Taming the Machine: Comparing UAW and ILWU Responses to Automation, 1945-1972

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Abstract

This thesis is the first comparative history of rank-and-file workers in two key U.S industries – auto production and longshoring – to examine their response to automation in their workplaces in the mid-twentieth century. As these industries were two of the most heavily automated, they present an ideal comparison to draw out the often-decentralized views of the rank and file in histories of automation. Exploring the realm of responses to automation reveals these workers' engagement with and critique of Cold War rhetoric and ideas as these individuals were at the raw end of technological development and modernization. Initially, auto and longshore workers joined their union leaders in broadly supporting the post-war drive to increase productivity and uplift the U.S. economy through automation. Rather than this process bringing about relief from physical drudgery in the workplace, it instead led to workers resisting a newfound speed-up and the crushing monotony of their jobs. With their jobs a shadow of their former selves, the rank and file lost their sense of pride and reward in their occupations, instead seeking value for work in leisure and consumption outside of the workplace. Automated work encouraged regimented and stultifying behavior which these laborers resisted by seeking to retain elements of traditional rough masculinity in the workplace. This thesis argues that these issues culminated in resistance from auto and longshore workers centering around their deteriorating mental health and the growing issues of workplace stress and loss of their previous way of life. The resistance of these workers and the successes and failures of themselves and their unions illuminates how to alleviate the mental health issues of workers facing automation in the present day when unions' importance in industrial relations has diminished.

Abbreviations

AAWP	The American Auto Worker Project Oral Histories
AFL	American Federation of Labor
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
CP	Communist Party
GAW	Guaranteed Annual Wage
ILWU	International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union
ILWU13OH	ILWU Local 13 Oral History Project
MDTA	Manpower Development and Training Act
M&M	Mechanization & Modernization Agreement
PMA	Pacific Maritime Association
OL	Oviatt Library, California State University Northridge
SUB	Supplementary Unemployment Benefits
UAW	United Automobile Workers
WOWOH	Women on the Waterfront Oral History Project
WPR	Walter P. Reuther Library

Chronology

1947	Walter Reuther champions the “30-40” cause to his victory in the UAW Leadership ballot.
1949	Ford River Rouge and Lincoln auto plants strike over speed-up. Walter Reuther proclaims his support for GAW, Harry Bridges opposes it.
1951	ILWU negotiates an agreement with PMA protecting worker benefits as the longshore industry grows.
1955	UAW Committee on Automation formed; SUB negotiations with Ford conclude.
1957-1958	Sputnik I launches; Reuther abandons the “30-40” cause while Bridges retains his support.
1958	U.S. experiences a sharp recession; Reuther proposes a Profit-Sharing Plan with the U.S.’s five biggest auto manufacturers.
1961	ILWU negotiates the first M&M Agreement with the PMA; Reuther becomes involved with President’s Advisory Committees on Automation and Labor-Management Policy.
1962	The Manpower Development and Training Act is signed into law.
1965	Arthur Kornhauser’s study of auto worker mental health is published.
1966	ILWU negotiates the second M&M Agreement with the PMA, to growing membership criticism.
1969	ILWU negotiates the Container Freight Station Supplement to protect longshore workers’ right to control the movement of cargo to and from vessels.
1971	Strike action breaks out on the West Coast waterfront as the second M&M Agreement expires.
1972	Auto workers at the Lordstown, Ohio Chevrolet Vega plant strike over their working conditions.

Introduction

"I'm scared to death of [automation]…I just don't want to see automated trucks coming down the road in my lifetime." These ominous words were uttered by Jeff Baxter, a trucker interviewed during a pitstop at the massive Iowa 80 truck stop in 2017. Fellow truckers and employees at Iowa 80 were quick to dismiss Baxter's concerns. However, their responses affirmed that his prophecy seemed *inevitable*, but that his dystopia was so far ahead in the future that it did not bear thinking about.[1] Baxter's fear of his obsolescence is not without historical precedent. Indeed, the American worker in the middle of the twentieth century would have found the approach to technological change taken by the majority at Iowa 80 very familiar. Automation – defined as the introduction of automatic machinery to assist or supersede the human performance of tasks – was a watchword in post-war U.S. society and affected the lives of all Americans in some manner. Whether they faced transformations in the workplace through the introduction of new automated processes, or whether they were able to enjoy the wide range of consumer goods created by these new production methods, Americans understood that automation had become a lynchpin of U.S. society and technological advancement. While these changes might have appeared positive, the specter of obsolescence loomed large in the minds of those workers whose jobs were set to be simplified or replaced by machines. The concerns of twenty-first century truck drivers in this regard illustrates that the glory of technological progress underpinned by automation continues to have a real human impact. Therefore, the precedent of this impact, namely

[1] Dominic Rushe, "End of the Road: Will Automation Put an End to the American Trucker?," *The Guardian*, October 10, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/oct/10/american-trucker-automation-jobs.

automation's effect on the lives of workers in the initial post-war decades, bears important consideration. Their contentions, agreements, successes, and failures serve to both foreground and guide workers negotiating automation in their work lives in the present day.

One key difference between the current neoliberal era and mid-century was that unions were still a major force in industrial relations and a vehicle for worker concerns. Whereas Baxter can only protest as an individual about his fears relating to automation, mid-century workers hoped to convince their union leaders to fight for their best interests as their industries automated. This thesis focuses on the lived experience of workers in two specific labor unions: the United Automobile Workers (UAW) and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). It argues that auto and longshore workers were the vanguard of the post-war battle for workplace autonomy that was threatened by automation.

The automotive sector and longshoring are seemingly disparate industries that offer a fruitful comparison. These industries were two of the most heavily automated in the U.S. by the end of the twentieth century. The UAW, as the flagship union in the automobile industry, effectively experienced the origins of modern automation through the development and refinement of the assembly line and Fordist manufacturing principles.[2] As a result, the auto industry was frequently drawn upon as a case study by contemporaries wishing to understand the effects of automation on production and management. Similarly, the West Coast longshore industry represented by the ILWU experienced a massive and rapid transformation from the early 1970s onwards as the initial forays into automation that had occurred in the decades prior hit their full stride.[3] Once container shipping replaced traditional shipping by

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[2] Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth, "A Half Century of Struggle: Auto Workers Fighting for Justice," in *Autowork*, ed. Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth (Albany: State University of New York), 1-38; David Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production 1800-1932: The Development of Manufacturing Technology in the United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); David Noble, *Forces of Production: A Social History of Industrial Automation* (New York: Knopf, 1984); David Nye, *America's Assembly Line* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).

[3] Marc Levinson, *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Lincoln Fairley, *Facing Mechanization: The West Coast Longshore Plan* (Los Angeles: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1979); Herb

the late twentieth century, longshoring was practically an entirely different industry. The fact that the auto industry reached its maturity with regards to automation several decades earlier than the longshore industry is extremely helpful for comparison purposes. Namely, these differing timescales of development illuminate the emergence of similar contentions among both workforces at the first introduction of automation through to its widespread implementation. Equally important for comparison is that these industries are so different. The auto industry is a central production industry in the U.S., whereas the West Coast longshore industry is a crucial part of the U.S.'s global distribution network.

Not only does this comparative approach present a greater spread of experience from workers dealing with different types of automation in different job contexts, but it also reinforces the existence of any shared trends between the two industries due to their geographical and economic sectoral disparity. After all, as Philippa Levine among others argue, one of the central merits of comparative history is that seeming incongruity between case studies makes the appearance of similarity speak strongly to the existence of trends and correlations through time.[4] By illuminating these similarities, comparative study of the UAW and ILWU uplifts the often-decentralized narratives of the rank and file who underwent a shared negotiation of automation in their workplaces. Although it would warrant further research, the appearance of a shared objection to automation, for instance, might speak to the existence of an archetype of worker response to automation that might be used to anticipate worker concerns and deal with them more proactively in present day efforts to implement technological change.

Mills, "The San Francisco Waterfront: The Social Consequences of Industrial Modernization," in *Case Studies on the Labor Process*, ed. Andrew Zimbalist (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 127-155.

[4] Raymond Grew, "The Case for Comparing Histories," *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (1980): 763-778; James E. Cronin, "Neither Exceptional nor Peculiar: Towards the Comparative Study of Labor in Advanced Society," *International Review of Social History* 38, no. 1 (1993): 59-75; Philippa Levine, "Is Comparative History Possible?," *History and Theory* 53, no. 3 (2014): 331-347.

Approaching automation through rank-and-file workers and their labor unions is particularly fruitful. Workers dealt with the raw end of automation, experiencing its transformations in the workplace – good and bad – first-hand. Therefore, they are an ideal case study for exploring the human costs of automation, most notably the physical and mental costs of technological change. Such an approach contrasts with treatments of automation and technological change in histories of policymaking and technological invention, which without including the perspectives of the rank and file could not accurately capture the full and lived impact of automation. Examining workers and unions illustrates how they interacted with larger political ideals of the period through their responses to automation, such as the Cold War rhetoric surrounding productivity, consumerism, and masculinity as they relate to technological change. In doing so, it reinforces the recent work of Jason Resnikoff, who argues for automation's importance as an ideological concept, not merely a technical process.[5] Exploring these issues brings the voice of workers and organized labor to the forefront in these discussions, demonstrating that they were indeed active participants in contemporary debates.

Throughout the post-war period, UAW leaders placed their bets on the notion of profit-sharing. By supporting automation to enhance the profitability of the U.S. economy, they hoped they could negotiate a share of these increased profits to be allocated to the workers who had accommodated such a massive transformation in their lives. This approach was born from the UAW leadership's close connection with, and wholly patriotic support of, the federal government and U.S. Cold War goals. In their minds, cooperation with government was essential for automation to be used to fulfill their social democratic aspirations for their own members, and indeed the entire working population of the U.S.

[5] Jason Resnikoff, *Labor's End: How the Promise of Automation Degraded Work* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2021), 1-2.

Their rank and file, however, did not report the same kind of positivity and often did not feel this sense of profits being shared among them. Registering complaints at speed-up in the workplace and the monotony of automated work, UAW rank and filers turned to consumerism as a form of compensation for their alienated labor. As the monotony of assembly line work wore on, their criticisms shifted towards the mental strain of the job and the undermining of their pride and identity as craftsmen and laborers. Their ultimate resistance in the early 1970s, therefore, culminated around the issue of stress – stress towards the nature of their work and the inability to form their identity around or find meaning in their work.

ILWU leaders similarly subscribed to a social democratic ethos, but unlike the UAW they did not believe profit-sharing would successfully uplift the lives of the rank and file. Instead, they focused on job security and prevention of unemployment, attempting to resist the future obsolescence of the longshore workforce. This more defensive stance was a result of their lack of connection to and willingness to criticize the federal government, contrary to the UAW, and because their industry was initially far less automated than the auto industry. A defensive approach, therefore, would have appeared more fruitful compared to the auto industry, where automation and mechanization were well established. Indeed, while both unions ultimately shared similar social democratic ideals – that automation might be harnessed to improve the livelihoods of U.S. citizens – they had little direct contact with each other. Aside from private acknowledgements in leadership meetings and public critique of the strategies employed by one another, they forged their own path through the unique obstacles present in their respective industries.

The longshore rank and file were largely supportive of the leadership stance initially, expressing skepticism towards automation but ultimately satisfaction that it would be possible to implement automated solutions without their livelihoods being jeopardized. This

then led to the greater support of a shortened workweek among longshore workers to spread the workload among more potential longshore workers and to take advantage of more efficient time management due to automation. As the rate of change reached breakneck pace, it threatened to scythe through jobs on the waterfront and forever change all aspects of longshoring and its traditionally vibrant and social work culture. Longshore leaders made peace with automation because it made their industry globally competitive. Rank-and-file workers desperately attempted to cling to their identities and masculinity that had been forged through the formerly physically challenging and rewarding crucible that was traditional longshoring. As a result, their resistance in the early 1970s culminated around loss, a sense of deep longing for the way of life they had treasured that was disappearing before their very eyes, and with it concern at their potential obsolescence.

Engagement with concepts and rhetoric pertinent to the Cold War effort was an area of major difference between the unions. It was not uncommon to see ILWU leaders publicly opposing or criticizing the UAW leadership for supporting the U.S. government line on automation, namely wholehearted support of efficient production in the hopes its benefits would be felt across U.S. society. Their contention was based on their belief that this Fordist capitalist approach to automation would leave little room for the rank-and-file worker, placing too much control in the hands of management to speed up or manipulate working conditions as they saw fit.

Ultimately, the successes these unions and their members managed to achieve relating to automation appear short-lived. Even though they successfully negotiated many benefits to counteract automation's negative effects, they were not enough to overcome the issues of mental and physical drudgery, transformation of the work environment, and the loss of pride and satisfaction in work that automation brought. These discontents culminated in resistance in the early 1970s. However, it is important to remember that the union leaderships and their

memberships had differing definitions of success. UAW and ILWU leaders defined success as achieving more benefits for workers while ensuring improvements to U.S. productivity and the strength of their industries, a balance which they managed to strike relatively well. Workers instead regarded success as retaining their traditional way of life and sense of fulfillment in work. Despite efforts to reconcile the demands of the rank and file with the leadership, these two definitions of success were ultimately contradictory.

UAW historians have tended to concern themselves with politics, both the internal political struggles between prospective and incumbent union leaders and the involvement of the union with federal politics in the post-war period. This approach has been extremely fruitful and has led to a number of landmark works in the field by the likes of Nelson Lichtenstein, Kevin Boyle, and John Barnard, among others. In their volumes automation sees the occasional mention but tends to fall by the wayside.[6] Just as these works illuminate the extent to which UAW leaders engaged with Cold War rhetoric and politics, this thesis demonstrates that the issue of automation was another important arena in which not only leaders but rank and filers engaged with Cold War political ideas. As a result, it aims to expand on these works by exploring the perspective of the membership further, dissecting the range of responses to automation in the workplace. Histories of industrial development and automation such as Harry Braverman's ground-breaking volume on Taylorism and David Noble's social history of automation prioritize the auto industry as a case study for examining the social effects of technological change. These works, while foundational, are less observant of the nuances within the union between leadership and members.[7] Similarly, Amy

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[6] Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1995); Martin Halpern, *UAW Politics in the Cold War Era* (Albany: State University of New York, 1988); Dudley W. Buffa, *Union Power and American Democracy: The UAW and the Democratic Party, 1935-72* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984); Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers during the Reuther years, 1935-1970* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004).

[7] Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1974); Noble, *Forces of Production.*

Sue Bix's work on technological change and the threat of obsolescence also touches on the impact of these concerns in the auto industry, but in a way that is necessarily diluted by the impressive scope of her volume.[8] This thesis builds on the work of historians examining the social impact of Fordist management, efficiency, and technological change, such as David Steigerwald's excellent article and Steve Meyer's numerous works.[9] By exploring the approach to automation taken in the post-war period as a continuation of the early responses to Fordist management, it expands on their perspectives by delving deeper into the repercussions of automation on the rank-and-file worker, particularly in the realm of mental health which has been relatively overlooked.

The historiography of the ILWU similarly has seen its landmark contributions focus on either the turbulent political origins of the union itself or the ways in which the leadership's politics impacted their contractual disputes in the post-war period.[10] With the importance of the Mechanization and Modernization Agreement for the ILWU's post-war negotiations, the leadership's stance towards and negotiation of this agreement with their employer has naturally received substantial coverage. More recently, Jake Alimahomed-Wilson's seminal work has encouraged greater consideration of longshore oral histories to analyze race and gender dynamics on the docks.[11] This thesis builds on these works while reinforcing the current literature on the human cost of automation within the longshore

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[8] Amy Sue Bix, *Inventing Ourselves out of Jobs?: America's Debate over Technological Unemployment, 1929-1981* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2001).
[9] David Steigerwald, "Walter Reuther, The UAW, and the Dilemmas of Automation," *Labor History* 51, no. 3 (2010): 429-453; Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); Stephen Meyer, "'An Economic Frankenstein': UAW Worker Responses to Automation at the Ford Brook Park Plant in the 1950s," *Michigan Historical Review* 28, no. 1f (2002): 63-89.
[10] Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Paul T. Hartman, *Collective Bargaining and Productivity: The Longshore Mechanization Agreement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969); Lincoln Fairley, *Facing Mechanization: The West Coast Longshore Plan* (Los Angeles: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1979).
[11] Jake Alimahomed-Wilson, *Solidarity Forever?: Race, Gender, and Unionism in the Ports of Southern California* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2016).

industry, exemplified by the works of David Wellman and contemporaries such as Stan Weir.[12] Rather than simply exemplifying the stark differences between conventional and containerized longshoring, which these works crucially explore in great detail, this thesis expands on this approach by examining the process of how this shift towards containerization came to be and how workers responded to automation and its impact on their lives throughout the process. Although the ILWU has rightly been regarded as being distanced from the federal government and the forge of Cold War rhetoric and policy goals – unlike the UAW – this thesis demonstrates that both the leadership and rank and file in the union interacted with the same Cold War ideals as the UAW in the same arena of automation. Not only did they interact with the ideals, but they also developed pointed criticisms of the UAW's pro-Fordist line that show an active willingness to engage in these topical debates.

This exploration of how automation affected the lives of post-war auto and longshore workers in the United States is divided into chapters based on five central themes that emerge in the public and personal discourse of union leaders and members regarding automation. These themes are structured in a roughly chronological order. There is some overlap between the themes owing to certain themes coming to the forefront of discussion and then being superseded by other issues. Broadly, this chronological development of themes charts a course from 1945 to 1972, from the end of World War II to the first notable incidents of resistance to automation from auto and longshore workers.

The first chapter tackles the theme of productivity, a central pillar of the U.S. economy in the wake of World War II. As Fordist principles reached their fruition with post-war assembly lines – and with containerization in longshore on the horizon – UAW and ILWU leaders were faced with a dilemma. They were confronted with the need to

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[12] David T. Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Stan Weir, *Singlejack Solidarity* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2004).

wholeheartedly support heightened productivity for U.S. economic recovery and to bolster the Cold War effort while simultaneously trying to preserve their members' rights and protect them from speed-up. This chapter argues that in managing this essential tension UAW and ILWU leaders did not capitulate to the pace of progress. Instead, they put forth differing strategies of cautious cooperation informed by their social democratic ethos and their relationship (or lack thereof) with federal government. It builds on the scholarship relating to labor and technology, which has tended to position unions as capitulating to government and following their line during the period of post-war recovery. By exploring the position of the union leadership, it contributes to the literature on social democratic thinking in the early post-war period, demonstrating that the social potential of automation was understood and discussed by labor leaders, not solely theorists or government figures. It broadens the literature on the mid-century history of Taylorism and Fordism by contributing a ground level view of workers experiencing new standards of efficiency first-hand.

These aspirations of automation's potential to uplift society through increased productivity went hand in hand with a belief that automation would herald a future of relief from physical drudgery in the workplace. This theme of physical relief forms the focus of the second chapter, in which rank-and-file workers faced a reality of monotony – physical drudgery in a new form – and significant changes to their working environment that were far from the rosy utopian vision they had been promised. Most prominently, UAW workers reported a loss of pride and autonomy in their work. At this juncture, these feelings were not shared by ILWU members, primarily due to automation being in its early stages in the longshore industry. Instead, they tended to advance a skeptical but satisfied appraisal of automation's potential. While the leadership of both unions engaged with the rhetoric of the Cold War and aspirations for capitalist development, this chapter demonstrates that workers on the raw end of automation were beginning to diverge from the stances of their union

leaders. It reinforces the current literature on the grassroots effects of Fordist management, namely affirming that jobs required less physical effort, but this was replaced by monotony. By illuminating the continued support of the union leaders, it contributes to the literature on modernization theory by demonstrating that labor leaders subscribed to justifications for automation that mirrored those used by government officials to glorify America's modernity.[13] Supporting the growing doctrine of efficiency, therefore, would not only enhance the competitiveness of their industries but also the capitalist system's global prestige.

Faced with growing awareness that automation had created an environment of crushing monotony rather than blissful relief within the auto industry, auto and longshore workers alike were faced with a dilemma regarding how to reframe the value of their work in the automated age. This is the central focus of the third chapter, which argues that, realizing that automation was here to stay, auto workers began to support union efforts to offset their monotonous labor with greater consumer and wage benefits. With the support of their union leaders, the UAW rank and file had begun to engage with the Cold War ascendancy of consumerist ideas. Deriving value in their work from monetary gain rather than pride or challenge in their work itself triggered early murmurings of resistance in the union. Longshore workers too looked to a future of potential unemployment and alienated labor, just as auto workers were facing. ILWU leaders continued to publicly criticize the shortcomings of the UAW's approach to automation for having put their members in such a position. Longshore leaders and rank-and-file workers instead looked towards securing a shorter

[13] Michael Adas, "Modernization Theory and the American Revival of the Scientific and Technological Standards of Social Achievement and Human Worth," in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War,* ed. David Engerman (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 25-46; Michael Adas, *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2006); David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

workweek and job security alongside a push for wage compensation. Both unions achieved successes in their respective approaches. The ILWU managed to negotiate a ground-breaking wage guarantee into their agreements which helped to hold their employers accountable for present and future automation. UAW leaders successfully fought for unemployment benefits and leveraged their connections with government to gain an important role in crafting federal legislation that could alleviate unemployment caused by automation. In doing so, this chapter expands the literature on the demand for a shorter workweek in the twentieth century. By demonstrating that the demand still lived on in the ILWU, it overturns previous conclusions that support for the shorter workweek died nationwide as UAW support waned. It provides a much-needed grassroots labor perspective to literature on the post-war accord, demonstrating the prevalence of consumerist ideas among the rank-and-file. The post-war accord refers to the tacit agreement between labor unions, employers, and government from 1946 until approximately the 1970s. It entailed that unions would abandon agendas of wide-reaching social change to support the growing consumer capitalist economy in return for sharing in said growth through increased wages and benefits. Scholarship on the labor-capital accord has often focused on the philosophies and politics of business and labor leaders or the average consumer reaping the benefits rather than the workers, whose labor underpinned the accord.[14] In turn it contributes to the literature on Fordist capitalism during this period, illustrating that UAW leaders were also key supporters of mass consumption and production to spur economic growth.

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[14] Clifford E. Clark Jr., "Ranch-House Suburbia: Ideas and Realities," in *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, ed. Lary May (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 171-191; Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Andrew Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in the Postwar Consumer Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Kathleen G. Donohue, *Freedom from Want: American Liberalism and the Idea of the Consumer* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Kevin Mattson, *When America was Great: The Fighting Faith of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

Concerns about the loss of pride and autonomy in work manifested as a threat to the masculinity of auto and longshore workers, who had built their identities around the rough and challenging nature of their jobs. Masculinity provides the thematic drive for the fourth chapter of this thesis, which argues that workers in both industries sought to retain elements of rough masculinity in the face of automation. As automation had matured in the auto industry, there was a focus on bringing masculine competition and roughness back into the workplace. Longshore workers sought to retain their traditional rough working culture in the face of progressively heightened automation. They were united in their goal of reclaiming pride in their work and defending their identities as blue-collar workers. A greater influx of women into both industries tempered this rougher masculinity but they still expressed awareness that they were entering a man's world where they had to prove themselves and pull their weight. In conversations regarding masculinity workers engaged with Cold War notions of the inseparability between the masculine body and technological change and the need to retain a sense of tough-minded masculinity to ensure success in the Cold War effort. This chapter contributes to the scholarship on blue collar masculinity, demonstrating that longshoremen clung to rough masculinity in the face of change, whereas auto workers sought to reformulate a more mature and respectable masculinity to include rougher elements. It reinforces the literature on ideas surrounding the male body in this period by demonstrating that these workers had a vested interest in retaining physicality in work and having autonomy over their bodies' motions.[15] Perhaps most importantly it provides crucial insight into the

[15] Joshua B. Freeman, "Hardhats: Construction Workers, Manliness, and the 1970 Pro-War Demonstrations," *Journal of Social History* 26, no. 4 (1993): 725-744; Stephen Meyer, "Work, Play, and Power: Masculine Culture on the Automotive Shop Floor, 1930-1960," in *Boys and their Toys?: Masculinity, Technology, and Class in America*, ed. Roger Horowitz (New York: Routledge, 2001), 13-32; Ava Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker, and the Historian's Gaze," *International Labor and Working Class History* 69, no. 1 (2006): 143-160; Craig Heron, "Boys Will Be Boys: Working-Class Masculinities in the Age of Mass Production," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 69, no. 1 (2006): 6-34; Ava Baron and Eileen Boris, "'The Body' as a Useful Category for Working-Class History," *Labor* 4, no. 2 (2007): 23-43.

experience of women in male dominated industries, how they were initiated into and ultimately transformed these predominately masculine spaces.

The erosion of these workers' traditional ways of life, workplace environment, and identities took a considerable toll on their mental health, which forms the central theme of the final chapter. Their burgeoning discourse regarding their mental wellbeing underpinned the murmurings of resistance which exploded in the early 1970s with the momentous combination of the 1971 West Coast longshore strike and the 1972 Lordstown auto strike. For UAW rank and filers, references to mental health were numerous and explicit, focusing on the stress and exhaustion they felt at the relentless pace of their automated work. While longshore workers focused their strike discussions on material benefits and securing their livelihoods, they also communicated their indelible sense of loss as a mental health issue, both towards the expectations of their work and the vibrant culture of the dock that they had hoped to preserve. Although both strikes were ultimately unsuccessful in stopping the tide of automation in their industries, importantly they were key in publicizing the issue of mental health and psychological drudgery in a period where the present-day discourse surrounding mental health was beginning to take shape. While the mental health narrative was more prevalent among the Lordstown strikers, both unions showed a unity of purpose in weaving a narrative of mental health into their strike effort and both instances of industrial action were commandeered from the grassroots level. This chapter builds on the literature surrounding workplace rebellions in the 1970s, demonstrating that these strikes fit into the growing mental health-conscious radicalism that had begun to emerge in this period. In turn, it contributes to literature on the growth of 1970s counterculture, which notes the presence of mental health awareness alongside familiar countercultural elements such as environmentalism and feminism. By taking their success into their own hands, these workers' efforts form an

important part of a countercultural moment that helped to raise awareness of mental health issues in the blue-collar workplace.

To explore these interconnected themes and capture the experience of auto and longshore workers negotiating automation in their everyday lives, this thesis draws on three types of source material. Primarily, it incorporates archival material relating to and correspondence to and from union leadership figures and planners. These provide crucial insight into not only the figures in question, but union strategy and discussions of competing approaches to automation that proliferated among the membership. The COVID-19 pandemic led to difficulties accessing ILWU archival material compared to that on the UAW. To redress this imbalance, this thesis uses news media, both internal union newspapers and popular newspapers to explore the rhetoric union leaders chose to put forward on the thematic issues, and how the strategy of unions and the rank and file was interpreted and publicized to the nation at large. It also makes liberal use of archived oral history interviews and published oral histories of those who worked in the auto and longshore industries. Although these have the obvious limitation that there are aspects of experience and feeling that cannot be put into words, they are the best possible gateway into understanding how workers dealt with and responded to automation.[16]

[16] Despite these limitations, oral history interviews have many merits that are well documented in scholarship on oral history methodology. See Donald A. Ritchie, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, "Who's Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics," *The Oral History Review* 43, no. 2 (2016): 338-366.

Chapter One: Productivity

The epicenter of strike activity over automation in 1972, the bustling Chevrolet Vega plant in Lordstown, Ohio, had a fair share of firebrands and sparkplugs among its workforce. One machine operator, Joe Alfona, spoke of the palpable effects speed-up and the push for maximal productivity had on jobs at Lordstown. "But like now [management] tell you, 'Put in 10 screws,' and you do it. Then a couple of weeks later they say, 'Put in 15' and next they say, 'Well, we don't need you no more, give it to the next man.' From day to day, you don't know what your job's going to be. They either add to your job or take a man off…They don't even tell the union. And management says if you don't do it, they'll throw you out, which they do. No problem. Zap! Away you go."[1] Yet only twenty years prior to the strike, UAW President Walter Reuther expressed his desire to see workers happily sharing in the fruits of heightened productivity resulting from automation. The conditions that workers like Alfona had to deal with in the 1970s were the products of attempts by union leadership to resolve an essential tension of automation that emerged during post-war economic recovery: the need to embrace heightened productivity while simultaneously protecting the hard-fought rights of blue-collar workers. The UAW's focus on sharing in the profits of automation led to the issue of speed-up falling by the wayside. This chapter explores the UAW's approach to harnessing productivity, contrasting it with the ILWU's strategy which emphasized job security. Far from capitulating to the pace of progress, these union leaders persisted in their efforts to ensure that the fruits of productivity were shared equally even as automation completely

[1] Bennett Kremen, "Lordstown – Searching For A Better Way To Work," *New York Times*, September 9, 1973.

transformed their industries. This should encourage historians to view labor's support of changes to their work and livelihoods as the product of their agency, not a surrender of it, and that a lack of resistance does not equal capitulation.

Histories of early twentieth century management strategy have identified a drive for productivity that encouraged managers to improve the efficiency of work tasks. This led to the development of Taylorism and Fordism, two philosophies of management. While these have often been referred to as distinct and successive phases in the history of management practice, historians in the late 1980s and early 1990s such as Mike Davis and Daniel Nelson demonstrated that Taylorist and Fordist practice often overlapped.[2] While Taylorism focused on improving workers' tools and precisely managing their every action, Fordism simplified and compartmentalized work tasks, allowing the product being worked on to be easily transferred between workers and assembled in stages.[3] Both philosophies encouraged automation, whether to improve the tools used or to streamline the flow of work, and were precursors to management strategies in the automated workplace. As employers sought greater efficiency in the workplace, they introduced ever more complex methods of automation as the technology developed. This process was never static, as hitting a standard of productivity only led to a new higher standard being devised. In the auto industry automation was focused on improving the efficiency of the assembly line, an already revolutionary improvement to the industry's productivity. By streamlining procedure, simplifying work tasks, and reducing the number of workers required, the assembly line laid the foundation for rapid mass production. The equivalent in longshoring is containerization,

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[2] Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* (London: Verso Editions, 1986); Daniel Nelson, *Managers and Workers: Origins of the Twentieth-Century Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

[3] Charles S. Maier, "Between Taylorism and Technocracy: European Ideologies and the Vision of Industrial Productivity in the 1920s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 5, no. 2 (1970): 27-61; Alan McKinlay and James Wilson, "'All They Lose is the Scream': Foucault, Ford and Mass Production," *Management & Organizational History* 7, no. 1 (2012), 45-60; Daniel Watson, "Fordism: A Review Essay," *Labor History* 60, no. 2 (2019): 144-159.

the process of loading cargo into large metal shipping containers which are transferred onto vessels via crane. This method allows for fast movement of cargo to and from ships, is carefully planned, and the use of cantilever cranes eliminates the complex and ingenious procedures of rigging and cargo movement that were labor- and manpower-intensive hallmarks of longshoring.

Unions and managers, then, were concerned with the labor definition of productivity: the cost of labor relative to its outputs. There are several methods by which this can be improved: implementing new technologies that increase outputs while keeping labor costs fixed, increasing the pace of work, or reducing the workforce while maintaining outputs. Automation is so attractive because it combines all three of these methods. New technologies allow managers to dictate the pace of work more easily (such as by increasing the rate that products moved down an assembly line) and automating more complex processes over time naturally means less workers are required. Both the UAW and ILWU were cognizant of the potential for management to abuse automation by using it to enforce speed-up in the workplace. The leadership of both unions were all too aware of the extensive battles waged with their employers over speed-up in the early twentieth century, and as a result their representatives were wary of tactics used by employers to speed up production and smokescreen the real extent of unemployment due to automation.[4] With these aspects in mind, the UAW and ILWU formulated strategies to harness automation's benefits constructively. Histories of the UAW such as Nelson Lichtenstein's pathbreaking volume emphasize Walter Reuther's desire to share in the profits of the auto industry and it is this

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[4] Ronald Edsforth and Robert Asher, "The Speedup: The Focal Point of Workers' Grievances, 1919-1941," in *Autowork*, ed. Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), 65-98; Martin Glaberman, *Wartime Strikes: The Struggle Against the No-Strike Pledge in the UAW during World War II* (Detroit, MI: Berwick, 1980); Joyce Shaw Peterson, "Auto Workers and Their Work, 1900-1933," *Labor History* 22, no. 2 (1981): 213-236; Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), especially chapter 4; David F. Selvin, *A Terrible Anger: The 1934 Waterfront and General Strikes in San Francisco* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1996).

same profit-sharing approach which characterized the leadership's approach to automation in the early post-war period.[5] In contrast, studies of the ILWU note Harry Bridges's focus on protecting the job security of workers rather than working with management for a cut of the profits.[6] While the UAW's approach may have been warranted due to the longstanding development and acceptance of automation's presence in the auto industry, the ILWU's more defensive tactics suggest a sense of self-preservation due to the relatively new and unsure forays into automation taking place in the longshore industry.

Reuther and Bridges's tactics to harness the benefits of automation help to illuminate the debates within the historiography of organized labor's response to technological change. Histories of labor and technology tend to depict labor as ultimately capitulating to the pace of technological progress, whether out of an intent to do so or due to their weakening negotiating position. David Noble's landmark social history of automation argued that union leaders essentially uniformly bowed to the pace of progress in the belief that opposition to automation was ultimately futile.[7] His study was succeeded by Amy Sue Bix's excellent volume focusing on the debates surrounding automation and unemployment in the twentieth century U.S. She instead argued that labor leaders did not capitulate as Noble had suggested but rather that they tactically complied with automation in keeping with the post-war federal government push for technological advancement to reverse accusations that labor was a hindrance to national development. As a result of this, she posited, labor became locked into a defeatist mindset that made them unable to resist the worst excesses of automation's

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[5] Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1995), especially chapter 16. Also see Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 3-4; John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935-1970* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004), especially chapter 8.
[6] Lincoln Fairley, *Facing Mechanization: The West Coast Longshore Plan* (California: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1979); David Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[7] David Noble, *Forces of Production: A Social History of Industrial Automation* (New York: Knopf, 1984).

development, namely unemployment.[8] These studies read relatively cynically in that they do not ascribe a great deal of agency to organized labor and place the development of automation itself as an oppositional force to labor agency rather than a product of management strategy. More recent studies by David Steigerwald, Peter Cole, and Jason Resnikoff have instead rightly identified the genuine belief of both unions' leaderships in humane applications of automation and an honest desire to think ahead and harness automation's benefits to improve worker livelihoods.[9]

The differing strategies of the UAW and ILWU when responding to automation and productivity increases were borne out of more than the conditions for technological development in their respective industries – they were also a product of political differences between the two unions. Histories of labor and technology tend to treat organized labor as a politically similar unit when dealing with responses to technological change. Although much of the ways in which unions dealt with automation was influenced by the attitude of management and the conditions of the workplace, political differences between unions should not be overlooked. As Nelson Lichtenstein and others have noted, UAW leaders were notably vocal about the need for government assistance. They worked with Congressional and labor-management commissions to examine the relationship between automation and progress, and influenced the crafting of key federal legislation that hoped to ensure the workforce could be protected from technological unemployment.[10] Whereas the UAW utilized its strong connections with government to achieve this, the ILWU's status as a left-led union meant it was unable to cooperate with government in the wake of the Cold War political crackdown

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[8] Amy Sue Bix, *Inventing Ourselves Out of Jobs?: America's Debate over Technological Unemployment, 1929-1981* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2001).
[9] David Steigerwald, "Walter Reuther, The UAW, and the Dilemmas of Automation," *Labor History* 51, no. 3 (2010): 429-453; Peter Cole, "The Tip of the Spear: How Longshore Workers in the San Francisco Bay Area Survived the Containerization Revolution," *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 25, no. 3 (2013): 201-216; Jason Resnikoff, *Labor's End: How the Promise of Automation Degraded Work* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2021), 12-13.
[10] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*; Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Barnard, *American Vanguard*.

on U.S. Communism.[11] As a result, the ILWU became locked in negotiations with the Pacific Maritime Association, its employer, and were unable to make their negotiating strategy known directly to those in government interested in automation.

Although it is clear on both unions' differing politics and extent of connection to federal government, the literature on the UAW and ILWU is limited in that it does not account for how, despite these differences, the leadership of both unions was united behind a social democratic ethos when dealing with automation and productivity. UAW and ILWU leaders were political and left-wing unionists foremost and did not obstruct productivity because they recognized its potential to create a society of abundance. Therefore, they approached productivity in terms of its social potentialities within the framework of a social-democratic project.

Social democracy was prevalent in the early twentieth century, arguing that a national program of government intervention, labor involvement, and employer cooperation was necessary to ensure that all U.S. citizens could enjoy secure jobs, stable and plentiful wages, and enhanced public services. Histories of social democracy from the 1970s to 2000 have emphasized the pervasiveness of the concept in early post-war U.S. society. These studies paid particular attention to labor's engagement with social democratic ideas primarily as an answer to the "labor question" – the desire for organized labor to achieve substantial and progressive improvements to their working conditions and standard of living. Steve Fraser's works emphasized the hope of U.S. labor leaders to harness post-war prosperity to the benefit of their workforces.[12] From the 2000s onwards, the historiographical focus of studies on

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[11] Howard Kimeldorf, *Reds or Rackets?: The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988).

[12] Steve Fraser and Joshua B. Freeman, *Audacious Democracy: Labor, Intellectuals, and the Social Reconstruction of America* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1997); Also see Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream*; Steve Fraser, "The Labor Question," in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*, ed. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 55-84; Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy and the Decline of Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), esp. chapter 1; Peterson, "Auto Workers and Their Work,"; David M. Gordon, Richard Edwards and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers: The Historical Transformation of Labor in the*

social democracy has shifted towards identifying its traction among U.S. liberal intellectuals. As Kathleen Donohue and Doug Rossinow have suggested, liberal intellectuals had a longstanding interest in social democratic ideas, believing them an ideal foundation for the blueprint for an equitable society of abundance.[13] By returning to labor's flirtations with social democratic ideas in the context of discussions surrounding automation, this chapter's more granular focus on the UAW and ILWU expands on these more general studies of labor. While UAW leaders believed social democracy should involve workers sharing in the profits of automation through cooperation with management and government, ILWU leaders believed that true social democracy involved defensive action against the potential threats of automation, such as unemployment. This should encourage historians to look to other unions and the differences between their understandings of what a social democratic outcome for their workforce might look like in the age of automation.

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When it came to automation, caution was the watchword for ILWU leaders. As 1945 neared its end, the ILWU's organ *The Dispatcher* printed the testimony of CIO President Philip Murray as a warning to its membership. It read "Automatic machinery in post-war production will have so high a production quotient, so much more can be turned out with fewer people, that it will become increasingly impossible to sell the output unless the mass of workers are continuously employed at high wages." "High income of the mass of people" would become "an economic necessity" as a result, Murray warned, suggesting that more infrastructural changes were needed to ensure this.[14] For UAW leaders, however,

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United States (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

[13] Kathleen G. Donohue, *Freedom from Want: American Liberalism and the Idea of the Consumer* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Doug Rossinow, "Partners for Progress? Liberals and Radicals in the Long Twentieth Century," in *Making Sense of American Liberalism*, ed. Jonathan Bell and Timothy Stanley (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 17-37.

