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The Performers Alliance: Conflict and change within the Screen Actors Guild

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**THE PERFORMERS ALLIANCE:
CONFLICT AND CHANGE WITHIN
THE SCREEN ACTORS GUILD**

by

Arthur Thomas Lynch

**Bachelor of Arts
University of Illinois, Chicago
1977**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the**

**Master of Arts Degree
Hank Greenspun School of Communication
Greenspun College of Urban Affairs**

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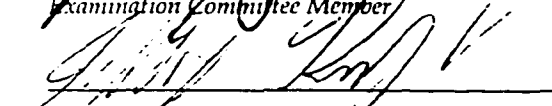
Master of Arts


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ABSTRACT

The Performers Alliance: Conflict and Change Within The Screen Actors Guild

by

Arthur Thomas Lynch

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This paper takes an historical critical research perspective on rapid change within one of the highest profile unions in the world, the Screen Actors Guild and in particular the emergence of a political force that identified itself as The Performers Alliance. The author was a member of the National Board of Directors of the Screen Actors Guild.

Parallels were found in the development of SAG through various stages of its history. Rhetorical analysis sheds light on the development of the Guild as a social movement and of The Performers Alliance as a dissident movement within the union itself. An argument is made that the Performers Alliance may be a successful social movement within the larger format of the Screen Actors Guild.

Questions arise as to whether unions will survive, how the nature of the working union member may evolve and shifts in the nature of the employer-employee relationship itself.

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CHAPTER 1

THE SCREEN ACTORS GUILD

“An organization of, by and for actors alone!”

- Eddie Cantor, October, 1933 (Rose, 1995, p.65)

Labor unions, born of the struggles of the nineteenth century, continue to face changes in management, economics, technology and public opinion. The pace may be increasing exponentially. This paper will study how one group, professional working actors, has been forced to deal with this change through the actions of a movement within their union and the demands of the membership the union represents. It will also show why the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and its political factions are worthy of consideration as a laboratory to review the evolution of organized labor well into the new century. This paper will view the dynamics of dissident rhetoric utilizing historical, dramatist, fantasy theme and social movement rhetorical analysis models.

The Screen Actors Guild, in particular the rise of a political faction within the union, can be seen as a model for political, ideological or social movements within contemporary unions and for the ability of organizations to adapt to change.

As a union on the forefront of the rapidly evolving entertainment technological revolution, the Screen Actors Guild faces political and economic forces from outside and within. The causes and nature of these changes, and the conflicts they create are already surfacing within larger, more traditional unions. There is a model, as a parallel exists between current day union struggles and the struggles at the time of the formation of the Guild in 1933. This paper will show that the union's current political factions have common roots with the founders of SAG. Both movements grew from times of rapid change, shifting economies, and dominant new technologies. In addition, several periods of evolution can be studied, as the Guild grew to face increased political, social, economic and technological change both within and outside the jurisdiction of SAG contracts.

This paper will look at the history of the Guild, similarities in challenges faced during the evolution of the Guild and the formation of a dissident movement and successful revolution within the union. It will look at the nature of acting as a profession, of labor in Hollywood and change within one of the highest profile unions in the world.

The Screen Actors Guild prides itself on being the crown jewel of international entertainment unions. It was formed during the Great Depression as a union to stand up for the rights, working conditions and position of actors as laborers in two of the growth industries of the Twentieth Century, motion pictures and broadcasting. As a political faction within SAG, the Performers Alliance (PA) is a contemporary dissident membership movement, which in four short years rose to sweep political control of the Guild. The group did so by mounting campaigns for and capturing all national officer positions, majority control of the powerful National Executive Committee and by

dominating over one third of the seats on the SAG National Board of Directors. The Performers Alliance also took control of the chair and thus the primary structure of all functional committees within the union.

As a union, the Guild faces new challenges: divisions within its ranks, rapid changes within the industry from technological advances and changes in business structure. All three may be reflective of the issues and challenges facing not just American Labor Unions, but society as a whole, in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Communication studies will be advanced through the further study of three basic themes explored in this paper. First, by an historical critical review of how a twentieth century generated industry is adapting to change in the early twenty-first century. Second, by looking at the effects resulting technological and corporate change are having within the film and related media industries. Third, and primary to this paper, communication studies will be advanced by looking at how small movements have an effect on established institutions (unions). The use of persuasion within a dissident movement and an evolution in the basic foundation of unionism will be discussed, along with technologies which may accelerate such evolutionary forces.

The History of the Screen Actors Guild

Illustrating the tenuous nature of the creative profession which is central to the Guild, Former SAG President William Shallert said, "Making a living as an actor is like trying to cross a rapidly running river, by stepping from one slowly sinking rock to another" (Prindle, 1988, p.11). To understand the profession and the union, it is necessary to review the history behind the Screen Actors Guild and its members.

The Wall of Presidents in the James Cagney Room of the Guild's headquarters contains the portraits of Ronald Reagan, Patty Duke Austin and a host of other high profile celebrity leaders. The Guild they chaired was founded and raised through adolescence in an age when a mass produced moving images meant film projection and the most readily available distribution was the local movie "house." The members of this union were seen by millions, often on a weekly basis, with some raised to the level of celebrity star (<http://www.sag.org>).

Like other unions, the Screen Actors Guild was formed to end eighteen hour work days (without overtime or meals) and one sided binding contracts (which amounted to indentured servitude), to provide basic contractual protections, a "fair" wage and a safe environment for the screen actor (<http://www.sag.org>). Like many other unions, the birth and growth of the Guild began with management taking what talent almost unanimously considered unfair advantage of their labor, including a cut in pay while the same owners invested heavily in buying movie theaters and other luxurious facilities and real estate.

SAG National Executive Director Ken Orsatti (1995), the highest-ranking employee of the Guild, relates what life was like in 1933 for screen actors:

Imagine working on a film with unrestricted hours, no enforced turn-around and no required meal breaks. Imagine working under a seven-year contract that you cannot break and more than likely will be forced to renew, for a producer who can tell you who you can marry, what your morals must be, even what political opinions to hold. This was Hollywood for actors in 1933 under the studio system. Rebel against the studio and you were in for a hard time, better to quit while you're ahead. Fortunately, a group of actors risked their careers to start the Screen Actors Guild. (p.34-35)

Even in those conditions, there were those who preferred to see the Guild as a mutual benefit confederation over a full-fledged union, in part because the reasons for its founding surpassed hourly wages and working conditions. There was much discussion at the formation of the Guild as to how much of a union it would really be, with several founders seeing it as a way to get past current problems but not as a traditional trade union. None-the-less, the union was formed as much to bring, no demand, respect for the profession of acting as to win employment for its members. The name Guild was selected to create the image of craft and art while offering the solidarity of the union movement (Prindle, 1988). Anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker (1951) says that the studios of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s looked upon actors as “children who do not know what is good for them; immature, irresponsible, completely self centered, egotistical, exhibitionistic, nitwits and utterly stupid” (p. 254). When, in the wake of the stock market crash and after forming their own studio-controlled union, the studios reduced pay by 50 % and sought to take away basic employment freedom of choice, a group of actors decided enough was enough.

Today, the Guild, as SAG calls itself, represents a wide range of ‘on camera’ and ‘voice over’ talent (on film, on video and digital media), including actors, background extras, dancers, singers, stunt performers, puppeteers, ‘folley’ and sound effects workers (see APPENDIX: Glossary for definitions of these and other film industry terms). The common element is that all SAG members use some or all aspects of their physical body as the instrument of their performance. Large studios, independent producers, production companies, advertising agencies and in some cases their clients are “signator” to Guild contracts and agreements. Traditionally, these employers utilized moving picture film in

the production of movies, documentaries, commercials and marketing or training presentations (<http://www.sag.org>). As video evolved as a production format, organization of the video media extended Guild contracts and protections to actors and performers on video.

The evolution from film to video, video to digital interactive and on to formats not even dreamed of a decade or so ago provides unique challenges to and often conflicts of interest for the Guild and its sister unions (Rose, 1995).

How This All Began

The American Motion Picture Industry began in heavily ethnic European dominated environments of New York and Chicago. Changing seasons, political payola pressures and undue influences by the underworld sent early movie moguls searching for a new home. After brief stops in cities and towns including St. Louis, Missouri and Flagstaff, Arizona, they found what they needed in 'sunny' southern California. Here they were free from the political and criminal nightmare of the eastern cities and here they had land, lots of land to expand. Smog is not a new development, for the foggy, somewhat smoky layer created by campfires, dust and the morning haze, provided the ideal natural filter for early motion picture cameras and film. Of greatest importance, and it goes hand in hand with politics and the criminal element, labor was inexpensive and higher paying industries had yet to gain a foothold in primarily agrarian California (<http://www.sag.org>, see also Prindle, 1988 and Rose, 1995).

In the days before commercial airplanes, before jets and fax and telex, it took a lifestyle commitment for a craftsman, whether it be actor or cameraman, set or costume designer, to relocate to the other side of the nation, almost the other side of the world.

Once they did, for the most part, they were stuck there, and management knew it. They also knew that the audience was oblivious to the details of how talent was groomed and how films were made. The public's only interest was in the final product. It was only a matter of time before the American Labor Movement would stretch into 'tinsel town' and management of the new glamour industry would find themselves dealing with many of the pressures they fled west to avoid (J. Hookey, 1999; also R. Weimer, 1998, personal communication).

By 1915, Hollywood had become a production center, with many movie studios in place. This particular period, the Progressive Era, was a time of growing corporate wealth and discontent and agitation among workers. From a labor point of view terrible working conditions dominated industry. Los Angeles was an "open shop" (non-union or competing union presence) town. With recent, significant organizing drives in other cities and industries to his credit, in 1916, Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) initiated an organizing drive, targeting skilled craft workers (such as carpenters, electricians, painters). With the movie industry centralizing in Los Angeles, instead of scattered across the country, it now seemed there was a chance for a union drive to succeed. The AFL considered the organization of the craft workers as the doorway to organizing other trades in Los Angeles. Over the next several years, the new unionists had several strikes, and survived agitation, strife, and problems with competing unions fighting over workplaces, especially the "open-shop" studios. (Ross, 1941; see also Nielson & Mailes, 1995). The decades ahead, through the depression, formed an era of union agitation, union organizing and growth, and corporate resistance.

As Franklin Delano Roosevelt entered the presidency in 1933, the Great Depression was at its historic height. On the West Coast a free spirited form of anti-union Republicanism prevailed. On June 16 FDR's National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) passed, forming the National Recovery Administration (NRA) (Prindle, 1988). The National Labor Board (NLB) was established under the rules of the NRA in August 1933. According to Neilson & Mailes (1995) the NLB formalized the conduct of labor relations, but did not have the authority to enforce the rules.

Actors' Equity, the stage actors union, made an unsuccessful attempt to organize the field in 1929. Four years later, in 1933, actors held informal organizing meetings at a private men's club, The Masquers, and at an affiliated club for women, the Dominos. Meetings were held in secret, using passwords, backdoors and alleyways to elude detectives hired by the studios. The group's objective was to correct abuses it felt was "heaped upon free-lance players" and to negotiate wages and working conditions for all performers (Prindle, 1988, see also <http://www.sag.org/>).

Equity's efforts to organize motion picture talent met with strong opposition from the studio bosses including MGM's strong willed young chief of production, Irving Thalberg. Thalberg is quoted as saying, "Actors are like children, no matter how many gifts there are on the Christmas tree, they always want the ornament at the top" (Rose, 1995, p. 55). Thalberg and others formed the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as a way of countering a union movement in the industry, providing certain protections and benefits, but only those which were acceptable or even profitable for management. In effect, at its formation in May, 1927 under its first president, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., the non-profit corporation offered the Academy of Motion Picture Arts

and Sciences as an alternative to the growing trend among all crafts toward unionization. Today the mission statement and official history clearly state that the "Academy's field of activity does not include economic, labor or political matters" (Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, <http://www.oscars.org>, see also Rose, 1995 and <http://www.sag.org>).

The studios and management may have had themselves to blame. With the arrival of sound in 1927, tremendous amounts of money were spent to incorporate the new technology into their production and distribution practices. Many silent era stars could not compete in the sound era because their voice did not match the sound image the public had built into its own minds. The studios had to invest in new talent, new technicians, new writers and make one of the most difficult and rushed transitions in the history of the technology of film. In addition they spent large amounts of money on the image of lavish studios and on acquiring theater chains at inflated prices. In short, when the stock market crashed, the studios were already operating so close to "the line" that they could not absorb the impact of a complete change in the economy and in banking. Rumors swept the industry that the studios would shut down and simply stop making motion pictures all together (Rosten, 1941).

To counter those rumors and keep what few investors that were still in a position to put money into their studios, the movie moguls announced that they had found a way to avoid disaster. Reacting to the federal government's banking moratorium in March, 1933, the studios announced temporary salary cuts of 50% for most workers, including actors, while requiring a six day work week of often more than a dozen hours a day. Five days later, after protest from employees, the Academy came up with a formula that still

represented sizable cuts (Ross, 1967). The pay cuts were the catalyst that led to the birth of the Screen Writers Guild on April 6, 1933, and gave new energy to actors who had been seeking union representation for almost a decade (Prindle, 1988).

Inspired by the efforts of the Writers Guild, six Actors met at the home of actor Ken Thompson to discuss formation of “a self governing organization of actors.” On June 30, 1933 SAG’s articles of incorporation were filed with eighteen actors signing on, with Ralph Morgan appointed as president of the fledgling union (Prindle, 1988).

The Motto: He Best Serves Himself Who Serves Others

The Guild’s Founding Board of Directors was made up of eighteen actors who risked their careers. At the time none of them were considered noteworthy stars. They included Leon Ames, Boris Karloff, Bradley Page, Alan Mobray, Ralph Morgan, Noel Madison, Kenneth Thomson, Alden Gay Thomson, Ivan Simpson, Richard Tucker, Clay Clement, Claud King, Morgan Wallace, Arthur Vinton, James Gleason and Lucille Gleason (Prindle, 1988). At this point, the Academy was the publicly recognized representative of actors. In early October, in protest of the Academy influenced NRA code and after resigning from the management created pseudo-union, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Groucho Marx and Charles Butterworth arranged a meeting at which twenty-one stars agreed to join the new union. They included people like Jimmy Cagney, Gary Cooper, Fredric March, George Raft and Adolphe Menjou. Four days later, rallied by the stars, over 800 actors gathered in a Sunday night meeting at the “lavishly appointed” El Capitan Theater and cheered when the first elected president of SAG, Eddie Cantor, called for an organization “of, by and for actors alone” (Rose, 1995, p.65).

The move to unionize actors was far from unanimous. Among the actors who opposed the formation of SAG, at the cost of having their memberships in Actors Equity revoked, were the following well entrenched studio system stars: Rosalind Russell, Lionel Barrymore, Robert Warwich, Harry Worth, Elizabeth Allen, Wallace Beery, Edmund Breeze, George Brent, Richardo Cortez, Roy D'Arcy, Eric Linden, Lucien Littlefield, Conrad Nagel, Jack Oakie and Reginald Owen (Prindle, 1988).

While over half of the members of the new Guild earned under \$2,000 a year (a figure which has not changed in over fifty years), the new union needed to counter an image of high paid and glamorous stars earning \$5,000 in a single week or as much as a quarter of a million dollars a year, to a public out of work and under the full pressure of the depression. To do so, they joined with Hollywood's most militant union, the Writers Guild, in drafting a joint telegram to President Roosevelt pointing out that "the motion picture companies are not being bankrupted by salaries to talent but by the purchase and leasing of theaters at exorbitant prices, caused by the race for power of a few individuals desiring to get a stranglehold on... the box office" (Rose, 1995, p. 66). While talk of an actors' strike grew on the street, on November 13, 1933 President Roosevelt invited his personal friends and political supporters, SAG President Eddie Cantor and producer Joe Schenck, one of a handful of Hollywood management who supported the formation of the actor's union, to his retreat at Warm Springs, Georgia, to discuss the National Industry Recovery Act of 1933, which called for fair practice codes to be drafted and enacted for every industry, standards to be administered by the National Recovery Administration in Washington, D.C. (Rose, 1995).

Frank Rose (1995) writes that the industry's code "enshrined every monopolistic procedure the studios had put into practice since they were formed as well as several they tried to achieve but hadn't" (p. 64). Cantor's meeting with the President, coupled with the recent conversion of super star Mae West to the union, led to the elimination of sections giving power to the studios in such areas as talent raiding, agency conduct and stars' salaries by executive order. It was the first of many victories for the fledgling actors' union (Rose, 1995).

A new union requires a fresh mission statement. Founded under the banner "He best serves himself who serves others" (SAG, 2000 [http](http://www.sag.org)), it became obvious from the start that the new union would represent the full range of professional talent, from the lowly background performer (extra) to the biggest star. The new union's mission was spelled out by President Eddie Cantor in the March 15, 1934 premiere issue of the Screen Actors Guild newsletter, then titled The Screen Player:

The Screen Actors Guild is, as far as I know, the first organization of all actors in Hollywood. It was born of the realization that the high-salaried star and the struggling extra have certain problems in common, as employees in the actors' branch of the motion picture industry. The conduct of the Guild and its experiences during its first year of existence have borne out the existence of the economic fraternity of the star, the freelance player and the extra. (Krizman & Yaros, 2000, p. 24)

In the Studio System that existed, the vast majority of actors, stars or otherwise, were full time employees of a studio, loaned out to other studios in ways similar to today's baseball trades, with little say in the process. It is significant that Cantor refers to background players and freelancers as equal to stars in the studio stables:

For the first time, the actors have an organization which is constantly battling for their rights and the betterment of working conditions, along the lines of justice, fair play and general public welfare....It is, however not purely for selfish motives that the Screen Actors Guild exists. What benefits the actors, benefits the entire motion picture industry, through the harmony which it engenders. The Screen Actors Guild has worked, and will continue to work sympathetically with every organization striving to attain the general betterment of working conditions through the entire field of motion picture activity (Krizman & Yaros, 2000, p. 24).

1934 SAG proposed the Motion Picture Code of Fair Practice. The same year efforts Actors' Equity (AEA) ended efforts to unionize the motion picture industry (<http://www.sag.org>).

In 1935 SAG became a national organization, joined The American Federation of Labor and the Equity spearheaded Associated Actors and Artistes of America [correct spelling for 4A's]. By 2000, the 4A members' unions include three large unions and several smaller, principally New York City area associations. These include the Screen Actors Guild, The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Actors Equity Association, American Guild of Musical Artists, American Guild of Variety Artists, Guild of Italian American Actors, and the Hebrew Actors Union (<http://www.sag.org>).

In 1936 The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences finally stated that it did not represent professional actors as a bargaining unit, but only did so after pressure was brought by celebrities under the SAG banner who boycotted the Oscars in large numbers. Studio boss Irving Thalberg had sworn he would die before accepting the Guild. In 1936, Thalberg died and in 1937, the studios accepted defeat and signed a contract with the

Guild that, for the first time in Hollywood, gave actors a sense of power.

(<http://www.sag.org>).

In the summer of 1937, 96% of Guild members authorized a strike if necessary over the issue of union representation. As a result, major studios began to accept the Screen Actors Guild as the bargaining organization representing their on camera talent and membership in the union became mandatory for anyone with a strong interest in acting for the camera (<http://www.sag.org>). Many of those early members of the Guild voiced the same praise for its early work, saying, “we were finally treated like human beings, not cattle or slaves” (<http://www.sag.org>).

By 1937, which was also the founding year for the American Federation of Radio Artists (AFRA, later expanded to include Television), SAG membership ranks grew to 5,000. Also in 1937, with the support of the Democratic Party and President Roosevelt, jurisdiction was clearly set as a national union, with offices in New York and Los Angeles. Major labor issues included recognition of the Guild as the sole bargaining agent for motion picture actors, stunt performers and extras, ensuring Guild access to sets for contract enforcement (Krizman & Yaros, 2000). Spurred on by a hostile attempt by the International Association of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE) to invade SAG and AFRA’s jurisdictions, the first of a long series of merger talks begins between the unions (<http://www.sag.org>).

Seven Decades, Similar Challenges

The 1940’s, under strong highly patriotic union presidents such as James Cagney, saw SAG’s full support of the war effort, including encouraging the donation of time and talents to the Armed Services, American Women’s Volunteer Services, and resolutions of

full patriotic support of the U.S. Government. Stars, such as James Stewart, put their careers on hold. Stewart became a decorated Army Air Corps Bomber pilot. Meanwhile other celebrities including John Wayne and Ronald Reagan kept making films, which were tailored to fire up the home front or, in some cases, train both troops and civilian industry workers (<http://www.sag.org>).

The Supreme Court dealt a fatal blow to the studios in 1940 with its anti-trust Paramount Decree ordering that the motion picture industry be broken up, clearing the way for independents to enter the industry. Suddenly, actors had the power to control their own careers (<http://www.sag.org>).

The 1940s represented important changes in the Guild and the industry, many of which were paralleled in the 1990s. Main labor issues of the war and early post-war period included a possible merger of all performer unions, the continuing development of new technologies (then defined as television and refinements in sound technology), and the 1945 formation of an extra's autonomous Screen Players Union. Later renamed the Screen Extras Guild (SEG), the background performers' union eventually gained national jurisdiction, with the exception of New York City, where actors chose to remain affiliated with SAG. By the late 1980s, SEG went bankrupt, with the jurisdiction reaffirmed for SAG by an emergency resolution of the SAG National Board of Directors. The price was significant, as in 2000 background actors continue to earn lower wages than might have if SEG had remained solvent (Krizman & Yaros, 2000).

SAG helped end a violent 1945 strike between IATSE and the Conference of Studio Unions (CSU) by refusing to honor CSU picket lines. A year later SAG refused to support Actor's Equity when it was under government criticism as being an

organization “seeking to propagandize the U.S. into a Communist form of government” (<http://www.sag.org>).

