

PROGRESSIVE LABOR REFORM:
PROGRESSIVISM IN SEATTLE LABOR FROM THE GENERAL STRIKE TO THE CIO

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts

with a

Major in History

in the

College of Graduate Studies

University of Idaho

by

Kristian J. Strub

August 2014

Major Professor: Rebecca Jager, Ph.D.

Authorization to Submit Thesis

This thesis of Kristian Strub, submitted for the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in History and titled "Progressive Labor Reform: Progressivism in Seattle Labor from the General Strike to the CIO," has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and dates below, is now granted to submit final copies to the College of Graduate Studies for approval.

Major Professor: _____ Date: _____
Rebecca Jager, Ph.D.

Committee
Members: _____ Date: _____
Adam Sowards, Ph.D.

Date: _____
Jeff Bailey, Ph.D.

Department
Administrator: _____ Date: _____
Sean Quinlan, Ph.D.

Discipline's
College Dean: _____ Date: _____
Andrew Kersten, Ph.D.

Final Approval and Acceptance

Dean of the College
of Graduate Studies: _____ Date: _____
Jie Chen, Ph.D.

Abstract

This thesis examines progressivism in the Seattle labor movement between 1919 and 1938. Using newspaper records, special collections and archival material, organizational publications, current scholarly texts, and a range of other sources this thesis seeks to understand how progressive labor debate and reform dialog continued between the general strike and the CIO. Analysis is broken up into three phases: the Seattle Central Labor Council under James Duncan, the workers' education movement through the Seattle Labor College, and the cannery workers' and longshoremen's transition to the CIO in 1937. Ultimately this thesis argues that progressivism in Seattle labor was driven outside the labor movement when Seattle labor opponents deemed mainstream progressive leaders radical for their class-oriented views and their strong shift toward politics, but class-conscious progressivism survived through workers' education, providing a clear link between the progressive labor reformers of post-WWI Seattle and the CIO reformers of the 1930s.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is a product of the valuable advice and constructive feedback that I have received since my first semester on assignments both large and small. Though I cannot yet claim to have truly mastered the technique of crafting an expert piece of scholarship, the advice and guidance provided by the faculty with whom I have worked the most have proven to be the greatest tools toward my continual improvement in historical scholarship.

I am particularly grateful to Becky Jager, who since my first semester held my work to a high standard, driving me to exceed my own expectations for what I can accomplish as a developing historian. She has also been very supportive and helpful in my growth as a student, and I cannot thank her enough for trusting me on two occasions to work as her research assistant. Adam Sowards has had a similar effect on my work. He has likewise ignited a personal drive to explore sources critically and develop my writing and argument into areas that I was not always comfortable, but from which I always drew important lessons. His class structure, always relying on discussion and thoughtful debate, has strengthened my critical approach to sources and viewpoints. In his classes, I constantly pondered my conclusions and challenged my own assumptions regarding historical theories and my own arguments.

I would also like to thank Jeff Bailey who joined my committee on relative short notice. His labor relations course provided valuable understanding of the development and strategies of unions from both a historical and contemporary perspective. In addition, being a business course, it also provided an interesting, practical, and helpful understanding of labor relations from the employer's standpoint that is not always—in fact rarely with impartiality—examined in the scholarship of labor history.

Dedication

To Dewey, family, and friends.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Authorization to Submit Thesis | ii |
| Abstract | iii |
| Acknowledgements | iv |
| Dedication | v |
| CHAPTER 1: Introduction | 1 |
| CHAPTER 2: Duncan Progressives and the Seattle Central Labor Council | 16 |
| Progressives and the General Strike | 17 |
| Militancy and Solidarity after the Strike | 24 |
| Americanism versus Duncanism | 29 |
| Duncan Progressives and the Struggle against the AFL | 35 |
| Conclusion | 42 |
| CHAPTER 3: Workers' Education and Progressive Reform in Seattle | 45 |
| Early Labor Education in the Workers' College of Seattle | 47 |
| New Directions and Progressive Changes: The Seattle Labor College | 49 |
| Women, Children, and Family Education at the Labor College | 60 |
| The Unemployed Citizens' League and the New Deal | 66 |
| Conclusion | 72 |
| CHAPTER 4: The CIO and AFL Battle in Seattle | 75 |
| Industrial or Craft Unionism: The AFL and CIO at the National Level | 76 |
| Forging a Tradition among West Coast Longshoremen | 78 |
| The True Leaders of the West Coast | 82 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union | 88 |
| “Unholy Alliance of Finks, Fakers and Phonies” | 91 |
| Conclusion | 96 |
| CHAPTER 5: Conclusion | 98 |
| Bibliography | 104 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

Few periods in American labor history have inspired so much scholarship as the 1920s and 1930s. The 1920s show that labor rode a high wave during the First World War, only to come crashing down forcefully as employers reminded labor that their cooperative efforts to ensure productivity and stability did not mean a permanent position for organized labor in the post-war workplace. Coupled with the nation's first red scare in 1919 and 1920 organized labor became suspect in its loyalty and place in America. Business leaders, anti-labor politicians, and a rising middle-class allegiance to these forces led the greatest effort to frame themselves as American and portray labor as infected by influence which was at best questionable and at worst radical. Thus for the remainder of the 1920s, organized labor remained in flux. It was diminished, beaten back, beset by infighting, and desperately attempting to reassert its conservative business unionism principles in an attempt to market a friendly and more American image of organized labor than that which was imagined by labor's opponents. By the 1930s, the deepening depression eventually led to a democratic landslide in federal government. Franklin D. Roosevelt and other reform-minded leaders used their positions of power from to launch unprecedented federal involvement in the economy. These New Dealers also developed labor friendly laws that placed organized labor at similarly unprecedented positions of power. Together, these two decades represent labor from bust to boom.¹

¹ The most comprehensive study of this period was undertaken by Irving Bernstein in his two volume work, *A History of the American Worker* Vol. 1 *The Lean Years* and Vol. 2 *Turbulent Years* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969; 1970). Also see James O. Morris "The AFL in the 1920's: A Strategy of Defense," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 11, no. 4 (July 1958): 572-590 for how the AFL sought and largely failed to reassert itself as an American enterprise to employers and build alliances through conservative leadership with business; Mark W. Robbins, "Transitioning Labor to the 'Lean Years': the middle class and employer repression of organized labor in post-World War I Chicago," *Labor History* 54, no. 3 (2013): 321-342 for how and why the middle class turned against organized labor in Chicago, for example of a local phenomenon of a national trend in the 1920s.

Between 1920 and 1930, organized labor reduced drastically. It faced many challenges. A burgeoning middle class, which received better wages, a highly coordinated campaign from employer organizations, which pushed for the open shop and company-controlled unions in workplaces, anti-radical fervor, and rapid increases in industrial mechanization, which displaced workers, all contributed to labor declines in the 1920s. Between 1920 and 1923, unionism in the United States dropped from just over five million to a little more than three-and-a-half million members. While blue-collar work stagnated throughout the decade or saw only modest increases in job opportunities and wages, middle-class white-collar work expanded and brought generally higher wages to many Americans.²

Many of the early studies of labor in the 1920s have focused on matters of American Federation of Labor (AFL) policy, the red scare, and employer anti-union tactics, as well as an overall lack of legal protections for labor in the 1920s. In 1969, Irving Bernstein set a different course for a new generation of labor historians in his two volumes comprising *A History of the American Worker*. Moving away from the just the pure and simple economic and administrative policies of business and labor in the era, he sought to create a narrative that placed the everyday worker and their families at the center. These works still rank among the best of the social histories of labor in the 1920s and 1930s. They examine the various movements, ideals, and philosophies from workers, organized under the AFL and outside, that jockeyed for power and influence over politics and the ear of the rank-and-file American worker. But as a national survey, it necessarily misses the detailed and intricate ways in which these trends progressed at local and regional levels. When brought down to a more localized perspective, historians have been able to show how

² Morris, "Strategy of Defense," 572; Bernstein, *Lean Years*, 52-74, 85 (union membership numbers). The numbers used here come from Bernstein, but estimates vary. Morris, "Strategy of Defense," 572, shows a drop from just over four million to around two-and-three-quarter million between 1920 and 1930. Regardless, union membership by each estimate dropped by nearly one-and-a-half million.

various cities and larger localities have followed these national trends in similar and sometimes unique ways, usually able to show how local considerations managed to influence the local response to larger national trends debates.

One of the most important ways labor has been examined is through class-oriented loyalties. In labor, these loyalties had always been present within the more leftist, progressive and radical groups. However, they generally remained a small concern to the wider American population until the onset of American involvement in World War I. Mark Robbins has shown that in Chicago, middle-class workers grew increasingly hostile to organized labor as union wages increased during the war, along with rent and cost of living, while middle-class wages generally remained the same. Threatened by the sudden drop in economic purchasing power over semi-skilled and unskilled union laborers, the middle class became protective. The middle class, which rose to economic strength through skilled trades over decades, often in unions, became more conscious of their own status and became distant and hostile to blue-collar working-class unionists. Not only in Chicago, but in cities like New York and Portland, Oregon, the middle class organized into protective leagues to oppose rising rents, unions, and war profiteers, which they deemed responsible for their diminished economic strength. These concerns among the middle class eventually led to alliances with employers and conservative politicians in anti-union efforts.³

It is the purpose of this thesis then to assess the theories and methods put forth by these previous studies and to track the progressive continuity of labor in Seattle from the general strike to the CIO. Seattle workers maintained a consistent model of class-conscious progressivism throughout the 1920s overlooked by past studies of Seattle labor. One of the key ways this was maintained was through workers' education. Progressivism in Seattle labor was driven outside the

³ Robbins, "Transitioning Labor."

labor movement when Seattle labor opponents deemed mainstream progressive leaders radical for their class-oriented views and their strong shift toward politics, but class-conscious progressivism survived through workers' education, providing a clear link between the progressive labor reformers of post-WWI Seattle and the CIO reformers of the 1930s. This of course is not only true of Seattle. In fact, the workers' education movement nationally deserves more attention when examining the link between progressive labor in the early 1920s and progressive labor in the 1930s.

In Seattle, historians have seen similar trends to those observed by historians of other regions. In the immediate pre-war years, Seattle unionists, largely with the influence of strong socialist sympathies, likewise became more conscious of their own working-class position in society. This consciousness was further aided by a large influx of more radical labor unionists, such as the IWW, who flooded into the city by the thousands with the Seattle industrial boom brought by the war. The war aided similarly in the increase of the middle-class population, and as the "old wealth" moved to suburban estates, the middle class and working class occupied their own city neighborhoods and quickly became conscious of their own class differences. As Seattle labor became more left-leaning and class conscious, the middle class likewise became protective of their economic position and were hesitant to understand the class-conscious militancy of Seattle labor. Particularly with the entrance of the United States into the war, the middle class grew weary of the often anti-war and class-struggle rhetoric that emanated from the leaders of labor.⁴

Jonathan Putman manages to trace this break more clearly in terms of class and gender politics. Working to trace the progressive spirit of Seattle in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, he shows how middle-class female progressive reformers built a sometimes tenuous but nonetheless effective alliance with labor in progressive politics in Seattle. This alliance aided not

⁴ Roger Sale, "Seattle's Crisis 1914-1919," *American Studies* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1973): 29-48.

only the passage of state suffrage, but also morality laws associated with liquor, prostitution, and child labor. The middle-class reformers were initially sympathetic to labor's association with socialist ideologies, but they became increasingly cautious as labor became more militant in its espousal of class-conscious and socialist goals. Thus the "feminist-labor" alliance, as Putman called it, broke apart when middle-class political goals became less aligned with progressive versus corporate interests and became more about "good citizens" versus "reds."⁵

Labor in the Pacific Northwest evolved on a different path from the eastern United States in the 1870s through 1900. Not until 1902 did Seattle and western Washington labor fall relatively in-line with and pledge its loyalty to the AFL. Even when it did, it remained a strong proponent of industrial unionism and maintained much influence from socialist and class-conscious philosophies. Industrial unionism had been long rejected by the AFL for various reasons, but it also competed with its craft union model by organizing workers by the industry in which they worked rather than by their trade within different industries. Seattle labor maintained these differences from the AFL because many of the early labor leaders who aligned with the AFL cut their teeth in the labor movement in the Pacific Northwest, which developed under the Knights of Labor. In the 1890s, the AFL remained weak and occupied with keeping the movement together in the East, and it neither had the funds nor strength to assert itself in the Pacific Northwest. Because of this, unionism was maintained locally after the demise of the KoL by socialist leaders and labor presses which brought a mix foreign labor philosophies to workers and union leaders. Even when the AFL asserted its "hegemony," in Carlos Schwantes' words, over Seattle and western Washington labor, the

⁵ John C. Putman, *Class and Gender Politics in Progressive-Era Seattle* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2008). See page 196 for quotes, and Chapter 5, pages 145-196, for details specific to the "feminist-labor" split.

remnants of this local labor movement persevered within the AFL in subtle ways for much of the next couple of decades.⁶

By 1919 and 1920, Seattle was “unique,” according to Robert Friedheim, in its class-consciousness, particularly as it related to matters of local union solidarity. Seattle labor imagined itself as the natural evolutionary direction of labor and felt itself superior to unions in the East, which they believed generally lacked class consciousness.⁷ While class consciousness, particularly as it meant alliances between conservatives, progressives, socialists, and radicals, may have been unique in some form, it certainly was not limited to Seattle labor or even the West.

Troubles that beset Seattle labor in the 1920s therefore were both the products of unique or rare circumstance and of national trends. Somewhat different, Seattle developed strategies of unionism locally after the Knights and in the absence of the AFL. Seattle unionists viewed themselves as more militant. Where labor in the East was staunchly “wet” in the prohibition debates, Seattle was solidly “dry.” In the Puget Sound, and many parts of the Pacific Northwest, labor engaged itself in politics to a greater degree and even favored more strongly the nationalization of important industries.⁸ However Seattle, like around the nation, faced the same declines in labor strength. Seattle labor has maintained a particular interest to labor historians of the 1920s because it maintained a particular scent of class-oriented progressivism and radicalism

⁶ Carlos Schwantes, “Leftward Tilt on the Pacific Slope: Indigenous Unionism and the Struggle against AFL Hegemony in the State of Washington,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 70, no. 1 (January 1979): 24-34. This article is most relevant to Washington, but for greater regional treatment of early unionism in the Pacific Northwest, see Carlos Schwantes, *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism, and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1917* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979). For expanded discussion on the article in particular, see Chapter 6, pages 80-102.

⁷ Robert L. and Robin Friedheim, “The Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-20,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (October 1964): 147.

⁸ Ibid.

that protruded all the way until the late part of 1923, when the AFL threatened revocation of its charter if it did not renounce entirely all procedures, goals, and ideals counter to the AFL.

While this period has drawn particular attention, few venture much past 1920 when giving dedicated emphasis on Seattle labor. The years 1919 and 1920 have been the focus of quite a few studies on their own. They are deeply important years to the history of Seattle labor. In 1919, Seattle undertook the nation's first general strike, and according to most accounts, by the end of 1920 Seattle labor was significantly weakened by open shop drives, the reduction of wartime industry, and the onset of a national recession. Many studies either breeze through the 1920s or only focus on the first year or two of Seattle labor in detail before reminding readers that when the AFL intervened in 1923, Seattle labor became more conservative, while the progressive and certainly the radical spirit of the movement subsided.⁹ These years generally have served as a source of sole study or as an ending point for the early periods of study of Pacific Northwest, Washington, and Seattle labor.¹⁰

⁹ To give a few examples, Robert Friedheim, *Seattle General Strike* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964) and his already mentioned article "The Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-20." David Jay Bercuson, "The One Big Union in Washington," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (July 1978): 127-134, and Hamilton Cravens, "The Emergence of the Farmer-Labor Party in Washington Politics, 1919-20," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (October 1966): 148-157 are examples that heavily relate to Seattle labor in 1919-20, but also to larger state and regional issues. Even Dana Frank's book *Purchasing Power* follows 1919-20 for nearly half of the narrative, a fact she even notes herself (see Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 11).

¹⁰ Of Studies that do surpass these years and give some attention to Seattle labor in the 1920s, few have been scholarly. Of those that do, Murray Morgan, *Skid Road* (Binghamton, NY: The Vail-Ballou Press, Inc., 1951) and Richard Berner, *Seattle in the 20th Century*, vol. 2, *Seattle 1921-1940: From Boom to Bust* (Seattle: Charles Press, 1992) treat the 1920s very quickly in terms of labor, and largely with relation to the rising dominance of conservative Teamsters' leader Dave Beck. Jonathan Dembo, *Unions and Politics in Washington State 1885-1935* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1983), spends a substantial portion of his 700-page book on the 1920s, but traces labor through the same path as other studies. He shows the creeping conservative influence in the Seattle CLC, providing only more detail, but not a new narrative. More can be gleaned from those who were active in Seattle labor and left their own accounts, such as Harvey O'Connor, *Revolution in Seattle, A Memoir* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964) and Hulet M. Wells, *I Wanted to Work*. Unpublished autobiography. Hulet M. Wells papers, University of Washington Library, Seattle, WA. (Hereafter referred as Wells, *I Wanted to Work*).

Eager to challenge this trend, in 1994 Dana Frank produced one of the best works on Seattle labor of the 1920s. Focusing on the Seattle labor movement through the consumer organizing trends of the early 1920s, Frank's *Purchasing Power* examined Seattle labor through another paradigm. Staying fixed to the progressive class-conscious tendencies of labor, she also expanded our understanding of labor to reach beyond wage-earners. Housewives, too, played in an important role in the consumer organizing movement of the early 1920s, but their place was not always understood by their husbands or other male unionists. In her examination of Seattle labor in the 1920s, she brings to the forefront the worker cooperative movement, union label campaigns, boycotts, and more, which all hoped to move workers to greater economic influence through their purchasing habits. Of course, as Frank demonstrates, non-union, non-wage earning housewives were highly important but not always willing to change their shopping habits or make a diligent study of where they could and could not shop at various times in order to make such a movement successful in Seattle. In addition, she manages to incorporate some the complex alliances between the Japanese and AFL unions seeking to eliminate economic competition between the two.¹¹ However, like studies before her, she too does not significantly explore labor outside of the AFL, and instead, she is forced to track the defeat of progressive labor in the 1920s, rather than its continuity.

Frank weaves an important story in Seattle through her examination of the AFL. The 1920s were much more integral to the foundations of the CIO in the 1930s than historians have generally given credit. What she showed is that the decline of militant, class-conscious progressivism gave way to a highly protectionist AFL that had much more to lose in the 1930s than the industrial unionists who formed the CIO, which ultimately allowed the split between the two to form. From

¹¹ Frank, *Purchasing Power*.

this, she concluded that that without understanding labor in the 1920s, which had often been seen as a “blank space to skip over while waiting for the industrial unionists of the WWI era to turn into CIO organizers,” our understanding of labor the 1930s remains incomplete.¹²

From the studies referenced here, common themes can be observed. Progressive, or any left-to-radical leaning, labor in 1920s and 1930s emphasized and built off of a strong working-class consciousness. While the Seattle labor movement was unique in some features, it did not differ in outcome to any other major labor centers in the United States. Despite efforts from historians to find evidence to the contrary, all examinations of the Seattle labor movement in the 1920s have been forced to realize that conservative leadership eventually suppressed progressive, and certainly radical, tendencies of the Seattle labor movement. Organized labor shrunk in Seattle as the rest of the nation. Yet in understanding labor in the 1930s, as more recent scholarship is keen to point out, our history remains incomplete without full attention to labor in the 1920s. But one of the ways in which previous studies of Seattle labor have fallen short is in its continual focus only on the path of the AFL in the 1920s. When observing class-conscious, progressive labor, like that which reemerges in the 1930s under the CIO, historians have failed to find a firm link between the 1920s and the 1930s because they have overlooked important movements outside of the labor movement—that is to say the AFL and other smaller groups of organized trade union labor.

Thus one of the more interesting ways in which the perseverance of class-conscious labor progressivism is shown is through the workers’ education movement. The workers’ education movement flourished in the 1920s, led most popularly by the Brookwood Labor College founded in 1921 in Katonah, New York. The workers’ education movement had strong roots in socialist and

¹² Ibid., 250.

class-conscious ideology, but remained mostly progressive.¹³ Starting with the assumption that traditional education did not reinforce—and in fact was anathema to—working-class and union issues, workers’ education developed at a grassroots level outside of the AFL, due mostly to the AFL’s insistence in alternative methods to independent labor-run schools to achieve union-oriented goals in education. When the AFL finally came around to alternative education for adult workers in 1921, they made significant attempts to ensure the movement had proper AFL oversight. However, many labor colleges remained outside of total AFL oversight and largely became the breeding ground for progressive labor debate and labor academics. Labor colleges like Brookwood maintained an uneasy relationship with the AFL until 1928, when the AFL condemned Brookwood outright for differing too much with AFL philosophies.¹⁴

Seattle was also an early center of the workers’ education movement in the Pacific Northwest, yet there is no substantive body of research relating to the workers’ education movement in Seattle in the 1920s.¹⁵ Therefore, in attempting to trace a progressive, class-conscious spirit in Seattle labor, workers’ education in Seattle has been overlooked. Providing a progressive class-conscious labor link between the 1920s and 1930s therefore rests largely on the environment that the labor colleges in Seattle and around the nation provided. At a time when AFL conservatives dominated procedures and suppressed debate, the workers’ education movement

¹³ While a case can be made that some turned radical, particularly with Brookwood, this label seemed mostly to be applied by the AFL conservatives, who overtime felt threatened by the variety of topics and debate that took place within Brookwood as well as its autonomy from AFL oversight.

¹⁴ See Richard J. Attenbaugh, “The Children and the Instruments of a Militant Labor Progressivism:” Brookwood Labor College and the American Labor College Movement of the 1920s and 1930s,” *History of Education Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (Winter, 1983): 395-411; Clyde W. Borrow, “Counter-Movement within the Labor Movement: Workers’ Education and the American Federation of Labor, 1900-1937,” *Social Science Journal* 27, no. 4 (1990): 395-417; and Bernstein, *Lean Years*, 105-06.

¹⁵ Several studies have noted in passing that the Seattle Labor College was an “offshoot” of Brookwood, but no study has examined the Seattle Labor College. Those who note that the Seattle Labor College followed a general pattern after Brookwood seem to be citing Bernstein, *Lean Years*, 416, who himself gives no analysis or explanation of the Seattle Labor College or how it was an offshoot of Brookwood.

provided in Seattle and around the nation an opportunity for open discussion of ideas ranging from conservative to radical, but most always promoting progress and innovation for labor within the AFL. Seattle makes a particularly interesting case because it had a vibrant class-conscious movement that incorporated whole families, from children to housewives. Finally, it played a critical role nationally when it helped found and give support to the Unemployed Citizens' League of Seattle. Founded in 1931, the Unemployed Citizens' League organized the jobless, demanded public works funding for worker relief, were politically active in placing democratic, reform-minded politicians in state and local office in 1932, among other activities both successful and not.¹⁶ Thus, though their influence should not be overstated, they did seem to support various progressive economic programs that eventually became cornerstones of the New Deal.

The progressive labor reform movement in Seattle, moreover, existed in three important phases. First it existed within the Seattle Central Labor Council (CLC), but it continued through one of the progressive CLC's own creations—the labor college. By 1935, the progressive reform movement increasingly became an AFL separatist movement which grew closer to the newly formed Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Therefore, each of these three sections will be examined separately, and with slightly different purposes, but each will maintain the same theme of class-conscious progressivism in Seattle labor.

The second chapter studies Seattle organized labor through the leadership of Seattle CLC secretary James Duncan, and his Duncan progressives. Roger Sale reminds Seattle historians that while they sympathize with the leftist wing of labor between 1914 and 1919, they must not forget that “they too were caught up in something quite unreal, in that people were becoming less able

¹⁶ Bernstein, *Lean Years*, 416-17 and Arthur Hillman, *The Unemployed Citizens' League of Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1935): 188-89; 207-215.

genuinely to comprehend the world around them.”¹⁷ Unlike the number of other studies of Seattle labor during this phase, this argument intends to give greater agency to Seattle progressives, making them complicit in their own demise within the CLC. Thus, the first section examines how the militancy of the progressives either failed to fully comprehend this changing social and political environment, or cared too little to sacrifice the solidarity of their movement on their own. Thus the progressive labor wing suffered most intensely because they became less equipped to prove that they were not dangerous radicals as they promoted class-conscious progressive programs.