[14] "'Every Citizen has a Right to a Job' – Philip Murray," *The Dispatcher*, September 7, 1945, 8-9.

technological progress was almost a self-fulfilling prophecy creating a cycle of abundance that would lead to social uplift at all levels of U.S. society. This viewpoint was a product of the union leadership's patriotism and support of government, magnified by their involvement in a key production industry that had benefitted from wartime growth.[15] The ILWU top brass, in contrast, did not see progress as self-fulfilling and needed assurances that workers would be protected from dangerous excesses of automation such as unemployment. Their stance developed because of the union not having the same level of patriotism, optimism, and connection to government as the UAW, making them less confident that automation would intrinsically lead to social benefits.[16]

While ILWU leaders worried over workers obtaining a rightful share of economic progress, Reuther remained headstrong in his Keynesian beliefs that encouraging automation would inherently solve these concerns. Criticizing the economic stagnation that had set in prior to the disastrous 1958 recession in his statement to the President's Economic Report, Reuther argued that productivity, especially of consumer goods, was necessary as consumer spending was crucial to reaching high levels of production and employment. He argued that government policies needed to encourage economic growth and ensure that there was no idle manpower or productive capacity. If the U.S. met the target of a five percent growth rate per year – the average from 1950 to 1958 was 2.8 percent – Reuther argued it would lead to the elimination of "poverty from this country, provide a constantly rising living standard with increased leisure for all, catch up rapidly with our unmet needs for schools, hospitals, homes, highways and other facilities." The U.S. could only set a social democratic example, Reuther

[15] Popular demand for commercial automobiles was high following the post-war lifting of the freeze on their production during World War II, leading to some prosperity for the industry. See Barnard, *American Vanguard*, especially chapter 8.
[16] Their lack of patriotism stemmed from the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and the crackdown on CP-led or associated trade unions. See Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), especially chapter 3.

argued, if productivity was properly shepherded by government policy.[17] He consistently advocated the acceleration of the pace of productivity and the potential for it to be harnessed to the betterment of U.S. society, social services, and infrastructure.[18]

He shrewdly framed his criticisms of the failure to restore the U.S. economy "to health and growth" as a critical failure in the Cold War struggle "between freedom and tyranny."[19] The framing of this statement was deliberately ideological, aiming to encourage a greater commitment to social democratic planning. For instance, his letter in February 1958 to then Senate leader Lyndon B. Johnson emphasized that "America is in truth freedom's last best hope and…the American economy is freedom's greatest material asset." He continued to argue that full employment and full production were the best countermeasures to "the challenge of Soviet tyranny," and that if fully mobilized, the U.S. economy could provide abundance necessary to "raise our living standards" while simultaneously "helping people of the underdeveloped nations of the world to help themselves…against the forces of communist tyranny."[20] Such language was surely music to the ears of Johnson, a fervent believer in the need for containment of Communist regimes abroad. But, in the previous May, Reuther had been interviewed before the National Press Club and stated that the U.S. would be judged by its potential to "translate material wealth into human values," not productive capacity. He argued that "instead of fighting ideological windmills, we ought to be talking about how free

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[17] Statement on the President's Economic Report, Presented on Behalf of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations by Walter P. Reuther, President, UAW-AFL-CIO, Vice President, AFL-CIO and Chairman of the AFL-CIO Economic Policy Committee, February 9, 1959, UAW Research Department Records Part 1, Box 90, WPR, 1, 7-9, 16.
[18] "Statement of Walter P. Reuther, President, United Automobile, Aircraft & Agricultural Implement Workers of America," *New Views on Automation: Papers Submitted to the Subcommittee on Automation and Energy Resources, Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States*, c.1960, UAW Research Department: Congressional Testimonies, Box 34, WPR, 551-583; Statement on the President's Economic Report, Presented on Behalf of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations by Walter P. Reuther, Vice President, AFL-CIO; Chairman of the AFL-CIO Economic Policy Committee and President, UAW, February 7, 1962, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 551, Folder 6, WPR.
[19] Statement on the President's Economic Report, February 9, 1959, WPR.
[20] Walter P. Reuther to Lyndon Johnson, February 17, 1958, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 410, Folder 8, WPR.

men, free labor and free management can work together to harness the productive power of [automation], and to share their abundance intelligently and sensibly and sanely."[21] His use of the term "free men" typifies the "end of ideology" mood of the 1950s, marked by the tendency for Cold War liberals to make ideological assumptions while explicitly distancing themselves from ideology. This could perhaps be reconciled if by "free" Reuther was referring to these camps being free to make their voices heard in the name of social democratic improvements. His specific reference to "men" here suggests that, in fighting for control over automation, workers viewed jurisdiction over the tools of their craft as a marker of their masculinity under threat by the managerial push for automation.

Reuther's end goal in these pronouncements was clear: that productivity and automation be harnessed towards creating an abundant society. This was far from unfamiliar territory for Reuther as he had been working towards this goal since the early post-war years. His correspondence with Norbert Wiener, a prominent MIT mathematician and outspoken critic of automation, makes this clear. Wiener reached out to Reuther in August 1949, warning him of the "disastrous" unemployment that would result if automation were pursued without commensurate social planning. Writing of his previous failures to convince labor officials to heed the importance of his warning – he suggested that they were too concerned with the minutiae of worker grievances – Wiener's appeal for the UAW to "formulate a policy toward this problem" and to "secure the profits" of automation "to the benefit of labor" struck a chord with Reuther.[22] Upon meeting in person in March 1950, the duo agreed to their partnership being the start of a "joint labor-science council" dedicated to anticipating and campaigning for the rights of workers in the face of automation's consequences.

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[21] Walter P. Reuther – National Press Club, Washington, DC, May 22, 1957, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 548, Folder 5, WPR.

[22] Norbert Wiener, "To Mr. Walter Reuther," August 13, 1949, Norbert Wiener Papers, MC 22, Box 7, Folder 102, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Archives and Special Collections, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Also see Norbert Wiener Papers, WPR.

However, their schedules were busy and mutually incompatible, and hope of this alliance leading to concrete gains in the fight to harness productivity had essentially fizzled out by 1952.[23] Despite this result, Reuther's attempt to forge an alliance with Wiener attests to his belief in cooperation with intellectuals to promote the need for social planning in response to automation and productivity.

Exactly what this social planning would consist of was an item of importance on the agenda of UAW leaders such as Reuther during the post-war years. Nat Weinberg, Director of Special Projects and Economic Analysis in the union, was one of Reuther's first ports of call on issues of automation and productivity. In his 1953 article on how labor would face the challenge of automation, Weinberg endorsed the UAW's push for a wage improvement factor that would see worker wages rise as productivity increased, the all-important share in the profits of productivity Reuther had called for. Weinberg warned of the need to translate "the rapidly rising productivity of capital and labor…into abundance and increased leisure," or else management could "pervert the new technology to the production of mass misery" – in other words, leaving workers unemployed and without the wages to purchase the consumer goods they desired.[24] Like Reuther, Weinberg was keen to see the productivity of the U.S. economy harnessed into social improvements. As the architect of the union's strategies towards maintaining workers' wages and fighting for equitable unemployment compensation throughout his directorial career Weinberg persistently worked to stimulate the social planning initiatives he believed were essential. This extended to his advice to Reuther on how to best approach a strategy to automation and social planning, and how to best publicize the successes of the union to alert government to the ways in which they believed productivity and automation should be harnessed. His influence in this matter extended throughout

[23] Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, *Dark Hero of the Information Age: In Search of Norbert Wiener, the Father of Cybernetics* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 246-247, 253.
[24] Nat Weinberg, "Labor in an Automatic Society," 1953, W. Willard Wirtz Papers, Box 93, JFK Library.

Reuther's entire leadership term. For instance, when advising Reuther on how to speak to the press on the latest recommendations of the National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress – of which Reuther was a member – to President Johnson in 1966, he suggested that Reuther emphasize inroads into social planning alongside victories for workers alone, such as the reallocation of surplus military resources from the Vietnam War to meeting "urgent domestic needs."[25]

To keep pace with developments in automation to better inform the union's calls for social planning, UAW leaders formed a Committee on Automation in 1955, headed by Reuther's trusted aide Jack Conway. This studied the effects of automation on U.S. society and how these might be felt by the union's members. His circulation of various studies on automation in different industries included his own comments on the main arguments put forward by intellectuals and how the union should best respond to oppositional perspectives on automation. Of a study of technological change in the telephone industry in the 1930s, Conway commented that its attention to the negative consequences of technological change to the worker's job security and consumption would help in "combating those speakers" who claim that workers "always…benefit from technological change regardless of whether or not social planning accompanies technological planning."[26]

The speakers in question were often prominent figures in business and government with a personal stake in the profits of automation. Conway addressed his concern with their perspectives in a speech on labor and automation delivered at a Michigan State College Symposium in 1955. He warned of a "new American myth" created by "high priced public relations 'experts'" who were "saturating" the American public with "a barrage of material that sets technology upon a pedestal" and leads the public to believe "that technology

[25] Nat Weinberg to Walter Reuther, Points to Emphasize on Presentation of Automation Commission's Report to President, January 31, 1966, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 165, Folder 6, WPR.
[26] Jack Conway to Members of the Automation Committee, April 11, 1955, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 45, Folder 12, WPR.

automatically confers benefits on society." Pointing fingers at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, a manufacturing advocacy organization, Conway expressed his concern that automation does not automatically provide progress, urging that all Americans, "in all segments of our society, working together, must harness our productive tools to beneficial ends." Speaking on behalf of the UAW, he proclaimed that "automation must be met sanely and constructively so that the miracle of mass production – and the ever greater economic abundance made possible by automation – can find expression in the lives of people through improved economic security and a fuller share of happiness and human dignity."[27]

Marginal voices within the union fixated on social planning. UAW organizer, business agent and Communist Party member Nat Ganley was especially concerned about how to best deal with automation, expressing this in his personal notes and correspondence to other CPUSA members. Wyndham Mortimer, fellow CPUSA member and past UAW organizer, expressed his concern that automated production of commodities would generate such a surplus that it would trigger a crisis in the capitalist system. In a letter Ganley advised him that the increased productivity of the auto industry kept its profits over the average, but that inevitably automation would "intensify the clash between production and consumption" at the heart of capitalism. As automation led to unemployment, displaced workers would not be able to consume the surplus of goods produced, leading to economic turmoil. "Full automation in industry as a whole," Ganley believed, "will have to await the advent of socialism."[28] Ganley was concerned about efficient productivity, but believed that Reuther, Weinberg and Conway's mistake was believing in the capitalist system in the first place.

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[27] Jim Stern to Members of the Automation Committee, May 2, 1955, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 45, Folder 13, WPR.
[28] Wyndham Mortimer to Nat Ganley, April 10, 1955, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 4, Folder 2, WPR; Nat Ganley to Wyndham Mortimer, 20 April 1955, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 4, Folder 2, WPR.

For some critical voices within the union, the political value of automation to employers was the issue. Martin Glaberman, associated with the radical leftist group the Johnson-Forest Tendency, wrote in his notable pamphlet *Punching Out* advising workers that capitalists intended to keep the worker yoked to the machine to prevent them from acting and organizing production in their favor. He maintained they should follow the example of the CIO and work to gain control of production in a "cooperative society of free men."[29] Glaberman's use of "free men" differs from Reuther's use, with Glaberman referring to freedom from capitalism, rather than freedom from Communism. For Glaberman, then, workers could only reclaim masculine control in a socialist system. Shachtmanites, in their publication *Labor Action*, equally believed that the capitalist system was inappropriate to make "the fruits of productivity available to the masses," arguing that "the more general problem is that of abolishing a society which cannot constructively utilize technological advances."[30] Although the leadership did not tend to entertain the postulations of marginal voices – despite the best efforts of these individuals, the overhaul of the capitalist system they advocated for was firmly off the table – it is important to note that they were influential in some locals. In the case of the Shachtmanites, some such as notable labor activist B.J. Widick were close to Reuther himself. Their criticisms show an important distinction between the union's leaders' calls for cooperation with government and business to engineer social planning and the radical leftist factions' repudiation of these alliances and the capitalist system.

Like the UAW leadership, cooperation with progress was central in the minds of ILWU leaders, although their pronouncements on automation read far more defensively. For instance, ILWU Vice President J.R. Robertson remarked in 1945 that the union had to

[29] Martin Glaberman, *Punching Out* (Detroit, MI: Bewick Editions, 1952).
[30] Irving Howe, "The Promise of American Production – I," *Labor Action*, September 16, 1946, 6.

"recognize and keep up with the vast and rapid changes" to longshore work caused by automation, emphasizing that the ILWU "can't stop and don't want to stop technical progress."[31] Similarly, ILWU President Harry Bridges gestured to the example of the Luddites to explain the ILWU's position on automation and productivity. He argued in an article for the union's newspaper *The Dispatcher* that the union's attempts to protect its workers from the negative consequences of automation were not symbolic of the union's opposition to progress. Instead, it was a way of "hitting back at a system which denied them any benefits from the new machines and from progress."[32] The defensiveness of ILWU leaders compared to the UAW is likely a result of the Cold War crackdown on left-led unions and domestic Communism which encouraged the ILWU to make it abundantly clear that they were not "anti-progress" or oppositional to aspects of U.S. economy and society deemed essential to the Cold War effort, of which automation was one. However, like the radical voices in the UAW, whose opinion he likely shared, Bridges did not entirely shy away from expressing his disdain with the capitalist system in general. He mused in the same article that "a complete and absolute solution to the problems resulting from machines displacing men can't be found under our present economic system."[33]

As the political position of the union encouraged this defensive stance, so too did it encourage the commitment of the ILWU leadership towards protecting the interests of their membership. Bridges was openly critical of Reuther's desire to share in the profits of productivity. Lincoln Fairley, the ILWU's Research Director who was heavily involved in the negotiation of the first M&M Agreement, noted that Bridges and the ILWU's Coast Committee were "at pains to point out that its program was to share in *savings* from increased productivity, not in *profits*." As Bridges commented "Let's not get mixed up with Mr.

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[31] J.R. Robertson, "On the March," *The Dispatcher*, August 20, 1945, 16.
[32] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, October 21, 1960, 2.
[33] Ibid.

Reuther. We are not talking profits…We have already made up our minds that no matter how long we go or how tough we are, we will never get a big enough share of the profits."[34] Clearly, Bridges simply believed that the union did not hold a strong enough bargaining position to leverage such a benefit from the PMA, however desirable it might have been.

Bridges may have been more assured of his stance following Reuther's announcement of the union's proposed Profit-Sharing Plan on January 13, 1958. This suggested that profits made by the union's main employers – GM, Ford, Chrysler (The Big Three), American Motors, and Studebaker-Packard – over a return of 10 percent on their net capital before taxes should be classed as "excess profits," a quarter of which should be returned to wage and salary workers in a form subject to the "democratic decision" of each group of workers. This could be supplementary wages, bonuses, additional unemployment compensation, increased insurance or pension benefits, additional holidays, or a shortened work-week at the same pay. The Big Three automakers resisted the proposal particularly fiercely, denying it outright as it would give the UAW a level of control over their operations that they perceived as dangerous.[35] GM had, after all, already acceded to an "annual improvement factor," entitling workers to a wage increase as productivity rose, in 1948, and this stipulation was an essential part of UAW pattern bargaining for the Big Three.[36] For Bridges, this plan was tantamount to Reuther turning his back "on the real problem facing the workers now working short weeks and those with no work at all" by not emphasizing job security.[37]

However, not all the automakers resisted Reuther's suggestion of profit-sharing. Reuther and the UAW managed to strike a deal with American Motors President George

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[34] Fairley, *Facing Mechanization*, 85.
[35] H.B. Shaffer, "Profit Sharing and Union Strategy," *Editorial Research Reports 1958*, Volume 1 (Washington, DC: CQ Press).
[36] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 280-297; Ronald Edsforth, "Why Automation Didn't Shorten the Work Week: The Politics of Work Time in the Automobile Industry," in *Autowork*, ed. Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 166.
[37] Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher,* January 31, 1958, 2.

Romney for a "Progress Sharing" agreement, about which Romney himself enthused. Speaking at a press conference on August 30, 1961, Romney hailed American Motors' "unequalled industry record of progress" and his confidence that "progress sharing will increase our progress and profits." In line with Reuther's hopes for a cooperative alliance between industry and union, Romney emphasized that "'if progress is not shared, and shared equitably, it will not adequately stimulate further progress." He set out the five elements of the plan, including wage increases based on an annual improvement factor adjusted to productivity, increased fringe benefits, planning for future progress sharing, and cost reductions based on the changes in local working agreements. This special collective bargaining arrangement was designed to be a departure from the pattern bargaining the UAW engaged in with the Big Three automakers, which Romney argued had left American Motors worse off.[38] Romney noted in press releases and television appearances that the Progress Sharing agreement piqued widespread interest, maintaining that this new collective bargaining approach would break the "conformity" in pattern bargaining that had stifled economic growth.[39]

Although Bridges did not wish to share in the profits of the PMA's productivity increases, he still attempted to guarantee that the Mechanization and Modernization Fund would be paid into based on the net labor cost saving freed up by automation. The PMA abandoned this idea, possibly due to difficulties in accurately measuring productivity, a worry that their productivity figures might be exposed to competitors, or perhaps more cynically that the PMA did not want to cede so much to the union. The final size of the fund was settled on $5 million per year for five and a half years, with the PMA deciding exactly how

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[38] Outline of Remarks by George Romney, President, American Motors Corporation, Press Conference, August 30, 1961, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 42, Folder 9, WPR.
[39] The National Significance of American Motors' Progress-Sharing Labor Contract. Script of Television Broadcast by George Romney, President AMERICAN MOTORS CORP. over NBC-TV Network, October 1, 1961, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 42, Folder 9, WPR.

the money would be raised. If adjustments had been made for productivity increases, though, the fund would have been much larger.[40] On the eve of the historic 1971 longshore strike, the union planned to jettison the Fund entirely in return for a substantial wage increase and a wage guarantee, which perhaps vindicates Reuther's focus on wage gains in the union's bargaining approach. Workers enjoyed increased earnings, a wage guarantee and a good pension plan in the wake of the strike, but Fairley questioned whether the union's negotiating position had put the union on the back foot.[41] Outspoken longshore dissident Stan Weir was firmer in his criticisms of Bridges's decision to "capitulate" to the PMA with the agreement, arguing that collaboration with the PMA "gave the industry the time needed for the mass introduction of the container moving machineries" at the expense of its members, who were being "automated out of existence."[42]

Both unions were cognizant of the potential for rising productivity and automation to usher in a new and intense wave of speed-up and unemployment in their industries. The leaders of both came to prominence as militants in their unions' storied histories of resistance to speed-up in the early twentieth century, and as a result were concerned about attempts from employers and government to downplay the real effects of automation. They attempted to mitigate these effects by reacting quickly to reports of speed-up where possible. The complexity and sprawling nature of the auto industry meant that it was impossible for the UAW to eliminate speed-up and unemployment. Conversely, the ILWU managed to negotiate a clause to prevent speed-up as part of the M&M Agreement, but like their negotiations over the Fund this was at the cost of ceding considerable control of their work rules to the PMA.

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[40] Fairley, *Facing Mechanization*, 79-83.
[41] Fairley, *Facing Mechanization*, 222-253, 305-315, 339-342.
[42] Stan Weir, *Singlejack Solidarity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 52, 67.

The push for productivity had its consequences, of which Paul Cubellis, chairman of Lordstown Local 1112's bargaining committee on the eve of the 1972 strike, was all too aware. Speaking of the imminent strike vote, Cubellis proclaimed that "we are not asking for anymore than for our people who fight these Production Lines, to be treated like American workers, human beings, not as pieces of profit making machinery."[43] Indeed, the Lordstown workforce faced perhaps the most egregious and shocking example of speed-up in the post-war auto industry. The breakneck pace of the assembly lines saw the plant turn out over 100 cars per hour, compared to the commonly held standard of 55 to 60 per hour, leaving workers just 36 seconds to complete their task. Grievances at the speed-up led to a 97 percent vote in March 1972 of the plant's younger, multiracial workforce to strike. Cubellis revealed in a press release that they had accumulated over 1,000 grievances "protesting work standards or 'speed-up'". Despite these issues, speed-up was difficult to police consistently due to the sprawling nature of the auto industry. Although it was less of an issue in the longshore industry, it still loomed over work tasks as a technique representative of excessive management control over workers. UAW and ILWU leaders wanted to offset this level of control through pursuit of social democratic ideas to bring government oversight into the process of automation at the plant level.

The Lordstown example, among others, illustrates that although the idea of automation improving productivity is largely treated as an economic question, speed-up gave it a political dimension. Speed-up involves deliberately increasing the pace of work to extract as much labor as possible from those who remain in the job and punishing those who do not comply. Speed-up naturally develops out of the relationship between productivity and capitalist profit-making – the greater the productive efficiency, the more goods created and

[43] Press Release by Paul Cubellis – Shop Chairman of Bargaining Committee (c.1971/1972), UAW Local 1112 Records, Box 17, WPR.

the more the employer personally benefits. It was this dimension of productivity that workers encountered on the shopfloor and resisted in their collective bargaining efforts. Although this was an issue pre-automation, the option for employers to force increases in the pace of the line as technology advanced meant that automation could easily be used to enforce and heighten speed-up beyond levels previously experienced.[44] Automation also in some instances gave managers and employers the option to remove workers from the equation entirely. Streamlining processes directly led to the need for less workers to achieve the same or higher productivity. Not only was this a cost-effective move for employers, but it was also politically effective, allowing them to justify the targeting of militant employees for layoff. A tension emerged between unions advocating automation to strengthen their industries, which might then lead to a loss of jobs as work processes required less manpower.

Shortly into his career as UAW President Reuther had to handle the protest at the Ford River Rouge and Lincoln plants in May 1949, which saw 65,000 workers strike over speed-up. Reuther's eventual settlement demonstrated his commitment to productivity without speed-up: it was agreed that each line would be maintained at a constant speed and that a uniform workflow would be maintained through correct spacing of units along the line.[45] Therefore, Reuther was acutely aware of the tendency toward speed-up and the potential for it to intensify with the introduction of automation. He resolved as part of his "Keep America at Work" address for the UAW Conference to Fight for Full Employment in 1953 that, alongside wishing to see automation harnessed beneficially, the union would

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[44] Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1974); Gordon, Edwards, and Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers*; David Gartman, *Auto Slavery: The Labor Process in the American Automobile Industry* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986); Edsforth and Asher, "The Speedup: The Focal Point," 65-98.

[45] Martin Halpern, *UAW Politics in the Cold War Era* (Albany: State University of New York, 1988), 257-259; Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth, "A Half Century of Struggle: Auto Workers Fighting For Justice," in *Autowork*, ed. Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 19-25.

exercise "eternal vigilance in the never-ending fight against every aspect of speed-up."[46] Granted, arrangements such as the agreement with Ford did not eliminate speed-up, but on this issue Reuther and the UAW leadership were fettered by their desire to encourage productivity, which naturally required a reactive strategy that responded to calls of speed-up where they arose, placing an ostensible degree of trust in employers to not overstep the line. Despite the UAW leaders' best efforts, the sprawling nature of the auto industry meant that speed-up could not be fully eradicated.

UAW leaders assessed their approach to speed-up in relation to the ILWU. Nat Weinberg commented on an article written by William Glazier, described by Weinberg as the "brain truster" of the ILWU, in a letter to Reuther. He noted that "despite language prohibiting speed-up" in the M&M Agreement, "the degree of latitude granted management in modernizing and mechanizing operations may in practice be dangerous to the workers' interests." Despite Glazier's argument that the M&M Agreement would solve unemployment on the West Coast waterfront, Weinberg contended that it "has not solved the problem of maintaining the total level of employment although it has provided greater security."[47] For Weinberg, then, ensuring that automation was morally implemented would require an elimination of speed-up without a wholesale sacrifice of the union's values or work rules.

Alongside speed-up, the twin issue of unemployment occupied UAW leaders. Jack Conway wrote to the members of the UAW's Automation Committee on the issue of "hidden unemployment" which had cropped up in an article by journalist Robert Bendiner. The article warned of workers who chose to retire early, temporary workers who took their contract termination pay and left their industry, and employees who might find their old job

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[46] Resolution: To Keep America Strong and Prosperous – Keep America at Work. Prepared for…The National UAW-CIO Conference to Fight for Full Employment, Washington, DC, December 6-7, 1953, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 56, Folder 11, WPR, 16.

[47] Nat Weinberg to Walter Reuther: Attached Article on Automation Agreement in West Coast Longshore industry, March 17, 1961, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 164, Folder 14, WPR.

classification disappear to be replaced by a new automated job. These workers were not "fired" as a result of technological change, they would simply not be hired, finding no place for them in the labor market. Bendiner warned of the creation of a "permanent reserve" of unemployed unable to find work as productivity rose, but that these unemployed would not be counted in the figures of those fired, therefore this would become "hidden unemployment."[48] Indeed, labor activist and economist Donald Montgomery encouraged Reuther, in his involvement with the Congressional Joint Committee on the Economic Report in 1955, to flag up the issue of why "an increasing number of people not at work are being classified by the Census Bureau as 'not in labor force' instead of 'unemployed'".[49]

Conway's concerns about 'hidden unemployment' and effects of technological unemployment were spurred by the flippant comments from industry voices on the effects of automation. For example, Ford executive Malcolm L. Denise maintained that "automation cannot be isolated as a cause of unemployment" and that "it seems self-evident to me that automation and other improvements in efficiency lead to employment, not unemployment" due to companies remaining competitive as a result of automation.[50] Henry Ford II's response to the third subcommittee of the President's Advisory Committee on Labor-Management Policy, tasked with investigating automation and technological advances and their effects on productivity, was vitriolic, arguing that unemployment was the result of "deficiencies in fiscal and monetary policies, and to labor policies which encourage excessive wage rates," not technological change.[51] If anything, according to these industry figures, unemployment

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[48] Jack Conway to Members of the Automation Committee, May 9, 1955, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 45, Folder 13, WPR.
[49] Donald Montgomery to Walter Reuther: Report of the Joint Committee on the Economic Report, April 8, 1955, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 286, Folder 10, WPR.
[50] Statement by Malcolm L. Denise, Vice President – Labor Relations, Ford Motor Company Before the Subcommittee on Unemployment and Automation, Committee on Education and Labor, United States Congress, House of Representatives, April 17, 1961, UAW Vice President's Office: Ken Bannon Records, Box 60, Folder 2, WPR.
[51] Statement of Henry Ford II With Regard To Report of Subcommittee No.3, President's Advisory Committee on Labor-Management Policy, October 13, 1961, UAW Vice President's Office: Ken Bannon Records, Box 60, Folder 3, WPR.

occurred because automation was too little too late. Conway noted that the existence of "hidden unemployment" "exposes the misleading statements" made by NAM, the Chamber of Commerce, and other business representatives supportive of automation. NAM's pamphlets attracted Conway's ire in letters to the Automation Committee. In response to a pamphlet on May 16, 1955 which argued that automation automatically raises standards of living unless there is "misfeasance by man," he advised members that "although most of the fallacious arguments presented in this pamphlet are rebutted in our Automation report, I suggest you check with Jim Stern [assistant director of the UAW Research Department] if you need additional material to refute their argument."[52]

While Reuther, Weinberg, and Conway saw speed-up as an avoidable consequence of automation and productivity, and something that could be mitigated despite alliances with government and business, Nat Ganley appeared to be less convinced. He wrote a series of articles published in the Detroit-local CPUSA magazine *Michigan Herald* (of which he was on the editorial board) on the economic trends in the auto industry in the immediate post-war period. Accusing Reuther and other union leaders of "class-collaboration" for negotiating productivity-adjusted wage increases with management, he argued that an ensuing "new speed-up drive" from attempts to increase productivity "will make for growing technological unemployment."[53] Ganley's anti-speed-up stance and criticism of the union leadership was inconsistent – as a Stalinist he had encouraged patriotic support of the speed-up during World War II.[54] This demonstrates the change in the Communist Party line, copied by the CPUSA, towards what its activists likely viewed a more natural goal. Similarly, the leaders of the

[52] Jack Conway, May 9, 1955; Jack Conway to Members of the Automation Committee, May 16, 1955, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 45, Folder 13, WPR.
[53] Nat Ganley, Economic Perspectives for the Auto Industry, 1948, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 3, Folder 9, WPR; These accusations of class collaboration and UAW leadership support of speed-up abound in Ganley's writings, see Nat Ganley, Peace and Labor, Spring 1950, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 3, Folder 9, WPR; Nat Ganley, 10 Questions and Answers on War Work and Unemployment, December 1951, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 3, Folders 10 and 11, WPR.
[54] For more on the ultra-conservatism of the CPUSA during World War II, see Stan Weir, "American Labor on the Defensive," *Radical America* 9, nos. 4-5 (1975).

Communist stronghold Local 600, one of the largest UAW locals based at the imposing River Rouge plant, advocated as part of their "Program for Jobs in Peace Time" that the union should "resist all efforts to eliminate workers through automation and speed-up," which they suggested was exacerbated by cooperation with "Big Business Corporations whose only concern is for profits, profits and more profits."[55] Local 600's Communists also repudiated their past support of speed-up in a similarly tactical effort to increase their marginal support among the UAW's membership.

ILWU leaders did not experience the same extent of speed-up grievances as the UAW, but "hidden unemployment" occupied them, just as it had Conway. Bridges criticized the inaccuracy of official unemployment figures, pointing out the existence of the "not in labor force" category as a method of hiding unemployment. This, combined with "2.6 million part-time workers – who are officially counted fully employed even if they work one hour per week," Bridges argued, masked the extent of the problem.[56] He decried rising unemployment before a convention of the American Association of Port Authorities "despite current prosperity and high level production." Blaming the Cold War for gearing the U.S. economy "to the limitless demand of a war machine," he urged "management, labor and all of the American people" to find a solution to displacement.[57] Like Reuther and the UAW, Bridges was cognizant of the potential for automation to lead to speed-up and kept a close eye on it as containerization swept the West Coast waterfront. Bridges recognized that ILWU members were grateful for the working conditions the union had fought for, and that they would resist a return to speed-up.[58] Granted, Bridges had supported the need for greater productive efficiency during World War II and had encouraged some extent of speed-up in the longshore

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[55] Carl Stellato, John Orr, William H. Johnson and W.G. Grant to Walter P. Reuther, November 12, 1953, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 250, Folder 12, WPR.
[56] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, August 10, 1962, 2.
[57] "Bridges tells 500 Port Agency Reps Facts of Life on Mechanization," *The Dispatcher*, October 6, 1961, 1, 4.
[58] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, October 14, 1955, 2.

industry to achieve this, like other left-led organizations.[59] But he aimed to reassure workers that in the automated age conditions would not return to those prior to the 1934 longshore strike that led to the union's formation, where speed-up was a fact of life.[60]

Indeed, pronouncements in *The Dispatcher* aimed to assuage West Coast longshoremen that there was nothing to fear. Robertson noted in August 1956 that the shift toward automation had not raised the ire of the union's members because "the work has been so plentiful for us." If any work had disappeared, it was those tasks which were "not too pleasant." Alongside his optimism, Robertson echoed concerns that working conditions should continue to improve, working hours should reduce due to machines, and the union should continue bargaining for fringe benefits without threat of speed-up. [61] The union managed to successfully negotiate a clause in the M&M Agreement ensuring guarantees against speed-up of individual longshoremen and "onerous work loads." Furthermore, it stipulated that the PMA was only able to make changes to the working conditions if more workers or more machines were added to compensate. [62] Workers might have been theoretically safeguarded from the consequences of raised productivity, but the union had ceded considerable control over working conditions to management in the process.

Although the UAW could not fully eliminate speed-up in the auto industry, and naturally had to adopt a reactive strategy to deal with complaints of speed-up where they arose, their proactive strategy on automation and productivity saw them turn to ameliorating unemployment. In an administrative letter to locals in 1959, the International signaled their adoption of a "Get America Back to Work" action plan, using the UAW's connections to

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[59] Nancy Quam-Wickham, "Who Controls the Hiring Hall? The Struggle for Job Control in the ILWU During World War II," in *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, ed. Steve Rosswurm (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 47-48, 66-67.
[60] Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*, esp. chapter 4.
[61] J.R. Robertson, "On the March," *The Dispatcher*, October 25, 1957, 12.
[62] John N. Burke, "The ILWU-PMA Mechanization and Modernization Agreement, A Report to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Business Administration," June 1962, California and West Coast Labor and Industrial Relations: Selected Publications, University of California at Berkeley, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment Collections, 18, 26-28, 33-34; Fairley, *Facing Mechanization*, 74-75.

government and "other liberal and progressive forces" – likely intellectuals and other labor organizations – to push for legislation to provide "full employment and full production." This included improvements in welfare and aid for workers facing unemployment, assurances of maximum purchasing power for the unemployed, facilitation of idle workers into available jobs, and capping the workweek and employing the unemployed to cover previous overtime hours.[63] The union's standard template for the creation of joint study committees between its representatives and automakers' management included explicit mention of "ways and means to create new job opportunities" for "workers displaced by technological progress."[64] Reuther's involvement – assisted by Weinberg, Stern, and the rest of the Research Department – with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations' President's Advisory Committees on Labor-Management Policy allowed him to communicate the concerns of the UAW's members – and of the labor movement as a whole – in a forum of likeminded individuals. They sought to remedy what they considered to be the main problem with automation: "how to achieve full technological efficiency without significant and lasting unemployment."[65]

UAW and ILWU leaders felt that social democratic ideas were tailor-made for a goal such as this. The fundamental notion of social democracy that productivity should be shared equitably, facilitated through an alliance between labor, management, and government appealed as government resources and planning offered a realistic route to an abundant society, and provided a check on the powers of management in labor negotiations. Reuther's personal social democratic tendencies have been well substantiated, as has the social

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[63] UAW Administrative Letter to All Local Unions, February 11, 1959, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 56, Folder 13, WPR.
[64] Proposed Subject Matter – Joint Study Committee, April 9, 1963, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 110, Folder 1, WPR.
[65] Report on Second Meeting of PAC on Labor-Management Policy, May 1, 1961, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 387, Folder 3, WPR; James J. Reynolds, Memorandum to all Committee Members, March 7, 1964, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 390, Folder 2, WPR. See especially contents of Boxes 387 and 390.

democratic agenda underpinning the UAW, even if this was stymied by difficult negotiations with management and Reuther's own anti-communism.[66] Bridges's belief in social democratic ideas does appear genuine, as do those of other ILWU leaders, as despite the union's political position ridding them of the leverage UAW leaders could draw upon to influence government planning ILWU leaders continued to advocate for social planning initiatives. However, Bridges's connections with the CPUSA complicates this, as his change in line from supporting speed-up to advocating social democratic planning in the post-war period is shared by other factions with known communist ties in the UAW, such as Local 600's leadership. Crucially, social democratic planning would allow unions to navigate the tension between the demands of employers to increase productivity and the desire of union members to acquire their share of that productivity by drawing upon resources outside of the sphere of labor-management negotiations.

The main concern of UAW leaders in their testimonies before government was outlining their vision of how economic growth should best be channeled to create abundance. In a statement for the Congressional Subcommittee on Automation and Energy Resources, Reuther noted that "millions of families" were living in conditions of "economic need," arguing that this tremendous amount of suffering relating to automation could have been avoided. He suggested growth be funneled into a constructive program of national social planning, such as through infrastructure development; improved minimum wage and a reduced working week allowing for more leisure time; higher federal standards for unemployment insurance; area and industrial development; specific targeting of distressed areas; and the creation of new leisure facilities.[67] Nat Weinberg was equally concerned about whether and how productivity could be channeled to social democratic ends. Discussing the

[66] Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man*; Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*.
[67] Statement of Walter P. Reuther, 1960, UAW Research Department: Congressional Testimonies, Box 34, WPR, 559-582.

"long-range problems" of adjustment to automation in a letter to Reuther advising how he should form a speech for the 1955 CIO Conference on Automation, he noted that automation could help in "adjusting the whole economy to abundance" by creating "higher living standards and increased leisure." Weinberg suggested that Reuther stress the possibilities automation and productivity provide for "a greatly stepped-up foreign economic aid program," a shrewd political move considering the prestige that international aid offered nations during the Cold War.[68]

The UAW leadership's commitment to social democratic ideals led to a concerted effort to educate the union's membership about the potential for socially beneficial applications of automation and productivity. One of the primary goals behind a UAW Summer School course on automation was "to stimulate thinking by union members about the kind of program that the union should adopt in order to *harness automation for the benefit of all* [emphasis added]."[69] Teaching materials emphasized the potential for productivity increases commensurate with rising worker purchasing power and the standard of living to possibly "almost double."[70] They encouraged workers to understand how automation and productivity could be harnessed and weigh in on how they believed they should benefit from productivity, a convenient method to canvass opinion on the policy lines that the union leadership planned to negotiate for with employers and government.

Although Reuther's approach was supported by many union members, some within the union – Local 600's leadership in particular – felt that it did not go far enough. In their proposed program for increasing jobs in peace time put to Reuther in 1953 they suggested various national measures that they believed were essential to full employment to "maintain

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[68] Nat Weinberg to Walter Reuther: Material For Speech at Automation Conference, April 11, 1955, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 286, Folders 10 and 11, WPR.
[69] Summer School 1955 Course Materials on Automation, 1955, UAW Region 1A Records, Box 3, Folder 14, WPR.
[70] Automation Teaching Material, Summer School 1955, Region 3, Ted Silvey Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, WPR.

and raise the living standards of all workers and all people." These included raising the minimum wage to $1.25 per hour, raising social security payments, a national medical and health plan, enacting "a comprehensive public works program in Congress," and protection to minority groups to ensure workers' living standards were maintained.[71] Like Reuther, Local 600's leaders recognized the necessity for government action to implement effective social planning, but did not share Reuther's willingness to cooperate with businesses. Reuther and Weinberg contemplated their proposals but vetoed them, citing infeasible extra costs.[72]

Glaberman, naturally, was similarly reluctant to ally with business, instead emphasizing the workers' "ceaseless struggle" towards a new society, totally reorganized by the actions of workers to claim their rightful role in deciding all aspects of work.[73] His concern was with workers overcoming the stultification of bureaucracy and gaining control over their work rules, less so over widespread social democratic change, and the targeted political message in the pamphlet reflects this. The Shachtmanites targeted Reuther's proposal for profit-sharing, arguing that "the workers' demands are for more security on the job, including some security of income. Profit-sharing only intensifies already existent insecurities." As a worker's take-home pay would be dependent on factors which workers have no influence over, they might be driven to work harder than necessary to boost productivity.[74] Such an argument would likely have resonated well with that of ILWU officials when they constructed their policy on automation.

Social democracy heralded a potential wider consolidation of the U.S. labor movement, which fit Bridges' personal politics. Speaking of previous ILWU programs in 1961, Bridges emphasized that the fringe benefits and social advances made by the union

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[71] Carl Stellato, John Orr, William H. Johnson and W.G. Grant to Walter P. Reuther, November 12, 1953, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 250, Folder 12, WPR.
[72] Nat Weinberg to Walter Reuther, "Estimated Cost per hour of Local 600 Proposals," December 1, 1953, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 250, Folder 12, WPR.
[73] Glaberman, *Punching Out*, 32.
[74] William Barton, "'Profit-sharing' is a speedup plan," *Labor Action*, June 27, 1949, 4.

"were actually substitutes for something preferable – adequate national programs which would have covered the entire community." He argued that "the problems created by technological change and automation will never be solved through collective bargaining between labor and management. They are much too complex and too big to be handled in this way."[75] Despite this suggestion, Bridges was aware that his union did not have the connections with government necessary to spark change at the national level. Still, he continued to promote national social planning, such as in his speech at the 51st Convention of the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security. Here, he set out a five point program: "genuine commitment to full employment…a stepped-up program to correct public deficiencies…a crash program for education…end to prejudice against economic planning…[and] a program guaranteeing direct income to unemployed workers."[76] As the longshore strike of 1971 raged on, Bridges testified to the interconnection between the intellectual community, students, farmers, small businesses, and white and blue collar workers, and insisted that the strike itself should encourage these groups to cooperate and "consolidate the wider labor movement together."[77] These words, and the fact that the strike occurred over the discontent of the union's membership at efforts to mitigate the effects of automation, suggest that Bridges understood automation to be an issue that organized labor could unite around.

Social planning was equally important for ILWU leaders looking to the automated future. Thankful that the union had begun planning for long-term adjustments to automation, Robertson gestured to the potential effect that automation could have on wider U.S. society. Although the ILWU "is going to keep trying to plan for its members," he was aware that this "isn't enough," gesturing to social democratic planning in stating that "our entire society

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[75] *The Dispatcher*, "Impact of Technology, Unemployment Needs Solution on National Level," October 20, 1961, 3.
[76] *The Dispatcher*, "Five Steps to Jobs: Bridges," July 10, 1964, 6.
[77] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, August 27, 1971, 2.

must learn to plan for the welfare of all the people."[78] He attested to the concern of ILWU members over what national plans were in place for their families and children, especially in regards to future job prospects, as the economy underwent automation and streamlining in the name of increased productivity.[79] Indeed, Robertson questioned whether it was possible to "revive the one time economic power, the political know-how, the moxie that made it possible for unions to be leaders in social planning." With greater influence, Robertson argued, "we can plan for the decade of the machine; so the machine will work for the worker, rather than own him and destroy him."[80]

The UAW's political influence successfully allowed its leaders, particularly Walter Reuther, to be selected to testify before Congressional committees on automation and productivity and allowed for their involvement in President's Advisory Committees on Automation in the early 1960s. In particular, the President's Advisory Committee on Labor-Management Policy in 1961 saw Reuther involved in several subcommittees relating to collective bargaining, economic growth, and sound wage and price policies.[81] The discussions of these bodies on automation assisted in the federal introduction of social democratic planning measures, such as the 1962 Manpower Development and Training Act, which aimed to retrain workers who had been displaced by automation.[82] Despite the rhetoric put forward by ILWU leaders calling for social democratic planning to mitigate the negative effects of automation and productivity, the end result of their efforts did not involve social democratic cooperation with government and management due to the union's political position and the reticence of the PMA to cooperate fully with the ILWU. However, this

[78] J.R. Robertson, "On the March," *The Dispatcher*, June 30, 1961, 12.
[79] J.R. Robertson, "On the March," *The Dispatcher*, May 4, 1962, 8.
[80] J.R. Robertson, "On the March," *The Dispatcher*, January 10, 1964, 8.
[81] President's Advisory Committee on Labor-Management Policy Pamphlet, February 16, 1961, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 387, Folder 3, WPR. See also the contents of Box 387 on the 1961 Committee, and Box 390 on the 1964 Committee in particular.
[82] Gladys Roth Kremen, "MDTA: The Origins of the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962," (c.1974), *U.S. Department of Labor*, https://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/mono-mdtatext.

should not detract from the pathbreaking nature of the M&M Agreement and should instead be seen as the ILWU gesturing to a commonality with the wider labor movement in using their collective influence to ensure that automation and productivity were harnessed beneficially.