McCarthyism and a booming economy divided SAG in the late 1940s and into the 1950s. In 1947 the “Hollywood Ten” were questioned by the House Un-American Activities Committee. While First National Vice President Gene Kelly, Board members Marsha Hunt, Humphry Bogart and Bogart's wife, Lauren Bacall, went to Washington to defend the ten, their union did not support their actions. Under SAG President Ronald Reagan the Guild became one of the first unions to require a loyalty oath. The Hollywood Blacklist split the union politically and left scars that veteran actors felt well into the 1990s. John Randolph starred in or co-starred in over 100 motion pictures and was active in the early days of television prior to his refusal to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). For his stance, he was kept from working in film or television for over a dozen years. His career continued on Broadway under the state actors union's (Equity) contracts. Actors Equity Association (AEA) refused to require an oath and was branded by McCarthy as a Communist sympathizer organization (J. Randolph, personal communication, January, 1998; see also <http://www.sag.org>; and see also Prindle, 1988).

As SAG President, Ronald Reagan fought for and gained Guild jurisdiction over filmed television, commercials and industrials. SAG historian Ken Orsatti views the commercial and television contracts as a significant reason in the growing weakness of the Studio System. With the advent of television, the studio system was dealt its final blow. SAG was able to win rights for actors through its first commercials contract in 1950, residual payments for television reruns in 1952 and, in 1960, after a strike,

residuals for films shown on television. With the implementation of the Pension and Health Plan, won in the 1960 negotiation, and residual gains, SAG's role in filling the studio system void and finding the means to empower its members was well on its way (K. Orsatti, personal communication, 1999; see also <http://www.sag.org>).

In 1953, SAG President Walter Pidgeon oversaw the Guild's first contract strike, resulting in full national jurisdiction over filmed television commercials. Meanwhile Reagan continued to establish sound health and pension plans and was a prime mover in the area of launching a residual based compensation package. Heavily industrial Detroit, home of the television advertising driven automotive industry, became the first official branch office outside of New York and Hollywood (<http://www.sag.org>).

In the late 1940s the Studio System officially crumbled, as the Supreme Court ordered studios to divest themselves of their theater or distribution and exhibition chains. In 1950 another major shift occurred for the Hollywood actor, with James Stewart becoming the first actor to agree to make a major motion picture in return for a back-end share of the profits. Orsatti writes, "When Jimmy Stewart negotiated to work on Winchester '73 (1950) for a percentage of gross receipts, he set a precedent for star deal power that is still in force today." (p.34) This, according to Orsatti (1995), proved to be a two edged sword:

While there was reason to rejoice at the empowerment stars enjoyed with the dissolution of the studio system, for the non-star contract players, risk and insecurity were the inevitable side effects. The great dominant parents had sent their children out into the world to fend for themselves: guaranteed employment as it existed with the old studio contract was obsolete. However, while the studios were gone, a more

benign guardian angel remained to fill the void in the form of the Screen Actors Guild.

(p 34)

By 1960, under SAG President Ronald Reagan (president from 1950-1952 and 1959-1960), Guild membership grew to 13,685 members with offices added in San Francisco, Chicago and Boston. Labor issues included the sale of theatrical motion pictures to television without compensation to performers. The joint funding by producers of the Guild's first Pension, Health and Welfare fund was established. The 1960s also saw the launch of joint contract negotiations with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) for TV commercials, live broadcast TV and taped television programming.

President Dana Andrews (1963-1965) pushed for the creation of the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities, which became the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. As president between 1965 and 1971, Charleston Heston supported war efforts in Vietnam with several visits to the front. To encourage documentary and new filmmakers, Heston also sought the Guild's first low budget film and television contracts (Krizman & Yaros 2000). In 1969 the Guild board, "cognizant of the innate desire and need of actors to practice their craft, even under disadvantageous conditions" and "to encourage employment opportunities for Guild members," proposed the first low-budget theatrical contract (Orsatti, 1995, p. 34). It was approved by the largest membership vote in the history of the Screen Actors Guild. Heston warned of the monopoly of television networks.

As a result of increased international production of films and the spread of movie technology across the country, the late 1960s saw a serious "productions slump" for

California. As president, Heston fought “run-away production”, which was defined as any production which filmed outside of Hollywood or New York City. While many Guild members still refer to “run-away production” in this manner, the official meaning of the term involves production outside of the United States of product intended for consumption of use within this country (Krizman & Yaros, 2000).

Reflecting the expansion of the motion picture beyond Los Angeles, by 1970 offices were added in Florida, Dallas, Denver, Cleveland and Minneapolis. Membership expanded to over 22,000. SAG jurisdiction now included theatrical motion pictures, television films, TV commercials, as well as industrial and educational motion pictures. Once again, new technologies were the focus of major labor issues addressed in the 1970s, including cable, pay television, and the advent of home videocassettes. Changes in the Guild’s collective bargaining agreement were made to encourage domestic production, fight “run-away production” and encourage smaller or new filmmakers to sign union contracts. Between 1971 and 1973 SAG President James Gavin fought to unionize film and television product produced by the United States Government (Krizman & Yaros, 2000).

In 1973 a minor revolution occurred within the Screen Actors Guild, as a slate of candidates representing day players, film and television bit players, swept the election, led by popular television star Dennis Weaver. Weaver became the first candidate to unseat an incumbent SAG president. In 1974 television residuals in perpetuity were sought and won, for the first time protecting actors whose shows entered the popular and profitable domain of syndication reruns. The proliferation of nudity in films and a rapid

expansion of non-franchised talent agents were other issues of the turbulent 1970s (Krizman & Yaros, 2000).

In 1975 Kathleen Nolan succeeded Weaver, becoming the first female president of any American union. She became a fearless fighter against discrimination of any kind. As the appointee of Jimmy Carter, Nolan became the first performer of any kind to be appointed to the Board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (Krizman & Yaros, 2000).

With increasingly liberal leadership, under William Schallert from 1979 to 1980, Ed Asner from 1981 to 1985, Patty Duke from 1985 to 1988 and Barry Gordon from 1988 until 1995, the Guild entered its most militant strike period. In 1980 a four month strike was fought over the future of compensation for pay TV, cable, videocassette and the yet to be named predecessor to DVD, the videodisc. Setting the stage for the 2000 commercial contract negotiations, SAG members in 1979 and 1980 were told that once negotiated compensation terms would be difficult to change later. SAG struck again over similar issues in other areas of jurisdiction in 1987 and 1988. But the longest and most devastating strike of the decade effected SAG as a supporting sister union to the Writers Guild, which struck for 154 days in 1988, in effect shutting down production for an entire broadcast television season (Krizman & Yaros, 2000).

In 1974 the Nevada branch of the Screen Actors Guild was formed in Las Vegas. In the later 1970s and early 1980s additional branches were formed in Philadelphia, San Diego, Atlanta, Arizona and Houston (<http://www.sag.org>).

In 1980, the over 50,000 members looked with interest at a possible reuniting merger with the Screen Extras Guild and with their independent sister, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA). Meanwhile the negotiating units for

management did merge into the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, against whom SAG negotiates theatrical, meaning film and television, contracts (AMPTP) (<http://www.sag.org>).

In 1990, after two failed merger ballots and the bankruptcy of SEG, by emergency action of the National Board of Directors, the Screen Actors Guild regained background talent or extras jurisdiction on a national basis. Precedent was found in SAG's continuous jurisdiction over background talent in the New York City market, dating back to the formation of the Guild. As a result of failed merger initiatives, SAG could not assume full jurisdiction and had to enter into and accept a lower base of compensation for background talent. Despite a lack of support from membership, the National Board of Directors felt that to allow a large segment of performers to be left without union representation was not an acceptable alternative. This division within membership remains an issue today (<http://www.sag.org>).

According to SAG statistics, in 1996 more than 85 percent of SAG's 90,000 members earned less than \$5,000 a year under Guild contracts (SAG Annual Report, 1997). While seven-digit movie deals make headlines for some stars, creating a false impression that all actors are highly paid, the reality is far less glamorous. The second half of the 1990s saw a major call for increased income, stronger contract protection and the protection of performers' images and talents using any and all legal and contractual means possible.

The union joined the international fight for intellectual, property and human rights through aggressive and expensive membership in organization such as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and a legislative lobbying focus on basic human rights. SAG supported unsuccessful attempts at a National Health Plan, stepped

up a renewed fight against run-away production, this time defining it as any production filmed or taped for principal distribution within the United States which is shot in its entirety or in principal amount outside of this country. The use of member funds in what some perceived as political pursuits contributed to dissident opposition, which as the decade progressed became a part of more organized dissension against elected officers and staff. Under presidents Gordan (1990-1995) and Richard Masur (1995-1999), SAG took aggressive steps to become a truly national union, with membership representation coast to coast. At the same time as talks of a merger with AFTRA began to bear fruit, an aggressive expansion of branches from Puerto Rico to Hawaii occurred, with SAG's branch offices numbering 36 by 1999, 52 when joint AFTRA-SAG offices are considered (Krizman & Yaros, 2000).

Change and Challenges for the Membership of the Guild

In 1999 the membership of the Screen Actors Guild exceeded 97,000. The three-decade long talks of merger with AFTRA came to an end, when SAG's membership rejected the proposed merger structure and documents. After decades of joint contracts, a joint office or caretaker arrangement of shared responsibility in many cities and a tacit approval to overlap jurisdictions in the areas of video and the Internet, it became apparent that the two unions would not join forces on a formal basis (see APPENDIX for information on the planned merger of the Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA). The issue became how to keep the pre-merger cooperation, referred to as Phase One, intact and continue to operate as separate but equal unions with some gray areas of cross jurisdiction (Krizman & Yaros, 2000).

During the 1990s, successful actors gained more control of their career and future by the taking on the role of producers and studio executives. Orsatti (1995) wrote, "Today, the freedom and power for stars brought about by the demise of the studio system, is evident in the fact that most stars have their own production companies, becoming, in essence, their own mini-studios. The actor who produces, directs, initiates his/her own projects is no longer a phenomenon but an accepted part of the industry" (p. 35). But, for those actors "who pound the pavement to act, who choose not to direct or produce, who do not have the option of becoming their own studios," Orsatti wrote, "the challenge is to face an "increasingly complex and diversified industry that, with technological advances, morphs almost daily....an industry with unemployment rates that remain shocking" (p. 35). How the Guild faced those challenges and the plight of the self proclaimed rank and file working actor led to a division in leadership, which may bring major changes in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

One of the challenges facing the Guild in 2000 is how to attract the celebrity actors back into its government and committee ranks without violating any labor law restrictions on producers (management) becoming directly involved in the union. The stars who carry the most weight in any labor dispute, legislative battle or membership rallying efforts, may be limited in their ability to serve on committees or elected office by the very financial reality of the business. To earn top dollar, under maximum tax and legal protection, stars often become producers or the owners of production entities. Orsatti's reference to "becoming their own studios" includes the production interest, which may be necessary to make a living in the motion picture, television or commercial talent industries. In addition the issue of salary compression, or the increased difficulty of

earning more than scale on a single job and working enough days to earn a living as an actor, is of paramount concern to the rank and file in Los Angeles. All actors are affected by a decrease in payment relative to an increased use of their talents, images or voice.

Going into the new century over 100,000 SAG members earn over 1.6 billion dollars in contract dollars each year. This compares to 1980 with \$385 million, 1960 with \$70 million and 1930 with an unadjusted earning of \$35 million dollars per year (Krizman & Yaros, 2000, see also <http://www.sag.org>).

An Actor's Life

When an actor does his/her job, the audience suspends disbelief and believes the actor is the character they are portraying. Actors are paid to make their job look easy and to minimize the percentage of the audience who perceive them as acting. Meanwhile actors face a constant chain of employers, ever changing in name, employment entity, job requirements and demands of their skill. It takes time, talent, dedication and study to aspire to earn a living as an actor.

The Screen Actors Guild of the new century is unique among unions in many ways. Perhaps the most unique feature of the Guild is that its membership consists entirely of film and television performers who work on a per contract basis and move routinely between employers over the course of most years, much less careers (Prindle, 1993). This structure is different from conventional industries with relatively stable work forces and an organized, structured business environment because most film and television industry projects are put together from scratch, with new payrolls, different crews, different talent needs and even different locations on a national or international basis.

Gone is the studio system where films were shot within the stone walls or motion picture communities in Hollywood or New York. Gone is the nurturing yet at the same time abusive system which hired starlets by the hundreds, put them through school, provided rigorous training and graduated the lucky few into full time employment on the studio lot (Prindle, 1993).

Understanding the nature of actors, the way they make their living, their motivations and aspirations is important in understanding why some of the members of the Screen Actors Guild would prefer to remain autonomous from other unions.

Most actors see their work as a craft, an art and a way of life. Others are attracted to the industry by the glamour and promise of fame and fortune and the outside perception of an easy way to make a living. According to a survey conducted by David Prindle (1988) film actors tend to be more mercenary and politically conservative while stage actors are more idealistic and artistic minded. Prindle and other sources confirm that within the SAG board room there are elected officials with views covering the full range of American politics and economics. Yet all have several things in common, including an interest in working for the betterment of their industry and their peers.

As artists and workers, actors are among the most misunderstood of professionals. According to actor Anthony Zerbe, "Acting is easy, or perceived to be, because we work so hard to make it look natural, to not let the work show, to suspend an audiences' disbelief and to play the play" (personal communication, August 29, 1999). The Bureau of Labor Statistics describes the profession of acting:

Acting demands patience and total commitment, because there are often long periods of unemployment between jobs. While under contract, actors are frequently required

to work long hours and travel. For stage actors, flawless performances require tedious memorizing of lines and repetitive rehearsals, and in television, actors must deliver a good performance with very little preparation. Actors need stamina to withstand hours under hot lights, heavy costumes and make-up, physically demanding tasks, long, irregular schedules, and the adverse weather and living conditions that may exist on location shoots. And actors face the constant anxiety of intermittent employment and regular rejections when auditioning for work. Yet in spite of these discouragements, the “passion to play,” as Shakespeare called it, still motivates many to make acting a professional career. (<http://www.sag.org>)

Being an actor is perhaps one of the most difficult ways to actually make a living. Of the over 100,000 members of SAG nationwide, over 46,000 live within the greater Los Angeles area (<http://www.sag.org>). There are estimates of four to as many as ten times that number of qualified non-union actors available in the same talent pool. Union and non-union actors compete for individual roles, which in film may be as little as one day of work for a few hundred dollars, or a day as a background extra for under \$100. It may take one or several hundred non-paid auditions to land that one-day's work. An actor may work dozens of days a year or none at all. Then too there are the expensive classes necessary to keep their skills up, the cost of professional photographs, video and audio tape, of postage and time spent marketing themselves to potential employers. Casting Director and producer Don Finn says of actors, “They are not acting for a living, they are acting for their craft. What they are doing for a living, besides waiting tables and taking 'day jobs', is auditioning. You might as well call them auditioners” (personal communication, March 15, 1997). Finn went on to point out that each actor “should

think of themselves as their own little corporation," and part of the requirements to be a successful corporation is to join and participate in one or more professional actors unions. Longtime SAG Board member Joe Ruskin, whose career includes appearances on the original "Star Trek" and many other television and film projects, states that, "Actors live in fear of rejection each and every day. If they are successful they fear it will end, if they are struggling they fear they will have to do something else for a living and give up a very important part of themselves" (personal communication, January, 1999).

For these and other reasons, many actors think of themselves as different from the rest of society. They sit on the outside looking in, observing, studying, emulating and imitating what they see. Many members of other unions view actors as not working for a living, because actors do not work nine to five for five work days in a row and do not always have to get their hands dirty or work up a daily sweat. Actors know that they are working every waking hour, even as they do other jobs, developing their craft and being ready when the time comes to be able to do what they consider to be the most important thing in their life, to do a role and to act.

A Truly Democratic Union

The Screen Actors Guild represents a membership which may not be steadily employed (an estimated 90% of serious full time actors are out of work at any given time, with as high as 80% of the SAG membership not employed in the field their union represents), may or may not be serious about their trade, and which outside of the craft remains a part of the myth of Hollywood. Most of society fails to understand what it is to be an actor, beyond the performances they witness. Today 85% of union actors make

under \$2,000 a year at their craft, with fewer than four percent living their upper middle class to wealthy lifestyles solely on their income from acting. (Prindle, 1988, see also <http://www.sag.org>). Published reports vary, however most agree that as many as six out of ten members of the Screen Actors Guild go without any acting related income in any given year.

The Guild has been called the one truly democratic union in the United States because it functions with freely elected officers who, even at the level of the national president, are not paid or compensated for the time they invest. It is a union made up of actors working for actors, who in turn hire paid staff to carry on the day to day functions of the Guild, including legal counsel and financial consulting. While this may sound altruistic, it is also true as a long list of presidents, officers and board members have had to put their careers on hold, spend time away from family and jeopardize their own relationship with agents, casting directors and management in the interest of what is good for the membership of the Guild (Prindle, 1988).

Screen Actors Guild Nevada Branch Treasurer Vickie Sutton summarized her view of why the Screen Actors Guild is unique:

This union is unlike any other union. Our union is so different. It's about a dream, working in that dream, pursuing that dream. Members are much closer to their union and what it represents. The membership is so diverse, yet under one banner, able to vote on all contracts and be a part of every aspect of the union. I take great pride in my union (personal communication, March 2000).

Membership in the Guild differs from most other unions. In addition to full time actors, dancers, singers and other performers, SAG membership includes others who do

not earn their living within the industry, yet are as proud of their union and their union card as any Hollywood star. The vast majority of SAG's membership are not 'actors' in the true sense. The Guild has among its members people who may have looked right for a part and were in only one movie for a few lines, actors and extras who work on movie sets more for the enjoyment than the paycheck, those who are more management in their political leanings than pro-labor, and many who never took their jobs on a movie set seriously. There too are the producer or director's friends, under the obvious influence of management, who were given a part or given a letter of intent to allow them to join the Guild. While representing professional performers, the majority of voting members of the Screen Actors Guild are not themselves full working professionals within the industry or the craft (Back Stage West, 1994).

SAG is a national union, with a structure that centers on elected officers and a national board of directors. Local branches assist in providing services to local members and recommending any local contracts or variations from national contracts to the national board. All funds are distributed through the national office, with general budgets and appropriate specific requests administered by the elected treasurer and voted on by the National Board of Directors (SAG, Constitution and Bylaws, 1996-2000).

A Sister Union: AFTRA

As briefly mentioned in the review of the Guild's history, a second union formed to provide work place protection for radio broadcasters and radio actors, later expanding to include a new electronic media, television. The American Federation of Radio Artists was formed in 1937. To reflect the inclusion of television, in 1946 it was re-named The

American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA). This historic expansion into new media, while SAG remained a “film industry union”, set a precedence, which occasionally produces conflicts between the two usually cooperative unions. SAG remains a performers union, primarily representing actors on film, television and in commercial or industrial presentations. While AFTRA began as a performers union, it now represents a widening range of professional crafts within the broader scope of the communications and entertainment communities. AFTRA represents newscasters, sportscasters, disc jockeys, talk hosts, announcers, on camera actors, video background performers, voice artists, dancers, singers, musicians, recording artists, music video talent, interactive technology performers, a small segment of television and radio producers, a small segment of electronic technicians and professionals in specific writing fields. While SAG’s membership moves rapidly from production to production and employer to employer, a politically powerful segment of AFTRA’s membership hold regular ongoing jobs, most notably the on air broadcast talent who work fixed hours five or six days a week for a specific employer. AFTRA also represents another segment of the entertainment industry whose lifestyle and motivation is surprisingly similar to those of a Screen Actors Guild actor: recording artists. So, in effect there may be more in common between the unions than detractors admit (Harvey, 1996; and S. Scott personal communication, January, 1998).

There are real issues to address if the two unions are to co-exist into the future. Will they cooperate or will there be a jurisdictional turf war? AFTRA activists point out, with some degree of accuracy, that by rights of the original intent of the two unions, AFTRA should have jurisdiction over all video and most certainly have jurisdiction over the new

digital interactive media. A mutual agreement exists that provides case by case individual decisions on jurisdiction, sometimes decided by which union the producer / employer prefers to reach an agreement with. As an example, television situation comedies, which are produced on videotape and not film, are produced under Screen Actors Guild jurisdiction. Soap Operas, even if they are shot on film, fall under AFTRA contractual jurisdiction. Both unions agree that this scenario could one day pit the unions against each other on a grand scale (SAG Board Room, personal communications, 1995-2000).

A major structural difference lies in the democratic concept of open membership, by which entry level membership may be purchased without meeting any work or professional credentials. AFTRA's board and conventions have consistently refused to revoke open membership. It is referred to as an "open door" policy. (Harvey, 1996) To the actors in SAG, this means that anyone can claim to be an actor, simply by joining AFTRA. This process continues today despite pleas from the Screen Actors Guild and Equity. It can be argued that AFTRA's open door policy may make the broadcaster union flexible enough to adapt and survive changes (SAG Minutes, personal communication, 1998, and SAG Board Room, personal communications, 1995-2000).

AFTRA is structured as both a local and national union. AFTRA locals have widely divergent responsibilities, jurisdictions, dues and sometimes structures. They generate and manage their own treasuries while contributing to the national fund. National officers and a national board of directors are responsible for negotiating and enforcing national contracts while an independent union congress of members at large, including proxy voting, holds the power to override the board and create national policy, including

the nomination of a slate of national officers. Like SAG, AFTRA elected officials are volunteers, without a salary or benefit package (Harvey, 1996).

While a percentage of AFTRA members have consistent single employer incomes, most do not. SAG and AFTRA have sometimes conflicting responsibilities in representing on camera talent in television commercials, on television programs, in industrials, on interactive entertainment and in most every category of voice over. When the two unions formed, AFTRA's work by its nature included the broadcast and recorded voice, while SAG's workers were employed in projects recorded on film. As audio recordings began to be used in film production and, with the advent of video, film began to be broadcast on television, both unions had legitimate arguments for claiming representation of workers who traditionally fell clearly under the other union. Cooperation between AFTRA and SAG is common, however there remains the potential, and indeed in some cases the reality of producers playing the two unions against each other or seeking out the contract which is the least expensive or least restrictive for their project (R. Masur, personal communication, 1996).

