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Class Consciousness and Common Property: The International Fishermen and Allied Workers of America*

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Abstract

The story of the International Fishermen and Allied Workers' of America (IFAWA), a Pacific North American trade union, allows a closer look at the relation between class-consciousness and common property natural resources. In light of this story, I reexamine the range of organizational forms considered in the literature on common property natural resource management, and conventional assumptions about the context of union organization, to demonstrate that both are excessively narrow. The characterization of fishers and other smallholders as independent entrepreneurs belies the relations of production and class that hold in the fisheries, and organized labor can represent an effective attempt to restructure a particular political ecology. Working-class consciousness emerged among Pacific coast fishers during the first half of the twentieth century, and collective efforts to manage common property reflected that class-consciousness.

Realizing the fact that the precious species of salmon and other valuable food fish are decreasing rapidly and are facing extinction, and that thousands of fishermen and cannery workers on the Pacific Coast of the U.S.A. are depending on the fishing industry for a living, it is our object to use our influence, individually and collectively, urging National and State Governments to enact laws against the unscrupulous tactics in fishing and improper seasonal limits in order to safeguard this great industry.¹

As manifested in the flurry of international activity surrounding climate change, endangered species, and highly migratory fish stocks, “public goods,” and the “commons” are at the center of contemporary political concern. This interest is easily understood. As our awareness of ecological and economic interdependence has grown, so has the desire to understand these dependencies and the implications of their transformation.

In what follows, I reassemble the story of the International Fishermen and Allied Workers' of America (IFAWA), a Pacific North American trade union, to look more closely at one thread in this conversation: common property natural resources. I reexamine the range of organizational forms considered in the literature on common property natural resource management (CPNRM), and

conventional assumptions about the context of union organization, and try to demonstrate that both are excessively narrow: a geographically dispersed trade unionism can be a means to achieve common property management goals. In light of a history of IFAWA, I argue that a working-class consciousness emerged among Pacific coast fishers during the first half of the twentieth century, and that CPNRM efforts reflected that class consciousness.²

I place a great deal of importance on the concept of a “union,” in contrast to other forms of collective association. It is possible that I overestimate the power of the organizational form; it would be naïve to assume, for example, that simply because an organization identifies itself as a “union,” it is in some essential way unlike a “protective association.” Still, critical components of unionism are central to this discussion.³ Following common practice in the industrial relations literature, a union is here defined as “an organization of employees that has the function of pursuing their work-related interests by dealing with their employer on their behalf.”⁴ This pursuit takes the form of collective bargaining, the integrity of which is maintained with the threat of “collective aggressive action” against the employer.⁵

Clearly, it will be up to me to demonstrate convincingly that fishers understood themselves as “employees” and the processors as “employers.” A significant part of the argument below is dedicated to this, in an attempt to untangle the complexities of actors’ positions within the industry’s structure. Fishers on the Pacific coast were either boat owners, employees of boat-owning fishers, or lessees of boats and gear owned by a third party, usually a processor or wholesaler. The fishing industry has always been affected by market, environmental and regulatory contexts, and the changing size of the industry over time reflects these pressures. From the outbreak of World War II to the mid-1950s, the industry employed between 33,000 and 50,000 fishers on approximately 11,000 to 14,000 boats.⁶ These fishers sold their catch to the 500 to 700 processors that dotted the coast, and concentrated in significant ports like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Astoria (Oregon), Seattle, and Bristol Bay (Alaska).⁷ Individually, processors and boat owners held highly varied degrees of market power: some were single establishment operators, others controlled several plants, boats and wholesaling concerns. Some were fishers or former fishers, others were large corporations like Star-Kist. Industry concentration varied across the fisheries; tuna packing, for example, was basically controlled by six operators, while some groundfish were processed by many establishments.⁸ As the Federal Trade Commission reported in 1946, however, wholesalers and processors were usually organized and presented a coordinated market for fishers’ products.⁹ The multiplicity of economic and social relations that constituted the working life of industry participants produced class locations and strategies that do not fit easily into the standard capital-labor dualism.

The paper has four parts: 1] The story of IFAWA; 2] A characterization of union organization as incorporating a collective attempt at common property management through creative efforts to determine membership and access to resources; 3] An explanation of why this attempt took the form and trajectory

that it did; and 4] Concluding arguments. The paper calls for a dual reevaluation: I argue that (a) the characterization of fishers and other smallholders as independent entrepreneurs belies the relations of production and class that hold in the fisheries; and (b) organized labor can represent an effective attempt to restructure a particular political ecology.

1. The International Fishermen and Allied Workers of America

IFAWA is not a well-known union; I stumbled upon it in a 1953 article on the Taft-Hartley Act, and it is very rarely discussed in secondary sources.¹⁰ IFAWA struck me because it contradicted the typical conception of the competitive (even selfish) independent-minded smallholder that has held sway in rural sociology. In the subsequent attempt to piece together the fragments of the union I could find, I have come to believe that the mere existence of IFAWA, from its establishment in 1939 until it succumbed to various pressures in the late-1950s, obligates us to reexamine that story; the union's existence and the stock image of the smallholder cannot simultaneously be true.

The first commercial fishers' union on the Pacific coast, the Columbia River Fishermen's Union (CRFPU), was founded in 1886 in Astoria, Oregon.¹¹ Although there were several maritime unions on the Pacific coast in the early twentieth century, for many years the CRFU was one of very few fishers' unions.¹² While there were some "cooperative guilds," "protective associations," and "fishermen's councils," these organizations only partially shared the goals of the CRFU and the few other unions that emerged in the first three decades of this century. They did not emphasize collective bargaining for minimum prices, egalitarianism, and relationships with processors characteristic of union activity. Rather, they focused upon the related tasks of "elimination" of foreign vessels from fishing grounds, the burdens of administrative processes imposed upon fishers, and the general representation of fishers' interests.¹³ Most of these organizations functioned similarly to what would presently be called "industry associations."

In 1937, three fishers' unions amalgamated to create the United Fishermen's Union (UFU), and affiliated with the new Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). The following year, three other fishers' organizations also affiliated with the CIO.¹⁴ In May 1939, these six unions, and several directly affiliated locals, coalesced to form the International Fishermen and Allied Workers' of America, also CIO-affiliated, representing fishers from California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska. IFAWA was constituted such that affiliated unions and locals would retain significant autonomy, and intended to involve all fisheries workers, from fishers, to "beachmen," to cannery workers.¹⁵ Indeed, from the wording of several IFAWA contracts negotiated in the late 1940s, it is evident that the local autonomy it afforded its affiliates was a condition of their participation.¹⁶

The fact that IFAWA was born as World War II began had an enormous impact upon its organizational life. Despite some initial bargaining successes,

IFAWA's leadership believed the war adversely affected the union and the security and economy of the Pacific fisheries for at least a year prior to the United States' official declaration of war.¹⁷ Aside from individual concerns for family and friends, the most significant impact the war had upon fishers was the Office of Price Administration's (OPA) imposition, in July of 1943, of price ceilings on all commercially harvested fish.¹⁸ The ceilings were intended to stabilize the fisheries economy, provide cheap wartime food, and enable "maximum production" in the industry.¹⁹ Initially IFAWA resisted these policies, but by early 1944 union leadership was encouraging the membership to cooperate with the OPA in the interests of the war effort, unity and postwar growth.²⁰ Along with concessions like the "no-strike pledge," this cooperation was consistent with CIO national policy.²¹

However, the exceptional sacrifices OPA restrictions demanded of fishers did not go unopposed after the war. Unlike some manufacturing goods—most notably, to fishers, fishing gear—the ceilings on fish prices were not quickly repealed.²² As late as August, 1946, IFAWA was still fighting a "stabilization monstrosity" it claimed cut real wages in half.²³ With the eventual removal of price controls the following year, IFAWA had the fullest freedom to pursue collective bargaining it had enjoyed in its eight-year history.