The third chapter examines workers’ education in Seattle. In doing so, it provides a critical link between the early 1920s and the 1930s in terms of class-conscious progressivism in Seattle. Workers’ education was more than a fringe movement in Seattle. Though it may not have attracted as much influence on labor as the CLC, particularly under its conservative AFL leadership, it did remain an important continuity for the same type of class-conscious progressive debate that existed under the Duncan progressives. The Seattle Labor College became a place outside of the total control of the AFL and the CLC, where ideas, no matter how conservative or radical, could be discussed, examined, and debated. Particularly because it was outside of the influence of the local AFL, it was mostly spared the public persecution and radical labels that plagued the earlier Duncan progressives. However, despite its desire for reform, as true progressives of the 1920s, they remained loyal to the AFL, only advocating reform and debate rather than secession from and destruction of the AFL.

The fourth chapter examines how responses to local and regional situations allowed for the progressive labor movement in Seattle, like around the nation, to become a separatist movement. This chapter examines two important groups: the longshoremen and the cannery workers. At the

¹⁷ Sale, “Seattle’s Crisis,” 40.

center of the debate was not as much the long-time progressive goal of industrial unionism, but rather an apathetic local AFL leadership that blocked these unions own ambitions in building stronger unions. This can be understood by the split of the West Coast longshoremen from the AFL, which left intact an AFL longshoremen's union in Tacoma, Washington, that seemed more concerned over the perceived communist element in the CIO than in the goals of militant, progressive, and industrial unionism. Further, for the cannery workers, continual efforts to cooperate with the AFL were thwarted, leaving them not so much concerned over an industrial model of unionism as finding a more progressive and militant ally to secure their own union's rights over negotiating contracts in the Alaskan canneries.

The disputes between the AFL and CIO around the nation have been well covered by volumes of work across a variety of disciplines. Many of these works discussed the break in terms of the fundamental disputes between the AFL and CIO at a national level or within industries unorganized before the CIO.¹⁸ Scholars who have spent time examining the split in Seattle have attempted to expand beyond the basic root of the dispute. Bruce Nelson has shown that beyond the ideological difference in organizing unions, power struggles and jurisdictional disputes were a prime concern among union leaders seeking to maintain or expand their position within the labor movement. Chris Friday, in examining the cannery unions, has placed the cannery workers' switch to the CIO as driven primarily by unifying Asian ethnic groups and was therefore reactionary to

¹⁸ Robert Ziegler provides one of the most comprehensive study of the CIO in *The CIO: 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). Irving Bernstein, though older, provides one of the most durable works of the labor movement in the 1930s, covering the Wagner Act, 1933-34 strikes waves, and the CIO in *Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker, 1933-1941* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970). Other studies have presented the CIO and their record on racial inclusion. Sociologist Victoria Johnson has written on West Coast longshoremen and waterfront unions, though not restricted to the CIO era, in "The status of Identities: Racial Inclusion and Exclusion at West Coast Ports," *Social Movement Studies* 8, No. 2 (April 2009): 167-183. Similarly, labor historian Bruce Nelson has written on the subject in "The 'Lords of the Docks' Reconsidered: Race Relations Among West Coast Longshoremen, 1933-1961," a chapter in *Waterfront Workers: New Perspectives on Race and Class*, ed. Calvin Winslow (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998): 155-192.

racist AFL policies that allowed for divided ethnic cannery unions. Richard Berner, in his multi-volume work on Seattle, presents how Teamster's leader Dave Beck built a strong AFL alliance with local politicians and maintained a great deal of control on the labor movement, setting the stage for the AFL and CIO dispute to become a major aspect of the 1938 Seattle mayoral race.¹⁹ Dave Beck and the Teamsters reinforced their power and position within the AFL by making every attempt to keep all unionists loyal to the AFL. However, although virtually every study of the CIO and AFL dispute makes some reference directly or indirectly to the AFL and public fear of a communist element in the CIO, few if any have looked at the dispute in terms of the full rhetorical battle that encompassed CIO and AFL organizing drives.

Over the course of the 1920s and into the early 1930s, progressive labor in Seattle, at times exhibiting flashes of militancy, remained loyal to the AFL when crafting its vision for labor's future, but was still the active voice of reform. Thus it is important to point out that the key difference between the radicals and the progressives was the route through which labor would progress, more so than the end goal. Progressives, particularly due to their strong class-consciousness, may have been sympathetic to radical ideologies, but they inherently sought only to reform the system enough to at least make room for their ideas rather than overthrow it entirely. In particular, it is useful to note Friedheim's description of the Duncan progressive's versus the radicals. Friedheim separates the progressives in Seattle from the radicals by noting that the progressives, though left leaning, were the most cohesive group and blended radical and conservative traits. Progressives showed the militancy associated with radicals through their promotion of class consciousness while also subscribing to AFL market unionism (commonly, business unionism), where negotiating

¹⁹ Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988): 223-249; Chris Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry, 1870-1942* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994): 125-148; Richard Berner, *Seattle in the 20th Century*, vol. 2., *Seattle 1921-1940: From Boom to Bust* (Seattle: Charles Press, 1992): 378-404.

mutually acceptable terms with employers, particularly to maintain a closed shop, were vital to their platform.²⁰ Importantly, while the Duncan progressives believed the working class should “operate as a class,” they sought to work within the prevailing American political and economic system as well as within the AFL. As a class the progressives sought to leverage their power of numbers to gain more equitable results against employers and wealthier classes. The radicals more generally opposed the capitalist system outright, but were divided on the issue of how such a result should have been pursued. While some sought to work within the AFL, all were generally against the prevailing political and economic system.²¹ Though these descriptions were particular to the Duncan progressives, they hold true for proceeding progressive labor groups as well. This is an important distinction, because it can be easy to lose track of the progressives as they blurred lines and occasionally seemed to advocate more radical ideals than they actually did. By the time of the CIO in the mid-1930s, many progressives became separatists, but in Seattle, the decision seemed to be a mix of viability under the protections of the New Deal labor laws and the CIO and frustration over the continued suppression of their own individual goals by the AFL—thus they became reluctant separatists.

²⁰ See Friedheim, “The Seattle Labor Movement,” 146-156 for a description of the three factions: conservative, radical, and progressive.

²¹ Cravens, “Farmer-Labor Party,” 151.

Chapter 2: Duncan Progressives and the Seattle Central Labor Council

On July 18, 1934, James A. Duncan took the floor of the Seattle CLC to issue a warning. A minority in the CLC asked for a strategic committee to investigate how unions in Seattle could assist in the then months' long waterfront strike that enveloped the West Coast. In San Francisco, city unions were on general strike, and some in Seattle wondered if it were time for them to join as well. Duncan condemned the idea of a general strike, calling it a "blind alley" that would lead the workers nowhere. He explained, "These men working for a general strike don't say where it will end. They have no program." The next morning, San Francisco unions called off their general strike, and in Seattle, unionists soundly defeated the measure.¹ Though the measure had no chance to begin with, Duncan was a veteran of the Seattle labor movement and knew from experience how a general strike action could poison the aims of labor.

From the late 1910s through 1923, Duncan was the face of the Seattle labor movement. As secretary of the CLC, Duncan saw Seattle labor promote some of the most progressive labor actions in the nation. This, however, was far from the perspective of local politicians, business leaders, and even the state and national AFL leadership. The Seattle general strike in February 1919 instead created an image in the minds of those outside as a Seattle labor movement overtaken by radical doctrine and leadership. In truth, Duncan and his followers were militant progressives. True radicals wishing, waiting, and hoping for a fundamental change in government and class order certainly existed in the Seattle labor movement, but most of the influence fell to the Duncan camp.² It was under the influence of the Duncan progressives that Seattle labor initiated progressive programs and remained a place where workers discussed and debated ideas, no matter how controversial.

¹ "Duncan, Secretary During 1919 Walkout, Says Communists Would Lead Laborers Up Blind Alley"; "Union Committee Votes 191 to 174 to Cancel Tie-Up," *Seattle Times*, July 19, 1934, 1.

² Friedheim, "The Seattle Labor Movement," 146-156.

This chapter examines several key events and progressive programs that characterized the Seattle labor movement between the late 1910s through the mid-1920s. By doing so, it covers one of the most researched periods of Seattle labor. The early 1920s are deeply important to Seattle labor history. However, while others have traced some of the general events considered here for different purposes, this chapter argues that the members of the Seattle labor movement were not just helpless victims of a national red scare, a fierce open shop drive, or of a haphazardly applied radical label that combined to bring a once vibrant and militant labor movement to its knees. Rather, the Duncan progressives were also responsible for their own decline both by their actions and inactions. They loathed to appear weak, and they hardly tolerated anything seeming like a command from an outside group. It was this attitude that in part assisted in the demise of progressive influence of the Seattle CLC by start of 1924. Such a narrative has mostly been unobserved in prior studies, in part because the decline of Seattle labor seemed likely regardless of how events transpired. Indeed, it would be difficult to say that in the absence of real radicalism or a general strike, Seattle labor would have been spared. To make that assertion would mean asserting that Seattle would have remained the exception in an otherwise national decline in labor unionism brought about by various forces. Still agency must be observed at the local level. The Duncan progressives were critical in shaping how Seattle labor opponents designed their campaign.

Progressives and the General Strike

The Seattle general strike was the main driver that set a course for the demise of Seattle labor. Carried out over the course of five days in February 1919, it quickly became the argument around the nation for radical labor run amok. Leading members of Seattle labor insisted, on occasion, that the strike was not intended as a radical action. Seattle mayor Ole Hanson and local and national press mostly ignored such assertions and more effectively voiced their perspective locally and nationally. It was at this same time that Duncan came to the public's attention as both

an advocate and leader of the radical labor element on the Seattle labor council. None of this was entirely accurate, but it nonetheless gave Seattle labor's political opponents a target at which to aim during the general strike and for over a year afterward.

In terms of a direct catalyst for the Seattle general strike, the shipyard strike organized by the Metal Trades Council was the instigator of the general strike. Considerable tension had developed between shipyard workers and the government adjustment board when workers discovered that Charles Piez, head of the wartime Emergency Fleet Corporation (EFC), wired employers to say that any wage increases to employees would result in a loss of ship building contracts and materials. The telegram was mistakenly delivered to the workers' Metal Trades Council rather than the employers' Metal Trades Association.³ Harvey O'Connor, who worked for the Seattle CLC labor paper *Union Record*, believed that most of the workers supported the general strike as a way to give sympathetic support to the shipyard workers, and few thought it would help them achieve their demands.⁴ Hulet Wells, a socialist Seattle labor leader who had a role on the General Strike Committee, observed that many of the workers voted for a general strike because they had worked hard and long hours during the war, leaving them exhausted and with savings. According to Wells, many workers welcomed the strike as a much needed vacation.⁵ Therefore, from the beginning, the strike seemed to be a mix of sympathy and carelessness on part of workers who failed to recognize the importance of how a general strike action, inspired by a dispute between shipyard workers and the government, would play out in the press, particularly in view of

³ See Robert Friedheim, "Prologue to a General Strike: The Seattle Shipyard Strike of 1919," *Labor History* 65, no. 2 (1965): 121-142 for how shipyard strike developed and his other article "The Seattle General Strike of 1919" *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (July 1961): 81-98 for a concise account of how the strike spread into a general strike.

⁴ Harvey O'Connor, *Revolution in Seattle, A Memoir* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964), 131.

⁵ Hulet M. Wells, *I Wanted to Work*, 215. Unpublished autobiography. Hulet M. Wells papers, University of Washington Library, Seattle, WA. (Hereafter referred as, Well, *I Wanted to Work*).

the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the corresponding red scare in the United States.

Another important factor in early 1919 that contributed to the general strike tenor was the case of Tom Mooney. In 1918 Mooney, a labor leader in San Francisco, was in prison, serving a life sentence for a crime that he did not commit. He was convicted of throwing a bomb into the San Francisco Preparedness Day Parade in 1916, and despite photographic evidence showing him standing a mile away from the explosion, a clock visible in the background showing the time, he had been unable to secure a retrial for his case.⁶

Agitation was strong in Seattle for a general strike for Mooney. Mooney supporters called a convention for January 14 through 17, 1919, in Chicago to discuss an option for a nationwide general strike for Mooney. Though a national, or indeed any, general strike never took place over the Mooney issue, the strike fervor was fierce in Seattle. In all, the Seattle CLC elected a large contingent of forty representatives to go to the convention to lobby for a general strike. According to O'Connor, most were socialist leaning and a mix of progressives and radicals headed by Duncan.⁷ Harry Ault, editor of the *Union Record*, claimed that the agitation for a general strike was popular not just with radical leaders in the CLC, but support was strong across the board for a nationwide general strike for Mooney. Ault, perhaps to impress the seriousness of his claim, asserted that if Mooney were not granted a retrial, it would no longer be a matter of if, but when a general strike would occur in Seattle.⁸ President William Short of the Washington State Federation of Labor wrote AFL president Samuel Gompers in late November 1918 to express similar concerns. He explained that the Seattle CLC had gone "Bolsheviki mad" since the end of the war, and if they could not have

⁶ Jeremy Brecher, *Strike! Revised and Updated Version* (Boston: South End Press, 1997), 121. Mooney remained in prison until 1939, when he was finally pardoned by California Governor Culbert Olson.

⁷ O'Connor, *Revolution*, 121.

⁸ Harry Ault, "Letter to Unknown Recipient Regarding Impending General Strike and Tom Mooney, December 1, 1918," Harry E.B. Ault Papers, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

a general strike for Mooney, they would “attempt [a general strike] over something else.”⁹ It was while these forty delegates were in Chicago for the Mooney convention that the Metal Trades Council appealed for and won a vote of general strike from the Seattle CLC. According to Anna Louise Strong, another active *Union Record* voice, the general strike vote would not have passed had most of the labor leaders not been in Chicago for the Mooney convention. By the time Duncan and other delegates returned to Seattle, support for the general strike was so great that they could only hope to make it through the strike “without a crash.”¹⁰

Progressive strike leadership mostly prevailed in the decision making after the general strike began. On February 5, the General Strike Committee met to make preparations. Radical members, led by Frank Turco, put forth a motion to establish the official strike slogan as “We have nothing to lose but our chains and a whole world to gain.” Such a slogan mirrored that of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and it clearly aimed to establish the general strike as a symbol of class struggle. The overall spirit of the committee however was not in favor of such a radical tone. Instead the slogan which passed was “Together We Win.” The slogan more matched traditional AFL sentiment regarding organized labor. The slogan was even borrowed from the EFC, who commissioned posters during the war to emphasize the equal importance of sailors, soldiers, and shipyard workers in the war effort.¹¹ The slogan may have also meant to provide a reminder to Piez and the EFC that Seattle labor played a critical part in the war effort. One thing was clear, if there was going to be a general strike, progressives did not want it to be an endorsement of radical

⁹ Letter from William Short to Samuel Gompers, November 29, 1918, in *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, Vol. 11, *The Postwar Years, 1918-21*, ed. Peter J. Albert and Grace Palladino (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 6.

¹⁰ Anna Louise Strong, *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1935), 72-74.

¹¹ Minutes of the General Strike Committee, February 5, 1919, King County Labor Council of Washington Records, University of Washington Library, Seattle, WA (Hereafter KCCLC records); O’Connor, *Revolution*, 130; The “Together We Win” poster commissioned by the Emergency Fleet Corporation can be seen online at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/90712758>.

philosophies.

Despite efforts by the majority of workers to market the strike as an expression of unity in the demands of the shipyard workers, opponents of Seattle labor easily managed to create a negative backlash. Leading up the general strike vote, a *Seattle Times* editorial, which otherwise expressed sympathy toward their opposition to anti-union interests in Seattle, asked, “A ‘general strike’ directed at WHAT? The government of the United States?”¹² The dispute for which the CLC was voting a general strike in sympathy was in fact a dispute between shipyard workers and the government’s EFC. Despite the *Seattle Times* editorial, the *Union Record* released its own statement exclaiming, “LABOR WILL FEED THE PEOPLE,” “LABOR WILL PRESERVE ORDER,” and “Labor will not only SHUT DOWN the industries, but Labor will REOPEN, under the management of the appropriate trades.” The message also called EFC director Piez the instigator of labor unrest, and the article ended the same as it began, by explaining the strike would lead “NO ONE KNOWS WHERE!”¹³ The *Union Record* article, written by Anna Louise Strong, gained considerable attention and seemed to provide a clear answer to the *Seattle Times* editorial. In reality, Strong counted herself as one of the reluctant and hesitant strike participants, and the message was designed to reassure the citizens that labor did not intend to make enemies of the people. In fact, she was quite certain that she did not know where the strike would take labor—though she certainly did not expect revolution.¹⁴ Regardless of the intent, the damage was done, and the article marked the first major misstep by Seattle labor in carrying out their general strike. Opponents of labor’s action interpreted the Strong article to be a clear example of radical class ideology and role reversal, with labor running government, and business leaders and democratically elected officials helpless to do anything

¹² “Editorial,” *Seattle Times*, January 28, 1919, 1.

¹³ “On Thursday at 10 A.M.” *Union Record*, February 4, 1919, 1.

¹⁴ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 72-4.

about it.

As the strike went into effect on Thursday, February 6, Duncan and many of his progressive supporters worked to end the strike as quickly as possible. In an expression of solidarity, the Tacoma CLC endorsed their own general strike action, but by February 9, Tacoma ended their strike. The Tacoma CLC explained to the Seattle strikers that they had accomplished their purpose in declaring solidarity with the shipyard workers and were returning to work.¹⁵ In the General Strike Committee, a similar debate had been ongoing. Duncan and several of the progressives voted to end the strike on Saturday, February 8, and at first the measure passed 13 to 1, with one vote abstaining in the Executive Committee of the General Strike Committee.

The Executive Committee explained in clear terms the purpose of the resolution. The resolution cited the “ill-advised, hysterical and inexcusable proclamation” by Mayor Hanson suggesting martial law, which “tremendously embarrassed the committee,” as reason enough to call off the strike before violence broke out. The resolution also pointed out that significant deliberation to call off the strike on February 7 had given way to majority support in the Executive Committee on February 8, stating similarly to Tacoma that the action of “solidarity and encouragement” had been successfully demonstrated toward the shipyard workers.¹⁶

When the resolution was brought before the rank-and-file of the General Strike Committee, the measure failed after debate which went from Saturday afternoon into early Sunday morning. In a plea for approval, Ault declared the motion best for labor, and encouraged endorsement of the resolution. Hulet Wells even suggested strikers return to work while the strike committee

¹⁵ Minutes of Tacoma Central Labor Council February 9, 1919, Pierce County Central Labor Council Records, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

¹⁶ Minutes of General Strike Committee, February 8, 1919; Central Labor Council of Seattle, *The Seattle General Strike* (Seattle: Seattle Union Record Publishing Co., 1919), 35-7, KCCLC records.

appointed five members to travel to Washington, D.C., to personally petition President Woodrow Wilson for removal of Piez and consideration of shipyard wage demands. But those in favor of the strike grew by an even greater majority. Even the generally conservative Teamsters delegate took the floor to press for a continuation of the strike.¹⁷

Before the strike began, a narrow minority of the General Strike Committee was against the strike action, including progressives like Duncan, Ben Nauman, Ault, and others that Hanson and the press declared radical leaders. Nauman later explained “Ole [Mayor Hanson] attempted to call the strike off at noon on Friday, and said if we didn’t do it, he’d declare martial law. Finally, he made many of the committee so mad we couldn’t declare it off ourselves.” Hulet Wells, himself a member of the General Strike Committee, recalled that many unions were eager to end the strike, but that Mayor Hanson’s martial law threat “angered some of the shaky unions and caused them to stiffen.”¹⁸ Many progressives, themselves in favor of ending the general strike, reversed course in a militant way for no more of a purpose than to avoid appearing as if Mayor Hanson dictated the strike’s end. By this point, the strike hardly maintained purpose. It changed from a definite strike in sympathy with the shipyard workers, to a strike vaguely against Hanson’s vitriolic attacks on labor.

The strike ended on February 10 with labor believing it made it through somewhat unscathed. In their own history of the general strike published the same year, the CLC account relayed a message to those who questioned labor’s intent: “We are growing tired of explaining that we DIDN’T mean this and that; we are weary of seeming to take the negative, explanatory attitude in connection with a faith of which we are proud.” Going on, the CLC credited the general strike with demonstrating to the workers their ability to manage capital, which had since inspired worker-

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 31; Wells, *I Wanted to Work*, 219.

led non-profit groceries and cooperative barber shops.¹⁹ But Seattle labor was not going to be the same. After the strike ended, Mayor Hanson toured the nation and declared that he had put down a communist-inspired plot. In the national publication *The Public*, his words were relayed to the nation: “The calling off of the general strike will not replace union labor in the high position it held in Seattle. Without reason, without cause, our city lay prostrate. Union labor must clean house.”²⁰

Militancy and Solidarity after the Strike

In the aftermath of the general strike, the Duncan progressives remained solidly in control of the Seattle CLC. In fact, labor hardly seemed phased by the attacks of business, the calls to “clean house” of their alleged radical leaders, or the perceived failure of the general strike—at least not in public. For the remainder of 1919 and into 1920, the progressive-led CLC took a militant approach toward its opponents, providing an indignant response to claims that the CLC was directed by radicals, while attempting damage control inside. The result was that the progressives, due in part to their own response to political and employer directives, became the target of red-baiting opponents, which only further damaged their agenda.

The key feature of Seattle labor, which aided in the type of local loyalties that enabled a general strike, was an informal system of unionism called Duncanism. What set Seattle apart from most other AFL-sponsored central labor councils was its sense of belonging first and foremost to organized labor in Seattle. This gave most unions in Seattle a greater sense of loyalty to the personal goals of Seattle labor over that of even their own national and international unions. According to Seattle labor historian Robert Friedheim, “If enthusiasm had been the only

¹⁹ Seattle CLC, *General Strike*, 6-7.

²⁰ “General Strike,” *The Public: A Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 1089 (February 15, 1919): 166; See Friedheim, *General Strike*, 173-74 for Hanson’s resignation from office to engage in popularizing his version of the general strike nationally.

requirement, Seattle labor would have organized industrially in 1919.”²¹ Despite this, even progressive Seattle unions recognized that they could not abandon the protection of the AFL. Therefore, they attempted to design a system in which a model similar to industrial unionism could exist. Under Duncanism, unions worked in close cooperation with the CLC and trades councils which represented similar industries in order to develop and enact agendas that would be beneficial for all Seattle labor unions’ goals. Part of this plan called for unions to coordinate contracts to expire at the same time as other critical craft union locals in the same industry, thus requiring employers to negotiate with each union simultaneously.²² This strategy, like industrial unionism, operated on the idea of strong, class-conscious solidarity of labor, with workers more attuned to the best result for workers, and not only their own trade. The model made perfect sense to many within the Seattle CLC.

In March 1919, following the general strike, the Seattle CLC formalized the idea of Duncanism into the Duncan Plan, which called for a dismantling of independent craft unions in favor of twelve industrial unions representing basic labor industries. The Duncan Plan was similar to the One Big Union model gaining momentum in Canada, but importantly did not advocate for secession from the AFL. Rather, unlike both the IWW and Canadian versions, the Duncan Plan sought reform of the AFL from within.²³ Thus, Duncanism and the Duncan Plan sought to work within the AFL to accomplish progressive goals, and it did not divert into radical philosophies advocating a complete overthrow of the existing AFL governance. To reinforce their commitment to the AFL, the CLC voted to censure any group or individual advocating secession from the AFL. The CLC

²¹ Friedheim, “Seattle Labor Movement,” 147-49.

²² *Ibid.*, 154-55.

²³ Minutes of the Seattle Central Labor Council, March 5, 1919, KCCLC records; “Would Reorganize Labor Federation,” *Seattle Times*, April 10, 1919, 1; See Bercuson, “One Big Union,” for the similarities and differences of the various industrial union plans supported by the IWW, Canadian unions, and Seattle, as well as how each faction contested the industrial plans of the other.

immediately passed this censure after rejecting a proposal from the Seattle longshoremen urging affiliation with the Canadian One Big Union.²⁴ When progressives wanted to take charge and direct discussion on the council, they had the power.

In 1920, the Seattle CLC attempted to enforce this system locally by requiring unions to submit their contracts to the CLC for review and approval. The purpose was to ensure that wage structures and agreements matched the interests of unions in similar industries, but organized by different trades. The CLC never enacted this policy because AFL president Samuel Gompers personally intervened to declare the action against the AFL constitution. In response, the CLC passed another resolution calling for an investigation committee to see how the spirit of the measure could be carried out within the guidelines of the AFL constitution.²⁵ To the progressive-led CLC, the spirit of the debate remained solidly on the side of loyalty to the AFL. The CLC recognized any reforms to the organizational structure of trade unionism required AFL approval.