An example of how the interest of the two unions may sometimes be in conflict came in early 1997, after both union boards had voted with a strong majority in favor of moving forward on merger. Concerns on the unilateral front of the two unions were raised over the World Intellectual Property Organization Treaty (WIPO) and its 1997 ratification by the US Senate. AFTRA and its national board strongly supported the ratification of the WIPO treaty, while SAG National President Richard Masur (of Los Angeles) vowed that his Guild "would actively oppose it" (Robb, February 4, 1997, p. 1). AFTRA National President Shelby Scott (who lives in Baltimore) fired off a letter to

Masur saying that SAG's opposition to the treaty "causes those of us who spent the past five years conceptualizing and constructing a new merged union to question whether the new union really is capable of understanding and addressing the needs of its diverse but contemporary constituencies" (Robb, February 4, 1997, p. 1). The WIPO treaty was drafted to protect the work of recording artists, including for the first time, protection of their intellectual property rights from misappropriation of their work in cyberspace.

In addressing his membership, Masur wrote that "our sister union, AFTRA, seems to have made some headway in securing treaty inclusion of some protections for sound recording artists...however, the lack of any protections for audiovisual performers places us in a position where we have no choice but to vigorously oppose...ratification of this treaty. And we will oppose it until such time as it includes real protections for audiovisual performers" (Robb, February 4, 1997, p.1).

Cooperation between the unions under Masur was never in dispute, in part because of his historic pro-merger stance and his friendship with AFTRA President Shelby Scott. Both were strong hands-on chairs, exercising parliamentary control under Roberts Rules of Order and interpreting those rules to gain the benefit for their presidential agendas. Both had been reelected by large majority mandates of their national memberships.

Chapter Summary

Actors are a unique mix of artist, craftsperson and employee. They view their needs as unique. Actors move between jobs and employers, resembling casual labor or self employed consultants, yet fight to remain classified as employees working for a single monolithic entertainment and information industry. Performers shoulder the individual

economic burden of their own training, wardrobe, and an almost constant search for work. They face an increasingly competitive work force. At the same time, they rely on their unions to negotiate and enforce contracts, protecting performers' wages and working conditions within the entire entertainment and information industry.

The Screen Actors Guild was formed in an age when things were different. A few major studios with a handful of powerful owners functioned as factories, producing entertainment and information for a world wide public. SAG was formed under pressure of large pay cuts for all actors and performers. Even though this occurred at the height of the Great Depression, from a labor perspective it also occurred simultaneously to large expenditures by management on the new technology of "talkies" and on the purchase of and building of large ornate movie palaces for the theatrical exhibition of management controlled films. The 1930s and 1940s saw record growth and profits for motion picture studios and broadcast companies. Over the decades that followed, the Guild adapted to changes in economics, politics and technology. These changes reflect Prindle's evaluation of SAG as a "truly democratic union." (1988)

The democratic nature of governance, geographic concentration of membership and flexibility of structure allow for direct observation and study of the internal operations of the Screen Actors Guild. Chapter Two will look at methodology and through a review of literature, the nature of entertainment union studies. This paper will look at the rapid growth within the Screen Actors Guild of a faction known as the Performers Alliance, which will be studied in further detail in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

Documenting history as it is happening, while reviewing the evolution of a creative communications union, required a multi-disciplined and flexible approach, anchored in an historical critical observation of events. Primary observation as a participant member of the Board of Directors of the Screen Actors Guild offered both opportunity and challenge, with access to primary sources on the history and development of the Screen Actors Guild, the Performers Alliance and the overall Hollywood union movement. A study, which began as an observation and analysis of the rhetoric of union merger, evolved into watching first hand the growth of and evolution to the level of establishment, a dissident movement within one of the two unions being studied. This movement effected and eventually eclipsed merger arguments in its long-term effect on the Screen Actors Guild, the union being studied. In addition, a strong parallel between technology and events within the Screen Actors Guild exist and needed to be studied to fully understand changes within the union.

A historical critical approach, utilizing a social movement model, best lent itself to the observation and analysis of a pattern of elements which have led to major change within the Screen Actors Guild at various times in its history. In addition elements of

dramatist and fantasy theme analysis help to explain the rhetorical techniques used by both sides in each conflict to influence the evolution of the Guild.

The primary focus of this study is a contemporary on-going evolution within the politics of the Screen Actors Guild. Primary literature sources include first hand observation, interviews and primary source evaluation, along with contemporary resources including the news media, trade press and the Internet. Additional resources included both academic and journalistic accounts of the formation of the Screen Actors Guild. An historical critical approach was used to observe and report whether or not the development of and cycle of the Performers Alliance fits dominant definitions of social movements and can be studied and used as a model for viewing the role of social movements within unions, its history and the current forces affecting its internal structure and politics.

Review of Literature

There are several areas of literature reviewed for the purposes of this study: a) studies focusing on investigations of the history of the entertainment and communications industry; b) sources which contain references to the Screen Actors Guild, AFTRA, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences or Actors Equity; c) archive and primary resource materials (including interviews, correspondence, meeting minutes, notes and first hand observation) concerning the history of SAG and the politics of the entertainment industry; d) literature which documents the emergence of new entertainment technologies; e) sources which document merger efforts and integrated marketing philosophies of entertainment industry corporations; g) communications

studies focusing on social movement analysis and h) studies on which the methodology on which this thesis is based.

This thesis demonstrates that the union and its current political factions have common roots in times of rapid change, shifting economies, dominant new technologies and the will to define an elusive segment of freelance based creative performers as a cohesive unit within the labor movement. These changing conditions, and the importance of serious study are addressed by Danae Clark in Negotiating Hollywood: the Cultural Politics of Actors Labor (1995)

Actors are laboring subjects who encounter and must negotiate the ongoing economic, political and discursive practices of their profession within the film industry. From a contemporary prospective, film scholars need to address the changing political economy of the film industry and how this affects the role of actors and other film workers. In addition to analyzing the diversity of production sites, we need a better sense of the relations among actors within the profession's hierarchy; of how various material and discursive conditions affect their current struggles over defining subject identities; and how the interrelations among different entertainment media influence the construction of the acting profession. Although cultural studies theorists have thus far reserved ethnographic analysis for spectators, ethnographic techniques would undoubtedly benefit research in this area. (p. 126)

A dependence and need to react to rapid changes in business structure as well as technology is studied in Gray & Seeber's (1995) Under the Stars: Essays on Labor Relations in Art and Entertainment. In the collection, Gray and Seeber

(1995) have chosen a broad look at the "Arts, Entertainment, and Electronic Media (AEEM)". The authors maintain that entertainment is a driving force in new technology, is highly visible, has high impact on society, is consumed by everyone, is made up of highly unionized labor segments, and has a high level of mutual labor-management interdependency" (p. 2). According to Gray and Seeber (1995), unlike traditional union workers "actors, writers and performers often hold other jobs to sustain them"(p.6) or participate in multiple professions simultaneously. While other unions branch out and represent workers in multiple professions and industries, most entertainment unions are insulated to their primary field. The Screen Actors Guild represents performers, and except for a small number of technicians, The American Federation of Radio and Television Artists represents only performers and broadcasters. Other aspects of labor within the entertainment industry include membership in and proportionate employment through multiple unions, and union members contracted as individuals on a job by job basis, often under diverse multiple employers. The labor-management relationship becomes one of employee to the industry, rather than to a single employer (1995, Gray & Seeber).

Recent dissertations concerning the film industry include Studio Labor Relations in 1939: Historical and Sociological Analysis (D. Hartsough 1987) in which the author discusses dissension and reform within the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. A second study is Actor's Labor and the Politics of Subjectivity: Hollywood in the 1930s (D. Clark, 1989) in which the author looks at actors identity as laborers and struggle for self-representation.

Another study by M.P. Lasky (1992), Off Camera? A History of the Screen Actors Guild During the Era of the Studio System looks at SAG's relationship with trade unionism, the studio system and critiques SAG's "accommodationist ethos".

The corporate changes in the film industry may be further researched in communication studies such as Is Hollywood America? The Trans-nationalization of the American Film Industry (Wasser, 1995) and Hollywood In The Information Age (Wasco, 1995). Trends towards multi-national mergers and global technology developed are reported in Policy Issues in Communications Technology Use (Dunn, 1995).

Studies about unions were researched and are readily available for further research. Recent examples that can be used include The New Economic Law and Democratic Politics: Unions and Public Policy, (Gould, 1995), The Transformation of U.S. Unions: Voices, Visions and Strategies from the Grassroots: Transformations in Politics and Society, (Tillman and Cummings, 1999), The Imperfect Union, (Hutchinson, 1972), and Hollywood's Other Blacklist: Union Struggles in the Studio System, (Nielson and Mailes, 1995).

S. Judson Crandall (1947) was one of the first scholars to analyze the birth and development of social movements. In Crandall's model, movements begin with a tangible need for change, from which someone begins to speak out with frustration and urgency. The second is a phase of propaganda and agitation. The third has followers growing in identity with the movement and evangelizing to expand the movement's reach and power. The fourth is formal or informal organization. The fifth involves leadership, action and the development of new converts. Sixth finds the movement becoming its own

institution or changing the institution it sought to change by becoming a part of it.

Seventh is eventual bureaucracy and the potential for a new movement to take on this new or revised institution.

The primary sources to illustrate the social movement aspects and characteristics of the Performers Alliance and Screen Actors Guild, fundamental to this study, were found in The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control (Bowers, Ochs & Jensen, 1993) and Persuasion and Social Movements (Stewart, Smith, & Denton, 1989). E.G. Bormann's various studies of rhetorical fantasy (1972, 1981, 1982, & 1985) have also been extensively applied to this study.

There are many well-researched texts on the industry as well as on the Screen Actors Guild. Books used in thesis research include studies of the industry and biographies of key individuals within the entertainment union movement. The primary sources used for this study include The Politics of Glamour, Ideology and Democracy Within The Screen Actors Guild (Prindle, 1985) Risky Business, The Political Economy of Hollywood (Prindle, 1993), The Agency (Rose, 1995) Stars and Strikes, Unionization of Hollywood (Ross, 1941).

Also utilized and available are the archives of trade publications such as the Hollywood Reporter and Daily Variety, newsletters, film and entertainment industry journals, biographies and memoirs. Articles by David Robb of the Hollywood Reporter have been used extensively as an outside source of record for Screen Actor Guild events. The Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA both have bound and in some cases microfilm minutes of their board and committee meetings, the AFTRA Congresses and of other select other entertainment labor organizations available for inspection at their offices in

Los Angeles. Interviews and conversations were conducted with actors, SAG board members, SAG staff members and other members of the film community (see also APPENDIX for a partial list of interview sources).

While ample support materials exist, there remains little substantial or even cursory material directly concerned with the proposed merger of the Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA, the Performers Alliance or the direct effects of rapid technological change on contemporary entertainment union contracts. The fact that secondary book publication resources are dated supports the argument that this study updates and adds to the volume of communication studies resources and provide a springboard for future studies. In addition, the author brings a personal and professional background in both media production and consumer electronics with the resources to investigate the effects of both on entertainment and communication industry unions. The author of this thesis has written articles on new technologies and how they will effect electronic consumers. This suggests the study and thesis are viable and contribute to the academic body of knowledge for future researchers and further study.

Methodology

A combination of research methodologies has been used in this study, including historic chronology, historical critical analysis and social movement rhetorical analysis. The researcher's role as a participant observer must be considered in evaluating observations, interviews and conclusions within this thesis. This study takes place over a six-year period, starting in 1994, with primary observations occurring between mid 1997 and early 2000.

The problem addressed is the issue of whether or not social movements are possible within the framework of unions, governments or businesses. Can a movement, which reacts to the perceived need for change within an established union, be seen as a social movement, or is it simply a faction within an institutionalized process? Even if the movement is not a true social movement, can a rhetorical social movement model help to observe and explain the dynamics of a dissident movement within a union?

As a participant observer, the use of subjective language may be necessary, although that use will be restricted when it is necessary to do so. This also creates the same challenges to neutrality as are faced by journalists, contemporary historians and biographers. The researcher of this study brings to it background and training in journalism and mass media marketing.

The primary focus of the study is the rise of the Performers Alliance, a group of agitators within the Screen Actors Guild. The formation of the Performers Alliance and its rise to prominence within the Guild will be studied and referenced to the overall structure and history of the Guild.

For this thesis, the work of Stewart, Denton & Smith (1989) will be used to test the validity of the Performers Alliance as social movement. The stages of a social movement as outlined by Stewart, Denton & Smith include a) genesis b) social unrest c) enthusiastic mobilization d) maintenance and e) termination. The concepts of agitation and control as described by Bowers, Ochs and Jensen (1993) will be applied to the actions of the Performers Alliance. The authors state that agitation exists when "people outside the normal decision-making establishment advocate significant social change and

encounter a degree of resistance within the establishment such as to require more than the discursive means of persuasion. Control is the response by the establishment to agitation" (p 4).

The researcher / author is not a member of the Performers Alliance. The researcher remained as neutral as possible and at times was sympathetic to the PA and its cause. At times both sides in the conflict studied have attempted to categorize the researcher as being sympathetic to or a member of the other side.

The argument that unions can give rise to a dissident movement motivated by the desire for reform will be studied using the Performers Alliance as a model. As a movement within a union, the Performers Alliance used a full range of marketing tools to support its platform and rapid rise from informal living room gathering to political dominance within the Guild. From traditional rallies and informational meetings to the aggressive use of the Internet, the Performers Alliance utilized a full arsenal of communications based organizing techniques to make its point of view the dominant view in governing the Screen Actors Guild.

A chronicle of events within the film industry and Screen Actors Guild is necessary to provide context and comparison with current issues. A modified participant observer approach was used to study recent events. Qualitative research methodology, according to Taylor and Bogdan, (1984) means, "collecting descriptive data and people's own words and behavior. "(p. 5). To this end, liberal use of personal observations and verbatim quotes allow for greater, unfiltered understanding, and offer strong comparisons and contrasts between the conflicting players. Taylor and Bodgan (1984) further state that participant observation, what is termed a phenomenologist approach, is research that

"involves social interaction between the researcher and informants in the milieu of the latter, during which data are systematically and unobtrusively collected" (p. 15).

Flexibility is an important part of this approach. As a participant observer, the ability to do this, while maintaining enough distance (literally and figuratively) for objectivity, has allowed both access and understanding of the unfolding events as the Performers Alliance formed and developed. As a participant observer, caution must be used to avoid "taking sides" and to respect privacy and confidentiality issues, with the ultimate goal of seeking validity. An important component of this research method is understanding the meaning of events from the perspective of the players involved, within the context of the background and environment of the members of the group.

CHAPTER 3

THE PERFORMERS ALLIANCE

The history and evolution of the Screen Actors Guild is continued in this section, which will examine developments since early 1997. These observations may shed light on the impact of new technologies, corporate mergers and the evolution of the entertainment industry into what may be the dominant economic force of the new century. As a case study, this paper will look at how, even in the international mega-merger economy of the entertainment industry, a small group of dissatisfied individuals, acting as a dissident movement, may still effect the future of and shape of an industry.

The purpose of this portion of this thesis is to review the formation, aspirations and rise of the Los Angeles based Performance Alliance (PA) and to look at the rhetoric and social actions of performers active in reinventing the Screen Actors Guild. The evolution of the PA as a movement using rhetoric and organizing methods will be examined primarily using the models of Stewart, Smith & Denton (1989) and Bowers, Ochs and Jensen (1993) and fantasy theme writings of Bormann (1972, 1981, 1982, 1983 & 1985).

The social movement model of Stewart, Smith & Denton is divided into five stages: genesis, social unrest, enthusiastic mobilization, maintenance and termination.

In the first stage of a social movement, individuals will become deeply concerned about a problem over the course of months, years or decades while the other side, perhaps an institution, will be unaware of the problem or not give it a high priority. As anger and

frustration builds, the leaders agitate for change, gaining others to their cause and gaining recognition from the offending institution. As the movement grows, members become committed to the cause, various tactics of persuasion, unity and confrontation are employed, and strong lines are drawn between friend and enemy. Next comes a time of either defeat, or victory, which will require new leadership and tactics to sustain the movement. Finally, comes the termination stage, in which the movement will take over, be absorbed into or become a new institution, or disappear. Early radical leaders of the movement may either adapt or go on to new causes.

Bowers, Ochs & Jensen describes agitation and control as it relates to social organization. In this model, a social organization is made up of structure, goal orientation and power. Different types of power, including reward, coercive, legitimate, referent and expert are used by either agitators or those in control to events. These groups also use rumor to direct information and influence results. The strategies used by agitators include petition of the establishment, promulgation, solidification, polarization, nonviolent resistance, escalation/confrontation and Ghandi/guerilla. Groups in control, or the establishment, use avoidance, suppression, adjustment, and capitulation. Various tactics are used to carry out these strategies.

In Bormann's Fantasy Theme Analysis a rhetorical vision, transformed by dramatic incidents, gives a group identity, purpose and unity and become for the group a social reality. Attitudes can change and be reinforced without the group being aware that persuasive forces are influencing it (1972).

The Birth & Formation of the PA: The Cause for Revolution

The Performers Alliance (PA) started to build a grass roots movement of Los Angeles actors dissatisfied with the 1996 Commercial and Industrial National contracts, in particular the only minor gains made in cable rates (Robb, October 8, 1997). The Performers Alliance, as a movement of its own, formed in reaction to what the founders saw as the lack of responsiveness by elected union leadership to threats to the livelihood of professional actors (Robb, 1997 and Board Room, personal communication, 1997-2000).

The founders of the PA felt their livelihood was being eroded by over-exposure to the audience on cable, by a lack of accountability for talent re-use in new technological mediums, by an industry move to pay only scale (the minimum wage allowed under a given contract) and by production leaving the country. Coming from outside the governmental structure of the union, they saw their union, the Screen Actors Guild, as being unresponsive to changes occurring as distribution and production technologies evolved beyond traditional film and broadcast television.

In March 1997, a small group of actors banded together to build a coalition for change. They were acting in response to a situation, which they perceived as negative for both themselves and their profession. Dissatisfaction over what was perceived as a weak three-year contract with management (film companies and agencies) for commercial provided a clear triggering event (Robb, March 11, 1997).

The genesis period, as termed by Stewart, Smith & Denton (1989) started when mounting frustrations began to be directed at the union, which was perceived as not doing a good job in negotiating the new contracts. This led to concerns over a perceived lack of

attention to the careers of actors by their unions. The union believed the issue was a minor one, one of many facing their membership, and in the negotiating process put a lower priority on the concerns of what became the Alliance, than on other equally pressing wage, working conditions and contractual concerns. The policy of the unions was to negotiate and avoid a direct and possibly violent work stoppage, which would eliminate all professional acting income and benefit payments for their membership. During the genesis phase, the negotiators for the union establishment were working in a world of management-labor compromise and co-existence, only mildly aware that there may have been a growing concern that more radical changes were necessary.

The new coalition of actors identified their common interests and developed a common plan of action (Burke, 1969). As a group and as individuals, they feared real challenges to their livelihood, their profession, their craft and their art forms. These challenges were coming from corporate conglomeration, mergers, new media, new ways of disseminating what they contributed to producing as talent, new ways for others to benefit from the use of their talents, voices and images. The PA pursued a clear agenda of agitation and social change (Bowers, Ochs & Jensen, 1993). They drew on stereotyped images of corrupt unions, on the perception that their elected representatives were too close and maybe even "in bed" with management. They were displeased with what they saw as unnecessary compromises and shifting priorities, with attention taken from their way of making a living in favor of other areas of employment by Guild members. Their shared vision was one of discontent, disenchantment and the need for a return to a back to basics role for union representation. Their need as a group was for hope and empowerment. They perceived their union, SAG, as drifting away from its primary

mission, which they see as providing for the well being and income of membership (P.A., 1999, http and SAG Board Room, personal communication, 1997-2000). The Alliance responded to and used perceived weakness in the contracts, a contested internal election and a perception of a union being led by those who are not working actors or who have lost touch with the struggle of those seeking to make all or most of their living as performers. In this way they met the definition of agitation as "a style of persuasion characterized by highly emotional argument based on citation of grievances and alleged violation of moral principles." The PA came from "from outside the normal decision making establishment" advocated significant change and encountered a degree of resistance within the establishment such as to require more than normal discursive means of persuasion (Bowers, Ochs, Jensen, 1993, pp. 3-5).

In keeping with the industry in which they made their living, in its early stages the Alliance used a Dramatistic Approach to illustrate issues and gain early converts. In reviewing the Dramatistic Approach and its applications to the Alliance, key elements are identified. The event itself is a theatrical one, in terms of profile, execution and actual profession. Symbols were used heavily to communicate at first dissatisfaction and common ground among dissenters, and eventually in the form of election rhetoric, ranging from petitions to signs, letters and fliers to speeches and rallies. There was a clear symbolic representation of the Performers Alliance as the party for working actors who fear a loss of or erosion of his or her livelihood. Rhetoric was used to seek common identification and eventually to persuade others that, in view of recent decisions, including the trade off in negotiating the commercial contract, it was time for a change. The combined rhetoric of the Alliance then went on to explain why it was time for a

change in elected leadership. A clear hierarchy existed in the form of a National Board of Directors and various committees of that board, including the Wages and Working Conditions Committee, which did the negotiating, and the Executive Committee, which serves as a work horse and filter before anything reaches the full board.

A Deliberate Choice of Change

The hierarchy of the existing union structure, at the time already in preparation for a dramatic transformation with the planned merger with AFTRA, represented the structure this new group of actors needed to choose to work within or to confront head on.

Concerned with their identity as actors and what they believed was the union's preoccupation with a much broader definition of performers, the Performers Alliance felt it was time to derail the merger, focus on protection of actors captured performances and aggressively fight for stronger contracts in the expanding media of cable and interactive media. (Robb, November 20-22, 1998). Acknowledging the reality that not all performers on camera or microphone consider themselves to be "actors," Alliance members rejected the term Actors Alliance or AA. The Performers Alliance coined their own name as a rhetorical rallying flag for working actors to rally around in the name of justice and making a living (J. Hookey, personal communication, 1998 and L. Carley, personal communication, 1997).