Yet it still faced several obstacles: inconsistent prices along the coast, which "undermined price structures in one region or fleet by fishing in another;" an "influx of fish from foreign countries;" and the "discontinuance of government buying."²⁴ Also, IFAWA confronted stock depletion and increasingly frequent attacks by the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) antimonopoly division, which claimed that the union was an association of independent businesspersons colluding to raise prices.²⁵ The latter was particularly burdensome given its coincidence with the anticommunism and antiunionism that led to the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947.²⁶ Conservation concerns, and the significance of the antitrust attack will both be addressed in more detail below.

Despite these difficulties, IFAWA negotiated some very demanding contracts in 1948 and 1949, particularly in Alaska. Organizing was highly successful, and membership reached 22,000 by the end of the war.²⁷ Indeed, in 1946 the FTC noted that the "Pacific North West fishing industry is one of the most highly unionized industries of the country."²⁸

Still, enabling "100 percent organizing," resisting Taft-Hartley compliance and fighting accusations of collusion in the court changed the demands placed upon the leadership.²⁹ A general feeling prevailed among the executive that affiliation with a larger, stronger union would benefit IFAWA, and the International Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union (ILWU) seemed the logical choice.³⁰ The ILWU worked the same waterfronts, was also CIO-affiliated, and had proven strength in both the legendary leadership of Harry Bridges and the bloody San Francisco strike of 1934. Limited records make it difficult to gauge rank and file support for the merger, but in January, 1949, the membership voted "overwhelmingly" in favor of operating as a "coordinated group," a Fisheries and Allied Workers Division within ILWU.³¹

The ILWU's strength, however, did not provide IFAWA with the longevity and organizational capacity it sought. A series of blows to the fishers' union reduced it to a shadow of its former self by the mid-1950s.

First, after summary trials in early 1950, both the ILWU and IFAWA, along with nine other unions, were expelled from the CIO for "pursuing policies and activities which were 'consistently directed toward the achievement of the program or the purposes of the Communist Party.'"³² While the long-term effects of the expulsion are difficult to determine, the lack of access to the resources of a national association like the CIO, the exacerbated "red" stigma, and the loss of morale that might accompany such a loss of legitimacy almost certainly weakened IFAWA's resistance to other federal and industry pressures.

Second, the FTC stepped up its pressure on IFAWA both during and after the CIO trial. Following a 1946 federal conviction in San Pedro, private suits were filed by "operators" (processors) on the same waterfront.³³ Federal prosecution followed.³⁴ In 1949, the FTC filed suit against Local 36 (San Francisco).³⁵ Between 1953 and 1957, six more complaints were filed by the FTC.³⁶ While the full extent of these pressures is uncertain, it is probable that the judgment of one of the present ILWU leaders—that these suits were the last straw for IFAWA—is appropriate.³⁷

It most likely did not take very many convictions to convince the dwindling number of unionized fishers that organization and collective bargaining would simply attract unwanted attention. There was talk of a "United Front" within the union at least as late as 1952, and in 1958 the division still claimed to represent 5,000 workers.³⁸ But by 1955, the Fisheries and Allied Workers Division was rarely mentioned in ILWU records.³⁹ Apart from a couple of brief notes in 1959, it appears the fishers were only a paper union after about 1957. Essentially, IFAWA simply slipped out of sight.⁴⁰

2. *IFAWA and Common Property Natural Resource Management*

This is one possible telling of IFAWA's story. The paucity and bias of sources and historical distance may hide essential elements of the union's life, enabling a different telling. Still, certain elements of the story are clear. The perspective of IFAWA's leadership is well-represented, as is their understanding of the organization's purpose. These enable an interpretation of the union as attempting a form of CPNRM. This section briefly introduces the field of common property, and common property natural resources in particular. It then examines IFAWA in light of the dominant perspectives in the common property literature.

Common Property. "Common property" is originally a legal concept. It emerged in British common law to distinguish the relations that determined the exploitation of resources that had customarily been open to all community members, an idea based in the work of political theorists like Rousseau and Locke.⁴¹ Like all property, it describes a relation between people concerning access to and use of a particular resource or "thing."⁴² But unlike individual or "private" prop-

erty, the subjects of that relation are collective and are usually associated with a group whose membership is formally or informally defined by the group itself. No individual has complete control of the resource in question, as common property is by nature available to all members.

This does not imply, however, that there are no rules or organization regarding access and use. Both formal and informal rules are common, the most fundamental of which is the limitation of access to members. These restrictive procedures distinguish common property, like a fishing ground which has been used by local fishers over time, and the use of which is determined by custom, from “open access” resources like open ocean oil deposits, the access to and use of which is unconstrained and unmanaged.

The majority of the common property literature focuses on the developing world, in which formal state-sponsored law has not penetrated some important aspects of economic life. The subsistence nature of many of these economies has also meant that most of the literature emphasizes the management of common property natural resources. Furthermore, since many resources are the object of local or customary relations, common property is often associated with pre- or noncapitalist systems of production. But the significance of common property is not limited to subsistence economies and developing countries. For example, North American groundwater systems are increasingly managed as common property—a massive improvement upon open access models of the past—and the intricate local regulation of Maine’s lobster fisheries is a well-known contemporary example.⁴³

Modern CPNRM literature begins in the 1960s with the publication of E. P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class* and Garrett Hardin’s 1967 paper, “The Tragedy of the Commons.” In his examination of the enclosure movement in England, and later in his study of the infamous Black Act, Thompson highlighted the organized and historically-determined ways in which English peasants understood their relation to and dependence upon the “commons.”⁴⁴ He paints a picture of a system of justice, access and use that was well-adapted to local conditions, and far from a destructive free-for-all. In contrast, Hardin relates a parable of common grazing land in which consistent overstocking of the commons by self-interested individuals leads to the inevitable destruction of the resource for all. He therefore advocates the privatization of common property in the interests of conservation and efficiency.⁴⁵

The debate between the “defenders” of the commons and the proponents of privatization has become an extensive literature, especially in sociology and economics, and to a lesser extent in political science and law. The work that informs the following section originates in this discussion, although by taking common property seriously, I only engage with the “defenders.” I hope to demonstrate the applicability of the CPNRM model to the history of IFAWA.