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The differing strategies of the UAW and ILWU towards harnessing the benefits of automation demonstrate how responses to productivity among organized labor in the early post-war period were neither uniform nor capitulatory. Both Reuther and Bridges and their colleagues among the leadership of these unions were aware of and faced the same essential problems arising from automation, namely the reality of increased speed-up and the potential for large-scale unemployment. Patriotism and a desire for international competitiveness colored the UAW response which placed faith in automation's role in the free enterprise system. Convinced that a social democratic unity of government, management and labor would help to share the profits of automation, UAW leaders tried to foster and strengthen these connections even as union members suffered from speed-up on the ground. By contrast, ILWU leaders felt that sharing in the profits of automation led to a dangerous complicity with government and management that might potentially create inroads for rampant automation. Seeing a need for labor solidarity to protect workers from speed-up and unemployment, the union's leaders felt that the best course of action was taking social democracy into their own hands and advocating safeguarding job security above all else. In doing so, they framed their need for monetary compensation as extracting a "tax" from their employer in return for automation.

This argument develops the current historiography of Fordism and Taylorism. Particularly in histories of the former concept the notion of maximizing productivity is one often confined to the world of management. This is understandable given Fordism's existence

as a management philosophy, but understanding how workers engaged with productivity as their industries were automating adds another dimension to the scholarship that historians should explore in the context of other unions. Workers were dealing with automation as a development from the Fordist management systems of the early twentieth century, and as such experienced the raw end of how automation affected social relations in the workplace. Therefore, this chapter develops on the work of Greg Grandin, among others, who have expertly examined how Fordist ideas translated into social and community-building projects, forming the basis for a system of social relations. While the UAW had experienced and subscribed to the idea of a social democracy with Fordist foundations, it is the shortcomings of these systems, as Grandin delineated, with which the ILWU were concerned, resulting in their defensive stance. Just as the community of "Fordlandia" could not channel the drive for greater efficiency into a balanced social system without greater oversight and planning, so too did the ILWU fear that wholehearted pursuit of progress was foolhardy. [83]

Although the ideals and strategies behind Fordism fit best in blue-collar industries – and the effects of automation in blue-collar industries are more substantiated in the scholarship – perhaps historians could look to worker responses to productivity and automation in white-collar industries. As David Nye identifies, the growth of mass production in blue collar industries driven by automation facilitated the shift towards a white-collar service economy. [84] Above all, the technologies responsible for automation proved effective at streamlining procedures in the white-collar office. Margery Davies's study, among others, speaks to the importance of technology – and the productivity that came with it – in transforming the lives of office clerks.[85] As such, industries were less explicitly connected to the Cold War effort and U.S. global prestige, unlike the auto industry; perhaps

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[83] Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (London: Icon, 2010).
[84] David Nye, *America's Assembly Line* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).
[85] Margery W. Davis, *Woman's Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982).

their responses to automation and productivity might be more akin to those of the ILWU, focusing on defensiveness and protection of workers' rights.

From these early post-war forays into harnessing the productivity of automation to the more advanced automation that came in the early 1970s, the essential tension between improving productivity and balancing the workload among auto and longshore workers remained constant. With the optimism of post-war development spurring them on, workers in both industries could feel relatively confident at this point that their union leaderships were negotiating in their best interest. Even as their jobs changed dramatically before their eyes in such a short period, they still had some reassurance from union officials that they would be compensated for these changes, whether through a hope to share in the profits of automation or a guarantee of job security. Their economic futures seeming relatively secure, workers began to look forward to another much-vaunted consequence of automation, namely the reduction of strenuous physical work required in their roles.

Chapter Two: Physical Relief

For many auto and longshore workers, the physical challenge brought by their labor was something to be treasured, not removed. As former ILWU Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Herb Mills recounted his long career on the West Coast waterfront, referring to longshoring prior to the introduction of containerization in the mid-1950s as being "hard, dirty, and dangerous." Despite this, he enthused that "every pensioneer […] I've ever talked to, he said… 'I loved every day, I loved every day of it.' Now there ain't one goddamn industry in five thousand that you're gonna find guys that say 'I loved that job'."[1] Mills identifies a sentiment among longshore workers to hold the rough physicality of their labor in high regard, believing it an important marker of their social worth and status. Therefore, the promise of automation – to lift the burden of hard physical labor from the shoulders of workers – presented a fundamental challenge to their identities as manual laborers. Incorporating automation into the workplace created an essential tension among auto and longshore workers – which this chapter explores – namely the balance between relieving workers of strenuous tasks and stripping them of the pride that stemmed from the rewarding physical challenge of their jobs. This chapter argues that auto workers found physical strain reduced due to automation but were dismayed to find it replaced with monotonous work and little autonomy. Longshore work, in contrast, managed to retain much of its physical challenge – and its workers held much of their workplace autonomy – until the late 1960s, when the pace of automation increased dramatically in their industry. By focusing on worker

[1] Herb Mills, Interview by Chris Carlsson and Steve Stallone, 1996, http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Oral_History:_Herb_Mills.

responses to automation's physically transformative effects in the workplace, this chapter expands on the nature of the critique these workers levelled at new technologies.

The leaders of these unions understood that there were several possible ways to lighten the physical burdens of manual labor. Their general focus was on streamlining processes and making liberal use of machine tools to reduce or replace manual labor, such as with the assembly line, or alternatively changing work processes entirely to the same effect. When workers in the auto and longshore industries recounted their experiences of promised physical relief and their perceptions of autonomy and their job content, their comments addressed three interconnected subthemes: the aspirations of physical relief put forward by union leaders and the theoretical ways in which this might be achieved; the realities of automation's effects on physicality which they often perceived negatively, and how management capitalized on the reduced physicality of automated work to intensify the pace of work through speed-up; and the effects of changes to the work environment as it became automated, such as improvements to safety measures or alterations to the physical layout of the workplace. This chapter examines these themes in turn to get to the heart of what the first-hand experience of workers in these industries was like when they contended with automation.

Stephen Meyer's excellent study of assembly line management in Ford plants published in 1981 encouraged a new generation of UAW historians to examine the relationship between lived experience in the automating workplace and management strategy. His work acknowledged the negative effects of assembly line work on auto workers, namely that it made work more mentally taxing and repetitive. This led to certain jobs taking on a new level of mental strain despite work processes being generally safer and requiring less

physical effort.[2] Subsequent studies in the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as the volume by notable UAW historian John Barnard among others, clarified that in some instances, relief from the physicality of specific tasks did not mean the job as a whole became easier, as physical toil either remained or was replaced by speed-up.[3] While UAW historians identified that automation was not bringing the physical relief that it had appeared to promise, prominent labor and social historians such as David Gartman and David Noble made the connection in the late 1980s between the negative testimonies of workers and a more insidious strategy of managerial control. Their studies built on the seminal work of Harry Braverman, who noted his concerns regarding the excesses of managerial control that automation had abetted almost a decade prior. Collectively, their work argued that the use of machines to dictate the pace of work allowed management greater control over work processes and workers' bodies. Although machine tools appear to give workers greater mastery over their work, control and implementation of machines is actually in the hands of management, who set the pace of work and by extension the way and the rate at which workers move their bodies.[4] The use of automation as a tool of managerial control directly infringed upon the autonomy of auto workers, a persistent thread in these workers' testimonies.

ILWU historians such as Herb Mills and Paul Hartman, however, offered a differing perspective. Despite their seminal studies also being published in the 1970s and 1980s and

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[2] Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981).
[3] John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935-1970* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004), especially chapter 1; Stephen Meyer, "'An Economic Frankenstein': UAW Worker Responses to Automation at the Ford Brook Park Plant in the 1950s," *Michigan Historical Review* 28, no. 1f (2002): 63-89; Ruth Milkman, *Farewell to the Factory: Auto Workers in the Late Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), especially chapter 2.
[4] Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1974), especially chapter 9; David Gartman, *Auto Slavery: The Labor Process in the American Automobile Industry* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986); David Noble's *Forces of Production: A Social History of Industrial Automation* (New York: Knopf, 1984), especially chapter 10.

similarly accounting for the ways in which containerization transformed the waterfront and changed the established practices of the union regarding new hires and maintaining jobs, they tend not to refer to these changes as affecting the autonomy of longshore workers.[5] This chapter seeks to answer the question of why the workers in these industries had such a differing reaction despite both experiencing automation at the same time.

The answer lies in the differing working environments and cultures of auto and longshore work. Scholarship on these industries is attentive to the ways in which the working environment in these industries was transformed by automation. Studies focusing on the longshore working environment (such as David Wellman's work) argue that workers felt more socially isolated and alienated on the containerized waterfront, and that many workers disliked the changes brought by automation to longshoring.[6] Although these observations are likely accurate in the post-1970s period, when containerization reached the height of its implementation on the docks, workers testifying to their experiences on the waterfront in the 1950s and 1960s tend not to exhibit these tendencies, instead reporting a relative, if skeptical, satisfaction with automation and its potential. In contrast, scholarship on the post-war auto working environment such as Ruth Milkman's exemplary study of late twentieth century auto work exhibit a trend towards negative reception of automation by auto workers, which is further substantiated by studies derived from oral histories.[7] Richard Feldman and Michael Betzold's collected volume of twentieth-century autoworker oral histories and Ben Hamper's

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[5] Paul T. Hartman, *Collective Bargaining and Productivity: The Longshore Mechanization Agreement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969); David T. Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Herb Mills's sharp criticism of containerized longshoring procedures for negatively affecting the culture of the docks and socialising between longshore workers does not suggest that these workers felt a loss of autonomy from the process. See Herb Mills, "The San Francisco Waterfront: The Social Consequences of Industrial Modernization," in *Case Studies on the Labor Process,* ed. Andrew S. Zimbalist (New York: Monthly Review, 1979), 127-155.

[6] Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong;* Herb Mills, "The San Francisco Waterfront,"; Stan Weir, *Singlejack Solidarity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), especially parts II and VI.

[7] Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital;* Gartman, *Auto Slavery*; Ruth Milkman, *Farewell to the Factory*.

own accounts of assembly line work – accompanied by those of his colleagues – crucially report dissatisfaction at their lost autonomy in the workplace and the monotony of the line.[8]

Despite the often-negative reaction of the membership, the leadership of both unions felt that automation's potential for physical relief was rather positive on paper. Indeed, physical relief was seized upon by modernization theorists in this period, and visions of what a modern working future might look like often involved some form of relief from the vagaries of drudgery.[9] Modernization theorists saw technological superiority as a crucial measurement of modernity and they therefore viewed automation and its relieving the worker of drudgery as a marker of the U.S.'s societal advancement in the face of the U.S.S.R.[10] By creating a connection between technological advancement and U.S. Cold War ideology, government officials found automation and its potential for physical relief an attractive goal.

UAW and ILWU leaders displayed similar optimism about the potential for automation to alleviate physical drudgery in their industries. This originated from their genuine belief that automation and productivity, when harnessed to beneficial ends, would uplift U.S. society. Their support was cautious; UAW leaders were particularly wary of automation's proponents in business and government arguing that automation was wholly positive solely based on physical relief, being careful to remind management and the general

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[8] Harvey Swados, *On the Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Richard Feldman and Michael Betzold, *End of the Line: Autoworkers and the American Dream* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Ben Hamper, *Rivethead: Tales from the Assembly Line* (New York: Warner Books, 1991); Barbara Garson, *All the Livelong Day: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994).
[9] David Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800-1932: The Development of Manufacturing Technology in the United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), especially chapter 8; Amy Sue Bix, *Inventing Ourselves Out of Jobs?: America's Debate Over Technological Unemployment, 1929-1981* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2001), especially chapters 5-7; Michael Adas, "Modernization Theory and the American Revival of the Scientific and Technological Standards of Social Achievement and Human Worth," in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War,* ed. David Engerman (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 25-46; Michael Adas, *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2006).
[10] For examples of this, see Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Daniel Bell, "Automation and Major Technological Change: Impact on Union Size, Structure and Function. A Panel Discussion at a Conference Held Under the Auspices of The Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO. April 22, 1958, Washington D.C.," UAW Research Department Records Part 2, Box 23, Folder 3, WPR.

public of the unemployment that could ensue if automation continued unchecked. ILWU leaders welcomed the alleviation of hard physical work, which had previously been a hallmark of longshoring. Compared to the auto industry these changes came several decades later, giving ample time for ILWU leaders to anticipate how automation might affect the longshore industry. Their greater optimism for physical relief was matched by a similar concern with the potential for automation to scythe through jobs on the waterfront. The difference between the two unions lay in the rhetoric underpinning their support for physical relief. UAW leaders often utilized Cold War language, in keeping with their support of productivity and connection with government. They hoped to draw the attention of those in federal government who could best make their desires a reality. The ILWU less commonly utilized Cold War language, a natural choice owing to the union's politics and lack of connection to government, focusing their attention more on the benefit for the individual worker. Both were united in their belief in the importance of making – and keeping – auto and longshore work more humane.

Indeed, while the prognosis endorsed by leaders was rosy, where auto and longshore workers' experiences of automation and physical relief contrast is over the issue of autonomy in the workplace. For UAW members, changes to the nature of auto work due to automation correlate with a reported loss of autonomy, of control over work, and of pride in their work. This is due to challenging physical work being replaced with mental strain and unchallenging monotonous work, effectively continuing drudgery in a different form. ILWU members retained some of the challenging physicality and variety in work tasks that many enjoyed, and the structure of longshore work was not as heavily transformed by automation as auto work, hence their feeling a similar level of autonomy in the automated workplace. This discrepancy was amplified by the differing work environments between auto and longshore, with auto work becoming more confined and socially separated compared to the physically open space

of the docks and the importance of social interaction to longshore work. Comparing the experiences of auto and longshore workers with the realities of automation's effects on physical relief demonstrates that automation's impact on the workforce can differ substantially between industries. The ILWU's success at retaining its members' autonomy and variety in work reinforces the notion that automation does not inevitably replace physical drudgery with mental drudgery, nor does it herald the removal of workers' control over their work.

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Phil Stallings, a spot welder at the Ford assembly plant in Chicago's far South Side, knew all too well that just because a job was less strenuous, that did not mean it was equally fulfilling. He testified that the repetition on the line was "such that if you were to think about the job itself, you'd slowly go out of your mind."[11] Auto workers often referred to relief from physical drudgery in terms of its negative consequences to their work life. Explicit references to automation's alleviation of physical drudgery on the job by UAW leaders were less common because automation and the assembly line had become a fact of life in the post-war auto industry, but they were more positive in tone. Reuther's reference to automation freeing workers from "monotonous drudgery" in his testimony before the Congressional Subcommittee on Economic Stabilization in 1955 was part of his effort to ensure that the UAW did not appear anti-progress, and to clarify the union's support of automation. Mentioning the Luddite destruction of machines, Reuther was quick to argue that their "complaint was not against the machines, but against the blindness of society which allowed the machines to be used as a means of ruthless exploitation." His caution that automation's benefits could only materialize with proper application was a counter to statements from

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[11] Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985), 222.

"those who refuse to admit that automation poses any problems for individuals and for society as a whole…the very people who should be in the best position to foresee the difficulties that will have to be met, and in cooperation with government and the trade unions, to take action to meet them" – in other words, management. [12]

Reuther's assertion that proper management and planning of automation was essential to ensuring its benefits were felt by the workforce was explicitly aimed at auto industry executives and members of the National Association of Manufacturers. Both groups had ties to government and had attempted to propagate the belief that automation was entirely positive. Their statements placed relief from physical drudgery at the heart of why automation, in their eyes, was without fault. Ford executive Ray H. Sullivan's positive assessment of automation was predicated on its removal of physical drudgery and intriguingly its potential to "multiply the strength of the individual man."[13] The latter is especially revealing – rather than removing or reducing the physicality of labor required, Sullivan suggested that workers would in fact be faced with the exact same hard workload with the machine allowing for an even greater output, a subtle but troubling herald of speed-up for Ford's auto workers. In 1955 UAW Automation Committee head and trusted Reuther aide Jack Conway shared an information bulletin from the Chamber of Commerce with members of the Committee. It was an ideologically charged piece proclaiming that U.S. freedom, combined with machines, would realize the "promise of a better world," partly by relieving workers of "boring, repetitious tasks."[14] This was ironic considering the underlying principle of the assembly line was rapid repetition. Reuther's plan, therefore, in explicitly

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[12] Testimony of Walter P. Reuther, President, Congress of Industrial Organizations, on Automation, before the Sub-Committee on Economic Stabilization of the Joint Committee on the Economic Report, October 17, 1955, Communications Workers of America Records, Box 100, Folder 7, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archive, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University.
[13] Ray H. Sullivan, "What 'Automation' Means to You Explained by Company Executive," *Ford Rouge News*, October 16, 1953, UAW Vice President's Office: Ken Bannon Records, Box 59, Folder 12, WPR.
[14] Jack Conway to Members of the Automation Committee, March 8, 1955, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 45, Folder 11, WPR.

referring to automation's relief of workers from drudgery followed by words of caution, was likely deliberately aimed at attracting the same audience as the propagandistic company executives and urging them to think twice before subscribing to unthinking belief in automation's potential.

Not only did UAW leaders challenge automation, but they were also prepared to hold management to account for implementing automation without forethought. In a speech given in 1955 on labor's response to automation, Conway attempted to reverse the common accusation of management that "when unions point out that drastic changes in production techniques have, as a by-product, disruptive effects on the lives of workers," this is "evidence that workers are afraid of new machines." He argued that workers "do not oppose automation" and "do not fear the automatic machine." In fact, workers "welcome better tools that take the danger and drudgery out of our work. What we do oppose is blind, irresponsible use of these new tools." Following this accusation of management for the misuse of automation, he added that "management has a responsibility to introduce this new technology in a manner which will minimize disruptive consequences," reiterating that "management must face its responsibility to the workers affected by changes in technology."[15] Conway's speech adopts the line taken by Reuther, namely using automation's promised relief from physical drudgery as a tool to hold management to account.

With automation relieving workers of physical drudgery, the question arose of how this would affect older workers dealing with newly automated jobs. Jim Stern, Conway's colleague in the UAW's Research Department who was equally as passionate and intrigued about the potential of automation, presented on this issue in 1955 to an audience at the eighth Annual Conference on Aging at the University of Michigan. Stern addressed the concerns of

[15] Jim Stern to Members of the Automation Committee, May 2, 1955, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Papers, Box 45, Folder 13, WPR.

middle-aged workers that automation might make their previously acquired skills and training obsolete, would lead management to select younger candidates over them, and that automated processes might be overly complex and require training that managers may not be willing to provide to more senior members of the workforce. He stressed to these workers that "automation will not hinder you," arguing that "with automation comes a greater stress on maturity, responsibility, training and skill. Physical effort requirements, the age-old enemy of the older worker, will be almost eliminated." His optimism, like that of Reuther and Conway, was accompanied by a cautionary note that 'the future of the older worker can be bright if we recognize our opportunity to accelerate our application of social 'know why' to match the unprecedented application of our technical 'know how'."[16] Just as Reuther and Conway had emphasized in their suggestions to management, Stern maintained that only with social planning crafted in cooperation between labor, management, and government would it be possible to ensure that older workers were not discriminated against.

ILWU leaders shared the enthusiasm of the UAW leaders regarding the potential for automation to alleviate physical drudgery. The union's vice president J.R. Robertson proclaimed in *The Dispatcher* that the union in the wake of World War II welcomed "the end of the backbreaking toil and human toil in lives and bodies exacted by antiquated methods of work" in response to the rapid advancement of labor-saving machinery on the waterfront.[17] As containerization became a reality for the ILWU in the mid-1950s, their pronouncements, like those of the UAW, began to show considerable caution. Bridges's viewpoint on automation and physical relief was published in *The Dispatcher* in 1957, several months prior to initial discussions over what would later become the M&M Agreement.[18] He reiterated the line he had taken at the March 1956 caucus, arguing that "longshoremen are not opposed to

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[16] James Stern, "Possible Effects of Automation on Older Workers," UAW Research Department Records Part 2, Box 23, Folder 33, WPR.
[17] J.R. Robertson, "On the March," *The Dispatcher*, April 20, 1945, 16.
[18] Hartman, *Collective Bargaining*, 80-82.

machines as such; they are not opposed to shifting a back-breaking job from their own shoulders to a machine." While the fear of longshoremen that "work might fall off," or that workers might be "displaced by machines" was understandable, Bridges maintained that the union's program was not "holding onto practices which make jobs for other people – and frequently which make the work harder." He argued that the ILWU would seek a union policy which supported automation and technological progress while addressing the concerns of the members regarding threats to their work opportunities and job security.[19] The following month, Robertson addressed automation similarly, arguing that workers in other industries attempting to find ways to "beat the machine" were misguided. "No worker in his right mind would ever be opposed to transferring heavy physical labor from his own back to a piece of machinery," Robertson emphatically stated. Like Bridges, he believed that the "ultimate aim" of the union was to contribute to U.S. Cold War ideological goals: "to let the machine do much of our back-breaking work, while we work less hours and while every one of us is able, at the same time, to continue to make a good living – in keeping with what we call the American standard."[20]

Just as UAW and ILWU leaders were optimistic about automation's potential for physical relief, so too were the women already employed in the auto and longshore industries and those who were seeking employment. Prior to automation, the West Coast longshore industry had difficulty accommodating female hires due to the more physically strenuous nature of longshore work pre-containerization.[21] The physical relief provided by automation therefore heralded a significant diversification in longshore hires from the mid-1950s. Within

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[19] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," May 24, 1957, 2, 7.
[20] J.R. Robertson, "On the March," June 7, 1957, 8.
[21] Scholarship on women entering the longshoring industry in this period is sparse. For analysis of women in Pacific Northwest industrial communities, focusing mainly on mine workers but also including coverage of longshore, see Laurie Mercier, "Gender, Labor, and Place: Reconstructing Women's Spaces in Industrial Communities of Western Canada and the United States," *Labor History*, no. 53 (2012): 389-407. As Mercier notes, women who found themselves entering the longshore industry had to adopt its rugged masculinity despite mechanization providing physical relief. This is explored further in Chapter Four.

the auto industry, the sight of women on the shopfloor was more familiar due to the recruitment drive during World War II, which had seen many women take up roles in the auto industry. For instance, Jess Ferrazza, a worker for the Briggs Manufacturing Company, reported that although Briggs had not traditionally employed women, as male workers were laid off they sought jobs elsewhere, leaving space for women. He estimated that during World War II "probably 60 percent of the employees in the plant were women."[22] Historians of the UAW such as Nancy Gabin have acknowledged the efforts of these women, who fought for their right to post-war employment even as servicemen returned and wished to take back their jobs.[23] The presence of an opportunity to work in the auto industry and, from there, develop a platform to fight for their right to fair employment within the industry is partly a product of automation reducing the physical demands of auto work – and therefore improving the industry's accessibility – in the early twentieth century.

Optimism was also shared by some of the longstanding male members of the unions. Germain Bulcke, a leader of ILWU Local 10, located in the San Francisco Bay Area, noted that, as a result of the M&M Agreement, ILWU longshoremen were better off on wages and benefits than workers in other industries, suggesting agreement with the leadership's decision to accept automation on the grounds that "there would be something in it for our members." Bulcke's caveat was that these benefits were excellent "for those actually working," but that the main issue was the "millions of unemployed" due to automation.[24] Albert Alvarez, a member of ILWU Local 13, based in the Port of Long Beach in Los Angeles, believed that mechanization and modernization was "the best thing in the world for labor and business."

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[22] Jess Ferrazza, interviewed by Jack W. Skeels, May 26, 1961, UAW Oral Histories, Box 4, Folder 7, WPR, 1, 22.
[23] Nancy F. Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement: Women and the United Auto Workers, 1935-1975* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), especially chapter 4; Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth, "A Half Century of Struggle: Auto Workers Fighting for Justice," in *Autowork*, ed. Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth (Albany: State University of New York), 1-38; Barnard, *American Vanguard,* especially chapter 6; Martin Halpern, *UAW Politics in the Cold War era* (Albany: State University of New York, 1988), especially chapter 3.
[24] Germain Bulcke, "Germain Bulcke: Longshore Leader and ILWU-PMA Arbitrator," Interview by Estolv Ethan Ward, 1983, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 208-209.

Like Bulcke, he was satisfied with the union's negotiations and the introduction of labor-saving devices onto the waterfront.[25] Like the leadership, members in support of automation grounded their positivity in the tangible benefits available to longshore workers.

Female members of Local 13 naturally expressed positivity towards automation's alleviation of physical toil as it had created the opportunity for them to work on the waterfront. Andrea Luse was thankful for automation allowing her to become a longshore worker, crediting the M&M agreement for affording women the opportunity to make "a decent living wage." While acknowledging that automation had made the job less physically demanding, Luse referred to M&M as a "double edged sword" as it also reduced the workforce.[26] Ester Rivera was similarly supportive of more machinery being utilized on the waterfront with time, and understood concerns regarding unemployment as before M&M "the work was such that it really took the strength of a man to do a lot of that."[27] Clearly, although women longshore workers owed their jobs on the waterfront to automation – and were thankful for the relief of physical toil it brought – they were cognizant of the crucial contentions of the longshore workforce with automation, namely its effect on employment.

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Like the ILWU members, Lloyd Allen, a member of Local 900 based in the Ford Wayne Assembly Plant in Wayne, Michigan, recalled his own cautious positivity towards automation's alleviation of physical drudgery on the job. He recounted how automation revolutionized the Paint Shop at Wayne Assembly, to the point that when he left in 2007 there were only 82 workers in the Paint Shop compared to 345 twenty years prior. He regarded automation, like Luse, as a "double-edged sword" – management would "save a dollar" by reducing the number of jobs, but "them robots aren't going to buy a car." His

[25] Albert Alvarez, interview by Tony Salcido, April 24, 1989, ILWU13OH, Box 1, Folder 1, OL.
[26] Andrea Luse, interview by Michael La Chance, June 9, 1996, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 11, OL, 31-32.
[27] Ester Rivera, interview by Andrea Cohen, January 20, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 11, OL, 22, 28.

attitude throughout his 41-year career in the plant was supportive of technological change: "you have to change with the times or you'll cease to exist…you have to embrace change, that's what it's all about." If it meant a stronger auto industry, a reduction in rank-and-file workers was acceptable to Allen.[28] Harvey Hawkins, a member of UAW Local 7, based in the Chrysler Jefferson North Assembly plant in East Detroit, noted that automation was "big and important" to the company, but "detrimental to the unions." He spoke about his experience of the introduction of an automated device that replaced six jobs, which led to the workers arguing with the company, telling them "Look, you brought that piece of equipment in here and it ain't going to buy one car. Not one," to which the company responded, "Well, it ain't going to take a day off either."[29]

Just as UAW workers felt that their position had become more precarious as automation heralded unemployment, so too did they feel their autonomy in the workplace diminished by changes to their jobs in the name of physical relief. Many found physical strain replaced by nerve-wracking and monotonous tasks performed at intense speeds, replacing the drudgery of hard physical work with a new mentally taxing and repetitive form of drudgery. As their work lives were dictated by the pace of the assembly line, many reported that they felt a palpable loss of control over their work, becoming a cog in the machine that was the factory. Unlike autoworkers, longshore workers recounted improvements to their jobs, as their work remained varied and retained a similar level of physical effort, either as a result of processes remaining unchanged or the pace of work increasing as individual tasks became less physically strenuous. It was likely this retention of challenging and interesting physicality in longshore work that led to ILWU members feeling that their autonomy had been preserved on the automated waterfront.

[28] Lloyd Allen, interview by Edward Savela, May and June 2012, AAWP, WPR.
[29] Harvey Hawkins, interview by Edward Savela, May and June 2012, AAWP, WPR.

The formidable UAW Local 600 brought the issue of continued strain and drudgery due to the pace of the line to the fore from the early 1950s. The program for jobs in peace time drafted by the local's leaders and addressed to Reuther included mention of demands for shorter working times on the job through methods such as increased rest periods and the involvement of "competent union time study men" to challenge work time standards set by management.[30] This, combined with their repeated mentions of opposition to speed-up suggests that they were cognizant of a need to regain autonomy over the pace of work ahead of increased automation, foreseeing the potential for heightened speed-up. The issue of drudgery and monotony on the line remained a decade later, as demonstrated by the campaign materials for Walter Dorosh's run to become the president of Local 600. These made an emphatic statement that "workers should not be dominated by a moving line" and that they "should not be chained to a job." These campaign points suggest a need to remedy drudgery and restore autonomy over workers' bodies and pace of work. Dorosh's campaign further suggested a "training program to enable workers to prepare for better jobs," offering a lifeline to those stuck in the rut of assembly line work and heralding new opportunities for workers who might find themselves unemployed because of automation.[31]

Workers' experiences of drudgery and monotony on the automated assembly line garnered national attention due to the resistance of UAW Local 1112 at the Lordstown Assembly Plant to their working conditions in 1972. An article from *The Cincinnati Enquirer* covered the dispute, emphasizing that it centered on "whether management has eliminated jobs and distributed extra work to the remaining men to the extent that they can't keep up with the assembly lines in the Lordstown plant." The article included comments from industrial engineers that the issue was not the "physical nature of the work as its constant

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[30] Carl Stellato, John Orr, William H. Johnson and W.G. Grant to Walter P. Reuther, November 12, 1953, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 250, Folder 12, WPR.

[31] Dorosh-O'Rourke Campaign Materials, 1964, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 250, Folders 28-29, WPR.

repetitive unskilled nature."[32] This illustrates that physicality had not been relieved by automation as it theoretically should have been. It had instead been replaced by speed-up and repetition. *Business Week* ran a feature on Lordstown two months later referring to the grievances of workers in automated plants towards hard and monotonous work as "Lordstown syndrome." This incident, the article stressed, underscored "the increasingly serious problem of worker discontent on automated assembly lines everywhere."[33]

Discontent from auto workers towards monotony and newfound drudgery on the line had been well substantiated since the early 1950s, when several scholars produced studies of automated work aiming to understand the attitudes of workers towards it. Most notable among these was Ely Chinoy's study of automobile workers, based on 78 interviews conducted with employees at a Big Three plant in a "middle-sized midwestern city we shall call Autotown," which was presumably Detroit, Michigan. Although his study was primarily focused on how much opportunity for advancement these auto workers were given, with the hopes of understanding whether they could achieve an "American Dream," his study touches upon working conditions in the automated factory. Interviewees frequently complained that "the fatigue after a day on the line or at a machine is so great that one has little energy left for other things one wishes to do." Assembly line work was looked upon unanimously as "the most exacting and most strenuous" work due to its "coerced rhythms, the inability to pause at will for a moment's rest, and the need for undeviating attention to simple routines." Notably, Chinoy observed that auto workers in the automated plant were subject to the control of management as their contribution to the finished automobile was so small individually that they could not make a claim to the fruits of their labor.[34] The experiences of Locals 600 and

[32] "'World's Fastest Assembly Line' Becoming One of Slowest," *The Cincinnati Enquirer,* January 24, 1972, Robert Guthridge Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, WPR.
[33] "The Spreading Lordstown Syndrome," *Business Week*, March 4, 1972, Robert Guthridge Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, WPR.
[34] Ely Chinoy, *Automobile Workers and the American Dream* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955), 24, 70, 85.

1112 and Chinoy's findings indicate that the relentless pace of assembly line work had left workers without much physical relief. As speed-up and monotony created a new kind of physical toil for these workers, they were left feeling alienated and sapped of their autonomy.

The pride many of these workers previously felt towards their jobs was diminished as their workplaces automated. Phil Stallings and his co-workers found their work monotonous: "I bet there's men who have lived and died out there, never seen the end of that line. And they never will – because it's endless. It's like a serpent. It's all just body, no tail. It can do things to you…" Automated machines were the premium to managers, not the workers who manned them. "I don't understand how come more guys don't flip," he added, "Because you're nothing more than a machine…They give better care to that machine than they will to you. They'll have more respect, give more attention to that machine. And you *know* this. Somehow you get the feeling that the machine is better than you are." Instead of concern about worker safety, managers worried about the status of the machines: "If that machine breaks down, there's somebody out there to fix it right away. If I break down, I'm just pushed over to the other side till another man takes my place."[35] Stallings's experience resonated with many other line workers like those respondents to Chinoy's study who found pride in their work replaced by feelings of alienation and lack of value in the face of automated machine tools. In contrast, Ned Williams, who began work for Ford in 1946 and was responsible for affixing tires to automobiles, acknowledged that despite automobile creation being a draining process for workers, there was still "a certain area of proudness" in seeing a car and thinking "I put my labor in it. And somebody just like me put their area of work in it."[36]

[35] Ibid, 152-153.
[36] Terkel, *Working,* 240-243.

These reports of monotony and drudgery on the line had a palpable effect on the tone of the pronouncements made by and discussions between UAW leadership on automation and physical relief in the 1960s. A pamphlet from the UAW's Recreation Department on automation and recreation released in 1964 included a quote from Reuther on the automated workplace. Understanding the plight of workers, he expressed concern that "we are not only faced with more time off the job but also with a duller time on the job." By this point, Reuther appears to have accepted the fact that automated labor had a degree of monotony and drudgery that was unavoidable. He therefore suggested that workers use their free time, which would "inevitably come with more automation and other improved technological innovations," to "voluntary, creative and constructive" ends.[37] Nat Weinberg was cognizant that drudgery still remained on the job, arguing in an article on automation and collective bargaining policy that, although "physical strain may be eliminated and physical hazards reduced to near the vanishing point" – likely referring to the traditional work tasks with high physical demand in the industry rather than the notion of physicality's elimination entirely, which many workers would likely have disagreed with – these might be replaced "by such factors as perceptual fatigue, nervous strain, loneliness and other psychological problems that have been found to be associated with automation."[38]

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Interwoven throughout the testimonies of UAW members is a feeling of lost autonomy in the face of automation. Rather than enjoying physical relief, autoworkers were subject to managerial control through automation. They were physically and mentally shaped and controlled by the demands of the line to feeling like they were accessories in the workplace compared to the machine tools they operated. ILWU workers also saw the

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[37] UAW Recreation Department, "Automation…Leisure…Recreation…Conservation," February 1964, UAW Research Department Collection Part 1, Box 58, WPR.
[38] Nat Weinberg, Automation and Collective Bargaining Policy in the United States, UAW Research Department Collection Part 1, Box 44, WPR.

physical elements of longshoring altered by automation, but their testimonies crucially lack the concerns about lost autonomy common to UAW oral histories. Instead, ILWU workers' central concern regarding containerization was the extent to which relieving the physical strain of the job would lead to unemployment. They expected this would manifest in the need for less longshore workers to handle cargo. ILWU Local 13 member Kristi Vogt disliked that the ILWU was not actively campaigning against new automation, feeling that the prospect of further technological change was "scary" because "the more automated [work was], the less people they need, the less jobs there are." Containerized efficiency meant that "ships can be in and out in one work shift" as opposed to "ten, eleven, twelve days." "You're lucky if you get a comeback anymore for a second day," she added.[39] Walter Williams shared Vogt's concerns about manning, arguing that the union "gave up far too much for what we got in return." He believed the union "gave away too much on manning," as on the East Coast he argued the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA), the longshore union in that region, had "maintained their manning scales pretty much" even in the face of modernization. Because of this, while containerization might have brought some physical relief for longshore workers, losing the level of manning on the waterfront was not offset by these improvements to the quality of work.[40]

Although the concerns of Local 13's members were justified, they were not to know that the bigger picture was more optimistic. The PMA's Southern California Area Manager John D. MacEvoy believed that, although the M&M agreement initially reduced available work on the part of a coastwide registration freeze in 1960 and the elimination of featherbedding on the docks – meaning that workers were only allowed to do one job – this led to a "far better utilization of the existing work force." Employers were faced with a

[39] Kristi Vogt, interview by Deborah Bowers Shirk, November 11, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 18, OL, 88.
[40] Walter E. Williams, interview by Tony Salcido, November 10, 1988 and October 4, 1990, ILWU13OH, Box 2, Folder 8, OL, 37, 90.

greater liability of wage guarantee if they over-registered workers at a port, such as on the Port of Los Angeles – Local 13's territory – where the amount of work "fell off sharply" because of technological improvements. This led to an over-registration of six or seven hundred longshore workers. MacEvoy maintained that despite the impact on manpower, the efficiency gained through automation "attracted so much cargo to the West Coast that there was no real period of time when the work force suffered from a lack of work opportunity." If there was an unemployment problem it was only in San Francisco and "some of the smaller ports," especially if they were a "one product port." In these cases, unemployment was not due to technological change, MacEvoy argued, but rather to a scarcity of the product that the port shipped.[41]

Despite the critiques of some of the ILWU's members, Bridges remained optimistic towards automation. Reflecting on containerization and the union's response to it during the period of the first M&M Agreement, he was positive about the prospect for automation to alleviate the physical demands of work on the waterfront. "One thing about machines: they lighten labor, and they can and must be used to shorten hours of work, especially hours of heavy physical labor," declared Bridges. Calling other unions to embrace automation for that reason, he added that "this union, the ILWU, surely will."[42] Unlike auto workers, who found their job changed irreparably to the point that even the union leadership looked to leisure as a means of counterbalancing the loss of autonomy felt on the shopfloor, longshore workers appear to have found their jobs, for the most part, enhanced by automation.

The contrast between UAW members' perceptions of lost autonomy in the workplace and ILWU members' seemingly unchanged autonomy despite the dramatic technological

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[41] John D, MacEvoy, interview by Tony Salcido, October 20 and 25, 1989, ILWU13OH, Box 2, Folder 1, OL, 35-38, 54, 71.

[42] Louis Goldblatt, *Men and Machines: A Photo Story of the Mechanization and Modernization Agreement Between the International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union and the Pacific Maritime Association Now in Operation in the Ports of California, Oregon, and Washington* (San Francisco: International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union, 1963).

changes in both industries stems from the working environment of these workers' automated workplaces. The physical confinement of the auto assembly plant, lack of variety in work tasks, and the physical separation of employees within the plant adversely affected autonomy among auto workers. Although the social environment of the waterfront was changed by the need for fewer longshore workers to complete tasks, some semblance of socializing between workers – a prided element of longshore work – remained. In contrast with auto work, longshoring was less physically confined, maintained a similar level of community and variety in work tasks, with more physicality on the job. Automation improved safety in both industries, although longshore work remained dangerous which meant that the crucial camaraderie-building exercise of watching out for the safety of fellow workers persisted on the docks. These changes demonstrate that the way in which automation is implemented in an industry can lead to radically different impacts on the autonomy of its workers.

Workers in the auto and longshore industries navigated workplaces with contrasting physical layouts and characteristics. Beyond the factory being a walled space contrasted with the openness of the docks, assembly line work required workers take prescribed positions and remain in those spots, which physically separated them from other workers. Phil Stallings noted that he wished for the opportunity to take a job in utility, as it would allow him to "get away from standing in one spot." Utility workers were able to do different jobs every day, which Stallings sought as it would allow him to "be around more people." Along with providing more variety, Stallings explained that utility work provided an escape from mental isolation among his colleagues, as the monotony of the work and the oppressive noise of the factory forced auto workers to "stay to [themselves]."[43] Although longshore work transformed from the late 1970s onwards as containerization became more advanced and was more extensively utilized, longshore work in the mid-twentieth century retained some

[43] Terkel, *Working*, 222.

elements of its characteristic gang structure. Social interaction was paramount to dock work, and was privileged by longshore workers, who worked in closely knit "gangs" or teams of workers who were free to move around the dock.[44] The open, socially involved dock working environment contrasted with the confines of the auto factory, where workers' positions were controlled by the assembly line.