Behind the rise of the Performers Alliance a simultaneous debate occurred concerning the long sought after proposed merger with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Actors and motion picture, television and commercial performers were divided on a merger which would have put actors in a significant minority within their own union. A merged union, it was said, could have a broadcaster or a recording artist at

its head and a board made up of artists who had little or no understanding of what it is struggle to make a living as a working actors. Fear existed that the needs of traditional Screen Actors would be sold out by the heavily pro-merger Masur and his administration (Robb, November 11, 1998 and November 17, 1998). Concerns about SAG's handling of the merger and possible negative effects of the merger became an early rallying cause among actors attracted to the arguments of the PA's founders. Anti-merger actors handed out leaflets to fellow actors at a Screen Actors Guild membership meeting at Sheraton Universal in June 1997. The flyer headline read: "This is another in a long line of bad deals for SAG." The rhetoric was clearly chosen as a critique of SAG management in general, not just the merger process (Robb, June 2, 1997, p. 1).

The founders of the Performers Alliance had strong convictions about what was needed. In order to bring their ideas to life, the members decided they would have to energize their fellow actors and begin a revolution within their unions. This restoration vision (Bormann, 1981) would have to go beyond discussion; it would take organization and common action to come to fruition. The rally call to membership and eventual secret ballot votes may have been directly dependent on voting actors drawing from their own established vision of their union, one of unions representing fair compensation for labors, the worker's right to earn a living and support their families (Bormann, 1982). The Alliance may have been able to undermine support in the sitting SAG Board of Directors because actors, their immediate audience, viewed issues in terms of what was best for themselves and their personal interest without perceiving the larger picture of all performers in all situations. Critical to the restoration vision is "the reliance on persons acting on values drawn from established visions" (Bormann, 1982, p.141). The appeal

was to the concepts of fair compensation and to a worker's right to earn a living and support their families. Within any union, picket signs, fliers, leaflets, speeches and the privilege of running for office are accepted methods of advancing within the hierarchy. These actors would eventually approach their situation using all of these tools and, as will be examined later, the resources of the Internet and e-mail.

Acknowledging the perhaps unperceived need for referent power, the PA quickly expanded beyond its small core group of highly visible commercial actors. At first this was done by reaching out into the commercial community at auditions and on work sites. Later rhetoric was shifted to include all working actors, including background talent and performers of other backgrounds or interest. The use of referent power to persuade and enhance identity will become increasingly obvious as this paper progresses (Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen, 1993).

The Alliance expanded to include television series regulars, day-players, voice artists and other working actors. Day-players are actors hired on a day to day basis to speak only a few lines. The Alliance moved into Stewart, Smith and Denton's phase two (1989) when they began to publicly voice their frustrations. As they began to do so in an organized mode, they entered Stewart, Smith and Denton's phase three, enthusiastic mobilization. Meanwhile the union establishment responded by trying logically to explain the contract negotiation process and why not all of the union's goals and demands were met this time.

The Alliance was least successful garnishing support among actors who earned their primary livings outside of the industry. These professional part-time actors were more concerned about the continuation of auditions and work opportunities than about any

possibility of over-exposure which some even saw as a goal that they would like to achieve. There was also a geographic schism, and while the Alliance did recruit and include east coast actors who regularly work on both coasts, their early east coast efforts at expansion were far less successful than in Hollywood. Since the majority of union commercial work is concentrated on the two coasts, the Alliance failed to seek or garner support from the numerous SAG branches or AFTRA locals geographically between New York and Los Angeles.

The solidarity of the Alliance helped individual members cope with frustrations over their perceived professional jeopardy and adapt to a political method of action. Believing that change was necessary and that they had the formula to bring about their desired change, these early members set the parameters for scope and message while setting out on the consciousness raising leg of their rhetorical mission. Perhaps without intending to do so, the Alliance and its membership created consciousness-raising communication, which fertilized the growth of their own membership while at the same time reinforcing some of the basic beliefs of the founders of the Screen Actors Guild and in a way the entire American labor movement (Bormann, 1983; see also Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen, 1993). Positioning themselves under a common identity, a single umbrella, as the good guy working actors, those who are threatened by evil giants and what they felt was an under-responsive elected SAG leadership, they chose to take action and make a difference. These actors sought an audience in agreement with their own beliefs in order to reinforce those beliefs and build a strong case for change.

The move to phase three (Stewart, Smith and Denton, 1989), full enthusiastic mobilization, occurred when it became obvious that their union boards were unwilling to

take the strongest action in their labor movement arsenal, over the “cable issue.” SAG and AFTRA were not willing to strike.

In part because of a lack of first hand experience or exposure to the government process, the PA existed on a stable diet of rumor and innuendo concerning the hierarchy of the Screen Actors Guild slow moving dinosaur they presented the Guild to be. As the movement progressed, successfully with the election of some Performers Alliance members to the National Board in 1998, a strategy of taking credit for any movement in the direction of the positions they advocated was adopted. Using a mix of interpersonal and media techniques, the story of PA initiated change was told and retold. Perception by the faithful and the converted alike was that of Alliance generated positive change, reinforcing the Performers Alliance as a political and social force (Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen, 1993).

Members of the Alliance were unified by the belief that the commercials contract ignored threats to their livelihood created by over-exposure, and by what they perceived as under-compensation on cable and in new technologies. In response, the Alliance sought to present an image of unresponsive unions (SAG and AFTRA) made up of “old-timers” and/or those who have forgotten what is to be a struggling working actor, whose primary livelihood was acting. There is much truth to their assumptions. However, what those inside the negotiating process believed the Alliance failed to understand is that corporate management is growing in strength and the unions are fighting to gain often tiny and symbolic ground against industries which would probably not care if the unions disappeared. From a corporate management viewpoint, actors are viewed as replaceable, disposable workers, a vast supply of labor.

Shared Experiences and Language

The battle for identification with working actors, and thus control of the union, begins with the use of strategic definitions. The formation of the Performers Alliance included the conscientious choice of a name that would imply unity and attract quick identification for the working members of the union. The founders deliberately chose to leave the word 'actor' out of the title in an acknowledged move to attract voice artists, stunt professionals, singers, dancers and others into their movement.

The group plays on the commonalities of any alliance using the tools of grass roots organizing. They use the same basic public relations tools, which were used to form the star-driven power base upon which the Screen Actors Guild was built. The PA uses much of the same rhetoric, both in language and action, as the founding fathers of the Guild in their break with the management formed "union". In 1933 the dozen founders of the Screen Actors Guild gathered in a back room to formulate plans to take on management. In the summer of 1997, the founders of the PA met in an actor's home. [The names must remain confidential.] SAG's founders reacted to high profile actors who were willing to conform to the studio's company line. The founders of the PA felt the existing SAG National Board of Directors had "sold out" their interest in favor of other concessions and contract gains from a management some felt had become too friendly with the Guild's top officers and staff.

This rhetoric of change feeds on the audience's tendency to believe that those in positions of power do abuse that power or at the very least grow too comfortable and complacent in their positions. The PA redefined the currency of symbols. It used them to shape perception of the union among members, to call for common action, and to

publicly proclaim common interest easily identified with by most members of the Screen Actors Guild. They wave the same flag of unionism as the opposition they hope to unseat. Lippmann refers to the way we see the world as being a fabric of "fictions", which are facts and reality as understood and processed by our own perceptions (1922//1997). The PA carefully crafted a world of fictions, telling working actors that those in power and the strong representation of non-working actors elected from other parts of the country threatened all real actors' (Hollywood based) ability to earn a living under Guild Contracts.

During a privileged and confidential conversation against the backdrop of a contract adjustment meeting with producers, a PA member openly stated that branches have an unfair advantage because they do not have to adhere to the one voting board member per every 1,200 dues paying members electoral formula, and that branch members are out of touch with the needs of the majority who live and work in Los Angeles. During the same lunch meeting, a second member of the PA openly commented that for too long board members from the branches have voted on and decided contract issues on contracts under which the branches have little or no work experience. In an e-mail correspondence, PA WebMaster Gordan Drake openly said that those who do not make their living under a contract have no right serving on the National Board and deciding whether or not to recommend the contract to the membership. In reality the percentage of work under commercial contract is roughly equal between Los Angeles and the rest of the country, and elected board members constitutionally are required to weigh and vote on whether or not to recommend contracts issues in any member referendum.

Utilizing the most current industry news of any given week, the PA applied press relations to keep a constant communications line open with the media, primarily the Hollywood Reporter and Los Angeles Times and with the non-union *e-entertainment* cable network. As reported in Daily Variety, the Hollywood Reporter and the Los Angeles Times, the Performers Alliance organization staged protest rallies in front of the Screen Actors Guild offices and at high profile industry events, such as film openings and awards programs.

An analysis of the Performers Alliance and its rhetorical arguments may support Doyle's (1986, p 24) contention that dramatic plots, if repeated, can be persuasive. The Alliance used much of the same rhetoric, both in language and action, as the founding fathers of the Guild in their break with the management formed "union", the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Burke states (1966) that society is created and maintained through symbols, which are used to control behavior and that for any common action to take place, common interest must be publicly proclaimed. The flag of unionism, in this case, works in favor of the Alliance, whose audience consists of fellow actors and entertainment industry employees who understand what life in a creative and unpredictable environment is like and who identify with each other.

Their fellow working actors, and those members of the Screen Actors Guild who identified themselves as working actors (whether employed or not) were ready to hear a plea for change. Shared experiences and shared frustrations proved fertile ground to generate a grass roots movement and respond with a new voice to those who they perceived as representing the status quo. While the National Board of the Screen Actors Guild, its contract negotiating committee, its staff and their counterparts in AFTRA may

have indeed come back with the best possible contracts and highest compensation, those “on the outside” could not easily be convinced of that fact. For most individuals the question is “what have you done for me?” In this case those who work in commercials and stunts for a living felt the answer was “not enough.” Sufficient numbers of actors, as the audience, were easily convinced by the Alliance’s message, because they did, indeed, perceive it as true (Combs & Mansfield, 1976). The Alliance found unifying elements in their appeals for the support of the working actor in the very rhetorical foundation of the union movement and more specifically the roots of their own union. Actors persuaded by the PA’s message may reflect Bormann’s (1972) statement that “audiences may gradually form new attitudes or have currently held attitudes reinforced without being aware they are being persuaded” (p. 116).

Strategies for Change

A shared rhetorical vision formed as the Alliance began to congeal into a unified force for change. By joining in the vision, members of the Alliance began to focus on how, working together, they could achieve desired change. The shared fantasy was one of being able to “put SAG back on track” as a union representing the interest of primarily actors in being able to make a living in the trade they love so much. Illustrating the model of a chain effect, going from individual to small group, to other groups, to larger group, to the media and in the near future to the board room, in a few short months what began as a small community of actors meeting at their homes, became a formalized political movement for change and a common future (Bormann, 1985). These actors went from concentrating on individual careers to being willing to contribute often large

amounts of time and portions of their personal income toward the advancement of their alliance and its missions.

The Alliance chose a multiple front strategic approach to forcing or agitating toward change. Their grievances were presented through all available communications channels, with the clear aim of creating opinion within the Guild and the Hollywood community favorable to their cause. The strategies of agitation as discussed in The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control by Bowers, Ochs & Jensen (1993) can be used illustrate the growth and eventual success of the Alliance.

The PA's founders staged media events designed to embarrass the power structure and edge them toward the desired change (1993). These events included picket lines, direct statements to carefully chosen reporters and a march on the Los Angeles national headquarters. On June 16, 1997, 80 performers picketed the L.A. offices of the SAG, AFTRA and Actors Equity headquarters to protest negotiations on the cable contract. According to a story in the Hollywood Reporter, the protesters marched with a dummy in effigy, and shouted "Vote no, contract stinks" (Robb, June 16, 1997, p. 1). While still in the formative stages, elements of the "selection of motive appeals, selection of target audiences, selection of types and sources of evidence, and selection of language" are all present early in the process of movement toward change (Bowers, Ochs & Jensen, p.16). When the members of the commercial acting community agreed to address the joint board of AFTRA and SAG, who were meeting on merger related issues, they fulfilled the requirements of petition and gave credibility to their as yet unofficial movement.

As evidence of the promulgation stage of agitation, the PA lobbied one-on-one with fellow actors in the workplace, in workshops and on the streets. They sent out publicity

releases, created public relations scenarios, stood vigil outside joint board meetings and actively lobbied existing board members to their point of view. In doing so, the PA fulfilled the promulgation strategy of agitation "designed to win social support for the agitator's position" (Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen, p. 20).

They used the full spectrum of techniques, including the lobbying and winning of a handful of potentially influential existing members of the National Board as "legitimizers for their cause" (Bowers, Ochs & Jensen, p. 22). To solidify and unite followers a conscious decision was made to gather under the banner of Performers Alliance, implying a unified voice for change and the potential, using a PA slogan, to take back your union (PA, 1997, [http](#)). Internal PA publications came in the form of a fledgling newsletter, which quickly became costly as numbers of membership and interested parties grew geometrically. As part of modern solidification, the newsletter was later replaced by the much more efficient, accessible, and most important national vehicle of an Internet Web page, professionally and deliberately linked to search engines under a range of names including "actors", "performers", "union actor", "alliance" and "SAG" (G. Drake, 2000 and J. Shaw, 1999, personal communication). The PA chose not to directly attack sitting President Richard Masur during their 1997 and 1998 formative seasons. Moving into the 1999 elections the decision was reversed with Masur made a direct target, charged with tolerance of alleged vote fraud in the NEC elections, intolerance of opposition within the board room, being a "nazi" as chair (G. Gordan, PA, 1999, [http](#).) and in taking too much an interest in the affairs of AFTRA and national issues at the expense of Hollywood and alleged working actors. Masur was in effect made a flag individual and in black and white terms, made to look like the enemy, the devil.

PA efforts led to the creation, for the first time since the early 1970s, of two distinct political parties within the union. The polarization strategy is best evidenced in the formation of Pro-Act by a group of "working professional performers" to support Masur, his slate and the reelection of standing board members (<http://www.pro-act.org>). A strong illustration of the feeling that members should be either for or automatically against the goals, aspirations and platform of the PA lies in an e-mail to a member of the national board from the Webmaster of the Performers Alliance, Gordon Drake, who wrote, "If you were a working actor, I would care what you say. But you're not. What are you even doing on the union board trying to represent people who work? You will hear no more from me" (G. Drake, personal communication, October 2000).

For reasons of time constraints, as well as political considerations, recorded votes are seldom used by the Screen Actors Guild Board of Directors. Most key votes since the primary election victory of the Performers Alliance in 1998 have required recorded votes, with those votes being used against specific candidates in forthcoming elections, a sign that in their view "that any individual who has not committed to the agitation supports the establishment....any uncommitted individual is assumed to be for the establishment rather than neutral" (Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen, 1993, p.34). The November 16, 1998 Hollywood National Executive Committee representation vote, along with an alleged attempt to skirt the issue, became flag issues in the 1999 elections. The NEC is a core committee made up of the elected officers of the Guild plus a proportional representation of elected board members from Los Angeles, New York and the other branches, elected by their fellow board members by region. Much of the actual business of the Guild passes through the NEC, which is often empowered to take action in place of the full National

board. Several staff members were called into question but cleared in an inconclusive investigation (Robb, January 15, 1999).

Other than in Internet rhetoric and the occasional heated board room debate, escalation of issues had not led to violent confrontation. In various releases to the media and Internet postings referring to Masur as a communist, Nazi and accusing him of McCarthy tactics reflected the full political extremes used by the PA to discredit their flag opponent (PA, 1999, <http>). Meanwhile, Richard Masur continued to invite those sympathetic with the PA to become a part of the political process through committees and in advisory functions to the board. Pro-Act also chose the high ground. Instead of attacking the Performers Alliance, they stated Masur and the Guild's achievements, goals and elements and actions already in place toward change. The PA used the NEC election as an issue, amplified by a full resolution of the board, the Kemmerling Resolution, to put the issue behind and move forward with the business of the Guild. The closest to a confrontational issue was in a strong feeling by the PA that the questions of the NEC were not resolved.

The evening a vote on the Kemmerling resolution was called, Performers Alliance member and later Commercials Contract Negotiations Chair, [name withheld for confidentiality], tearfully called for a healing of the wounds and a joint resolution of the conflict through the support of the resolution to put the NEC election into the past. The next day, at the National, General Membership and Hollywood Membership Meeting, the same actor walked up and down the aisles, clapping his hands and calling for the heads of those who voted to bury the issue of the NEC election. This public tactic of agitation illustrates the Performers Alliance role as instigators for change within the union. A deliberate "us" versus "them" tactic was clearly evident.

Finally, the PA chose to challenge the incumbent board in the direct court of union elections. The need for any form of violent confrontation was averted, and may never have been planned. The emotional level of the protestors and the Performers Alliance movement was high enough, that had the establishment chosen direct confrontation or to completely closed the doors to protest, violence was within the realm of possibilities. Phase three of the Stewart, Smith and Denton's dramatic lifecycle of social movements was in full form.

Risking potential violation of National Labor Relations law, which has restrictions concerning communications and relations between management and labor, including how the physical space of offices is used, the Alliance took the battle to the offices of casting directors. Permission was granted to gather signatures, pass out leaflets and solicit members (J. Hookey, personal communication, 1999). Since the casting directors (considered management) did not actively encourage or coerce actors visiting their office to sign on with the Alliance, the potential for a court challenge of their movement was minimized, although not entirely eliminated. Early on, a moral decision was made that in order to have access to the voting members of SAG, and thus counter the inherent advantage of the incumbents they opposed, the risk was a necessary one (confidential personal communication, 1999).

Interpersonal communication skills were applied in the formative weeks by expressing their anger, beliefs and plans one on one with casting directors, agents and their primary target of those actors who were actively seeking work. They quietly lobbied on the sets of productions, in coffee shops, in restaurants and wherever else actors congregate. In mid 1998 the Performers Alliance claimed their position and

rheterical vision helped membership grow to over 20,000 actors. By mid year 1999, PA unsubstantiated membership claims rose to over 60,000 members. For perspective, there are just under 100,000 active members of the Screen Actors Guild and 126,000 card-carrying members. While the organization had not come out for or against merger, many of its members were opposed to merger on the grounds that it would water down or decrease control of the Guild by working actors (Robb, November 24, 1999).

In June 1997 a hard fought and hard negotiated three year commercial contract agreement was approved by the national membership of the Screen Actors Guild, but not until after vocal protest by the Alliance whose members were upset because of the relatively low compensation package for commercials that are broadcast on cable when compared to national or spot market broadcast contracts (Robb, June 27-29, 1997). These protests were heard both inside and outside the confidence of the National Board room, including "off the record" speeches made to the closed joint national boards of SAG and AFTRA on Friday evening, January 16, 1998, at the invitation of SAG President Richard Masur and AFTRA President Shelby Scott. At this meeting leaders of the Performers Alliance, which represented itself as "working professional commercial actors" strongly voiced their dissatisfaction over the commercial contract. For reasons of professional security, their names are not in the public record.

The Performers Alliance target audience was found in three directions, each requiring a different combination of rhetorical vehicles and environments. The first was to let their voice be heard by the National Board of SAG. To do this, they earned allies within the existing board, passed on a petition to let their views be known, and spoke out clearly in the trade press, which, dependent on advertising support from the producers and

production companies, seemed anxious to amplify discontent or disagreement amid the unions. As an information filter, The Hollywood Reporter, and to a lesser extent Daily Variety and the Los Angeles Times, proved to be sympathetic or neutral transmitters of the intended message. For example, a story in the Hollywood Reporter:

A group of actors called the Performers Alliance is fielding a slate of candidates in the Screen Actors guild elections, a move the group's leaders are calling "an open challenge to SAG's leadership." The Performers Alliance was born out of the heated discussion over SAG's new television commercial contract. (Robb, October 8, 1997)

Their second audience consisted of fellow actors, approached in person, through mailings and by exposure to press coverage of events. The third audience was the general public, a difficult target as the majority of the public, even in a town like Los Angeles, find it hard to understand how the relatively high wages earned by SAG actors when they work, could be seen as endangered or poverty level based on the small amount of work actually available.

The Performers Alliance used strong rhetoric and argument, using the media as a primary channel, before retrenching and taking the political election avenue to meet their goals. While its goals and intent are the same as the existing National Board of Directors of the Screen Actors Guild, there may have been a need for the Alliance to position itself as outsiders fighting for fundamental change in order to drive home the specifics of their agenda, including protection from what they see as abuse by the powerful cable and satellite segments of the industry.

Within the first few meetings, the decision was made to work within the system while also bringing their fight to the streets. The PA sought proactive change within their

unions, rather than the establishment of a new order or radical change to the entire entertainment union structure. To accomplish this, the commercial actors who formed the PA chose early on to actively recruit high profile individuals who could help their cause from the “top down” within both unions. These recruited opinion leaders included, but were not limited to, John Connolly (a regular in police dramas and films who works out of both New York and Los Angeles), Paul Napier (established commercial actor and already an example of top down movement leadership as a major behind the scenes player within the system in AFTRA), Patrick Pankhurst (a recognizable Los Angeles character actor who served as the Alliance’s unpaid campaign and public relations director), Gordon Drake (a commercial actor who also owns and operated an Internet Design and Advertising firm) and Sumi Haru (a television talk host, actress, Asian-Pacific Community Activist, former acting President of SAG and at the time AFL-CIO 6th Vice President.). Television and industrial actor Chuck Sloan added his background as a speechwriter and his talents as a handler by becoming the primary advisor to the 1997 and later 1999 slate of officers (<http://www.pro-union>).

The Performers Alliance became a political force to take seriously when it threw up informational picket lines at the national headquarters of SAG, on Sunset Boulevard. Their petition drive led SAG’s Western National Board (those members who live in Hollywood or states geographically closer to Hollywood than New York City) to vote against the 1997 commercial contract by only one vote. At a meeting of the remaining board members in New York City, the vote was nullified as all of those who voted in the eastern board session voted for the contract, giving it a clear majority of the full National Board. When the contract was sent to the membership for ratification, it earned a

traditional overwhelming approval vote (Robb, May 5, 1997 and June 27-29, 1997). Here is a direct conflict between the fantasy and the reality. Alliance members blamed the entire board for the terms of the new commercials contract, and sought to defeat not only those who voted against their interest, but even those who supported them (confidential personal communication, 1997-2000).