IFAWA and CPNRM. There are two dominant strands in the CPNRM literature: the institutional, as typified by Elinor Ostrom, and what could be labeled the ethnographic, exemplified by Pauline Peters and Bonnie McCay.

Institutionalists share the methodological individualism and contractual emphases that underpin an entire school of thought in economics and political science.⁴⁶ For Ostrom, collective action is the way through which “broadly rational” “appropriators” attempt to address environmental complexity and uncertainty.⁴⁷ Most effective at smaller-scales, the “management” element of CPNRM consists in the institutionalization of practices that enable “credible commitment” from, and properly align incentives among, local actors dependent upon the resource.⁴⁸

The ethnographers generally eschew methodological individualism and associated assumptions of rationality. Instead, they emphasize the cultural and local “embeddedness” of CPNRM institutions.⁴⁹ They argue that all such institutions are the product of historically informed norms of social interaction and expectation, and therefore that relevant actors can often be understood collectively.⁵⁰ Thus, it is assumed that as “social relations of production change, so do the rules of access to resources.”⁵¹

There are some perspectives common to the two schools of thought. Both advocate self-regulation and at least limited autonomy from state institutions. Also, both defend the viability of CPNRM. Still, they are in many ways philosophically and methodologically opposed. Ostrom’s emphasis on generalizable “principles” of CPNRM can be seen as missing the essence of the social particularity critical to ethnographic work.⁵² Bill Maurer, for example, accuses methodological individualists of reducing common property to:

the relationship between different individuals, with presumably conflicting interests, and the land, rendered as an inert object or a resource, over which they fight. In this framework, the social relationships that make up individuals, interests, and the land itself, are removed from view.⁵³

Further evidence of this opposition is visible in the communities each “school” chooses to study. With few exceptions, the ethnographic literature addresses rural or marginalized communities, often in the developing world. The institutionalists, while covering a broad range of cases, seem far more willing to tackle urban, industrial concerns, often in Europe or North America. In each instance it is arguable that the dynamics of interest to the different approaches are more readily identified in the settings they choose.⁵⁴

Yet despite these oppositions, the perspectives can be complementary. I hope to show that the dimension in which IFAWA has the most to tell—the complex nature of the historical response to “progress” of those on the economic and geographical periphery of industrializing and urbanizing North America—can best be understood with access to ethnography and institutionalism. The only way to describe and legitimate the experience of IFAWA is to understand it as a CPNRM institution that took the form of an industrial union. This allows for a dialectical approach to the institutional-ethnographic opposition, for each offers insights into dilemmas faced by IFAWA in its capacity as a CPNRM institution. While ethnography can sensitively capture cultural particularity, his-

tory, and geographic specificity, institutionalism can better highlight structural features like economic expansion and state regulation. Only an examination of these spatial, technological, economic and social tensions IFAWA was forced to address can enable us to understand its historical role.

First though I must address the initial question: Putting aside the problem of efficacy, can IFAWA be understood as a CPNRM institution?⁵⁵ If, as McCay and Acheson write, “common property should refer to an exclusive as well as inclusive notion of the commonwealth involved” that “encompasses a wide variety of institutional arrangements that delimit access and impose restrictions on use,” then what did IFAWA do to delimit and restrict?⁵⁶ On the shore and on the water, how did these essentials of CPNRM take forms appropriate to union action?

Clearly, any trade union both excludes and includes. In this simple sense, IFAWA attempted to include as many fishers and allied workers as possible, and exclude nonfisheries workers and those who chose not to join. On the shore, organizers drew on a variety of sources of organizational potential. They appealed to self-interest, describing what Mancur Olson calls “selective incentives” like better fish prices, wage payment (in contrast to piecework), or health insurance.⁵⁷ They referred to the “solidarity” of fisheries workers, the importance of the industry to the local community, and the value of a shared, “traditional” way of life. Other times the union argued that joining was crucial for the long-term health of the fishery; management and regulation, by and for fishers, was possible only if all belonged. In addition, the injustice of the fisher’s plight was highlighted: foreign fish on the markets, the unjust practices of “operators,” or the unfair interventions of the “men back in Washington, who know nothing about fishing.”⁵⁸ Finally, IFAWA leadership could point to the substantial achievements of unions both within the fishing industry and across North America.⁵⁹

These tactics were effective. In the early 1940s, many fishers joined the union: eight thousand by 1939, and by 1942 IFAWA represented approximately nineteen thousand of the fifty thousand fisheries workers on the Pacific Coast.⁶⁰ Membership continued to grow throughout the mid-1940s, although not as rapidly as the industry. Still, in 1949 IFAWA’s membership comprised almost one-third of the workforce.⁶¹

Notable in all these appeals are two elements common to many CPNRM arrangements. First, whether calling upon some shared collective interest, a nostalgic romanticism, or blatant self-interest, IFAWA excluded in the very act of inclusion. For those who participated in the organization membership set them apart from what they had been, and from those who refused to join: the articulation of a “we” simultaneously identified a “them.” Second, insofar as these appeals organized the attention of fishers to the issues explicit and implicit in union organizing, they not only justified IFAWA, but also constituted it. The 22,000 members clearly identifying themselves not as “independent businessmen,” but as “brothers” very probably represents a significant development in what might be called the “fishers’ ideology.” In section three, I will attempt to explain this development of class-consciousness among fishers.

While crucial to CPNRM, social restrictions are effective only if materially tied to the natural resource. Most conceptions of common property, therefore, are concerned with the social relations of material production: Who can fish, where and when can they fish, how much can they catch? On the water, IFAWA had to address this, but could not practice CPNRM in the conventional manner—preventing all nonmembers from extracting the resource—for their “territory” consisted of the entire Pacific coast of North America and extended a great distance out into the ocean. Yet while the fishers did not have the means of exclusion or inclusion available to other unions, they developed a no less distributive strategy. Given their institutional and legal resources, they could not prevent nonunion fishers from fishing, nor could they regulate the quantity and content of their catch. But they understood very well the market processes upon which commercial fishing depended. While they could not stop anyone from bringing fish into their boat, they could—or so they hoped—stop them from getting those same fish out of their boat. Collective bargaining agreements almost always involved agreement on the part of the processor to buy only union fish. The threat of boycott, and therefore of no fish coming into the plant, was intended to ensure compliance. The only difference between IFAWA and most of the common property fisheries examined in the literature is the point of intervention. Most CPNRM institutions intervene to restrict entry. IFAWA intervened to prevent profitable exit.