Transformations to the workplace brought with them changes to safety procedures in both industries. In the auto industry, tasks such as fastening spring coils were quite dangerous: a particular tool known as a spring stretcher, despite allowing workers to avoid using physical strength to balance the springs, was hazardous, with Harvey Hawkins recalling one worker having their fingers sliced off by it rapidly expanding. The addition of a safety button as technology developed to force workers to move their fingers away from the stretcher improved workers' quality of life on the job – "technology improves, things get a little better. Safety gets better." One of the harder jobs on the line was spot welding, an unsafe role which was "extremely hot" and in which "fire is flying everywhere." The introduction of automation meant that robots could be programmed to apply welds to specific positions. Spot welders welcomed this, as "over time the robots have settled down and do a much better job than they used to. Workers are not suffering in that heat and them sparks flying [...] We hate to loose [sic] workers, I don't like to see any worker go. But sometimes we have to do what's better for them."[45] Autoworkers in some of the most physically demanding roles within the factory found their jobs becoming much safer, but the reduction in manpower that resulted further isolated those workers that remained on the shopfloor.

Despite automation heralding changes to the safety of auto work, it continued to inflict a toll upon the bodies of the workers. Karl Burnett, a member of UAW Local 22 in

[44] George Love, interview by Tony Salcido, May 16, 19, and 30, 1989, ILWU13OH, Box 1, Folder 11, OL, 105.
[45] Ibid.

Detroit, noted that until the early 1980s workers were exposed to "terrible chemical dangers," "toxics and ergonomically incorrectly designed jobs." Acknowledging that the work was "tough," he avoided injury because he was "very careful and watched what [he] did." Others were not so lucky. He recalled his neighbor who had worked at the Cadillac sheet metal plant four, who retired from "bending over, picking up sheet metal and placing it in the stamping presses for many years." As a result of that job, "his back was curved so badly through work related injury that he walked bent over in the shape of a C until the end of his life."[46] It was this kind of toll that the ILWU leadership wished to alleviate for their members, whose work on the docks pre-containerization involved regular heavy lifting. Contributors to *The Dispatcher* noted the lack of safety measures in 1946, arguing that "there is no legitimate reason for faulty equipment or dangerous speeds of work." Criticizing the unwillingness of employers to invest in safety measures, the article emphatically stated that "booms fall, boards break, cables snap and hooks grab flesh and blood longshoremen instead of cargo for the reason that employers love extra mazuma."[47] It is clear, then, that automation appeared to herald a safer future for West Coast longshoremen of more efficient and carefully paced work tasks with more reliable mechanized equipment.

Those on the waterfront who experienced the changes brought by the M&M Agreement were less convinced that containerization was making work processes safer. Andrea Luse argued that M&M had helped to make the job easier but had also "made it more dangerous in some instances," alongside reducing the workforce.[48] The danger Luse referred to was likely safety issues relating to containers, namely the risk of containers and large sling loads being improperly transferred to vessels or dropped in transit. For William Waiters, the advent of the M&M agreement saw the loads becoming bigger in return. Rather than making

[46] Karl Burnett, interview by Edward Savela, May and June 2012, AAWP, WPR, 1-2.
[47] *The Dispatcher*, "Murder born of greed," September 20, 1946, 2.
[48] Andrea Luse interview, 31-32.

the job easier for him and his co-workers, in theory, it instead was one of the factors that pushed him to retire from the industry. The larger loads increased the danger of the job, as other longshoremen reported, and after a boom fell on a longshore worker on the San Francisco waterfront, he decided it was "too dangerous" and resolved to "get away from that."[49] Fellow longshore worker Walter E. Williams concurred, expressing his belief that the casualty rate increased as a result of M&M because "of the heaviness of the equipment that would get loose from time to time or break." Although injuries might have been less frequent, "they were perhaps more serious" due to this.[50]

Despite Herb Mills's argument that the transition from manual loading to containerization made certain tasks safer at the expense of "watching out for the other guy safety-wise," which laid the groundwork of camaraderie that "built the union," it is clear that longshore workers still felt the need to look out for the safety of themselves and others, as accidents on the containerized waterfront were likely more severe.[51] As Mills notes in his retrospective study on the differences between traditional and containerized longshoring, although workers may have become more isolated as less workers were required on the waterfront from the 1970s onwards, in the mid-twentieth century concerns over safety on the docks continued to galvanize longshore workers.[52] New additions to the longshore workforce at this time, such as Carole Hoffman, noted that the increase in productivity led to initial boosts to hires and the expansion of docks, meaning that there was plenty of opportunity for social interaction with women and men, the former of which she found "nice" and the "majority" of the latter were "wonderful."[53] Mills's tendency towards sharp criticism of

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[49] Robert T. Waiters, interview by Tony Salcido, July 28, 1994, ILWU13OH, Box 2, Folder 6, OL, 42.
[50] Walter E. Williams, interview by Tony Salcido, November 10, 1988 and October 4, 1990, ILWU13OH, Box 2, Folder 8, OL, 90.
[51] Herb Mills, Interview by Chris Carlsson and Steve Stallone, 1996, http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Oral_History:_Herb_Mills.
[52] Mills, "The San Francisco Waterfront," 141-142.
[53] Carole Hoffman, interview by Michael La Chance, May 26, 1996, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 8, OL, 14-15, 31.

containerization lay in his pointed opposition to the International's support of automation, so this likely colors his conclusions.

UAW members found that these changes to the physical demands of their jobs had a consequent effect on social interaction in the workplace. Historians Charles R. Walker and Robert H. Guest's landmark study of workers at an anonymous assembly plant, published in 1952, found most respondents commenting that social interaction with other workers was important to them. The noise of the factory and the close attention to the work required of assembly line work limited opportunities for interaction that workers treasured. In cases where workers were in almost complete isolation, those workers gave social isolation as an important reason for disliking their job.[54] Following on from Walker and Guest's findings, sociologist Robert Blauner's 1964 study on alienation in the automated workplace included a section on the auto industry. He suggested that the dissatisfaction of automobile workers with assembly line work was due to "the anonymous atmosphere of the large plants," social alienation, and the fact that the assembly line's relentless pace "controls [the worker] perfectly."[55] All of these factors contribute to the erosion of an auto worker's autonomy. The proscribed and controlled nature of assembly line work alongside the division of tasks left individuals without the sense of working in a team felt by longshore workers, which helps to explain why the latter felt greater autonomy in the automated workplace.

Even as automation transformed the physical premises and the social landscape of the working environments experienced by the members of these unions, some physicality persisted in both industries. John MacEvoy noted that the physical demands on longshore workers decreased "considerably" due to containerization, but that there were still "individual

[54] Charles R. Walker and Robert H. Guest, *The Man on the Assembly Line* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 66-79.
[55] Robert Blauner, *Alienation and Freedom: The Factory Worker and His Industry* (London: Chicago University Press, 1964), 98-115, 122.

operations where a man is required to exercise a certain amount of strength." [56] Unlike those autoworkers who harkened back to greater physicality in work, longshore workers did not have to face the elimination of treasured challenging physicality on the docks. Fellow longshorewoman Jackie Cummings testified that although, thanks to M&M, there was "a lot of work that's not as physical because it's done by machines," there were still some physically demanding tasks such as "lashing," the act of securing the cargo to the vessel.[57] For some longshoremen, however, the introduction of containerization to the waterfront was not so positive. Patricia Monje became a longshore worker because of the influence of her father, who was a foreman on a container dock. She emphasized that containerization had transformed the waterfront from when her father first started working, where longshore work was "bulk and heavy work." Earlier generations of longshore workers were faced with "really hard labor" with not "a lot of easy stuff to do." Although containerization had made her father's "job in life a lot easier," her father had become "bored with it now." Containerization had simplified work tasks to the point that the job for him was far less interesting than traditional longshoring.[58]

Although much of the physical strain had been eliminated in auto work with the advent of the assembly line, some physicality still remained in certain roles. Those jobs that remained physical tended to be afflicted with the characteristic monotony of the assembly line. Ned Williams noted the need for fast work on account of a quota set by bosses, and the physicality – and lax safety – of his job, requiring bending, reaching, jumping, and on occasion climbing to grab tires from racks. "Sometimes I felt like I was just a robot," Williams recounted, "You push a button and you go this way. You become a mechanical nut." The dual meaning here of "nut" as a minor physical part of a greater whole and

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[56] MacEvoy interview, 32, 38.
[57] Jackie Cummings, interview by Michael La Chance, August 22, 1995, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 3, OL, 7-9, 18.
[58] Patricia Monje, interview by Mary Beth Welch-Orozco, January 8, 1997, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 14, OL.

someone who is mentally unstable is telling. The stress and pace of work affected his home life, as in his mind he was "still workin' that line." In his experience, those who he worked with who had been on the line for longer were "the same way [or] worse," where the line had similarly affected "all the parts of [their] life."[59]

Williams's comments regarding the repetitiveness of his role, despite remaining quite physical, suggests that perceived autonomy correlates with variety of work tasks. Walker and Guest's study found, unsurprisingly, that most workers surveyed were critical of the "repetitive character of their jobs," unrelated to the actions of foremen. Jobs off the line were viewed more favorably as these offered greater variety for the worker. Dislike of drudgery had a direct effect on workers' attitudes towards their job. Workers whose jobs involved a higher level of repetition were more likely to exhibit absenteeism and were twice as likely to resign compared to those workers experiencing less repetition.[60] Longshore work maintained its variety, which made it rewarding for many. Ex-ILWU Local 13 President George Kuvakus Sr, who had experienced longshore work pre- and post-containerization, enjoyed the job for the sheer "variety of cargos" he could work day by day, which made longshoring "the biggest experience in the world."[61] Andrea Luse, who registered as a longshore worker in 1985, enjoyed longshoring for "the fact that you go to a new job every day…it's great. It's wonderful."[62] Variety still remained in longshore as it diminished in autos, and this accounts for the comparatively greater autonomy in the former industry.

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Although their approaches had differing results, UAW and ILWU leaders both aspired to an automated future in which their members could be relieved of onerous physical work. Despite both leaderships supporting automation to improve productivity, they adopted a

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[59] Terkel, *Working*, 240-243.
[60] Walker and Guest, *The Man on the Assembly Line*, 1-4, 53-56, 121-122.
[61] George Kuvakus Sr, interview by Tony Salcido, March 10, 1992, ILWU13OH, Box 1, Folder 9, OL, 123-124.
[62] Andrea Luse interview, 21-22.

cautious approach to the visions of physical relief put forward by management and government. Their strategies differed in that the UAW utilized more Cold War language, making pointed statements to hold management to account, aiming to ensure that they would cooperate to actualize their aspirations of physical relief. Without these political connections, the ILWU targeted their rhetoric on automation and physical relief at their own members, emphasizing the benefits they would receive from the M&M Agreement and changes to their work life. As with their attitudes towards automation and productivity, these unions' support of automation and physical relief arose from genuine belief in the capabilities of automation to improve their members' quality of life, not from a cynical desire to avoid appearing anti-progress. Historians could build on this comparison between these two unions' stances on physical relief to determine if other unions adopted similar approaches to automation and physical relief in their industries.

Workers in both the auto and longshore industries had to face the realities of the automated workplace first-hand, and its reception was far from universally positive. UAW members complained of a loss of autonomy because of deadening and monotonous assembly line work. The enforced pace of work created a new drudgery in which repetitive and unchallenging physical tasks were accompanied with mental strain, running counter to the promises of physical relief presented by management, government, and even the union's leadership. UAW leaders addressed the issue, but due to the sprawling nature of the auto industry could not enact any specific policies to counteract this new drudgery or reports of speed-up entirely. By accepting that work had to remain this way to ensure high levels of productivity, they instead turned to promoting enriching leisure activities and advocating for reduced work time in the hopes that workers would find solace outside of the workplace. ILWU members did not encounter this issue on account of automation making processes easier while still retaining both an element of challenging physicality and a variety of work

tasks to perform. This comparison demonstrates that it is possible for automation to enrich and enhance a workplace and retain the autonomy of its workers and should encourage historians to examine issues of automation and autonomy in other industries.

The essential difference between the automated auto and longshore workplaces, and the explanation for the contrasting feelings of autonomy between both industries, lays in their respective working environments. Although auto work became safer, it became more monotonous, even in tasks where physicality remained. The division and precise positioning of workers throughout the confined plant environment created less opportunities for camaraderie and served to socially divide and alienate workers. Longshore work, in contrast, remained somewhat unsafe with the introduction of containerized loads, but the industry maintained some of its treasured challenging physicality and variety. The continued existence of the gang structure, however precarious it might have become in the late 1970s, provided workers with a sense of community on the docks that auto work sorely lacked. Historians could look to other industries to determine how the working environment, especially post-automation, affected workers' sense of community.

This chapter expands on the work of labor historians and historians of technology, such as David Steigerwald and David Nye, who since the early 2000s have reinforced the notion that union leaderships actively pursued automation to lighten the physical burden of work for their members. Although the UAW remains the primary union example among these scholars, more recent studies of the ILWU such as Peter Cole's work have noted the ILWU leadership's support for automation being born out of a similar desire for physical relief. [63]

[63] David Steigerwald, "Walter Reuther, The UAW and the Dilemmas of Automation," *Labor History* 51, no. 3 (2010): 429-453; Bix, *Inventing Ourselves*; David Nye, *America's Assembly Line* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2015); Barnard, *American Vanguard*, especially chapter 8; Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Hartman, *Collective Bargaining and Productivity;* Peter Cole, "The Tip of the Spear: How Longshore Workers in the San Francisco Bay Area Survived the Containerization Revolution," *Employee Responsibilities and Rights* Journal 25, no. 3 (2013): 201-216.

These studies are attentive to the caution felt by UAW and ILWU leaders handling the thorny issue of automation and the concern of leaders that they did not simply buy into management ideals and strategies. The preference of some workers for harder and more skilled physical work even with the promise of reduced manual labor is less well accounted for in the scholarship. Among notable studies of the automated workplace, Stephen Meyer's excellent work on Ford management practice and David Nye's comprehensive history of the assembly line mention the concern of Ford's workers in the 1920s towards their jobs becoming less skilled and ultimately monotonous.[64]

By looking to the early post-war period, the experiences of UAW and ILWU workers explored in this chapter demonstrate that these concerns persisted and were amplified by automation. It builds on the work of historians examining work processes such as Harry Braverman and David Gartman, who rightly note physical control of workers by managers heightening in the post-war automated workplace due to machines being used to control the pace and flow of work, to the chagrin of union members.[65] Comparing automation and physical relief as it developed in the auto and longshore industries into the mid-twentieth century expands present understandings – which are mainly UAW focused – of how workers reacted to and reconciled new mechanisms of control in the workplace. Historians might wish to further investigate the relationship between automation as a manifestation of management control and its important role in the promise of physical relief in other blue-collar industries.

Longshore workers were justified in their relative optimism towards automation by this juncture. After all, the early stages of containerization on the waterfront appeared to be on track to achieving the ideal goal of eliminating troublesome work processes while

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[64] Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day*, especially chapter 3; Nye, *America's Assembly Line*, especially chapter 5.
[65] The main studies arguing that automation was a tool of physical control used by managers to subdue their workforces is Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. See also Gartman, *Auto Slavery*. Similarly, David Noble's *Forces of Production* emphasises automation controlling workers as a reason why, in his argument, workers felt that resistance to automation was futile.

retaining complexity and an element of challenging physicality. If they looked to the example of their UAW compatriots, however, they would have realized that their optimism would likely be short-lived. Automation had appeared to herald the same potential for auto workers, but as it cemented its place in auto plants workers found the consequences of the promised "physical relief" undesirable. Longshore workers would face the same dilemma in the late 1960s and early 1970s when containerization fully took off, leaving the waterfront a place where workers were not faced with much in the way of physical demand. This process, however, left the job – and the culture of the waterfront – a shadow of its former self.

Chapter Three: Value of Work

A seasoned assembly line worker, Pops disapproved of his son Rudy's career aspirations. Rudy had asserted to Pops that he also wished to take up a job on the line. Pops was fully aware of the monotonous and arduous nature of working on the line and was concerned that his son was blinded by the need to "gratify his immediate material desires." Reading such an account, an auto worker living in the post-war U.S. would likely have felt such a familiarity with Pops's concerns that they would be convinced the account was real. Pops and Rudy's debate was in fact entirely fictional. The story of Pops and Rudy was one of a collection of short stories on assembly line work published in 1957 by social critic and ex-auto worker Harvey Swados.[1] Swados's story exposed a dilemma that was taking place in the minds of many workers during the 1950s, namely what the value of their labor was in the automated age, and importantly whether there was a suitable return for their time spent undergoing alienated and monotonous labor. It is this central tension in post-war work that this chapter explores. Auto workers found that automation had begun to strip them of pride and fulfilment in their jobs, and hence they redirected their pride towards what their wages would buy them. Notably, these workers did not attempt to return to more challenging and rewarding working conditions pre-automation, instead supporting their union's efforts to offset the monotonous labor with greater benefits.

Although the auto industry was the subject of Swados's insight, the same dilemma was taking place in the minds of longshore workers. Containerization in the mid-1950s was

[1] Harvey Swados, *On the Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 80.

not nearly as advanced as the assembly line, which was reflected in longshore work still retaining physical challenge and variety, as the previous chapter argues. Like auto workers, longshore workers looked to the future of potential unemployment and alienated labor on the automated waterfront with a mind towards securing higher wages, greater tangible benefits, and above all a shorter workweek. The retreat to conservative fights for wage gains and benefits among labor leaders and union members was a natural outgrowth from optimism and support for automation. Fighting for wage gains is a traditional element of labor bargaining. The intertwining of wage negotiation and automation represents the latter being viewed as a similarly long-term issue that might be tackled by conventional bargaining means. For the ILWU especially it represents a newfound understanding of automation's effect on the relationship between time on the job and the value of work with which the UAW was all too familiar.

Workers struggled to find value in meaningful work as their jobs were transformed by automation and instead sought other ways to define the value of their labor. Workers aimed to counterbalance the time they spent in alienated labor through two different means. They could negotiate a higher wage rate for their work time. Alternatively, they could seek an extension of their leisure time or the acquisition of benefits to be redeemed as leisure time, such as vacation allowance. The extent to which workers were "wage-oriented" or "leisure time oriented" was the subject of Juanita Kreps's illuminating 1969 study. Examining workers' movements in Europe and the United States, Kreps argued that workers tended towards negotiating what she calls "lumps of leisure" such as holiday arrangements or retirement benefits rather than being "thing-oriented," or inclined towards wage increases to buy more goods. This leisure comes in "lumps" as it is not evenly distributed throughout a worker's life, such as retirement benefits accumulating for the end of a career.[2]

[2] Juanita Kreps, "Time for Leisure, Time for Work," *Monthly Labor Review* 92, no. 4 (1969): 60-61.

Kreps's work intersects with the literature on the historical movement for a shorter workweek, either as a method of increasing leisure time or creating more opportunities for employment. David Roediger and Philip Foner's excellent work on the genesis of the shorter workweek movement in multiple U.S. industries in the 19th century and its persistence through to the end of World War II argues that the death knell of the movement came not long after the 1950s. It does, however, suggest the presence of an undercurrent of desire for the shorter workweek from the 1950s onwards even as it became an infeasible collective bargaining goal.[3] In his UAW-focused study on the shorter workweek movement, Jonathan Cutler tended to concur with Roediger and Foner that by 1958 the demand for a shorter workweek had effectively fizzled out, stifled by the union leadership.[4] This chapter builds on these studies, developing on Roediger and Foner's comparative approach to illustrate that while rank and file support for a shorter workweek might have eventually waned in the UAW it continued in the ILWU. More importantly, it illustrates that the existence of a shorter workweek movement did not preclude a push for wage gains or acquisition of "lumps of leisure." Rather, these methods were used together in a valiant attempt to claw back some value in work.

Although auto and longshore workers in the post-war period saw their wage rates rise, there was plenty of room for negotiation and improvement to reach the standard of living they desired. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average family income in 1950 was $3,300, an increase of $200 from 1949. Relating this to the Consumers' Price Index, it suggests that despite the increase only being slight, it "represented a significant increase in

[3] David Roediger and Philip Foner, *Our Own Time: A History of American Labor and the Working Day* (New York: Verso, 1989).
[4] Jonathan Cutler, *Labor's Time: Shorter Hours, The UAW, and The Struggle for American Unionism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

purchasing power for the average family."[5] This initial post-war boom of purchasing power was considerably diminished by 1960. Despite the average income of families having risen to $5,600, consumer price rises since the end of World War II meant that only around "one-half of the increase in current-dollar incomes represented an increase in purchasing power."[6] In comparison to the national average, by 1960 the average annual income of an auto worker working the standard amount of time per week (roughly 40 hours) stood at approximately $5,900.[7] Similarly, longshore workers – who also worked on average 40 hours per week – had an average annual income of approximately $5,800.[8] As workers in both industries just crested the average income for families in the U.S. by the end of the 1950s, the push from both unions to raise the value of work through wage increases and safeguarding pay is understandable considering that current dollar income was being somewhat eroded by inflation.

The decision to ultimately pursue wage gains and acquisition of benefits was one shaped by the post-war accord, which brought new significance to material gain and consumption for workers. Scholars of post-war society and politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s such as Clifford Clark Jr. and Stephen Whitfield noted the importance of consumerism and affluence as an ideological tool to prove capitalism's superiority to communism.

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[5] United States Department of Commerce, *Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1950*, March 25, 1952, Series P-60, No. 9, Washington, DC. https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1952/demo/p60-009.html.

[6] United States Department of Commerce, *Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1960*, January 17, 1962, Series P-60, No. 37, Washington, DC. https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1962/demo/p60-037.html.

[7] United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment, Hours, and Earnings, United States, 1909-90: Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 2370," *Employment and Earnings, United States* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, March 1991), https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/189/item/5435/content/pdf/emp_bmark_1909_1990_v1/toc/421308, 334. The rough approximate figure is based on the annual average weekly earnings in 1960 of $115.21.

[8] United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Wage Chronology: Pacific Maritime Association and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, 1934-78: Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics No. 1960," *Wage Chronology: Pacific Maritime Association and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1977), https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/publications/bls/bls_1960_1977.pdf, 12. These figures indicate the average hourly wage of a longshore worker to be $2.82.

Consumption was a symbol of increasing wealth in contrast to communism's focus on redistributing wealth.[9] This wider political context informed Americans' fervor for consumer goods in the post-war period, but there was a baser motivation for consumerist desire. Building on these works, early 2000s social historians such as Andrew Hurley and Kathleen Donohue argued that the lived experience of World War II – where the populace had lacked basic necessities – was fresh in the minds of Americans. Therefore, manufacturers of consumer goods consequently capitalized on post-war economic growth and increased income to persuade Americans that braving the war effort was worth it for the new material possessions they produced. [10] Although contemporary social theorists such as David Riesman and Herbert Marcuse would later criticize this dominant consumerist mentality as stultifying and conformist, many Americans understandably sought a higher standard of living and a greater disposable income for the security it brought them.[11]

Naturally, as the previous chapter argues, workers were often frustrated with the ways in which automation changed the meaning of their work and their mindset had already begun to shift away from finding meaning in work and towards finding meaning in leisure and consumption.[12] This trend was flagged up by contemporary sociologist Daniel Bell in his

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[9] Clifford E. Clark Jr., "Ranch-House Suburbia: Ideas and Realities," in *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, ed. Lary May (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 171-191; Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

[10] Andrew Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in the Postwar Consumer Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Kathleen G. Donohue, *Freedom from Want: American Liberalism and the Idea of the Consumer* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003);

[11] David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), originally published 1950; Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London: Routledge, 2002), originally published 1964.

[12] Ely Chinoy, *Automobile Workers and the American Dream* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955), especially chapter 7; Max Lerner, *America as a Civilization Volume 1: The Basic Frame* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 325-334; Clark Kerr, *Industrialism and Industrial Man: The Problems of Labor and Management in Economic Growth* (London: Heinemann, 1962), especially chapter 8; Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Paul Adler, "Technology: Good for the Workers," in *Major Problems in the History of American Workers: Documents and Essays*, ed. Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein (Lexington, MA: DCHeath, 1991), 662-672; Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys*; Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), especially chapter 4; David Nye, *America's Assembly Line* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), especially chapters 5 and 6.

1956 volume *Work and Its Discontents*. Primarily focusing on the auto industry, Bell saw the transformation of the U.S. into a "machine civilization" as creating a fixation on efficiency in work that drove workers to substitute "the glamor of leisure for the drudgery of work." Workers, he posited, not only resisted the pace of automated work by trying to create opportunities for rest on the job but worked for the "new hunger" of funding a desire for consumer goods. The value of and satisfaction in work had irrevocably changed, giving rise to a drive for recreation, amusement, and leisure.[13]

Bell's concerns about the relationship between automation and the value of work translated into two issues the UAW and ILWU had to face. Firstly, as automation took over more tasks in the auto and longshore industries, the prospect of unemployment loomed for many workers, who might find their jobs unnecessary. Planning for this eventuality, both unions recognized their need to secure a living wage and unemployment benefits to cushion workers in the event of unexpected dismissal. Secondly, there was a need to ensure that wages were not undercut as automation boosted productivity. Both unions, but particularly the ILWU, believed that increased efficiency in the workplace should encourage less time on the job. Those workers suffering from their experience with alienated labor in the automated workplace would likely have also welcomed opportunities to reduce the workweek. As necessary time on the job decreased, the goal was to maintain income at a commensurate level reflective of the productivity of the industry as compensation for the drastic changes to work arising from automation.[14] The central goal for organized labor, then, was to ensure that

[13] Daniel Bell, *Work and its Discontents: The Cult of Efficiency in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), 3, 15, 31, 36-38.

[14] The question of acquiring a fair day's pay for a fair day's work is one that organised labor had been embroiled with since prior to World War II. See Martin Halpern, *UAW Politics in the Cold War* Era (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988); Steve Meyer, "'An Economic Frankenstein': UAW Workers' Responses to Automation at the Ford Brook Park Plant in the 1950s," *Michigan Historical* Review 28, no. 1 (2002): 63-89; Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); David Gartman, *Auto Slavery: The Labor Process in the Automobile Industry* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986).

those workers most at risk of unemployment were protected, and that those on the job received ample benefits.

The question of the value of work gained new importance in the post-war period as the rise of consumerism meant that workers were defined not by their occupation but by the material benefits they could accrue. Historians from the late 1980s and early 1990s such as Mike Davis and Simon Clarke began to refer to the post-war period of capitalist development as "Fordist" capitalism as it was marked by a pursuit of the original ideals that Henry Ford hoped his system of production could achieve. These were primarily mass production and mass consumption, full employment, economic growth through Keynesian policies, and the intervention of the state to keep the system running smoothly. While initially seen in this manner as economically Fordist, the work of scholars in the late 1990s and early 2000s such as Elizabeth Fones-Wolf and David Harvey clarified that post-war capitalism also exhibited some of Ford's social aspirations writ larger, such as social security and welfare provisions offered by companies to their workers to establish their allegiance to the company cause.[15] Not only were Fordist principles attractive to management to reduce worker resistance while contributing to economic prosperity; workers were also enamored by high wages under Fordism, which helped to mitigate the previously high turnover of workers on dangerous early assembly lines.[16] Examining UAW and ILWU engagement with automation and the value of work expands the argument made by Mike Davis in his important study on capitalist

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[15] Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* (London: Verso Editions, 1986); Simon Clarke, "What in the F---'s Name is Fordism," in *Fordism and flexibility: divisions and change,* ed. Nigel Gilbert, Roger Burrows and Anna Pollert (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 13-30; Nick Heffernan, *Capital, Class, and Technology in Contemporary American Culture: Projecting Post-Fordism* (London: Pluto Press, 2000); Walter Russell Mead, "The Decline of Fordism and the Challenge to American Power," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (2004): 53-61. David Harvey's *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) presents the concept of 'embedded liberalism', which considering its constituent elements is akin to Fordism. For more on how businesses used Fordist ideals to win over workers, see Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-60* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

[16] Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day*. Although Ford's control over his workers was paternalistic in nature, it is more likely that he offered higher wages as a carrot to encourage them to keep their jobs, rather than out of wanting them to be able to purchase Ford cars.

development, which has a stronger focus on labor's side of the labor/capital power dynamic than most works assessing Fordist capitalism.[17] Davis suggests that the strength of Fordist capitalism was one of the central factors leading to labor cooperation with management in the post-war period.[18] Both unions' efforts to ensure work remained valued in the automated workplace reinforces Davis's argument, as the development of post-war capitalism offered new opportunities for the acquisition of tangible benefits in return for automation's impact.

The unions differed in the methods they advocated to maintain value and dignity in work. Many auto workers suggested that the UAW negotiate for a shorter workweek at the same pay to allow for greater leisure time while retaining their ability to consume. The union's leadership initially worked towards a salary and income guarantee that they hoped would dissuade employers from introducing automation without thought for unemployment. Pursuing this approach led the leadership to negotiate a series of unemployment benefits that were well received and helped to guarantee auto workers' standard of living. During this time, UAW leaders kept the idea of fighting for a shorter workweek open to placate those among the membership who desired it. Ultimately, this gave way to a more conservative pursuit of wage gains without any changes to working time as the union leadership became involved with the Kennedy administration. They justified their apparent change of heart on the notion that the escalating Cold War demanded greater sacrifice on the part of workers. These shifts in position were the product of the UAW leadership's desire to maintain political expediency, seeking to retain their influence in federal government. The nature of Reuther's involvement in the architecture of the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962

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[17] Richard Coopey and Alan McKinlay's work focuses on supervisory relationships and power dynamics in the workplace, see "Power without knowledge? Foucault and Fordism, c.1900-50," *Labor History* 51, no. 1 (2010): 107-125. Alan McKinlay and James Wilson authored a related study noting the ways in which management sought to refine efficiency through the elimination of non-productive labor, see their "'All they lose is the scream': Foucault, Ford and mass production," *Management & Organizational History* 7, no. 1 (2012): 45-60.
[18] Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream*.

suggests that he had become convinced that retraining workers, rather than trying to salvage jobs in the face of automation, would be a more successful approach.

On the other hand, the ILWU leadership focused on maintaining full employment in their industry throughout the entire period. This emphasis primarily manifested in the union's consistent pursuit of a shorter workweek with guaranteed wage levels as the shipping industry automated. Owing to their persistence in campaigning for reduced working hours, ILWU leaders disapproved of the UAW's vacillating approach to maintaining value in work and tackling unemployment. The ILWU's negotiations with the PMA did not lead to an explicit inclusion of a workweek reduction in the terms of their M&M Agreement. Despite this, the M&M Agreement included a ground-breaking wage guarantee based on a fund paid into by the PMA to maintain wages even if hours were reduced. The first of these agreements was well received by the membership, despite complaints from radicals within the union that too much control over work rules was sacrificed in return. Not only did this hold their employers accountable for unemployment due to automation in spirit, but it also paved the way for potential future reductions in work time.

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"There is an understandable deep concern on the part of the rank-and-file auto workers over what the future has in store," explained ex-UAW vice president Wyndham Mortimer, "compelled to live from pay day to pay day, under conditions of an inhuman speed-up; with little or no savings; several mouths to feed; and usually in debt."[19] The solution, Mortimer felt, lay in the Guaranteed Annual Wage (GAW), a strategy spearheaded by Walter Reuther. It aimed to solve the central question of how best to ensure that work retained its value and workers were safeguarded from job loss considering increasing

[19] Wyndham Mortimer, "Guaranteed annual wage," November 20, 1953, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 5, Folder 20, WPR.

automation, unemployment and inflation as the Korean War wound down in 1953. This was effectively envisioned to be a salary paid to workers for a year if they were laid off, going above and beyond government unemployment insurance programs. Reuther's intention was that the GAW would serve three purposes; not only would it provide financial stability for workers and their families, he hoped it would discourage auto manufacturers from the short-term layoffs common throughout the industry, and the length of GAW pay served as an incentive for businesses to avoid longer-term unemployment as a result of automation. As David Steigerwald argues, GAW was a long-term goal of the union that had been reframed in the automated age, giving workers more flexibility to look for work or retrain in the event of layoff, ensuring they were unafraid of losing their income stream.[20] Indeed, Reuther stated it himself in his address to the twelfth Constitutional Convention of the UAW in 1949, that "one of labor's long-range objectives is to achieve in every basic industry a guaranteed annual wage so that the consumers of this country can have a sustained income…because only on that basis can we sustain an economy of full employment and full production and full distribution."[21] The GAW was a mechanism that would ensure that auto workers had the value of their work recognized. Rather than workers simply being laid off at the whims of management, it was designed to encourage auto manufacturers to put the financial security of workers first.

While UAW leaders promoted the GAW, the ILWU had reason to be satisfied with the contract they had negotiated in 1951 with the PMA. Despite the Korean War leading to a wage freeze that fostered complaints that longshore workers' wages were falling behind the

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[20] Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), especially chapter 6; John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935-1970* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004), especially chapter 8; Steigerwald, "Walter Reuther," 436-437.
[21] Walter Reuther, "'Too Old to Work, Too Young to Die,' Section of the Opening Address of the Twelfth Constitutional Convention of the United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, Milwaukee, July 10, 1949," in *Walter P. Reuther: Selected Papers*, ed. Henry M. Christman (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 36-43.

cost of living, the conflict bolstered Pacific Coast shipping, leading to coastwide trade tonnage tripling by 1951.[22] The growth of longshoring was reflected in the June 16, 1951 agreement, which included, among other terms, a minimum pension of $100 per month plus social security for longshore workers with 25 years seniority, limited medical care, a 5 cent straight time hourly wage increase, and increased subsistence payments.[23] By 1955, however, trade had dropped, largely due to the rising prominence of Norwegian and Japanese shipping and the end of the Korean War. This necessitated a cost squeeze on the part of ship operators, which led to their increased interest in longshoring efficiency and automation along with it.[24] ILWU President Harry Bridges and Vice President J.R. Robertson were aware that this push would require a renewed effort on behalf of the union to ensure workers and their labor were valued, their jobs were secure, and the structures of the hiring hall that they had fought for in 1934 were retained and modified to meet the needs of automated longshore work.[25]

As the ILWU leadership realized the importance of needing to retain value in work in the automating workplace, Reuther's aide Nat Weinberg presented the GAW as doing so in his speech to senior financial executives at the Eastern Spring conference of the Controllers' Institute of America in 1954. He proclaimed that GAW "will bring about a major change in the economic and social status of workers. It will mark a tremendous step forward in practical recognition of the fact that workers are something more than mere tools of production to be used or discarded as it suits management's purposes." Emphasizing the importance of financial security, Weinberg added that the UAW "believe that the worker who invests his life in industry has at least as good a claim to such provision for his security as the

[22] Hartman, *Collective Bargaining*, 73. The ILWU newspaper *The Dispatcher* ran many articles on the wage freeze situation. See for instance Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher,* March 2, 1951, 2; *The Dispatcher*, "How to melt the wage freeze," November 9, 1951.
[23] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, June 22, 1951, 2.
[24] Hartman, *Collective Bargaining,* 73-74.
[25] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, October 14, 1955, 2; J.R. Robertson, "On the march," *The Dispatcher*, October 14, 1955, 8. Both articles made clear that the whole membership should remember the importance of defending the hiring hall system from employer encroachment.

stockholder who invests only money." Noting the focus of the UAW on full employment and full production, Weinberg noted that business executives would find increased satisfaction in providing "security and dignity for the workers" alongside the "maximization of profit."[26] UAW Research Department member Jim Stern concurred with Weinberg's assessment of the importance of GAW to bring greater value to work. He argued that the UAW was not campaigning for GAW solely because of the impact of automation on society, but rather that the demand was based on the historic insecurity of the auto worker and the past demands of CIO unions for guaranteed annual wages.[27]

The lofty ideal of achieving GAW in the auto industry was tempered by the realities of negotiation with the Big Three automakers. Ford's executives were uninterested in offering the UAW the full GAW they desired, instead proposing a plan for "supplemental unemployment benefits" (SUB), which was agreed upon on June 6, 1955. The SUB plan involved Ford putting 5 cents an hour for each worker into a trust fund which could be drawn on to provide payments of $25 per week for laid-off workers for up to 26 weeks. This trust fund amounted to $55 million in total. Comparing this amount to the average take-home pay for auto workers suggests that the SUB plan was quite favorable. When combined with unemployment compensation, workers would receive 65 percent of their pay for the first four weeks and 60 percent for the next twenty-two weeks, conditional on their seniority, attendance, and availability of trust fund money.[28] Workers interviewed on the eve of the agreement tended towards a negative appraisal – out of eight workers quoted in the Hearst Times, only two "had anything favorable to say about the Ford offer," with all workers criticizing the fact that the agreement was to last for five years. One disgruntled worker was recorded in socialist newspaper *The Militant* as dramatically crumpling the company's

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[26] Nat Weinberg, "The Guaranteed Annual Wage: Some Practical Issues," March 23, 1954, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 5, Folder 17, WPR.
[27] Jim Stern to Milton Aronson, December 23, 1954, UAW Research Department Records Part 2, Box 22, WPR.
[28] Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 284.

proposal in his hand and throwing it against the ground while uttering: "This isn't what we want. What we want is a guaranteed annual wage. And we're going to get it. Wait and see." Others were somewhat more optimistic, exemplified by one Ford worker who referred to himself as "a 100% union man," who added that "whatever the union does is okay with me. The company proposal sounds good on the surface…Everything sounds good the first time you read it. Sure, I'll strike if we don't get what we want."[29] The socialist angle of *The Militant* and its privileging of material that disparaged the SUB agreement likely suggests that opinions such as the latter were more commonly held among the workforce, namely a general, if somewhat indifferent, satisfaction with the SUB plan.

Marginal Communist voices within the union felt that Reuther could have gone further with GAW negotiations. UAW organizer Nat Ganley did not see GAW and the shorter workweek as mutually exclusive demands, but rather that "both are necessary, supplementing and re-enforcing each other."[30] His views aligned with those of Wyndham Mortimer, who argued that in principle GAW was a great addition to the benefits already accrued by auto workers. However, higher productivity in the auto industry had not been translated to "having raised the annual income of the workers involved. [GAW plans in other industries] have only spread the normal income over a yearly period for such of their employees as can be profitably employed."[31] In his correspondence with Mortimer in the wake of the 1955 SUB negotiations with Ford, Ganley expressed his disapproval with Reuther's negotiation of SUB instead of GAW. He expressed that "what the UAW got in Ford-GM was a very inadequate SUB plan," rather than a "real GAW" which is "guaranteed by socialist society, but by its very nature can't be guaranteed by capitalism." By negotiating

[29] *The Militant*, "What Ford Workers Say," June 6, 1955, 3.
[30] Nat Ganley, "Automation and the worker," Nat Ganley Papers, Box 4, Folders 4, 5, and 6, WPR.
[31] Mortimer, "Guaranteed annual wage," November 20, 1953, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 5, Folder 20, WPR.

SUB, Ganley argued that Reuther had "class collaborated," reducing key local union demands in favor of playing on the desires of Ford and GM to avoid a costly strike.[32]

Among the UAW rank and file, talk of GAW was generally positive and acceptance of SUB in replacement was widespread. Reuther's focus on material benefits for workers resonated with the vast majority of the union's members, who wished to see their leaders fight for greater value in their work and a rising standard of living.[33] Large rallies in support of GAW gathered at Ford plants and those among the picket lines celebrated the successful negotiation of the SUB contract.[34]

Members of UAW Local 906 at Ford's Edgewater, NJ plant celebrate the settlement of the SUB contract. Damon Stetson, "Ford and Union Reach 3-Year Pact Including Modified Annual Wage; Pattern Set for General Motors," *New York Times,* June 7, 1955.