Partial Victory and Unexpected Allies

“SAG dissidents rule election but Masur back” was a headline on the cover of the Hollywood Reporter (Robb, November 10, 1997, p. 1). According to the story, Richard Masur “handily earned reelection in 1997 to a second two year term as the national president of the Screen Actors Guild,” however most of his loyal slate of incumbents, including those vice president offices assigned to the Hollywood membership, was defeated. The exception was also an often-dissonant voice, Sumi Haru, who was on the record as being against merger. She served as “acting president” after previous National SAG President Barry Gordon resigned to run for Congress, to the election of Richard Masur to his first term as president. As the incumbent first vice president and possible next in line for the presidency, Haru chose to run against New York actor and Performers Alliance member John P. Connolly for national recording secretary. The official nominating committee had selected Connolly, who retained his seat on the National Board elected by the New York City Branch (Robb, November 10, 1997).

Haru later resigned her seat as first Vice President, citing time conflicts with a similar role in AFTRA and her elected position as the first ever performer to serve as the 6th Vice President of the powerful AFL-CIO. It can be speculated that her differences with Masur over merger, and the structure of national committees (Haru favored a Hollywood

dominance in committee membership) may have been the true reasons for her resignation. This set the stage for a 1999 run for the First Vice-Presidency of SAG, with Haru jumping to the Performer's Alliance slate, against Masur's VP, Amy Aquino. Under SAG's constitution, Haru maintained her seat on the National Board despite her resignation from her officer position. Reflecting SAG as a Hollywood based union, the first vice president, who serves as president in the absence of, or at the will of, the president, is an elected position selected by the Hollywood and General Membership (SAG Constitution and By-Laws, 1996-2000).

A Road Built On Contracts and Elections

In the 1997 elections, the Performers Alliance earned fourteen of the nineteen Hollywood seats up for election, defeating board members who have been seated incumbents for ten, fifteen and in one case twenty-seven years (Robb, November 10, 1997). Following the 1997 elections, thirty-six additional Hollywood seats were filled by incumbents who would end their three-year terms between 1998 and 2000. After the election in 1997 the Performers Alliance held one third of the Hollywood Board seats and fourteen percent of the overall National Board vote. Following an apportionment formula set forth in SAG's Constitution and By-Laws, there are 105 seats on the National Board of the Screen Actors Guild. While still working in a phase three position (Stewart, Smith and Denton, 1989) the Alliance was, through its own 1997 victory, moving into phase four, maintenance, while there were still battles to fight. The question was, would the Alliance remain unified and consistent in this new position within the existing institutional system?

The Theatrical Film and Television Contract

As members of the Screen Actors National Board of Directors, in the spring of 1998, the Alliance spearheaded a movement to defeat the Theatrical (film) and Television Contract. As with the Commercial Contract, it was felt that performers were under-compensated for residual reruns on cable and made for cable or video programming. As explained in the history section of this paper, the contracts for cable and video were recent and were written to organize what were in the 1960s to early 1980s, experimental new technologies. Under Phase one of a merger plan, the Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA jointly negotiated most national contracts with management. Already evident was some division, as several vocal members of the Alliance jumped ship and argued for contract ratification.

Unsuccessful in board room efforts to block the contract, the remaining Performers Alliance members garnered a 40% support level among the joint boards of SAG and AFTRA to force a minority report to be sent to the national membership along with the contract ratification ballots. It set a new precedent. SAG President Richard Masur and AFTRA National President Shelby Scott were in a position to block this effort, as there were no provisions allowing or governing minority reports from the joint boards in any Phase I merger document. Instead they chose to bring the issue to the eastern joint section board in New York City. That body strongly turned down any such report. Further breaking established precedent, principally because the Performers Alliance is a predominately Los Angeles coalition, Masur and Scott empowered the PA by decided to allow the western joint boards to vote on the minority report motion which was made in New York and turned down there. Under normal circumstances a defeated item would

not show up on the deferred agenda of the western body. The vote to send out a minority report met with an overwhelming western majority, for a combined national percentage in excess of 40%. At this point it became clear that the Alliance had become a part of the governing body the officers and staff needed to work with, listen to and if necessary placate to achieve their own individual goals or agendas (Robb, May 8, 1998).

The theatrical contract did pass. As reported on the Screen Actors Guild Web Site on Thursday, July 2, 1998 only 22.2% (27,127) of the 122,295 eligible voting members of AFTRA and SAG cast ballots. Of those who cast votes, 70% (18,539) were for the contract and 30% (7,916) opposed it (Robb, July 2, 1998).

The PA Gains a Foothold

Following the 1998 elections, the Hollywood percentage reversed, and in 1999 the PA managed to sweep into a 90% majority of the Hollywood board, and with it over 40% of the seats on the National Board of Directors (Robb, November 8, 1999). Because of the importance of Hollywood, a PA victory over three elections also guaranteed majority control of the most powerful national committees and the appointment, and after earning the presidency in 1999, of the chairs of all national committees.

It is important to affirm that members of the Screen Actors Guild are not paid or compensated for the time they commit to serve on Guild boards, committees or participate in voluntary services for the membership of their union. As with the board members they replace, the newly elected Alliance members have committed to between two and three years of service, ranging from ten or so hours a week to, when including travel and phone calls, full time to the benefit of and advancement of their fellow actors (Prindle, 1988).

During the 1997 formation period, the Performers Alliance had not endorsed a candidate for president, noting that their political advisor and campaign manager Patrick Pankhurst indicated Masur would win his bid for reelection handily, despite holding many beliefs that were contrary to those of the Alliance. In press coverage of the 1997 election, SAG President Richard Masur welcomed their dissenting voice, saying, "It's a very positive development that a group of active, working performers has gotten involved in the process and put so much energy and focus into getting elected. It always helps this union when active, working people are engaged in the process" (Robb, November 10, 1997).

In 1998, jumping ahead to after the election, Masur's early acknowledgement of this dissenting voice proved valuable to the Performer's Alliance's strategy. Masur proceeded to make decisions to allow the Alliance an often-unprecedented leeway in both the boardroom and in access to the general membership. While he could have chosen to use his position as National Board Chair to control the room and limit the voice of the PA minority, on many occasions Masur went the other direction, granting many liberties to Performers Alliance speakers (R. Masur, personal communication, August, 1999).

In what would become a potential political misstep, a small group of members of the Alliance were invited by New York Board member John Connolly to address the joint boards of AFTRA and SAG, meeting as committee of the whole, to voice their concerns about the impact of the new commercials contract on their livelihood. This meeting occurred prior to the election, and may have been done as a way to defuse the potential impact of Alliance dissatisfaction. At the meeting, Masur was joined by others in the room in inviting the dissenting commercial actors to join in the regular union political

process and work toward the changes in which they so strongly believed. In effect, the establishment defused some of the “devil” image, by appearing willing to work with the dissenters. To Masur's frustration, the group took him to heart, not by joining the existing political process, but by solidifying as an opposition party in the form of the Performers Alliance. The dissidents continued in a lack of action and in some cases steps in a direction differing from their own by Masur and the elected leadership. John Connolly later converted to Masur's team and helped to form Pro-Act, a hastily assembled movement to counter the Performers Alliance and its momentum (www.pro-union.org and www.pro-act.org)

The Alliance created a platform that dealt primarily with aggressively challenging the status quo with producers and increase both compensation and employment guarantees for working union actors. Members tended to align with those against a merger with AFTRA, but fragmentation on this issue among the Alliance was high. The Performers Alliance was concerned that SAG has lagged behind in protecting performers in the commercial, cable and new technologies fields.

Chapter Summary

As indicated earlier in this paper, the social movement model of Stewart, Smith & Denton is divided into five stages: genesis, social unrest, enthusiastic mobilization, maintenance and termination.

In the first stage of a social movement, individuals become deeply concerned about a problem over the course of time while the institution appears to be unaware of the problem or not to give it a high priority. Since negotiations and much of the activities of

the Board of Directors remained under the shroud of either legal privilege or the transient nature of compromise, those outside of the actual negotiating committees were unaware of the day to day battles fought by their union. The membership remained unaware of what the existing institution was doing to meet the needs of working actors, specifically those who earned their living in commercials. In addition an increasing number of new technology Internet savvy members of the union grew concerned that their union might be too entrenched in the age of 35 millimeter film, the studio system and a reliance on broadcast television for primary revenue.

As anger and frustration built, the leaders agitated for change, gaining others to their cause and gaining recognition from the offending institution. This occurred against the backdrop of a heated merger debate that distracted the institution of the Guild and its existing power structure from giving the full attention the new movement, the Performers Alliance. In addition, the Masur administration and staff were putting energy and efforts into such issues as the protection of performers image as international intellectual property, providing service to a growing membership outside of Hollywood through the opening of new branches and/or offices and into the modernization of staff offices, functions and resources. Recognition by the union as an institution came when members of the Performers Alliance, introduced as "commercial actors" were invited in by presidents Masur and Scott, to voice their frustrations with the commercials contract at the conclusion of a 12 hour joint session of the AFTRA and SAG boards, a gesture the PA faithful felt was too little and too late.

As the movement grew, members become committed to the cause, various tactics of persuasion, unity and confrontation were employed, and strong lines were drawn between

"friend" and "enemy". As the PA snowballed in membership and political clout, exchanges between SAG members became heated, using both conventional and new interpersonal communications methods, including e-mail, to insult, belittle and attempt to limit the power of the opposing side. Rallies, T-shirts, web sites, slogans and mission statements helped solidify power for the leaders of the PA and launch a formal opposition representing the established union board, Pro-Act.

Next came a time of either defeat, or victory, which would require new leadership and tactics to sustain the movement. Finally, comes the termination stage, in which the movement will take over, be absorbed into or become a new institution, or disappear. Early radical leaders of the movement may either adapt or move on to new causes.

CHAPTER 4

STRATEGIES FOR VICTORY

The Performers Alliance utilized numerous communication strategies while following a pattern common to social movements in its development and growth. As a dissident group of union members, working from outside the political establishment, the PA took advantage of every opportunity to advance their ideology and cause. One on one meetings with members on the set or at auditions led to rallies, letter writing, fax and telephone campaigns. As the movement built momentum, extensive use was made of the Internet, including web links and e-mail distribution. Simultaneously, the PA co-opted the establishment's own methods by working to develop converts within the existing government of SAG, and finally sought victory for their slates in a series of national elections. The rhetoric battle that took place on the Internet through web sites and e-mail, through the press, and in the boardroom will be reviewed. Examples of rhetoric will be shown to compare and contrast communication tactics and styles between the PA and the SAG establishment.

A Perceived Need for Change

With a rallying cry of "take back your union", the Alliance came from outside the normal decision making establishment, responding to what they perceived as their union's violation of the basic moral obligation to protect the well being, livelihood and interest of all of the membership in those unions. The PA advocated rejection of contracts and the direction those contracts reflected. The PA favored a fundamental, traditional approach to flexing union muscles and gaining larger concessions from management. The Performers Alliance and its allies responded with emotional and yet well organized venting of grievances and a call for action, both by calling for the defeat of specific contract ballots and by running for political office for no other reason than to unseat union incumbents. With the 1997, 1998 and 1999 union elections, Alliance candidates captured all but two of the three-year seats representing Hollywood on the National Board of Directors. In the less than four years from its founding, the PA captured all of the national officer positions, controlling interest in the powerful National Executive Committee, the chair position on all national committees and nearly 40% of the voting seats on the Screen Actors Guild National Board of Directors (Robb, November 9, 1998 and November 8, 1999).

The social changes sought came down to the very basics of compensation for their time and talents in relation to changes in the technological and professional world of entertainment, a battle they viewed as one fought over their very economic and career survival (Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen, 1993).

Organizing Methods and Rhetoric

Fueled by its initial 1997, political ambitions and far deeper concerns than one contract, PA founders sought a more stable organization to reach out to an increasingly diverse membership. They did so by targeting SAG members whose self-perception is as under represented working actors regardless of actual income or which contracts they work under. Reflecting rhetorical methods outlined by Lippman, the PA has taken the upper hand by defining the terms, building a positive fictitious or constructed personality for themselves and painting anyone who was not with them with the broad brush of status quo and being responsible for weak contracts (1922/1997). In effect, the PA became the union within a union, fighting for the rank and file from within. At one point, their web banner read "pro-union, proud of it and fighting for it" (<http://www.pro-union.org/>). By laying claim first and strongly to various changes and innovation within the union since their formation, the PA took credit for not just their own victories, but projects launched and piloted by their opposition. All positive action by the Guild since the PA's first electoral victory were proudly taken full credit for by the PA, whether or not they were actually instrumental in the change. In the tradition of Hollywood publicists, the PA applied the old adage that it is not who is first, or right, but who takes credit first and loudest.

Formed as a defensive reaction to the PA, early in 1999, was a counter movement, which had labeled itself Pro-Active (or Pro-Act). Pro-Act chose to imply identification with actors and in doing so the name of the union they felt they represented. At the same time, they took on a more all inclusive catch phrase which was coined earlier on by the rival PA itself, a call for a pro-active union, open to its membership and working toward

a positive future. Pro-Act, which was launched in Los Angeles and spread to a national organization, immediately enlisted the support of the branches of the Screen Actors Guild outside of Hollywood and of performers less dependant on a single source of income from commercials or under "Hollywood" based contracts. In 1999, incumbent two-term president Richard Masur led the Pro-Act political slate against equally recognizable character actor William Daniels and the PA slate. The two sides used the media to publicly debate their positions, using rhetoric to defend, explain, and persuade. "The union has been pussycats with the industry for years and years and years," Daniels said utilizing the Performers Alliance Web Site on November 2, 1999. "They need somebody who will go to the wall for them. There's nobody in this town who frightens me." (<http://www.pro-union.org>)

The founders of Pro-Act defended their position in a statement distributed on the Pro-Act Web Site:

ProAct is a national coalition of active, experienced, working Screen Actors Guild performers who intend to refocus the Guild's energy on those forces that threaten the livelihood of all professional performers. These include cutbacks in wages and residuals, factionalism and strife within our Guild, out-of-country production, corporate globalization, employer contract abuse, and new technologies.

(<http://www.pro-act.org>).

To distinguish itself from the Performers Alliance, Pro-Act declared its slate "committed to maintaining and advancing the pro-active work begun under President Masur's leadership in the past five years"(<http://www.pro-act.org>). These programs included an aggressive response to U.S runaway production, increasing diversity in

casting, a commercials residual monitoring program, an outreach campaign to independent and digital filmmakers, putting an end to abuse of the voucher system, and legislation to provide new protections for performers.

Masur let the LA Times know that most of the claims of accomplishments and change since the PA's surfacing in 1997 were in fact done under and as a result of his administration:

Masur believes that Daniels' supporters are selling his administration short on its accomplishments....he also is making an issue of Daniels' admitted lack of experience in union affairs, what he said is his naivete on a number of union strategies and the lack of specifics on just what he and his supporters would do differently. What's more, he argues, many of the actors who are supporting Daniels are SAG board members who supported policies and administrative decisions they are now criticizing. (Bates, November 2, 1999) (see EXHIBITS D for complete article concerning 1997 to 1999 elections).

Since 1997 both sides have attempted to facilitate or mitigate change though the use of a wide range of public relations tools to persuade and mobilize an apathetic membership. As a model, their rivalry provides a case study of the effective use of marketing and public relations within an established union by dissidents.

The PA played a key role in derailing a long sought after proposed merger with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Under PA. attack, the 1998 Theatrical Contract passed by a slim 8% in membership ballot returns. In early fall, 1999, the PA came close to defeating the first proposed dues increase in over a decade. The timing of the dues referendum, made necessary by the defeat of a merger with AFTRA,

could not have been better for the PA. Performers Alliance members lined up in significant numbers against the merger. While in the board room only 5 of 96 board members present opposed the dues structure, both sides knew that the proposal would find displeasure with both the lower and highest earners within the Guild (Finnigan, September 17 - 19, 1999). The slim passage of the dues increase only two months prior to the 1999 elections left the less informed rank and file dissatisfied with their national board. From the results of these closely timed referendums, it can be projected that up to 40% of the membership of the Screen Actors Guild were exposed to and may be sympathetic to at least part of the mission of the PA. To become the majority the PA needed to attract background talent (extras), pro-branch and limited income members. The unpopular, but agreed to be necessary, dues referendum helped the PA gain needed converts outside of their key membership of full time working commercial actors. The dues increase formula was one which did not sit well with both the lowest earners and very high earners, two key groups that needed to be dissatisfied with the existing administration, if the PA hoped to win control of the union.

In addition to contracts and their stated mission of saving SAG for those who work, the PA had also taken up arms against high level paid staff, whom they accuse, with some legal justification, of manipulating the results of elections, determining the policies of the union and leading the members by their noses. In particular two staff members, who acted as tellers, or clerks, in the internal board election for representatives to the National Executive Committee, Katherine Moore and Catherine York, were targeted for their alleged bias in counting ballots and ruling on the legitimacy of contested ballots. This attack went so far as to include the hiring of a neutral arbitrator in an official election

challenge, resulting in a finding that showed no conclusive evidence either way (Robb, January 15, 1999). Moore, York and Masur therefore became flag individuals, used in an emotional battle to discredit the existing administration and staff and reflect a need for social change within the Guild (Bowers, Ochs, Jensen, 1993). In early April of 2000 an outside consulting firm, Towers Perrin of Minneapolis, was contracted to survey the board and membership on their trust of SAG's senior staff and leadership (SAG Archives, personal communication, 2000).

Once A David

Using the David vs. Goliath model, the conflict pit a minority of members of the Screen Actors Guild against the powerfully established political powers within the board and what they see as the status quo nature of Guild staff. They also pit themselves, as new and reform minded members of the political process, against the large and formidable forces of management, the producers, studios and corporations for which Guild members work. They saw themselves as being able to do what previous boards had been unable to do, gaining radical concessions and ground in the name of actors as professional laborers from employers. The Alliance also viewed SAG at the forefront of the battle to stem the growth of and reverse the flow of the California and national "right to work" movements toward laws that in many ways hamstring labor unions in their ability to "encourage" membership and limit benefits to those members. In the battle with management, Alliance members also wished to regain jobs lost to Canada and other countries at the cost of employment for American based union actors. While the official line presented a loss of jobs to actors in the United States, campaign literature and observations of board room rhetoric made it clear that for the PA, the protection of jobs

in Los Angeles from productions leaving the state of California is the primary consideration of its membership. This would eliminate concern for the employment of union members who live outside of Greater Los Angeles. From the rostrum at the December 1999 National Board Plenary, board member Rick Barker, a professional stunt performer, referred to Las Vegas and Texas as examples of "runaway production" which needed to be stopped. His fellow PA delegates applauded him. (SAG minutes, personal communication, December 1999)

Looking at the National Board as an audience for the Performers Alliance's message, the initial picket lines and petition gave national staff and eastern board members reason to be concerned when the western board narrowly voted against sending the contract, which was opposed by the PA, to the membership. The effect of the November 1999 elections has yet to be seen, but by defeating even friendly sitting board members, the Alliance sent a clear message to those board members whose terms were not up for election. At least among the Hollywood membership, there was a desire for change and for action in what the membership, as a larger audience, perceived to be their cumulative interest (Bormann, 1972).

The Performers Alliance sought change through both rational and emotional discourse on the future of the professional actor, by appealing to the majority of actors who see their real income from acting decreasing as new technology makes increasing use of talent and image outside the more traditional and well negotiated areas of normal compensation. The growth of cable, for example, has led to a dramatic increase in viewership and with it exposure for actors without any significant additional compensation. The PA was born in the middle of a period of rapid technological change,

of major changes in media consumption patterns, of ownership changes (including mergers and acquisitions), of political pressure on both sides of the merger issue, of increased "runaway production" (at first defined as any work that left Greater Los Angeles and now defined more politically correctly as production which is leaving the U.S. in favor of foreign facilities, unions and exchange rates), and of declining pay rates (when producers are landing talent for scale or even worse, non-union talent at far below scale) and decreasing income against cost of living. The forces of corporate and communications industry changes are influencing the film industry, and therefore, in a chain effect, actors. Wasko (1995) notes that Hollywood as an industry is not just film production, distribution and exhibition, but should be viewed in an international economic and political context, notably in the deregulation of the media sectors.

Entering the Mainstream

Within the boardroom, Performers Alliance members showed many of the traits associated by veteran union board members to freshman members zealous in expressing opinions. They felt they had to be heard often, showing a need to speak, even when they were repeating points already well made by others. President Masur was relaxed in his exercise of the powers dictated under parliamentary rules in allowing much of this expression to occur, noting that freedom of expression and a sharing or venting of ideas is part of what a democratic union should be about. During the last two years of Masur's presidency, the Alliance consistently showed its Los Angeles bias, voting as a block against waivers or issues brought up specifically to address geographically unique problems affecting actors in branches outside of the greater Los Angeles or New York area. They spoke of their "mandate" and their "constituency", without reflecting on the

dual role of board members to represent both local constituent groups and the overall interest of the national membership (SAG minutes, 1998/1999 and personal communication, 1998/1999). As long time board member Joe Ruskin states, “On this board, you wear several hats. The two most important are those of representing performers, as you understand them, and remembering that this is a national union with international effects, and what you do effects union members everywhere.” (personal communication, 1999)

Amid the adventure of a high profile glamour industry, international in scope, involving rapid changes in technology, the erosion of the labor movement and the intrigue of big business, this group of union idealists chose to take the time and energy necessary to take on Goliath, and Goliath’s brother. The path ahead seemed one of boardroom intrigue, learning, growth and challenge.

The New Power

While avoiding a direct statement of the subject of merger, in 1998 the Performers Alliance lent its membership, expertise and support to a movement self titled "Save SAG." This top down movement began as a minority in the boardroom and filtered down to garner membership support against the planned merger with AFTRA. They perceived the merger constitution, dues structure and documents as an absorbing of SAG by AFTRA rather than a true and equitable merger. In solidarity with the Alliance and its mission, Save SAG also noted that in the new union actors would become the minority and there was a good chance a broadcaster or music recording artist could be the president of what was once an actors' union. This battle was significant, as the leaders of the PA are by professional necessity, members of both unions.