Internally, the Seattle CLC remained conscious and considerate of the participation of true radicals whose AFL loyalties were at best questionable within the council. While business and political leaders called for conservative leaders to push out radical influences in the CLC, council debates reflected serious concern as to the credibility of problem. In February 1919, just a few weeks following the general strike, a delegate of the Produce Workers Union introduced a resolution calling for all CLC delegates holding dual union cards with the IWW to be removed from the CLC. The purpose was to ensure that all remaining delegates held “undivided loyalty” to the AFL. Though the resolution sparked some debate, it ultimately gained enough votes to be sent to the Resolutions Committee for consideration.²⁶ Despite the merits of the proposal, the Resolutions

²⁴ Minutes Seattle CLC, May 28, 1919, KCCLC records.

²⁵ Minutes of the Seattle CLC, March 17, 1920, KCCLC records.

²⁶ Minutes of the Seattle CLC, February 26, 1919, KCCLC records.

Committee recommended against its adoption after an hour-and-a-half long debate, partially on the grounds of its “vagueness” but also because its adoption would “appear that [the CLC] were following the instructions of the Chamber of Commerce and Ole Hanson to ‘Clean House.’”²⁷ Just as in the general strike, leaders within the Seattle CLC refused to treat questions on their own merits. Rather, the barometer for decision making seemed more tuned to how weak or strong and militant Seattle labor would appear.

To throw fuel on the fire stoked by their opponents, the Seattle CLC instead responded to their opponents with a highly charged message:

We hasten to assure the draft-slacking publisher of the *Star*, all the employers who hate labor, and all those who love to lick their boots, that we know exactly what they mean by “reds,” we know exactly what they mean by “bolsheviki,” exactly what they mean by “cleaning house”; that organized labor in Seattle was never so proud of itself, that it has no intention of cleaning house to please its opponents, and that the general strike is permanently in the arsenal of labor’s peaceful weapons.²⁸

With such an attitude on behalf of labor, it is clear how labor opponents could easily manipulate every action as a CLC leadership promoting militant class-oriented, soviet-inspired struggle against democracy and the capitalist system. It was not until November 1919 that the Seattle CLC, by their own initiative, finally started to purge IWW dual-card members from the CLC.²⁹ By then, just as with their hesitance during the general strike, it was much too late for appeasement.

The IWW maintained a strong position in the Pacific Northwest in particular. From the early 1900s to the early 1920s, they gained several strongholds in labor towns in British Columbia and particularly around Spokane, Washington. While they did not establish firmly in the Puget Sound and around Tacoma, Everett, and Seattle until closer to WWI, they nonetheless prominently made

²⁷ Minutes of the Seattle CLC, March 5, 1919, KCCLC records.

²⁸ Minutes of Seattle CLC, March 6, 1919; Also quoted in O’Connor, *Revolution in Seattle*, 157.

²⁹ Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 105.

gains in the area. It was not an unlikely scenario, nor was it an unlikely fear among citizens, law enforcement, politicians, and AFL leadership that Seattle could come under significant IWW influence. The IWW gained a considerable reputation as instigators of public disturbance, and throughout the years held many free speech demonstrations, congregating on public street corners and in front of public buildings protesting employer lockouts, IWW arrests, police beatings, and protecting their rights to assemble and establish pickets during strikes. These tactics riled opponents and in Everett, Washington, and in 1916 resulted in the deaths several IWW members and armed, deputized citizens, with injuries to dozens more, when IWW members descended on Everett to join in protesting the lumberman lockout of shingle weavers.³⁰ Given the public opinion surrounding the IWW as instigators, rather than victims, in these labor struggles, any sympathy or cooperation on behalf of the Seattle CLC toward the IWW was disastrous to their own public image.

Within Seattle, employers had consolidated their forces into the Associated Industries, which maintained the primary propaganda arm of the open shop movement, like others around the nation, promoting it under the name "American Plan."³¹ Broussais Beck, owner of the Bon Marché, employed labor spies which infiltrated the CLC and reported back on the feelings, discussions, and plans of Seattle labor unionists. One of these spies even boasted in his final report that he had been "well acquainted with nearly every delegate of the Central Labor Council," and that the business agent of the CLC, Charles Doyle, "consider[ed him] one of his best friends." Though Duncan would be branded as a radical by business, politicians, and the press, the labor spy's own report marked Duncan as a progressive who expressed past sympathies toward the IWW and had the most

³⁰ A good summary of the free speech fights of the IWW, including the Everett Massacre, can be found in O'Connor, *Revolution in Seattle*, Chapter 2 (pp. 29-57). Also see Schwantes, *Radical Heritage*, 201-02.

³¹ Francis R. Singleton, "Seattle and the American Plan," 1920, E.B. Harry Ault papers. The American Plan was nationally promoted by the National Association of Manufacturers, becoming an arm of the open shop movement nationwide, and was also given to the formation of company unions. See Irving Bernstein, *Lean Years*, 155-157.

influence in the labor movement. Further, his report confirmed to Beck that the true radicals had mostly left the city in search of work after the war industries shut down. He added that union leader Frank Rust was a conservative at heart but only pretended to be a radical in order to appear resolute and gain support from the rank-and-file members of the CLC.³² When even a conservative leader could pretend to be radical, the CLCs biggest problem was too much militancy. Labor leaders lacked understanding for exactly how their political and social environment changed around them in these critical months following the strike to truly evaluate the outcomes of their decisions.

Internally, Seattle labor was in flux, with conservatives in open opposition to radicals, and the progressives attempting to hold the movement together for the sake of strength and solidarity.³³ Had the progressives sided fully with the conservatives, there certainly would have been enough votes to completely and publically eject radical delegates from the CLC. However, the progressives, with the most influence on the council, failed to intermedicate and fix what some in the CLC already realized was a problem—their public image. In 1920, the main issue placed before Seattle voters was Americanism or Duncanism.

Americanism versus Duncanism

In January 1920, Duncan announced his candidacy for the Seattle mayoral race. Organized labor in Seattle was concerned over setbacks in union efforts over the prior year. They refused to believe that their troubles were the result of strategy or weak labor unions. Rather, they felt that business had the ears of the city politicians and they needed better political representation. Duncan entered the race claiming no candidate had sufficiently represented the concerns of labor. His

³² Labor spy report by Agent #106 to Broussais Beck, April 30, 1920, Broussais C. Beck papers, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

³³ See Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 93-107 and Dembo, *Unions and Politics*, 195-200 for how rivalries and open disputes between conservatives and radicals began to form cracks in the solidarity of Seattle labor.

candidacy ended weeks of speculation on behalf of the *Seattle Times* as to how the recently established political action committee, the Triple Alliance, would figure in the city elections.³⁴ The Triple Alliance itself already attempted to influence city school board elections the previous December, but they were thwarted in their efforts, failing to get a single candidate elected.³⁵ Comprising groups from organized labor, the Railwaymen's Welfare League, and members of the state Grange, its goal was to promote political candidates across the state sympathetic to the goals of farmers and laborers. The organization caught the attention of Gompers, but Triple Alliance president D.C. Coates reassured him that the organization was neither a political party, nor did it infringe on the non-partisan policy of the AFL. Rather the organization was formed with the support of the Washington State Federation of Labor during its convention on June 18, 1919.³⁶ Regardless, in the political race, politicians, and the even *Seattle Times*, opposed the group and its endorsed candidates as radicals and fundamentally un-American.

When the primaries race officially began, the field of mayoral candidates narrowed to three. The incumbent was C.B. Fitzgerald, who had been acting mayor since Ole Hanson resigned to tour the nation boasting about his suppression of the general strike. His opponents in the primaries were Duncan and Hugh Caldwell. At the outset, the *Seattle Times* set the tone of the race. Before Duncan declared for the race, the *Times* ran an editorial calling on the Triple Alliance to "fight in the open." Certain that the Triple Alliance had a secret candidate in the race already, the *Times* declared that Seattle voters ought to know which of their candidates was for Americanism and which was a representative of "anti-Americanism." When Duncan declared for the race, the *Times*

³⁴ "General Strike Leader Enters City Campaign," *Seattle Times*, January 13, 1920, 1; Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 111.

³⁵ "Santmyer and Walker Win 3 to 2," *Seattle Times*, December 3, 1919, 1.

³⁶ D.C. Coates of the Triple Alliance of Washington State letter to Samuel Gompers, March 10, 1920, KCCLC records. Though the Triple Alliance would play a role in forming the Farmer-Labor Party later that year and remain a supporter of the party through 1924, see Cravens, "Emergence of Farmer-Labor Party."

took credit for rooting out the Alliance's candidate and called on Seattle citizens to elect a mayor of "unquestioned Americanism."³⁷ Of course, being a political action group and not a political party, the Triple Alliance only endorsed candidates for office and did not field its own candidates under a political party.³⁸ Regardless, being endorsed by the Triple Alliance was reason enough for concern.

One candidate for office in the city elections was Robert Hesketh, running for reelection to city council.³⁹ A long-time member of organized labor, he received official endorsement of the Triple Alliance, but he quickly repudiated the endorsement, claiming that he did not affiliate with political parties or interest groups. He further called the endorsement an attempt by labor radicals to damage his reelection campaign, asserting that he sided solidly with the conservative labor camp and opposed both Duncan and radicals in the Seattle CLC. The maneuver by Hesketh proved valuable to his campaign. The *Times* immediately endorsed his candidacy while simultaneously asserting Hesketh's unquestioned Americanism and announcing their support for conservative-minded labor.⁴⁰ Hesketh received further support and endorsement from the Bolo Club, a veterans' organization formed after the Spanish-American War. The Bolo Club remained divided on Fitzgerald and Caldwell for mayor, unable to secure enough votes for endorsement, but they overwhelmingly rejected Duncan. Needing three-quarters vote to endorse a candidate, few received endorsement from the Bolo Club in the election, but Hesketh claimed his endorsement handily based on his repudiation of Duncan and the Triple Alliance.⁴¹

³⁷ "Force Ring's Candidates to Fight Openly," January 11, 1920, 1; "General Strike Leader Enters City Campaign," January 13, 1920, *Seattle Times*, 1.

³⁸ The way in which the *Times* discussed the Triple Alliance may have contributed to Samuel Gompers' initial confusion as to the purpose of the group.

³⁹ Hesketh was one political voice of labor on the city council, having been voted to the city council in 1911 in part by the cooperative efforts of the "feminist-labor" alliance described by John Putman. See Putman, *Class and Gender Politics*, 148.

⁴⁰ "Mr. Hesketh's Candidacy," "Hesketh Stands as Independent," January 23, 1920, *Seattle Times*, 6-7.

⁴¹ "Veterans' Club Opposes Duncan," January 24, 1920, *Seattle Times*, 4.

In the first mayoral debate, Fitzgerald laid out his campaign to the voters. With a tone of civility, Fitzgerald first declared that he had no personal feelings toward Duncan, but that he “differed with” Duncan about the war, “he opposed” him during the general strike, and he “refused him” a parade for Tom Mooney. He proposed “fully believing that the majority of voters of Seattle agree with me and do not agree with him, I am going into this campaign on that platform.”⁴² By early February, Fitzgerald started using the term Duncanism to sum up the diametrically opposed position of Duncan to that of Americanism. While Caldwell kept mostly to the fiscal and administrative issues facing the city, attempting to pull Fitzgerald into meaningful debate, Fitzgerald reaffirmed that the only important issue facing the city was the threat of Duncanism infecting city governance. Fitzgerald in turn questioned Caldwell’s Americanism, wondering aloud to voters if Caldwell hoped to pick up Duncan supporters if Duncan failed to get past the primaries.⁴³

For all that Duncanism represented in Seattle labor circles, the *Times* and Fitzgerald were able to repurpose the term for the general public. They had plenty of reason to support their use of Duncanism given the militant voices of Seattle labor in 1919 alone which easily gave themselves to misinterpretation. Duncan himself did not help his case when the *Times* reported on a Triple Alliance forum for its candidates held at the Labor Temple. During the meeting, Duncan re-endorsed the general strike action and, as if to give away his priorities as mayor, told the audience that he would resign as mayor if his capacities to strengthen labor were less than he held as secretary of the CLC.⁴⁴ Duncan must have been playing politics with his own supporters. During another mayoral debate he expressed a more accurate account. Answering criticisms about his role

⁴² “Mayor Opposed to Duncan and All His Works,” January 25, 1920, *Seattle Times*, 7.

⁴³ “Caldwell Assails Fitzgerald Issue,” “Fitzgerald in Open, say Friends,” *Seattle Times*, February 6, 1920, 9.

⁴⁴ “Candidates for Mayor to Speak,” *Seattle Times*, January 23, 1920, 5.

in the strike, he explained how he was gone during the strike vote, was against it from the beginning, and worked to shorten it in his capacity on the General Strike Committee. He further elaborated that any candidate against his position during the strike was “on the wrong side.” He then pointed blame to Ole Hanson as having done more damage to the image of Seattle than did labor.⁴⁵ His mixed message did nothing to clarify his position or ease voter concerns.

Further hurting Duncan’s already damaged reputation in the public was his personal endorsement of a resolution urging the formation a labor jury to pass independent judgment for a pending trial of IWW members. They were on trial for the Armistice Day violence that resulted in the deaths of several American Legion men in Centralia, Washington, the prior November. In the middle of the campaign, the *Olympia Daily Record* reported that Duncan personally endorsed the jury, calling him a “radical agitator” and calling the labor jury a “soviet jury” approved by “Seattle reds.”⁴⁶ Of course the action was typical of Seattle labor, exhibiting class-conscious sympathy that the IWW members would not get a fair trial given the nature of public opinion. Certainly Duncan’s endorsement of such a measure was hardly a surprise and a noble gesture given Seattle’s class-conscious labor movement, but it only added more alleged evidence to claims that Duncan himself led radicals on a radical labor council.

The most tempered assessment of Duncan’s candidacy came from the Voters’ League of Seattle. After determining candidates Fitzgerald and Caldwell exhibited “unquestioned

⁴⁵ “Candidates for Mayor Speak at Immanuel Church,” *Seattle Times*, February 7, 1920, 3. Though Duncan’s held genuine disapproval of the general strike in February, he did support general strike actions as an option, and very vocally opposed a modification to the AFL constitution in 1919, which added that central labor councils could not force local unions to “take a strike vote.” Duncan challenged this as direct opposition to the local jurisdiction of unions and CLCs who better knew what was best for their local situation than did their national or international union bodies. See American Federation of Labor, *Report of Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor* (Washington, D.C.: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1919): 438.

⁴⁶ “Seattle Reds Threaten to Send a Soviet Jury,” *Olympia Daily Record*, January 24, 1920, 1.

Americanism,” they assessed Duncan as “a man of good moral character” and “sincere” but gave concern that he was “misguided in his efforts to bring about advantage to labor.” Ultimately, the Voters’ League expressed that Duncan’s election would “tend to accentuate class consciousness.”⁴⁷

Despite the nature in which the campaign painted Duncan a radical, he managed to beat out Fitzgerald in the primary, and the real election came down to Caldwell and Duncan. Duncan came just 2,500 votes short of Caldwell for most primary votes.⁴⁸ Though this was more a testament to how divided the city was between Fitzgerald, who ran entirely on defeating Duncanism, and Caldwell, who attempted to address more important issues. In the final election, Caldwell picked up most of the Fitzgerald votes, and won overwhelmingly by nearly 25,000 votes. The election drew the highest voter turnout in city history, at 88 percent of registered voters. They massively rejected Duncanism—as defined by Fitzgerald—in favor of the candidate of unquestioned Americanism. The *Times* rejoiced that Seattle did not fall prey to a “Radical assault upon our liberties,” and “Never again [would] Seattle have to prove her Americanism.”⁴⁹ *The Outlook*, a national magazine, published a special report calling the election a triple defeat for radicalism and a victory for Americanism, first with the defeat of the general strike, then with the defeat of the Triple Alliance in the school board elections, and again in the city elections.⁵⁰

The election solidified the mood of Seattle citizens. It became difficult to impossible for Seattle labor to gain a political ally in local or state politics so long as their public response to their enemies could be easily equated to bolshevism, classism, or radicalism. Later in 1920, Duncan would help form the state Farmer-Labor party. In 1922, he would run as the party’s candidate for

⁴⁷ “Views of Seattle Candidates Given by Voters’ League,” *Bellingham Herald*, February 11, 1920, 7.

⁴⁸ “Caldwell is First Choice of Electors,” *Seattle Times*, February 18, 1920, 1.

⁴⁹ “Very Good Job and Well Done,”; “Caldwell Given Largest Majority Ever Returned on Mayoralty Candidate,” *Seattle Times*, March 3, 1920, 1.

⁵⁰ E. H.C. Thomas, “Seattle’s Political House-Cleaning,” *The Outlook* (April 21, 1920): 698-99.

Senate of the United States. The Farmer-Labor party in Washington vaguely operated on a platform of advancing the economic and social interests of the working class, seeking to protect the working class against a rising cost of living, reduction of crop prices for farmers, and the open shop strategies of business. Particularly in the political environment of the post-WWI red scare, the Farmer-Labor party hoped to continue the progressive reform interests of the prewar era. However, Seattle labor had so sufficiently suffered from a backlash against its alleged radical tendencies that the movement itself began to fracture. Though Duncan would gain substantial support from his supporters in the Seattle CLC, the Farmer-Labor party in Washington suffered from a lack of support from those outside of labor, and a significant withdrawal of support from labor outside of Seattle. On the other side of the party, the state Grange remained divided on its support. Both the state and national AFL and the state and national Grange condemned the party for what it was, partisanship on part of farmers and laborers.⁵¹ The 1922 election once more brought the false notion of Duncanism to task, with Senator Miles Poindexter equating it to Leninism and Trotskyism.⁵² Samuel Gompers publically criticized Duncan for remaining in the Senate race for the Farmer-Labor Party, which split labor's vote and nearly kept anti-labor incumbent Poindexter in office over C.C. Dill, the official AFL-endorsed candidate.⁵³ For Duncan and the Seattle CLC, this was hardly the first or last time the AFL took effort to condemn their actions.

Duncan Progressives and the Struggle against the AFL

By 1923 the Seattle CLC faced an ultimatum from the Executive Council of the AFL. After

⁵¹ For an account of these failures of the Farmer-Labor party in the 1920s, see Carlos Schwantes, "Farmer-Labor Insurgency in Washington State: William Bouck, the Grange, and the Western Progressive Farmers," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (January 1985): 2-11; Hamilton Cravens, "A History of the Washington State Farmer-Labor Party, 1918-24" (master's thesis, University of Washington, 1962); and Dembo, *Unions and Politics*, 311-333.

⁵² "Duncanism Is Scored," *Bellingham Herald*, August 10, 1922, 3.

⁵³ Samuel Gompers, "What Became of a Prophecy," *American Federationist* Vol. 29, pt. 1, December, 1922, 897-900.

years of following their own path, the AFL commanded that they fall in line or have their charter revoked. Among AFL leaders' concerns was the Seattle CLC observed class-conscious sympathies with soviet Russia and the IWW, moved politically toward partisanship, and even promoted local loyalties over national and international union directives. The progressives on the CLC did not give in to the AFL so easily. Though they long advocated continued affiliation with the AFL, the CLC tended to see their rights divided into matters of local importance, for which the CLC had final say, and matters of trade union importance, with authority surrendered to the national body. Such was not the understanding of AFL leadership regarding its power over city labor councils. As tensions increased, the AFL was, like the CLCs opponents in Seattle, able to use their actions to paint an otherwise progressive labor council as radical.

To open the 1923 AFL Convention, Gompers addressed the direction and goals of labor, and how unified action was necessary to properly meet labor's challenges. He spoke of radicals and leftists in the labor movement who refused to fully march under the banner of the AFL. Gompers then went on to provide an allegory relating to the orchestra that played the opening of the convention:

Suppose they had, by a majority of ninety-eight to two, decided they would . . . render their pieces of music in harmony with each other to attain one common purpose; and suppose for instance, the piccolo player and the drummer, being the two in the minority, would say, "no, we will not be bound by you ninety-eight, you reactionaries."

One of them will say, "I am going to blow my piccolo just when I feel like it," and the other will say, "I'll beat my drum to beat the band."⁵⁴

To Gompers, Seattle clearly represented that piccolo player or that drummer.

The AFL had deep-rooted concerns regarding the Seattle CLC. Seattle had long been a

⁵⁴ American Federation of Labor, *Report of the Proceedings of the Forty-Third Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1923* (Washington D.C.: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1923): 5.

source from which debate regarding traditional AFL directives emanated. Duncan proposed resolutions providing for the recognition of the communist government of Russia and support for federal prohibition at the AFL national conventions in 1919 and 1920. Further he cast the sole vote in opposition to the reelection of Samuel Gompers in the same years. On November 26, 1919, the CLC officially endorsed an action refusing to revoke the charter of the Lady Barbers, who had been working under union contracts with the Seattle barbers, although the national officers of the Journeymen International Barbers' Union (JIBU) demanded the CLC disaffiliate with the women barbers.⁵⁵ Even Gompers took to leveling charges at Seattle in order to support his stance on repealing prohibition measures. Gompers spoke, "I am not prepared to say that prohibition of alcohol and Bolshevism are cause and effect. But you will find when later resolutions are introduced that the proposition that comes [from] Seattle is the one that favors Bolshevism for the United States."⁵⁶ Each of these issues and more would guide the same concerns of the AFL in 1923.

In April 1923, the Executive Council of the AFL presented to the Seattle CLC a list of charges that, when corroborated by AFL organizer C.O. Young, raised serious questions regarding the CLC's loyalty to the AFL. Among the charges, the letter stated that the CLC continued to pass resolutions favoring the system of government in the Soviet Union, they had ignored state and national AFL directions, promoted partisan politics, and continued to admit non-AFL unions into the affiliation with the CLC. The key concern among all of this was "that the policy pursued by the Seattle Central Labor Union [sic] has greatly impeded the progressive development of the labor movement of Seattle by needlessly arousing and antagonizing groups of citizens who would otherwise be

⁵⁵ American Federation of Labor, *Report of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1919* (Washington D.C.: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1919): 87, 248; American Federation of Labor, *Report of the Proceedings of the Fortieth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1920* (Washington D.C.: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1920): 443; "Wartime Prohibition is Opposed by Labor," *Oregonian*, June 12, 1919, 3; Minutes Seattle Central Labor Council, November 26, 1919, KCCLC records; Friedheim, "Seattle Labor Movement," 146.

⁵⁶ "Red Fire Burns in Dry Talk," *Twin Falls News*, June 12, 1919, 1.

favorably disposed toward the labor movement.”⁵⁷ Thus the real problem, according to the AFL, was that their actions had only increased hostility toward the labor movement in Seattle, which in turn was a problem for the labor movement in general.

Duncan and others responded through a CLC letter to these charges with both shock and admission, while attempting to clarify the inaccuracies they saw in the Executive Council’s letter. First and foremost, Duncan asserted unquestionable loyalty of the CLC to the AFL. He asserted that their attempts and successes to stave off secessionists in the One Big Union and the IWW should have provided evidence enough of their loyalty to the AFL. Further, he clarified that their position regarding the Soviet Union, as it had always been, was not approval for the form of government either in the United States or in Russia, but that recognition of the government and establishment of trade relations would be beneficial to workers in both nations. He further claimed a hypocrisy of non-recognition, stating, “a government which recognized and had no compunctions about doing business with the governments of the Czars need have no scruples about recognizing the present government of Russia.”⁵⁸

Further Duncan claimed that the non-partisan policy of the AFL had not fit for Seattle, because politics in the state of Washington had become such that only the Farmer-Labor Party

⁵⁷ Executive Council of AFL letter to Seattle Central Labor Council, April 10, 1923, in *Gompers Papers*, Vol. 2, 223-225. See *Ibid.*, 224 for quote. C.O. Young successfully developed as a hardline AFL loyalist and organizer in Eastern, then Western Washington, at the direction of the AFL in the early 1900s to help combat the growing power of the IWW. See Schwantes, *Radical Heritage*, 139-39;186.