Finally, IFAWA undertook fisheries management and regulatory initiatives both on the water and on the shore. It fought infrastructure and technology it considered destructive, like dams, fish traps and poundnets; indeed trap owners were denied membership to some of the locals.⁶² It also advocated scientific stock assessment and funded some biological research. It imposed harsh penalties upon members who took undersized fish, overfished, or fished out of season. And, although they usually “vigorously opposed” government fishing regulations, union members frequently set their own regulations, often stricter than those imposed by the state. For example, the union imposed its own “coast-wise” size limitations on black cod, levied substantial fines from members who breached conservation rules, and even suspended the membership of those who fished out of season.⁶³ While neither the length of IFAWA’s lifetime, nor the fisheries science of the time (or, arguably, of the present) enables a judgment of the efficacy of these efforts, there is little question that they were extensive.

Many of these efforts are uncommon in the CPNRM literature. Certainly, most common property arrangements have internal harvest and environmental regulations, but the extensive scientific and economic study undertaken in the IFAWA assessment of the California sardine fishery or the relatively complex arguments for environmentally sustainable electricity generation that frequented the union’s newsletter are of a different magnitude and form than the management efforts of many common property fisheries.⁶⁴ These differences can be explained by the nature of the resource. Of the several fisheries upon which the membership depended, many, like salmon, migrate over great distances. Given the spatial scales of concern and using the best science and technology available,

IFAWA undertook common property regulatory efforts that were appropriate to the problems at hand.

3. *Why a Union? An Emerging Working-Class Consciousness*

Why has there been so little union organization among smallholders? Much of the literature in rural history, and on the “agrarian question” in particular, has addressed this question.⁶⁵ In the history of Pacific coast fisheries, there have been many “marketing associations,” some “boat owner associations,” and even a few “fishermen’s protective associations,” but relatively few trade unions. If unionization is an indication of the evolution of a working class, or at least of a collective consciousness in an industry, why has this consciousness not emerged more frequently among small-scale fishers?⁶⁶

The dominant answer to this question is: (a) Workers work for somebody else, while fishers are believed to work for themselves, and/or, (b) small-scale fishers are independent entrepreneurs in competition with each other. It makes no sense to speak of them as “workers” potentially interested in collective action and bargaining. But the intricacies of relations of production lead to a complex continuum of social relations that have long posed empirical puzzles to work in class analysis and labor history.⁶⁷ It is difficult to argue that small-scale producers are described by the conventional employer-employee or labor-capital dualities. There are many class positions that fill the space between these poles. The claim that simple commodity production and working-class identity are incompatible has been challenged on the basis of those who, like the members of IFAWA, occupy this ill-defined social space.⁶⁸

Without slipping into facile functionalism, I would like to address the question of why, if IFAWA represents a CPNRM initiative, such a fisheries institution emerged as a union and not in some other form? The pressures of foreign fishing, stock depletion, and the changing productive and technical nature of the fishery evidently convinced fishers that some institution addressing the condition of their common property and the livelihoods that depended upon it was necessary. But why did fishers not form a federation of marketing associations, or cooperatives (which were common in agriculture), or independent, community-based collectives?⁶⁹ Why would they join a coast-wide, multi-gear, multi-ethnic and industry-wide organization that many would predict would be unwieldy, oligarchical, and unresponsive to local needs?⁷⁰ Moreover, why would they form a union, with “workers” contrasted to capitalist businessmen? Were these people not independent entrepreneurs?

Class matters in answering these questions. But to tell this story in class analytic terms, it is necessary to move beyond the orthodox perspective that class position and consciousness are determined solely by the relations of production. Looking at a union that covered a vast area and arguably would have been ineffective had it not, the spatial dimension of IFAWA’s organizational constraints and opportunities is crucial.⁷¹ In this sense, unionization among fishers was the result of a conjuncture of contingent and structural tensions, both productive and spatial.

Production. As theorized by Karl Marx, class is an “analytical construct” useful in understanding differential relations to the means of production.⁷² In general, Marx relied upon what David Harvey calls a “two-class model,” capital versus labor, through which he sought “to lay bare the exploitative character of capitalist production.”⁷³ Although in his more programmatic writings Marx does reify class in the form of an actual group of laborers, an emphasis on “class-as-thing” misses the conceptual power of the term.⁷⁴ I would like to follow E. P. Thompson by understanding class not as a “structure” or a “category,” but as “something which in fact happens in human relationships.” It is the relation that emerges through the sentiment and articulation of interests derived from “common experiences (inherited or shared).” Usually these interests are understood as opposed to those of others and produce a class-consciousness “in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms.”⁷⁵

In the Pacific fisheries the conflicting interests are evident. To the state, fishers were entrepreneurs. Like all proprietors, they were exempt from the minimum wage and maximum hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.⁷⁶ But at the same time, those familiar with the industry understood the fishers’ position; ironically, government representatives countered fishers’ identification as employees by defending the interests of those “who give jobs to fishermen.”⁷⁷

This is not to say that fishers did not see themselves as independent, but that they did so in a qualitatively different manner. They understood working-class identity as a choice, and they freely chose it. As George Johansen of the Alaska Fishermen’s Union stated:

Under present laws, a union can be prosecuted under the FTC Act, and antitrust laws, if it attempts to bargain for so-called independent fishermen or fishermen who own their own boats and gear. A man who owns his own boat and gear is in an independent position. He wants to belong to a union. Why should he be discriminated against by law if he chooses to have a union bargain for him?⁷⁸

I believe that the story of IFAWA makes it clear that, in Thompson’s terms, class “happened” in the Pacific coast fisheries, and class-consciousness helped motivate IFAWA. If this claim is tenable, it enables a particular interpretation of the members of IFAWA as caught in the contradictions of the meanings of the capitalist mode of production for their way of life.

These contradictions are most readily visible in fishers’ ambiguous attitudes toward technical development. Although the adoption of new technology, from on-board refrigeration to “fish-finders,” obviously necessitated the increasing capitalization of the fisheries, and thus the restriction of access, this technology also had the potential to make fishers’ very strenuous and dangerous work a little easier and safer. Throughout the newsletters, meetings and correspondence, I found an unromantic welcoming of these expensive industrial techniques. “Sardine refrigeration helps labor.”⁷⁹ “Fathometer finds fish.”⁸⁰ Yet at the same time, fishers lamented the impact of increased harvest: “I am moving farther out each

year, and the fish are getting fewer each year. In a few years, there will be no fish.”⁸¹ Fishermen both feared and favored technical advances.

In the face of these conflicting developments, what organizational responses were contextually possible? It would be wrong to paint the fishers as anticapitalist. IFAWA members relied upon the commodity market for their living; they caught fish to sell. But like most participants in CPNRM, they had to ensure a sustainable supply to maintain their living. Furthermore, like many laborers in a capitalist system, they relied upon an economy to which access was unevenly distributed. The fishers were economically and geographically peripheral to national and international markets. They had neither the time nor capital to sell their catch directly. To reach the consumer in marketable condition, fish needed to be processed, an expensive and labor-intensive process. Thus, catches were almost always sold to an “operator,” who acted as both processor and broker of the product. Given the potential for spoilage, fishers had to sell to the operator closest to the fishing grounds.

