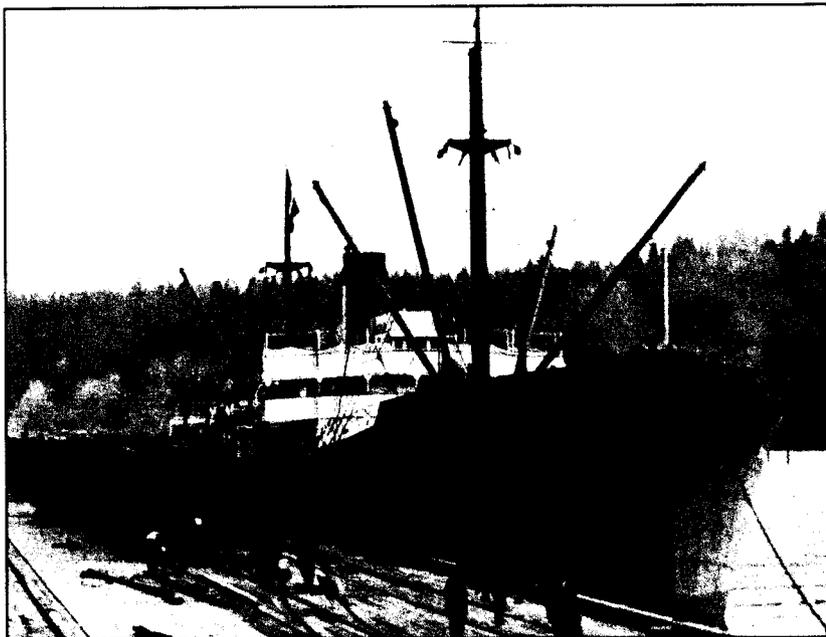
During January 1920 Northwest waterfront employers met with ILA district officers to discuss a new contract. The bosses absolutely refused to continue with rotary dispatch. They also demanded that the checkers' union be disbanded. When District President Joseph Taylor and Secretary Marshall Wright refused to accede to the changes, employers handed over a letter cancelling the old agreement. A West Coast ILA membership referendum supported Taylor and Marshall's position on the list and the checkers. Later, the longshore unions backed off the list issue. On April 12, Taylor and Wright signed an agreement that duplicated the 1919 settlement, except that the list system was eliminated. Seattle union longshoremen struck for rotary dispatch on April 30. Employers hired hundreds of scabs and deserters. On May 14 Local 38-12 called off the strike. The Seattle waterfront would remain open shop for the next thirteen years. Employers discussed letting the contract lapse with Tacoma, but elected to continue to observe the provisions of the agreement orally.<sup>62</sup>

The destruction of the closed shop on the Seattle waterfront was one of a series of debacles that overtook West Coast longshore unions. San Francisco Riggers and Stevedores were broken first in 1919; Seattle in 1920; Portland and Anacortes in 1922; San Pedro, Everett, and Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1923. All San Francisco longshoremen had to join the "Blue Book" company union. Three thousand Bay City men belonged to steady company gangs while 1,000 casuals shaped up at piers for work. Everett, Seattle, and Portland longshoremen were corralled in fink halls. The two Washington cities installed employer-employee committees controlled by the bosses. Under the direction of WEU Industrial Relations Manager Frank P. Foisie the number of Seattle longshoremen and truckers working out of the fink hall was cut from 1,400 in September 1920 to 586 exactly one year later.<sup>63</sup> The first to go were the leaders of Local 38-12.<sup>64</sup> In the second wave were the oldest men, "floaters," and "incompetents."<sup>65</sup> In October of 1920 Tacoma bosses tried to create an employee-employer committee to provide a channel for discussing grievances and wages, but the two ILA unions refused to participate.<sup>66</sup>