⁵⁸ Seattle Central Labor Council letter to Executive Council of the AFL, April 21, 1923, in *Gompers Papers*, Vol. 2, 233-41. See *Ibid.*, 235 for quote. It is also worth noting that Harry Ault echoed similar sentiment in 1920, when asked by the House Committee on Immigration about his feelings toward the soviet-style of government. He said that it was too early to make any “intelligent” assessment about its superiority to the American-style of government. He further explained how he would not support any radical change in government, but that discussion of such a system of should be accepted as free speech, saying “Personally, I can listen to a man express that philosophy without feeling that the foundations of the government we have are shaken, and that it is going to fall the next minute.” See US Congress, House, *Japanese Immigration: Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization*, 66th Cong., 2nd sess., July 12-14, 1920: 1431-1432.

properly represented the goals of labor and the platform of the AFL. Regarding allowing three non-AFL unions to affiliate with the CLC, he spoke that it was not their character or lack of loyalty to the AFL that kept them outside, rather their inability to attain proper representation through established national and international AFL unions. Further, with even more militancy, the CLC asserted that, though they differed in minor policy with the AFL and even the state leadership, they have never recognized the AFL to have complete authority over matters of local concerns.⁵⁹ Though they presented a reasonable case for their position and attempted to explain their complete loyalty to the overall direction of the AFL, the AFL was not interested in individual opinions, and they sought full capitulation from the Seattle CLC.

The Executive Committee took the CLC's response as nothing less than full admission of guilt. They expressed that they were both surprised and pleased that the CLC openly admitted to the reports accuracy. The AFL instructed the CLC to provide assurances that they would no longer ignore resolutions passed by the AFL and that they would repudiate non-AFL labor movements, remove non-AFL unionists from the council, and repudiate the Soviet Union.⁶⁰ However, Duncan and his supporters in turn expressed shock that their letter was taken as an admission of any wrongdoing. Their letter was intended to clarify their positions, which they felt fully able to endorse as matter of local differences that had no bearing on trade unionism nationally. In response, the CLC claimed that it never endorsed the Soviet Union, and therefore could not repudiate their stance. Likewise, they expressed dismay that they should repudiate the IWW or any other anti-AFL movement, because they had never supported such secessionist movements or allowed them as

⁵⁹ Seattle Central Labor Council letter to Executive Council of the AFL, April 21, 1923, in *Gompers Papers*, Vol. 2, 233-41.

⁶⁰ Executive Committee of AFL letter to Seattle Central Labor Council, May 14, 1923, in *Gompers Papers*, Vol. 2, 252-55.

members of the council.⁶¹

They voiced some conciliatory tone in agreeing to unseat the three non-AFL unions on the council. However, they put forth a personal plea for the Lady Barbers, who had since 1919 been organized by the Seattle CLC, and due only to their gender, were forbidden from joining the JIBU. On other matters, they asserted that they would continue to urge the recognition of the Soviet Union and endorse the Farmer-Labor party as a matter of local disagreement. They challenged that when the CLC was loyal in virtually every matter regarding the direction of the AFL, it was irresponsible of the AFL to insist on following every minor position not related to trade unionism.⁶²

For the CLC though, they had failed to see that they could not win the battle. By sticking to recognition of the Soviet Union alone, they could easily be labeled radicals. Their past positions and actions could support such a label as well. The dispute, however, may have had very little to do with the rights of local councils, and more to do with the enemies Seattle labor had made since 1919 and their entrance into third-party politics. According to historian Jonathan Dembo, the AFL never intended to negotiate with the CLC on any issue. Rather, the whole exercise of establishing and inflating the charges had mainly to do with the CLC's partisan support of the Farmer-Labor party. The entire campaign against the Seattle CLC came at the same time that the state federation of labor had aligned all power behind the conservative bloc and sought fully to oust all third-party loyalists from the labor movement. In this issue, the matter entirely related to politics more so than subtle differences in ideology.⁶³ Such a claim can be easily supported with other evidence. In June, state federation of labor president William Short wrote Samuel Gompers to personally express his hope that the Seattle CLC would continue to rebel so that their charter could be revoked and

⁶¹ Seattle Central Labor Council to Executive Committee of AFL, June 6, 1923, in *Gompers Papers*, Vol. 2, 266-71.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Dembo, *Unions and Politics*, 340-41.

reorganized under conservative leaders loyal to himself. Further, Short's interpretation of Seattle's position on the Soviet Union showed that real misunderstanding did exist. Short scoffed at the idea that recognizing the Soviet Union did not entirely equate to supporting such a form of governance.⁶⁴ Just as they had in 1919 and 1920 in their interactions with business, politicians, and the community of Seattle, they had failed to fully realize the way in which the political and social environment was changing around them.

In July, Duncan resigned his position as Secretary of the CLC. He seemed to recognize that his leadership only continued to draw controversy. Though, his stepping down was not a surrender on part of the CLC. Charles Doyle, who had been a long-time supporter of every position Duncan stood for, absorbed his position in the CLC elections.⁶⁵ The final stage of the battle did not conclude with his resignation.

Into September 1923, Seattle had still largely been defiant in its position to the ultimatum given by the AFL. But a private meeting between the Seattle delegation of Duncan, Doyle, and Pearl, and Gompers largely settled the issue. In an October 1, 1923 meeting at the Portland convention, Gompers used a parable that mirrored that of his opening statements at the convention, stating that, like a military unit, labor could only move at the same pace. Gompers claimed that he did not want to revoke the CLC's charter, but he demanded full compliance. He asserted that differences and debate could exist, but not in terms of lasting noncompliance with decisions established by the AFL. At the end of the private meeting, Duncan told Gompers, "I think we are nearer than we thought," and in a final, if weak, show of militancy, Doyle said, "I intend to

⁶⁴ William Short letter to Samuel Gompers, June 7, 1923, in *Gompers Papers*, Vol. 2, 272-74.

⁶⁵ "Final Action in Labor Council Fight," *Seattle Times*, July 27, 1923, 14; Dembo, *Unions and Politics*, 342; see C.O. Young letter to Samuel Gompers, June 10, 1923, in *Samuel Gompers*, Vol. 2, 274-75, for reference to Doyle's loyalty to Duncan.

do what I can to bring about harmony, but I won't be dominated."⁶⁶

Seattle was ultimately dominated. At the convention, Duncan, finishing out his duties as secretary, offered one last kick of the militant progressive spirit. He fought strongly for recognition of the Lady Barbers, but the AFL refused to direct the affairs of the JIBU or grant an independent charter that would create a rival union.⁶⁷ Further, Duncan cast a vote against the removal of open communist William Dunne from the AFL. Though Duncan refused to vote on the issue twice, Teamster President Daniel Tobin three times demanded to hear where Duncan stood. On the third request, Duncan sided with eight other delegates—Tobin refusing Duncan to join the 57 other delegates abstaining from the vote.⁶⁸ By the close of the convention, the AFL had their answer, and the CLC accepted unconditionally all demands made by the AFL.⁶⁹ The progressives lost their influence over the Seattle labor movement.

Conclusion

The way in which Seattle progressives voiced their militancy in the general strike and the months following allowed their opponents to paint them as radicals. Certainly, given the political environment of 1919 and 1920, the red scares provided ammunition enough to target real radicals in the labor movement. Certainly enemies of organized labor would have made efforts, likely even successful efforts, to damage the goals of even conservative unionists. However, an otherwise progressively spirited Seattle CLC made it too easy for their opponents to target their goals for eradication. Progressives went against their own better judgment in not calling off the general

⁶⁶ The Minutes of a Conference in Portland, October 1, 1923, in *Gompers Papers*, Vol. 2, 323-24.

⁶⁷ AFL, *Proceedings 1923*, 328-30. Though the JIBU refused at the convention to admit women barbers, they changed policy in September 1924. The Seattle JIBU had continued to cooperate with the Lady Barbers despite their removal from the CLC nearly the entire time. See Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 181.

⁶⁸ AFL, *Proceedings 1923*, 259; "James Duncan Forced to Showdown on Communist," *Seattle Times*, October 10, 1923, 4.

⁶⁹ "Council Yields," *Seattle Times*, October 11, 1923, 1; 13.

strike when they had initial majority support. If they failed to endorse union concerns calling for a voluntary removal of radical members of the CLC, they further went against their own interests by publically condemning the idea of ejecting radicals on the grounds that it was what the employers and politicians wanted. It came across only as class warfare. In an effort to appear strong and defiant, masters of their own path, they contributed to their own weakening. By 1920, they made it entirely impossible to build effective political alliances with local and state politicians. Their militant refusal to “clean house” made it impossible for an openly labor-endorsed candidate to win an election. Though their intentions were admirable in attempting to maintain solidarity and keep labor on a progressive path, the way in which they handled their affairs publically—at times against their initial inclinations—implicated them directly in their own demise. Their actions created only distance from politicians and likewise drove labor to partisan politics in the Farmer-Labor party, causing further condemnation from the AFL.

Nationally, the AFL tried to save unions from further declines that wrought despair in the ranks of labor. In Seattle, they failed to realize that the AFL cared not for a semi-autonomous identity in the Seattle CLC. Their move to partisan politics and independent action in foreign affairs were too much for the fragile AFL to accept. Within the AFL, they had likewise allowed their actions to make for easy demonstration that the Duncan progressives were too radical, nearly bent on destroying the AFL. When it came time for the AFL to assert itself over the council, they had plenty of reason to believe that the council maintained questionable loyalty to the AFL due to their consistent refusal to abide by national AFL policies. The CLC, in their attempts to clarify their actions failed to do so because for too long they had established their militancy and advocated policies counter to the political aims of the AFL. Though the more important struggle may have been related to the Duncan progressives’ support third-party partisanship, the myriad positions they had taken counter to the AFL allowed for their enemies within the labor movement to manipulate and

exaggerate evidence to present a CLC that was much more extreme and radical than it genuinely was.

For those who remained loyal to progressive ideas, they still had a home within the workers' education movement. For the remainder of the 1920s, those who may have formerly allied with the Duncan progressives found a vibrant environment in which to continue their debate. The Seattle Labor College carried the progressive spirit of the Seattle labor movement mostly without the public criticism that brought down the Duncan progressives.

Chapter 3: Workers' Education and Progressive Reform in Seattle

Only a month after the general strike, five delegates including Duncan, called for an investigation into the ways and means of establishing a workers' college in Seattle. The purpose was to explore a "liberal education" for the working class of the city.¹ Workers' education was just starting to gain momentum as a national movement in 1919 and 1920. The movement grew slowly and largely out of socialist-leaning class-conscious inspiration. It was mostly disregarded by the AFL until 1921 when they entered into cooperation with the Workers Education Bureau (WEB) founded in the same year. Before then, the AFL advocated for closer cooperation with traditional schools to influence different curriculum, but by 1921 the movement was too big and held too much influence for the AFL to ignore any longer. By 1919, there were labor colleges in Seattle, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other cities around the nation.²

In 1915, Seattle labor leaders developed what was called the Seattle Plan for workers' education. This model worked in cooperation with sympathetic professors at the University of Washington to develop courses at the Labor Temple which emphasized worker themes through the social sciences, including sociology, art, and literature. This model was borrowed by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in New York, where by 1921, more than two thousand of their union members had taken courses in their workers' college, and 300 graduated through the program. By 1923, labor colleges around the nation combined enrolled an estimated thirty-thousand students.³ Though influential in other areas, the Seattle Plan seemed to disappear in Seattle during WWI, because the Duncan progressives again called for a study of workers'

¹ Seattle CLC minutes, March 12, 1919, KCCLC records.

² Altenbaugh, "Brookwood Labor College," 396-97; Barrow, "Counter-Movement," 397-99. The Workers Education Bureau did not observe the possessive plural apostrophe in reference to itself, but it did for the general term workers' education and similar variations.

³ Barrow, "Counter-Movement," 398; 400.

education in 1919.

Among the most popular of the labor colleges in the United States was Brookwood Labor College in Kootenay, New York. Brookwood was founded in 1921 as one of the few live-in labor colleges in the nation. According to Irving Bernstein, Seattle modeled the Seattle Labor College in 1922 after Brookwood, however the Seattle Labor College never assembled its own buildings or had full-time, live-in students. It nonetheless offered a variety of courses covering topics from conservative to radical union ideologies. Brookwood's founders established their school as "a professional school to educate workers to work in the workers' movements and frankly aims not to elevate workers out of their class."⁴ Much of that same philosophy can be observed as the workers' education movement evolved in Seattle in the 1920s.

While the mainstream Seattle labor movement may come to terms with its inevitable fate in 1923, the spirit of progressive labor continued through the workers' education movement in Seattle. Begun at the behest of leading progressives and some radicals, the labor college remained a place where open discussion and academic debate could exist between workers. Even more important, it remained a place where progressive class consciousness persisted by design. As the Workers' College grew, it became less attached to the CLC. Though it leaned toward the Socialist party, it remained progressive in outlook and had "tolerant support" from the CLC.⁵ In short, it provided the environment typical of the progressive labor movement in Seattle between 1919 and 1923, but it extended through the decade, and drew significantly less public ire, providing an important link from the progressive ideas of the early decade to those of the 1930s.

⁴ See Altenbaugh, "Brookwood Labor College." See *Ibid.*, 400 for quote. See Bernstein, *Lean Years*, 416 for reference to Seattle as an "Offshoot" of Brookwood Labor College.

⁵ Eugene V. Dennett, *Agitprop: The Life of an American Working-Class Radical, the Autobiography of Eugene V. Dennett* (New York: SUNY Press, 1990): 20.

Early Labor Education in the Workers' College of Seattle

The precursor to the Seattle Labor College, the Workers' College of Seattle, was founded in 1919, but it only operated into early 1922, before being rebranded the Seattle Labor College and taken over by new leadership. However, the Workers' College was important as a trial period to figuring out workers' education in Seattle and is worth reviewing.

The director of the Workers' College of Seattle was Dr. Sydney Strong, father to Anna Louise Strong. He was, perhaps, the most responsible for the early direction of the college. Under his leadership, the Workers' College had a fairly successful first year. They offered a variety of courses, ranging from economics, public speaking, drama, English composition, reading, and more. Each course came at a cost of \$2.50 for the term. Though Dr. Strong administered daily operations at the school, CLC leaders, such as Duncan and Ben Nauman, A. B. Callahan, and J. A. McCorkle, led the CLC-appointed committee-in-charge of the Workers' College. Following the first term, Dr. Strong explained that the college was a success and in cooperation with "broad-minded professors." With help from University of Washington professors it was possible for the courses offered at the labor temple to be filled with "honest-to-goodness facts" that the professors according to Strong were forbidden from teaching at the University.⁶ Seattle was not unique in its cooperation with individual local college professors in helping to round out their curriculum; it was in fact somewhat common among the nation's labor colleges.⁷ Through this model, they were able to remain independent from university oversight and provide more freedom for professors to develop and experiment with curriculum that may not have been approved at public colleges and

⁶ Seattle Central Labor Council Workers' College Registration, Winter 1920, Broussais C. Beck papers; For quotes, see Agent #106 to Broussais Beck, March 13, 1920, Broussais C. Beck papers.

⁷ University Extension Association, *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference National University Extension Association*, April 20-22, 1922 (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1923): 57-58.

universities.

During the next fall, there was even a course taught by local labor leader Jim Fisher on Marxian economics, which drew large crowds. But encouragement and diversity of discussion remained broad enough that University of Washington professor Dr. DeMan could give a lecture titled "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," which drew considerable debate between conservative, progressive, and radical attendees. Mark Litchman, a lawyer sympathetic to and supportive of the college, described the debate ahead of Dr. DeMan's lecture as leading to a "pending crisis," and that Dr. DeMan expected a "hard riding" from questioners following his talk.⁸ The Workers' College thought Dr. DeMan valuable enough to the diversity of opinions found in the college that they held him on retainer for \$200.00 dollars per month while classes were in session into 1921. Other University of Washington professors more commonly received \$100.00 dollars per month.⁹

The interest among progressive CLC leaders in seeing the college grow was evident. James Duncan attended the first two WEB conferences in 1921 and 1922. Not only was he the only committee representative from the Pacific Northwest, but he was the only advisory committee member west of Kansas in each year.¹⁰ Though courses came at a fee, the report from Seattle at the WEB conference in 1921 indicated high student attendance. In addition, the Workers' College claimed most of its funding through donations, more so than tuition.¹¹ But interest among the general unionists quickly waned, and for reasons unclear the Workers' College was not able to

⁸ Mark Litchman letter to Emmanuel Slater, October 28, 1920. Mark M. Litchman papers, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA. Mark Litchman was a prominent member of the Seattle Jewish community and notable lawyer both for his socialist leanings and defense of labor in a variety of legal proceedings.

⁹ Mark Litchman letter to Albert Brilliant, [undated 1921?], Mark M. Litchman papers.

¹⁰ See list of committee and officers, with city affiliation indicated, in Workers Education Bureau. *Report of Proceedings First National Conference on Workers Education in the United States* (New York: Workers Education Bureau of the United States, 1921), 6; and Workers Education Bureau. *Report of Proceedings Second National Conference on Workers Education in the United States* (New York: Workers Education Bureau of the United States, 1922), 6.

¹¹ Workers Education Bureau, *First National Conference*, 136.

match the attendance it had in the first year.

Dr. Sidney Strong left the college, and Seattle, in late 1921 to tour Russia with his daughter, Anna Louise Strong. He encouraged Litchman to join and replace him as the director of the college. Though overall attendance was down, tuition and donations managed to keep Sunday night lectures going, as well as a broad spectrum of courses taught by university professors such as ethics, biology, psychology, evolution, and Marxian economics. Litchman advised the committee-in-charge, and they agreed, to have “University economics” cut from the curriculum, because it had been overtaken by students who only heckled the instructor, interrupting lectures with Marxian economics lessons they had picked up from Jim Fisher’s class.¹² Litchman, to his credit, seemed to understand that attendance, rather than funding, would be most important to the continued existence of workers’ education in Seattle.

New Directions and Progressive Changes: The Seattle Labor College

When the Workers’ College closed after the spring term in 1922, it reopened in the fall re-branded as the Seattle Labor College.¹³ The first term of courses in the fall were deemed a “financial success” by Litchman, now president of the Seattle Labor College, but attendance faced the same issues as with the Workers’ College. Most classes in the fall of 1922 averaged only 10 students, with only one course bringing as many as 20. In the middle of the fall term, the Seattle Labor College decided to open courses to the public, and they accepted donations in lieu of tuition. The only class that kept its tuition fee was public speaking, taught by the socialist preacher Dr. Robert Whitaker. Following the change, attendance increased by leaps and bounds. Among the

¹² Mark Litchman letter to Albert Brilliant, [undated 1921], Mark M. Litchman papers.

¹³ When exactly the Workers’ College of Seattle closed and the Seattle Labor College opened is not entirely clear. However, based on letters from Mark Litchman and early programs of course and lectures for the Seattle Labor College, classes only seemed to be offered in 6- to 8-week segments from October through March or early April each year.

most popular courses taught was University of Washington Professor Dr. Kincaid's course on evolution. This class brought, according to Litchman, as many as 80 to 90 people to the Seattle Labor College. In addition, attendance at Sunday Night Open Forums rose as well.¹⁴ The Sunday night forums offered an opportunity to hear a variety of speakers discuss and debate a range of topics related to labor, whether they were loyal to the AFL or not.

One controversy that brought the newly formed Seattle Labor College publicity was a brief red-baiting campaign by Seattle Department of Justice Special Agent in Charge Roy Darling. Darling gave a series of interviews to the *Seattle Star* explaining that the labor college was run as a school for communism by Litchman and Dr. Whitaker. Further, Darling added that Seattle and Boston had the only two communist workers' colleges in the nation. When asked where the college operated, Darling clarified that it held classes at the labor temple. Litchman wrote a letter thanking the paper and Darling for the publicity, and the *Union Record* likewise made light of charges. According to Litchman, their response in the press, only laughing the charges off and not condemning them, aided their cause. Litchman claimed, "We noted an appreciable attendance and a lot of new faces after the appearance of the articles."¹⁵ The tactic represented a significant change to the typical militant, defensive responses the Duncan-led CLC lobbed at their critics.

The Seattle Labor College also managed to expand its reach in the fall of 1922. Unions even made special requests for labor college instructors to give brief lectures at their meetings. The Machinist and Blacksmiths negotiated with the college a special tuition rate of five dollars for every five of their members who enrolled at the labor college. Extra courses relating to American labor history were added when John C. Kennedy, state secretary of the Farmer-Labor party and formerly of the University of Chicago, joined the college in 1922. The Seattle Marxian Club also purchased six

¹⁴ Mark Litchman letter to Emmanuel Slater, December 26, 1922. Mark M. Litchman papers.

¹⁵ Ibid.

weeks of courses by Whitaker.¹⁶ The Seattle Labor College duplicated many of its courses to serve the greater Puget Sound. College instructors travelled to Tacoma, Everett, and even across the sound to Bremerton to offer classes to interested unions.¹⁷ Though the college did not shy away from radical ideology, it would be unfair to call the college itself radical. The *New Majority*, a national publication of the Farmer-Labor party, advertised that the college offered a variety of courses, ranging from public speaking, social psychology, American history, and literature, with special emphasis on economic forces, as well as a course on women in the home and in industry.¹⁸ The publication *Co-Operation* indicated the Seattle Workers' College as one of only seven labor colleges in the nation, and the only one in the Pacific Northwest, teaching courses related to the workers' co-operative movement. Those courses also carried over into the Seattle Labor College curriculum.¹⁹ Thus their curriculum was broad and not defined fully as radical or conservative.

One of the most significant changes brought about by Litchman's leadership of the Workers' College was the transition away from the Seattle CLC in terms of oversight and governance. When the Seattle Labor College opened its doors, it was under new management as well. Although they would continue use space at the labor temple, there was no longer a CLC-appointed committee-in-charge. The officers of the 1922-23 year were elected from an independent Board of Directors, with Whitaker as Educational Director and Litchman as President, and others comprising positions of Secretary, Treasure, and members of the Board. Labor college leaders consciously reformed the school outside of the control of any single interest so that it could

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "Seattle Labor College on Wheels," *New Majority*, October, 28, 1922, 3.

¹⁸ "Seattle Has Labor College," *New Majority*, October 14, 1922, 6.

¹⁹ "Workers' College Teach Co-Operation," *Co-Operation* 8, no. 1 (January, 1922): 15; "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 2, no. 2, 1925, Harvey O'Connor papers, Walter P. Ruether Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

continue to provide a diversity of viewpoints promoted by the college's board.²⁰ This was the single most important development for the Seattle Labor College, because it helps to explain in part how it would continue throughout the 1920s without facing the serious challenges of conservative AFL leadership that took over the Seattle CLC.

One of the only other major labor colleges in the Pacific Northwest was the Portland Labor College. The Portland Labor College was founded in 1921, but suffered serious organizational problems from too much conservative AFL influence. The Portland Labor College relied too much on the support of the Portland CLC, who perpetually kept the school grounded in "safe" conservative AFL ideals. The Portland Labor College went through several directors between 1921 and its slow collapse that dragged on into 1929. When directors tried to boost attendance by opening up courses in more leftist ideologies, the Portland CLC spurned and replaced them. In turn, the courses that stuck only to discussing pure and accepted AFL ideologies failed to gain significant followings from the rank-and-file unionists, and as early as 1924, the Portland Labor College was a financially unstable enterprise. In 1930 Kennedy, of the Seattle Labor College, expressed that the Portland Labor College failed because "It tried to function too much within the framework of the A.F. of L." In Seattle, the labor college received support from a wide array of the working-class community, having opened up its forums and debates to the IWW, communists, and any other group interested in the topic of labor. Therefore, according to Kennedy, "Having [our] own ideals, we've been able to carry on."²¹ The Seattle Labor College remained relatively strong by promoting class consciousness that appealed to the type of worker interested in workers' education in the first

²⁰ See "Seattle Labor College Program of Classes and Lectures, Second Term, 1922-1923," Mark Litchman papers, for list of the year's officers and directors. See John C. Kennedy, "Facts You Ought to Know About the Seattle Labor College," 1927, Seattle Public Libraries Special Collections, Central Library, Seattle Pamphlets Collection, Seattle, WA, for how the college was formed in 1922.

²¹ See Jerry Lembcke, "Labor and Education: Portland Labor College, 1921-29," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 85, no. 2 (Summer, 1984): 117-134 for history of Portland Labor College summarized here; see *Ibid.*, 133-134 for quotes used here.

place. The Seattle Labor College avoided the fate of the Portland Labor College because it became accepted by the general working-class population as a place for debate and understanding of different viewpoints rather than something altogether radical or conservative. Had the CLC kept influence over the curriculum as the Portland CLC did in their labor college, the result may have been an overall lack of interest from the working class in Seattle as well.