In many cases, this meant an operator monopsony, and the creation of a “dependent” employment relation, not (as processors claimed) a business-to-business contracting transaction.⁸² While there remained certain significant differences between fishers and wage laborers (who comprised much of the rest of the union in the canneries), in particular the former’s frequent role as an employer of non-family labor, the integral structure of the fisher-processor relationship was very like that of employee-employer. The fisher, whose income was usually entirely dependent upon one processor, commodified his labor in one marketable form (fish), and was forced to sell to one price-making buyer. A portion of the fishers’ income was wage-like “run money,” meant to diminish the risk of seasonal fluctuations that made companies’ and employees’ contractual timing imperfect.⁸³ Often, the processors owned the boat. Almost always, they owned at least some of the gear—nets or lines in particular.⁸⁴ Moreover, the processor demanded a great deal of control over when, where, who, and how fish were harvested.⁸⁵ Where the fisher was “independent,” the processor was usually the main source of credit, which forced the fisher, if there were options (as there were in some urban centers), to sell his catch to that processor as part of debt repayment.⁸⁶ Characteristic of the employment relation, surplus value was extracted by the processor through privileged access to and control of the means of production, and monopsony as the sole purchaser of fishers’ labor power.

The nature of this relation was very clearly understood by the union; the Constitution of the Columbia River Fishermen’s Protective Union clearly identified “capital” and the “employer.”⁸⁷ Fishermen could not avoid participating in capitalist production and remain fishers, but they could try to force the operators to maintain the smallholder structure of the industry by monopolizing the labor supply. This is exactly what a union is structured to do.⁸⁸ Labor contracts, while acknowledging the seasonal nature of the industry, nevertheless formalized the employer-employee relationship in a manner that blatantly contradicts the conventional understanding of the fisher as he or she who “works for no one but him or herself.” Instead, they demonstrate two characteristics very clearly.

First, while fishers' legendary independence may hold true, it manifested itself not so much by working for themselves, but by choosing for whom they would work. Second, that choice was only significant if it were made collectively. Given the mobility of both labor and resource in fisheries, that collective had to be relatively large scale; locally specific but uncoordinated responses could easily be undermined.

Space. Clearly, the spatial and productive analyses of fisheries cannot be completely separated; indeed, David Harvey argues that this is true of all capitalism.⁸⁹ For the Pacific fisheries, as noted above, coast-wide organization was the only scientifically viable means of CPNRM in light of stock and labor mobility. Yet this scale of organization was new to fishers. Note, for instance, that five of the six founding unions of IFAWA identified themselves as fishing ground-specific: Puget Sound, the Columbia River, California, Prince William Sound, and Alaska (Bering Sea).

There are evident tensions in how the fishers felt about the scale and diversity of issues that IFAWA had to confront, and this no doubt affected the union's decision to operate in a more decentralized manner. Still, the demands of the resource, and the economics of processing, which was dominated by relatively few players, made it clear to the founders of IFAWA that locally specific organization was insufficient for fisheries management or economic survival.

This recognition highlighted another dynamic tension among fishers, one that is often forgotten today: In the mid-twentieth century, many small fishers still operated out of urban centers like Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Furthermore, since a significant portion of Alaska's fisheries labor was not resident there, much of the Alaska fishery was urban in the off-season.⁹⁰ Western coastal cities have often been at the center of radical unionism in the United States, and this was never more true than during the first forty years of this century.⁹¹ This almost certainly influenced the institutional form the fishers' organization eventually took. It also led to an occasionally marked disparity in the political radicalism of different locals. Strike threats, tie-ups, and conflict were more frequent in the urban locals, and the risks that individual fishers were willing to take seem to have been greater in urban centers, which may be a function of differential exit opportunities in the form of other work or other processors.

A fascinating and perhaps tragic element of this urban-rural integration is that smallholder, natural resource-based class organization may only have been possible when these economies were extant in urban areas. The organizational and political focal capacities of cities are well-known, and IFAWA certainly can be understood on these terms. The leadership, which remained relatively steady throughout, mostly came from Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle. Also, especially following the ILWU merger, organizational leadership, while sensitive to rural concerns, was substantially involved in national political conflicts that necessitated an urban emphasis, like antitrust suits and the CIO trial. This is speculation, of course, but it points toward further possible explanations for the rapid rise and fall of IFAWA.

In any case, contradictory spatial and productive demands encouraged the coastwide fishers' unionism. Industrial-smallholder, local-coastal and urban-rural dynamics helped create an organization that struggled to confront the conflicting demands of the local particularities inherent in the coast-wide concern and the individual fisher's reliance upon a regional resource. This interpenetration of the local and the global, the general and the particular—and the interplay of forces out of which actors shape their lives—is characteristic of a dialectical understanding of history, and is, I believe, the most defensible understanding of IFAWA.⁹² This is one instance of how class happened on the Pacific coast. The differential relation to the means of production between fisheries workers and operators made possible the class relation. Class-consciousness manifested itself in an institutional form that could address both concerns for the physical resource and the economic realities of capitalist production by coordinating the harvesters at the relevant scale: a fishers' union. As with technology, though, the union was neither a plain leap of faith into industrial production, nor was it a "traditionalist" effort to disable it. Rather, it was an attempt to rein it in and control its development on fishers' terms.

4. Implications and Conclusions

It may seem that in section three I have neglected to address CPNRM. In trying to explain why IFAWA emerged as it did, I may have painted a picture of an organization that addressed common property management only incidentally. If this is the case, I mean to reemphasize IFAWA's common property management dimensions in these conclusions. To do so, I will focus on an element of the history of IFAWA glossed over in section one: the antitrust and anticommunist tactics of the operators and the federal government. I want to argue that the vehemence and relentlessness of these attacks make evident the potential of the union as an institution of CPNRM. Moreover, this demonstrates the significance of a class-based CPNRM in the industrialized West that is not recognized by the common property literature. It also moves towards an understanding of a political ecology of class on the Pacific coast.

In reassembling the story of IFAWA, I occasionally lost touch with the appropriate time register. I found myself wrapped up in the intricacies of daily life in the union and on the water, flicking forward five years, then back another eight, without much thought. Rereading the fragmentary records of the antitrust and Taft-Hartley pressures, though, I am reminded of their astounding relentlessness. This all happened in less than twenty years. FTC accusations were decried in the union's newsletter by September 1942, only three years into a short life, and did not let up until the union was only a paper shell. Moreover, these impositions took place, at least initially, in a context in which labor had relinquished a great deal of its strength for the war. Willingly, they did so through the no-strike pledge, and unwillingly, through measures like the "Connally Amendment," which enabled the government to "take over and resume production in any plant where production has been interrupted."⁹³ Admittedly, the fishers

were not the only ones under scrutiny, but this does not diminish the immediate question: why so much time, energy, and persistence directed against the fishers?⁹⁴

IFAWA was a radical union, which almost certainly did have Communists in the leadership. Many unions did at the time.⁹⁵ Taft-Hartley compliance was an issue with working people throughout the United States in the postwar period.⁹⁶ IFAWA, the government said, was a “fishermen’s trust.” Setting aside the irony of the Clayton Act, designed to curb the power of corporations like US Steel, turned against a group of working people, the antitrust suits underscored the visible potential for the fishers to collectively and exclusively manage the fisheries. Recognizing their class-specific shared reliance on the fishery, the fishers formulated organizational objectives that would have, if successfully met, created a *de facto* common property regime on the Pacific coast.