January 27, 1999 the proposed SAG-AFTRA union merger was defeated, in what then President Masur classified as "a very definitive result...a mandate" (see APPENDIX for additional information on the proposed merger). With 42.5% of the membership voting, 52% voted against merger. The referendum required a 60% vote in favor for the new union to be born. The PA influence, through Save SAG, was felt, as on the AFTRA side a solid two thirds majority voted in favor of merger. Both unions needed to achieve 60% of their individual membership for merger to take effect. (Robb, January 29 - 31, 1999)

As a long time proponent of merger, Masur found himself fighting to assure that relations with AFTRA remained solid and that the post-merger vote unions would not come out feuding. He had built a solid relationship with AFTRA staff, officers and the AFTRA board of directors. He felt he should be the one to assure a peaceful transition from the movement toward merger to a world where the unions would remain separate but equal. To move toward that goal, he felt he needed to seek a third term of office, something only his predecessor Barry Gordon had succeeded in doing.

Launching his campaign for a third term as president of the Screen Actors Guild, Masur lashed out at the 'divisiveness and factionalism' that had split the Guild's board in recent years. "One reason for feeling that I need to run for the presidency one more time is the level of factionalism that has entered the SAG board room... Two years ago, a group of highly motivated performers came together and ran for the board out of a sense of frustration with what they saw as the failings of the current leadership." Historically, according to Masur, such dissidents later work within the system, however with the PA, this was not to be the case. "Many who have come in on a platform of negativism seem to

be clinging to that negativity as a way of maintaining their power base among the members." Masur felt "very strongly that this mood of divisiveness and factionalism must stop ... and I will continue to do everything I can to make sure that those who are creating this mood are either educated, and adjust their behavior, or are no longer on the board." (Robb, August 23, 1999, p. 1) (see also expanded text in EXHIBITS).

With the sound defeat of the merger, the Performers Alliance found itself as the champion of the majority view within the voting rank and file. On the heels of a 1999 dues increase (one the PA strategically supported in the boardroom), the membership was primed for a complete change in their leadership. In late October 1999 a relatively low percentage of the Screen Actors Guild who voted, did just that. After a controversial and bitterly fought campaign, it was a Performers Alliance landslide sweeping the one time David into the new Goliath. 2000 found the PA in the driver's seat going into negotiations of the contract whose provisions and only minor increases in the area of cable, led to the birth of the PA the last time the contract was up for renewal, in 1997.

It is important to note that of the national membership of the Screen Actors Guild, only Hollywood and New York faced significant local elections on the same ballot as the race for the key national officers. Voter response in the branches followed the historical pattern of being low, as for many branches local elections are in months other than November. For example, in Nevada officers and council are elected every second June. Also, since the PA did not mount a truly national offensive, many of the candidates for national vice president positions representing the branches ran unopposed, contributing to low turnout. The 8th Vice Presidency, which represents the majority of the geographic US, rotates between cities and does not require a traditional election. In what may have

been a shrewd campaign decision, the PA focused only on those areas with major local elections simultaneous with the national ballot. (SAG Constitution and By-Laws, 1996-2000)

With the rapid success and growth of the Performers Alliance, the awakening of organized political support for the Masur administration and a need to reach out to those most affected by new technologies, younger talent, all factions in this political ballet almost simultaneously turned to the very media which represented their latest challenge, the Internet.

The Internet, Technology, Politics and the 1999 Elections

October 15, 1999: Screen Actors Guild National Election Ballots arrived in the mail of the over 99,000 dues-current voting members. For the first time, prominent in every candidate's 50-word statement, was a web address. In doing so the candidates declared affiliation with either the Performers Alliance (PA) or Pro-Act. The web was being used to solidify political alliances and gain converts (personal communication).

The primary "public" for the ballot is the "voting members" of the Screen Actors Guild. Since SAG guards its membership list closely, and makes it costly and therefore impossible for candidates to use the traditional campaign tool of direct mail, alternative low cost communications methods were advantageous for those seeking election or the advancement of their political views. For the most part, the Internet remains a free to low cost method of reaching large numbers of a targeted public.

The Internet has evolved into a key player in waging political war, without the expense or overkill of mass media. Web site and e-mail have earned a place in

supplementing, if not supplanting, traditional direct mail and telephone solicitation. This trend may be illustrated in the development of an internal political battle within the Screen Actors Guild, a high profile union with a vested interest in remaining on top of cutting edge communications technologies. The battle, played out on the Internet through E-mail exchanges (with multiple copies and forwards) and site postings serves to illustrate how this medium may tend to intensify rhetoric, with normal social restraints dropped, and points and counterpoints quickly escalating into the realm of personal attacks. The Internet is a powerful tool for using confrontational tactics.

Whether the use of the web to do anything other than organize and support those who are already activists within a particular political viewpoint, remains to be seen. The effectiveness of the use of these technologies to influence the national membership of the Screen Actors Guild may be an early test of the Internet's ability to persuade.

For candidates in the Screen Actors Guild, political budgets are low. Other than the tightly structured official ballot mailing, no Guild funds are used for campaigning. There is no direct financial gain in running for office. No member of SAG is paid for service within their union. Most suffer income loss. Elected officials oversee a paid staff.

This unique structure limits the financial commitment made in running for office or gaining political position to investments in a candidate's personal belief, with no financial return, either direct or indirect. Holding office may actually cost a member in time lost work opportunities and close identification by management with the union movement. For these reasons, public relations and public perceptions have always been the primary tools for achieving change within the Screen Actors Guild. (Prindle, 1988) Various PR "publics" targeted by the PA included members already active in Guild politics

(converts), performers who earn all or part of their income under specific contract areas (co-workers), the Hollywood or General Membership, the Branches, the national membership, the "Hollywood" community and the national general public.

In 1997, the PA launched a web-site as a means of communication with their members. By mid 1998 it had evolved into a platform not only to reinforce member beliefs, but also to disseminate its version of the truth to a broader membership. All references in print (except for media coverage) to the PA contained their web address. Through the web site, and street membership drives, a large data base of e-mail contacts were collected to be used for frequent "releases" using the technology of broadcast e-mail to compliment traditional telephone committees and direct mail.

The selection of going to the web was made for three reasons. The first was as a means for existing supporters to access information without the expense of traditional print newsletters or the time commitment of phone committees. Second, it provided a directory medium for actors seeking information concerning not only their group but also the Screen Actors Guild. Creative links were established in various search engines to assure that inquiries would turn up not only the officially neutral union web page, but the PA as well. Over time the PA web site evolved from "pa.com" to "pro-actor.org." linked automatically to "pro-union.org". Third, the PA acknowledged that its base of power was almost entirely Hollywood. It needed to reach out to members in the rest of the country, whom it assumed were as angry over the same issues as they were. Initial web site and e-mail outreach resulted in not only minimal results but accelerated the birth of and national appeal of Pro-Act. In content the assumption was made that what interested them in Hollywood was of interest to the national union. As a result, some of their web

outreach may have backfired by putting too much importance on Hollywood. The PA web-masters did not research the diversity of contracts, earnings under contract, or local identities of a diverse geographic membership. A public relations mistake was made in the assumption that the "grassroots" of Hollywood represented the same "grassroots" appeal on a national union basis.

Using the Internet, combining the power of the web page (a pull technology which requires a member to actively seek information) and broadcast e-mail (a push technology where material is sent directly to the members' computer), the PA launched a final barrage prior to the mailing of official ballots. Its last volley included references to how much of the "attacks" and "claims" attributed to the Performance Alliance were actually sent out by the members of "Pro-Act" to mislead the membership. These defensive attempts came in the form of web-site posting, mass e-mail and a national mailing of traditional post cards to 56,000, or close to half of the Screen Actors Guild membership. In effect, their final attempt to influence membership, and thus "public" opinion, came with a throwing of mistrust on everything and anything that had been claimed, and pointing a finger at the status quo (Pro-Act) as at fault (www.pro-union.org/).

This was one of many volleys between sides in a battle of rhetoric fought through the Web. The ease of communications through the web site and e-mails created an escalating series of attacks and defenses, positioning and propaganda that perhaps because of the nature of the almost instantaneous nature of postings and mailings created dialogues that lacked the mediating filter of the public press and in some cases became harshly personal.

As it turns out, the only campaign material actually mailed to the entire national membership was sent by the PA itself, containing an unauthorized reproduction of a

misleading, or incriminating note written by Richard Masur during a contract negotiation. From the Pro-Act Web site comes this response to the Performers Alliance mailing to the SAG membership in late October 1999:

CLAIM: "Actual note handwritten by Richard Masur at the 8/9/99 Commercial Contract Campaign Committee meeting."

FACT: The note has been taken completely out of the context in which it was written. The context was a highly confidential meeting at which strategy for the upcoming Commercial Negotiations was discussed. This note has been "spun" and its publication is a breach of confidentiality and a violation of Guild rules

(<http://www.pro-act.org>). (See EXHIBITS for full text)

The last minute mailer, timed to arrive at the same time as the official ballots hit mailboxes, may have helped solidify the PA's position, while the statement reproduced above could have dissuaded Pro-Act from committing the sizable expense of a national mailing (over one dollar per name in processing fees by the Guild, which does the actual mailing to protect its membership lists from commercial or political abuse).

At the same time, PA Web Master Gordon Drake issued a press release over the PA Web site, via e-mail and in the media, threatening a lawsuit against Richard Masur for McCarthy type actions in "an effort to stifle debate..." quoting himself in his release Drake "announced that he had filed charges against Masur with the National Labor Relations Board in Los Angeles, alleging that Masur's threats coerced, restrained and interfered with his exercise of his right to organize under the National Labor Relations Act" (<http://www.pro-union.org>). (see EXHIBITS for full text).

SAG Presidential Candidate William Daniels, through the PA web-site and its

e-mail broadcast, sent the following letter to the membership:

In life you are presented with some harsh realities and the reality is that our union is not representing its members adequately. Our union must provide us with a theatrical contract, which gives us (our rank and file members) the chance to make a decent living. We don't have such a contract! Our union must provide us with a commercial contract that is not a giveaway (unlimited usage in cable for 11 dollars a day.) We don't have that! Our union must enforce our contracts with vigilance - it doesn't. But mostly, the upper echelons of our union have shut their doors to our members and are hiding facts and figures from them, obstructing their elected board members from doing their job and spreading gloom and doom in order to make us comply with their agenda. It must stop, and if I'm elected, it will stop! (<http://www.pro-union.org>)

In a response to Daniels, a series of endorsements were posted on the Pro-Act web site including a direct response from actor Paul Hecht, who starred with Daniels in the original company of *1776* on Broadway:

What I discovered was that SAG is one of the finest if not the finest union in the country. Its contracts are admired throughout the world by arts unions and associations. Above all I discovered how its executives and employees were to actors and to the Guild. I discovered that to serve, as a volunteer on the board was an enormous and time-consuming job. Not for the faint of heart or stomach. I fear from what I have read that you don't have a clue what is in store for you. To listen to the ranting and raving of your supporters (some of whom I have served with) leaves me

to fear not only for you but more important for the future of the guild and us, the working members. (<http://www.pro-act.org>)

To review just how closely the two groups really were on mission and policy, read the following from their perspective web sites, starting with Pro-Act:

Pro-Act is a national coalition of active, experienced, working Screen Actors Guild performers who intend to refocus the Guild's energy on those forces that threaten the livelihood of all professional performers. These include cutbacks in wages and residuals, factionalism and strife within our Guild, out-of-country production, corporate globalization, employer contract abuse, and new technologies. At the same time we are committed to maintaining and advancing the pro-active work begun under President Masur's leadership in the past five years: an aggressive response to U.S. runaway production, increasing diversity in casting, a commercials residual monitoring program with the potential for recovering millions of dollars for members, the innovative outreach campaign to independent and digital filmmakers netting thousands of jobs for performers and equally more signatories to the Guild contracts, putting an end to abuse of the voucher system, highly effective legislation at both state and federal levels resulting in new protections for performers. (<http://www.pro-act.org>)

The PA had the upper-hand by keeping its mission statement simple, and posting it at the top of all of its web pages and in most of its web-correspondences: "To revitalize the leadership of the Screen Actors Guild and to restore its effectiveness through the active participation and influence of its working members."(<http://www.pro-act.org>) The PA's statement is short, to the point and easy to understand, when directly compared to Pro-

Act's longer and more detailed mission statement. The use of the Internet in all its incarnations for public relations, political communications and in influencing decisions is a tool with its most effective uses yet to be found. Caution signs lie in the fast, instantaneous nature of e-mail, of web posting, transmission lists (list-trans), chat rooms, and web-casting, which can be easily abused or used without full preparation or thought. Issues and problems include credibility and reliability of information sources and potentially libelous, rumor-feeding personal attacks (called flaming in web circles). Are Internet based politics effective in swaying votes? What is the proper positioning of Internet technology in a Public Relations Promotional Mix? Can the Internet replace and therefore lower the cost of other forms of political campaigning and advertising; and finally, does it work?

An example of the web debate in the 1999 SAG National Election cycle, taken Sunday, October 17 1999 off the PA Web Site, which sought to use its oppositions words adjacent them by taking full credit for all positive board action and laying blame for anything the membership may feel has gone wrong, as Lippmann said, the facts without regard to the truth (1922). From the Performers Alliance web site, "SAG is being redefined to meet the challenges ahead. Yes, thanks to the Performers Alliance."

The Web could be an effective, but dangerous tool for dissident movements, because it seems to increase the heat of rhetoric, deepens divisions, and perhaps encourages radical positions. The debate between sides may lack the moderating effects of outside influences from the media, social commentators, public officials and other opinion leaders.

The Election Mandate

"They think they've won, they think they have a mandate and they think they are the union" stated a Pro-Act founder and activist in confidence, "but we represent the numbers, the future of the industry and the real diversity of the union." (personal communication, April 7, 2000).

The 1999 election, and with it the 2000 National Board and Officers saw the largest single shift in power since the Dennis Weaver Day Player Rebellion of the 1970s, in which theatrical film and television actors ran successfully against a wide range of entertainers, commercial actors and celebrities who at the time were the incumbents and the status quo. A member of senior staff, 25 plus year SAG employee, interviewed in confidence, sees the PA's victory as even larger in number and impact on the future of the Guild than any single shift since the Guild's formation in 1933.

In national voting completed on November 3, 1999, just over 21,000 ballots were counted, representing a voting return of fewer than 22% of the national membership. William Daniels received 47.5% of the votes cast for President. Daniels' opponents were incumbent Richard Masur, who garnered 42.5%. The votes in other national offices were equally tight. Every PA backed candidate for the Hollywood seats on the National Board earned victories the majority of these victories fell within five percent of the votes from their Pro-Act opponents. Despite a low voter turnout and tight election races, the fact that PA candidates across the board defeated their Pro-Act rivals was termed by the New York Times a stunning upset, and claimed by the PA as a mandate of the membership (Madigan, November 8, 1999; see also Greenhouse, November 7, 1999). (see EXHIBITS for full election vote tallies and results).

The election sweep by Performers Alliance reflected the failure of the establishment to respond to the issues and emotions represented by the PA. Again, using the Bowers, Ochs and Jensen strategies of agitation (1993), instead of avoidance, the establishment chose to embrace its opposition, therefore giving credibility to Performers Alliance platforms and beliefs. The PA was successful in using standard boardroom confidentiality and procedure to create the perception of secrecy to discredit the standing board. In place of suppression, dissidents were invited into the political process through advisory committees and the existing committee structure. A possible mistake on the part of the Masur administration may have been in facing the Performers Alliance as Pro-Act, rather than standing on their elected offices within SAG. The appearance of accepting parts of the dissident ideology came as Masur waited until possibly too late to refute claims by the PA that it has launched or forced SAG to launch programs which were in fact programs begun prior to the birth of the Performers Alliance.

Bowers, Ochs & Jensen (1993) state that "for a model of establishment to be totally successful, a dissident movement- its ideas, goals, policies, beliefs and personnel - must replace those of the larger institution" (p. 63). If the PA is allowed to claim title to all Guild programs they advocated, then the formation of the Daniels administration and changes which occurred in the first few months of that administration support capitulation. The establishment did not surrender its position voluntarily, but acquiesced to a release of power in the interest of the contentious Commercial Contract negotiations the Guild faced in early 2000. Those negotiations came to an impasse, and on May 1, 2000, with the support of other entertainment unions in the United States, Canada and Mexico, a strike was called. This deliberate retrenchment by those who supported Pro-

Act may indicate that the election victory of the Performers Alliance may be a step in the political process rather than a mandate.

A New Administration

The Performers Alliance took control of their union. Daniels was elected president, defeating Richard Masur. The Performers Alliance also took solid control of the powerful National Executive Committee. Using the power of the pen, President Daniels, at the bequest of his campaign manager Chuck Sloan, quickly replaced the chairs of all national committees with PA faithful. At his first two national meetings, he did not even acknowledge Branch or even New York co-chairs. Branch affairs were also missing from the first two national meeting agendas, which were dominated by national and Hollywood issues. In New York 28-year-old Performers Alliance activist Lisa Scarolla unseated much older and long time incumbent, 68-year-old New York President Mel Boudrot in a highly contested recount. The New York president automatically takes the national office of second Vice President (Armbrust, November 12, 1999).

The election of Daniels' represents a shift in the power structure and definition of responsibilities within the Guild. The day after the election Daniels told reporters, "I just want to make it clear, I think, that I see the role of the presidency a little differently than my predecessor. I'm just one vote on the board of directors. It's the board of directors I want to give the power back to because it's right there in the Guild's Constitution. There's an inclination to ask the president what solutions he has...I don't have solutions. Hopefully the union does to such things as salaries and run-away production." (Armbrust, November 12, 1999, p. 56) Masur believed in a strong presidency, supported by a competent and ongoing consistent experienced staff. He frequently referred to legal

council and senior staff and allowed their full participation in boardroom debate. Masur's administration was open to multiple viewpoints while pursuing a liberal political agenda that began with Dennis Weaver's ascent to the SAG presidency in the 1970s. Daniels chose to pass the chair at meetings on to the first or second vice presidents (who are not elected by the national membership, but by the Los Angeles and New York membership respectively). Masur referred to the Los Angeles National Boardroom as just that or by its formal name as the James Cagney Boardroom. Daniels refers to the same room as the Hollywood Boardroom. He listens to his advisors and prefers to be a figurehead leader and symbol. Senior staff and legal are treated as advisory and are often limited to answering questions from the floor. The shift reflects a social victory by the PA away from the dictates and policy of a central presidency and a strong staff, in favor of an empowering of what they define as the membership and the individual elected members of the National Board of Directors.

Only four months after winning control of the Screen Actors Guild, the Performers Alliance began to minimize their identification as the PA and maximize their identification as the leaders of their union, the Screen Actors Guild. An article in Back Stage West reported, "The presidents-elect of the Screen Actors Guild's national and New York local have both called for an end to in-fighting and a new unity: One Guild working for its members." (Armbrust, November 12, 1999, p.1) The pair called for dissolving of the feuding organizations, the PA, ProAct, and Clean Slate '99 (a New York organization aligned with the PA). However in calling for unity and the abolition of the competing political parties, Second National Vice President Lisa Scarolla also called for a fantasy theme image in saying that "we were the rebels who stormed the castle" and added of her

fellow board members, "if they don't want to work together, they shouldn't be on the board" (Armbrust, November 12, 1999, p.56). In the same press report, National President Daniels took the first step toward becoming the new establishment by putting his emphasis on "putting salve to wounds...unite, that's what I can do right away." (p. 56)

From Agitation to Control: It's Broke. Let's Fix It

To the victors belong the spoils is the old adage often used by writers and speakers to address a post-victory environment. The PA perceives itself as the new SAG, the new administration and new leadership of a high profile union. As such, they move from the agitation stage to the role of administrator, and with it the potential role of having to control dissidence.

Actors on the Move, an official committee of the Guild, boasts over 60,000 signature cards agreeing to the use of their name, phone numbers and e-mail in union organizing activities. With the PA officially dissolving and evolving into the infrastructure of the Screen Actors Guild, the organizing and motivating functions of the PA are able to use the Actors on the Move lists as a vehicle for communication and informational manipulation from within the Guild's official structure (personal observation, 2000 and www.sag.org/).

PA co-founder Sloan is chief advisor to President Daniels. Sloan had become a powerful part of the establishment and no longer viewed himself as the outside rebel (personal observation, April, 2000).

Daniels prefers to allow First Vice President Sumi Haru on the west and Lisa Scarolla in the east chair the sectional board meetings. Haru is elected only by the Los Angeles

membership and Scarolla only by the New York membership (SAG Constitution and 1996-2000 and SAG Archives, personal communication, 2000). In practical effect, this leaves the union's national board chaired by individuals directly representing the primary and secondary PA strongholds, without direct representation of the almost half of the dues paying membership living outside of and belonging to branches other than New York or the Hollywood based General Membership (those members who live outside of LA but who do not declare a branch affiliation). Past Presidents Gordon and Masur used the power of the gavel and whenever possible sat in the chair at meetings on both coasts. Without President Daniels seated in and serving as parliamentary chair, the national membership with branch affiliations have no direct electoral voice outside of their board level representation. By nature of electoral politics and self-identification, issues with Los Angeles, and to a lesser extent New York, importance take precedent for the western and eastern chairs. Agendas to May, 2000 have been heavy with Hollywood and SAG only issues, while light on branch affairs or items that would be of concern to joint SAG and AFTRA missions. Board member, background talent activist and PA member Bob Courts, who was an early convert as a sitting board member, has proposed that in all future business the Los Angeles Board Room be referred to as the Hollywood Board Room, because Hollywood is not just a place but an industry. His proposal also suggests that western section national board meetings be referred to an Expanded Hollywood Board, National Business. Court's proposals are gaining support and could become policy (SAG Board Packet and Minutes, personal communication, April 24, 2000).