Aided by the changes, the Seattle Labor College grew in popularity. In 1923, Litchman reported that the Sunday Night Open Forums continued to grow after dismal showings in 1921 and the early part of 1922. Now they were averaging nearly 100 attendees.²² These forums provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the spirit of debate and diversity of opinions that the college provided. In early 1923, the Sunday Night Forum brought a pictorial lecture from Dr. Kincaid on human evolution. Dr. Sidney Strong returned to give a lecture titled "What I Saw in Russia," and Rev. Whitaker gave a four-part lecture series on American History from the perspective of economic forces from the colonial period to rise of American imperialism. By the end of 1923, a special Science Series at the Sunday Night Forum provided by University of Washington professors taught the evolution of the universe, the geological evolution of the earth, and the evolution of man. John C. Kennedy and Mark Litchman gave their own social science features to the lecture series with history of humanity and the history of government.²³ The intense interests on the themes of evolution and development in science as well as viewing historical developments through perceived evolutionary characteristics over generations suggests that the interest of the college was to promote the theme of progress. Their science and social courses observed forward change and, with some socialist and Marxist slants, they seemed to use scientific theories to

²² Mark Litchman letter to Adella Parker Bennett, August 26, 1923, Mark Litchman papers.

²³ "Seattle Labor College Program of Classes and Lectures, Second Term, 1922-1923,"; "Seattle Labor College Program of Classes and Lectures, Autumn Term, 1923-1924," Mark Litchman papers.

support inevitable progress in solving social issues facing labor.

In the fall of 1924, still more changes occurred at the labor college. John C. Kennedy replaced Dr. Whitaker as Educational Director, and the programs offered by the labor college diversified even more under his leadership. The fall curriculum included more courses on the history of the American labor movement as well a drama course. Science courses in geology and social psychology remained on the schedule as well. Even veteran progressive James Duncan undertook a course titled "Practical Problems of the Labor Movement," which doubtless promoted solutions to labor programs long touted by the Duncan progressives. Still, classes on Marxian theories remained available to those interested. The college even expanded in establishing its own library and reading room for free use by the public. By 1928, the labor college library entered into cooperation with the Seattle Public Library to expand their offerings and create a free book program for members enrolled in classes.²⁴

Finally, under Kennedy the college settled into place as the progressive voice for labor in the post-Duncan CLC era. By 1925, Litchman was no longer affiliated with the college, and Paul Mohr took his place as President. After this change in leadership, Kennedy seemed to have become the main figure of the college in his continued role as Educational Director.²⁵ Under his leadership, the college kept an open mind to all theories regarding the labor movement, but remained active in promoting a progressive agenda. In a statement in the *Seattle Labor College News*, Kennedy affirmed his belief that different opinions within the labor movement should not be viewed as

²⁴ "Seattle Labor College Program of Classes and Lectures, Autumn Term, 1923-1924," Mark Litchman papers; "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 5, no. 1, 1928, Harvey O'Connor papers.

²⁵ Why Litchman left the college is unknown, though notes for the Mark Litchman papers at the University of Washington Library claim he gradually began to lose faith in and cut ties with the labor movement beginning in 1923. Paul Mohr was a noted communist in the Seattle labor movement, see, Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 158, for reference to Mohr's communist allegiance; see "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 2 no. 2, Harvey O'Connor papers, for list of college officers.

harmful to organized labor's goals. However, he went on to say that differences of opinion should never allow division in the labor movement. Kennedy told readers that "When a policy or program has been decided upon after fair discussion, let everybody put his shoulder down to the wheel and put that program into effect."²⁶ Given the growing conservative nature of the leadership of the Seattle CLC and the same tone coming from the national AFL, the statement could only be interpreted as giving solid support to working within the AFL, and not dividing the movement over conflict of opinions. That Kennedy fully advocated working within the AFL is further supported by the position he took in a college-sponsored debate with IWW leader C.B. Ellis. With Kennedy taking the affirmative stance, the debate asked if participation within the AFL by progressive and radical workers provided the best hope for labor.²⁷

Under Kennedy's direction, the school's class offerings dropped its Marxian courses as well. A survey of courses offered from fall 1925 through 1928 show that while the offerings on courses in science, labor history, and public speaking remained, no Marxian economics courses were offered. In its place, a course taught by Kennedy in applied economics became available in some terms. The course discussed economics issues as they affected trade unionists, applying economic principles to industrial and craft union organizations, political action, company unionism, and problems that faced the labor movement. The concern that labor education ought to educate workers to better operate within their class was shown in other offerings. Carl Brannin, a long-time labor journalist, offered a course in labor journalism. Other courses taught basic writing and reading skills for personal enrichment.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 4 no. 6, 1927. Harvey O'Connor papers.

²⁸ See "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 2, no. 3; Vol. 4, no. 6; Vol. 5, no. 1, 1925-1928, Harvey O'Connor papers, for details provided here. Carl Brannin was a national representative of *Labor*, the news journal of the Railwaymen's Union, see O'Connor, *Revolution*, 218.

But working within the AFL was not akin to conservative doctrine in the labor college. Still the idea that debate and ideas mattered remained evident in the lecture and Open Forum series. During this same span the “Heretic Bishop” William Montgomery Brown was invited to give a talk titled “Banish Gods from the Skies and Capitalism from the Earth.” Controversial radical economist Scott Nearing gave a three-part lecture series on the decay and corruption of capitalism, and Kennedy gave a lecture series entitled “Whither America,” which examined the potential future for America from the viewpoint of wealth distribution, collection of power, civil liberties, race relations, and American economic imperialism. Kennedy also gave a lecture series titled “Outstanding Leaders of American Labor,” which recognized labor leaders from a broad spectrum of ideologies, such as Samuel Gompers, Eugene Debs, William Z. Foster, and Warren Stone. By 1928, the Seattle Labor College proudly took on a motto: “Where Progressives Meet.”²⁹ While Kennedy claimed the college had limitless potential, it sought to provide only “valuable manifestations of working-class life and labor solidarity.”³⁰ It had truly become a place that welcomed the same kind of debate that the Duncan progressives accepted, and also like the Duncan progressives, it officially lobbied allegiance to the AFL. Yet unlike the Duncan progressives, they college stayed away from partisanship and outside the target of potential critics, including the AFL-influenced WEB.

The labor college continued to support a range of debate, while ultimately driving progressive ideals. In a special college-sponsored lecture held at the Labor Temple, Kennedy affirmed his belief that American democracy, rather than Russian or other foreign models, offered the best hope for labor, but he also advocated progressive political action and a conscious understanding on part of the working-class of their own industrial power.³¹ Such a model that

²⁹ See “Seattle Labor College News,” Vol. 2, no. 3; Vol. 4, no. 6; Vol. 5, no. 1, 1925-1928, Harvey O’Connor papers, for details provided here.

³⁰ Kennedy, “Facts you Ought to Know.”

³¹ “U.S. Emphasized as Inspiration to Working Man,” *Seattle Times*, February 13, 1928, 7.

avored the prevailing American system while advocating greater class consciousness and collective action was safe enough to avoid scrutiny or condemnation. That the Seattle Labor College was not considered an overtly radical institution under Kennedy can further be supported by the fact that the AFL-influenced WEB accepted the school for affiliation in 1928, the same year they expelled Brookwood Labor College in New York over alleged radical leanings.³²

The Seattle Labor College also remained a relatively stable enterprise financially. Though it did not operate for profit, it still paid approximately \$3000.00 dollars each year in operating costs. The American Fund for Public Service provided \$1000.00 dollars each year since 1925, and donations and tuition from the public speaking course covered the remainder.³³ Brannin, as director of extension services, proudly explained that over a dozen local unions had regularly benefitted from the college. Unions paid to have college speakers discuss popular themes such as unemployment, social topics, and psychology. The Building Laborers, Carpenters, and Millmen's unions each set aside a portion of one meeting a month aside to invite labor college speakers.³⁴ Further, it seemed that the labor college met strong growth during a membership drive initiated in 1927. The college set a goal to double its membership in 1927, and it had closed in on its goal quickly by adding 200 new members.³⁵ Finding full data on college membership and demographics

³² "Labor College Is Given New Standing," *Seattle Times*, April 26, 1928, 5.

³³ Kennedy, "Facts you Ought to Know." The American Fund for Public Service, also known as the Garland Fund, gave exclusively to radical and progressive causes, and even in causes aimed at assisting African American legal defense and civil rights between 1921 and 1941. See Merle Curti, "Subsidizing Radicalism: The American Fund for Public Service, 1921-41," *Social Service Review* 33, no. 3 (September, 1959): 274-295. It turned down a \$100,000.00 dollar grant application to the AFL-influenced Workers' Education Bureau in 1923 on grounds that it did not sufficiently endorse class-oriented education within its movement, from which Gompers asserted the true aim of the organization was to promote class upheaval and communism. See Samuel Gompers letter to Matthew Woll, John Frey, and George Perkins, April 12, 1923, in *Gompers Papers*, Vol. 2, 226-227. The *Seattle Union Record* also received a \$5000.00 dollar grant from the fund in 1921. See Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 185. That the Seattle Labor College received this fund means it was sufficiently more progressive, particularly in its class conscious approach, than the Workers Education Bureau, but should not necessarily certify the college as radical.

³⁴ "Trades Unions Aided by Seattle Labor College," February 8, 1928, 11.

³⁵ "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 4, no. 6, 1927, Harvey O'Connor papers.

is difficult, but the impact of the college steadily extended beyond its membership.

Kennedy also oversaw closer cooperative relations with the Seattle CLC, further indicating their somewhat safe progressive identification. In October 1923, the Seattle CLC became cautious in associating fully with the labor college. When William Dunne, who the AFL ousted because of his open association with the communist party, was scheduled to speak at a forum hosted by the labor college, the CLC refused to allow the college to use their facilities for the lecture, given their recent scolding by the AFL over their openness to different philosophies. The labor college did not back down, and instead rented alternate facilities for the forum.³⁶ This stand by the CLC seemed to be permanent for the better part of the decade after Duncan stepped down in 1923. For example, when the radical economist Nearing came to speak to the labor college in 1925, it was hosted at the local Eagles lodge. When the debate between Kennedy and the IWW's Ellis took place, it was at the Moose Temple. However, when more thematically acceptable forums were held, they took place at the Labor Temple as the rest of their activities.³⁷ However, under Kennedy, real cooperation in addressing and discussing issues facing labor were undertaken starting in 1928.

In April 1928, the Seattle CLC requested that Kennedy conduct an investigation and publish findings on the issue of the five-day work week. Thomas Pratt, director of the CLC's Education

³⁶ "Labor Sessions Ended," *Seattle Times*, October 13, 1923, 2.

³⁷ See "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 2, no. 3; Vol. 4, no. 6; Vol. 5, no. 1, 1925-1928, Harvey O'Connor papers. With the exception of at least one term in 1927, where all classes met at the Moose Temple, the CLC generally continued to rent out space to the labor college for its classwork, including earlier Marxian economics courses. See "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 4, no. 6, 1927, Harvey O'Connor papers. Harvey O'Connor claims that the Seattle CLC withdrew support of the Seattle Labor College due to their openness to hosting a range of ideological viewpoints and does not mention any return of support on behalf of the CLC, see, O'Connor, *Revolution*, 218. O'Connor left Seattle in 1924 and did not have first-hand knowledge of events afterward, see *Ibid.*, xv. However, they seemed to only experience their brief schism in 1927, and possibly 1926. By 1928, all classes again commenced at the Labor Temple, see "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 5, no. 1, 1928, Harvey O'Connor papers. Further, in 1930 Kennedy addressed the Brookwood teachers conference and explained that support in Seattle was broad-based, which meant that when the CLC attempted to end relations, "it couldn't because the rank-and-file were too much for the college." See Lembcke, "Labor and Education," 134.

Committee claimed it would be the first full account of the issue ever assembled, despite significant support among labor, including the AFL. Kennedy was directed to compile data relating to the five-day work week as it pertained to unemployment and production.³⁸ By June, Kennedy completed the study, and the CLC arraigned to print one-thousand copies for distribution to local employers and politicians, the reason being that unionists were already convinced on the merits of the proposal.³⁹ Since its earliest years, the college offered special research services to local unions and the labor movement, but it is unclear how often the CLC or any other group acquired these services.⁴⁰ By 1928, however, clearly the CLC seemed to value more the opinions of labor college leaders than at any time after the Duncan progressives lost influence in the council.

Kennedy had also been hosted by the CLC to express other progressive opinions regarding labor. On one occasion, Kennedy gave a talk exploring the growing antagonisms between the British and American governments and how to bring rapprochement between the two nations. In his talk, Kennedy urged the AFL to seek greater unity with the British Trades Union Congress in passing political and organizational policies designed to bring diplomatic relations closer to the same goals. Conscious of Brookwood's recent expulsion from the WEB, Kennedy carefully said that his opinions should not be understood as an attempt to "set the policy of the labor movement." Scott Nearing was also invited to give a two-part lecture series at the labor college on the same issue. Regardless of any potential controversy, of which none was ever found, the CLC expressed that it intended to pass a resolution favoring similar suggestions as those made by Kennedy.⁴¹

One the more interesting questions probed by the CLC at the suggestion of Kennedy was how to better bring young people into organized labor. In February 1928, the CLC announced that it

³⁸ "College Head to Assemble Arguments for Five-Day Week," *Seattle Times*, April 6, 1928, 28.

³⁹ "Employers to Be Told Merits of Five-Day Week," *Seattle Times*, June 7, 1928, 4.

⁴⁰ "Seattle Labor College Program of Classes and Lectures, Third Term, 1922-23," Mark Litchman papers.

⁴¹ "Harmony Aims of World Laborer to be Discussed," *Seattle Times*, January 27, 1929, 13.

was planning a discussion, to be led by Kennedy, on the relation of the labor movement to the youth.⁴² At the meeting, Kennedy wagered that the main problem that faced the labor movement in terms of membership was a lack of organization among children at a young age. Kennedy asserted that most unionists only came to organized labor later in life, and for various economic reasons, but they lacked the class-conscious understanding of the importance of unions to their ancestors' struggle for better wages and conditions in the workplace. At the conclusion of the talk, the CLC endorsed a plan to explore the possibility of establishing a youth baseball league and summer camps for young workers and children of unionists. According the CLC, only a few eastern cities, such as New York, had experimented with the youth-in-labor movement, but Seattle became the first city in the West to explore the topic.⁴³ Though the youth-in-labor question, Kennedy at least managed to lead some progressive discussion in the CLC relating to class consciousness in his capacity as education director. While it may have been new to the Seattle CLC, the concept of expanding programs to develop class-conscious ideology within children and whole families outside of direct union membership had been firmly established at the labor college for some time.

Women, Children, and Family Education at the Labor College

As a class-conscious movement, the Seattle labor college had early on expanded its operations to include the young children of its members. It also offered similar activities for women, both unionists and housewives, to build class consciousness across the college community, not just the workers. It was among this group that the labor college transcended class consciousness as the wage earner to class consciousness as the broader community reliant on the wage earner as well—the entirety of the working class.

⁴² "Relation of Youth, Labor to be Council Topic," *Seattle Times*, February 28, 1928, 9.

⁴³ "Labor Considers Athletics Plan to Train Youth," *Seattle Times*, March 7, 1928, 4.

In the fall of 1923, the labor college announced the formation of the Junior Labor College, open to both boys and girls ages six through fourteen; shortly after it expanded to sixteen years of age.⁴⁴ Particularly among the boys of the group the importance and anticipation that they would fill the ranks of the labor movement was evident. Kennedy reached out to members to find a leader of a boys' group. The boys' group would learn how to work with tools, building everything from bookshelves to their own transistor radios. Kennedy called for a "real instructor who knows how to makes things, how to play and work with boys,—and how to teach boys not only to use their hands but to use their heads for the advancement of labor."⁴⁵ Though this emphasis suggests a greater importance on boys than girls, the whole youth group was given to develop working-class consciousness and instruction in labor history. One of the most interesting fashions this took place was through labor college pageants.

In 1923, the youth prepared a Christmas pageant program to close out the special science lecture series that December. Being attached to the science series, and with no title provided, it is difficult to understand what the play covered. It may have been thematically related to the issues of evolution of nature, humanity, and government that the lecture series addressed.⁴⁶ A more specific example comes from 1924. That year, the club put on a peace pageant, in which the instigator of the play portrayed the god Mars. His costume trimmed with dollar signs and simulated flames, he constantly attempted to drag peaceful characters into a war hysteria by getting them to drink the "war cocktail" of "HATE, FALSE PATRIOTISM, and PRIDE."⁴⁷ Another pageant in 1925 titled "The History of Labor through the Ages" more closely confirms that some kind of indoctrination

⁴⁴ "Seattle Labor College Program of Classes and Lectures, Autumn, 1923-1924," Mark Litchman papers; "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 2, no. 2, 1924, Harvey O'Connor papers.

⁴⁵ "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 2, no. 2, 1924, Harvey O'Connor papers.

⁴⁶ "Seattle Labor College Program of Classes and Lectures, Autumn Term, 1923-1924," Mark Litchman papers.

⁴⁷ "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 1, no. 2, 1924, Harvey O'Connor papers.

into the promise of organized labor lay at the heart of the Junior Labor College's goals.

Beyond just the youth, full families and members of the community had the opportunity to watch plays put on by the adults of the labor college. The Labor College Players, according to Harvey O'Connor, were among the best of any amateur theater group in Seattle in the mid to late 1920s. Plays covering social issues by the likes of Leo Tolstoy, George Bernard Shaw, and others featured in their repertoire. In 1927, the Modern Drama course evaluated a variety of these German, Russian, and other European playwrights from their themes of society and economics.⁴⁸

One early production of the Seattle Labor College Players, in which details can be assessed, was a play by Edna Ferber, titled "\$1,200 a Year—A Comedy." It was a social satire. The premise of the play revolved around a college professor who received inadequate pay. Events transpired when the professor, at first "too dignified to rebel," left the college after a dispute over the content of his economics courses. He proceeded to work at the local mill, where he received better pay than as a professor because of a union contract. Because of the economics professor's experience, other professors left their jobs at the college to work in the mill for better wages. With the college devoid of instructors, the manager of the mill, also a board member of the college, cut wages in an attempt to divide the workers, blaming the professor for their plight.⁴⁹ Thus through plays like these, the Seattle Labor College was able to conduct even more class-conscious narratives into their educational efforts.⁵⁰ Setting not only the goals of promise labor atop the narrative, the play also served to remind workers of malicious efforts to conquer labor and the working class through divisive tactics.

⁴⁸ O'Connor, *Revolution*, 218; "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 4, no. 7, 1927, Harvey O'Connor papers.

⁴⁹ "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 1, no. 2, 1924. Harvey O'Connor papers.

⁵⁰ Seattle was not unique in labor college drama programs. Labor colleges regularly used drama programs to emphasize important themes of working-class culture. According to Altenbaugh, labor dramas were intended to arouse class-conscious sentiment through participation and observation, reminding the audience of "their relationship to the world of work." See Altenbaugh, "Brookwood Labor College," 401.

The youth club grew over the years. By 1927, the youth became more officially aligned with the national youth-in-labor movement through affiliation with the Pioneer Youth of America. With the Pioneer Youth, the children of the labor college had a more formalized system from which to build. Not much different from organizations such as the Boy Scouts, the group met for meetings, went on hikes, and engaged in service activities for the college, such as serving food at Sunday evening events, and acting as ushers. They also visited local factories and continued to put on plays.⁵¹

In the East, progressive unions strongly supported the Pioneer Youth. Fannia Cohn, of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILWGU), provided strong support for labor education and the Pioneer Youth. With support from the ILWGU in New York and Brookwood, a Pioneer Youth summer camp flourished in the Catskill Mountains of New York State. As with the organization, the Pioneer Youth camp in New York was supported strongly by socialists and progressives in labor who wanted to counter communist groups such as the Young Pioneers, but provide preparation for their children's future entry into the labor movement.⁵² An examination of the camp in 1929 in the *Survey* promoted the camp as a working-class summer camp that offered the same experience as available to wealthier families, but at a fraction of the cost. The camp was evaluated for creating responsible, class-conscious youth who would through activities develop their natural inquisitiveness while dealing with issue of social progress. The story briefly followed the journey of an African American boy who held a leadership role at the camp over integrated campers. The boy's experience was important to highlight, because the *Survey* added that the camp desired more participation from the black community in building the vision of the Pioneer Youth. The *Survey*

⁵¹ "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 4 no. 6, 1927; Vol. 5, no. 1, 1928. Harvey O'Connor papers.

⁵² Daniel Katz, *All Together Different: Yiddish Socialists, Garment Workers, and the Labor Roots of Multiculturalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2011): 79.

offered a clear conclusion:

In short, Pioneer Youth is trying to give labor's children the kind of education and experience that will aid them not to become neurotic protestors, not to be poorly equipped rebels, dashing themselves futilely against the stone wall of our obviously stable American civilization, but to be the kind of people who can change whatever dissatisfaction they may feel into creative and patient work toward ends clearly seen.⁵³

There is no evidence that the Seattle Labor College's Pioneer Youth had a similar kind of camp experience available to them in the Pacific Northwest, though the CLC may have eventually provided a camp, which was one potential goal of their move into the youth-in-labor movement. The main agenda of the program certainly exhibited the same purpose as the Pioneer Youth nationwide.

Women too played a role in the purpose and direction of the labor college's educational goals for the working class. The Women's Club of the Seattle Labor College undertook a range of issues regarding education about the labor movement. The club consisted of both women unionists and wives of unionists and was directed by club president Mary Chamberlin. Like the labor college, the group was free and open to the public.⁵⁴

One club meeting invited two speakers to engage in an Open Forum-style debate. Asking the question "Can Women Be Organized?" they invited a female garment worker from New York City and Mrs. John Reetz of the local Laundry Workers Union to debate the issue. The debate took place within a larger lecture series hosted by the Women's Club titled "Women in Industry." Other lectures invited a debate between two women on married women in the workforce, while another lecture discussed the impact of women workers on men's wages.⁵⁵ In another instance, the

⁵³ Deardorff, Neve R., "The Pioneer Youth in Camp," *Survey* 63, no. 2 (October 15, 1929): 77-79. See *ibid.*, 79, for quote.

⁵⁴ "Labor College Womens Club in New Study Course," *Seattle Times*, February 26, 1928, 10.

⁵⁵ Women to Discuss Labor Topics," *Seattle Times*, April 14, 1927, 13.

Women's Club hosted political candidates and later discussed their positions as they applied to working-class issues. Education, electricity costs, transportation, public utilities, and of course labor issues all factored into their assessment of each candidates platform.⁵⁶

In 1928, the Women's Club hosted a lecture series at the Labor Temple which set out to understand working-class uses of power in the United States and the western world. Titled "Building a New Social Order," the lecture series explored labor education, working-class political action, and consumer and cooperative activism. The course also made a study of labor unionism in England, Russia, Denmark, and the United States, as well as women's place within those labor movements.⁵⁷ Though not all of their activities related only to their place in the labor movement. As housewives and mothers, they also volunteered their domestic efforts in sewing items to be sold at an international fair hosted by the labor temple, and they also invited the principal of Roosevelt High School to give a talk on the educational success of the local children in traditional academics.⁵⁸ Still the labor college existed as a place for families to build a collective class-conscious education about their place as a class in the labor movement.

The Sunday night curriculum of the labor college provides one clear-cut example of the place of the full family at the college. Spending a full Sunday afternoon at the labor college, a family could send their children to their own classes, while the adults attended other lectures. In the evening, families could gather for a community meal prepared by the college, followed by singing. To finish out the evening, members could attend the Open Forum and hear the diverse topics

⁵⁶ Stands of Candidates Reviewed by Women," *Seattle Times*, February 20, 1927, 9.

⁵⁷ "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 5, no. 1, 1928, Harvey O'Connor papers; "Labor College Women's Club in New Study Course," *Seattle Times*, February 26, 1928, 10.

⁵⁸ "Labor College Women Will Sew at Temple," *Seattle Times*, November 10, 1927, 15; "Labor College Women Will Hear Froula," *Seattle Times*, May 5, 1927, 25.

presented as they related to working-class goals in the labor movement.⁵⁹

Despite the growing success of the Seattle Labor College in the later part of the 1920s, the college did not last long into the 1930s. Certainly the deepening of the Great Depression may have had some factor to play in its demise, but it also lost its leader at the turn of the decade. In 1930, Kennedy left the Seattle Labor College to join the faculty of Brookwood Labor College. Carl Brannin took over the college as Educational Director that year.⁶⁰ By 1933, the Seattle Labor College faded into nonexistence after Brannin left Seattle to return to his childhood home in Texas.⁶¹ However, the college still had an important impact on the local and national response to the Great Depression before it closed its doors for good.