A serious discussion concerning "decasualizing" the Tacoma waterfront occurred at the quarterly meeting of the Northwest Waterfront Employers' Union on April 20, 1921. Frank Tuttle, Tacoma manager for International Stevedoring, cautioned against forceful action. The current system of picking men at the ILA halls worked "splendidly." "If an attempt were made to introduce Joint Organization at this time it would be against the wishes of organized labor, with possibly a lack of understanding by the business interests of Tacoma and the public press." If Seattle's experiment proved successful, Tuttle was certain, "It would be only a matter of time before the men will ask for it themselves." Harvey Wells concurred in Tuttle's estimate of the situation. Dodwell & Company's K. J. Middleton said he recognized the Tacoma situation was "a very delicate one," but employers must not overlook the fact that the ILA "will undoubtedly concentrate all their efforts on Tacoma."<sup>67</sup>

The year 1921 witnessed a slump in Tacoma's maritime commerce. Tonnage dropped from 2,705,217 to 2,510,118.<sup>68</sup> The United States Shipping Board and private operators cut wages of seamen 15 percent on May 1, precipitating a strike of fifty-two days during the height of the shipping season. When seamen asked longshore unions for aid, ILA District President E. B. O'Grady and Secretary Marshall Wright pointed out that the Sailors had never answered ILA calls for "closer cooperation" in their time of trials.<sup>69</sup> On August 1 employers told Puget Sound longshoremen it was their turn to take a 10 percent pay cut. Members of locals 38-3 and 38-30 told the *Tacoma Labor Advocate* that "nothing has been done to oppose the new scale and that in all probability nothing will be."<sup>70</sup> During the fall, hundreds left the Tacoma waterfront in search of more secure jobs. From a wartime high of 1,100 members, Local 38-3 dropped to 500 in 1921. Local 38-30 fell from over 200 members to 135.<sup>71</sup>

There was one bright day in 1921 for Tacoma longshoremen. On March 25, the Port of Tacoma formally began its career in the commercial shipping business. Pacific Steamship Company's *Edmore* tied up at Pier 1 at 8:00 a.m. to stow aboard 600,000 board feet of lumber. Fifty members of locals 38-3 and 38-30 were there to work the three hatches and the deck load. Hatch tenders Anders Jensen, Axel Johnson, Julius Johnson, and Peter Peterson signalled "Little Ed" Harris to move the lumber from rail cars to the forward, midship, and aft hatches. Sitting in the new locomotive crane, Harris jerked the first load prepared by two dock men. Harris placed the lumber beside the *Edmore's* aft hatch. Winch man Melville Anderson lowered the load into the hold. Eight stevedores in the "basement" placed the forty-foot long 16- and 24-inch squares on a buggy. Two men pushed the cart where the lumber was piled. A siderunner watched carefully to make certain the men built a tight and level load. The longshoremen worked from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. with time off for two meals. Four new gangs appeared at 11:00 p.m. At eight the next morning, the *Edmore* sailed to Yokohama. The longshoremen had set a new loading record.<sup>72</sup>

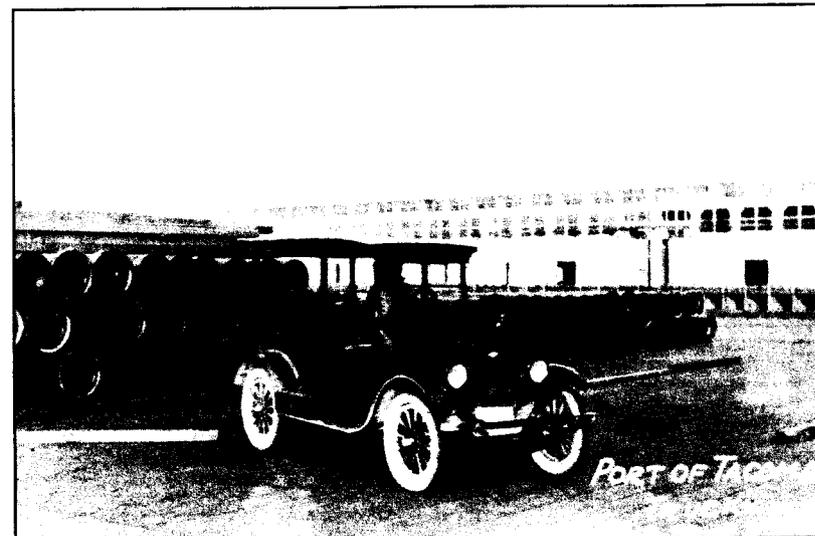


Pacific Coast Steamship Company's Edmore, first vessel to call at the new Port of Tacoma, loading lumber for the Orient at Pier 1, March 25, 1921. (Port of Tacoma archives)