The only way the government could justify antitrust measures was if the fishers were not “supposed” to organize. This required not only a denial of the employment relation the fishers felt was evident in fishing industry, but an ascription of entrepreneurial independence that the fishers themselves intentionally rejected. As the FTC remarked in 1957, after a group of Alaska fishermen claimed bargaining rights as employees: “The record clearly shows that the skippers of Purse Seine Vessels are independent businessmen . . . Neither the skippers nor their crews are shown to be employees of individual canners. The relationship involved is that of buyers and sellers of fish.”⁹⁷ As in the case of the New Jersey fisheries studied by Bonnie McCay, the government understood open access to natural resources as “the structure of *laissez-faire* competition.”⁹⁸ But the structural position of IFAWA’s membership was not easily reconciled with the logic of atomized, competitive businessmen-harvesters. To the extent that it was successful in maintaining an open access regime, the government refuted the counter-claim implicit in unionization and in CPNRM, the demand for “social equity.”⁹⁹

At the local level, and territorially specific, CPNRM is usually understood as structuring a contained local political ecology. By crossing geographical boundaries with an appeal to class interests, IFAWA attempted to take CPNRM far beyond these bounds. This is perhaps the most striking lesson the union’s history has to teach, for it illuminates a site of analytical and political possibility. The dominance within the political ecology literature of the study of pre- or non-capitalist, relatively homogenous communities in developing countries mirrors the conventional focus of studies of CPNRM; indeed they are often one and the same. An emphasis on the local, “traditional,” and non-Western has proved enormously fruitful, but it has diminished the significance of non-local axes of organization and obscured larger scale concerns. In doing so, it has effectively excluded the concept of class and its power as a tool for the analysis of capitalist societies. Very probably, this has reinforced the literature’s focus, in a kind of theoretical-empirical vicious circle. While there is great value in working inward, in filling the gaps in existing theory, the potential for working out from this model to the complexity of the lived world is great. As

David Harvey writes, “[w]e reach out dialectically (rather than inwardly and deductively) to probe uncharted seas from a few seemingly secure islands of known concepts.”¹⁰⁰

The wider possibilities for the study of work, class and nature are immanent in IFAWA’s story. The Pacific coast fishery is an ecologically determined political economy—a particular regional political ecology—and the social response to it was at least partially shaped by the constraints and opportunities of the environment in which it took place. If I have convincingly argued that the social response was the realization of class membership and the emergence of class-based organization in the form of a fishers’ union, then IFAWA is evidence of class as a political-ecological relationship. This seems reasonable, for where do work and nature so intertwine but on the sea?

NOTES

*I wish to thank Louise Fortmann, Jeff Romm, Jenn Sherman, Gene Vrana, Michelle Bonner, the editors of this journal, and an anonymous reviewer for enormously helpful comments.

1. Columbia River Fishermen’s Protective Union (CRFPU), “Constitution and Bylaws of the Columbia River Fishermen’s Protective Union,” Preamble (Astoria, OR, no date), Doe Library, Main Stacks, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

2. Almost all of the information I have been able to acquire concerning the union was either produced by IFAWA itself or are the minutes of meetings. This likely means I tell a one-sided story. I have attempted to minimize the effects of this, but recognize that bias is inevitable. In any event, the beneficence of the union is not of concern here, except insofar as that may have affected the sincerity of its stated goals. With nothing else to rely upon, I have for the most part taken these at face value.

3. Although gender is not a focus of this paper, and deserves a more complete investigation, the “industrial” nature of the union brought many women cannery workers into the membership.

4. Hoyt N. Wheeler, *Industrial Conflict: An Integrative Theory* (Columbia, SC, 1985), 5.

5. *ibid.*, 214.

6. Federal Trade Commission, *Report of the Federal Trade Commission on Distribution Methods and Costs, Part IX: Cost of Production and Distribution of Fish on the Pacific Coast* (Washington, 1946), 1; US Fish and Wildlife Service, *Fishery Statistics of the United States, 1942* (Washington, 1946), 149–50, 201; and annually to US Fish and Wildlife Service, *Fishery Statistics of the United States, 1957* (Washington, 1959); 250, 342.

7. US Fish and Wildlife Service, *Fishery Statistics, 1942*, 154, 201; and annually to *Fishery Statistics, 1957*, 256, 342.

8. Senate Subcommittee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Fisheries Legislation: Hearings before the Senate Committee on Commerce*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., May 8, 24, 25, 27, 1963, 113–115.

9. Federal Trade Commission, *Report*, 34.

10. Sumner Slichter, “Revision of the Taft-Hartley Act,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 67 (1953):168.

11. *IFAWA Views the News*, December 1942, 10.

12. Many fishers’ organizations of the Pacific coast prior to World War II were locally restrictive and ethnically defined (Arthur McEvoy, *The Fisherman’s Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries* (New York, 1986), 95–100, 172–173). Moreover, whether ethnicity was constitutive or not, the “clannish” nature of the fishery is almost always in fishers’ accounts of the times (see, for example, Pratt Peterson, “A Fisherman and a Whaler: Recollections of the Richmond Whaling Station, 1958–72” (Regional Oral History Office, Berkeley, 1990), 47; Tony Ghio and Dominic Ghio, “Fishermen by Trade: Sixty Years in San Francisco Bay” (Regional Oral History Office, Berkeley, 1990), 45). I am unfortunately unable to get at the critical question of ethnicity within IFAWA. A glance down the delegate lists at meetings indicates that the membership was mostly of northern and eastern European descent, despite the fre-

quent articulation of support for racial equality (for example, “ANB Fights Race Discrimination.” *IFAWA News*, April 1943).

13. Federated Fishermen’s Council, “Minutes of Executive Committee, Seattle, Jan 31, 1938,” *IFAWA Papers*, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

14. The United Fishermen’s Union (UFU) was created by the Salmon Purse Seiners’ Union (of Puget Sound), the Deep Sea and Purse Seine Fishermen’s Union of California, and the Herring Fishermen’s Union. The non-UFU unions were the Copper River and Prince William Sound Fishermen’s Union, the CRFPU, and the Alaska Fishermen’s Union (*IFAWA Views the News*, December 1942, 10).

15. Beachmen were those working anywhere but in the canneries or on the boats.

16. For example, subsection 2(i) of Contract #6 between the Alaska Fishermen’s Union and Alaska Salmon Industry, Inc., June 11, 1949, *IFAWA Papers*, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA: “Misrepresentation: Non-resident fisherman posing as resident shall be reported to the Territorial Revenue Dept., and no company shall be permitted to hire such man as a fisherman.” In addition, subsections 17(c) and (d) afford Alaskan residents earlier payment at season end.