Although SUB was a reasonable replacement for the GAW in the minds of many auto workers, the revolutionary socialist publication *March of Labor* urged readers to be vigilant

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[32] Nat Ganley to Wyndham Mortimer, August 18, 1955, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 5, Folder 18, WPR.
[33] Barnard, *American Vanguard,* 294.
[34] Ibid, 285.

for auto companies trying "to counteract the costs of GAW by more speed-up, more rigid work rules, and more resistance to wage increases."[35] The publication of the Detroit News and Letters Committee, a small revolutionary socialist organization, aired the anonymous concerns of sympathetic auto workers in the city regarding the SUB agreement. These comments generally expressed distaste with the final agreement and a desire for a true GAW. A GM worker from Los Angeles wrote in to express their concern at the agreement being "a phoney deal." "It was supposed to be a full year and now it's only 26 weeks. And before it can even go into effect the state laws need to be changed to allow payments to be made out of the fund," the worker lamented. Within these responses there are indications of the wider acceptance of the GAW proposals among the membership. A Lincoln-Mercury assembly-line worker is quoted "I like the idea of a Guaranteed Annual Wage but I'm more interested in seeing a better contract." Another toolmaker similarly commented that "the Guaranteed Annual Wage Plan signed by Reuther and Ford is good only as long as the trust fund doesn't give out."[36]

A common thread among responses was a call for the shortening of the workweek. This is exemplified by the call of one skilled worker: "it would have been easy to ask for a 30-hour week," adding that "we fought so long for eight hours and we seem to be going backwards. What is the use if you make more money by working longer hours and prices go up?."[37] It must be emphasized that the views expressed in these publications were likely only marginally held, despite their claims to the contrary, but they provide crucial insight into the landscape of responses towards the GAW within the union. The suggestion of widespread rank and file support for the shorter workweek was, however, a more grounded observation.[38]

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[35] Dan Frank, "Automation: The Bosses' Weapon," *March of Labor*, vol. 7, no. 5, May 1955, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 4, Folder 12, WPR.
[36] *News & Letters*, "Readers' Views," June 24, 1955, 4-5.
[37] *News & Letters*, "Readers' Views," July 8, 1955, 4-5.
[38] Cutler, *Labor's Time*, 123.

Unlike UAW dissidents, ILWU President Harry Bridges was vehemently against the prospect of GAW, as he outlined in his regular column in *The Dispatcher* in 1955. He emphasized the importance of "job security, seniority rights and the use of the grievance and bargaining machinery in determining production standards and job classifications" to protect "the individual workers from the full brunt of automation, and in winning some of its fruits for him." Referencing the UAW's collective bargaining agreements with Ford and GM, Bridges expressed concern that these agreements were "so dangerous for the rank and file" as they continued the – in his view – risky pattern of accepting "a temporary monetary gain instead of hanging tough on job security and guarantees for the individual worker." He continued that "a wage increase or a so-called 'guaranteed annual wage' are meaningless protections to the worker who needs security on the job first" in the face of automation. "The much-heralded 'guaranteed annual wage' has been recognized by employers as a 'green light' to automation," Bridges added, "It doesn't take a smart employer long to see that he can reduce his future payments into the lay-off fund by speeding up automation and reducing the size of his labor force."[39] After all, downsizing a labor force in this way would be classed as adaptation to technological change rather than causing unemployment. Bridges's disapproval, then, stemmed from the amount of control given to employers to ensure the security of workers through GAW. Not only that, the casualized nature of longshoring work in general made the thought of guaranteed payments upon lay-off anathema.

Bridges had delineated his solution to the dilemma of retaining the value in longshore work in the face of automation two months prior. He stated that "there is a great potential before us right now for reducing the work load through mechanization and of shortening the work day and workweek. Longshoremen still work too hard and too long each week to make

[39] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, December 9, 1955, 2.

a decent pay."[40] By pushing for a shorter workweek and standard wage increases, Bridges continued to set a divergent course from Reuther and the UAW leadership. Despite Reuther not achieving his goal of a true GAW, the SUB agreement, as Kevin Boyle argues, "created a permanent structure that could be used in successive bargaining rounds to win workers even greater security."[41] Indeed, by making employers somewhat accountable for unemployment due to automation, the UAW continued to ensure that its workers retained their value in an economic landscape where they were in danger of being rapidly eclipsed. However, the SUB was essentially a rear-guard action – it certainly did not guarantee that workers would be re-employed in the auto industry if they were laid off, and it did not proactively address the tangible effects of automation on workers, such as the altered physical and mental challenges of automated work. The ILWU's focus on the shorter workweek at this point was perhaps more prescient, looking towards how workers might benefit from automation lightening their workload, and how they might be recompensed for the transformations to their work.

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The ILWU were far from alone in calling for a shorter workweek in response to automation. There was a dedicated cadre among the rank and file in the UAW that had been eager to see their demand of "30-40" – 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay – gain traction among the leadership. [42] The basis behind such a demand was, as Jonathan Cutler rightly argues in his study of the movement's prominence within the UAW, "to meet diminished demand for labor with diminished supply."[43] In other words, if workers were forced by contract to work shorter hours, but still retained the income to maintain their standard of living and purchase consumer goods, supporters believed this would kill two birds with one

[40] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, October 14, 1955, 2.
[41] Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 96.
[42] This was sometimes referred to as "30-40-60" where retiring at 60 was included in the formulation.
[43] Cutler, *Labor's Time*.

stone. More workers would be able to be employed and would be capable of spending their newly freed-up hours on leisure activities, which would, like the UAW organizers in 1936 and 1937 argued, remedy the physical and psychological strain brought on by speed-up.[44] With automation increasing working efficiency, 30-40 supporters saw it as a natural progression in the process of work being taken over by automated machines.

Despite Reuther's push for the GAW in the 1950s, he understood the demands of the 30-40 supporters well, having championed the cause of thirty hours' work for forty hours' pay at the 1947 UAW convention, a line which led him to become re-elected. However, he quickly abandoned his support for the shorter workweek after backing the Marshall Plan in an act of patriotic support, assuring that auto workers would be willing to work longer weeks to support U.S. economic strength.[45] As he moved away from 30-40 in support of U.S. Cold War ideological goals, Detroit-based CP leaders took up the issue themselves.[46] One of these leaders was Nat Ganley, who drew upon the desire of the CIO and AFL in 1939 for a shorter workweek as a justification for pursuing the same goal in the post-war period. After all, if "the previous advance of machine technology made imperative a 6 hr day and a 30 hr week [sic]; how much more imperative is it after sixteen more years of expansion and advance and the opening of automation techniques?," Ganley mused. He added that realization of this goal was effectively the least that could be done for workers in an era of "mass unemployment and other signs of crisis," and argued that it was more important than the GAW as an objective, albeit that both supplement and reinforce each other.[47] Ganley felt the support of militant local unions, such as the formidable Local 600, behind him in pushing for 30-40. In 1954, the

[44] Ronald Edsforth, "Why Automation Didn't Shorten the Work Week: The Politics of Work Time in the Automobile Industry," in *Autowork*, ed. Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 161.
[45] Halpern, *UAW Politics*, especially chapter 15; Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), especially chapter 15.
[46] Ibid, 33-37.
[47] Nat Ganley, "Automation and the worker."

March of Labor reported that Carl Stellato, Local 600's president, was leading militant locals in stressing "the 30-hour work-week at 40 hours pay." 30-40 placed at the top of the list of the local's demands, with GAW taking second place.[48]

Although Reuther had moved away from 30-40 as a bargaining priority, he kept the hope of its return alive among its supporters in the years leading up to the SUB negotiations, likely as an act of political expediency. When referring to the shorter workweek demand, UAW leaders were careful to refer to the importance of auto workers extracting maximum value for their work. In a preliminary report of the UAW Committee on Automation in 1954, they tied the shorter workweek demand to the "enormous potential of automation," suggesting that workers would be rewarded with "substantially increased living standards and greatly increased leisure in which to enjoy the abundance that awaits us." Although they assured that workers would be able to enjoy these benefits "within a relatively short time," they posited that the timing of the fight for a shorter workweek was predicated on "the rate of acceleration of productivity advances" and "the degree to which our growing productivity potential is utilized."[49] Despite this sounding optimistic on the surface, this suggested that the fulfilment of both requirements was in the hands of employers. This allowed UAW leaders to quietly shelve the demand, and if employers could not fulfil them the UAW leadership was effectively absolved of any blame, not being involved in meeting the goals. In turn, this meshed with their support of productivity increases brought about by automation, continuing to reassure members that they were still fighting to extract maximum value for their automated labor.

Not all UAW leaders were so tepid in supporting the shorter workweek demand. As automation developed in the auto industry and workers began to experience the newfound

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[48] *March of Labor*, "The bloom is off the boom!" April 1954, Nat Ganley Papers, Box 3, Folder 14, WPR.
[49] Preliminary Report of the UAW-CIO Committee on Automation, October 20, 1954, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 45, Folder 10, WPR, 6.

mental strain and repetition in assembly line labor, UAW leaders like Nat Weinberg reiterated the importance of restoring workers' dignity in their profession and making them feel like their efforts were valued. In a conference paper on approaches to the problems of automation in 1956, Weinberg spoke on the shorter workweek demand as a natural response to the "inevitability of greatly increased leisure" brought by automation. By reducing the workweek, Weinberg argued, unions would replace "the barren idleness of unemployment" with "creative voluntary leisure resulting from a reduction of working time." He added that the union's main task was "winning higher living standards and increased dignity and security" for its members, with reduction of the workweek "perhaps the single most important weapon in the collective bargaining arsenal…to meet the potential dangers of automation."[50] Although dignity in labor could not be returned to the levels felt by auto workers prior to post-war automation, Weinberg's paper resonated with the desires of shorter workweek supporters that workers could find newfound dignity in their leisure time, effectively giving their alienated labor greater value.

Among the rank and file, outspoken support for the shorter workweek was generally concentrated in the most radical and militant locals, such as Local 600 based in the Ford River Rouge Plant. The local presented its goals to the 1957 UAW Constitutional Convention, which took the form of a thirteen-item list of negotiating priorities. At the top of this list was "30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay," with GAW being absent from the list and improvements to the SUB plan being the lowest priority.[51] UAW Local 595 based in Linden, New Jersey, called upon the International to support the 30-hour week, backed by a unanimous vote at its membership meeting on April 29, 1958. They took aim at GM

[50] Practical Approaches to the Problems Raised by Automation – Paper Presented by Nat Weinberg to European Productivity Agency Trade Union Seminar on Automation, London, May 15-18, 1956, UAW Research Department Records, Box 43, WPR.
[51] Local 600 Resolution, January 8, 1957, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 250, Folder 16, WPR.

corporate policy, framing their support for the 30-hour week around their concerns at the diminishing value of their work. "One thousand of our brothers will be in the street, seeking work. The rest of us are working short hours and, if buying doesn't pick up, more of us stand to lose our jobs. What kind of justice is it to overwork us part of the year and then lay us off for the remainder? What kind of security do we have and what kind of existence can we offer to our families?"[52] This is not to say, however, that support of the shorter workweek was only heard among marginal groups within the union. UAW Vice President Leonard Woodcock polled 2,900 workers and found that almost all of those interviewed were firmly in favor of reducing the workweek, but a large majority preferred Reuther's emphasis on income security and measures such as the GAW or SUB instead.[53] As a result, the extent of support for the shorter workweek demand among the membership has likely somewhat slipped under the radar. Many workers framed their security in terms of material benefits, but clearly this did not preclude a desire for the shorter workweek.

Supporters of the shorter workweek in the UAW would have found company among the ILWU leadership. Robertson affirmed the union's commitment to ensuring that the benefits of automation were put towards "higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, and an easier life for the men in the longshore industry."[54] Following the ILWU Portland Caucus which would lay the foundations for the M&M Agreement in 1957, Robertson laid out their expectations for a union program which likely resonated with many longshore workers. "We want to work to live, not live to work," stated Robertson. "We all want more time to live, we want more time to enjoy our families, our homes and the good things in life we've been able to buy with our labor. In a general way the caucus set the sights for what we know we want: shorter working hours, no reduction in pay, no speedup, safety

[52] *The Militant*, "Auto Local Bids Union Fight for 30-Hour Week," May 14, 1956, 1.
[53] Edsforth, "Why didn't automation," 176.
[54] J.R. Robertson, "On the March," *The Dispatcher,* September 14, 1956, 12.

guarantees, improvements in pensions, welfare, vacations, etc."[55] As the waterfront began to automate, ILWU leaders interpreted their program as one of ensuring value in work not through holding on to older work practices but by encouraging longshore workers to find value in the newfound leisure time that automation would afford them. The fight for a "6-hour day, 30-hour week with adequate take home pay" was approved by Locals 10, 13, and 34, some of the largest West Coast longshore locals, with 10 and 34 unanimously approving the program of the union's Negotiating Committee. "To meet the main problem facing the union today – mechanization, machines, displacing men," Bridges affirmed that the union "must abandon the policy of over twenty years standing of compulsory overtime; shorten the work day while at the same time maintaining and/or increasing take-home pay. Protect the union against both layoffs because of mechanization and unnecessary additions to the registered workforce."[56] Bridges believed that effectively focusing on their own 30-40 demand would give the ILWU membership the security they desired.

While the ILWU ploughed ahead in the struggle for a shorter workweek, the hopes of 30-40 supporters in the UAW ranks were torpedoed by Reuther's apparent change of heart in the wake of the Sputnik satellite launch. Reuther had been managing to keep up appearances among 30-40 supporters by airing the shorter workweek demand regularly. However, he returned to strictly opposing the shortening of the workweek after Sputnik on the grounds of mobilizing all of the U.S.'s human resources in the battle against Communism.[57] As Jonathan Cutler argues, this was likely less of a return to early post-war thinking than it appeared. Rather, it was an opportunity for Reuther to pivot back to the course of action he had favored

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[55] J.R. Robertson, "On the March," *The Dispatcher*, October 25, 1957, 12.
[56] *The Dispatcher*, "10, 13 & 34 OK Coast Program," October 10, 1958, 1, 8.
[57] For more on Sputnik as a crisis of national security, see Matthew Brzezinski, *Red Moon Rising: Sputnik and the Hidden Rivalries That Ignited the Space Age* (New York, NY: Time Books, 2007); Ryan Boyle, "A Red Moon over the Mall: The Sputnik Panic and Domestic America," *Journal of American Culture* 31, no. 4 (2008): 373-382; Audra Wolfe, *Competing with the Soviets: Science, Technology, and the State in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

all along. He was aided in this by the 1958 recession, which, he argued, made a concerted push for the shorter workweek demand difficult to countenance.[58] In turning against the shorter workweek, Reuther turned his back on Resolution 14 that had been established at the April 1957 UAW Convention in Atlantic City, which technically committed the union's leadership to making shorter hours a priority. Although this did not necessarily rankle the large majority of workers polled by Leonard Woodcock who preferred Reuther's emphasis on income security over shortening the workweek, it disappointed left-leaning board members Emil Mazey, Ernest Dillard and Harold Grant.[59] Despite the rank and file support for the shorter workweek demand as a reclamation of value for their alienated labor, Reuther felt that his fight for income security, symbolized by his profit-sharing strategies and pursuit of greater SUB benefits, was the key to better compensation and benefits for auto workers.

Indeed, although the replacement of the shorter workweek was approved by a 9-1 margin at the 1958 UAW Convention, it was preceded by almost three hours of heated debate.[60] Representatives of the militant locals continued to argue the importance of the shorter workweek demand even as the International looked to abandon it. Their arguments centered around preserving the dignity and security of auto workers on the job, while emphasizing their belief that 30-40 would allow for a greater extraction of value from work than a "profit-sharing" strategy. Carl Stellato, the president of UAW Local 600, noted that it was the first convention he had attended in twenty years where "every delegate who has taken the floor has talked about the problem of unemployment," arguing that 30-40 was not only a constructive response to unemployment but would provide a policy that unemployed workers could rally around. John Davito of Cleveland GM Local 45 criticized the reversal of support for 30-40 as a "cold blast" compared to the "hot words" of the previous April

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[58] Cutler, *Labor's Time*, 137-144.
[59] Edsforth, "Why Didn't Automation," 174-176.
[60] Damon Stetson, "UAW Backs Plan to Share Profits," *New York Times*, January 24, 1958, 9.

engendering support for the shorter workweek. Others, such as Robert Lopez, representative of GM Local 664 in New York, argued that recession conditions should instead encourage the shorter workweek to spread the workload among auto workers who might become unemployed. Some rank and file delegations, such as the one at Dodge Local 3, were on record that the replacement of the shorter workweek demand with productivity and profit sharing "offers nothing to the jobless worker."[61] After all, as one disgruntled Local 212 member put in a reader's letter to *News & Letters*, "How is Reuther's talking about Sputniks and defense production going to put food in my babies' mouths?"[62]

Just as Reuther's abandonment of the 30-40 demand alienated the left-leaning cadres within the UAW and many of its production worker membership, so too did it anger the left-leaning leadership of the ILWU. Bridges expressed his vitriol at Reuther's approach in general, criticizing his support of income security and profit sharing as "pie in the sky." He argued that unions should not worry about the profits employers make as "so far they've had little to worry about" themselves. The assumption that speeding up and reducing labor costs would increase profits which the employers would allow to trickle down to workers did not sit well with Bridges in the first instance. "Wouldn't it be easier to just go out and get more for your labor and let it go at that?" Bridges questioned. His central contention, therefore, revolved around the notion of extracting value from work. Responding to Reuther's justification of dropping the shorter workweek demand over Sputnik, Bridges argued this was "a fraud on the face of it." Just as "a shorter workweek will not **reduce** production," he argued, "a stretched out work week…will not **increase** production." Arguing for the shorter workweek, Bridges proposed that "if the owners of industry have to pay overtime rates after 30 hours instead of 40 hours, they might hire more workers in maintaining or even expanding

[61] *The Militant*, "At Auto Union Convention Big Locals Hit Reuther Gimmick," February 3, 1958, 1, 4.
[62] *News & Letters*, "Readers Views," January 31, 1958, 4.

production," offering a solution to the issue of technological unemployment. "For a union leader to offer to sacrifice so basic a demand – reducing the burden and the hours on the job – in the present situation is phony on the face of it," Bridges concluded.[63]

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Instead, Bridges argued, "there's really only one way to get the longshoremen to cooperate and not to oppose mechanization, and that is by ridding them of the fear of layoffs and unemployment while guaranteeing them some of the benefits of the increased labor productivity."[64] Therefore, when negotiating with the PMA to create an agreement that would allow the union to weather the storm of automation, Bridges and the ILWU leadership focused their attention on preventing unemployment and guaranteeing wage levels. By doing this, they hoped that longshore work would continue to retain its value, and that it might lead the way for a shortened workweek for current employees as automation vastly improved the efficiency of longshoring. They negotiated with the PMA to provide a fund as part of the M&M Agreement that could be distributed among longshore workers to maintain wage levels or fund early retirements. This served the dual purpose of ensuring income security even if fewer working hours were required and encouraged fresh hires. Although the prospect of a shorter workweek was not explicitly focused on in the negotiations, Bridges and the leadership implied that a shortened workweek would naturally develop from the wage guarantee and benefits. A Question-and-Answer piece in *The Dispatcher* on the details of the M&M Plan – which reads more as an opportunity to praise the plan rather than a place for airing genuine queries – posited that the agreement had brought "better wages, hours and conditions on the job," and that this importantly prefigured the continued "cut in both manpower and hours on mechanized jobs." Anticipating the further reduction of work

[63] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, January 31, 1958, 2.
[64] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam," *The Dispatcher*, November 21, 1958, 2, 8.

required, the article naturally praised the leadership's foresight by not waiting until "the work force [shrank] further or by waiting until after the hours are cut and the damage is done to work out a program."[65] Framing the M&M negotiations in this way suggests that Bridges and the ILWU leaders were following the spirit of 30-40 supporters by working to retain income as the reduction of working hours appeared inevitable.

Despite the sizeable 30 percent opposition vote to the terms of the final M&M settlement with the PMA among the membership, many longshore workers reported satisfaction with the benefits provided by M&M.[66] Henry Gaitan of ILWU Local 13 believed in the long run benefits of M&M, arguing that despite misgivings at the time of the agreement towards giving the PMA control over work rules and manning scales, "it had to be done at the time, because things were changing…[it] had to come sooner or later." "There was a lot of pressure on […] Bridges at that time," Gaitan added.[67] Fellow Local 13 member Pete Dragovich recalled that, although "the manpower was cut down," "every year they had a pretty good raise in wages and the earnings were good and the work was much…much, much, lighter." Focusing on the material benefits of M&M, Dragovich praised the agreement for its "good retirement fund, a medical fund, and now we have a dental fund." "It turned out pretty good. Still is very good," he opined.[68] Past president of Local 13 Gordon Giblin, who was involved in the initial caucuses on the M&M negotiations, similarly praised the final agreement on the basis that "[the union] got a lot," even though the opposition of many in the union at the time was based on the belief that the union would not get enough in return. The agreement, Giblin maintained, ensured the health of the industry, making it easier "to get

[65] *The Dispatcher*, "Outline of Mechanization Fund Plan," *The Dispatcher*, May 6, 1960, 7.
[66] Fairley, *Facing Mechanization*, 110.
[67] Henry Gaitan, interview by Tony Salcido, June 16, 1988, ILWU13OH, Box 1, Folder 4, OL.
[68] Pete J. Dragovich, interview by Hector Rojas, November 25, 1983, ILWU13OH, Box 1, Folder 2, OL.

more benefits later on because the employers were making more money," spurring on the epochal change to "the mode of loading and unloading ships in the whole world."[69]

Women longshore workers, whose presence on the waterfront in larger numbers was enabled by containerization, were naturally thankful for the M&M Agreement. Local 13 member Andrea Luse praised the M&M as it "afforded [women] the opportunity to make a decent living wage." She interestingly notes that the work ethic on the docks had shifted since she had begun work, namely towards "[doing] the least amount you can possibly do to get by…nobody takes any pride."[70] Luse's comment on the changing work ethic suggests that the material benefits of work had begun to eclipse the rewarding nature of the work itself among longshore workers. This further reinforces that longshore workers, like auto workers, had begun to see the benefits of the M&M Agreement as a trade-off for their gradually more alienating labor. Carole Hoffman argued similarly to Giblin that, in her experience, M&M increased the labor force due to the expansion of container docks. "I don't think what they originally were objecting to, materialized," Hoffman noted, referring to the initial opposition to M&M on the grounds of continued unemployment.[71] The trend towards support of the M&M reflects ILWU Research Director Lincoln Fairley's observation that the membership might have been worried about the inroads on their work wrought by automation and the control of employers over work rules, but believed the union was doing well and therefore should continue with their approach.[72]

Sparkplugs within the union centered their criticisms of the M&M on the level of control that had been given to the PMA to implement work rules and automate as they saw fit. Longshore militant Stan Weir maintained that the sizeable "no" vote for the first

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[69] Gordon W. Giblin, interview by Tony Salcido, June 28 and September 11, 1991, ILWU13OH, Box 1, Folder 5, OL, 40-45.
[70] Andrea Luse, interview by Michael La Chance, June 9, 1996, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 11, OL, 31-32, 43.
[71] Carole Hoffman, interview by Michael La Chance, May 26, 1996, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 8, OL, 31.
[72] Fairley, *Facing Mechanization*, 77.

agreement was a portent for discontent with the agreement. He argued that those who had misgivings about automation placed their trust in Bridges's leadership despite knowledge that "oncoming automation had already stripped them of their power to resist the employers." Weir's particular indication of Local 13's sharp resistance to the M&M Agreement contrasts with the positive appraisals of the agreement from members of Local 13, with little if any report of the same levels of widespread discontent he suggests.[73] Granted, it must be acknowledged that those offering testimonies had retained their jobs and therefore might have reason to be positive towards M&M. Overall, however, the first M&M Agreement was rightly hailed as a momentous step towards protecting workers from automation. Although the chagrin over relinquishing control over work rules to the PMA was justified, this can be viewed as representative of the ILWU leadership's acceptance – like the UAW – that automation was here to stay and could not be reversed. Importantly, the crucial M&M Fund provided material support for workers to retain the monetary value of their work.

While the ILWU were finalizing their negotiations with the PMA, Reuther leveraged his connections with the Kennedy administration to become involved in planning legislation aimed at ameliorating technological unemployment. He played an important advisory role in the President's Advisory Committee on Labor-Management Policy that met to discuss the terms of what would later become the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962. The act funded up to 52 weeks of training in skills needed for full-time employment, which was expanded in 1963 to include basic education for those who required it, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic.[74] The provisions of the act followed the recommendations of the President's Advisory Committee closely, as their joint report recommended improvements in

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[73] Stan Weir, *Singlejack Solidarity* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2004), 96.
[74] John F. Kennedy, Statement by the President Upon Signing the Manpower Development and Training Act, March 15, 1962, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/237006; United States Office of Manpower Policy, Evaluation, and Research, *MDTA: A Summary of the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, as Amended* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Administration, 1965), 16-17.

education and training to create mobility between occupations for displaced workers. Supporting these initiatives, the committee members hoped, would allow for the maintenance of a 40 hour workweek at full employment. However, labor representatives Reuther, Joseph Keenan (Secretary of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) and David McDonald (President of the United Steelworkers of America) negotiated a footnote which emphasized that the fallback strategy should be "shortening the work period" if there was a struggle to achieve the "most desirable solution" of the 40 hour week at full employment.[75]

The MDTA seems to have been well received among UAW members. Steve Pasica, president of UAW's Dodge Local 3 in Hamtramck, Michigan, expressed interest and support on behalf of the local's unemployed committee in how the MDTA was to be administered, but was disappointed that there had been no success in deleting the clause which placed a one-year limit on the training allowance.[76] For auto workers discontented with the pace and strain of assembly line work, the MDTA's training allowance offered them an opportunity to transition to a potentially more rewarding career with a similar pay. This cemented the focus of work and the definition of work's value as being for monetary or material ends rather than personal fulfilment, pride, or dignity. Workers had the means to retrain and switch jobs and therefore their social status was not predicated on a career to which they had wedded themselves. As Judith Stein argues in her study of the steel industry during this period, the MDTA was also favorable for employers due to its provisions being government funded and leaving most of the onus for finding employment in the hands of unions and workers.[77] The

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[75] President's Advisory Committee on Labor Management Policy Pamphlet, February 16, 1961, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 387, Folder 3, WPR; The President's Advisory Committee on Labor-Management Policy, *The Benefits and Problems Incident to Automation and Other Technological Advances* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government, 1962). Although Reuther was not personally involved in the third subcommittee on automation and technological advances, he kept abreast of developments and was satisfied by their recommendations. See Letter from Walter P. Reuther to Willard Wirtz, December 10, 1961, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 387, Folder 10, WPR.
[76] Irving Bluestone to Steve Pasica, President, Local 3, Hamtramck, Michigan, July 2, 1962, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 229, Folder 5, WPR.
[77] Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy and the Decline of Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 27-28.

Act was successful in placing employees in new occupations once they had completed their training. The *New York Times* reported that 72 percent of workers completing institutional training and 94 percent of workers completing on-the-job training had been placed in jobs, which supported the case behind the act being renewed.[78]

Attempting to capitalize on the successful negotiation of the MDTA, Reuther used his connections with government to put forward an idea for national economic management that he hoped would help ameliorate the threat of unemployment. Speaking before the Joint Economic Committee of Congress in January 1962, Reuther advocated for a "flexible workweek" to be adjusted based on the national level of unemployment. He envisioned that when demand for work was high, the standard workweek would be capped at 40 hours. When demand for labor was low, the workweek would be shortened to create more jobs. He suggested that the take-home of pay of workers would remain at the equivalent of 40 hours' work through a "national workweek adjustment fund accumulated by a small payroll tax on all employers."[79] Effectively what Reuther was proposing here was an M&M style agreement on a national scale, funded by employers and enforced by federal government. However, Reuther's suggestion was perhaps too ambitious and likely would have been opposed by employers, who would rankle at the prospect of paying more tax in the wake of the 1960-61 recession.

Reuther also began to support the retraining of blue-collar workers as a solution to technological unemployment outside of his government advisor role. In a 1962 letter sent to the auto, aircraft, and agricultural implement companies that the UAW dealt with, Reuther

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[78] C.P. Trussell, "Job Training Bill Passes in Senate. Vote is 76-8 on Extension of 1962 Manpower Act," *New York Times*, March 17, 1965, 25.

[79] U.S. Congress, Senate, Joint Economic Committee, *Economic Report of the President: Hearings before the Joint Economic Committee*, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962, 794-795. Reuther continued to promote the flexible workweek, supported by Nat Weinberg, throughout the 1960s. See Nat Weinberg to Walter P. Reuther: Attached Draft Letter to Tom Watson on Flexible Workweek, January 12, 1966, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 165, Folder 5, WPR.

referred to the tendency of industry to "overlook one important, fruitful, practical and economically sound means for meeting its obligations to workers" whose jobs were threatened by automation. The method in question was "the transfer of qualified production workers to white collar jobs." He noted that although white collar work "may not be attractive to production workers," he argued that training costs would not be particularly steep, despite the salaries on some jobs being undesirable. Reuther added that retraining would not be confined to only those at threat of displacement due to automation, but also suggested "preventive" retraining that would allow workers "to shift out of the diminishing class of blue-collar jobs into the growing class of white collar jobs," drawing unemployment compensation from SUB and the MDTA's training allowances. He framed this as beneficial for the companies, creating substantial savings in unemployment compensation costs by creating an "orderly system to transfer qualified blue-collar workers to new or vacant white collar jobs."[80] Reuther was likely well aware that this would only be a temporary solution; white collar jobs had already begun to experience early automation and these transferred workers would eventually find themselves faced with the same dilemma as they had experienced in blue-collar work.[81] Taking this line demonstrates Reuther's understanding of value of work as retaining the material benefits and income security of workers, even if it meant abandoning their old jobs entirely. Ultimately, like the flexible workweek idea, these proposals fell on deaf ears.[82]

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As the attitudes towards automation and negotiations with employers developed throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, what appears most clearly is that UAW and ILWU

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[80] Walter Reuther, Copy of Letter Sent to Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Companies, March 23, 1962, UAW Research Department Records, Box 58, WPR.
[81] Amy Sue Bix, *Inventing Ourselves Out of Jobs?: America's Debate Over Technological Unemployment, 1929-1981* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2001); Nye, *America's Assembly Line*, especially chapter 9.
[82] Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 303.

leaders and members were experiencing a shift in their understanding of what the value of their work was and how they expected to benefit from work. Previously, auto and longshore workers had prided themselves in their work tasks and activities for their rewarding and physically and mentally challenging nature. It was this feeling of pride in their work that had led to their initial dogged defense of their traditional working methods from the threat of automated monotony. However, by the mid-1950s, both unions had come to understand the value of their work as primarily derived from the monetary and material benefits they would be rewarded with in compensation for monotonous and alienated labor. Although both unions clashed over the ideal method to ensure their work had value – and to extract as many benefits as possible – both unions ultimately accepted that improvements to productivity in their industries had made reversing automation wholly undesirable. Alienated labor, then, was the norm, or threatened to soon become the norm in the case of longshoring. Just as the UAW leaders pushed for the GAW to ensure that workers had income security in the face of unemployment looming due to automation, ILWU leaders became aware that containerization was on the cusp of rapid rollout across the longshore industry. Although they disagreed with the UAW's approach, primarily due to the differing circumstances and conditions within each industry, they felt a similar sense of urgency in needing to protect the value of their work. Historians should look to this period as a turning point in post-war thinking for other unions to foster a broader understanding of how unions charted their ideal course through the automated age with retaining value of work in mind.

While the leadership of both unions became embroiled in bargaining, support for a shorter workweek swelled among the rank and file in both industries. Not only was this a countervailing solution to the problem of technological unemployment emerging from the grassroots, but it also demonstrated a paradigm shift among the workforce. Workers were internalizing the importance of greater leisure time as a compensation for strenuous and

alienated labor. This groundswell was treated differently by each union; the UAW leadership acted as if it would embrace their desire but in fact dispensed of it at the earliest possible opportunity, whereas the ILWU leadership upheld the shorter workweek as the central pillar of their approach. Granted, both unions found themselves between a rock and a hard place on this issue. There would always be difficulties in negotiating a shorter workweek with employers, as accepting automation meant accepting the stakes of their employers in automation and pushing its workforce towards maximal productivity to ensure the vitality of their industries. Scholars should look to the prevalence of support for the shorter workweek demand among other unions in this period to determine whether these changing understandings towards the value of work among the rank and file were shared more broadly.

Historians examining unions' efforts to extract the maximum value for their work exhibit two main trends in their assessment of the connections between labor and capital. The first is that higher wages and greater benefits were agreed upon by employers with the purpose of buying off the resistance of workers to new technologies. This perspective tends to be more commonly held among historians of the UAW and auto work such as Harry Braverman and Stephen Meyer.[83] In these works, try as workers might to prevent it, their cooperation with management would only lead to their exploitation and speed-up. The second trend is that unions were willing to cooperate with employers in the first place to realize their goals of securing a higher standard of living for their members. This trend tends to appear among ILWU histories such as Paul Hartman and David Wellman's work but has also begun to appear in histories of the UAW, particularly David Steigerwald's seminal article.[84] These

[83] Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1974); Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); David Gartman, *Auto Slavery: The Labor Process in the American Automobile Industry* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986); Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-60* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994), especially chapters 2 and 4.
[84] Paul T. Hartman, *Collective Bargaining and Productivity: The Longshore Mechanization Agreement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969); Lincoln Fairley, *Facing Mechanization: The West Coast Longshore Plan* (Los Angeles: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1979); David T.

works offer a more positive view that cooperation could potentially have led to an accord between labor and management that could be mutually beneficial and non-exploitative. The reason for these historiographical trends can be found in the maturity of automation within each industry. The legacy of mechanization and automation in the auto industry is storied and lengthy, and hence what positivity there might have been at the turn of the twentieth century was eclipsed by cynical concerns of managerial exploitation. For longshore, however, automation was relatively new, and hence a vista of opportunity appeared on the horizon, just as it did for auto workers some five decades prior.

Interwoven through both trends is the notion that workers were willing to allow automation if it meant securing monetary and material benefits for themselves, despite the fact that they were so discontented with the ways in which automation was transforming their jobs and workplaces. The strengthening of these unions' and their members' desires to extract maximum value from their work from the mid-1950s onwards aligns with the development of their relationship with automation. While in the initial post-war decade both unions eagerly supported productivity increases abetted by automation, they kept a cautious eye on the changes wrought by automation on employment and the nature of work in their industries. As management continued to push for automation unabated, the resulting success of their industries led workers to accept that automation was here to stay. This chapter reframes the current scholarship to argue that, rather than the notion of management needing to buy off "resistance" of workers to automation in this period or of wholesale cooperation with management, a more accurate assessment would be that both unions accepted automation, pushing for wage increases and safeguards against unemployment to sweeten the deal for their members.

Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); David Steigerwald, "Walter Reuther, the UAW and the Dilemmas of Automation," *Labor History* 51, no. 3 (2010): 429-453.

Early negotiations and bargaining over value of work by the leaders both unions paved the way for their important involvement in the creation of the M&M Agreement in longshore and Reuther's role in the creation of the MDTA. Although both measures were successful in providing benefits for workers and in the case of the latter avenues out of careers at threat of automation, they demonstrate a further acceptance of automation on the part of labor and cement the dominance of the employer in matters of automation. The M&M's material benefits were counterbalanced with allowing the PMA control over work rules and the pace of automation, whereas the MDTA acknowledged that blue collar labor would ultimately be eclipsed by automation. These sacrifices do not seem so great when considering the general stance of acceptance taken up by these unions. Negotiating greater benefits and retaining income, after all, had become more important than resisting automation, and contracts and legislation such as these translated into benefits for workers. Historians could look to the early 1960s as another turning point in attitudes towards automation, namely a moment where unions felt they had firmly established an approach to automation in their contracts, which might also prove fruitful when compared to other unions facing technological change.

Returning, then, to Swados's tale of Pops and Rudy, the solution to the essential tension between maintaining value of work and ensuring that work remained fulfilling and rewarding would likely have upset the Popses among the auto and longshore workers. Although perhaps people like Pops could have sought some solace in the pursuit of a shorter workweek by both unions, the ultimate goal of ensuring that workers felt pride in their jobs was only maintained in longshore, and it was hanging by a thread as containerization loomed. Despite the Popses grumbling, the many Rudys had their unions' efforts to thank for focusing their attention on wage levels, preventing unemployment, and extra benefits. As automation

advanced further by the 1970s, some of the Rudys in both industries might have wondered if the advice given by the Popses was really worth rebelling against after all.

Chapter Four: Masculinity

Reflecting fondly on his lengthy service in the longshore industry, ILWU Local 13 member Edward Thayne spoke of the hard labor associated with traditional longshoring methods. Those men who could manage the "strong, hard physical work" were distinguished above others as being of a special "breed" or "character" compared to the many men "that left the waterfront and never came back" because "they couldn't take" the job. Like many traditional longshoremen, Thayne saw longshoring as a "man's job." Comparing the ease of automated longshore work with traditional longshoring, he argued that there was not "a woman down there [on the automated waterfront] that could have done the work that was going on in those days."[1] Thayne's comments expose two challenges blue-collar workers faced to their masculinity as U.S. industry automated from the mid-1950s. Automation transformed the physical requirements of blue-collar work and forced workers to reformulate their masculinity, which traditionally hinged upon feats of physical prowess on the job. Second, as automation created more opportunities for women to enter these industries, the activities of women in masculinized workplace cultures triggered a reassessment of workers' masculinity as they adjusted to the presence of women in a traditionally male sphere. This chapter explores these dual pressures on workers in the auto and longshore industries. Examining the effect of automation on masculinity and how auto and longshore workers responded to threats to their masculinity, it sheds new light on workers' efforts to preserve a

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[1] Edward Thayne, interviewed by Richard Amesqua, October 27 and December 13, 1983, ILWU13OH, Box 2, Folder 5, OL, 27.

rougher "locker room" style masculinity even if it was not conducive to the trappings of automated work or respectful of new female colleagues.

Historians of post-war masculinity have tended to define blue-collar masculinity as taking one of two forms: "rough" masculinity characterized by aggression, misogyny, vice, and competitiveness; or "respectable" masculinity characterized by a considered dress sense, dignified conduct, and an effort to meet the social expectations of middle-class life. Between these two masculinities, there is the implication that although both rough and respectable masculinity were signified by pride in work, pride in the means of work was a marker of rough masculinity (such as pride in craftsmanship) whereas respectable masculinity is often marked by pride in the ends of work (such as using wages to purchase consumer goods and markers of status outside of the workplace). As this formulation emerged, it became apparent that certain job classifications encouraged certain styles of masculinity, as illustrated in Joshua Freeman's excellent study which identified lower-skilled construction workers as more likely to exhibit "rough" masculinity than skilled artisans.[2] It was Stephen Meyer's ground-breaking studies in the 2000s which suggested that "rough" and "respectable" masculinity were not mutually exclusive, but rather that workers often alternated between these modes of masculinity, reformulating them as required. Workers shifted from "rough" to "respectable" as they aged and became less capable of the rough work and play undertaken by young workers.[3]

These studies are limited, however, by their focus on one specific industry, usually the auto industry. Although the auto industry was the largest blue-collar industry in the U.S. at

[2] Joshua B. Freeman, "Hardhats: Construction Workers, Manliness, and the 1970 Pro-War Demonstrations," *Journal of Social History* 26, no. 4 (1993): 725-744. For a similar conclusion in the case of turn of the twentieth-century steelworkers, see Lou Martin, "'So Nobly Struggling for their Manhood': Masculinity and Violence among Steelworkers in the Wheeling District, 1880-1910," *Labor History* 60, no. 5 (2019): 429-443.
[3] Stephen Meyer, "Work, Play, and Power: Masculine Culture on the Automotive Shop Floor, 1930-1960," in *Boys and their Toys?: Masculinity, Technology, and Class in America*, ed. Roger Horowitz (New York: Routledge, 2001), 13-32. Meyer developed on this further in his book-length study of working-class masculinity, see *Manhood on the Line: Working-Class Masculinities in the American Heartland* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

this time, comparing it with the longshore industry develops on these studies to complicate how working-class Americans reformulated their masculinity in the post-war period. As the West Coast waterfront automated rapidly from the mid-1950s, the notion that longshoring was a "man's world" because it required male physical prowess to handle cargo came under attack. Lifting containerized cargo with cranes threatened to make the notion of longshoremen handling cargo entirely obsolete. In response, ILWU workers leapt to the defense of a more traditional "rough" masculinity based on physicality, clinging onto aspects of their jobs which remained physical to define their masculinity even as physical strength lost its importance on the docks. In contrast, UAW workers had longer-term experience with automation in the auto industry with the advent of assembly line production in the early twentieth century. Although they exhibited more traits of "respectable" masculinity, unlike longshore workers, they did maintain a competitive culture in the workplace which represented a reformulation of rough masculinity to suit the changing environment of the automated factory. Despite the differing levels of automation in both industries, the comparison illustrates that rough masculinity was similarly important. Whereas in longshore the goal was to defend rough masculinity, in autos the objective was instead to revive it. This should assist labor historians by furthering how we understand worker agency in the process of retaining and reshaping traditional workplace cultures as these workplaces automate.