From its inception the Port recognized the closed shop and paid 5 cents an hour above private waterfront employers. The two ILA locals also gained the right to operate Port cranes, which historically had been the jurisdiction of the hoisting engineers.<sup>73</sup> In 1922 the Port purchased a five-ton hammerhead crane with a ninety-foot boom. That same year the Port added two traveling semi-portal cranes and a transit shed for Pier 2.<sup>74</sup>

The slump in the general cargo trade disappeared in 1922. Private docks and the Port of Tacoma demonstrated gradual growth for the next seven years, except in 1927. Outside of 1925, lumber and wheat rose steadily.

<u>Year</u>	<u>General Cargo Tonnage</u>	<u>Board Feet</u>	<u>Wheat Tonnage</u>
1922	3,254,035		
1923	4,111,844	203,759,172	272,825
1924	4,156,590	270,785,400	264,450
1925	4,364,240	224,787,768	167,665
1926	4,918,844	260,760,397	215,326
1927	4,715,162		
1928	5,503,108	274,573,469	232,524
1929	6,405,759	295,957,389	307,055 <sup>75</sup>



Light truck at the Port of Tacoma, 1923, with Pier 2 in the background.

(Port of Tacoma archives)

When Tacoma's maritime business improved during the late fall of 1922, locals 38-3 and 38-30 presented wage demands to the waterfront employers. The men asked for the return of the 1919 pay scale, 90 cents an hour for general cargo and 95 cents for lumber handling. On February 20, 1923, the Tacoma Waterfront Employers' Union met to discuss the ILA's wage scale. The bosses decided to forgo creating a "Joint Committee of Men and Management" to negotiate the matter. "It was considered best," Wells wrote in the minutes, "that there should be no change, and that the present agreement should be maintained for the next year."<sup>76</sup>

By December 1923, there was pressure everywhere on the Pacific Coast for a pay raise. Almost three years had passed since the men had been cut to 80 cents an hour. First San Francisco, and then all other West Coast employers, posted new wage scale notices. Tacoma longshoremen officially learned about the pay raise New Year's Day. WEU had posted on all docks:<sup>77</sup>

**(NOTICE)**  
**Wage Increase on Tacoma Waterfront**  
**Effective January 1, 1924**

The Waterfront Employers of Tacoma find no justification for a wage increase based on the cost of living in Tacoma, which from Government figures, shows no appreciable increase; nor from a comparison of monthly earnings and working conditions of longshoremen in other ports.



Unloading lath from a flat car with a hammerhead crane at Pier 1, 1925.  
(Port of Tacoma archives)

But to keep their pledge that

the men are entitled to the security of knowing that the employers recognize the principle that the Tacoma wages and conditions shall be equal to those of the principal ports of the Pacific Coast,

an increase is awarded from the present wages of:

	Straight Time	Overtime
Longshore	\$ .80	\$1.20
Dock	\$.70	\$1.05
	To:	
Longshore	\$ .90	\$1.35
Dock	.80	\$1.20

However, justice requires that in consideration of this increase of pay the employers are entitled to an assurance from the men of a good day's work for a good day's pay.<sup>(78)</sup>

Wage raises had become a lock-step system. San Francisco set the pattern for the Pacific Northwest. It was a mighty hurdle that Tacoma locals 38-3 and 38-30 would have to climb over as they reorganized the Pacific Coast District I.L.A.