Aggressive slogans such as "it's broke, let's fix it" and "take back your union" are being applied toward a "battle" to gain tremendous ground against producers in the joint

SAG-AFTRA 2000-2003 Commercial and Industrial Contract negotiations, which began in March, 2000 in New York City. The activist rhetoric deliberately replaces more corporate language used in the past to invite producers and the industry to be friendly with and work with SAG. With the PA victory, and with one of the founding members of the Performers Alliance, David Jolliffe, at the head of SAG's portion of the contract negotiating team, Hollywood insiders anticipated and even predicted a full-blown strike, which many feel SAG will lose. Production and advertising agency interest stockpiled commercials under contract in advance of the strike deadline, while others began to schedule production outside of the United States and use non-union workers. (Robb, March 9, 2000). In addition, the AFTRA portion of the negotiating team are not members of the Performer Alliance and may have had different agendas and goals going into the negotiations than the PA dominated SAG team. In response to management pulling out of negotiations a few days earlier, on April 18, 2000 the Western Section of the joint boards of SAG and AFTRA completed what their Eastern counterparts began on April 16, called for a full work stoppage, or strike, effective May 1, 2000. A month earlier in a national referendum, members of both unions had overwhelmingly approved a strike, if necessary (Robb, April 19, 2000). Interest in SAG's commercial negotiations by Hollywood insiders and the media has been higher than normal, with indications that the major studios and theatrical (film and television producers) are keeping a close eye on the negotiations with the 2001 Theatrical and Television contract negotiations in mind. Some more cynical observers are even proclaiming that with the rise of the PA, SAG is dead (G. Fuchs, personal communication, December 7, 1999).

Board Meeting of April 24, 2000: A Glimpse into the Future

Entering the first year of political dominance, the former Performers Alliance faces what could be the most difficult industry shift in a quarter of a century; the pro-business, entrepreneurial climate of America in relation to negotiating the contract under which the majority of union performers earn their living. The PA rose from dissatisfaction with the previous Commercial Contract. They campaigned on platforms of change and of winning victories and improved compensation for performers under the Commercial Contract. It was in the trades and management reads the trades.

"They are ready for a strike, they are out to bury us" negotiating committee member Roy Costly, who represents New Mexico on the National Board confided, "Management is not moving on rollbacks and on refusal to upgrade the cable contract." Costly feels that there is moral and financial support on the side of management from the large studios and corporations who will be on the opposite side of the table in next year's theatrical film and television contract discussions. (personal communication, April 25, 2000). As of late April, 2000, management was refusing to negotiate on any pay-for-play contract for cable. Pay-for-play is used as an option for compensation on broadcast television and is one way talent is assured that they will be compensated for any loss from the overexposure of their image or talents. The industry refused to agree to any form of monitoring or even to encode the commercials so that the union might bear the cost of such monitoring. Management maintains that they have no duty to bargain in the area of Internet usage of commercials, because they claim they cannot control that use and it remains an unregulated media. Of greatest concern from the union side of the table is an

industry proposal to eliminate the pay-per-play on broadcast advertising and replace it with flat rate guarantees per 13-week cycle.

One area in which SAG is prepared to do battle with producers and to gain the support of the membership is the Internet, with the added assist of former PA expertise. SAG's highly visible web site, a regular stop for industry professionals and those interested in the motion picture industry, is now under the direction of PA Webmaster Gordon Drake. Staff in the communications office now answers to successful PA candidate for secretary, Nancy Austin. The image and rhetoric of all SAG internal and external communications have become increasingly heated in union rhetoric and decreasingly influenced by the communications counterparts within AFTRA. Three months into the new administration, appointments to committees made by branch co-chairs have yet to be approved by the president. Much has been put on hold in favor of putting full efforts and supports behind the Los Angeles dominated contract committee and PA controlled Members on the Move contract rally efforts.

During their campaign, the Performers Alliance chose to isolate key flag individuals to polarize the membership. These included Richard Masur, for his alleged dictatorial politics and inability to change, and key staff members, Katherine Moore and Katherine York, who adjudicated and assisted in a contested internal election by the Los Angeles Board for their representatives on the powerful National Executive Committee. The rallying issue was allegations of rigging the 1999 NEC election in favor of Masur supporters (Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen, 1993). On April 14, 2000 two key senior staff members, the subject of PA allegations of election tampering in relations to the teller committee on a Hollywood Board vote for National Executive committee (NEC)

representation, left by their own choice for other positions. Communications Director Katherine Moore to a non-disclosed position and Special Projects Director Catherine York, who left to become the Executive Vice President and a principal owner of start up internet niche auction service, GalaxyBid.com (Robb, April 4, 2000 and K. Moore, personal communication, April, 2000). The new Communications Committee, under a former PA chair and make up primarily of PA appointees, will interview replacements for Moore, while a presidential appointed search committee will interview for York's position. Finalists for both jobs will be presented to the entire national board for ratification. In effect by mid-2000 the Performers Alliance will have had a major role in hiring two key communication and legislative agenda staff members.

It is important to once again note that AFTRA and SAG are different in structure and philosophy, with AFTRA set up as locals, controlling their own funds and negotiating, out of necessity, a much higher percentage of local contracts, including by employer, industry and/or geography. Los Angeles is an AFTRA local. SAG is a national union with a centralized National Board and National Executive Committee. The national board approves waivers when needed by local branches, all of which are part of the national general fund from a financial operational point of view. Autonomy is limited. As of April 24, 2000 there are 27 SAG branches, all but 3 of which are in one way or another linked to an AFTRA local. These links come in several forms. The most common are joint offices, with shared rent and a sharing of payroll for all of the staff, including executives. Separate but equal offices sharing or close in physical space occur in several markets, most notably the largest offices in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. LA is not a branch of the Screen Actors Guild. The government of Los Angeles falls under a portion

of the National Board elected only by members living in greater LA or what is referred to as the General Membership (again, those who live elsewhere but do not declare a local branch affiliation). Referred to at the Hollywood Board, it is this governing body which dominates the post PA victory west coast and western branch meetings, and as such the majority of the practical operation of the Screen Actors Guild.

It is under the political environment of post-merger and post-PA victory that the April 24, 2000 meeting of the Western Section of the National Board of Directors held some light on the evolution to come.

The top national employee of the Guild, Ken Orsatti, who is nearing retirement, was ill and unable to attend, leaving Hollywood Executive Director Leonard Chassman and embattled New York Executive Director and SAG's chief contract negotiator John T. McGuire to represent Senior staff. President Daniels sat at the rostrum, but did not chair the meeting. Seated at the front for only the first hour of a five-hour meeting, Daniels allowed Sumi to chair. Within two hours he had left the building, leaving the business, as he promised, to the National Board. Haru is the first female performer to serve as a national vice president on the AFL-CIO Executive Committee. Officially she represents the Four A's and other performing unions. Unlike many of her PA allies, she views the role of SAG as vital to the American Labor Movement. In her report to the board on the AFL-CIO, she pointed out that that organizations' leadership was not happy about her abstaining on the vote to endorse Democratic candidate for US President, Vice President Al Gore, and on withholding SAG funds. She explained:

We are so diverse that we have a little bit of everything and anything in our union.

Anything we put our stamp on gets a lot of publicity. Our membership covers the full

political spectrum. We have Charleston Heston and Ronald Reagan on one end and Ed Asner on the other, and one of them became president of the United States. We do not endorse candidates, but we do support labor and we do support anything that benefits our entire membership. (personal communication, April 24, 2000)

When Gary Epp and other members of the PA tried to call her report as out of order because it did not deal directly with SAG business, an angered Haru responded:

We are a trade union. A portion of our members' dues goes to the AFL-CIO. What affects dockworkers affects actors. It is important that we be looked upon as a real union. Too many see us as a bunch of rich actors riding around in limousines. My personal income after taxes and expenses was only \$12,000 last year! (personal communication, April 24, 2000)

With the scheduled May first start of what could be the longest and most expensive strike in Screen Actors Guild history looming on the horizon, the atmosphere in the room was thick and anger was shown at any dissension close to the surface. Long before anyone had anything to say in the way of dissent, commercial and character actor Matt Kimbrough, a founding member of the PA, felt it necessary to say, "We're going to war folks. We have a lot of diversity but this strike is critical to the unions' future. We need to be on the same page. This union has one voice and one voice only." He was applauded and his sentiments re-voiced whenever anyone questioned committee make up or decisions handed down by the national chairs. Sloan openly contested the long held concept that branch and New York co-chairs were equal in rank and committee standing with their Hollywood Board appointed fellow national chairs. Sloan replied, "There are times when there can be only one chair. Co-chairs exist to assure branch input and serve

when the chair cannot make a meeting." As the unofficial head of the former Performers Alliance (which according to the PA no longer exists), his opinion was upheld at the PA dominated meeting, in effect reversing long held national policy and taking even more political power and operational say away from branch representatives.

Calls for unity, apparently, must come from the party in control of the elected body. Former Pro-Act leader, First Vice President and Chair of the Communications Committee, Amy Aquino, is now relegated to serving out the remainder of her concurrent term as a member of the National Board. Divested of her officer position and committee assignments by the PA, Aquino remains vocal in the boardroom. On April 24, her call for unity was voted down as being duplicitous, but not before a prominent PA member inferred that she did not write the language of her proposal and that there was a political subtext to the intent of the motion (personal observations, SAG, April 24, 2000).

In a private conversation earlier in the evening, branch representatives from six western branches, including Kathy Christopher of Colorado, who is entering her 27th year of service on the National Board, discussed the frigid atmosphere for anyone who did not agree with "Chuck Sloan and his clones." One board member felt that the PA has successfully turned two national Vice Presidents from the branches to their politics of government, with decisions made only by those who make their full living as actors. Except for Regional Branch Conference elected representation, most board members elected from the branches, who were not considered to be working actors, had been shut out of the reconstituted committees, or relegated to alternate status. At the same time the power of government had been handed by the president to a Hollywood dominated central committee (the NEC) and to the Hollywood elected first Vice President. It was

also restated that only 27% of the membership voted in the election that swept the final third of the PA into power and elected the PA slate. Despite a heavy Hollywood turnout proportionately, the victory had been a slim one. One board member joked that "now SAG has a loyal opposition, but the PA still sees us as the enemy! This cannot be good for the future of our union" (personal communication, April 24, 2000).

Chapter Summary

The Performers Alliance began as a grassroots reaction to what was perceived as the loss of control by working actors of the union they depended on to negotiate and enforce contracts on which members economic futures depend. Dissatisfaction with the result of a major contract negotiation sparked a movement within the Screen Actors Guild for radical change. From a few individuals, the PA grew to earn political dominance of the unions governing bodies.

During the period of this study, changes in both entertainment industry technology and the use of new personal tools, such as computers, radically effected the world in which performers earn a living and the methods with which the Performers Alliance gained converts and eventually power.

The PA and the Screen Actors Guild face yet another technological, business and political upheaval. As shown in this paper, SAG has proven to be flexible, resourceful and when necessary tough in dealing with similar challenges in the past. The timing of so much change at one time is unparalleled since the forces, which led to the formation of the Guild almost 70 years ago.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER STUDY

Dissident movements do exist and can be studied both within unions and in the study of unions themselves. These movements may meet the criteria of social movements, however the strength of the parallel in this case is strong but not conclusive.

Rapid advancement in technologies is affecting the nature and rate of social change and the way communications are studied. These changes also affect both mass and interpersonal communications. Technological advancements are changing the interaction and relationship of printed word, sound, image and contextual meaning. Technology is bringing geographically diverse populations closer together in common interests, causes and goals. Unions may need to evolve and grow more immediately responsive to their membership on the local, regional, national and international levels if they hope to continue a viable role outside of the establishment. Technology may not only assist in allowing for responsive rapid communication, but may also be mandating such change.

This study evolved from first hand observation over a six-year period, with the focus on understanding important changes occurring within a high profile and nationally influential communications union, the Screen Actors Guild. The study utilized journalistic, rhetorical and sociological observation of the Performers Alliance, the

Screen Actors Guild, and the larger societies in which the Guild functions. Study and observation involved a wide range of communication disciplines. The observations were made in the national board room of the Screen Actors Guild, in discussions and interviews with members of the board as well as rank and file members, in research as outlined in the methodology and review of literature sections of this thesis and in specific research into the history of the Guild and the emergence of the Performers Alliance.

A brief review of each of the areas studied and the primary discoveries, followed by suggestions for further study will confirm the value of this thesis and the time invested in it over the past six years.

The Study of Communications

There could not have been a stronger model to accompany a contemporary master's level study in communications than the internal struggles of the Screen Actors Guild and the external forces that contributed to change within the Guild. Based in the study of the rhetoric of social change, additional lessons were learned in areas of technology, mass communications and the illustration of more traditional models of communications.

The observation, recording and analysis of internal union politics, beginning at the level of one individual and growing in momentum to a dominance of a mature union structure, supports at each phase the social movement model. Key observations and interpretations include how remarkably parallel the pattern and rhetoric of the Performer Alliance is to other successful movements in much different environments or times. While the PA did not have a martyr and its leadership, for the most part, remains

intact, the full cycle of a movement remains to be played out. As of the end of May, 2000, the PA faced its first major challenges as the dominant group within SAG, one month into a major national strike action while simultaneously pushing for radical change within the structure of the Guild itself (confidential: Towers-Perrin Report, 2000). While a few PA members shifted sides, the PA itself remained in the convert stage, working on winning the support of branch executives and elected board members and, through Members on The Move and strike committees, a broader base of the membership.

The use, power and growth of the relatively new medium of the Internet accelerated the use and effectiveness of traditional communication models, at both the interpersonal and mass media level. The Internet's ability to disseminate both true and distorted information quickly and effectively to a motivated and receptive portion of the electorate became clear in a battle to claim credit for programs and advances already underway within the internal structure of the Guild. The technology of e-mail proved a fast and effective way to communicate with large numbers of potential supporters or converts, with the perception by the reader of individual personal communication with the PA and Pro-Act. This same technology also allowed for immediate feedback or for the re-transmission of the message to other recipients at little or no costs. Between 1997 and 2000, a new media emerged to complement or even surpass traditional letters, mass mailings and pamphleteering.

Behind the actors on stage a backdrop of technological change and shifts of management and the economics of society contributed to the lessons of this study and recommendations for future studies. Each major shift in the Guild, from its formation to current day, paralleled a technological shift or major shift in the economics of society.

The rapid acceleration of change over the short five years of this study raised questions of its own about the nature of communications and communications study. The growth and evolution of use of the Internet far exceeded traditional growth rates set by telegraph, telephone, radio and later television communications systems and networks. Yet in the face of this change, the models studied remain valid and are confirmed with each step of the rise of the PA. It can be argued that the political force that mastered the tools of organization and use of communications tactics in the end earned the votes and the perceived power of controlling their union.

The potential applications of the traditional, dramatist, fantasy theme, narrative or cultural approaches to communication analysis and criticism in future studies are almost unlimited. The use of ethos, pathos, logos and mythos are clear on both sides, as was illustrated by the nature of actors themselves and the appeals to their nature and belief systems. In the birth and growth of the Guild, and in the birth and rise of the PA, there were clearly defined sides, conflicts of good versus evil, climatic points and resolutions. Irving Thalberg and the studio machine were not much different than Disney, Time Warner or Sony gobbling up communications networks and entertainment production channels to dominate a union of performers, whom Thalberg once referred to as "children." There are the Goliath's of big business and corporate mergers and the David's of the PA, the lowly actor, the Guild itself.

Communications studies, in its full range, may find continued observation of the internal workings of the Screen Actors Guild and other entertainment unions useful in explaining changes occurring rapidly, both in the communications arena and in society. Has the rapid growth of new technologies, starting with but not limited to the Internet,

made it possible to accelerate change at a national and international level in ways which prior technologies could not? Are we finally becoming a truly global village? What skills will researchers, practitioners and even consumers of computer based communications need to become fluent in and why? How will advertising, public relations, journalism and education be affected and how rapidly? The Screen Actors Guild is at the forefront of having, out of the necessity of its mission to protect and work for the wages, working conditions and welfare of its membership, of dealing with all of these questions. Those who control the union, currently the Performers Alliance, also have a direct effect on the role labor may have in helping to define the future of the overall society in view of technological change.

While the tools and pace of communications are changing and accelerating, all of the work reviewed in the course of masters studies remains valid in recording understanding, analyzing and continuing to study the ongoing and evolving rhetoric of change.

The observations of this study could have been utilized in any number of directions dependant on the commination models or analysis techniques chosen by the author. The potential in reporting and analyzing five years of observation was overwhelming with a range of potential detailed analysis of as small a topic as one ballot initiative document to an overview of the entire entertainment industry and the concept of Hollywood itself. The selection was made to follow the most current and therefore most interesting element to emerge during the source of this study, the Performers Alliance as a movement within the structure of the Screen Actors Guild. Even this selection has proven to be detailed and complex, with only a general overview possible in the confines of this thesis. The fast moving pace of events also made this a good topic to study.

1997-2000: The Successful Rise of the Performers Alliance

Of the issues observed and studies, most interesting was the dynamic of observing the birth of a dissident movement within the Screen Actors Guild, from its germination in the merger debate, to its inception in response to the 1997 National Commercials Contract. This thesis observed first hand the growth, evolution and organization of a small opposition faction as it grew systematically to dominate the political offices and operations within the Screen Actors Guild. Through the full use of all the tools available, including traditional and new technologies, the Performers Alliance grew rapidly, taking only three years to remake the Screen Actors Guild a national government in its own image.

The phases of development as a dissident or social movement have been clearly illustrated. The first is a tangible need and individuals or groups that begin to voice the need, as seen in the formation and growth among working commercial actors, and later on a larger scale amid all performers. The second is a phase of propaganda and agitation, as illustrated in PA members various methods of communications to the media, SAG members and the public. The third has followers growing in identity with the movement and evangelizing to expand the movement's reach and power. This occurred as candidates chose to run for election in 1977 and grew to its climax with the 1999 elections. The fourth is formal or informal organization. The PA formed committees, selected a web master, selected publicists, mounted candidates and staged events. The fifth involves leadership, action and the development of new converts. While the message may have changed, the PA reached out to background talent, actors who perceived that, given desired change, they could join the ranks of working actors, to stars such as

William Daniels and to agents, primarily those who represent commercial talent. Sixth finds the movement becoming its own institution or changing the institution it sought to change by becoming a part of it. While politically still active, including the continuation of a web site, the PA formally dissolved as an entity when it rose to the perceived majority in decision making and control of the Screen Actors Guild. Seventh is eventual bureaucracy and the potential for a new movement to take on this new or revised institution. This pattern can be clearly observed and documented in the rise of the Performers Alliance within the politics and government of the Screen Actors Guild and may be evident in yet to be recorded events over the next two to six years.

The Performers Alliance, and before it the Day Player Revolution and the formation of the Guild itself, are movements for change within the structure of American Labor. A strong argument exists that these dissident movements meet the definition of social movements. What characterizes a group as a social movement? According to Rybacki and Rybacki, "A group becomes a social movement when it uses rhetorical acts to demand change" (1991, p. 150). Change was in each case as necessary for economic, technological and creative reasons and perceived as needed to guarantee the future of performers very livelihood into the foreseeable future. In these and other instances reviewed in Chapter One, quantum changes brought about by new technologies, economics and expanding markets led to management decisions concerning their dealings with labor.

According to Simons (1970), social movements are distinct from panics, crazes, booms, fads, and hostile acts. Furthermore, he states, movements are not a part of labor unions, government agencies, business organizations and other institutions. Simons

outlines rhetorical requirements that social movements should have: "a) Attract, maintain, and mold workers into an efficiently organized unit. b) Secure adaptation of their product by the large structure. c) React to resistance generated by the larger structure." Simons (1970) further relates the concepts of Smelser and Turner & Killian, stating that movement leaders must acknowledge and recognize the needs of followers, be both consistent and flexible, adapt to several audiences and relinquish leadership to others as needs change. Leaders must also be able to choose from militant and moderate tactics as circumstances dictate.

While Simons (1970) does not include union movements within a general definition of social movements, it could be argued that many institutions were born from the seeds of a social movement, for example, a revolution creating a government. The seeds of a social movement may remain within an institution, ready to be germinated by factions willing to break off from the establishment. Wilkinson (1976) notes that "movements are questioning, testing strategies that arise out of addressing a given establishment" (p. 92). Cathcart (1978) includes confrontation as a signifying element of social movements, giving a movement form, substance and identity. Confrontation, in this usage, is a ritualistic, dramatic act. The act of confrontation forces a separation between movement members and the establishment that it is challenging, demands a response from the establishment, and gives added strength to a movement through unity and commitment.

If a movement clearly meets the goals and definition of social movements, even if it is within a union, government or business, a case can be presented that it is indeed a social movement. Are not governments, business and unions the larger entrenched institutions

that make up the fabric of society? If they are, then movements for change or justice within them are clearly social movements.

The PA clearly acted as a dissident movement, fulfilling the requirements of a social movement as outlined by Simons and Wilkinson and defining itself in confrontational terms as emphasized by Cathcart. While PA leaders may have been members of an established institution, the Screen Actors Guild, they acted outside of, and then confronted SAG using dramatic language and actions, and eventually political organizing to overturn and gain entry into SAG's central government.

As the primary focus of this thesis, the Performers Alliance proved fertile ground for study as one actor, whom we will call Chuck, gave voice to building discontent toward a union perceived as governed by members who did not earn their living acting, and in specific over the perceived weak gains of the 1997 Commercials Contract.

Using concepts and structures from Bowers, Ochs and Jensen's The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control (1993); and Stewart, Smith and Denton's Persuasion and Social Movement (1989) and other models for social change, this paper has shown a clear parallel between the Performers Alliance and classic models for social change.

The previous chapters provide the historic groundwork for the following summary and a conclusion that the Performers Alliance may well be a legitimate social movement within a union. The PA has grown to become the new establishment, against which other factions, such as branch representation, will have to operate and perhaps seek to create their own counter movement.

Between 1997 and 1999, a small group of people, mostly actors whose livelihoods depended on their income under the commercials contract, propagandized and agitated

ever expanding groups within the member of the Screen Actors Guild. They adjusted their appeal to each group, building a common consciousness and identity as the representatives of the real union, under the banner of "Take Back Your Union."

Populations of diverse interest and cultures were drawn to the Performers Alliance banner by the commonality of feeling that they had lost control over their own ability to make a living.

As established in Chapter Three, the Performers Alliance grew from a sense of frustration by a small group of actors who saw their ability to make a living threatened by what they perceived as their union's slow to non-existent response to changes in the technology of entertainment and information, and by shifts in the management structure of employers. A group of no more than a dozen actors accurately perceived an undercurrent among their fellow performers of similar dissatisfaction. They used the tools of agitation and control to encourage a grass roots revolution within a sufficient minority of the Screen Actors Guild Los Angeles membership to achieve their desired change.