The transitions and reformulations of masculinity that these workers underwent were tempered by the relationship between technology and their male bodies. Influential studies such as those by Ava Baron and Craig Heron, inspired by the bodily turn in history, examined how working men confronted threats to their manhood and crises of masculinity. This often involved their reactions to external control or change to how they used their bodies to physically assert dominance in the workplace. They emphasize that working-class men's

bodies were essential to their self-expression in all parts of their lives.[4] These studies intersect with those on technology and masculinity, particularly regarding how mechanization and automation took over tasks that previously required greater physical effort and the use of workers' bodies. As Baron, among others, rightly argue, masculinity centered on the use of the body, referred to as "embodied masculinity," gains a new importance for workers when technology challenges it.[5] This chapter's focus on the embodied masculinity of longshore and auto workers builds on the work of these historians by applying it to these workers' post-war reformulations of their masculinity. Auto workers had less control over their bodies and work pace during this period on account of Fordism and time-management being prevalent within their industry since the early twentieth century. As discussed in my chapter on physical relief, the design of automated factories spaced workers out along the line and discouraged group work and socialization. Despite this, they still attempted to resist this control and retain elements of roughness and competitiveness in the workplace. Longshore workers emphasized the physical prowess traditionally required for their work in this period precisely because automation on the waterfront was a much newer phenomenon.

This notion of embodied masculine dominance over work became contested as women became involved in the auto and longshore industries. Studies examining the experience of women in masculinized workplaces – particularly in the auto industry – reveal the extent to which demeaning language and condescension towards women was a regular

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[4] Ava Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker, and the Historian's Gaze," *International Labor and Working Class History* 69, no. 1 (2006): 143-160; Craig Heron, "Boys Will Be Boys: Working-Class Masculinities in the Age of Mass Production," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 69, no. 1 (2006): 6-34; G. Wood, "'Beyond the Age of Earning': Masculinity, Work, and Age Discrimination in the Automobile Industry, 1916-1939," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 3, no. 2 (2006): 91-120; Ava Baron and Eileen Boris, "'The Body' as a Useful Category for Working-Class History," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 4, no. 2 (2007): 23-43.

[5] Meyer, "Work, Play, and Power"; Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker," 146-147; For a twenty-first century example, see Lisa Collingwood, "Autonomous Trucks: An Affront to Masculinity?," *Information & Communications Technology Law* 27, no. 2 (2018): 251-265. Collingwood notes that truck drivers associate their masculinity with bodily control over their truck, which is challenged by the potential for driverless trucking in the future.

feature of interactions between male and female workers.[6] The literature on labor unions as vehicles for women's advancement and the impact of the Cold War on women union members has become well established since the 1990s. But what has been less well developed by these studies is how women's presence shaped the reformulations of masculinity taking place among blue-collar workers exposed to automation.[7] This chapter builds on Joan Scott's 1986 thesis that gender is based on the social relationships between sexes and perceived differences between them and Kevin Boyle's 1997 work on conflicts of gender within the workplace to address this deficiency. Taken together, Boyle's argument reinforces Scott's seminal thesis by illustrating that working-class gender relations in the post-war period were forged through the experience of working side by side with one another. Gender relationships were not decided through insular discussions and interactions within subcultures, but rather were fluid and determined by the clash of gendered subcultures against each other on the job.[8]

The involvement of women in the male-dominated auto and longshore industries led to a tempering of rougher elements of masculinity. Automation opened the door for women to enter the longshore industry in greater numbers. These new longshorewomen found that they were entering a culture whose gatekeepers were stalwart longshoremen who emphasized results and performance, encouraging them to pull their own weight. Rather than trying to

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[6] Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, "No Laughing Matter: The UAW and Gender Construction on Labor Radio in Fifties' America," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 8, no. 1 (2011): 77-107; Meyer, *Manhood on the Line*, especially chapters 2 and 6.

[7] Nancy Felice Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement: Women and the United Auto Workers, 1935-1975* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Lisa Kannenberg, "The Impact of the Cold War on Women's Trade Union Activism: The UE Experience," *Labor History* 34, no. 2-3 (1993): 309-323; Sol Dollinger and Genora Dollinger, *Not Automatic: Women and the Left in the Forging of the Auto Workers' Union* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000); Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Ruth Milkman, "The Two Worlds of Unionism: Women and the New Labor Movement," in *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American Labor*, ed. Dorothy Sue Cobble (Ithaca: ILR Press, 2007), 63-80.

[8] Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075; Kevin Boyle, "The Kiss: Racial and Gender Conflict in a 1950s Automobile Factory," *Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (1997): 496-523.

carve out a feminized niche on the docks or attempting to form feminist collectives, these new longshorewomen garnered esteem among their male peers by adapting to the masculinized culture and looking down upon those who attempted to use their femininity to leverage benefits or a lighter workload. However much they intended their presence to simply fit into the masculinized waterfront culture, inevitably these longshorewomen slowly began to change this culture, as their involvement on the docks led to men toning down some of the more abrasive and sexist elements of waterfront culture out of respect for longshorewomen's hard work. In contrast, male auto workers were not only more accustomed to technological change, but they were also more used to women working alongside them. Women had seized several opportunities throughout the early twentieth century to become involved in the auto industry and used their position to fight for their continued gainful employment. Like in longshore, auto workers appear to have accepted women's work provided they were able to pull their weight. This chapter reframes examinations of workplace culture in histories of labor and gender to explore further how women workers approached masculinized cultures and shaped them.

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Phil Stallings, a young spot welder at a Ford assembly plant on Chicago's far South Side, spoke candidly about the impact assembly line work had on his masculinity. As previously noted, he primarily took aim at the dehumanizing nature of automated work. "You're nothing more than a machine," he complained, adding that management gave "better care to that machine than they will to you…Somehow you get the feeling that the machine is better than you are." Line workers did not conceive of themselves as men able to exercise their bodies to prove their masculinity, but instead were conceptualized as cogs in a larger machine. Stallings felt the biggest betrayal to masculine values lay in becoming a foreman. "When a man becomes a foreman, he has to forget about even being human…You see a guy

there bleeding to death. So what, buddy? That line's gotta keep goin'. I can't live like that. To men, if a man gets hurt, the first thing you do is get him some attention." Stallings also noted how his job had become devoid of braggadocio and competitive social interactions characteristic of rough masculinity. "You got some guys that are uptight, and they're not too sociable…You pretty much stay to yourself." He added that this was ideal for management, suggesting that "When two men don't socialize, that means two guys are gonna do more work." Above all, Stallings felt he had lost all the pride in his work traditional of a craftsman. But "you *have* to have pride," he proclaimed, and that pride had become diverted away from work and towards his beloved "stamp collection."[9] Stallings's criticisms appear to be aimed at an enforced respectable masculinity within the plant, at odds with his desire for a rougher, more embodied masculinity.

Stallings's discontent towards automation for its emasculation of his job role was well documented by the works of social commentators in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These works followed in the footsteps of European social theorists exploring mass psychology, spurred on by concerns over "mass society" and the growth of the middle-class in the post-war United States.[10] These studies had international repercussions, as the notion that American men were losing their traditional tough-minded masculinity concerned foreign policy makers who believed such an approach was essential to U.S. Cold War success.[11] So inseparable was the masculine body and technological change in the works of U.S. social critics that the discussions of automation and efficiency invariably became discussions of how technology infringed on embodied masculinity. Journalist Max Lerner took it upon

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[9] Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do* (New York: New Press, 1974), 151-154.

[10] K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), especially chapter 3. A notable example of this body of theory is David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) originally published in 1950.

[11] Robert Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001). Eugene Burdick and William Lederer's *The Ugly American* (London: Gollancz, 1959) laid bare the effects of masculine weakness on U.S. diplomats' overseas activities.

himself to account for "the condition of the American working classes" in his work on the state of American society. His discussion of automated work paints it in a negative light, suggesting that it subverted the masculine body. He notes that the worker is confined, unable to move properly, and "hour after hour he uses the same muscles in the same motions at the same operations." Rather than straining the male worker's muscles, he emphasizes that "the tensions on his nervous system are great" instead. Gone also is the sense of reward; the small role each worker plays on the line meant that one individual could not take credit and feel dignified at crafting the finished product, as in traditional craftsmanship.[12]

Similarly, political scientist Sebastian De Grazia's treatise on the changing meaning of work and leisure time strayed regularly into discussion of masculinity. "Machines have already done away with much of the need for muscle power in work," De Grazia opined. His chagrin at the future of automated work was levelled at the prospect of work becoming "less muscular and more sedentary than before." Seeing this as a great shame, De Grazia hoped that there "may be an even greater seeking of active sports by young workers" to make up for their inability to exercise their embodied masculinity at work. "The further slackening of muscle tone in older workers may make them more content to sit at home, reposing on the sturdy muscles that serve so well at work," he added.[13] For De Grazia, masculinity left to stagnate at home rather than being exercised in the workplace was masculinity wasted.

Theorists also considered the implications to masculinity of automation making jobs more accessible to women. Donald N. Michael, in his work principally concerned with the challenges automation and computing posed to society, referred to the effect of automation on employment and the resulting effect it would have on life in the nuclear family. "The free time of some men will be used to care for their children while their wives, in an effort to

[12] Max Lerner, *America as a Civilization, Volume 1: The Basic Frame* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 238-242.
[13] Sebastian De Grazia, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1962), 297.

replace lost income, work at service jobs," Michael wrote, "But this arrangement is incompatible with our image of what properly constitutes a man's role and man's work."[14] Many workers used to traditional modes of work likely agreed with Michael's assessment that a man's role in the home should be the sole breadwinner. It is interesting here that Michael did not consider a future where women might take over the jobs previously done by men due to automation. Consignment of women to "service jobs" might have seemed the most alien proposition he could muster.

Indeed, those women that did enter the workforce not only had to contend with social discrimination from male counterparts but also financial discrimination. Wage inequality between men and women was rife in the post-war period. From 1955-1975, women in full time labor earned only approximately 60 percent of the wages that their male colleagues worked for the same job. By 1975, this figure had begun to dip below 60 percent.[15] In the auto industry, women's roles regularly paid out around 50 cents to a dollar less per hour than their male equivalents.[16] Data on the longshore industry and its wage breakdown between men and women is patchier on account of it being less well monitored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the more recent allowance of women into its ranks. However, when viewing the difference in hourly wages for "transport and material moving occupations" between men and women by 1998, women still earned around 2 to 3 dollars less per hour than their male counterparts.[17] The attraction to these jobs was their higher rate of pay compared to "pink-collar" jobs such as service industry work, with women earning over a

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[14] Donald N. Michael, *Cybernation: The Silent Conquest* (Santa Barbara, CA: Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1962), 30.
[15] United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, *U.S. Working Women: A Databook: Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 1977* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1977), 35.
[16] United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Industry Wage Survey: Motor Vehicles and Parts, April 1969: Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 1679," *Industry Wage Survey: Motor Vehicles and Motor Vehicle Parts*, (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1971), https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/industry-wage-survey-motor-vehicles-motor-vehicle-parts-4618/industry-wage-survey-motor-vehicles-parts-april-1969-498659, see Table 12.
[17] United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, October 1998), 14-16.

dollar an hour more than service jobs in practically every auto industry role.[18] Despite this, the situation women faced regarding wage discrimination was no different in the auto and longshore industries to the conditions experienced by women in other industries.

Stallings's desire for a return to a rougher, more muscular working masculinity harkened back to the culture of auto work prior to automation. The earliest auto shops saw small cadres of skilled workmen assembling a car, sharing control over the pace of the work process and the design of the final product.[19] This form of work encouraged camaraderie, ingenuity, and brought a sense of pride in craftsmanship to early auto workers. However desirable this work might have been to these men, the culture of auto work and the lengthy production process were seized upon by Henry Ford. Fordism and the assembly line aimed to channel the culture of auto manufacture away from rough work and play at the behest of auto workers and towards a controlled and rapid system of production that could meet demand. In return for the transition of their role away from skilled craftsmen to having responsibility over a single process in the assembly line, Fordism encouraged a transition away from rough masculinity and towards respectable masculinity.[20] Workers could aspire for the lifestyle of the growing middle-class, with their work as a means to the end of purchasing new consumer goods and technologies.

The prospect of blue-collar workers transitioning to a respectable masculinity and being instilled with a desire for a middle-class lifestyle appeared to be a step forward in improving the conditions of work. However, social critic and ex-auto worker Harvey Swados correctly sensed the chagrin that would be felt by workers like Stallings towards this

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[18] United States Women's Bureau, "1969 Handbook on Women Workers: Women's Bureau Bulletin, No. 294," *Handbook on Women Workers: Bulletin (United States. Women's Bureau)* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), 155-156.
[19] John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935-1970* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004), especially chapter 1.
[20] Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908-1921* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981).

transition. He addressed "the myth of the happy worker," namely the misguided impression that the blue-collar working man had disappeared, replaced with men who would be content if they "earn[ed] like the middle-class, vote[d] like the middle-class [and] dresse[d] like the middle-class." Swados argued that factory work was "degrading" and echoed the feeling of the men he worked alongside that they were merely "trapped animals" on the line. Workers, he argued, had accepted these conditions in the belief that they would receive better pay and more job security, and it would lead to rebellion if they felt they could not progress these goals any further. He suggested that auto workers were merely acting as "middle-class conservative[s] in temper," implying that many workers, like Stallings, desired a revitalization of some elements of rough masculinity to make their work more meaningful.[21] Swados implied, then, that the prevailing argument that the middle-class and working-class were becoming indistinguishable because of their similar goals was false. As close to middle-class as blue-collar workers became, they still had to endure work that no longer filled them with pride or presented an opportunity for them to display bravado, exercise competitiveness, or enjoy feelings of camaraderie.

However, some auto workers found ways to resist the emasculating influence of the assembly line. Wheeler Stanley, a lead general foreman at the Ford Assembly Division in Chicago, enjoyed a multitude of jobs in various sectors of auto work, from installing cushions, working on trims, auto body work, and paint work. He "enjoyed the work" and "felt it was a man's job" because "you can do something with your hands. You can go home at night and feel you have accomplished something." The connection Stanley makes between the use of his body, his fulfilment in work, and his understanding of his job as a "man's job" further speaks to the importance of the body in auto workers' conceptions of masculinity and masculine pride. Instead of adapting to the respectable masculinity of the automated

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[21] Harvey Swados, *On the Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 237-243.

workplace, Stanley created competition with fellow workers: "we'd come up with different games – like we'd take the number of jeeps that went by. That guy loses, he buys coffee. I very rarely had any problems with the other guys. We had a lot of respect for each other."[22] By bringing a competitive edge to his work and those of his colleagues, Stanley clearly succeeded in building camaraderie and reintroduce an element of "rough" masculine competitiveness back to automated work. His testimony demonstrates that some were willing and able to go above and beyond to revitalize traditional elements of rough masculinity in the automated workplace. No matter what lengths it would take would appear preferable to facing the drudgery of the assembly line without it.

Despite the efforts of workers like Stanley, by the 1970s they were pessimistic about the prospect of restoring rough masculinity to the workplace. Gary Bryner, the young president of UAW Local 1112 at Lordstown commented on the generational changes in attitude towards masculinity in the plant, whose workforce consisted of mainly young workers. "Fathers used to show their manliness by being able to work hard and have big, strong muscles and that kind of bullshitting story," Bryner argued, "The young guy now, he doesn't get a kick out of saying how hard he can work. I think his kick would be just the opposite: 'You said I had to do that much, and I only have to do *that* much. I'm man enough stand up and fight for what I say I have to do.' It isn't being manly to do more than you should." New entrants to the auto workforce, Bryner suggested, were uninterested in exercising their embodied masculinity through displays of physical prowess at work. He also signaled a noticeable absence of craftsman's pride among his young workers: "The guys are not happy here. They don't come home thinking, Boy, I did a great job today and I can't wait to get back tomorrow. That's not the feeling at all…[The worker]'s not concerned at all if the

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[22] Terkel, *Working*, 249-256.

product's good, bad, or indifferent."[23] Gone was the craftsman's traditional pride in the fruits of their labor.

While some older auto workers longed for a return to rough masculinity, longshoremen such as George Love, a former president of ILWU Local 13, were defensive of the "hard physical work" central to longshoring as a marker of masculinity. Although containerization reduced the amount of hard labor longshoremen had to perform, he noted that there was still a substantial amount of heavy lifting, such as "loading cottons into containers" or "dragging chains around and stuff like that." He added that he used to think "'…damn, all you are is a goddamn worker, hard worker, laborer.' But it was [a] different kind of labor and [I] enjoyed the term 'longshoremen'".[24] In associating his hard labor with that of other blue-collar workers, Love shared their understanding of embodied masculinity. Love is unclear about what exactly made his labor different, although his account suggests that it was the variety of work and the social waterfront culture that made being a longshoreman so distinguished in his mind. He acknowledged the concerns of longshoremen that the M&M Agreement would lead to rapid automation, in turn undermining rough masculine camaraderie and cooperation on the waterfront by reducing the required workforce on the docks. However, he noted that these effects were not seen until the early 1970s.[25] For much of the mid-twentieth century, then, longshore work retained most of its physical labor. Unlike many auto workers, then, longshore workers continued to experience rough work and play on the docks. As automation threatened an enforced dismantling of rough waterfront culture, West Coast longshoremen clung on to their traditions.

Love's defense of rough masculine values on the waterfront was a product of the work culture fostered by longshore operations pre-automation. A hallmark of traditional

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[23] Ibid, 256-265.
[24] George Love, interviewed by Tony Salcido, May 16, 19, and 30, 1989, ILWU13OH, Box 1, Folder 11, OL, 113.
[25] Ibid, 105.

longshoring was the gang system, which gave rise to tightly-knit brotherhoods of men who encouraged one another to take pride in their work. A sense of community formed whereby no cargo offered to the longshoremen to load presented an insurmountable challenge. In fact, the process of problem-solving required to load cargo efficiently led to men innovating cooperatively, creating opportunities to express their sense of fraternity.[26] The hiring hall system, doggedly fought for by the ILWU in the 1930s, reinforced a sense of reciprocity and camaraderie among longshoremen, as it allowed for workers with the lowest number of hours on record to have first claim on jobs in his remit. This not only subverted the oppressive control of longshore employers that had been endemic in the previous "shape-up" system but allowed the men to divide the work among themselves. Hiring hall practices contributed to the maintenance of strong partnerships between dock workers, and maintaining these partnerships was an imperative of longshore work.[27]

The importance of brotherhood on the docks was further underscored by the response of ILWU members critical of the potential for automation to disrupt the established gang system. Herb Mills, former Secretary-Treasurer of ILWU Local 10, based in Oakland, California, enthusiastically expressed the importance of "help[ing] a guy out" in traditional longshoring operations. "I mean, me and you picking up a coffee bag together, we're working together[…]or two of us is trying to manhandle a cotton bag[…]whatever the hell it is…There's a million things you had to do. And we're all helping out." Mills also spoke on the value of gang work to his own and his colleagues' masculinity. "Then watching out for the other guy safety-wise and this and that and the other…It's what built the union[…]We

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[26] Herb Mills, "The San Francisco Waterfront: The Social Consequences of Industrial Modernization," in *Case Studies on the Labor Process*, ed. Andrew Zimbalist (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 131-133; David T. Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), especially chapter 4.

[27] Nancy Quam-Wickham, "Who Controls the Hiring Hall? The Struggle for Job Control in the ILWU During World War II', in *The CIO's Left-Led Unions,* ed. Steve Rosswurm (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 47-67; Harvey Swados, *A Radical at Large: American Essays* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1967), 31-33; Mills, "The San Francisco Waterfront"; Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong*.

were becoming men. You could become a person down there. You had personhood out on the job, just like you had community out on the job." "There ain't that opportunity onboard a container ship. Or in a container yard," he added.[28] Mills's understanding of masculinity forged on the waterfront resonates with Love and Thayne's accounts, noting that the combined physical effort of longshoremen on the job fostered a sense of camaraderie which formed the basis of their embodied masculinity and underpinned the masculinized longshore community.

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For these longshoremen, the first formidable challenge to their established embodied masculinity came as a byproduct of automation: the newfound opportunity for women to enter the industry. Despite an initial registration freeze on the West Coast in 1960, early automation of longshoring activities led to a concomitant growth in jobs as demand for coastal shipping increased, and the reduced physical burden of certain elements of longshore work created opportunities for women to work alongside the longshore stalwarts.[29] Local 13 longshoreman Willie McGee recounted a story from his experience of working with women on the waterfront, his attitude to which was typical of longshoremen's defense of rough masculinity. He spoke of a female colleague who brought a complaint about a fellow longshoreman turning his back and urinating off to the side while on a job. Behavior such as this, McGee emphasized, was completely normal and symbolic of a longshoreman's dedication to the job: "if we have to wait for you to go half a mile to a rest room there's thousands of dollars a minute going down the drain." He argued that women did not understand this because "women live in one world men live in another. So they have to learn

[28] Herb Mills, interview by Chris Carlsson and Steve Stallone, 1996, http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Oral_History:_Herb_Mills.
[29] John D. MacEvoy, interview by Tony Salcido, October 20 and 25, 1989, ILWU13OH, Box 2, Folder 1, OL, 35-39; George Love interview, 105; Carole Hoffman, interview by Michael La Chance, May 26, 1996, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 8, OL, 31.

all over again." When asked if there had to be a similar adjustment on the part of male workers to women's presence, McGee firmly stated "No." "Not if they come there on equality and that's what they come down there for[…]That's a job of rough language, rough men, dangerous job, and you got to know what you're doing and you have to produce."[30] McGee and many other longshoremen expected women to fit into the rough and ready masculine culture on the waterfront and offered no quarter for those who sought to challenge their established practices.

McGee's testimony, and oral history interviews more broadly, cannot fully capture the experiences women had of life on the docks or in the factories. Histories of women in the workplace in both industries testify to the presence of a pervasive and often normalized culture of sexual harassment. Steve Meyer's work importantly testifies to the presence of this culture in the UAW's auto factories. He rightly delineated sexual harassment in the workplace manifesting in three ways: explicit sexual harassment from supervisors directed at women workers; paternalistic but playful sexual harassment between male and female workers; and vindictive and coarse harassment from men towards those women who competed for their jobs in the post-war years.[31] Similarly, Jake Alimahomed-Wilson's excellent work on racism and sexism within the longshore industry reveals that sexual harassment was a fact of life on the West Coast docks for its new female employees.[32] However, from these interviews alone there is minimal evidence of harassment or the existence of this culture at all. This is understandable; for one, women may be unwilling to testify about their harassment or relive their past traumas lest their abusers find out. The same equally applies to men testifying, who would see their social capital at risk were they to state

[30] Willie McGee, interview by Tony Salcido, February 25, 1991, ILWU13OH, Box 2, Folder 3, OL, 43-45.
[31] Stephen Meyer, "Workplace Predators: Sexuality and Harassment on the U.S. Automotive Shop Floor, 1930-1960," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 1, no. 1 (2004): 77-93.
[32] Jake Alimahomed-Wilson, *Solidarity Forever?: Race, Gender, and Unionism in the Ports of Southern California* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2016), especially chapter 7.

their involvement in cultures of harassment and bullying in the workplace. Although these interviews are limited in this manner, they still serve an important purpose in illustrating the positive aspects of platonic relationships between men and women in the workplace and the ways in which workplace culture transformed to accommodate women.

With rough masculinity on the waterfront came male chauvinism in equal measure. Expressions of male chauvinism revolved around the inferiority of women's bodies and their lesser physical prowess compared to men. John D. MacEvoy, the Southern California Area Manager for the PMA, the ILWU's employer, similarly expressed the difference between male and female longshore workers in terms of their bodies, showing how pervasive these views were on the waterfront for employer and employee alike. He complained that women on the job affected production as they did not have the physical capability in some jobs, such as loading steel beams, "of levering some of those beams around and getting slings on them right." "I mean, you can't expect a woman to be equal to the strength and ability of a six-foot-four, two hundred and eighty pound longshoreman," he added. For MacEvoy, evidence of this also came with the increased number of back injuries suffered by women longshore workers as "they are just not up to the lifting capabilities of a man." Since the rules on the job made no distinctions between men and women, longshoremen felt that women should not expect to be treated differently. "Women are entitled to equality," MacEvoy opined, "but I think that some of the things that they claim to be equal in are a function of the imagination rather than physical fact. And there are a lot of jobs still on the waterfront that I think any woman is an absolute imbecile to think that she can tackle or handle properly."[33]

Although many longshoremen could temper their chauvinism for women who conformed to the rough masculine culture of the dock, some held a deeper resentment of women's presence and its impact on their masculinity. George Kuvakus Sr, past president of

[33] John D. MacEvoy interview, 40-41.

ILWU Local 13 and ex-member of ILWU Local 94, a foremen's local based in San Pedro explicitly expressed his misgivings about women workers on the waterfront. "I don't think a woman should be in the hole of a ship working as a longshoremen [sic]…I cannot see women as longshoremen, though. I think it's a disgrace," he stated firmly. Kuvakus's criticisms were levelled at women workers subverting traditional understandings of the nuclear family structure, ascribing the problems longshoremen had to face managing women to aspects of their femininity. "You can not get the productivity out a woman," Kuvakus complained, "There's more injuries from women on the waterfront now, women incurring injuries." Kuvakus suggests that women's physical inferiority to men made them unsuitable to the strains of longshore work. He continued on to state "there's more divorces on the waterfront because of women workin' [sic]." Here, Kuvakus makes clear his opinion that women's involvement on the waterfront was disruptive to the structure of the family and a point of contention with the traditional role of men in society, which presumably led to an increase in divorce rates. Even though women worked on the docks "women are not longshoremen, period," Kuvakus stated.[34]

Women entering the longshore industry held no illusion that longshoremen like Kuvakus viewed their presence uncomfortably in the "man's world" that was the West Coast waterfront. Frances R. Grassi, a member of the ILWU Local 13 Ladies' Auxiliary – the woman's caucus within the union – who was involved with checking cargo on the docks and providing for striking workers, noted that despite her role she was still convinced, like many in the Auxiliary, that longshore work was "men's work." "It's not a job for women," Grassi added, "physically they cannot handle it." While the physical strain of the job went far enough to convince Grassi of this, the rough masculinity of the waterfront solidified her opinion. "I don't think [the waterfront] is a place for women. A lot of it has to do with…and a

[34] George Kuvakus Sr, interview by Tony Salcido, March 10, 1992, ILWU13OH, Box 1, Folder 9, OL, 123-124.

lot of women will disagree with this…the language the men use…and I'm being prudish, I'll admit…the fact that the men had a mutual respect for each other but they…too many of them don't have a respect for women."[35] While the men were able to express camaraderie and build fraternal relationships with each other on the job, Grassi's comments appear to suggest that women felt excluded from this aspect of waterfront culture. Her fellow Ladies' Auxiliary member Katie Quadres concurred that the waterfront was 'a man's world out there'.[36] Even for Lynn Hummel, a longshore worker for Local 13, her involvement with the industry came despite her belief that it was "a man's job" and her initial dismay at the "rough looking" men she competed for jobs for at the hiring hall.[37]

The culture of the docks was so unflinchingly rough that women felt obligated to fit in to prove their worth working alongside their male colleagues. Adjusting their behavior to blend in as best as possible with the rough masculinity of the docks led to longshorewomen becoming critical of any use of femininity on the job in the hope of gaining advantages or an easier time. Carole Hoffman, a serving longshore worker with Local 13, was optimistic about the presence of women on the waterfront, stating "the women belong down there [on the docks]. They do. There's a place for them." However, she cautioned that "those women have to realize that it is a different environment, and I just don't like seeing them using their femininity for anything other than doing the job […] Don't use this feminine thing for trying to get out of the work or getting your way with someone." The notion of longshoring being "a different environment" for women was another way of referring to the rough masculine culture. Women "better be ready for it," Hoffman advised, and must be prepared to "take a lot from […] the men […] and don't take it personally" as the docks are "a male-dominated

[35] Frances R. Grassi, interview by John R. Pulskamp, January 28, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 6, OL, 16, 36.
[36] Katie Quadres, interview by Judy Weidoff, January 14, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 15, OL, 18.
[37] Lynn Hummel, interview by Mary Beth Welch-Orozco, November 4, 1996, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 9, OL, 10.

society."[38] Peggy Chandler, a member of the Ladies' Auxiliary, was similarly critical of femininity on the docks. She criticized women for "want[ing] it both ways." "They want their jobs on the docks and then they can't do the work […] They have the babies and then they get hurt and then they blame it on the work," she bemoaned.[39] Views such as these, which perhaps seem more fitting coming from a male longshore worker rather than an Auxiliary member, speak to the resilience of rough masculine values on the waterfront in the face of women's involvement and how the anti-femininity rhetoric propagated by longshoremen had spread among the women involved with the union's activities.

Examining the actions of the Ladies' Auxiliary speaks to the ways in which class concerns intersected with those of gender. The women who spoke on the Ladies' Auxiliary explicitly stated that while the organization might have been 'leftist' in its support of the union and its strike actions, it was not a feminist collective. Chandler was particularly maddened by the suggestion that the Auxiliary might have been considered a feminist group seemingly on the basis that the Auxiliary saw itself as an organization that would assist the men (and women by extension) on the docks. The Auxiliary saw itself as an organization committed to worker solidarity rather than as a means of advancing women's interests. As a result, it appeared to be more involved with preserving the longstanding culture of the docks and rather than fighting for substantial improvements in the treatment of women it instead encouraged them to fit in.[40] Indeed, many women took to the rougher language and culture of the docks. Linda Miller-Cibel, a UTR (utility tractor) driver, accepted women on the waterfront provided "they weren't going to act, you know, like sissies, because you don't go down there and act like a sissy." Her use of the term "sissy," a pejorative traditionally used to refer to those who were not traditionally masculine in character, is telling. Women were

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[38] Carole Hoffman interview, 55-57.
[39] Peggy Chandler, interview by Gail Stein, January 14, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 2, OL, 32-33.
[40] Ibid, 7.

expected to adopt the masculinity of the docks to earn their place. In fact, Miller-Cibel noted that gay women might have been attracted to the waterfront for that reason. "I guess it has attracted some women that, you know, are gay […] It's that kind of work."[41] By signaling that the attraction of gay women to the job would be based on the kind of work available, Miller-Cibel was likely indicating the appeal of the job to butch lesbians, who were gender non-conforming and therefore "masculine" in demeanor. Miller-Cibel's testimony brings together the apparently distinct notions that the Bay Area was both a center of post-war lesbian and gay life and the epicenter of the ILWU.[42] In their adoption of more traditional masculine behaviors, Miller-Cibel suggested that they might find the physical demands of longshore work and the rougher masculine culture of the docks attractive.

The attitude of ILWU women towards feminism was worlds apart from that of the UAW's female members. Although women were in the minority in the auto industry, they had longer standing compared to Pacific Coast longshoring. Their employment in male-centric working environments such as auto plants during World War II was facilitated by many auto workers serving in the military but also advances in automation since the early twentieth century which made assembly line work mostly accessible to women. Briggs Manufacturing Company employee Jess Ferrazza explained that the company did not traditionally employ women. However, there was "a demand for workers around the city" of Detroit and many of the men who had been laid off had been re-employed elsewhere in the run-up to World War II. As a result, "there was no available help, outside of women." During the war, Ferrazza noted that "probably 60 per cent of the employees in the [Mack Avenue] plant were women. So this did not cause any problem." He added that tensions emerged after

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[41] Linda Miller-Cibel, interview by Christine Fearing, January 23, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 13, OL, 57, 73-74.

[42] Lilian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), especially chapter 7. For more on Bay Area LGBT history, see Susan Stryker and Jim van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay: History of Queer Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996).

the war when auto workers returned from military service. "We had some problems after the war when they went back into automobile production. Some of the women were still around doing jobs that were formerly done by men and the men resented this a little bit." These men found, however, that "there was nothing else that they could do about it." "The women had the seniority and could do the job," Ferrazza explained.[43] The indispensable work of women in auto plants during World War II and the advancements in automation that opened the doors for them to work in the male-dominated factory environment had earned them the right to maintain their employment.

Following World War II, women auto workers fought to defend this right even as efforts were made to stifle their politics and eject them from the plants. A Ford spokesman argued that women had been able to work in the industry because airplane assembly was "light" work compared to "the heavy, tiring assembly work of cars." "Women can't handle such tough work," he added.[44] Indeed, cutbacks in defense production were used as an excuse to justify cutting women's jobs in auto plants. A *New York Times* article reported that industry analysts had deemed "serious unemployment" in the auto industry as possible to avert by the "return of factory employed housewives to the kitchen."[45] Presumably here the only unemployment these analysts cared for was that of male auto workers. As technology advanced, so too did women manage to maintain their presence in Detroit's auto factories. Industry spokesmen noted that "more men and women drew more money for work on automotive production lines in 1953 than in any previous year in history" due to technological advances.[46]

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[43] Jess Ferrazza, interviewed by Jack W. Skeels, May 26, 1961, UAW Oral Histories Box 4, Item 7, WPR, 22.
[44] Lucy Greenbaum, "Industries in U.S. Replacing Women: 4,000,000 Fewer Employed Now Than On V-J Day, Federal Statistics Show, Veterans Getting Jobs, Auto Assembly Lines are Too Tough for Feminine Workers, Company Spokesmen Say," *New York Times*, February 19, 1946, 27.
[45] *New York Times*, "Women to go First in Plant Cutbacks: Auto Makers Estimate Some 50,000 Now Are Employed in Factory Jobs," July 19, 1953, F1.
[46] John Stuart, "Detroit is Leading Trend to Full Mechanization: Big Automatic 'Tools' Make Better Autos at Lower Cost," *New York Times*, February 14, 1954, F1.

Clearly women auto workers had a mountain to climb in assuring industry spokespeople, let alone their own male colleagues, that they were worthy of employment. On the job, they had to contend with sexual harassment from their male colleagues who sought to maintain male dominance and a rough masculine culture within the plants. Despite this, they made their presence known through their involvement with the various branches of the UAW Women's Auxiliary. These were women's organizations committed to furthering the negotiating goals of the union rather than pursuing the improvement of women's rights within the industry. Genora Dollinger, a notable activist within the UAW and organizer of the first Women's Auxiliary, explained how the Auxiliary was born from women wanting to "play a more active role" and its success surprised the men who had originally only thought of the women as "all right" because they were "good for the strike kitchens" or first aid stations, rather than as "any factor that could really help them." The experience of referring to men and women alike as "brothers" and "sisters" in solidarity created a feeling that the workers "felt they had jointly fused together all their hopes, their aspirations, and their desires and longing for a chance to have equality and the right to determine their own future."[47] Involvement with Auxiliary activities saw women picketing alongside male colleagues, improving their recognition and respect in their eyes. Alongside these organizations, the UAW Women's Department was "instrumental in getting women hired" into plants where they had not been hired before, according to auto worker and Local 174 Auxiliary president Catherine Gelles.[48] The existence of this department within the union's structure reinforced the importance of women workers to the union, providing a platform for women to improve their position within the industry that ILWU workers did not have access to.

[47] Genora Dollinger interview, 17-18, 38. Dollinger, *Not Automatic*.
[48] Gelles interview, 16.

Even as women in auto and longshore worked individually and within organizations like the Auxiliaries to improve the standing of women within their industries, winning the mutual respect and acceptance of the stalwart working men would always be a challenge. As it became clear that more women were working in the auto and longshore industries – and that they were here to stay – the attitudes of men began to shift towards appreciation of women's work. These shifts inevitably effected change in the pre-existing masculine cultures of these industries. Perhaps most remarkably, longshoremen who were initially defensive of an exclusively male suitability to their profession began to warm to women on the docks. Ike Morrow, an African American longshore worker from ILWU Local 23, based in Tacoma, Washington, explained that when women first came to the waterfront, "he thought 'no' at first." "Then, as the work became mechanical and gentrified," Morrow added, "I said to myself, 'Well, that's what they once thought about you,' changed my mind, and decided I'd never hard-time women on the waterfront. In fact, I've come to admire them."[49] The fact that Morrow felt a sense of solidarity with the newly employed longshorewomen in the face of automation illustrates how the impact of technological change affected relationships between workers and led to transformations in the longshore culture.

Morrow and other longshoremen's acceptance of women came from their recognition that newly employed longshorewomen were pulling their weight on the docks. Cynthia Dacquisto, a Local 13 longshore worker, stated that women could find their place on the dock provided they "have the attitude" to perform the work to a high standard. After all, if longshoremen felt that they had to "carry" women on the job then that would only lead to more resentment towards them. "A man can go out there and say he has a hangover and everyone's gonna cover him, but it doesn't matter how well they know you or how good your

[49] Harvey Schwartz, *Solidarity Stories: An Oral History of the ILWU* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 135.

reputation is, you do it once, and that's it," Dacquisto added, indicating the high standards women had to meet on the waterfront to be respected by men. Building respect among the longshoremen was crucial when vying for jobs at the hiring hall, Dacquisto explained. "You know, the first thing they do is they see you at the hall and go, well 'Oh yeah, she's a good worker, don't worry about it' and the biggest compliment is 'you can be my partner anytime.' If they say that to you […] and, if another guy that's worked with me says 'Hey, don't worry about it she does her job'," these were signs that longshorewomen had earned the mutual respect of their male peers.[50] Women acknowledged the lax standards and expectations of longshoremen towards other men compared to women on the waterfront and working towards the high standards expected of them rather than flagging these double standards. As a result, these women convinced the stalwart longshoremen that their presence was not a detriment to longshore operations or established waterfront culture.

Those women who made an effort to ingratiate themselves into the rough masculine culture were similarly rewarded with the respect of their fellow longshoremen. Lynn Hummel explained how the atmosphere on the waterfront was hostile towards women. "We just kind of kept to ourselves. We knew that we weren't really wanted there. We were resented." However, a glimmer of hope came when she and other women "broke the ice with some of them." Her husband, who worked on the docks, introduced Hummel to some longshoremen who were playing cards around a makeshift table, one of whom been "really harassing" her. She "made some kind of a joke, and he laughed and said, 'Why don't you sit down here and you can keep score for us?'" As a result, she recounted: "here I was on the side where the men were […] and suddenly it just seemed it…that it was going to be okay for me to be there. That I wouldn't be frightened of them anymore because they were making friends with me. So suddenly, days went on and on, and a few weeks later, we were actually having barbecues

[50] Cynthia Dacquisto, interview by Gail Stein, June 8, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 4, OL, 18.

with them. The men."[51] With good humor and a willingness to involve oneself with the culture of the waterfront, then, even women like Hummel who were initially afraid of the men could find a place for themselves on the docks.

Even those longshoremen most defensive of the rough masculinity of the docks and the suitability of men to longshore work compared to women were prepared to concede that there were some jobs on the waterfront that were suitable. George Love admitted that he could "see women being clerks and certain longshore jobs, where you push the buttons," or perhaps "driving […] equipment." Such opportunities would open up as the waterfront became containerized. But Love once again was quick to follow up by asserting the traditional suitability of male bodies to the task of longshore work. "But when I was working in the hold there's no way females could have been longshoremen because it was all hand stows […] pushing four-wheelers around in the hold with heavy loads."[52] Love's concession of a place for women on the docks was significant considering the general opposition of chauvinistic longshoremen to the prospect, albeit this was largely in a manner that would not compromise the job's hard physical labor.

Eventually, cracks began to appear in the veneer of traditional waterfront culture, thanks mainly to the efforts of women to ingratiate themselves into the rough masculine culture. Andrea Luse, a Local 13 longshorewoman, expressed her belief that the presence of women on the waterfront had not only led to improvements in "sanitary facilities" but also had affected the language used on the docks. "I think in terms of…of behavior during disagreements has changed. To an extent, you know, language," she stated.[53] The men toned down their behavior and attitude towards women along with their language, as fellow Local 13 longshorewoman Diana Rosas attested. She had been "seeing a lot of difference" in the

[51] Hummel interview, 12.
[52] Love interview, 112.
[53] Andrea Luse, interview by Michael La Chance, June 9, 1996, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 11, OL, 22.

attitude taken to new recruits, particularly that longshore stalwarts had been "awfully patient" with them. "I mean, they've taken jobs we weren't ever allowed to take or even have the privilege of taking."[54] Longshoremen had become more accepting of women on the waterfront by the 1970s and were even willing to tone down their often abrasive language out of respect for their presence on the docks. Even though the testimonies of women longshore workers regarding these changes are somewhat vague, the small changes show a newfound lenience and respect far beyond what would have been expected of longshoremen.