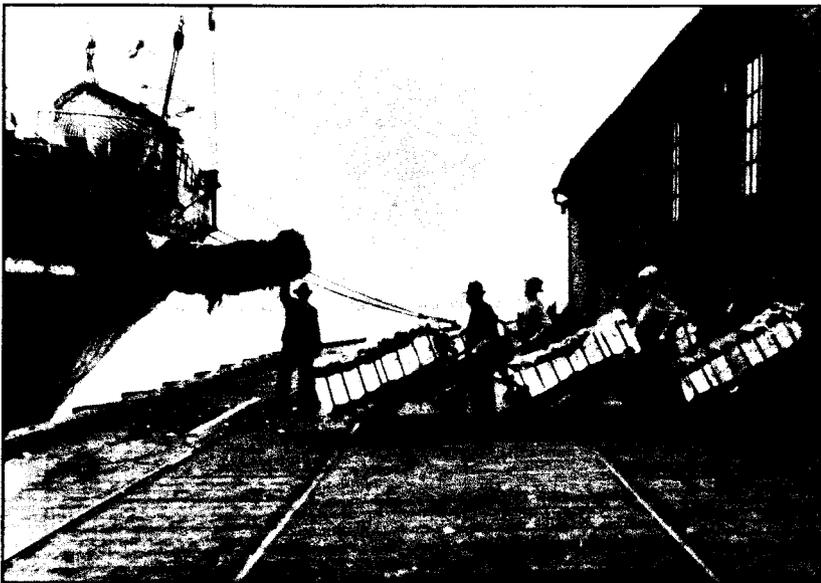
Unloading oyster shell from Japan for poultry farmers from the first ship at the Co-op dock, 1927.  
(Boland photo B17151, Washington State Historical Society)



Loading flour at the Sperry Mill dock, 1927.  
(Boland photo B19519, Washington State Historical Society)



Loading wheat seed at the Port of Tacoma, 1927.  
(Boland photo B19793, Washington State Historical Society)



Loading cotton at the Milwaukee dock No. 2, 1929. The cargo was shipped by rail from the South destined for the Orient.  
(Asahei Curtis photo 56143, Washington State Historical Society)

## CHAPTER VII POSTWAR TURMOIL

1. ST, November 17, 1918. None of the forty members of the ICC were waterfront businessmen or union longshoremen.
2. TDL, November 12 and 13, 1918.
3. *New York Times*, November 14, 1918.
4. TDL, November 17, 1918.
5. ST, November 29, 1918.
6. *Ibid.*, December 7, 1918.
7. Cantelow 1, p. 1.
8. TDL, February 1, 1919.
9. TLA, January 31, 1919.
10. TDL, February 1, 1919.
11. Robert L. Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike*, p. 202.
12. TNT, February 6, 1919. Tacoma, Pierce County Central Labor Archives. Of 4,843 Tacoma unionists voting to strike, 3,180 were members of nine shipyard unions already on strike, and 1,663 were members of unions not on strike. The analysis of the vote is courtesy of Otilie Markholt. On February 6, 1919, the TNT printed a partial count of the vote.
13. TLA, April 18, 1919.
14. *Ibid.*, April 18, 1919.
15. *Seattle Local 38-12 Minute Book I*, January 30, 1919.
16. PI, February 1, 1919.
17. Cantelow 1, p. 1.
18. TNT, February 1, 1919.
19. TLA, February 14, 1919.
20. *Ibid.*, April 18, 1919.
21. TLA, February 14, 1919.
22. *Tacoma Waterfront Employers' Minutes*, March 6, 1919.
23. Letter from Edwin Orrett to Harvey Wells, March 14, 1919.
24. PCDILA 1919, pp. 16-17.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
26. *Mr. Citizen* was printed in TNT, April 14, 1919; TDL on April 15, 1919; TT, April 18, 1919; and TLA, April 18, 1919.
27. TNT, April 18, 1919.
28. Letter from the Board of Business Representatives of the Tacoma Central Labor Council to W. C. Dawson, Secretary, Waterfront Employers' Association, April 16, 1919.
29. TDL, April 18, 1919.
30. TNT, June 6, 1919.
31. *Ibid.*, May 8, 1919.
32. *Ibid.*, May 29, 1919.
33. *Ibid.*, May 30, 1919.