17. “Historic Victories for CIO Fishermen and Allied Workers,” and “Japanese Maneuvering Is Threat to Fishermen,” *IFAWA Views the News*, August 1, 1941, 1.

18. “OPA Sets Ceilings on Fish,” *IFAWA News*, July/August 1943, 1. It should be noted that the ceilings for pilchard-sardine were instituted at a later date.

19. *ibid.*, 1.

20. “Give the Devil His Due,” *IFAW*, May 1944, 6; Jeff Kibre, “Price Stabilization—Key to Unity, Postwar Growth,” *IFAW*, July 1944, 1–2.

21. “No-Strike Pledge is Re-Affirmed,” *IFAW*, June 1944, 2; Howard Kimeldorf, “World War II and the Deradicalization of American Labor: The ILWU as a Deviant Case,” *Labor History* 33 (1992): 248–78.

22. Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, *Fisheries Legislation: Hearings before the Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce*, 84th Cong., 2nd sess., Oct. 10–Dec. 5, 1955, 302 (Table 2).

23. “Minutes of the Coastwise Salmon Conference, Eureka, CA, August 22, 1946, 3,” *IFAWA Papers*, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

24. “Minutes of the Coastwise Bottom Fish Conference, Seattle, October 30, 1946, 2,” *IFAWA Papers*, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA. During the war, the federal government bought eighty percent of Pacific salmon and sardine (Minutes of the Northwest Cannery Workers Conference, Seattle, December 7, 1946, 2, *IFAWA Papers*, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA).

25. “Minutes of the Coastwise Conference on Bottom Fish, Seattle, March 14, 1947, 5–6,” *IFAWA Papers*, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA; *Columbia River Packers Association v. Hinton*, 315 U.S. 143 (1942); “Memo to Anti-Trust,” *IFAWA Views the News*, September 1942; “Peterson Wins Anti-Trust Case,” *IFAW*, May 1944, 5. These concerns were not merely anticipatory. The California sardine fishery “failed” in the years immediately following the war (Paul Pinsky and Wayne Ball, “The California Sardine Fishery: Review of the Biological, Statistical and Environmental Information About the California Sardine” (San Pedro, CA, 1948), i-ii), and in 1946, San Pedro fishers were convicted of collusion under the Clayton Act (Proceedings Report of the Cordova Conference, Cordova, AK, October 25–27, 1947, *IFAWA Papers*, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA).

26. The Taft-Hartley Act required all union leadership to sign affidavits that they were in no way affiliated with, or in support of, communism and the Communist Party.

27. *IFAW*, July 1944, 3.

28. Federal Trade Commission, *Report*, 56.

29. Summary of Minutes of Conference of Northwest *IFAWA* Council, Seattle, May 27, 1950, 4, *IFAWA Papers*, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

30. *ibid.*, 4.

31. “The *IFAWA*-*ILWU* Merger,” *IFAW*, March 1949, 7. There were some whose opposition to the merger was sufficiently strong to leave *IFAWA*. For example, some of the Alaska leadership formed the Alaska Independent Fisheries Federation one month after the decision to merge (Northwest *IFAWA* Council, 4).

32. CIO decision, cited in SP: Slichter, “Revision,” 168.

33. “Around Fishermen’s Wharf” (San Pedro, CA), June 6, 1950, Collected *IFAWA* papers, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Library, San Francisco, CA.

34. "Minutes of the Coastwise Fisheries Conference, Seattle, April 9, 1952, 8," IFAWA Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

35. *Local 36 IFAWA v. US*, in Ben Margolis, Attorney, to Jeff Kibre, Secretary, IFAWA, October 6, 1949, Collected IFAWA papers, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Library, San Francisco, CA.

36. Federal Trade Commission, *Annual Report* (Washington, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958).

37. Gene Vrana, conversation with author, ILWU Headquarters, San Francisco, April 7, 1999.

38. Jeff Kibre, Washington Representative of the ILWU, to Sen. Frederick Payne, July 17, 1958, in Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, *Fisheries Legislation: Hearing before the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce*, 85th Cong., 2nd sess., July 15–17, 1958, 276.

39. Vrana, conversation with author.

40. In addition, it is possible that IFAWA also had difficulty maintaining autonomy and focus within the ILWU. On the surface, the ILWU's organizational goals did not necessarily conflict with those of IFAWA, but it is also reasonable to expect that the interests of the wider ILWU membership would overshadow those of fishers and fisheries workers.

41. Bonnie McCay, *Oyster Wars and the Public Trust: Property, Law and Ecology in New Jersey History* (Tucson, 1998); Carol Rose, *Property and Persuasion* (Boulder, 1994); John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, (London, 1704); Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origins of Inequality," in *The Basic Political Writings* (Indianapolis, 1987 [1754]).

42. Carol Rose, *Property and Persuasion*.

43. Mark Somma, "Local Autonomy and Groundwater District Formation in High-Plains West Texas," *Publius* 24 (1994):53–62; Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 103–42; James Acheson, "The Lobster Fiefs Revisited: Economic and Ecological Effects of Territoriality in the Maine Lobster Industry," in *The Question of the Commons: The Culture and Ecology of Communal Resources*, ed. Bonnie McCay and James Acheson (Tucson, 1990), 37–65.

44. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (London, 1963) and E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*, (New York, 1975).

45. Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 162 (1968):1243–48.

46. For recent representative work in economics, see Oliver Williamson, *The Mechanisms of Governance* (New York, 1996), and in political science, Robert Keohane and Helen Milner, *Internationalization and Domestic Politics* (New York, 1996).

47. In this instance, I mean "environmental" in the broad sense. Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 33; Elinor Ostrom, "Institutional Arrangements for Resolving the Commons Dilemma: Some Contending Approaches," in *The Question of the Commons: The Culture and Ecology of Communal Resources*, ed. Bonnie McCay and James Acheson (Tucson, 1990), 250.

48. Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 185.

49. See, for example, Pauline Peters, "Embedded Systems and Rooted Models: The Grazing Lands of Botswana and the Commons Debate," in *The Question of the Commons: The Culture and Ecology of Communal Resources*, ed. Bonnie McCay and James Acheson (Tucson, 1990), 172.

50. See, for example, Bonnie McCay, "The Culture of the Commoners: Historical Observations on Old and New World Fisheries," in *The Question of the Commons: The Culture and Ecology of Communal Resources*, ed. Bonnie McCay and James Acheson (Tucson, 1990), 209.

51. E. Paul Durrenberger and Gisli Pálsson, "The Grass Roots and the State: Resource Management in Icelandic Fishing," in *The Question of the Commons: The Culture and Ecology of Communal Resources*, ed. Bonnie McCay and James Acheson (Tucson, 1990), 373.

52. Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 90.