By the early 1970s, male auto workers' attitudes towards women in the workplace appeared to be warming, as they were in the longshore industry. Gary Bryner noted that Lordstown's young workforce had taken well to the presence of women on the shopfloor. "They work on the line just like the men. It's been a good thing for our union. It has finally dawned on the guys that if a woman comes here to work, she's able to go on that job," he stated. Bryner's positivity about women workers at Lordstown was reinforced by his commentary on how automation allowed for more women to be employed. "In '66 and '67 [certain] jobs were so physically demanding that a woman couldn't have done them. They had to be made more normal."[55] It is interesting to observe here that Bryner saw automation transforming auto work as a positive process of normalizing the work and reducing its barrier to entry. This contrasts with the perspectives of chauvinistic longshoremen who saw automation reducing the barrier to entry for longshore work as a negative and abnormal process. Bryner seeing this as a more normal process could be attributed to the legacy of mechanization and automation making the auto industry more accessible compared to the more recent automation in longshore.

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[54] Diana Rosas, interview by Mary Beth Welch Orozco, February 3, 1997, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 17, OL.
[55] Terkel, *Working*, 264.

Alongside earlier legislative efforts to improve gender equality in the workplace, women were able to find their place in the mid-twentieth century auto factory not only because of male acceptance but because of their own brazenness in taking their career advancement into their own hands. A *New York Times* article on the inroads made into gender equality by 1971 included testimonies from several female auto workers. Dorothy Walker, a worker at a General Motors plant in Ypsilanti, Michigan, lamented that women of previous generations never attempted to enter skilled trades programs in the auto industry, adding that "they seemed to be afraid even to try." However, younger women were "more pushy," according to Ford worker and UAW officer Betty Mickens. "They sign up for the better jobs. If the foreman says anything about it, they'll look at him like he's crazy." Bernice Shields, another Ford worker, added that "these younger women will not take what the older women will take."[56] Younger women, buoyed by developments in gender equality and their increasing presence in auto plants, were willing to assert their rightful position in the workplace alongside working men.

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The extent to which auto and longshore workers had begun to accept women in their masculinized workplaces demonstrates how they had reformulated their masculinity to adapt to changes in their working environment wrought by automation. Auto workers struggled with a loss of pride in work due to the assembly line depriving them of previous fulfilment in the means of work. Although the expectations of their employers might have been that automated work and respectable masculinity was desirable to auto workers, on the contrary shopfloor workers attempted to revitalize elements of rough masculine competitiveness as resistance to the stultifying pace of the line. In contrast, longshore workers were able to retain

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[56] Jerry M. Flint, "Job Bias Against Women Easing Under Pressure: Discrimination in the Job Market is Starting to Give Way," *New York Times*, January 31, 1971, 1, 50.

the rough masculine culture on the waterfront throughout the period even as the docks became containerized and women worked in greater numbers. The unique culture of the docks appeared resistant to early automation and its preservation was assisted by the stalwart defensiveness of longshoremen and the longshorewomen who conformed to it.

This argument develops on the current scholarship on second-wave feminism's origins in the post-war lived experiences of working women. The traditional historical understanding of the growth of second-wave feminism is marked by an understanding that it was born from a 'housewives' rebellion' in opposition to the veneration of the nuclear family and glorification of motherhood in the post-war era.[57] Since these works, historians such as Daniel Horowitz have argued persuasively for the origins of key feminist theoretical works in the author's experiences with unions, such as Betty Friedan's treatise *The Feminine Mystique* in her involvement with the United Electrical Workers union.[58] Others have developed on his work to identify the ways in which leftist and Communist cultures within unions created a fertile environment for the development of feminist ideas.[59] This chapter develops on the work of Denis Deslippe, among others, who have emphasized that the development of second-wave feminism also grew from women's experiences with automation in regards to it opening up opportunities for work that were previously only accessible to men.[60] Although this holds true for the women involved with the UAW, who organized feminist collectives, the same cannot be said of the ILWU women, who viewed their auxiliaries and their activities as distinctly anti-feminist. The fact that the ILWU women's experience did not lead to the

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[57] Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001).
[58] Horowitz, *Betty Friedan*.
[59] Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Kannenberg, "The Impact of the Cold War on Women's Trade Union Activism: The UE Experience."
[60] Denis Deslippe, *"Rights, Not Roses": Unions and the Rise of Working-Class Feminism, 1945-80* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

development of feminist collectives within the workplace should encourage historians to examine other unions for evidence of a similar trend.

The first port of call should perhaps be unions with well-documented Communist involvement in their establishment. Kate Weigand's work on how Communist ideals influenced prominent feminist activists in the post-war period underscores the ways in which the differing political cultures of trade unions can lead to radically different manifestations of feminism.[61] The same too can be said of masculinity. UAW members harkened back to the rougher masculinity prevalent in their workplace prior to automation and went to lengths to bring back some of that competitiveness in the more respectable assembly line environment. For the ILWU, a union in which Communist Party members held key leadership positions, the pervasiveness of a rough masculine culture and defensiveness of the close fraternal bonds between longshore workers eclipsed that of the UAW. This is likely on behalf of the CP's assertion that commitment to the union and its politics was one in which union men were brothers in solidarity.[62] Therefore, scholars would do well to examine other CP-led unions which dealt with the initial push for automation at the same time as the ILWU to explore whether there was a similar defensiveness of masculinity and fraternity in the face of automation.

Although longshoremen enjoyed a similar rough masculine culture on the automating waterfront as was established through early twentieth-century union organization and traditional longshoring methods, like in the auto industry this time was numbered. As containerization became more dominant and the movements of dock workers became organized by computers rather than the ingenuity of working gangs, auto workers looking on

[61] Weigand, *Red Feminism*.

[62] For studies on Communism's importance in the origins of the ILWU, see Howard Kimeldorf, *Reds or Rackets?: The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) and Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

might have felt a sense of déjà vu. Disappointment with fully containerized longshoring was similar to the disappointment felt by auto workers at fully automated automobile creation. This was not a foregone conclusion for longshore workers, just as it was not for auto workers. In the liminal post-war period masculinities were in flux and the defense of rough masculinity remained paramount even in the face of eventual technological change.

Chapter Five: Mental Health

For Dave McGee, a committeeman at the Lordstown General Motors Plant in Ohio, the mental pressures of the assembly line had become too great. Because assembly line work was "the hardest mental type work in the world," Mc Gee stated, he and his colleagues had turned to "doubling up," effectively sharing their eight hour workday in self-determined shift patterns. With this method, reviled by line managers, McGee proclaimed they'd "found a way for me to shuck and jive – all day long, have a good time, help each other and get out the work. I don't have to take these pain pills no more. My ulcer's gone […] My nerves was bad, I'm not kidding you."[1] McGee's mention of his ulcer – a medical condition that can be caused by stress – is telling here. When the stress of his job was shared, he had access to more opportunities for social interaction and his workload was reduced. As a result, he reported his symptoms and quality of life improved. This chapter focuses on the growing issue of mental health among workers in the mid-twentieth century. It brings together the themes of the preceding chapters to explore the role of mental health in the explosion of rank-and-file resistance in the auto and longshore industries to drudgery in its new automated form. It focuses on the pivotal West Coast longshore strike of 1971 and the Lordstown strike of 1972 and the mounting tensions leading to these moments to elucidate the – ultimately mostly unsuccessful – efforts of rank-and-file workers to resist their own dehumanization in the automated workplace.

[1] Bennett Kremen, "Lordstown – Searching for a Better Way of Work: As Auto Strike Deadline Nears, A New Blue-Collar Generation Defies G.M. and the U.A.W. by Changing Rules of the Game," *New York Times*, September 9, 1973, 159.

Mental health issues were not experienced one-dimensionally by workers in both these industries, however. The testimonies of Lordstown's young workers are fraught with explicit mention of stress and mental exhaustion at the unrelenting pace of their work and workplace atmosphere. In contrast, older Old Left ILWU members advanced a narrative of loss – both of their treasured way of life on the waterfront and their own dignity and identity as longshore workers – as they protested against the PMA's efforts to undermine longshore culture in return for greater automated efficiency. While the predominant issue of stress faced by auto workers fits more obviously into common understandings of mental health issues, it is important to recognize that concerns over loss of the waterfront's traditional vibrancy point – albeit more subtly – to the presence of anxiety, depression, and a sense of identity crisis among longshore workers. The reason for the difference in the prevalence of explicit reference to mental health in testimonies between the two unions lies in the differing stages of automation's advancement between their industries. As automation was reaching fever-pitch in the longshore industry, the issue of loss gave way in discussions to more tangible concerns regarding securing worker livelihoods. In contrast, automation by the 1970s had become a well-established feature of auto work. Aware that its automated mundanity appeared to be there to stay, workers hit a breaking point with their stressful jobs where they even resorted to acts of sabotage.

The mental health of the blue-collar worker attracted the attention of contemporary social theorists. Initially, Sebastian De Grazia's study of the lives of workers and their division of time between work and leisure made subtle reference to the mental strain of automated work. He noted that "the factory system and machinery brought the blessing of lighter labor, but also the curse of greater attentiveness over fixed stretches of time." Not only was this "greater attentiveness" a new drudgery workers had to face, "work concentration usually lessens the chance for social relations on the job," De Grazia continued. "By doing

so, it deprives industrial work of perhaps its chief satisfaction," he added. Although he did not explicitly refer to mental health, he described the long-term psychological effects of automated work on the blue-collar worker. "The tender of the automatics [referring to automated machinery] may in time have the dull, nerve-racking life of the croupier in the casino. Emaciated, he will watch with alert and lifeless eyes."[2] Here, De Grazia was making reference to the newfound mental drudgery workers in the auto and longshore industry were facing with the growth of automation, which bred such discontent within both industries that industrial action exploded in the early 1970s.

While De Grazia's work shed light on the mental struggles faced by workers in automated industries, it was the work of prominent industrial psychologist Arthur Kornhauser that enlightened many observers in business, labor and government to the importance of worker mental health. Perhaps the most significant early researcher into the mental health of workers, Kornhauser was also among the first to refer to the issue of mental health explicitly in his ground-breaking 1965 study on mental health and industrial work. His study was, most importantly, not on "mental *illness*," but rather "the psychology of normal working people." The subjects of his study, therefore, were 407 "employed, successful factory workers exemplified by those in the automobile plants of Detroit" interviewed between 1953 and 1954, consisting of "white, native-born males holding hourly paid jobs," the majority demographic among auto workers. The results of his study revealed that many auto workers were suffering from unsatisfactory mental health, with from a quarter to a half of the sample reporting that they were "often worried and upset," "bothered by nervousness" or felt "blue and discouraged." Although Kornhauser mentions "the exciting new development" of automation, he avoids directly addressing the effects of automation on mental health beyond the potential for automation to eliminate "routine semiskilled jobs." He justified this on the

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[2] Sebastian De Grazia, *Of Time, Work and Leisure* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1962), 60, 297.

basis that the full impact of automation on the issues at hand was unclear to him. Despite this, throughout his study he makes many links between the routine nature of automated production work and job dissatisfaction, which he suggests directly affected the mental health of these workers, leading them to show "notably weak ambition and initiative," "feelings of ineffectualness" and "anxiety and hostility in the factory groups."[3] These familiar feelings were among those attested to by auto workers speaking on the transformation of their work in Chapter Two, and which were being brought to breaking point by the late 1960s. Although Kornhauser did not study the longshore industry, his definition of mental health in the industrial context is particularly salient when examining both industries, which he terms "those behaviors, attitudes, perceptions, and feelings that determine a worker's overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness, and excellence of functioning as a person," and this chapter pays heed to this definition moving forward in understanding how workers conceptualized and fought to preserve their mental health.[4]

With Kornhauser alerting his readers to the degradation of mental health and job dissatisfaction experienced by workers, this raises the question of why it took until the early 1970s for resistance on this basis to come about. The answer lies in Christopher Lasch's analysis of the rise of therapeutic thinking and a cultural shift in the U.S. towards mental health in the 1970s. He argued that the cultural milieu had shifted in the late 1960s towards individuals seeking feelings of personal well-being and "psychic security." Drawing on the formative experiences of Jerry Rubin, the radical co-founder of the Youth International Party, he affirms Rubin's understanding of the existence of an "inner revolution" in the 1970s. This entailed Americans looking inward and focusing their attention on improving their quality of

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[3] Arthur Kornhauser, *Mental Health of the Industrial Worker* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965) 2-3, 5, 9, 18, 40, 260-261, 268.
[4] Ibid, 11.

life.[5] It is the growth of this mental health conscious radicalism that likely provided the impetus for the Lordstown workers and the West Coast longshoremen to resist the feelings of stress and loss that had come to define their working lives.

In the 2010s, several prominent labor historians such as Jefferson Cowie turned their attention to workplace militancy and rebellion in the 1970s. They sought to explain how labor militancy arose considering what appeared to be the solution of the "labor question" in the post-war period. This refers to the goal of organized labor to achieve progressive improvement in working conditions and support for workers among their communities and industries.[6] Post-war prosperity – in particular the doubling of real wages between 1947 and 1973 – led to a decline in trade union prestige and power which translated to diminished desire to push for grander social transformation.[7] In response, Cowie rightly argues that these factors did not lead to working class inertia, it instead simply contained class conflict.[8] The reason why the scale of worker resistance had largely been overlooked by historians of counterculture was, as Cal Winslow and Robert Brenner have argued, a result of working class rebellion being unstructured and unorganized. It came from the rank and file not the Internationals, rarely spilled over from industry to industry and did not have any coordinators, leaders, or coherent ideology.[9] Comparing West Coast longshore resistance in 1971 and the Lordstown strike of 1972 illustrates that, although these instances of rebellion

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[5] Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), 7, 15.

[6] Steve Fraser, "The Labor Question," in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); 55-84; Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), especially chapter 3

[7] Nelson Lichtenstein, "Pluralism, Postwar Intellectuals, and the Demise of the Union Idea," in *The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism*, ed. Sidney M. Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 83-114.

[8] Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2010).

[9] Cal Winslow, "Overview: The Rebellion from Below, 1965-81," in *Rebel Rank and File: Labor Militancy and Revolt from Below during the Long 1970s*, ed. Aaron Brenner, Robert Brenner, and Cal Winslow (London: Verso, 2010), 1-36; Robert Brenner, "The Political Economy of the Rank-and-File Rebellion," in *Rebel Rank and File*, 37-76.

were not centrally organized, their similar timing and emergence from opposition to automation is no coincidence. Taken together, this chapter and those preceding reinforce the notion that worker discontent with the physical and psychological effects of automation gradually built throughout the post-war period. Criticism of the focus on productivity and efficiency over worker welfare; the removal of challenge and ingenuity in work, replaced with monotony; the expectations of how much workers should work; and the undermining of established rough masculine cultures reached fever pitch in the early 1970s.

Although these studies are invaluable to understanding the landscape of rank-and-file resistance in the 1970s, they are limited in that they do not engage with the ways in which the deteriorating mental health of workers – a process triggered by the advancement of automation and the transformation of work – catalyzed worker activism. This chapter addresses this deficiency through its focus on the Lordstown and 1971 ILWU strikes, two moments of industrial action that were spearheaded by the discontent felt by workers in both industries towards the mental pressures of automated work, among the other factors mentioned above. It builds on Barbara Garson's noteworthy thesis on the importance of meaningful work to blue collar workers in the late twentieth century and Cal Winslow's work on the disparate nature of the workers' rebellion which emphasizes the parameters of the workplace as the key battleground between these activist workers and management.[10] Taken together, Garson and Winslow's studies speak to the importance of looking to working conditions – and those modified by automation in particular – as a source of working class militancy in this period. Acts of sabotage and protest undertaken by workers were, then, at a base level a means of safeguarding their own mental health, bringing meaning and dignity to their job which had long since faded.

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[10] Barbara Garson, *All the Livelong Day: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994); Winslow, "Overview: The Rebellion from Below, 1965-81."

The resistance of auto and longshore workers to their working conditions did not take place in a vacuum. Instead, these workers' efforts fit neatly into a growing counter-culture of resistance emerging within the U.S. during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The extent of this countercultural resistance has been well substantiated by historians of post-war culture and society in the 2000s. Daniel Rodgers's excellent study of the 1970s termed it the start of an "age of fracture" as it represented a moment of separation from post-war sociocultural norms, replacing them with conceptions of human nature that stressed choice and agency.[11] This notion of "fracture" fits for both the UAW and ILWU in this period. The UAW's fracture was countercultural resistance to established norms in the form of resistance to automation as a prime workplace stressor. For the ILWU, their experience of fracture was between the work culture of containerized longshoring and that of traditional longshoring, lost to time and yearned for. Rodgers's argument is reinforced by studies such as Jeremi Suri's which illustrate the counterculture's growth from the secure living conditions in the U.S. stifling individual freedoms, explaining the focus of countercultural groups on freedom, authenticity, and the rejection of authority.[12] These sociocultural histories crucially contextualize the issues of stress and loss facing UAW and ILWU members on the eve of their respective strike efforts. By resisting the ways in which automation had transformed their jobs, auto and longshore workers were striking back against the ascendancy of productivity and efficiency in U.S. society, rejecting authority in the fight for greater control over their own work and workplace culture more broadly.

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[11] Daniel Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011).
[12] Jeremi Suri, "Counter-cultures: The Rebellions against the Cold War Order, 1965-1975," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War Volume 2: Crises and Détente*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 460-481. For other studies on the 1970s as a period of resistance and counterculture, see Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002); Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington DC: Island, 2005).

This chapter builds on Howard Brick and Christopher Phelps's seminal study of the post-war U.S. Left to place auto and longshore worker resistance in the framework of 1960s and 1970s counterculture. These workers fit neatly into the post-1968 radical moment as one of the myriad dimensions of radicalism with their vision of freedom from the trappings of automated work.[13] Brick and Phelps's work expands Brick's earlier history of U.S. society and culture, which argues that the 1960s was an era of contradictions in which reformers of various backgrounds struggled to realize their far-reaching social goals without turning to outright resistance. In particular, he notes that the promise of abundant production "opened vistas of social change but also reinforced a sense of personal alienation."[14] Taken together, Brick and Phelps's thesis and those of other notable historians of this period mark the late 1960s as the end of the "consensus" or "liberal consensus" period of post-war U.S. history. The heavily debated notion of a "consensus" was popularized by Godfrey Hodgson's *America in Our Time*, which argued that the demands of the Cold War unified conservatives who accepted liberal domestic policies and liberals who accepted conservative foreign policy, a phenomena which extended throughout U.S. society and culture.[15] Whether the notion of a "consensus" was truly valid, Hodgson placed productivity at the center of the liberal political equation, as it was ultimate proof of the strength of the free enterprise system. Auto and longshore worker resistance to the trappings of automated work, then, directly resulted from the feelings of personal alienation that accompanied both industries' focus on abundant

[13] Howard Brick and Christopher Phelps, *Radicals in America: The US Left since the Second World War* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 171-172.
[14] Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 1-2.
[15] Godfrey Hodgson, *America in Our Time* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976). For works debating the "liberal consensus" idea, see H.W. Brands, *The Strange Death of American Liberalism* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2001); Sidney M. Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur, eds., *The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005); Kevin Mattson, *When America was Great: The Fighting Faith of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Robert Mason and Iwan W. Morgan, eds., *The Liberal Consensus Reconsidered: American Politics and Society in the Postwar Era* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017). Gary Gerstle argues that the consensus mentality was a product of the New Deal political order. See Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022).

production. This chapter reframes their opposition to automated machinery, the catalyst for continued efficiency and productivity, not as the insular resistance of workers to managerial control but to what these workers saw as symbols of their diminishing freedoms in post-war society.

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Observing the situation on the West Coast waterfront, journalist and ILWU advocate Sidney Roger looked on with dismay. He noted the tendency towards the undermining of the "gang" system on the docks in the wake of containerization, as there is less need for workers to cooperate to load cargo. "No cargo. No personality left to the thing. You have no idea what kind of port it came from. What kind of port it goes to," Roger commented, emphasizing the aspects that the job was now devoid of that were so prized by those on the docks. "It's no fun any longer working on the waterfront. The fun is gone. The fun has to do with the men working together. A sense of camaraderie," Roger added. He also noted that workers tended to refer to containerized loads as "Harry Bridges loads," which associated the larger size of these loads with the ILWU President as a sign of discontent. Containerized work alienated longshore workers who had become accustomed to traditional methods of waterfront and culture. It signaled a clear break from the masculinized longshore culture many knew and loved and it bred fear for these workers' livelihoods. The concerns of ILWU workers over the loss of their traditional way of life underpinned the 1971 longshore strike. A momentous occurrence, being the first major waterfront strike since 1948, the 1971 strike embodied the themes of discontent that had been rippling through the workforce since the post-war period. Anxieties surrounding employment, guaranteeing wage rates, the transformation of longshore work and the negative aspects of container work, and the survival of the waterfront's vibrant community all came to a head in this pivotal period. When the dust had settled the following year, longshore workers might have been able to enjoy an apparent guarantee of further

security, but it was a return to status quo that showed ominous portent of an automated future that no worker was quite prepared for.

While the union's focus on wages and employment perhaps seems akin to any other industry strike, the unifying issue which created anxieties surrounding these two factors was containerization.[16] As discussed in previous chapters, resentment towards containerization had begun to build on the West Coast waterfront in the late 1950s as the longshore industry became increasingly reliant on new technological developments. ILWU members were aware of the situation on the East Coast, where the region's longshore union – the International Longshore Association – was further along in the process of automating and was struggling with their workers being devoid of a "share in the machine" – in other words some financial benefit from automation – and being at risk of layoff.[17] These concerns had led to the union negotiating the M&M Agreement with their employer, the PMA in 1961. Both employer and union could look upon the result of the first M&M Agreement with satisfaction. Gains in productivity and profits for employers more than outweighed the costs of establishing the M&M Fund and safeguarding employees from reductions to their earnings or layoff. The union had met its objectives of guaranteeing its fully registered members stable earnings and protection from layoff, but as ILWU Research Director Lincoln Fairley pointed out, these achievements came not primarily from the terms of the agreement but from the massive increase in tonnage shipped from the West Coast as the U.S. became involved in further military ventures in Vietnam.[18]

Roger spoke on behalf of the longshore workers' fears that "when you have new and different machinery, you can get pretty damn frightened. You can see the future. The

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[16] The union reported as such in *The Dispatcher*, see *The Dispatcher*, "Strike Enters 5th Week, Container Work Is Main Issue," July 30, 1971, 1, 8.
[17] Lincoln Fairley, *Facing Mechanization: The West Coast Longshore Plan* (California: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1979), 145.
[18] Ibid, 222-227.

possibility that some part of your industry is not going to have a job. That became the number-one issue."[19] Concern for job security and a desire to defend the established workplace culture on the docks that had developed during the 1950s, then, was beginning to have effects on the mental health of longshore workers that came to a head by the mid-1960s. Oral histories of longshoremen and women identify a similar concern for the future and a sense of loss for past modes of work. As previously noted, longshorewoman Kristi Vogt expressed her fears regarding automation reducing the number of workers required. In traditional longshoring, she explained, "you could be working [a] ship, you know, ten, eleven, twelve days […] Now those ships can be in and out in […] one day."[20] Similarly, fellow Local 13 longshorewoman Edna Daley voiced her concerns that she would not have a job in the future, and when asked if she felt that M&M could eventually phase out longshoring entirely, she replied "Absolutely."[21]

Not only was there a fear for the future and the impending specter of the loss of waterfront tradition, so too had there begun a palpable change among the newer generation of longshore workers in their attitude towards work. Local 13 Auxiliary member Helen Kaunisto noted the differing mentality between young and old longshore workers towards containerization. Whereas the younger generation enjoyed the work because "it's easier," she also added that the "older guys" remarked that they "just worked fifty years too soon."[22] This is understandable, as while younger longshoremen could take their job on face value, the older workers' response exemplifies the massive transformation between containerized and traditional longshoring and exhibits the tendency among older workers to look back on a lost past. The penchant of younger longshore workers towards easier work is reflected in the

[19] Sidney Roger, *A Liberal Journalist on the Air and on the Waterfront: Labor and Political Issues*, 1989-1990, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt1000013q&brand=oac4&doc.view=entire_text , 566-570, 895.
[20] Kristi Vogt, interview by Deborah Bowers Shirk, November 11, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 18, OL, 88.
[21] Edna Daley, interview by Michael La Chance, November 16, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 5, OL, 84.
[22] Helen Kaunisto, interview by Gail Stein, March 4, 1993, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 10, OL, 27-28.

change in work ethic that Local 13 longshorewoman Andrea Luse reported. As previously noted, she articulated a sense of loss towards the work ethic of traditional longshoring, explained that new workers "do the least amount you can possibly do to get by" and that "nobody takes any pride." Comparing this to her own generation's work ethic of hard work reflecting "who you are as a person," her account reinforces the notion of older longshore workers feeling increasingly alienated in the working culture of the containerized waterfront.[23]

Despite these concerns, the success of the M&M Agreement meant that, five years later the time had come to negotiate its renewal. Following heated discussions between the PMA and the union, both parties agreed upon another five year M&M agreement to run from 1966 to 1971 to be ratified by the union membership. Among the somewhat substantial changes to the M&M agreement in this iteration was the elimination of provisions present in the previous agreement to secure a wage guarantee for workers and to prevent layoffs due to automation. These were exchanged for a large 50 cent basic wage increase (which would be supplemented by additional 20 cent increases in 1969 and 1970), and numerous retirement, vesting, and vacation benefits. The PMA were willing to supplement the remaining funds in the M&M Fund established in the first agreement with a further $34 million.[24] These wage increases came at a notable cost, namely granting the PMA even more control over waterfront operations. ILWU officials agreed that it should be compulsory for the PMA to use machines on oversized loads to eliminate hard work, but they also conceded full control of manning to the employer, allowing them the flexibility to eliminate "unnecessary men" on the docks as they wished, a stipulation that the ILWU had hoped to counter, but to no avail.[25] Naturally, the rank and file were less enthusiastic about the new agreement. The final

[23] Andrea Luse, interview by Michael La Chance, June 9, 1996, WOWOH, Box 3, Folder 11, OL, 43.
[24] *The Dispatcher*, "Coast Referendum Begins for Five-Year Dock Pact," July 22, 1966, 1, 4.
[25] Ibid.

referendum vote on the proposal was 6,488 in favor to 3,985 against, with three of the four largest locals (Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle) voting against.[26] Although the wage increases were perhaps welcome among younger longshore workers, the redoubled opposition to the new agreement was a herald of things to come and the first signs of resistance to what the rank and file no doubt saw as control over their future in the automated waterfront slipping away.

Perhaps the most contentious element of the 1966 M&M was the controversial Section 9.43. This gave employers the right "to employ steady, skilled mechanical or powered equipment operators without limit as to numbers or length of time in steady employment." Now, not only could the PMA dispense with what it deemed to be "unnecessary men" on the docks, it could also place its own salaried employees on the docks, contravening the traditional and hard-fought principles of the hiring hall. ILWU Locals 10 and 13, based in San Francisco and Los Angeles respectively, were particularly resistant to these new "steady men."[27] Not only did this heighten tensions among the rank and file around potential obsolescence, it also heralded an uncomfortable change in traditional work patterns and waterfront community. If a longshoreman was to become a "9.43 man," his fraternal relationships with his colleagues would be permanently undermined, along with his dependence on the union in return for greater earnings under the PMA's auspices.[28] These men were hated precisely because their presence contended with the established way of life and traditional working patterns on the docks. Former Local 10 leader Herb Mills testified to longshore workers seeing Section 9.43 as a rationale for injustice. The PMA put forward a "carefully sown and cultivated myth" that elite "steady men" were required to operate new automated machinery. Actually, workers quickly realized that there was no correlation

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[26] Fairley, *Facing Mechanization*, 233-253.
[27] Ibid, 255-257.
[28] Bruce Wellman, *The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 131-32.

between the size of the massive container cranes (and the containers themselves) and the skill needed to operate them; if anything, it was the inverse. The fact that the 9.43 men were even seen as a "cancer" on the union for not becoming involved with union activities demonstrates that workers saw their encroachment onto the waterfront as an affront to the equality, justice, and fraternity that the hiring hall and gang system had embodied.[29]

Although containers were a relatively common sight on the West Coast waterfront in 1966, from 1968 the popularity of container shipping simply exploded. Despite this heralding tremendous growth in the West Coast shipping industry, it had more troubling repercussions on the longshore workforce. The rate of containerized shipping meant that the PMA often opted to stuff containers away from the docks using teamsters, warehousemen or non-union labor because it was cheaper and more flexible. This process occurred in container freight stations, where containers were loaded from rail or trucks and then delivered to yards for loading onto ships.[30] Many longshore workers and ILWU officials saw the use of these stations in this way as an underhanded method of diverting work away from the union. As Norman Leonard, a defense attorney and legal representative of the ILWU, noted, there was "a lot of pressure from the rank and file to do something about containers."[31]

Sidney Roger noted the concerns of longshore workers towards the PMA's attempt to bypass them in the shipping process. To them, the PMA "wanted to negate our history; the crucial union concept that the man next in line is the man who should have the job."[32] This comment directly references the traditional "low man out" system of longshoring, whereby members would equitably distribute jobs to those with the lowest workload first. By controlling who would work the containers, then, the PMA threatened the traditional

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[29] Herb Mills, "The San Francisco Waterfront: The Social Consequences of Industrial Modernization," in *Case Studies on the Labor Process*, ed. Andrew S. Zimbalist (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 149-155.
[30] Harry Bridges, "On The Beam," *The Dispatcher*, March 21, 1969, 2.
[31] Norman Leonard, *Life of a Leftist Labor Lawyer,* An Interview conducted by Estolv Ethan Ward in 1985, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 185.
[32] Roger, *A Liberal Journalist*, 899.

structures of camaraderie that had characterized life on the docks. The union's position, as Bridges delineated in his regular column in *The Dispatcher* was plain: ILWU members should load and unload containers on the dock. The notion of "the dock," Bridges argued, should include areas where containers are stored. As an "integral part of the ship," containers should be handled by longshoremen.[33] Resulting threats of strike action and refusal to work container ships in 1969 led to the approval of the Container Freight Station Supplement, which essentially gave the PMA six months to make necessary technical and mechanical adjustments to ensure that container work would be brought to the docks to allow it to potentially be worked by longshore workers.[34] Although seemingly resolved, the issue of the Container Freight Station Supplement was the straw that broke the camel's back for many longshore workers already disgruntled with the terms of the 1966 agreement. Although the supplement gave some control back to the union, the fact that it had to be negotiated in the first place signaled a dangerous trend towards a focus on productivity and efficiency on the part of the PMA over the livelihoods of longshore workers, an issue which the UAW had grappled with early in the post-war period.

By 1970, these issues – and a palpable undercurrent of rank-and-file concern at the loss of the traditional way of life on the docks – weighed heavily on the union's efforts to negotiate a new agreement with the PMA. As Bridges noted, "the rank and file expects many important changes […] a coastwide strike is a distinct possibility to secure such changes." Above all, he emphasized, the union had to "do all it can to insure that the brunt of [containerization] is not shouldered by our working ranks."[35] Throughout negotiations, the union put forward their contract demands. These included, most importantly, a guarantee of work opportunity from the PMA for registered members, that no registered workers be laid

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[33] Bridges, "On the Beam," March 21, 1969, 2.
[34] Leonard, *Life of a Leftist Labor Lawyer*, 187.
[35] *The Dispatcher*, "Coast Committee: Urges Early Dock Caucus," April 22, 1970, 1, 8.

off because of technological changes, a dollar per hour wage increase each year, and much improved welfare and vacation arrangements.[36] This guarantee of work for ILWU members would theoretically involve a continuation of the Container Freight Station Supplement entitling union members to load and unload containers. Ultimately, the two sides could not come to an agreement, and the ILWU initiated its first major strike in twenty-three years. Bridges saw the advent of industrial action as epoch-making and urged intellectuals, blue-collar, and white-collar workers to see “that their own wages, salaries, and way of life are inextricably interwoven with the actions of the labor movement.”[37] The fact that Bridges mentioned the workers’ way of life illustrates that their message of concern relating to its loss had been heard by leadership. The ILWU’s resistance to containerization, therefore, was not just an insular fight for the future of the union and its members, but a fight that would represent the resistance of U.S. society to the detrimental effects of automation. Bridges got his wish, as then UAW president Leonard Woodcock expressed his support for the longshore strike and the “fight to gain economic justice on the docks.”[38]

The PMA’s resistance to the union’s proposal incensed some of the more militant ILWU locals and galvanized their desire to protect the traditional way of life on the docks. In response to the potential for containerization disrupting the culture of the waterfront, the members of ILWU Locals 13 and 63, in Los Angeles and Long Beach, showed the importance of their camaraderie not in work, but in shutting down the ports. The Local 13 Publicity Committee noted that a combination of old and young workers on the picket lines – “the wisdom of the old plus the strength and tenacity of the young” – made “an unbeatable combination of men dedicated to preserving a way of life that is unique in the history of the working class.” With the Union Hall connected to the strikers via two-way radio, their sense

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[36] *The Dispatcher*, “Longshore Negotiations Begin, Demands Presented to PMA,” November 20, 1970, 1, 8.
[37] Harry Bridges, “On the Beam – Labor Unity Can Win,” *The Dispatcher*, August 27, 1971, 2.
[38] *The Dispatcher*, “UAW Supports Dock Strike,” August 27, 1971, 5; *The Dispatcher*, “UAW Hikes Support for ILWU Dockers,” September 24, 1971, 3.

of brotherhood was reinforced by the potential for instant communication in the event of emergency: "a tremendous feeling" in the face of potential alienation, as the Publicity Committee described it. The workers' "dignity" and way of life were at stake in this battle against the PMA, two aspects of longshore work that many had felt were in the process of slipping away.[39]

Organizing the strike effort was very much a bottom-up affair, with *The Dispatcher* frequently lauding the efforts of individual locals to lead their own picket lines and create their own publicity material. Most importantly, its reports on the early progress of the strike emphasized the Locals' focus on the issue of loss. By the fifth week of the strike, *The Dispatcher* continued to report containerization as "the main issue" underpinning the strike effort for workers.[40] The publicity committee of ILWU Local 10, based in Oakland, created leaflets to inform on the effects of containerization. These questioned what the public might do if "your jobs were being taken over by the 'progress' of new 'labor-saving' devices and modes of operations" and how the public might feel with no "paid sick leave" and facing "injury or death every working day." With this, the local hoped to raise awareness of the need to 'challenge the notion that the employer – in the name of 'progress' can simply go ahead and slash his workforce or close his factory…and to do this without any regard for the people and the community involved."[41] Local 10's publicity drive echoed the UAW's concerns about the prioritization of progress and productivity over worker welfare experienced in the early post-war period. Their mention of "community" being destroyed by progress is telling – not just the mental health of employees but the fate of the longshoremen's traditional way of life was on the line. These tensions between raising productivity with automation and supporting workers, with a worrying undercurrent of obsolescence reared their head once

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[39] *The Dispatcher*, "Morale Runs High as LA Dockers Shut Ports Tight," July 16, 1971, 8.
[40] *The Dispatcher*, "Strike Enters 5th Week, Container Work is Main Issue," July 30, 1971, 1, 8.
[41] *The Dispatcher*, "Local 10 Talks to the Public," July 30, 1971, 3.

again in the longshore industry as containerization became more widespread. Just as the UAW had to deal with these problems during automation's infancy within the auto industry, so too did longshore workers during containerization's infancy.

As the strike wore on, the morale of the workers remained high. John Gilmore from ILWU Clerks' Local 34 commented on the union spirit on display at the picket lines: "it's beautiful!" His comment was also aimed at the bevy of hot meals provided by Local 1100 to hungry picketers.[42] However, the Nixon administration was already beginning to intervene in the ILWU's efforts to secure a favorable deal with the PMA. Nixon had announced a ninety-day wage freeze and price controls on August 15, 1971 to stymie unemployment and inflation, followed by a need for all potential wage increases to be federally approved, a significant roadblock to the ILWU's efforts. He had previously threatened to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act should the strike prove too dangerous to the West Coast longshore industry. The International Longshore Association's announcement of a strike the following month over negotiating their own guaranteed income program to protect the East Coast workforce from containerization effectively forced Nixon's hand.[43] His invocation of Taft-Hartley was solely aimed at the ILWU, forcing the West Coast longshore workforce to reluctantly return to work for 80 days as part of a "cooling-off" period.[44] The union and the PMA had still not agreed upon a contract. Recapping the status of longshore negotiations, *The Dispatcher* still listed the issue of containers first in the long list of points of contention between the two parties. Although the two parties had agreed on an effective extension of the terms of the Container Freight Station Supplement, there were difficulties dealing with PMA companies who had arrangements with other unions (such as the Teamsters) involved in the loading and unloading of containers. The PMA also expected the union to accept the continued

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[42] *The Dispatcher*, "Local 1100 Brings Chow to Picket Line," September 24, 1971, 4.
[43] Richard Phalon, "I.L.A. Strike Tonight Is Likely; All U.S. Ports Would Be Closed," *New York Times*, September 30, 1971, 1.
[44] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam – Strategy Under T-H," *The Dispatcher*, October 8, 1971, 2.

employment of steady men alongside any proposals they had agreed.[45] The effect of containerization on job security was still at the forefront of the union's concerns, and without resolution of this key issue the two parties were at stalemate throughout the entirety of the cooling-off period.

There had always been a disparity in support for the strike between the ILWU leadership and the rank and file. After all, the ranks had mustered their efforts on the frontlines unabated without requiring support from the top brass. Once the cooling-off period ended, however, the gulf between them widened further. The PMA submitted a final offer for settlement on December 1, 1971, which was practically the same as the offer on the table two months prior. A landslide 93.1 percent of ILWU members voted to reject the offer. Despite this, Bridges was keen for negotiations rather than resorting to another strike, despite the desires of many rank and filers to treat the overwhelming "No" vote as a strike vote. "Will the vote soften up the employers enough to offer us a contract we can accept? Not in my opinion!" declared Bridges. Although he sought to reassure members that he would not "give up on containers and some other things for 15 cents [per hour wage increase]," he urged that "tough local talk" and the hope of "hot shots and so-called radicals" to "hang tough on our demands until the employers cave in" was naïve to "the cold, hard facts of life."[46] The previous contract arrangements prior to the strike continued post-cooling-off period while the two sides worked towards a settlement. Despite the concerns of the membership, ILWU leaders appeared less convinced that the loss of traditional longshore working culture could be averted with the importance of containerization.

However, the ILWU and PMA remained at loggerheads, which triggered a continuation of the longshore strike at the end of the contract extension period on January 17,

[45] *The Dispatcher*, "Status of Longshore Negotiations as of October 4," October 22, 1971, 3.
[46] Harry Bridges, "On the Beam – What's Next?," *The Dispatcher*, December 22, 1971, 2.

1972. A crucial difference between this and the previous round of strikes was that Bridges had met with Teamsters Union president Frank Fitzsimmons and agreed upon allowing the ILWU greater union jurisdiction over containers.[47] With the threat of Congressional arbitration of the strike looming, a settlement was reached by February 8, 1972, supported by 71 percent of ILWU members. The final terms of the contract importantly included a pay guarantee for registered members, extended medical benefits and pension provisions, and the ILWU being awarded a right to a fifty-mile zone within which they had authority over containers. It also attempted to resolve the issue of "steady men" by leaving it to locals to equalize their hours and methods of dispatch with other registered members.[48] The new contract also included several wage raises, amounting to a 10 percent increase.[49] Despite the union successfully negotiating a good level of jurisdiction over its members' job security and its handling of containerized freight, the strikers still had to face the fact that the traditional longshore culture was dying a slow death. Even though they had greater control over containerized freight, the rate and demands of containerized shipping left little room for the vibrant social scene that was a hallmark of traditional longshoring.

Although the ILWU's membership might have had reason to rejoice the end of the strike on paper, some voices from the ranks were more apathetic than hopeful for the future. Section 9.43 remained unchanged and while it was useful to have a continuation of the Container Freight Station Supplement included in the contract, this effectively retained the previous status quo. Forest Moore, a longshoreman from ILWU Local 13, argued that "my opinion is that…and I've talked to a lot of guys, my opinion was that they could have got…what they eventually settled for, they could have got before they went out on strike."