The Unemployed Citizens' League and the New Deal

While the college itself seemed to be on the decline in the 1930s, the leaders became influential in another way. In 1931, the leaders of the college organized the Unemployed Citizens' League of Seattle. The league itself was founded as a self-help organization, similar to what President Herbert Hoover imagined would provide the best method for getting the poor through the Depression. However, while the self-help activities were what the Unemployed Citizens' League was best known for, it also advocated for some of the far-reaching economic reforms that became

⁵⁹ See for example the schedule laid out by day and time in, "Seattle Labor College News," Vol. 2, no. 3, 1924. Harvey O'Connor papers.

⁶⁰ When Kennedy left exactly is not clear. In December 1929, he still appeared to be the educational director of the labor college, see "Labor College Topics," *Seattle Times*, December 1, 1929, 4. But by the fall of 1930, the *Times* listed Carl Brannin as college educational director, see "Future War Is Topic," *Seattle Times*, November 1, 1930, 14. See Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 187, for reference to Kennedy joining Brookwood in the 1930s.

⁶¹ "Radical Worker Quits U.C.L.; to Live in Texas," *Seattle Times*, March 19, 1933. When the college itself closed is uncertain, but the *Times* regularly posted college-hosted talks in the classifieds, but no records turn up after Brannin's departure.

the pillars of the New Deal.⁶²

When the Unemployed Citizens' League first formed, it established in its constitution four central goals. First, the league demanded employment. When no employment was available, they sought self-help. Unemployment insurance became the third goal in the failure of the first two options. Finally, public relief—or the dole—was considered a last resort for members of the league. As stated in their constitution,

We propose to exhaust every means of self-help and cooperative effort in preference to acceptance of relief. When such relief becomes inevitable, the orderly and equitable method is by unemployment insurance. In absence of insurance legislation, we condemn unreservedly all forms of private charity for this purpose. Relief, whether by insurance benefits or by direct rations, should come from the public treasury and be borne by the beneficiaries of the prevailing industrial system.⁶³

Thus the league sought first and foremost a means of livelihood. The league drew attention around the nation when it worked with local city officials to establish public relief funds through city projects, which could employ the unemployed at \$4.50 a day.⁶⁴ Unlike the communist Unemployed Councils, the Unemployed Citizens League attracted a large number of conservative, unemployed former unionists who owned homes, paid taxes, and raised families. Membership was not, as Hulet Wells said, made up of the “floater” from whom the communists always attracted the most support.⁶⁵ Also, unlike the ideals set out by Hoover, in which private charities would help support the unemployed, the league sought and won city and county money to put people to work in 1931 and 1932. The city of Seattle alone established over \$400,000.00 dollars in relief money in 1931.⁶⁶ When the county took over in 1932, they appropriated several hundred thousand more in money

⁶² See Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens League*, and William H. Mullins, “Self-Help in Seattle, 1931-1932: Herbert Hoover’s Concept of Cooperative Individualism and the Unemployed Citizens’ League,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (January 1981): 11-19 for two different assessments of the league.

⁶³ Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens’ League*, 187.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 189.

⁶⁵ Hulet M. Wells, “They Organize in Seattle,” *Survey*, March 15, 1932, 665.

⁶⁶ Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens’ League*, 188.

for relief and public projects for the unemployed.⁶⁷ Though ultimately, city funds were not enough to continually support the unemployed of the city, who only grew in number in 1932. In 1933, the league ultimately failed and moved into obscurity and public condemnation when communists bored into the organization and radically changed the group, by then much smaller in number, into true radicals.⁶⁸ The movement nonetheless inspired other unemployed organizations to undertake action in cities, first along the West Coast, and then east, often seeking the same objectives as the Seattle league.⁶⁹

The league, however for a brief time, remained an effective political activism tool for the unemployed in 1932. The league endorsed reform-minded candidates for state and city office, and were effective in getting their candidates elected. In 1932, their endorsed candidates won seven state congress seats, three city council seats, and they endorsed Seattle Mayor John Dore as well.⁷⁰ In his capacity in the League, Brannin also endorsed measures such the 30-hour work week bill, designed to promote more sharing of employment, but these measures failed. The Seattle CLC and the League jointly introduced Initiative 68 to the voters in 1931, which asked for state-run unemployment insurance, but this too failed to receive enough votes.⁷¹ Brannin even expressed to his followers that the only logical step for the AFL was to adopt a system of unionism based on industry to replace the craft system that left so many workers outside of union protections.⁷² The league championed ideas that would soon become real state and federal policy and structures to labor just a few years later.

⁶⁷ Mullins, "Self-Help in Seattle," 15.

⁶⁸ Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens League*, 229-30; Mullins, "Self-Help in Seattle," 18; Bernstein, *Lean Years*, 416-18; Dembo, *Unions and Politics*, 520-21.

⁶⁹ Bernstein, *Lean Years*, 418-24.

⁷⁰ Though Dore would later be recalled with support of the league because of his failure to meet campaign promises, see Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens' League*, 207-215.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁷² "Radical Bloc Menace Grows," *Seattle Times*, May 5, 1932, 8.

Working with the Seattle CLC, the League also took their campaign for unemployment insurance to the AFL convention in 1931. Perhaps signaling the frustration of the CLC with the stagnation of labor and rising unemployment, James Duncan was elected for the first time as a delegate to represent the CLC since 1923. At the convention, Duncan introduced the unemployment insurance measure, which was defeated overwhelmingly by the conference delegates. In response Duncan, echoing his earlier militancy of the 1920s, condemned the convention's rejection. Referring to AFL president William Green, Duncan spoke, "I find myself admiring [Green] for the service he has rendered labor, but when he walks into a labor convention seeking to dictate labor's policy, I say to him . . . that we who are working out in the field know much better than our multimillionaires' what is good for labor."⁷³ The unemployment debate in the AFL reflected, in microcosm, the growing antagonisms between the industrial unionists and the craft unionists. The AFL remained divided on the issue of unemployment insurance because strong craft unions had largely been able to negotiate some form of unemployment insurance on their own through contract negotiations. The weaker industrial advocates had been unable to make such demands, and therefore wanted a government system, which the AFL opposed because they thought would invite government involvement in union affairs. But by 1932, the Depression became such that even the stronger craft unions felt the impact of lost jobs, and the AFL endorsed state-run unemployment insurance that same year.⁷⁴

Seattle labor, through the Unemployed Citizens' League and the 1931 demands from the CLC for unemployment insurance represented the growing trends of the nation. Though they took the lead in such matters as relief and labor reform, the nation was not far behind them. Though the

⁷³ American Federation of Labor, *Report of Proceedings of the Fifty-First Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1931* (Washington D.C.: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1931): 372-73.

⁷⁴ Dembo, *Unions and Politics*, 512-13; *Ibid.*, 529.

Unemployed Citizens' League should not be given too much credit for the turning tides of the nation, they were a small part in the larger debate. This debate in part inspired much of the preliminary legislation of the New Deal when President Franklin D. Roosevelt entered office.

The most notable individual behind Roosevelt's New Deal labor policies was labor secretary Frances Perkins. Through Perkins, workers, and not just unions, bore the benefits of New Deal legislation. Coming up in the progressive-era social reform movement, Perkins found herself acutely aware of the sufferings of the poor, working class. As she worked with Roosevelt both as his labor secretary during his governorship of New York and his presidency, Perkins sought to strengthen wage earners' positions rather than just unions. Importantly, she lobbied for laws to protect workers, and from her standpoint, the unorganized workforce required legislation to protect their ability earn reasonable wages and shorter hours. Unions, in Perkins' model, therefore had the same protections from which they could bargain for more, but no worker could fall trap to less than demanded by state and federal protections.⁷⁵

While many groups, including the Seattle CLC and the Unemployed Citizens' League, clamored around the nation for some form of unemployment insurance, Perkins listened. At the direction of then-Governor Roosevelt, Perkins travelled in 1931 to England to make a complete study of their government unemployment insurance system. She found that unemployment insurance not only kept starvation down, but importantly kept some amount of purchasing power among the masses of unemployed in England. According to Perkins, a basic amount of purchasing power provided through unemployment insurance in England kept textile and coal industries from suffering as deeply as other industries in England, which in turned allowed such industries to keep relatively strong employment figures. Agreeing with many of the American proponents of

⁷⁵ Winifred Wandersee, "I'd Rather Pass a Law than Organize a Union," *Labor History* 34, no. 1 (January 1993): 8, 11-12.

unemployment insurance, she concluded that had a system been in place in the United States before the Depression, the worst years of 1929 through 1933 would not have been quite so bad.⁷⁶ This experience largely informed Perkins' and Roosevelt's policy of pursuing unemployment insurance within the New Deal program.

When the Roosevelt administration took office, they too realized what the Unemployed Citizens' League had already in 1931—public works would be critical to boosting short-term employment and increasing purchasing power among the massive number unemployed. According to Perkins, the first aim of the administration was to pack as much public works into the first year as possible. Therefore, in 1933 alone, projects that normally would have been conducted and paid for over several years took place in as short a period as possible in 1933. Perkins believed that when the unemployed gained earnings, they first would buy shoes, socks, and full suits of clothing for example, which in turn would increase demand and employment in the textiles, in turn putting more money into the economy, gradually raising most industries out of the depression.⁷⁷ Of course, the problem was not as simple as that.

Perkins also realized that some measure of accountability and partnership on behalf of business would be needed to meet the federal response to unemployment through public works. One important bill that sought to address this issue was the Black Bill, also known as the Share the Work Bill. Reminiscent of the plan put forth by Brannin in Washington, the bill sought to limit employers to a 30-hour work week for employees. Just as Brannin believed, Perkins and Senator Hugo Black believed shorter hours would require employers to hire more workers to meet productivity. Along with a minimum wage requirement, the Black Bill would have increased both payrolls and purchasing power, reducing unemployment around the nation. The Black Bill,

⁷⁶ Frances Perkins, *People at Work* (New York: John Day Company, 1934): 119.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 128-30.

however, failed to gain enough support in Congress, and Roosevelt himself gave only mild support, fearing that too much push on such an issue would give his opponents more reason to oppose his other New Deal measures.⁷⁸

Thus the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) passed in 1933 which helped satisfy some of the purpose behind the failed Black Bill. The NIRA became more of a boon to unions than it did the unorganized worker however. Through the NIRA, employers would be temporarily granted some protections against anti-trust laws in order to stabilize industries, costs, and demand of product. In return, industries, through Section 7(a) of the act were expected to enter in to bargaining agreements with unions which set wages and put hours on a sliding scale between 30 and 40 as negotiated by unions and management.⁷⁹ Thus the NIRA purposefully intended to guarantee the rights of unions to collectively bargain without interference from employers, just as it allowed employers to collaborate in trust to stabilize industries. When Roosevelt sent the NIRA bill to Congress, he called it a necessary bill to create cooperation in industry, create wide employment, and aid in creating a living wage for fewer hours worked.⁸⁰

Conclusion

The labor college provided for one of the best strongholds of working-class consciousness and progressive training in 1920s Seattle. Incorporating full families, it went even beyond that which the Duncan progressives attempted to build within their movement. Though it remained outside of AFL control for much of its existence in the 1920s, it still remained loyal to the AFL while training workers, families, and future union youth in the progressive ideals of what a future labor movement could be. When the WEB expelled Brookwood in 1928, then-director A.J. Muste

⁷⁸ Ibid., 136-44.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 144.

⁸⁰ Perkins, *People at Work*, 169; Bernstein, *Turbulent Years*, 30.

defended the college and those modeled after them as a place to counter the communist influence among those who identified as working class. Brookwood, for Muste, was a “non-communist left,” and those who came out of workers’ colleges were “the children and the instruments of a militant labor progressivism.”⁸¹ During the height of the Seattle Labor College in the 1920s, it would be difficult to argue against such an observation. Though it is unclear how many in the Seattle Labor College went on to join the ranks of the CIO, others have noted that Brookwood in particular, and labor colleges in general, trained a large number of the militant organizers who filled the CIO in the 1930s.⁸² Thus the Seattle Labor College may have provided a more direct link to those who entered the CIO than even the radicals and progressives who recognized the need for some form of industrial option within the AFL in 1919 and 1920.

Through the labor college, the Unemployed Citizens’ League of Seattle formed. The league offered a model similar in ways to the New Deal public works programs. Despite its failures, it influenced other similar movements nationwide. These movements garnered a lot of attention to the problem of unemployment as well as offered new ideas for how to address the plight of the unemployed, particularly in state and federal public works. In Seattle, the league and its leaders also managed to inject progressive reform debate which, coupled with millions others around the nation, came to fruition in some form or another through New Deal programs. In turn these programs granted new power to union organizing and bargaining, which allowed massive rebounding in AFL membership starting in 1933.

While the Supreme Court eventually ruled the NIRA unconstitutional, Section 7(a) lived on, and became much stronger, through passage of the Wagner Act in 1935. The Wagner Act granted unprecedented power to union workers, giving rise to the CIO. The same year this act passed, John

⁸¹ Altenbaugh, “Brookwood Labor College,” 406.

⁸² Ibid., 407.

L. Lewis of the United Mine workers formed with like-minded leaders in the AFL to form the CIO.

Chapter 4: The CIO and AFL Battle in Seattle

Addressing the delegates at the 1938 national convention, AFL President William Green recalled the warnings of John Lewis of the United Mine Workers (UMW) in 1924. Lewis had warned of the threat of communists boring from within the UMW and other AFL unions, working to dissolve craft unionism in favor of industrial unionism, to create a One Big Union movement industry by industry. The ultimate goal of the communists, according to Lewis, was to overthrow the government and destroy popular democracy. Fourteen years later, Green declared that Lewis now was carrying out the very communist tactics he warned against as his CIO raided AFL unions across the nation for new members. Green called the AFL delegates “warriors from the battlefield,” who were fighting an enemy that sought to “limit, if not destroy, the American Federation of Labor.”¹ Such attitudes were common in the labor movement in the mid- to late-1930s. Just when labor was given the power to chart its own path and restore bargaining power to the workers granted by the 1935 Wagner Act, the movement fractured over a fundamental disagreement in tactics. In Seattle, it was no different. Once the center of progressive, class-conscious labor ideas in the Pacific Northwest, it too saw a massive struggle of worker against worker, unable to recall the great unity and solidarity it once demonstrated in the 1919 general strike and tried to preserve through the labor college.

At the center of the CIO dispute in Seattle were two groups closely tied to the waterfront: the longshoremen and the cannery workers. As each union proposed entering the CIO or remaining in the AFL, they launched a war of words. The themes of the rhetoric focused on unity, solidarity, and rank-and-file democracy within the labor movement; themes that were much the same as the class-conscious tones of earlier progressives. In the case of the longshoremen, the battle focused on who

¹ American Federation of Labor, *Report of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1938* (Washington D.C.: Judd and Detweiler, 1938): 9-11.

had greater resolve in promoting such goals—the AFL or CIO. Among the cannery workers, the fight for unity, solidarity, and rank-and-file democracy was only supported through the CIO.

This chapter explores the rhetorical battle between AFL and CIO labor in Seattle. By doing so, it will supplement existing studies that explored the local impact of the CIO and AFL rivalry in Seattle and expand on the motives that drove individuals involved in the dispute. This dispute served to reinforce local and regional tensions, and where elements of the national debate found their way in, such themes of solidarity served to underpin local and regional concerns. Further, for the progressive labor groups which chose to move into the CIO, their decision came with some reluctance. They had long made efforts to seek accommodation within the AFL but only met obstructions to their own agenda. As the AFL dug in and remained protectionists of their exclusive model of craft unionism, the CIO recruited unionists supportive of class-conscious unity promoted through earlier progressive, leftist labor leaders.

Industrial or Craft Unionism: The AFL and CIO at the National Level

The origins of the CIO date to the AFL convention of 1935. Seeing the new strength of the labor movement, which the Wagner Act of 1935 provided, UMW President Lewis lobbied delegates of the AFL convention to organize the masses of unorganized industrial workers around the nation. After failing to garner enough interest, Lewis met privately with his minority supporters to form the Committee for Industrial Organization (later Congress of Industrial Organizations) to organize the unorganized industries into the AFL under the model of industrial unionism.² Industrial unionism is a pattern of organizing vertically across craft lines within an industry—disregarding job function—and placing workers into one union. Traditional AFL craft unionism promoted separating and organizing workers horizontally into unions based on their trade, regardless of which industry the worker was

² Zeigler, *The CIO*, 22-23.

employed. While the AFL had generally opposed industrial unionism, within some of their larger unions industrial patterns played out. Within the UMW, it was not uncommon at some mining camps to find transport drivers, cooks, carpenters, and other non-miner support staff organized within the UMW long before the CIO formed.³

Industrial unionism long had a bad reputation with conservative AFL leaders. When Samuel Gompers founded the AFL in 1886 following the collapse of the Knights of Labor, he advocated for craft unionism as a more practical approach to bargaining with employers. More radical or leftist progressive groups, such as the Knights of Labor, Industrial Workers of the World, and communist-led unions were traditional supporters of industrial unionism. Of course, even the Duncan progressives on the Seattle CLC were among the supporters of some form of industrial organization. Support from these groups, historically, allowed conservative craft union advocates to imagine industrial unionists as radicals and fundamentally un-American. However, by 1935 most advocates of industrial unionism thought the model was the most appropriate collective bargaining unit for mass production industries.⁴ For this reason, when Lewis formed the CIO, he hoped to awaken AFL leaders to the benefit of bringing more workers into the AFL under the industrial union model, rather than challenge the AFL outright.

The CIO quickly met resistance within the AFL from President Green and the majority of the AFL leadership. Most of the conservative leadership viewed with suspicion the newer members brought in under the CIO. They felt CIO members were too quick to strike, and many were of ethnic backgrounds that traditionally existed outside of the AFL under the craft union model.⁵ By 1937, the AFL expelled all of the CIO unions, and Green ordered city and state labor councils to similarly

³ Ibid., 14.

⁴ Walter Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement, 1935-1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960): x.

⁵ Zeigler, *The CIO*, 19.

cancel relations with CIO unions.⁶

In Seattle, like everywhere around the nation, supporters of the AFL and CIO were already drawing battle lines before the end of 1937. Harry Bridges, leader of the West Coast longshoremen, brought most of his membership into the CIO under the newly formed International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union (ILWU), but the ILWU faced serious charges from the largest AFL holdout in Tacoma, Washington. Cannery workers, led by the Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union (CWFLU), voted to join the CIO but still faced an uncertain future amidst AFL challenges in the industry.

Forging a Tradition among West Coast Longshoremen

The West Coast longshoremen established themselves as an autonomous unit of the International Longshoremen Association (ILA) within the AFL following the West Coast Waterfront Strike of 1934. The strike leadership itself was centered at San Francisco, where it ended in a city-wide general strike, but the strike represented the entire waterfront along the West Coast. From the beginning of the strike, Bridges had established himself as the clear leader of the rank-and-file membership. Facing fierce resistance from employers to his leadership, Bridges and his rank-and-file base rejected an agreement signed on June 16, 1934, by ILA president Joe Ryan. The agreement gave little in terms of settling bargaining positions but promised to enter into collective bargaining after strikers returned to work. Bridges and the rank-and-file nullified the agreement and refused to return to work.⁷ At the heart of their dispute was full union recognition, a closed-shop, union-

⁶ Zeigler, *The CIO*, 66-67; Nelson, *Workers*, 224; Otilie Markholt, *Against the Current, A Social Memoir* [2001]. Ron Magden Papers, University of Washington, Seattle, 118-119; American Federation of Labor, *Report of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1937* (Washington D.C.: Judd and Detweiler, 1937), 106.

⁷ Thomas G. Plant, *The Pacific Coast Longshoremen's Strike of 1934*. (San Francisco: Waterfront Employers' Union of San Francisco, 1934), 6; "Arbitrators Board Told Owners Have Refused to Make a Single Concession," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 11, 1934, 11.

controlled hiring hall, and an increase in wages with fewer hours. Following the failed June 16 agreement, Ryan publicly condemned Bridges and charged that he was leading a communist minority that refused to allow the rank-and-file membership to return to work.⁸ The longshoremen eventually won the dispute in arbitration by the National Labor Relations Board, and Bridges came out as the champion and eventual leader of the ILA on the West Coast. Burt Nelson, a longtime waterfront worker in Seattle, felt that that the June 16 “sell-out agreement” made the eventual transition the CIO a “foregone conclusion.”⁹ Of course, his observation was made in hindsight, and the CIO did not exist in June 1934, but the West Coast ILA certainly had greater goals than the AFL could provide. After the strike, Bridges and other waterfront union leaders formed the Maritime Federation of the Pacific to coordinate efforts of all West Coast maritime unions—a pseudo industrial union.

Going into 1937, the main concern of the ILA was the apparent lack of support from the AFL in organizing the unorganized inland warehouse workers. In this dispute, Bridges' ILA met Beck's Teamsters, who objected to initial ILA successes and challenged their jurisdiction over the inland warehouse unions. Shortly after Beck raised concerns, he was supported by President Green, who declared that jurisdiction of the ILA warehouses fell to the Teamsters.¹⁰ Although the dispute between Beck and Bridges ran up and down the West Coast, Beck had been in effective control of the Seattle labor movement since 1925.¹¹ Because of Beck's strength, he managed not only control of the labor movement, but he built an alliance with Seattle Mayor John Dore, through which he gained access to the city police. The police became effective tools in busting ILA warehouse picket

⁸ Nelson, *Workers*, 144.

⁹ Burt Nelson, interview by Ron Magden, March 3, 1987, Ron Magden papers.

¹⁰ Berner, *Seattle*, 387-91.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 358; Evan Weston, interview by Gerald Vandenberg and Fayette Krause, April 10, 1969. Oral History Collection, University of Washington, Seattle. Also see Dembo, *Unions and Politics*, 347-413 for the growing conservative influence on the CLC and the eventual control of Beck, who while not an officer in the CLC, remained influential through his management of the strong Teamsters' Unions in Seattle.

lines while ignoring Teamster warehouse pickets and physical assaults on other unions who objected to Beck's methods.¹²

The rivalry between Beck and Bridges seemed to be more related to Beck's absolute hatred for the CIO and suspicion of Bridges' communist sympathies. In April 1937, Beck further declared that the CIO was "of communist origin" and its leaders were attempting to breed revolution, divide labor, and overthrow the government. Beck declared that "paid propagandists sent up from San Francisco by Harry Bridges" were "boring from within" the ranks of labor to promote the CIO and disrupt labor in Seattle. The *Seattle Times* coverage of Beck's statements provided few direct quotations but made clear that Beck felt Bridges had already become an agent of the CIO.¹³ This form of hostility toward Bridges came before Bridges had abandoned the AFL for the CIO. The quickness to charge Bridges as radical and a communist was similar to the attacks on Duncan in the early 1920s. Both leaders, in fact, valued democratic, rank-and-file leadership among the workers and generally promoted an environment which valued the strength and unity of the working-class above all else.

Despite President Green's declaration in 1936 that inland warehouses were Teamster jurisdiction, the Seattle ILA had continued to organize five inland warehouses in 1937. The Teamster's picketed the ILA warehouses, refusing to haul cargo, and on May 19, 1937, the Seattle Central Labor Council (CLC) responded by expelling all ILA warehouse representatives from the council.¹⁴ Notably, the Tacoma ILA made no attempts to ignore Teamster jurisdiction. Mostly, they sought to maintain good relations with AFL unions in Tacoma.¹⁵

¹² Evan Weston Interview; Berner, *Seattle*, 379-387.

¹³ "Destruction of Labor is C.I.O. Aim, Says Beck," *Seattle Times*, April 2, 1937, 1.

¹⁴ Markholt, *Against the Current*, 119.

¹⁵ Nelson, *Waterfront Workers*, 240; Ronald Magden, *The Working Longshoremen* (Tacoma: Tacoma Longshore & Research Committee, 1991), 161.