53. Bill Maurer, "Colonial Policy and the Construction of the Commons: An Introduction," *Plantation Society in the Americas IV* (1997):115.

54. For example, in McCay and Acheson's edited volume *The Question of the Commons* (Tucson, 1990), none of the sixteen case studies address what might be considered "industrial" natural resource management systems (although many of the communities examined are in so-called "industrialized" countries). For instances of institutionalist study of industrial economies, see Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, 103–42, or Somma, "Local Autonomy."

55. Following the argument implicit in Ostrom (*Governing the Commons*, 143–181) I do not think that the success of a CPNRM institution has any necessary relation to its status.

56. McCay and Acheson, "Human Ecology and the Commons," in *The Question of the Commons: The Culture and Ecology of Communal Resources*, ed. Bonnie McCay and James Acheson (Tucson, 1990), 8, 34.

57. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, 1965), 51.
58. "Conference on Bottom Fish," 1947, 7.
59. For instance, the 1902 Alaska Fishermen's Union (AFU) strike at Nushagak River was part of the legendary past that IFAWA leadership frequently cited. The AFU threatened a tie-up (a fishers' strike, in which all boats stay in port) if the price per fish was not raised from two to three cents, and were successful (*IFAWA News*, December 1942, 10).
60. "Proceedings of the First Annual Convention of the International Fishermen and Allied Workers of America (CIO)," Bellingham, WA, December 4–8, 1939, 3, Collected IFAWA Papers, ILWU Library, San Francisco, CA; *IFAWA News*, December 1942; US Fish and Wildlife Service, *Fishery Statistics, 1942*, 149–50, 154, 201.
61. US Fish and Wildlife Service, *Fishery Statistics of the United States, 1949* (Washington, 1952), 186–7, 238.
62. CRFPU, "Constitution and Bylaws," Membership Section 5.
63. Minutes of the Conference on Bottom Fish, Astoria, Oregon, March 22, 1949, 2; Alaska Salmon Industries-Alaska Fishermen's Union Contract #6, Bristol Bay General Agreement, June 11, 1949, 25(2)(a); Coastwise Salmon Conference.
64. Pinsky and Ball, "California's Sardine Fishery."
65. For a review of this literature, see Susan Mann, *Agrarian Capitalism in Theory and Practice* (Chapel Hill, 1990).
66. On unions as representative of working-class consciousness, see (among others) Louis Adamic, *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America* (Gloucester, 1960); and David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Baltimore, 1989), 115ff. Similarly, there is a century-old debate on the reasons for the apparently inadequate organizational capacities of "peasants" and simple commodity producers throughout the world. See Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (Chicago, 1913); Vladimir I. Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (Moscow, 1967) and more recently, Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1973), and Jeffrey Paige, *Agrarian Revolutions: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World* (New York, 1975).
67. For a full discussion of these complexities, see Erik O. Wright, *Classes* (New York, 1985).
68. For example, Miriam Wells, "What is a Worker? The Role of Sharecroppers in Contemporary Class Structure," *Politics and Society* 13 (1984):295–320; and John E. Davis, "Capitalist Agricultural Development and the Exploitation of the Propertied Laborer," in *The Rural Sociology of Advanced Societies*, ed. Fred Buttel and H. Newby (Montclair, NJ, 1980), 133–153.
69. Such a federation—the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations—now represents many Pacific coast smallboat fishers.
70. By "multi-gear," I mean IFAWA represented fishers from all major fishing techniques: trolling, longlining, seining, trawling and gillnetting. Fishermen mostly use only one type of gear, and there can be considerable animosity between conflicting gear users.
71. Some recent work in geography suggests that space should always play this critical part in analyses of capitalist societies' class structures. See Harvey, *Urban Experience*; Michael Storper and Richard Walker, *The Capitalist Imperative: Territory, Technology, and Industrial Growth* (Oxford, 1989).
72. Harvey, *Urban Experience*, 112.
73. *ibid.*, 111.
74. "There is today an ever-present temptation to suppose that class is a thing. This was not Marx's meaning, in his own historical writing, yet the error vitiates much latter-day 'Marxist' writing" (Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 9). "In the context of the capitalist mode of production . . . class has a more specific meaning that relates to the basic social relationships pertaining in capitalist society" (Harvey, *Urban Experience*, 111).
75. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 8–9.
76. 29 U.S.C. §213(a)(5).
77. Senator Frederick Payne, in Senate Committee, *Fisheries Legislation*, 1958, 101.
78. George Johansen to Sen. Warren Magnuson, July 9, 1958, in Senate Committee, *Fisheries Legislation*, 1958, 276.
79. *IFAW*, June 1945.
80. *IFAW*, May 1945, 6.
81. Coastwise Conference on Bottom Fish, 1947, 5.
82. Testimony of Victor Turpin, in Senate Committee, *Fisheries Legislation*, 99.

83. For example, Contract #6, Bristol Bay General Agreement, Section 14(a).
84. For example, Alaska Salmon Industry, Inc. Contract #30, 1949, Section 12, IFAWA Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA.
85. Contract #6, Bristol Bay General Agreement, Section 6; Alaska Salmon Industry, Inc. Contract #30, Sections 8, 13, 15, and 25.
86. This credit relationship was very widespread (United States Department of Agriculture, Farmer's Cooperative Service, "Summary of Legal Cases, Legal Series No. 1" (Washington, April 1957)), and still holds in many fisheries today.
87. "Forward and Not Back: A Fighting Program for California Fishermen," IFAWA Local 34, San Francisco, no date, 1, Collected IFAWA Papers, ILWU Library, San Francisco, CA; CRFPU, "Constitution and Bylaws."
88. IFAWA members were not the only small producers to recognize this. Between the late 1940s and 1960s, farmers and fishers on both sides of the country tried to restructure their cooperatives as unions in light of their de facto status as "employees." See USDA, "Legal Series No. 1;" United States Department of Agriculture, Farmer's Cooperative Service, "Summary of Legal Cases, Legal Series No. 12" (Washington, April 1960)
89. Harvey, *Urban Experience*.
90. The Alaska Fishermen's Union, founded in 1902, was headquartered in Seattle for its entire existence.
91. See, for example, Carey McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception* (Berkeley, 1949), or Wallace Stegner, *Joe Hill: A Biographical Novel* (Garden City, NJ, 1969).
92. Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (New York, 1997), ch. 2.
93. "Oppose Compulsory Arbitration." *IFAWA Views the News*, August 1, 1941.
94. Although I have not looked into it extensively, there are occasional comments in IFAWA's correspondence referring to similar efforts to disable agricultural cooperatives (see, for example, Cordova Conference).
95. Kimeldorf, "World War II," 248–50.
96. Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston, 1998).
97. Quoted in USDA, "Legal Series No. 1," 4–5.
98. McCay, "Culture of the Commoners," 196.
99. *ibid.* McCay also hints that in enforcing open access, the state often enabled what is known as the "tragedy of the commons."
100. Harvey, *Urban Experience*, 11.