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[47] *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "Dock Strike Hits Seattle and Coast," January 18, 1972, A5 sec.
[48] *The Dispatcher*, "Summary of Longshore Pact," February 24, 1972, 3; *The Dispatcher*, "Strike is Over – Ranks OK Contract by 71%," February 24, 1972, 1,8; *The Dispatcher*, "Summary of Dock Contract," February 11, 1972, 4.
[49] Pacific Maritime Association, "Strike of 1971," https://apps.pmanet.org/?cmd=main.content&id_content=2142586624.

"Guys were out a long time and didn't gain…get that much benefit out of it, you know," added Moore.[50] Herb Mills was similarly critical of the 1971 strike result. He called it a "lousy quid pro quo, not just on 9.43 but on the whole M&M!" Emphasizing how little the union gained on top of their old contract terms, he noted that "we went into that strike, we didn't have no paid holidays…In fact, not only did we go into the strike with no paid holidays we come out of the strike with no paid holidays!" He argued that Bridges was "so embarrassed about what little we did have, that he always had to think up a damn good reason why it was that way."[51]

For Mills though, the strike was mainly ineffective because it failed to save the culture of the waterfront from the container revolution. "You pull into the stringer on the waterfront [in the 1950s]…a lively scene! Vibrant socials […] there was a café at the end of every damn pier there was. […] Well, there ain't none of that around there, not only for the longshoremen! It's like *Gone with the Wind*…"[52] The social life of the longshoremen on the West Coast, then, was not only instrumental to each others' mental health but also to the continued existence of hospitality businesses on the docks. As Mills explained in his comparative study of traditional and containerized longshoring, modern facilities on the docks required up to ten times more acreage than the traditional facilities. As a result, these larger and more widely dispersed hubs of activity were not "surrounded by the kind of neighborhood which distinguished the Embarcadero," the previously lively and bustling eastern waterfront of San Francisco.[53] Containerization regimented and transformed longshoring into more solitary work, at detriment to the workers' mental health and signaling the loss of social life on the waterfront that was previously a hallmark of the job.

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[50] Forest "Pete" Moore, interview by Tony Salcido, March 10 1994, ILWU13OH, Box 2, Folder 4, OL, 57-58.
[51] Herb Mills, interview by Chris Carlsson and Steve Stallone, 1996, http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Oral_History:_Herb_Mills.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Herb Mills, "The San Francisco Waterfront: The Social Consequences of Industrial Modernization" in Andrew S. Zimbalist, *Case Studies on the Labor Process* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 127-155.

While the final agreement may have been only a small step forward rather than the giant leap that Mills and Moore hoped for, this is due to the difficulties of top-level union negotiation with the PMA and a desire to remain relatively conservative despite the efforts of the rank and file. It must be emphasized that the 1971 strike was very much driven by the ranks, with the International mostly watching over and being present at the bargaining table. The main issues flagged up by the locals on the picket lines stemmed from the changes that automation wrought upon the waterfront. Rank and file efforts to maintain a jurisdiction over container shipping were a last ditch attempt to retain their traditional autonomy on the docks in the face of what appeared to be a bleak containerized future. Ultimately, it was the ILWU and PMA leadership who were unwilling to budge on the unpopular Section 9.43. The approach of the leadership, however, had always been a defensive one of guarantees rather than advancements. Bridges had always stressed the need for guarantees of job security – and eventually guarantees of wage rates when he realized its importance following the first M&M – and therefore the acquisition of more guarantees in the 1972 agreement is unsurprising. Indeed, while Kim Moody is right to some degree that the result of the 1971 strike was merely Bridges "nurturing the goose that laid the golden eggs," in other words containerization, by negotiating in this way with the PMA, it is clear that Bridges had some foresight since the early days of containerization.[54] Aware that automation was proving too productive and too profitable for employers, by 1971 he believed that no matter how much furor the ranks whipped up they would be unable to change the minds of the PMA. As containerization continued to advance and the waterfront workforce shrank further, he was regrettably proven right. Despite this, though, it is important to remember that the strike itself was significant among the labor movement – and garnered support from unions such as the

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[54] Kim Moody, "Understanding the Rank-and-File Rebellion in the 1970s," in *Rebel Rank and File: Militant Revolt from Below during the Long 1970s*, ed. Aaron Brenner, Robert Brenner and Cal Winslow (London: Verso, 2010), 105-148.

UAW – because the longshore workers were fighting for their place and autonomy in a precarious automated future, a struggle that all U.S. industries were facing or soon would face.

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By early 1972, tensions at the Lordstown General Motors plant had reached breaking point. Stressed and exhausted with the pace of the line, workers had begun to turn to more creative methods of resistance. "You can't keep up with the car so you scratch it on the way past," one worker commented, "I once saw a hillbilly drop an ignition key down the gas tank. Last week I watched a guy light a glove and lock it in the trunk." Accused of "sabotage" by managers concerned with the substandard autos being turned out by the Lordstown workforce, the same worker quipped "Sabotage? Just a way of letting off steam."[55] The indication of the need to relieve the mental strain of assembly line work is telling. While the longshore workforce rebelled against the early signs of automation maturing in their industry, UAW members had already experienced their teething problems with advanced automation earlier in the post-war period. Therefore, while concerns surrounding loss were more subtly interwoven into accounts of the '71 longshore strikers, among the auto workforce mental health concerns had developed into a full-fledged grievance over stress that warranted attention by the International. The 1972 Lordstown strike, while also one that exemplified anxieties around job security, the pressures of productivity, and the balance between work and leisure time, saw the mental strain of automation rise to the surface. Lordstown's workers were mentally drained from the relentless pace and crushing repetition of automated work and they rightly suspected that they were not the only ones who were sacrificing their mental health in the name of meeting productivity targets.

[55] Barbara Garson, "Luddites in Lordstown," *Harper's Magazine* 244 (June 1972), 68-73.

By the 1970s, the U.S. auto industry was in decline. Rising oil prices, labor resistance to management's attempts to push the assembly line system to its limits and excessive government regulation were central factors in Japanese auto manufacture threatening U.S. ascendancy. The Big Three auto makers were slow to adapt to Japanese work systems and strategies, marked by early "just-in-time" production, a focus on quality of autos produced as opposed to quantity, and streamlined manufacturing of lighter, fuel-efficient cars, demand for which had grown substantially.[56] To secure the prosperity of the auto industry, the Big Three automakers continued to build auto plants, with each new industrial complex aiming to have faster, more efficient production than the one that came before. Lightning-fast efficiency was the watchword for the architects of the General Motors Lordstown plant in Ohio. Built in 1966, the Lordstown plant was originally designed with the intent of using advanced automation to produce 60 cars per hour. By June 1970 the plant had been retooled to produce the Chevrolet Vega, a subcompact design intended to rival the growing ascendancy of lighter weight Japanese-built automobiles. To speed up production, the Lordstown plant was outfitted with twenty-six programmable Unimate robots which handled roughly 95 percent of auto body welding. These robots were computer controlled, but unskilled workers were still required to feed robots materials and perform simple and repetitive tasks on the line. This arrangement meant that the Lordstown plant had a projected production rate of over 100 cars per hour. The massively increased production rate led to a concomitant reduction of time that workers had to do their jobs on the line, reduced from an average of 60 seconds to just 36 seconds.[57] Lordstown epitomized the mentality of pursuing greater productivity that had become dominant in the post-war auto industry. Not only that, the use of programmable

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[56] David Nye, *America's Assembly Line* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), chapter 8.
[57] Quentin J. Skrabec, *Fall of an American Rome: De-Industrialization of the American Dream* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2013), especially chapter 5; James J. Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 244.

robots made a future in which workers would be rid of their physical burdens in the workplace seem closer than ever before.

Despite this, what actually transpired was that an average workday of a Lordstown line worker was stressful, unrelenting, and oftentimes physically and mentally demanding. This was compounded further by the involvement of the General Motors Assembly Division (GMAD) from October 1971. GMAD enforced a regime of tight discipline to force greater productivity from the Lordstown line. They quickly set to work consolidating divisions within the plant, keeping workers under close (and sometimes degrading) supervision. GMAD fired those deemed unnecessary to production or accused of sabotage for missing details due to struggling to keep up with the breakneck pace of the line. Within four months of them taking over, GMAD had fired between five and eight hundred workers of the 8000-strong Lordstown workforce.[58] The tight time control imposed by GMAD took its toll on Lordstown's workers and bred rebellion. Local 1112's young president Gary Bryner spoke on behalf of the members of Lordstown's UAW Local 1112 when he bemoaned GMAD for using "stopwatches." "They say, 'It takes so many seconds or hundreds of seconds to walk from here to there […] We know the gun turns so fast, the screw's so long, the hole's so deep.' Our argument has always been: That's mechanical, that's not human." Workers, Bryner emphasized, "we perspire, we sweat, we have hangovers, we have upset stomachs, we have feelings and emotions, and we're not about to be placed in a category of a machine." He added, "If the guys didn't stand up and fight, they'd become robots too. They're interested in being able to smoke a cigarette, bullshit a little bit with the guy next to 'em, open a book, look at something, just daydream if nothing else. You can't do that if you become a machine."[59] Bryner's testimony of GMAD ignoring the feelings and emotions of workers is

[58] Garson, *All the Livelong Day*, 92-93.
[59] Terkel, *Working,* 175-176.

telling, as is the workers' desire for more opportunities to break up the monotony of work with leisure activities, of how much Lordstown's work pace affected workers' mental health.

Bryner's comments on the mental strain of automated work was supported by Lordstown's young workforce. Italian-born assembly line worker Tony D'Errico complained that he "felt like he was losing [his] mind" due to "the repetition. It's kind of hard to do your job and nothing else." An early Lordstown hire complained that, although a group of 150 workers were hired on the same morning that he was hired, only fifty remained by lunchtime "because it was a job that was more stressful than most jobs in the area." Not only was the job stressful, workers were turning to unhealthy coping methods to deal with the mental strain. Lordstown worker Bonnie Rich expressed her belief that monotony had driven many workers to drink and drugs: "The drug and alcohol problem out there," she noted, "I would attribute it to all the repetition of the job and the monotony of the job and trying to cope with that kind of work."[60] Bryner himself weighed in on the type of work undertaken. "I don't give a shit what anybody says," he complained, "it was boring, monotonous work […] A guy could be there eight hours and there was some other body doing the same job over and over, all day long, all week long, all year long. Years." "Jesus Christ!" he added, "Can you imagine squeezing the trigger of a gun while its spotted so many times? […] It's got to drive a guy nuts."[61]

News of resistance to automated work among the Lordstown auto workers would not have surprised the UAW leadership. Not only did the late 1960s see the rumblings of resistance to automation, it also saw an outright explosion of fury from black nationalist activists within the plants, especially in Detroit. Although the UAW leadership had lent their support to the Civil Rights Movement by endorsing the 1963 March on Washington, its

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[60] Stephen Meyer, "The Degradation of Work Revisited: Workers and Technology in the American Auto Industry, 1900-2000," Automobile in American Life and Society Project, http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Labor/L_Overview/L_Overview8.htm.
[61] Terkel, *Working,* 172-173.

attitude to racism within the workplace was lacking. The growth in African-American workers within Detroit's auto plants brought with it dissident groups who sought to resist racial injustices on the shopfloor, which they saw as a result of the lack of African-Americans in key positions of power. This shopfloor Black Power ideology had its roots within a vocal minority of Chrysler's young black workers. These early black nationalist activists were succeeded by the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement in 1968, formed to fight for the equitable treatment of black workers. This group, and other Revolutionary Union Movement groups that spun off from the Dodge cadre, led an overtly revolutionary stance against the UAW leadership on the belief that they perpetuated shopfloor racism. These groups became isolated due to their hostility to the support of white workers, leading to management and union efforts to stifle them by firing more vocal members.[62] On the contrary, the Lordstown workforce was majority white and hence the nature of their growing resistance did not utilize the same Black Power protest tactics and language. The fact that they couched their complaints at automation in familiar and ultimately non-racial terms meant that their growing protest was a lesser concern of the UAW leadership, who were more focused on stifling black nationalist activism believed detrimental, allowing it to escalate into a full-blown strike.[63]

Not only was the UAW leadership more open to Lordstown's activism, it had acknowledged awareness of mental health issues among auto workers in the late 1960s. A draft of a report from the UAW leadership for the government's National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress included a lengthy section titled "mental health". The section included citation of Kornhauser's research to emphasize that "the nature

[62] Heather Ann Thompson, "Auto Workers, Dissent, and the UAW: Detroit and Lordstown," in *Autowork,* ed. Robert Asher and Ronald Edsforth (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), 181-208; John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers during the Reuther Years, 1935-1970* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004), especially chapter 12; Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); David M. Lewis-Colman, *Race Against Liberalism: Black Workers and the UAW in Detroit* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), especially chapter 6.
[63] Thompson, "Auto workers, Dissent."

of work is just as important a cause of mental illness as are the personal and social characteristics of the individual." It continued on that the cause of "mental distress" among industrial workers was "the lack of meaning and accomplishment inherent in the tasks" of work, suggesting that automation should be used to replace menial work "with jobs with more tasks and increased meaning and responsibility." However, the report acknowledged that automation actually transformed workers "into a creature of the machine," with the demands of automated work creating "nervous tensions exceeding anything ordinarily experienced during eight hours of pure physical effort." Describing automation as a "generator of anxiety," the report stressed a need to take "positive steps" to combat "mental illness" caused by "the nature of work."[64] The fact that the union leadership acknowledged the mental pressures of automation and even cited notable theorists on the issue shows remarkable awareness and foresight to tackle these issues. However, the report drew a blank on exactly how the mental strain of automated work might be offset considering how entrenched the doctrine of maximum efficiency was in the Big Three's auto plants. Calling for further research on the impact of automation on mental health was all well and good, but it did little to help those workers already struggling with the new drudgery of modern assembly line work.

The continued mental pressures and stifling atmosphere of automated work, exacerbated by the enforcement style of GMAD, meant that by December 1971 Lordstown's workforce had reached their limit. Their central dispute with GMAD was the notion that management had eliminated jobs and "distributed extra work to the remaining men to the extent that they can't keep up with the assembly lines in the Lordstown plant." News outlets

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[64] Draft of Position Paper for Automation Commission Report, June 7, 1965, UAW Research Department Collection Part 1, Box 42, WPR. The report published by the National Commission the following year focused almost entirely on economic factors with little to no mention of health concerns surrounding automation. See National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress, *Technology and the American Economy Volume 1* (Washington D.C., February 1966).

also reported that Lordstown's workers were dissatisfied with the "constant repetitive unskilled nature of the work" they were expected to perform by GMAD.[65] James Bartek, a Lordstown worker writing in to Ohio newspaper *The Vindicator*, stated that those who had not been to the plant could not "begin to know how monotonous the work is, and conditions being as they are, it's almost unbearable."[66] This dissatisfaction manifested itself in the form of sabotage on the shopfloor. GM management insinuated that any issues with Vegas as they passed down the line were the result of sabotage, whereas Lordstown workers maintained that the often shoddy work and unfinished builds were more often the result of being pushed to the breaking point by the pace of the line. Although these workers would likely have testified this way to avoid the ire of GMAD, it was clear that some of their resistance was deliberate sabotage. In some instances workers simply refused to work, or maliciously damaged the Vegas as they passed down the line by breaking windshields or wing mirrors, slashing or defacing upholstery and breaking off ignition keys, for instance.[67] Rather than be cowed by the draconian management line, the resistance of these young workers continued even as their jobs became scarce.

By January 1972, a strike vote was looming at Local 1112. News outlets reporting on the growing preparations to strike quickly realized that the notion of industrial action was not simply based on a standard wage scruple with management. "Money is not the issue," explained a *Time* magazine editorial covering the Lordstown dispute, "the workers earn about $4.50 an hour, plus $2.50 in fringes." "What the union wants," it continued, "is a redefinition of the work rules that will result in some rehiring and elimination of extra chores […] G.M. added some of these chores partly in the hope of alleviating the mind numbing boredom of endlessly doing just one task."[68] "Extra chores" was putting it lightly; workers might not have

[65] "'World's Fastest Assembly Line' becoming one of slowest," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 24, 1972.
[66] James Bartek, "GM Worker Calls Job Monotonous," *The Vindicator,* June 2, 1972.
[67] Agis Salpukas, "Young Workers Disrupt Key GM plant," *New York Times*, January 23, 1972, 1.
[68] "Sabotage at Lordstown?," *Time Magazine*, February 7, 1972.

been performing the same task repetitively but GMAD had compartmentalized work so that they had to perform multiple tasks repetitively instead. Ultimately, this led to the same kind of mental drudgery but with tighter time pressures. Local 1112 received several letters of support from other UAW locals (and also other industries such as the local Youngstown Steel Workers branch) as the battle between the local and its employers intensified. UAW Local 719 in Illinois stated that its members "fully support the decision of your members to work at their old paces to protest the work changes, and the layoff of 700 workers." "We know that the fight at Lordstown is our fight," their letter concluded.[69] Clearly, other UAW locals recognized that the struggle at Lordstown was representative of the wider issues auto workers faced in the automated workplace and seemed a herald of things to come.

Bolstered by the solidarity for their cause among their UAW compatriots, the Lordstown Local 1112 voted to strike on March 3, 1972. *Business Week* reported on the first day of the strike, notably referring to "worker grievances in automated plants" as symptomatic of a growing "Lordstown syndrome of hard and more monotonous work," referring to this as a "major issue in future labor-management relations." "The production disputes and management charges of worker sabotage at Lordstown," the article stated, "though considered a somewhat local problem, underscore the increasingly serious problem of worker discontent on automated assembly lines everywhere."[70] The connotation of a "syndrome" spreading among workers exposed to repetitive automated work shows an awareness by the news media that the physical and mental symptoms experienced by workers was caused by automation. Like the locals and unions supportive of the strike, *Business Week*'s report captured the concerns of many workers that the conditions auto workers had to

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[69] Letter from Local 719 members to Gary Bryner, February 13, 1972, UAW Local 1112 Records, Box 8, Folder 1, WPR. The same box includes other letters from UAW locals expressing solidarity, such as Locals 75, 122, and 425, among others.
[70] "The spreading Lordstown syndrome," *Business Week*, March 4, 1972.

endure at Lordstown were just the beginning of a shift towards inhumane working conditions in other industries.

Having experienced the concerns of the membership and the conditions on the ground, Gary Bryner summarized his understanding of the central idea underpinning the strike effort in one Marxist paraphrased quote: "The workingman has but one thing to sell, his labor. Once he loses control of that, he loses everything." He continued to state that "I think a lot of these kids [in the Lordstown workforce] understand this. There's some manliness in being able to stand up to the giant."[71] Bryner clearly saw the strike for what it was, one that centrally concerned control over labor and the rights of workers in the automated workplace. His mention of manliness here gestures to the idea that the Lordstown strike among its male workforce was seen as an opportunity to reclaim traditional ideas of masculinity and masculine control over work in the face of the emasculating nature of the assembly line.

The central issue of job cuts arising from the increased efficiency of the Vega assembly line was reported as being quickly resolved by management and union representatives. Mental health issues and quality of life concerns experienced by workers were interpreted as secondary issues, with the gesture that union leaders "hoped to discuss" the repetitive and unskilled nature of Lordstown jobs in the future. Even the driving snow on the picket lines did not serve to dampen the spirits of workers for whom these "secondary" complaints were far from secondary in their minds. William O'Connel, a worker picketing at the front gate of the plant, commented that it would take a "long time to heal the bitterness." "Before this we had respect for each other […] I used to go out with foremen for a drink. Now I won't do it any more," he added.[72] Workers like test driver William Washington stood firm in their desire to keep their seniority rights. He had prepared for the strike, stating "you

[71] Terkel, *Working,* 176.
[72] Agis Salpukas, "Talks Show Gain in G.M. Ohio Strike: Most Disputes on Job Cuts are Reported Settled," *New York Times*, March 6, 1972, 65.

could see this coming six months ago, so I put a little [money] away." Even as negotiations progressed successfully over the following weeks, George Morris Jr., vice president of GM, commented that the "local union is more concerned with exerting its muscle than continuing for a responsible settlement." [73]

By the end of the month, both sides reached a settlement, ending the strike on March 25. Although the settlement was regarded by the *New York Times* as one in which the union won "major concessions from GM," it speculated that "it was uncertain whether the labor strife at the plant had ended." Indeed, Local 1112 had successfully managed to restore 240 of the jobs eliminated by GMAD, effectively returning the plant to its pre-GMAD numbers. Gary Bryner lauded the result and the issues faced at Lordstown for bringing the young workforce together into a unit "strongly committed to the U.A.W." "They built more unionism than we ever could," he commented, praising the Local's solidarity. [74] The notion of continued labor strife came from the fact that, while the local had successfully worked to reverse some of the worst excesses of GMAD's activity, it had not addressed the working conditions that had led to the strike in the first place. For instance, the issue of the breakneck pace of the line was far from solved. "We're still making 101 cars an hour," Gary Bryner explained, "but now we have the people back GMAD laid off." "They tried to create a speed-up by using less people," he spoke triumphantly, "We stopped 'em."[75] Bryner might have felt proud of what the local had achieved, but the struggle against automation's effect on workers was far from over.

Despite the brevity of the strike, the rapidity of negotiating a settlement and the lack of progress made on actively tackling the mental strain of assembly line work and the pace of

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[73] Agis Salpukas, "G.M.'s Vega Plant Closed by Strike: Talks to Resume Tomorrow on New Pact in Ohio," *New York Times*, March 7, 1972, 42.
[74] Jerry M. Flint, "U.A.W. and G.M. Agree on Ending Vega Plant Strike," *New York Times*, March 25, 1972, 63; Agis Salpukas, "G.M. Plant in Ohio is Producing Again," *New York Times*, March 28, 1972, 33.
[75] Terkel, *Working*, 177.

the line itself, the Lordstown strikers' efforts were not in vain. Most importantly, the publicity surrounding the strike opened the eyes of many reading national newspapers to the grueling working conditions within the plant, seemingly unbecoming and unexpected of a modern automated plant. Discussions of the Lordstown syndrome or "blue-collar blues" continued long after strikers had packed up their pickets. Wilson Hirschfeld, a journalist writing for Cleveland newspaper *The Plain Dealer*, questioned whether plants like Lordstown could survive in the future based on the strength of worker resistance. "Has labor in the auto industry so priced itself out of reach that management cannot come up with a plant other than one which indeed may dehumanize its workers beyond a limit they can abide, physically or mentally?" he questioned.[76] Most importantly here the workers had effectively communicated their central concern of the mental stress of automated work to the wider public, more so than the ILWU, who focused their efforts on raising awareness of obsolescence. Like the 1971 longshore strike, the strike effort was carried by Local 1112 rather than being shepherded from the International's leadership, and likewise Bryner was also satisfied, as was Bridges, with an assurance of job security and protection from the egregious layoffs that GMAD had made.

This local-centric drive reinforces A.C. Jones's argument regarding UAW strike action and militancy from the late 1960s. Jones emphasizes the role of locals in pushing for industrial action and their potential effectiveness in effecting change during this period coming up against the insurmountable power of the International. Despite concerns about working conditions, Local 1112 were unable to push the strike effort and negotiations beyond the limits of where the International was prepared to go, leaving the crucial issue of mental strain and repetitive work unsolved.[77] Despite the Lordstown strike exemplifying the

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[76] Wilson Hirschfeld, "The Lordstown Issue: Survival," *The Plain Dealer*, April 17, 1972.
[77] A.C. Jones, "Rank and File Opposition in the UAW in the Long 1970s," in *Rebel Rank and File: Labor Militancy and Revolt from Below during the Long 1970s*, ed. Aaron Brenner, Robert Brenner and Cal Winslow (London: Verso, 2010), 288-289.

fragmented and wildcat nature of the UAW membership's strike efforts from the late 1960s, its significance in publicizing the issue of worker mental health in the face of automated work cannot be understated, despite its lesser success in effecting substantive change for Lordstown's workers.

The success of the Lordstown strikers in raising awareness of the mental strain of automated work is touched upon by the current literature on the strike, although this is not explicitly discussed as an issue of mental health. Stanley Aronowitz's important study of Lordstown flags up that the issues driving the strike were a desire for autonomy on the job and a need for "more than mindless labor" for its young workforce.[78] Similarly, Barbara Garson's seminal book on the meaning of work pays close attention to the Lordstown strike for the pivotal turning point it rightly was in publicizing the need for meaningfulness and a humanization of work conditions in industry.[79] Although these works importantly indicate the need for the workforce to enrich themselves mentally and improve their enjoyment of their jobs, they do not address the burgeoning language around mental health and stress that these workers used in articulating their demands. This chapter expands on these studies by illustrating the prevalence of this language and its reception by those reporting on the strike effort.

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Elliot L. Richardson, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1972 was all too aware that no other government report was "more doughty, controversial, and yet responsible" than the report of his special task force on the quality and meaning of automated work and its physical and mental effects on workers. Inspired by the news media coverage of the "quality of working life," primarily the product of media attention on Lordstown, the task

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[78] Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), especially chapter 1.
[79] Garson, *All the Livelong Day*, 92-93.

force researched blue-collar work life and how it might be improved. The report flagged up the twin factors of loss and stress clearer than ever. Not only did it find that, among the 1553 workers sampled, interesting work was ranked as the issue of highest importance, a 1970-71 survey of male blue collar workers found that “less than one-half claimed they were satisfied with their jobs most of the time.” These men felt emasculated by their work, as interviews with blue-collar workers conducted for the report revealed “an almost overwhelming sense of inferiority” and a lack of masculine pride and social status attributed to automated work compared to their jobs prior to automation. The reason for this, the report identified, stemmed from the automation revolution. It seemed the complaints of longshore and auto workers, among others, at the new drudgery of automated work had finally caught the ears of government. As the report stated, “What does it gain the employer to have a ‘perfectly efficient’ assembly-line if his workers are out on strike because of the oppressive and dehumanized experience of working on the ‘perfect’ line? […] The current concept of industrial efficiency conveniently but mistakenly ignores the social half of the equation.”[80]

Of particular interest to workers negotiating early definitions and understandings of mental health and wellbeing would have been the extent to which the report showed awareness of mental health issues. It noted that “boring, dehumanized, and authoritarian work” had caused workers to either “protest or give in, at some cost to their psychological well-being.” Those who gave in were prone to becoming “schizoid depressed characters who escape into general alienation, drugs, and fantasies,” a lifestyle that was all too common among the workforce at Lordstown in particular. The report did not resign itself to merely chronicling these developments. It accepted that there was an opportunity for change before more workers in newly automating industries succumbed to the same fate. Extolling the

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[80] U.S. United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Special Task Force on Work in America, *Work in America – Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, December 1972), 4-5, 28-30, 33, 45-46.

"therapeutic value of meaningful work" for improving mental health, it encouraged policymakers to redesign jobs, increase worker mobility and create new jobs to counter obsolescence and automated drudgery. It also encouraged union leaderships to become more involved with the concerns of their memberships around automation, exemplified by the fact that the 1971 longshore strike and the 1972 Lordstown strike were spearheaded by locals, not the Internationals.[81] Whether or not this would lead to substantive change, the longshore and auto strikers could feel a sense of success that not only had their efforts bore fruit but that their communication of their central complaints with automation – and particularly concerns about mental health – had been understood.

This chapter complicates and expands the current historiography on mental health and mental illness in the U.S. Histories of mental health among the American populace have tended to focus on the origins and development of specific mental health techniques (such as psychotherapy), policy creation, and the establishment of institutions, in particular the transition away from conflating mental health with 'madness' and mental illness.[82] Framing the Lordstown and ILWU strikes as worker interventions into the ongoing discussions surrounding mental health in the early post-war period, they provide a countervailing narrative on mental health to the one developed by the Congressionally endorsed Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health established in 1955 and the discussions and federal decisions surrounding the Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963.[83] This should encourage historians to investigate further grassroots discussions on mental health as a precursor to changing attitudes on mental health beyond the realm of policy development.

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[81] Ibid, 79-87, 166.

[82] Perhaps the most notable historian of mental health in the U.S. is Gerald Grob. See Gerald N. Grob, *Mental Illness and American Society, 1875-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) and Gerald N. Grob, *From Asylum to Community: Mental Health Policy in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). Also see Peter Conrad and Joseph W. Schneider, *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness* (Temple University Press, Philadelphia: 1992).

[83] Gerald N. Grob, "Mental Health Policy in the Liberal State: The Example of the United States," *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 31, no. 2 (2008): 89-100.

The mental health of workers in this period, and especially that of workers in industries undergoing automation, merits further consideration in the scholarship. Taking UAW members' more overt dialogues regarding mental health as an example, perhaps historians could turn their attention to other critical production industries in the U.S. in which automation was in its advanced stages, such as the steel industry. However, this is not to downplay the more subtle nods towards mental strain of automated work in non-production industries, as ILWU members' experiences explored in this chapter demonstrates. Comparing the experiences of UAW and ILWU members, resistance on the grounds of physical changes to the job and working conditions in the early phases of automation transitions into an awareness of automation's mental drudgery in the later phases of its implementation and development. Therefore, although historians might do well to search for more obvious examples from "late-phase" automation industries similar to autos, a trajectory towards a developing awareness of and language around mental health might be detectable in those industries in their initial stages of automation like the longshore industry.

As the 1970s wore on, those auto and longshore workers making their first unsteady strides into the arena of mental health in their battle with automation were beginning to tire. They came out of their respective strike efforts happy with the gains they had made. Furthermore, the public and press response to their strikes showed that their message was being understood. Despite this, there was an uncomfortable realization that the International and management were unwilling to turn their backs on automation. Just as they had begun to adapt to the physical demands of automation, so too would they be forced to mentally adapt to it. Although the issue of mental health was an important last bastion for these workers to fight for, as containerization developed and the use of computers became more widespread, it was not a line that was convincing enough to effect substantive change. Faced with overseas competition, "more" seemed to be the buzzword on the lips of industry moguls. In hindsight,

it was not "more" of anything that propped up the success of the U.S.'s competitors – mainly a difference in strategy – lending credence to the calls of alienated workers that "less" automation might really have meant "more" for their industry.

Conclusion

By 1977, life on the rivet line of an U.S. auto plant was about as grueling an affair as it had been thirty years prior. "Did those fuckers [in management] really believe that squeezin' rivets was 'fun'? If so, why weren't they all down here having the time of their lives?" lamented Ben Hamper in his published memoir of his assembly line work. Despite the best efforts of workers and union leaders, automation had brought more, not less, drudgery to the automobile assembly line. Productivity had come at a tangible human cost. Hamper saw his colleagues lose their enthusiasm about the money they could make on the job due to their "major difficulty coping with the drudgery of factory labor." The strain of the factory took its toll on his colleagues' mental health and consequently their home lives. "It was as if the shop had hollowed them out and replaced their intestines with circuit breakers," Hamper commented. These workers were not men who were proud of their jobs, but rather "numbed-out cyborgs willing to swap cerebellum loaf for patio furniture."[1]

For these workers, and surely many others in auto and longshore at this point, the solution to the drudgery of their jobs and the impact on their mental health was not to mount a resistance against automation or their working conditions, but to simply try and improve their own personal circumstances. This resignation to the immutability of their job conditions and the immovability of management on the issue of automation was a long time coming, but certainly had not been the stance of auto and longshore workers throughout the entirety of the post-war period. The initial hope for automation in the wake of World War II was largely positive, if tinged with skepticism. Auto workers who were more familiar with automation

[1] Ben Hamper, *Rivethead: Tales from the Assembly Line* (New York: Warner Books, 1991), 9, 13, 40, 160-161.

and mechanization hoped that their union could utilize its connections with government to develop a plan that would allow them to share in the benefits of increased productivity. Longshore workers similarly looked to their union leaders in the hopes that they could devise a strategy that would alleviate what appeared to be automation's worst shortcomings, mainly the potential for unemployment and obsolescence. These hopes of a highly productive future in which workers could be relieved of the most physically arduous elements of their jobs were quickly dashed upon realization that advances in automation continued to mean monotonous working for those on the auto assembly lines. While longshore workers looked on at these developments with hope that their industry would not face the same fate, auto workers began to experience a loss of pride and autonomy that was devastating their morale. Already the stage had been set for discussions of mental health that would emerge two decades later.

Unable to find enjoyment or feel a sense of reward from their work, auto workers began to turn towards consumerism to reassess the value of their labor in their own minds. If they could not find pride and fulfilment in their jobs, they would instead find it in what they could purchase with their wages. As the extent of automation in store for the longshore industry quickly became apparent, longshore workers turned their attention towards fighting for a shorter workweek and greater job security. They hoped that these actions would prevent them from facing the same situation as those in the auto industry. Soon enough, despite the best efforts of their union leadership, longshore workers began to experience the same loss of pride and autonomy as auto workers. As containerization accelerated the dynamics of the waterfront changed irreparably, shattering the social status quo of the docks and challenging the masculinity of longshore workers who had built their identities around their work. While longshore workers fought tooth and nail to defend the traditional rough masculine culture of the docks, auto workers sought to inject more of this rough masculinity back into the more

socially respectable and tightly managed structure of the 1960s auto plant. With their identities, masculinity, and pride on the brink of collapse, auto and longshore workers struck up a valiant resistance around the central concept that unified all their discontents: mental health. Their grassroots efforts, while ultimately unsuccessful in turning back the clock on automation, served as important, if less well acknowledged, forays into a burgeoning discourse of mental health that had begun to take shape in the 1970s United States.

This is not to say that the union leaders and higher-ranking members themselves did not try to alleviate the deleterious effects of automation on their memberships. However, both UAW and ILWU leaders found themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place. Although indeed their workers were complaining about the impact of automation on their physical and mental health, pressure from employers and government to encourage greater economic growth and the expansion and success of their respective industries left them with no choice but to support automation. After all, if their industries were left without new technologies they would quickly become eclipsed in a world of increasingly globalized production, and it could spell the end of their industries as a whole, a far more concerning fate. The social democratic ethos that both unions drew upon in formulating their strategies towards automation led to notable successes in the post-war period. The UAW successfully negotiated unemployment benefits and become involved in legislation that would help to alleviate potential obsolescence caused by automation. Equally, the ILWU negotiated wage and employment guarantees that aimed to dissuade their employers from automating without forethought. With these, among other small victories, in mind, workers could not say that their unions did not push back as hard as they could against automation, even if it might not have felt that way to them at the time.

The experiences of these workers negotiating automation in their workplaces bridge the gap between the well-developed literature on early twentieth century labor history and

that of the militant 1970s. Scholars of the former period observe the growing resentment among workers forced to deal with processes of rationalization and homogenization that were essential to creating efficiency. They note that rank and file concerns were dampened by structures of compliance created by business and management to which unions acceded.[2] Similarly, histories of 1970s labor activism tends to interpret the preceding decades as one of mostly union conservatism and quiescence with government and management which exploded into resistance among the rank and file when the prime opportunity arose.[3] Instead, auto and longshore workers' struggles with reframing their identities and understanding automation's effects on their wellbeing help to draw a clear progression between early quashed resistance to automation and the industrial action of the 1970s. Historians might look to this thesis's more complex picture of post-war workers negotiating the presence of automation in their lives as inspiration for the potential existence of less overt forms of resistance towards the post-war status quo in other industrial contexts.

Examining the struggles of union and worker alike to mitigate the effects of automation adds further texture to a crucial chapter in the social history of twentieth-century technological development. Carroll Pursell's social histories of technology in America mention attitudes towards automation as a "hysteria" perpetrated by the popular press, but with little dissection of how this affected the rank and file.[4] Similarly David Edgerton's

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[2] David M. Gordon, Richard C. Edwards and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers: The Historical Transformation of Labor in the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), especially Chapter 5; Daniel Nelson, *Managers and Workers: Origins of the Twentieth-Century Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996); Nelson Lichtenstein, "The Unions' Retreat in the Postwar Era," in *Major Problems in the History of American Workers: Documents and Essays,* ed. Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein (Lexington, MA: DCHeath, 1991), 525-539.
[3] Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973); Henry Friedman and Sander Meredeen, *The Dynamics of Industrial Conflict: Lessons from Ford* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); Aaron Brenner, Robert Brenner and Cal Winslow, ed., *Rebel Rank and File: Labor Militancy and Revolt from Below During the Long 1970s* (London: Verso, 2010); Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2010).
[4] Carroll Pursell, *Technology in Postwar America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Carroll Pursell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2007).

history of technology refers to an "automation scare" over the issue of potential obsolescence. His work, while impressive in its scope, does not interrogate this sensationalized notion of a scare further.[5] The lived experiences of union and worker in auto and longshore testify to the notion that this was not a period defined by fear but one defined by negotiation, adaptation, and criticism. Labor engagement with automation reinforces the post-war decades as a crucial period in the development of the relationship between labor and management.

If the West Coast longshore and Lordstown strikers felt in the early 1970s that hope for a return to traditional modes of work in the future was slim at best, their fears were confirmed by the late 1970s. By 1975, over two-thirds of the cargo touching the skin of the dock on major U.S. ports were transported in uniform metal containers. Gone were the days of rigging hooks and handling irregular cargoes, the future was instead one of purpose-built ships designed to receive these specific uniform shapes. There would be no need for gangs of workers, instead giant cranes controlled the movement of these containers which meant these new ships did not require longshore workers in their holds or on the docks. The continued transformation of the West Coast waterfront's culture away from its traditional vibrancy and character led longshore militant Stan Weir to testify in 1978 that containerization had turned old waterfronts into "tourist attractions." "Loading docks that once teemed with workers have been converted to hotels or dinner-theaters," his interviewer Kate Callen reiterated, and this had "changed the longshoreman's once-vital image of himself and his society."[6] Slowly but surely the traditional waterfront had become a distant memory, whisked away on the winds of globalized and efficient shipping.

For auto workers, the crisis in their industry was not one of continued automation but rather the realization that the Fordist assembly line system had become incapable of bringing

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[5] David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History Since 1900* (London: Profile, 2008).
[6] Stan Weir, *Singlejack Solidarity* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2004), 75, 91-108; Marc Levinson, *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

much-vaunted prosperity and growth to the industry. The ascendancy of Japanese auto production in particular eclipsed U.S. autos in competitiveness. By 1980 the U.S. supplied only 30 percent of the world's cars, compared to almost 80 percent three decades prior. The Japanese produced automobile was smaller and much more fuel efficient than U.S. auto producers traditionally manufactured, which made them popular among consumers due to oil price increases during the 1970s. Not only did Japanese auto manufacturers have superior technology and equipment, their unique management philosophy allowed them to produce twice as many vehicles with half the labor and at half the cost that the U.S. was able to muster.[7] U.S. auto workers would have been shocked to hear that Japanese assembly lines had not only fewer workers, but also each worker performed a variety of tasks, which not only justified the need for less workers but caused productivity to skyrocket.[8] The growth of Japanese autos encouraged an uncomfortable rethinking on the part of auto industry executives that perhaps the cries for greater variety and autonomy in the workplace that they had heard from post-war auto workers could have been heeded to the same ends. Most importantly, the work rules and management style of the auto industry had become so heavily wrought and massively invested in that completely switching established protocol to copy this approach would be a costly and extensive undertaking that all but ensured Japan's firm grasp on the consumer automobile market in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

For those in the present day contending with automation, such as long-haul truck drivers like Jeff Baxter at the Iowa 80 truck stop, if popular news media is to be believed the potential for automation to make their jobs obsolete is merely a misguided fear. Looking to the historical struggles of auto and longshore workers in the post-war period – particularly the

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[7] Quentin Skrabec, *Fall of an American Rome: De-Industrialization of the American Dream* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2013), especially Chapter 12; Jeffrey A. Hart, *Rival Capitalists: International Competitiveness in the United States, Japan, and Western Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), especially Chapter 2.

[8] James J. Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), especially Chapter 17; Haruhito Shiomi and Kazuo Wada, ed., *Fordism Transformed: The Development of Production Methods in the Automobile Industry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

ways in which automation was first promoted to them – and viewing them alongside the rhetoric regarding trucking creates a chilling comparison. Autonomous trucking systems, numerous articles aim to reassure, would not eliminate the trucker's job, just make it easier. If it did eliminate one's job, truck drivers could use their skillset on the job in different ways, but this would only be a simple matter of retraining. The advent of full automation, in all these pieces, is far enough in the future so as not to worry about.[9] Just as these arguments are akin to those regarding automation's prospective physical relief in the early 1950s, so too should it be considered what the mental health repercussions would be for truckers facing automation. Could they too experience the kinds of mental drudgery, loss of pride in their work, and crises of identity that auto and longshore workers faced? Although like these workers it might be too late to fight these changes, it is not too late to account for the wellbeing of our fellow humans. In a world dominated by technology and machines, we owe them this much.

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