In May 1937, the West Coast ILA convention was held in Seattle. Though he supported Beck in the labor disputes between the Teamsters and Longshoremen, Mayor Dore opened the convention and introduced Bridges as “the greatest leader labor has ever seen in this country,” but not before warning the delegates in attendance against “injuring” what had been gained by organized labor and reminding them that their gains were “easy to lose and hard to get.” Aside from the ominous opening, the overall theme of the convention was unity and solidarity of the labor movement. Bridges declared that the West Coast ILA was for a united labor movement, and the convention’s purpose was to keep labor united and not to promote divisive factions.¹⁶ The only sign that that the ILA was on its way out on the West Coast was the passage of a resolution supporting the purpose and goals of the CIO, opposing the AFL in expelling CIO members, and calling for a unified labor movement with the CIO intact and within the AFL.¹⁷ However, within a few months, a majority of the ILA on the West Coast would vote to disaffiliate with the AFL and form the ILWU under the banner of the CIO. After the transition, Lewis appointed Bridges director of West Coast operations for the CIO.¹⁸ The only major holdout was the ILA of Tacoma, who remained with the AFL until finally joining the ILWU in 1958.¹⁹ How the dispute played out in the Seattle area in terms of propaganda and rhetoric can best be observed by the efforts of the nearby Tacoma ILA to the ILWU in general. While some evidence in texts suggest the Seattle ILWU launched a campaign of its own,

¹⁶ International Longshoremen’s Association, *Report of Proceedings of the 30th Annual Convection of the International Longshoremen’s Association, Pacific Coast District 38*. Seattle, WA, May 3-22, 1937, 5, Ron Magden papers.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 212-213.

¹⁸ Zeigler, *The CIO*, 73.

¹⁹ The main reason the Tacoma ILA remained out of the ILWU seemed to relate to red-baiting associated with the CIO and ILWU. Also, during the 1920s, the Tacoma ILA remained the stalwart port of the Pacific Coast District of the ILA, when most other ports lost their contracts in the open-shop drives of the 1920s. During this time, they opposed the IWW-led Marine Workers Industrial Union who made many failed attempts to organized West Coast longshoremen during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Tacoma may have seen themselves as the rightful leaders of the ILA on the West Coast, and their ILA membership throughout the 1920s may have left them strong defenders of the AFL. Their leader Paddy Morris was a one-time contender to the district leadership of Bridges. See Magden, *Working Longshoremen*, Chapters 7 through 10.

their testimony at the first convention of the ILWU suggests that their struggle was not as troublesome as at other ports.²⁰

The True Leaders of the West Coast

Until the CIO split, the West Coast ILA had truly been a unified, rank-and-file labor union, exhibiting militant tendencies to force their demands on employers. The West Coast longshoremen, unlike at East Coast or Gulf Coast ports, had galvanized democratic, rank-and-file labor strategies, where the general popular will of the unionists took precedence over leaders' personal viewpoints on union contracts, strike votes, and general strategy. These characteristics defied local loyalties based on their shared experience of the 1934 strike.²¹ For the AFL holdovers in Tacoma, the fundamental concern was a perceived communist element in the CIO. Such concerns gave way to claims of a dictatorial leadership that made a mockery of rank-and-file, democratic, and militant tradition. Tacoma ILA descriptions of the ILWU were generally framed within the idea of a communist-led divisive force that destroyed the unity and ideals of the West Coast ILA. Moreover, the ILWU viewed themselves in the same fashion that the Tacoma ILA holdovers viewed themselves—promoters of true progressive, rank-and-file unionism.

At the first ILWU convention held in 1938, the reasons for leaving the AFL were outlined. A continuous absence of Ryan in extending support to the aims of the West Coast ILA was an overarching factor. The ILA viewed Ryan as “silent” on the jurisdictional dispute with the Teamsters. Further, the convention accused Ryan of slandering West Coast leaders and mocking their rank-and-file ideals. As if to reinforce their idea of solidarity and unity in the labor movement, the ILWU

²⁰ International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union, *Report of Proceedings of the 1st Annual Convention of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union*, Aberdeen, WA, April 4-17, 1938, 165-66; Ron Magden papers. No collection of materials could be found explicitly from the Seattle ILA or ILWU.

²¹ Nelson, *Workers*, 230.

pledged support to all “progressive” AFL unions that based themselves on democratic, rank-and-file principles. Finally, the convention condemned the AFL leadership and Ryan for attempting to “stir up fear, hatred and confusion among organized workers” after Ryan levied a 5 cent per capita tax on the West Coast ILA to fund the AFL anti-CIO efforts. The rank-and-file ILWU members recognized such a tax to be a “labor splitting” tactic.²²

In regards to the ILA holdouts, the ILWU convention passed Resolution 36 condemning the leadership, but not the workers, of the unions. Resolution 36 opposed efforts of Ryan and “ILA phony officials” that intended to confuse workers who overwhelmingly voted as a coast-wide union to affiliate with the ILWU. It further resolved that they “brand [ILA officials] as a disgrace to the labor movement, betrayers of the workers, and enemies of democracy.” However, they asserted that the members of the ILA holdovers who remained outside of the ILWU could not be blamed for being misled by the ILA propaganda campaign.²³

While the statements made at the 1938 ILWU convention cannot be directly correlated to the opinions and beliefs of the Seattle ILWU, the Seattle ILWU did report a lack of significant resistance from Seattle longshoremen to the ILWU platform. They also did distribute fliers and pamphlets extolling the virtues of the CIO and ILWU and the reasons for leaving the AFL.²⁴ More can be understood from the Tacoma longshoremen, who rebranded the ILA labor paper, *The Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, to voice opposition to the ILWU and CIO.²⁵

²² ILWU, *1st ILWU Convention*, 103.

²³ Nelson, *Workers*, 222-23.

²⁴ ILWU, *1st ILWU Convention*, 165-67.

²⁵ Nelson, *Workers*, 272; Magden, *Working Longshoremen*, 162. The *Pacific Coast Longshoremen* began publication under the ILA in 1935 and acted as a propaganda tool to reinforce ideals of solidarity along the West Coast. See Kristin Ebeling, “Pacific Coast Longshoremen,” Labor Press Project, University of Washington, 2008, accessed December 10, 2013, http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/laborpress/Pacific_Longshoreman.shtml. Although this article states the newspaper ceased after the formation of the ILWU, in fact it continued under the Tacoma ILA as

According to Tacoma Longshore worker Burt Nelson, the strongest support for Bridges and the ILWU came from the younger longshoremen who had little experience in the long struggle of the longshoremen prior to 1934. From the very beginning, a large number of longshoremen in Tacoma had been against the CIO.²⁶ Although a small majority initially favored moving to the ILWU for the sake of solidarity and unity with the West Coast, they were quickly overwhelmed by “virulent anti-communism.” Charges that Bridges and the CIO were communist-inspired organizations became too much for the Tacoma ILA holdovers to overcome. In addition to such fears, many of the older generation remembered the considerable backlash against organized labor following the 1919 Seattle general strike and the 1919-1920 red scares. When Nelson, a supporter of the ILWU and CIO spoke to the Tacoma longshoremen at the Tacoma CLC about the CIO, he was drowned out by calls that it was the “Communist Industrial Organization.”²⁷ Despite their overall approval of the pattern of democratic, rank-and-file militancy of the ILA which was imported into the ILWU, it is clear from the *Pacific Coast Longshoremen* that the perceived communist leadership, as suggested by Burt Nelson, was the key wedge between the Tacoma ILA and the ILWU.

From the *Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, it was clear that the national dispute played little into the ILA longshoremen’s minds. In no way did the Tacoma ILA seek to challenge the model of industrial unionism. In fact, they supported the industrial model. Several articles point to the idea that the industrial model touted by the CIO and ILWU were only covers for a communist agenda, and represented little of true industrial unionism. One article stated, “The principles of genuine industrial unionism upon which the Maritime Federation of the Pacific Coast was founded are too

evidenced by references by Nelson and Magden. Articles referenced in this paper come from hardcopies that survive in the Ronald Magden Papers at the University of Washington.

²⁶ Burt Nelson Interview; Magden interviewed another Tacoma longshoremen, T.A. Thronson, who claimed the Tacoma ILA supported the CIO goals and actions until the CIO started raiding already organized AFL unions for more members, see Magden, *Working Longshoremen*, 160.

²⁷ Burt Nelson Interview.

important to be discarded for the cheap substitute proposed by the communist C.I.O. 'maritime council.'"²⁸ Another article claimed the ILWU and CIO were "substituting the empty phrases of communist betrayers for the solidarity of real industrial unionism."²⁹ It is clear that the Tacoma ILA held themselves as supporters of industrial unionism, contrary to the national dispute between the AFL and CIO. Rather, the Tacoma ILA justified their opposition to the ILWU and CIO on grounds that the suspected communist goal undermined the promise of industrial unionism. Further, the Tacoma ILA believed they already had in place an industrial model when the West Coast was with the ILA. Moreover, the ideals of unity, militancy, and rank-and-file democracy unique to the West Coast longshoremen were challenged by the ILA only as far as suspected communist leadership undermined those principles.

One charge made by the ILA was that the CIO and Bridges lacked the desire to maintain unity among the waterfront unions as the ILWU claimed. Taking the premise that the ILWU and CIO were communist groups, they declared that the purpose of the ILWU and CIO was to disrupt and unravel worker unity. As proof, one article suggested that the ILA had unity with the strong Maritime Federation of the Pacific before ILWU.³⁰ In addition, the article charged that while the AFL had supported the ILA since 1933, Bridges wrongfully blamed Beck, Ryan, and the AFL whenever he failed to get his way.³¹

In other articles addressing unity, the intent was to show the ILA carried the tradition while

²⁸ "The Blow Has Fallen," *Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, November 17, 1937, 3, Ron Magden papers.

²⁹ "Peace Conference Drags On," *Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, November 17, 1937, 2, Ron Magden papers.

³⁰ While it is true that the Maritime Federation was a strong component of West Coast unity, Nelson attributes the weakening and eventual collapse of the Federation to Harry Lundeberg, the president of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific, who made calculated moves to preserve his power and authority of his union over the unity of the Federation. In addition, Nelson also asserts that true communists within the Federation were opposed to the CIO split from the AFL, and a majority supported a slow push to industrial unionism within the AFL. See Nelson, *Workers*, 225; *Ibid.*, 227-228.

³¹ "One Imperative Need," *Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, January 26, 1938, 3, Ron Magden papers.

the ILWU abandoned it. In portraying the ILWU leadership as a power-hungry and deceptive group, the article declared “under the pretense of promoting unity and industrial unionism,” the ILWU leaders sought, but failed to gain control of the Maritime Federation, and they were only attempting to selfishly destroy what they could not have. Making a final plea that the ILWU was now only succeeding in provoking contempt from employers, it clarified that only true unity with organized labor would prevent the damage the CIO provoked.³²

The ILA challenged the ILWU on their record of democratic principles and their record on militant leadership. Bridges was criticized as misleading the workers and, again, allying with communists to disrupt organized labor. One article claimed that he made a “mockery” of militant labor tradition, placed fault on others, and collaborated with “commie stooges” when he could not win control of the Maritime Federation through “rank-and-file vote.” Finally, the article charged that Bridges lied at the 1937 ILA convention when he professed unity as his goal, and he had since engaged in an “unholy alliance” with Lewis and the CIO, where he was appointed—not elected—director of the West Coast CIO. Attempting to reach out to the workers, the article pressed that the rank-and-file were merely misled, and were only the “catspaws” of the “autocratic” ILWU. Further, the article insisted “the communist group in the maritime industry has done more to destroy real industrial unionism and solidarity than employers could effect in a thousand years.”³³

Such themes persisted in much of the talk of the ILWU. Frequently, Bridges would be labeled “director” or “supreme director” to emphasize his position within the CIO as an appointed one. One article gave special attention to labeling every reference to the AFL heads as “leaders” and CIO heads as “appointees.”³⁴ In this respect, the Teamster's joined in, attacking the CIO and Lewis as

³² “Stop, Look and Listen!,” *Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, November 17, 1937, 1;3, Ron Magden papers.

³³ “Bridges' Gang Run True to Form,” *Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, January 26, 1938, 4. Ron Magden papers.

³⁴ “Harry Makes 'Em Eat Crow,” 1; “Peace Conference Drags On,” *Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, November 17, 1937, 2, Ron Magden papers.

“stooges” representing minority viewpoints in an organization that exclaimed rank-and-file rule, but was filled with self-appointed labor leaders.³⁵

The militant record of the ILWU was also challenged as the ILA made efforts to mock the failure of the ILWU to stand their ground in disputes. At an ILWU boycott of Coos Bay lumber in Oregon supporting CIO lumbermen against the AFL, the ILA made light of Bridges immediately caving to employers who demanded the boycott stop. The article jokingly quoted Bridges as telling the employers, “They'd never do it again and would be good little boys.”³⁶ Another article titled “Militants vs. 'Phonies” mockingly suggested that where the self-proclaimed labor militants in the ILWU had failed to secure better wages in their contract negotiations, the ILA “phonies,” as the ILWU referred to them, had managed to win better wages with their employers.³⁷

While the communist overtones bled through in many criticisms of the ILWU, the ILA attempted to grant legitimacy to their concerns by challenging the ILWU on their record on rank-and-file democracy, promotion of unity, and militant leadership. All of these were characteristics that the West Coast ILA remnants sought from their leadership, because that is what they had under the ILA between 1934 and 1937, before Bridges took the majority of longshoremen to the CIO. At the 1938 convention of the IWLWU, they claimed that over twelve thousand rank-and-file longshoremen voted to join the CIO, whereas only a little more than three thousand voted to remain with the AFL.³⁸ Regardless of if the numbers were precise, or even exaggerated, practically every port on the West Coast joined the CIO when Bridges formed the ILWU through democratic, rank-and-file vote. While Bridges was appointed director of the West Coast CIO, he was elected

³⁵ “Lewis and Stooges Appointed Selves to Control of C.I.O.” *Teamsters Bulletin*, September, 10, [1937?], 3, Ron Magden papers.

³⁶ “Harry Makes 'Em Eat Crow,” *Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, November 17, 1937, 1, Ron Magden papers.

³⁷ “Militants vs. 'Phonies;” *Pacific Coast Longshoremen*, November 17, 1937, Ron Magden papers.

³⁸ ILWU, *1st ILWU Convention*, 104.

leader of the ILA, and retained his position in the ILWU through election as well. It was likely that the fear of communist leanings in the CIO led the few hold out ports, such as the Tacoma ILA, to believe the other propaganda that Bridges became corrupt, power hungry, and a divisive enemy of labor, just like the earlier conservative opponents targeted the Duncan progressives

However, not everyone viewed the ILWU as an enemy of labor or led by communists. The cannery workers actively cooperated with the Seattle ILA, and then the Seattle ILWU after their switch. At the first ILWU convention the Seattle ILWU reported that more of their efforts were directed toward assisting the cannery workers in their disputes than in combating their own enemies, indicating their broader class-conscious support transcended matters of race to some degree.³⁹ The CWFLU was recognized as the only bargaining unit in the cannery industry by the Maritime Federation, and as a member of the Maritime Federation, the longshoremen were obliged to recognize the CWFLU as well. However, the Seattle ILWU went beyond recognition and moral support and granted a one thousand dollar loan to the CWFLU to organize campaigns in April 1937, while at the same time the AFL demanded back affiliation taxes from the CWFLU.⁴⁰ In May 1938, members of the CWFLU offered official appreciation to the ILWU for their support after winning control of the cannery workers hiring hall.⁴¹ Despite their unity and affiliation with the Maritime Federation, the Cannery Workers' dispute with the AFL was quite different.

Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union

The Cannery Workers Union formed in 1933 under charter from the AFL, but the AFL never treated the cannery workers fairly. Among the early concerns of the CWFLU was their inability to join the Seattle CLC. The council represented all AFL-chartered unions, but three years after

³⁹ Ibid., 167.

⁴⁰ ILWU Local 1-19 Meeting Minutes, April 21, 1937, Ron Magden papers.

⁴¹ ILWU Local 1-19 Meeting Minutes, May 19, 1938, Ron Magden papers.

attaining an AFL charter, the CWFLU remained unseated at the Seattle CLC, and the CLC leaders ignored their applications to appoint delegates. The CWFLU sent their first application for affiliation with the Seattle CLC on April 4, 1936, after a unanimous vote of CWFLU members endorsed the measure for affiliation. Again, on March 17, 1937, they sent another application, referring to yet another earlier application dating from November 8, 1936, to which the CLC never responded or considered.⁴² Though more applications for affiliation would follow, by early 1937, open disputes between the CWFLU and AFL emerged when Seattle AFL organizer Leo Flynn chartered a segregated Japanese cannery union, AFL local 20454, headed by Clarence T. Arai, a prominent lawyer in the Seattle Japanese community.⁴³

Arai had convinced Flynn and many Japanese workers in the cannery industry that the Filipino dominance of the CWFLU would only lead to discrimination when it came to assigning jobs.⁴⁴ In reality, as the CWFLU charged at the time, Arai's union represented an attempt to continue the system of labor contracting, where employers paid a fee to a contractor, who in turn handled all of the hiring of cannery workers for the canning season.⁴⁵

When the CWFLU launched protests, Flynn attacked the union, claiming that since its foundation in 1933, it had not been in good standing with the AFL. He accused the CWFLU as being too democratic and threatened to revoke their charter if they did not pay back dues taxes owed to the AFL to maintain their affiliation.⁴⁶ What "too democratic" meant is uncertain from documents,

⁴² Letter from Ponce Torres to Seattle CLC, April 4, 1936; March 17, 1937. Box 8/3. Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union Records, University of Washington, Seattle. (Hereafter CWFLU records).

⁴³ Friday, *Organizing Asian*, 169-170; Markholt, *Against the Current*, 119; CWFLU Meeting Minutes, February 23, 1937, CWFLU records.

⁴⁴ Berner, *Seattle*, 392; Friday, *Organizing Asian*, 166-67; Markholt, *Against the Current*, 119

⁴⁵ Berner, *Seattle*, 392; Dorothy Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003): 188-89; Frank Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity among the Japanese in Seattle*, 1981 ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981): 26.

⁴⁶ CWFLU Minutes, January 24, 1937. Box 1/3. CWFLU Records, University of Washington, Seattle..

but it suggested that the Flynn thought the CWFLU policies did not reflect the best interests of all members. Perhaps this suggests that Flynn felt the Filipino majority easily overruled the concerns of the Japanese minority through democratic, rank-and-file vote. In February 1937, CWFLU leaders, under advice from their business agent, Conrad Espe, outlined that Flynn was working to split the union, taking advantage of racist and nationalist sentiment to do so. Espe proposed that if the AFL intended to continue such tactics, the CWFLU should take steps to become independent of the AFL or affiliate with the CIO.⁴⁷ The following month, the CWFLU won unqualified support from the Maritime Federation, who declared they would fully support the CWFLU against AFL “labor splitting tactics.”⁴⁸

With Maritime Federation support, the CWFLU quickly won exclusive bargaining rights with the industry employers for the 1937 season. However, when it came time to board ships headed for Alaska, the CWFLU members met a picket filled with members of the Japanese cannery union. The dispute played out in the local newspapers, and Beck’s Teamsters supported Flynn and Arai in refusing to let the CWFLU board the ships.⁴⁹ President Green wired the Maritime Federation to demand that they stop “discriminating” against the Japanese cannery workers or face expulsion from the AFL, to which the Maritime Federation responded by declaring Green’s “threats as a labor-splitting tactic.”⁵⁰ The CWFLU finally boarded ships for Alaska after they won a court injunction against Arai’s union on May 4, after five days of picketing by Flynn and Arai. CWFLU Treasurer Antonio Rodrigo declared that the victory positioned the CWFLU as “the most militant fighting organized groups for having emancipated the workers . . . [from] the contractors.”⁵¹ However, they sailed to Alaska knowing their success was without the support of the AFL and, in fact, in spite of

⁴⁷ CWFLU Minutes, February 23, 1937, CWFLU records.

⁴⁸ CWFLU Minutes, March 16, 1937, CWFLU Records.

⁴⁹ Markholt, *Against the Current*, 119.

⁵⁰ “Washington Maritime Unit May Be Ousted by A.F.L.,” *Seattle Times*, April 29, 1937.

⁵¹ Antonio G. Rodrigo letter to “Monks” Shimahara, CWFLU records; Markholt, *Against the Current*, 119.

AFL protests.

On September 11, 1937, Rodrigo wrote Flynn presenting one last opportunity to mend the wounds between the CWFLU and the AFL. Rodrigo demanded that the AFL revoke the Japanese union charter, recognize the CWFLU at the Seattle CLC, protect the jurisdiction of the CWFLU over the cannery industry, and apologize for past activities against the CWFLU.⁵² No resolution was found, and by the end of September, the CWFLU voted by a margin of 9 to 1 to affiliate with the CIO.⁵³ Flynn promptly re-chartered the AFL local with leftovers who supported the AFL.⁵⁴

Into 1938, the AFL or CIO question was carried out through propaganda campaigns. Though the CWFLU maintained support from the Maritime Federation and every labor body relevant to their work in Alaska, the final question for who controlled the industry was settled by the National Labor Relations Board in May 1938, where the CWFLU was certified by popular rank-and-file vote over the dual Japanese and Filipino unions of the AFL.⁵⁵ In the campaign for certification, the CWFLU launched an all-out publicity effort designed to target the leaders of the rival unions and the AFL. By focusing on the leadership, the CWFLU hoped to avoid slandering rank-and-file members and win them over to the CIO, just as each longshoremen group had done in their conflict.

“Unholy Alliance of Finks, Fakers and Phonies”

Naturally, the publications put out by the CWFLU targeted the three most troublesome

⁵² Antonio G. Rodrigo letter to Leo Flynn, CWFLU records.

⁵³ CWFLU Referendum on AFL or CIO, CWFLU records.

⁵⁴ “C.I.O. Cannery Union Raps Rival,” *Seattle Times*, November 24, 1937, 4; the leader of the re-chartered local, Belosillo (first name not discovered), went on record as a member of the CWFLU Emergency Committee opposing affiliation with the CIO. He further claimed that the AFL was not at fault for their jurisdictional troubles and proposed “cleaning house” by pushing out trouble makers before taking a vote for CIO affiliation, see Minutes of Emergency Committee Meeting, September 13, 1937, CWFLU records. See *The Cannery Worker* (newsletter), January 11, 1938, CWFLU, for mention of Belosillo’s leadership of re-chartered local.

⁵⁵ Friday, *Organizing Asian*, 170.

groups that the CWFLU faced. They targeted Arai, as the leader of the Japanese union, Flynn as the AFL organizer, and the collective leaders of the re-charted AFL union. The most pressing core of support required by the CWFLU was the Japanese. Although Arai and Flynn charged that the CWFLU discriminated against the Japanese, the evidence suggests otherwise. According to Frank Miyamoto, the primary problem the Japanese faced in the cannery industry was a social solidarity in the community that made it difficult for the Japanese to ally themselves with the Filipinos against their own Japanese contractors and Arai's union. Miyamoto asserted that for this reason, the Japanese delayed support for the CWFLU.⁵⁶ Taul Watanabe, a Japanese organizer for the CWFLU, claimed that while most of the younger Japanese were harder to organize because they did not look at the cannery industry as a career, a core group of no more than 200 older Japanese who had been career cannery workers mostly stuck with Arai because of the language barrier with the Filipinos.⁵⁷ Regardless of the cause, the Japanese members of the CWFLU made a concerted effort to "humanize" the CIO and CWLFU in the Japanese community by appearing at social functions whenever they could. "Dyke" Miyagawa recalled that "it wasn't much different from a political campaign. We had to put ourselves out as the good guys, young but effective, sincere, knowledgeable."⁵⁸

On January 8, 1938, nine young Japanese cannery workers wrote to the Japanese community paper to express their support for the CWFLU and CIO. Addressing the situation pragmatically, they outlined how the union had the support of the Maritime Federation, financial support of an international labor body, and the support of the Alaskan Labor Convention. They further pointed out that all labor organizations that mattered within the canned-salmon industry

⁵⁶ Miyamoto, *Social Solidarity*, 26.

⁵⁷ Taul Watanabe, interview by Richard Berner, April 32, 1969. Oral History Collection. University of Washington, Seattle.

⁵⁸ Daisho Miyagawa letter to "Big Bill" Hosokawa, February 25, 1968. Daisho Miyagawa Papers. University of Washington, Seattle.

had gone on record as opposing AFL cannery unions. The Japanese cannery workers closed by declaring that the CWFLU was the “best fit for all rank-and-file Japanese.”⁵⁹ Overall, the message was that the Japanese who wanted work had to side with the CWFLU for their own benefit. But not all tactics sought to rely on pragmatic arguments.