34. Ibid., June 1, 1919.
35. File 10110-362, *Investigation of the MTW Union*, December 23, 1918, p. 48. The section on the Tacoma MTW was written by an anonymous naval intelligence officer. Hereafter cited as File 10110-362.
36. TDL, February 10, 1918. IW, February 16, 1918.
37. File 10110-362, p. 50.
38. Reichl Files. Local 38-30 stayed at 200 members throughout the war years.
39. File 10110-362, p. 48.
40. *Governor Ernest Lister's Papers. Secret Service Reports and Correspondence*, 1917-1919, January 3, 9, 13, and 14, 1918.
41. ST, January 13, 1919. TLA, January 17, 1919.
42. File 10110-362, p. 48.
43. PCDILA 1919, p. 3.
44. Ibid., pp. 28-30.
45. Ibid., p. 30.
46. Ibid., p. 35. ILA members voted 1,806 to 369 in favor of the OBU referendum. Since less than one-third of the total membership cast ballots, the district executive board placed affiliation with the Canadian OBU in abeyance until the next district convention. See PCDILA 1920, p. 18.
47. Ibid., p. 32.
48. TLA, May 16, 1919.
49. Reichl Files. Harry E. Wright should not be confused with Marshall E. Wright, Pacific Coast District ILA Secretary 1918-1921. Marshall Wright was initiated into Local 38-3 on March 17, 1913, and Harry Wright on June 11, 1918. Harry Wright resigned from the union during December 1920 to return to his former job as a railroad switchman.
50. WSFL 1919, p. 131.
51. TNT, July 17, 1919.
52. SUR, July 31, 1919. TLA, August 1, 1919.
53. WSFL 1920, pp. 11-12.
54. TLA, August 22, 1919.
55. SUR, August 20, 1919.
56. SCLC, August 20, 1919.
57. *Tacoma Harbormaster's Reports* for 1919 and 1920.
58. Cantelow 1, p. 3.
59. TLA, May 16, 1919.
60. Cantelow 1, p. 3.
61. William C. Dawson, *Brief History of the Waterfront Employers of Seattle 1908-1936*, p. 3. Hereafter cited as WCD. The origins of NWEU will be found in the April 20, 1921, minutes.
62. Cantelow 1, pp. 2-4. PCDILA 1920, pp. 6, 12, and 13.
63. Frank P. Foisie, *Original Records, March 6, 1920-September 18, 1921*. Hereafter cited as Foisie. The lists of Seattle's deregistered men were compared with the 1921-1925 dues record sheets of Local 38-3 and 38-30. Fourteen Seattle longshoremen had transferred to Tacoma ILA locals.

64. NLB. Testimony of Arthur Whitehead, p. 1574; Thomas Wadum, p. 1596; E. L. Ridley, p. 1602; Veaux, p. 1628; and Samuel McCoy, p. 1679. Whitehead, Ridley and Veaux had previously been blacklisted after the 1916 strike.
65. *Minutes of the Northwest Waterfront Employers' Union*, April 20, 1921. Hereafter cited as NWEU.
66. *Tacoma Waterfront Employers' Union Minutes*, February 20, 1923.
67. Ibid.
68. *Tacoma Harbormaster's Reports* for 1921 and 1922.
69. TLA, June 17, 1921. Letter to Ed Rosenberg, Acting Secretary of SUP, from E. B. O'Grady and M. E. Wright, dated June 4, 1921.
70. TLA, July 29, 1921.
71. Reichl Files.
72. Morris Thorsen Interview. As an extra, Thorsen worked in the hold of the *Edmore* on the "8 to 11 shift." TNT, March 25, 1921.
73. Port, March 21, 1921.
74. *Port of Tacoma Annual Report for the Year 1922*.
75. *Annual Reports of the Harbormaster of Tacoma* for the Years 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1928, and 1929. See TDL, February 9, 1932, for 1927's tonnage.
76. *Tacoma Waterfront Employers' Union Minutes*, February 20, 1923.
77. ST, December 30, 1923.
78. *Wage Scale, Rules and Working Conditions on the Tacoma Waterfront*, 1924, p. 11, in Otilie Markholt's collection of standard practice handbooks.