Most organizing tactics for the Japanese focused on condemning Arai as an enemy of labor and a friend of business. Karl Yoneda, assisting the CWFLU organizing efforts, publically accused Arai of being a representative of “companies and former contractors” over the workers’ interests.⁶⁰ The CWFLU repeatedly attacked Arai as a labor splitter. Shortly after the Japanese union formed, the CWFLU called a meeting of Japanese cannery workers to outline their position of nondiscrimination. At the same time, they took special attention to accuse Arai of intentionally confusing the Japanese to reinstate the interests of the contractors. In notes made on the meeting, the leaders emphasized that all attacks on Arai were directed at his character, while being careful to make sure they could not be understood as an attack on his Japanese ethnicity.⁶¹ The goal, in short, was to break the ethnic solidarity of the Japanese cannery workers and replace it with the class-conscious solidarity long emphasized by progressives in Seattle and around the nation.

In dealing with the new re-chartered AFL local formed by Flynn, the CWFLU quickly formed a campaign to label the group the “Defeated Candidates Local.”⁶² This tactic emphasized that the CWFLU transitioned to the CIO under majority elected leadership and majority rank-and-file vote, whereas the new local was composed of minority representation, “defeated candidates” who supported the AFL in the previous union election. They continued this tactic against AFL loyalists, repeating the charge that it was a “defeated candidates club” and attacked Flynn as the leader of a

⁵⁹ Newspaper clipping, *North American Times*, January 8, 1938, CWFLU records.

⁶⁰ Friday, *Organizing Asian*, 168.

⁶¹ CWFLU Special Japanese Meeting Minutes, Jan. 11, 1937, CWFLU records.

⁶² “C.I.O. Cannery Union Raps Rival,” *Seattle Daily Times*, November 24, 1937, 4.

fake company union that protected “stooges” and labor contractors over the interests of the worker.⁶³

To demonstrate the cowardice and selfishness of Flynn, a CWFLU cartoon showed Flynn on his knees begging an angry grizzly bear, which represented the cannery employers. The cartoon showed Flynn crying for recognition of his union while admitting to being a labor disruptor, representing only the interests of himself and contractors.⁶⁴ Such images made it easy for the members of the opposing unions to clearly see the argument about the AFL, without reading long passages condemning specific actions.

Another series of cartoons released on the eve of the AFL and CIO jurisdictional election in May 1938 lampooned “Two-Faced Flynn.” Pulling an excerpt from a speech given in Kent, Washington, in 1937, the cartoon challenged Flynn on the reality of his avocation for splitting the AFL unions along racial lines. The cartoon quotes Flynn as saying “You are nothing but. . . greasy Filipinos,” followed by claims that Flynn only wanted the union’s money, cared little for the contract agreements that the workers desired, and even less for their unity as a labor force. The second face sarcastically characterized Flynn as reaching out to his “little brown brothers” to welcome them into the AFL.⁶⁵ Still another cartoon showed Flynn, teary eyed and in tantrum, exclaiming “come listen to me little brown brothers. Listen to me! Listen to me!,” as a mass of AFL workers fled toward the CIO, shouting back “I learned enough!”⁶⁶ Such cartoons emphasized the neglect that Flynn had not only for the Asians as an ethnic group, but also about his motivations for involving himself as an organizer in the cannery industry in the first place. Like their other enemies, the argument was

⁶³ Political Cartoon Regarding the Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union, Local 18257, and Their Affiliation with the AFL and the Abuses of Labor Disruptors, [1938], CWFLU records.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ “Two-Faced Flynn” [1938], CWFLU records.

⁶⁶ “The Rank and File of AFL gets tired of Flynn, Important All Cannery Workers Meeting.” [1938], CWFLU records.

Flynn represented a traitor to his class—a supporter of “greedy” capitalists and an opponent of effective, real solidarity among workers.

Overall, the theme was consistent. Arai, Flynn, and his “defeated candidates” were as one newsletter put it, “an unholy alliance of finks, fakers, and phonies.” They ran “puppet unions” established to “sell out” the workers to business and contractors.⁶⁷ But the CWFLU never targeted the workers. The workers, much like the longshoremen argued, were tricked and misled by conspiratorial efforts designed to divide workers and destroy class-conscious solidarity.

In their 1937-1938 yearbook, their first under the CIO, the CWFLU openly declared for no opposition to the general worker. The CWFLU stated they “had no quarrel with the AFL—the rank-and-file AFL workers in the land,” rather it was the “rotten rackets,” of the “Leo Flynn’s and Clarence T. Arai’s,” that the CWFLU opposed.⁶⁸ Expanding on this point, the further asked “Why persecute the misled workers,” pointing out that they could not be blamed for being misled about the CWFLU or the CIO. Once they discovered the truth about their own leaders and about the CIO, the Japanese and other workers would continue to join the ranks of the CWFLU.⁶⁹ It was important to target the leaders, because like the longshoremen, the CWFLU depended on building class conscious workers and not creating more enemies.

As the jurisdictional battle between the AFL and CIO in the canned-salmon industry engulfed CWFLU organizing efforts in late 1937 and throughout most of 1938, promoting the CIO platform while condemning the AFL became a key effort of the Publicity Committee of the CWFLU. More cartoons, short on text, big on visual impact, showed the CIO program promoting solidarity and worker rights. One cartoon promoted the CIO’s demands for better wages, equal wages, an

⁶⁷ CWFLU newsletter, November 24, 1937, CWFLU records.

⁶⁸ CWFLU Yearbook, 1937-1938, 4, CWFLU records.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

elimination of all forms of discrimination, and a unified work force in the cannery industry. The AFL was shown, again, as a divisive party, promoting company unionism and lacking considerable support among cannery workers. The cartoon imagined CWFLU workers and their CIO partners standing unified as trees in a forest, which was juxtaposed to the AFL's "mousy leadership" that was scared off by any real challenge.⁷⁰ Such images drove the CWFLU campaign against the leadership, and not the members, of their AFL rival unions.

Conclusion

The AFL and CIO dispute in Seattle represented the concerns of the unions involved at the local and regional level. While the national dispute, at a fundamental level, regarded the philosophical difference in organizing workers along industrial or craft lines, the longshoremen and cannery workers met different challenges. The CWFLU and the longshoremen expressed their concerns primarily through the lens of a sometimes obstructive and sometimes absent leadership in the AFL. While the longshoremen's efforts to organize inland warehousemen did represent an industrial model, and Bridges and the ILWU also supported industrial unionism, the ILA holdovers did not oppose the goal of industrial unionism. Instead they charged the CIO and ILWU destroyed what industrial model they formerly had and used industrial unionism as a lure to cover up their communist intentions.

After the split, the unique factors of the West Coast ILA came into play. Unable or unwilling to challenge the legitimacy of rank-and-file democratic procedures, militant unionism, or unity of the waterfront under a strong Maritime Federation to coordinate waterfront union efforts, the ILA holdouts, such as in Tacoma, sought to claim greater legitimacy to that tradition unique to the West

⁷⁰ Flier with political cartoon mocking the leadership of the AFL [1938], CWFLU records.

Coast ILA. In doing so, they framed their arguments around red-baiting, presenting the case that because the ILWU and CIO were under leadership of alleged communists, they had abandoned the unity, true rank-and-file democracy, and effective militant tradition of the West Coast ILA. In this way, the Tacoma ILA sought to use the national fear of communism associated with the ILWU to underpin local issues, just as the AFL portrayed Duncan.

The CWFLU faced a Seattle labor movement, led by Leo Flynn and the Seattle CLC, under the control of Beck, that sought to split their union along racial lines. Presenting the argument that the Filipinos dominated the CWFLU and would be unfair in their treatment of the Japanese cannery workers, Flynn and Arai sought to divide the union. Their actions were met by the CWFLU with charges that the AFL was attempting to sell out the union to the contractors who had only recently dominated the hiring of cannery workers for the industry. While speculation about what would have happened had the AFL been a more effective partner in the interests of the CWFLU are not made here, the total support granted to the CWFLU by the CIO and the Maritime Federation put the CWFLU in a position of legitimacy over the industry. From that support, they built an argument that where the local AFL leaders promoted division, racist, and nationalist tendencies, the CWFLU partnered with the CIO to provide class-conscious solidarity in the industry and among like-minded unionists locally. Their campaign efforts, focusing significant attacks on local AFL leaders, reinforced the struggle as a local dispute in which the CWFLU chose the CIO because the efforts of the local AFL to hinder their organizing efforts were not just against progressive goals, but even counter to purpose of organized labor.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

To begin her assessment of Seattle labor in the 1920s, Dana Frank provided a warning to her readers: her story did not have a happy ending.¹ The progressive coalition on the Seattle CLC fought and lost in their attempts to solidify a class-conscious movement within the AFL in Seattle. Her narrative mirrored much of the common assumptions historians had about the labor movement in Seattle and around the nation. When reviewing the evidence, it is impossible to argue that the AFL did not follow a progressive decline in Seattle. They mostly lost power in 1923, and whatever remnants remained had little impact on the affairs of the CLC afterward. Yet much of their ideologies and concerns lived on, took new forms, and extended into the New Deal labor environment of the 1930s. But historians must not always look upon the progressives only as the victims. Certainly, Seattle progressives played a critical role in their own demise. In an effort to maintain and grow on the gains they attained during the First World War, they misjudged the political and social environment around them. Following the war, labor could not rely on its impact on wartime industries to prove its Americanism. Following the war, both being class conscious and American were two mutual exclusive identities to conservative labor and many outside the labor movement, particularly with the rise of bolshevism in Russia and the red scares that followed. It was their own inability to recognize this change in the American social and political landscape that left them unequipped to navigate their post-war environment successfully.

The progressives also struggled to manage their public identity. Their errors in dealing with strikes and associating too closely with truly radical unionists, their hesitation to appease or concede to the position of employers, politicians, and the press limited their influence. Their enemies only strengthened their resolve and reinforced for the public that the type of labor

¹ Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 1.

ideologies which emanated from the Seattle CLC were equal to those which advocated communist revolution for the city and the nation. After their actions, no longer could Seattle labor find a political ally in which to advocate for their interests. Their actions left them little option but to pursue partisan politics. Their increasing reliance on supporting a third-party ticket brought them more into conflict with labor itself. As both the state and national AFL pressured the Seattle CLC to resign itself to fully supporting conservative AFL principles, the progressives became the target of conservative labor interests. Yet their failures did not mean the end of progressivism among many Seattle workers. Their concerns, particularly in the belief of freedom of debate, continued to resonate.

The struggle of progressive-minded unionists did not entirely meet an unhappy ending. Within the Seattle Labor College, progressive, class-conscious development of workers continued. While it existed outside of AFL dominance, it remained loyal to the AFL in principle, just as the Duncan progressives had on the CLC. The labor college maintained a far greater vision for labor than many realized existed outside of the more radical secessionist groups such as the IWW. Throughout the 1920s, it remained the only true place for education on the variety of visions for where labor could and should evolve, but they promoted thought and debate more so than action. Unlike the Duncan progressives, they did not operate politically through partisanship or a third party. Therefore, they met considerably fewer enemies than did past progressives in the CLC. They advocated educating the working class to realize its potential, to lead future reforms, and offer debate within the AFL. But the college too founded and gave support to the Unemployed Citizens' League, which itself played a part nationally bringing attention to the plight of the unemployed, as well as the potential for addressing the problem of unemployment aside from just private charity. They raised public concern and debate over the responsibility of the public to provide relief, address the distribution of wealth, and the importance of consumer spending. Thus Seattle

remained an important place in the 1920s and early 1930s for a center of progressive debate and experimentation that showed some precursory vision for what would occur within labor and at the federal level for the working class in the 1930s.

As the New Deal reformers came to power in the early 1930s, they put in place programs that aided the unemployed and union bargaining power. By 1935, the Wagner Act gave power to labor such that the industrial unionists finally had the power to push their vision for the organization of labor within the AFL. Their resolve in the 1930s was much greater than that of the 1920s and before. At first, Lewis and CIO supporters sought to seek reform within the AFL. When the AFL refused to accommodate their model cooperatively, the CIO was forced out on its own. The movement may not have survived had it not been for the New Deal labor protections, but with the protections the industrial unionists within the CIO had the resolve to challenge the AFL, becoming only reluctant secessionists.

In Seattle, the dispute erupted in 1937 when the CIO was pushed out and forced to sustain itself through organizing more workers under its model. However, the dispute in Seattle had little to do with the concerns over industrial unionism. Rather, from the cannery workers and the longshoremen, their conflicts with AFL leadership became the driving factor. In their rhetoric, justifications for their secession centered more on preserving working-class unity. Targeting the leadership of their own AFL unions, they sought to demonstrate an apathetic and divisive leadership that cared little for the unity labor deserved. In the AFL holdovers in Tacoma, much of the same justifications were used. It was not the issue of militancy, class-based allegiances, or even industrial unionism that solidified their decision to remain with the AFL. Rather, it was the same fear that the AFL used nationally—as labor's enemies used in the 1920s—to justify their position. The CIO represented a communist plot to overthrow labor and divide workers.

In each of these phases of Seattle labor, the theme of class consciousness was incredibly important to the goals of progressive labor. It was the feelings of local solidarity, understood through their similar struggle as a class against employers that the Duncan progressives sympathized with—but did not as their opponents challenged significantly collaborate with. To maintain this class-conscious solidarity that had roots deeper than just the Duncan progressives, the Duncan progressives struggled to shift strife away from conservative versus radical and more toward the common goals they held as workers. Duncanism, the early form of industrial unionism proposed by James Duncan and his supporters, similarly relied on workers sacrificing their unions' individual goals in favor of the greater strength of workers in other trades. As a class, workers under Duncanism struggled for the goals of labor and not merely for the benefit of their union's individual contract with an employer.

The Seattle Labor College too operated in this way, but within a much calmer social environment. With the Duncan progressives removed from positions of significant influence on the CLC, much of the hostility directed at Seattle labor by both the AFL and business leaders, politicians, the press similarly faded. With no significant attacks on their agenda, the Seattle Labor College provided a vibrant, mostly peaceful setting in which to safely educate workers to view themselves in terms of their power and needs as a class. The importance of having leaders among the workers who understood and coordinated efforts toward building class consciousness is evident by the founding of the Seattle Unemployed Citizens' League—the first league that would influence others around the nation and bring sympathetic public attention. Without the Seattle Labor College there may not have otherwise been effective leaders in Seattle who could inspire a group of unorganized, non-unionized, unemployed citizens toward collective action, seeking goals and making demands based on the unity they held as a group. Perhaps not the first league in the nation, at least.

Together, the Duncan progressives and the Seattle Labor College represented a clear

progression. They were tied to each other quite clearly though lineage; participated in by many of the same people. While the Seattle Labor College began to distance itself from the CLC, it did so to protect itself from the encroaching conservatism on the council—and from the council's critics. Yet the model of the Duncan progressives survived. Loyal to the AFL in every way, they sought only a forum for debate, knowledge, and discussion as they eagerly imagined a more progressive future for labor within the AFL and how to make that future reality. This was not different in most regards to the Duncan progressives within the CLC.

Class-conscious solidarity remained important within the CIO as well, however the goal was not entirely the same. The CIO became less dedicated to reforming within the AFL. While they formed in the AFL and attempted to find acceptance from AFL leadership, unlike earlier progressives, they did not eventually back down, regroup, and wait for another time or another opportunity. They allowed themselves to break with the AFL. No longer AFL loyalists, they still sought much of the same goals as earlier progressives. They were dedicated to organizing workers who could never be organized in a trade union model. However, more progressive unions, like the longshoremen and cannery workers in Seattle, joined the CIO not because they could find no union representation through the AFL model, but because the AFL became anathema to their goals. As a strategy, this group employed class consciousness as a tactic in building support among workers. For the CIO, the leaders of the AFL represented class traitors and benefactors of relationships with employers and the capitalist system. For the cannery workers, developing class consciousness was important to overcoming racial loyalties which the AFL attempted to reinforce. Among the longshoremen, class consciousness remained important in their rank-and-file union operation dating long before the CIO.

While the CIO seemed to be filled with a new generation of worker, though likely many from the earlier decades of industrial union struggles found their way in, they did not come to

achieve their progressive reforms on their own. Future scholarship on Seattle labor in 1920s should closer examine the role the labor college played in directly preparing future leaders and membership of CIO unions in Seattle. Just as Frank reminded historians that industrial union proponents of the post-WWI period did not just wait until the CIO formed in the 1930s, progressives in Seattle did not fall by the wayside and surrender their goals. They just became less prominent and less militant, but still present and effective in their promotion of progressive labor reform and debate.

Bibliography

Secondary Sources

- Altenbaugh, Richard J. "The Children and the Instruments of a Militant Labor Progressivism: Brookwood Labor College and the American Labor College Movement of the 1920s and 1930s." *History of Education Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (Winter, 1983): 395-411.
- Barrow, Clyde W. "Counter-Movement within the Labor Movement: Workers' Education and the American Federation of Labor, 1900-1937." *Social Science Journal* 27 no. 4 (1990): 395-417.
- Bercuson, David Jay. "The One Big Union in Washington." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (July 1978): 127-134.
- Berner, Richard C. *Seattle in the 20th Century, Vol. 2, Seattle 1921-1940: From Boom to Bust*. Seattle: Charles Press, 1992.
- Bernstein, Irving. *A History of the American Worker, Vol. 1, The Lean Years*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.
- _____. *A History of the American Worker, Vol. 2, Turbulent Years*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.
- Brecher, Jeremy. *Strike! Revised and Updated Version*. Boston: South End Press, 1997.
- Cravens, Hamilton. "A History of the Washington State Farmer-Labor Party, 1918-24." Master's thesis, University of Washington, 1962.
- Cravens, Hamilton. "The Emergence of the Farmer-Labor Party in Washington Politics, 1919-20." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (October 1966): 148-157.
- Curti, Merle. "Subsidizing Radicalism: The American Fund for Public Service, 1921-41." *Social Service Review* 33, no. 3 (September, 1959): 274-295.
- Dembo, Jonathan. *Unions and Politics in Washington State 1885-1935*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1983.
- Frank, Dana. *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement 1919-1929*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- _____. "Race Relations in the Seattle Labor Movement, 1915-1929." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 35-44.
- Friday, Chris. *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry, 1870-1942*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.
- Friedheim, Robert L. and Robin Friedheim. "The Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-20." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (October 1964): 146-156.
- Friedheim, Robert. "Prologue to a General Strike: The Seattle Shipyard Strike of 1919." *Labor History* 65, no. 2 (Spring 1965): 121-142.

- _____. "The Seattle General Strike of 1919." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (July 1961): 81-98.
- _____. *Seattle General Strike*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964.
- Fujita-Rony, Dorothy. *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Galenson, Walter. *The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement, 1935-1941*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960.
- Hillman, Arthur. *The Unemployed Citizens' League of Seattle*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1934.
- Johnson, Victoria. "The status of Identities: Racial Inclusion and Exclusion at West Coast Ports." *Social Movement Studies* 8, No. 2 (April 2009): 167-183.
- Katz, Daniel. *All Together Different: Yiddish Socialists, Garment Workers, and the Labor Roots of Multiculturalism*. New York: New York University Press, 2011.
- Lembcke, Jerry. "Labor and Education: Portland Labor College, 1921-1929." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 85, no. 2 (Summer, 1984): 117-134.
- Magden, Ronald. *The Working Longshoremen*. Tacoma: Tacoma Longshore & Research Committee, 1991.
- Miyamoto, Frank. *Social Solidarity among the Japanese in Seattle*. 1981 ed. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981.
- Morgan, Murray. *Skid Road*. Binghamton, NY: The Vail-Ballou Press, Inc., 1951.
- Morris, James O. "The AFL in the 1920's: A Strategy of Defense." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 11, no. 4 (July 1958): 572-590.
- Nelson, Bruce. *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- _____. "The 'Lords of the Docks' Reconsidered: Race Relations Among West Coast Longshoremen, 1933-1961." In *Waterfront Workers: New Perspectives on Race and Class*, edited by Calvin Winslow, 155-192. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.
- Putman, John C. *Class and Gender Politics in Progressive-Era Seattle*. Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2008
- Robbins, Mark W. "Transitioning Labor to the 'Lean Years': the middle class and employer repression of organized labor in post-World War I Chicago." *Labor History* 54, no. 3 (2013): 321-342.
- Sale, Roger. "Seattle's Crisis 1914-1919." *American Studies* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1973): 29-48.
- Schwantes, Carlos. *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism, and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1917*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979.
- _____. "Farmer-Labor Insurgency in Washington State: William Bouck, the Grange, and the Western Progressive Farmers." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (January 1985): 2-11.

_____. "Leftward Tilt on the Pacific Slope: Indigenous Unionism and the Struggle against AFL Hegemony in the State of Washington." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 70, no. 1 (January 1979): 24-34.

Wandersee, Winifred. "I'd Rather Pass a Law than Organize a Union." *Labor History* 34, no. 1 (January 1993): 5-32.

Ziegler, Robert. *The CIO: 1935-1955*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Primary Sources

"General Strike." *The Public: A Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 1089 (February 15, 1919): 166.

Albert, Peter J. and Grace Palladino, eds. *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, Vol. 11, *The Postwar Years, 1918-21*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

_____. *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, Vol. 12, *The Last Years, 1922-24*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

American Federation of Labor. *Report of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1920*. Washington D.C.: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1919.

_____. *Report of the Proceedings of the Fortieth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1920*. Washington D.C.: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1920.

_____. *Report of the Proceedings of the Forty-Third Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1923*. Washington D.C.: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1923.

_____. *Report of the Proceedings of the Fifty-First Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1931*. Washington D.C.: The Law Reporter Printing Company, 1931.

_____. *Report of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1938*. Washington D.C.: Judd and Detweiler, 1938.

_____. *Report of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor 1937*. Washington D.C.: Judd and Detweiler, 1937.

Bellingham Herald

Broussais C. Beck Papers, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union Records, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

Central Labor Council of Seattle. *The Seattle General Strike*. Seattle: Seattle Union Record Publishing Co., 1919.

Daisho Miyagawa Papers. University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

Deardorff, Neva R. "The Pioneer Youth in Camp." *Survey* 63, no. 2 (October 15, 1929): 77-79.

Dennett, Eugene V. *Agitprop: The Life of an American Working-Class Radical, the Autobiography of Eugene V. Dennett*. New York: SUNY Press, 1990.

Gompers, Samuel. "What Became of a Prophecy." December, 1922, 897-900. In *American Federationist* Vol. 29, pt. 1.

Harry E.B. Ault Papers, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

Harvey O'Connor Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Kennedy, John C. "Facts You Ought to Know About the Seattle Labor College." 1927. Seattle Pamphlets Collection, Special Collections, Seattle Public Libraries, Central Library, Seattle, WA.

King County Central Labor Council of Washington Records, University of Washington Library, Seattle, WA

Mark M. Litchman Papers, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

New Majority

O'Connor, Harvey. *Revolution in Seattle, A Memoir*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964.

Olympia Daily Record

Oral History Collection, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

Perkins, Frances. *People at Work*. New York: John Day Company, 1934.

Pierce County Central Labor Council Records, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA

Plant, Thomas G. *The Pacific Coast Longshoremen's Strike of 1934*. San Francisco: Waterfront Employers' Union of San Francisco, 1934.

Ronald Magden Papers, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

Pacific Coast Longshoremen

Teamsters Bulletin

Ottillie Markholt, *Against the Current, A Social Memoir* [unpublished manuscript].

International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union. *Report of Proceedings of the 1st Annual Convention of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union*, Aberdeen, WA, April 4-17, 1938.

International Longshoremen's Association. *Report of Proceedings of the 30th Annual Convection of the International Longshoremen's Association, Pacific Coast District 38*. Seattle, WA, May 3-22, 1937.

San Francisco Chronicle

Seattle Times

Strong, Anna Louise. *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1935.

Thomas, E. H.C. "Seattle's Political House-Cleaning." *The Outlook* (April 21, 1920): 698-99.

Union Record

University Extension Association. *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference National University Extension Association*. April 20-22, 1922. Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1923.

US Congress. House. *Japanese Immigration: Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization*. 66th Cong., 2nd sess., July 12-14, 1920.

Wells, Hulet M. *I Wanted to Work*. Unpublished autobiography. Hulet M. Wells papers, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

Wells, Hulet M. "They Organize in Seattle," *Survey*, March 15, 1932, 665-67.

"Workers' College Teach Co-Operation." *Co-Operation* 8, no. 1 (January, 1922): 15.

Workers Education Bureau. *Report of Proceedings First National Conference on Workers Education in the United States*. New York: Workers Education Bureau of America, 1921.

_____. *Report of Proceedings Second National Conference on Workers Education in the United States*. New York: Workers Education Bureau of America, 1922.