"Highly emotional" arguments based on a "citation of grievances and alleged violation of moral principals" (Bowers, Ochs & Jensen, 1993, p.3) utilized interpersonal communications, small group meetings, pamphleteering, telephone-trees, the press and most effectively of all, the Internet to agitate for change within the elected structure of the Screen Actors Guild.

The leaders identified a need for change in the way in which the Screen Actors Guild governs itself and negotiates contracts. They perceived a union where a large number of "vanity card" members had taken control and in doing so were not working in the best interest of those who relied on jobs under Guild contracts to earn a living and pay their

own bills. Vanity card members were defined by the PA as any member who earned less than the majority of their income under Guild contracts, and therefore paid dues for the right to carry a membership card and tell others that they were members of a high profile and glamorous union (<http://www.pro-act.org>). The perception was that members of the negotiating team on contracts may not have the best interest of the everyday "working actor" in mind, and might not fight with every weapon in the union arsenal to maintain and gain the best possible wages and working conditions for the membership. Whether true or not, the Performers Alliance told Los Angeles SAG members that members who had never worked under the contracts being negotiated were determining the future of those who depended on those contracts to feed their families.

Sitting outside of the normal decision making process, the founders of the PA sought a significant change in the mission and structure of the union, while those in office fought to continue programs they had already begun and felt that the grievances of the outsiders were already being addressed. Substantive change was sought in the form of higher wages and more union jobs. Procedural change was sought in the ways in which the union constituted negotiating committees and the points on which there would be little room for negotiation. The Performers Alliance sought a higher level of participation by working members and a greater level of communication of the workings of the Guild to the membership. Meanwhile, the establishment countered with arguments of an open democracy for all members and claims of legal restraints on information that could be allowed to leak or filter out of the boardroom. The Performers Alliance saw SAG's governing bodies and staff as being large and unresponsive to the needs of the membership they represented. Because of a common value system, that of the need for

fair wages and working conditions and any union's role in negotiating those areas of employment security contractually, the Performers Alliance can be said to have followed a path of agitation through vertical deviance. They sought to empower the working actor who had the most to benefit or lose through contract repercussions.

While the establishment of the Screen Actors Guild did maintain control of traditional media, such as Guild publications, the official web site and media relations, the Performers Alliance proved itself to be adept at opening new channels of control, used in this case to facilitate change. Starting with interpersonal conversations, petitions and leafleting in agents and casting directors offices, at workshops and on job sites, the strategy quickly grew to include rallies, media events, structured phone calls (telephone-trees), their own mailing list and a well promoted web site of their own. With the election of Performers Alliance members to the National Board of Directors in 1997, the movement gained limited access to official channels of communication within the union and an unofficial voice in the media as members of the governing board.

Authority was vested in the legitimate power of the elected president, Richard Masur, and in the expert power of the highest level employee of the Guild, National Executive Director Ken Orsatti. Masur took an active role by chairing meetings, appearing often in the media, attending committee meetings and launching studies and programs through his office using his office staff. At the same time, he appeared open to dissenters, inviting them into the government of the Guild through committees and welcoming them in their initial election victory in 1997.

The Performers Alliance sought a shift of power, from the elected president and high level staff to the elected board and member driven committees. In 1999 SAG elected PA

candidate Bill Daniels as president. Daniels openly campaigned he wanted to give control of the union back to the members and would work for and with the board, not as the policy setter but as the representative of the board and the membership.

While Masur held legitimate power, the PA gained referent power through the support of the voting electorate in Los Angeles and New York. They created a shadow union, standing for everything that significant numbers of members felt the union should stand for. In the course of the 1997, 1998 and 1999 elections a cycle of petition, promulgation and solidification occurred. Requests to the elected board and president for change continued on a regular basis, brought at first from the outside and later from the inside by newly elected PA board members and converts. Public declaration and a taking credit for any positive action or direction of movement by the board followed, among other places posted on the PA web site and in media releases or interviews. A coalition and eventually a majority of Los Angeles board members then carried the PA platform to the policy level, solidifying their solutions to the perceived needs and demands of the members they represent. The renaming of committees to reflect PA rhetoric followed. "Actors on the Move" in place of the "membership committee" and the change of the word "committee" to "task force" on other committees represent solid evidence of the full cycle of agitation and control on the part of the Performers Alliance.

The PA became highly organized and used every tool at their disposal to win their goal of dominating the political make up of the union and shifting its mission and focus back to the working actor, defined as those who earned the majority of their entire annual income under union contracts. The shared belief was one of an older Screen Actors Guild which did not "go to the wall" to "fight for" members rights in contract negotiations. The

feeling was that elected representatives were removed from the suffering of income loss by the working members, listening instead to those well off stars and concerned for the welfare of the lowliest member, who may have worked only a few times under union contract after joining SAG.

By winning the elected seats on the Hollywood and General Membership Board of Directors in each of three consecutive elections (board members hold three year terms), this movement achieved its goal, capped by sweeping the Hollywood and New York national officer positions and all three of the post elected by the entire union membership.

Polarization over flag issues and individuals occurred at each stage, including during within the union as of May 1, 2000. Members who did not at least seek to earn a significant portion of their annual income under SAG union contracts were vilified as representing a threat to working actor's livelihoods. Anyone who was not a supporter of the PA was classified as against them, in conversation and on their web site. Inactive members were considered as part of the problem, not of the solution. If you did not believe in the ideals and goals of the Performers Alliance, you did not believe in your union. Only through the PA could positive change occur. The PA believed that the threat of a strike by a union willing to pull out their big guns would win them concessions in negotiations with management. In April 2000, negotiations on the Commercials Contract broke down and on May 1, a PA dominated negotiating committee found themselves at the forefront of a full national strike against the national advertising industry.

Richard Masur, Katherine York, Katherine Moore and New York Executive Director John McGuire found themselves made into flag individuals, targets for defeat or

employment elsewhere in PA revolutionary rhetoric. Only McGuire remains in the union's leadership.

The birth and rapid rise of Performers Alliance is proof that the elements of social movements can and do exist within the establishment of a union. Unions, which may be seen as part of a larger labor establishment, may need such change to remain active and viable in the best interest of their members against the larger realities of a larger society and the marketplace. This could lead to a study of whether internal strife and change is needed in the labor movement to effectively deal with large issues such as globalization, NAFTA, the spread of right-to-work legislation, a decline in union shop market share, and the public perception of unions and the labor movement.

As of the writing of this thesis a major struggle is underway to redefine themselves, consolidate power and maintain control as the new establishment of the union. This transition is set against the backdrop of a full strike over the 2000 renewal and renegotiations of the Commercials Contract that began the rapid rise of the PA in 1997. A management report which, among other things, would redefine the branch system outside of Hollywood in the image of Hollywood's structure, is also under consideration, as are ways to consolidate, in the interest of finance, committee and other functions primarily under Hollywood and New York control.

The new order is already under fire from the majority of the elected representatives for a membership that resides outside Hollywood. Inside Los Angeles, the future and success of the Performers Alliance maintaining political control may depend on an outcome of the current Commercials Contract strike and negotiations acceptable to their constituents, including the PA's delivery on campaign promises concerning cable

residuals, pay for the Internet and the implementation of commercial monitoring technology.

The use of media for organizing and political control within the Screen Actors Guild literally evolved over the actual course of this study from pamphlets and protest rallies to sophisticated web sites and broadcast e-mail, with strong and clear effects in rallying geographically disperse populations of voters. The founders of the Screen Actors Guild were able to use interpersonal communications and public speaking as primary tools, relying on the relatively tight geography of the cluster of studios in the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles. At the time the primary employers were the studios, as full time employers of actors and background talent.

The Guild formed as a union negotiating with a relatively small group of powerful studios, controlled by a small clique of even more powerful owners, the movie moguls. By attracting stars early in their growth stage, the new union movement captured local and national radio and newspaper publicity. In its early stages, the Performers Alliance relied on similar tactics, but quickly adapted to add more advanced tools such as sophisticated publicity campaigns, the Internet and with it, e-mail. The importance of the new media of the Internet and e-mail are explored in Chapter Four.

Further study may include the continued documentation of the progress of former Performers Alliance members as the perceived leadership of the Screen Actors Guild, a more detailed study of the rhetoric used by both Pro-Act and the PA between 1997 and 2000, expansion of the study to include AFTRA and other entertainment industry unions and further investigation into the effect of new technologies and the use of technology on modern social movements and organizations.

New Technologies As an Historic Catalyst for Change

The impact of new technologies on the income and livelihood of members of the screen actor's profession over the past one hundred years was greater and of greater importance than originally anticipated. This was clearly illustrated with the advent of sound in the late 1920s, of videotape distribution in the middle of the century, and of cable and Internet distribution over the last few decades. Each of these major technological changes led to a reorganization of the self-identity and goals of the Screen Actors Guild and its members. The advent of sound, coupled with the effects of the depression, created an undeniable dissident movement, as individuals began to speak out, propagandize, agitate, earn converts, attract high level supporters (stars), raise the consciousness of the group (actors), organize, take action and finally overthrow the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in its role as a pseudo-union, and give birth to the Screen Actors Guild. Videotape and television contributed to the end of the traditional studio-single employer system and the birth of the existing system of essentially independent contractors negotiating with an entire industry for labor contracts. In the early 1970s a movement of working but low profile actors successfully overthrew a star-based board of directors and put SAG on a 30 year social reform agenda, with the focus on membership numbers over a qualified performer membership base. Rapid growth of the Guild eventually led to the discontent, which gave birth in the late 1990's to the Performers Alliance.

The importance of technological change in the formation and alternations of performance union politics falls clearly within the realm of communication studies. The existence of a solid parallel between technology and change within the internal structure

of the Screen Actors Guild confirms and suggest the potential for models to track the evolution of movements within unions and society parallel to new technologies.

Hollywood as the Stage for Larger Studies

Studies of a common social mythos of Hollywood, not a as a city or even as an industry, but as an idea and a dream, provided one of many avenues toward understanding the dynamics of the acting profession and of those unions which work within the modern entertainment industry. An understanding of actors' egos, motivations, common rhetoric of words and ideas was necessary to build a research base on which to study both SAG and the Performers Alliance. The ethnocentrism of working commercial actors, actors, the Performers Alliance, The Screen Actors Guild, the industry, the city of Los Angeles, Hollywood the dream and of strong unionist all play roles in this study. The performers who earn their livings by doing commercial voice or on camera work felt that their perception of the union, of the industry and of what is best for all working performers is the only one which will in the end save the union and all working actors paychecks. As trained observers and artists, all actors have a way of perceiving the world and have drawn criticism for voicing their opinions as educated observations of fact. The PA as a movement was quick to vilify and attack anyone who did not share their vision of the Screen Actors Guild and what was good for performers. From heavy coverage by the Los Angeles Times and Southern California media, it is clear that the perspective and identity of the region in which key members of the entertainment industry and just over forty percent of the membership of the Screen Actors Guild live, adds to an inflated feeling of importance and power of the motion picture, television and advertising industries. Two daily newspapers, Daily Variety and the Hollywood Reporter, publish

and are widely read, geared specifically to Hollywood and The Industry. As the casino industry is to Las Vegas, movies are to Southern California.

The Merger for the Future Failed

A merger of the two largest performers union, SAG and AFTRA, discussed in various forms over a 50 year period and seriously pursued in a specific merger plan for over a dozen years, was soundly defeated by the electorate of the Screen Actors Guild midway through this study. A decision was made to focus on the Performers Alliance, leaving room for a future in depth study of the proposed merger, its long history, and speculation as to why the proposed merger may have failed. From a communication discipline perspective, the traditional union argument that through unity and numbers there is solidarity and strength was outweighed by concerns that the national top down structure of the Screen Actors Guild would be diluted in the hybrid marriage with the local chapter based and heavily local contract centered AFTRA. In addition, a minority report on the official ballot proved to reflect the majority of voting membership in its fear of a migrant performers multiple employer SAG membership losing political and contract influence to powerful and steadily employed broadcasters and broadcast producers within AFTRA.

Application for Future Studies

Is the Screen Actors Guild dead or dying? Is the Screen Actors Guild a model for the flexible democratic unions of the future? How will labor unions evolve into the 21st Century? Do labor unions represent the little guy, the oppressed worker and downtrodden, or do they represent well off workers who are fighting to protect what they have or greedily seek even more? Will international ownership of business turn local or

even national union organizations into social dinosaurs? Will American labor need to abandon its conservative roots to rejoin the liberal and socialistic international labor defense against growing multinationals? Are labor unions necessary at all? And finally, can social movements exist within established labor unions, government agencies and other institutions?

There were many questions raised in the course of this study which should lead to additional research and exploration well beyond the bounds of the Screen Actors Guild and the entertainment industry. These questions reach into many fields of study and many areas of everyday life for actors, workers and for all of society.

Applications of this four year study and further studies may include, but are not limited to, use in the fields of organizational or government/corporate communications, public relations, mass media, new technologies, visual communications, as well as interpersonal and intercultural communications. Outside of communications, applications may be found in government, labor relations, law and a wide range of social science and business fields.

As expected, strong parallels between the forces behind the formation of the Screen Actors Guild in 1933 and the past five years of rapid change within the structure of what may be classified as a mature union were observed and documented. The Performers Alliance, Save SAG, Pro-Act, Clean Slate '99 and other political movements clearly indicate that social movements can exist within established institutions when such institutions face periods of major evolution and change. Whether or not these political segments are indeed social movements may require revisiting these groups much later in the social movement cycle. While the Performers Alliance fits the pattern set forth by

Stewart, Smith and Denton, it may fall short of the full reach and implications of true social change. Further documentation of forces and beliefs will prove useful as a foundation for future study. It may also be possible to draw implications that could apply to the other unions, the Labor Movement and toward society in general.

In the course of research and observation, research questions may be developed concerning the strengths and weaknesses of new media, the Internet, of doing business, of a world marketplace and evolutionary options for the Labor. Potential shifts in the communications fields of advertising, journalism, broadcasting, public relations, entertainment and education will need to be revealed and studied. These areas of research are expected to develop from comparative observations concerning the forces driving change which led to the formation of the Screen Actors Guild, the defeat of a planned merger with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the rise of a political faction known as the Performers Alliance and the forces of change on both sides of the first major joint AFTRA-SAG contract negotiation of the new century.

This paper has shown how at least one labor union continues to face changes in management, economics, technology and public opinion, as well as how one group, the Performers Alliance, has dealt with this change through actions to change their union in response to the demands of the membership the union represents. This thesis has shown that the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and its political factions are worthy of consideration as a laboratory to review the evolution of organized labor well into the new century.

EXHIBITS

1999 ELECTIONS DEBATED IN THE PRESS

HOLLYWOOD REPORTER COVERS PRO-ACT AND THE PA

PA/PRO-ACT WEB SITES

MASUR AND MCCARTHYISM

1999 ELECTION RESULTS

Tuesday, November 2, 1999

Hollywood Veterans in Fight to Lead Actors Union

By JAMES BATES

Both are veteran actors, and both are starring in roles neither especially relishes.

One of the bitterest fights in years at a Hollywood talent guild is pitting Richard Masur, veteran of films and television shows such as "Picket Fences," against Emmy-winning actor William Daniels, known for roles in such shows as "St. Elsewhere" and "Boy Meets World," for presidency of the Screen Actors Guild.

As the incumbent leader of the union that represents 96,000 mostly out-of-work actors—one that over the years has been headed by the likes of Ronald Reagan, James Cagney, Ed Asner and Charlton Heston—Masur has been under fire from Daniels and other dissidents, who say that the guild has rolled over when negotiating with producers and studios.

"The union has been pussycats with the industry for years and years and years," Daniels said. "They need somebody who will go to the wall for them. There's nobody in this town who frightens me."

Such complaints aren't unique to SAG, but are echoing regularly throughout all the talent guilds. Hollywood's writers, directors and actors are restless in part because they believe the guilds—whose members have always been plagued by chronically high joblessness because of intense competition for entertainment work—haven't been tough enough in making financial gains.

* * * The discontent has grown in the wake of the explosion of the lucrative cable television and foreign markets for producers and studios, and as studios tighten the purse strings. Veteran actors complain of regularly being offered "scale plus 10%," a term that describes being offered just 10% above SAG's basic pay scale. As Daniels puts it, the paltry cable TV residual checks actors receive tell the whole story best.

Masur believes that Daniels' supporters are selling his administration short on its accomplishments in negotiating contracts and making legislative gains and on important, big-picture issues such as helping to attract attention to the issue of producers moving film and TV production to Canada to save money.

He also is making an issue of Daniels' admitted lack of experience in union affairs, what he said is his naivete on a number of union strategies and the lack of specifics on

just what he and his supporters would do differently. What's more, he argues, many of the actors who are supporting Daniels are SAG board members who supported policies and administrative decisions they are now criticizing.

"He has no knowledge of the guild or its operations or its finances or anything else," Masur said of Daniels.

Daniels, who said he's taken a "crash course" on SAG, said his lack of activity in the union is exactly why he was drafted to run by Performers Alliance, a dissident, anti-Masur group within SAG.

"They wanted someone who was an outsider of the union," Daniels said. "Someone who didn't have any baggage or any political agenda, any commitments in the union and someone who was an established actor with visibility. I said, 'That sounds like me.' "

Daniels also said that SAG is bloated, with union dues supporting too much administrative fat at its mid-Wilshire headquarters. "There's lots and lots of jobs up there," Daniels said.

In recent weeks, debates over SAG issues have given way to what Masur's supporters say is a dirty campaign run by some members of Performers Alliance. Masur says he's gone so far as to send legally threatening cease-and-desist letters to members he says are spreading malicious rumors that he's corrupt. Daniels said he hasn't engaged in any mudslinging and is unaware of anyone spreading such rumors.

"He's taking all this as a personal attack. What we've done is run a campaign for office. It doesn't involve him personally. It involves the way the union is being run," Daniels said.

Masur countered that he has absolute proof that some alliance members are spreading the rumors, and that any efforts to distance the group are disingenuous.

"It has been the focus of their campaign from the outset," Masur said.

The most unusual twist involves Masur supporters posting on their Web site a section titled "Fact and Fiction" in which they detail, then dispute, the rumors that allegedly are being spread about Masur.

Among them: "Richard Masur is on the take"; that Masur once declared there would be no strike on his watch by actors in commercials; that he won't finish his term because he wants to run for political office and that he and other SAG supporters committed a crime during a ballot-counting debacle that occurred during an election of executive committee members last year. All of the rumors, they say, are lies.

Masur's supporters have lined up some well-known stars to endorse him. Their Web site includes letters from Christopher Reeve, John Lithgow and Peter Coyote. Others lending their names as supporters include Billy Crystal, Kathy Bates, Dennis Franz, Michelle Pfeiffer, Jenna Elfman, Jack Lemmon and Michael J. Fox.

The list of endorsements for Daniels includes Ed Begley Jr., Gary Cole, Shirley Jones, Miguel Ferrer and Frances Fisher.

Masur is seeking a third two-year term. A third candidate, actress Angel Tompkins, who reportedly changed her name from Angel Tompkins so her name would appear first on the ballot, also is running, although Masur and Daniels are expected to draw the vast majority of the vote. The face-off culminates this week when the last ballots are submitted and the counting begins.

A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., Daniels, 72, first appeared on stage at age 4 and later performed as a child on radio. A veteran Broadway performer, he appeared as Dustin

Hoffman's father in the classic film "The Graduate" as well as in such films as "Reds" and "A Thousand Clowns." He is best known for his two-time, Emmy-winning role as Dr. Mark Craig on "St. Elsewhere," recently named by TV Guide as one of the top characters in TV history. He also was the voice of David Hasselhoff's car in "Knight Rider," and more recently has been Mr. Feeny on the ABC sitcom "Boy Meets World."

Masur, 50, has a long list of TV and film credits, including major roles in such films as "My Girl" and "Six Degrees of Separation" and on such TV shows as "Picket Fences." He has been one of the more visible SAG presidents in recent years, speaking and testifying regularly before government bodies on behalf of the union.

Observers say that the election result is hard to call. For starters, they note, turnout for guild elections is historically light. Whatever the outcome, they say, the bitterness of the campaign will last a long time.

"Some of this stuff is just too weird," said one longtime Hollywood labor leader.

* * *

Seeking the Top Spot

William Daniels and Richard Masur are the two leading candidates for Screen Actors Guild president. Actress Angelotomkins also is running.

William Daniels, 72

Acting highlights: Films include "The Graduate," "A Thousand Clowns" and "Reds." Television work includes two Emmys for "St. Elsewhere," the voice of David Hasselhoff's car in "Knight Rider" and Mr. Feeny in sitcom "Boy Meets World."

Position: Believes Screen Actors Guild has failed to negotiate decent contracts for actors, especially amid the explosive growth in cable TV and foreign business.

Quote: "The union has been pussycats with the industry for years and years and years."

Richard Masur, 50

Acting highlights: Films include "My Girl," "Six Degrees of Separation," "The Mean Season" and "The Man Without a Face." Television credits include "Picket Fences," "And the Band Played On" and "One Day at a Time."

Position: Incumbent believes that SAG has made progress both in contracts and on legislative issues. Has also drawn public attention to the issue of production fleeing to Canada.

Quote: "He [Daniels] has no knowledge of the guild or its operations or its finances or anything else."

HOLLYWOOD REPORTER COVERAGE

OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PA AND PRO-ACT

Entering what reporter Dave Robb of the industry daily The Hollywood Reporter called the most hotly contested election in the history of the screen Actors Guild, in the summer of 1999, SAG President Richard Masur and Pro-Act came out slugging. The foundation of the forces of change in the entertainment industry and within the Screen Actors Guild are presented by Richard Masur in this extensive interview in the Hollywood Reporter:

Launching his campaign for a third term as president of the Screen Actors Guild, Richard Masur lashed out at the "divisiveness and factionalism" that has split the guild's board in recent years. Masur didn't name names, but it's clear that he is particularly irked by the behavior of some members of the Performers Alliance, a dissident faction that now holds a majority of the seats on SAG's Hollywood board.

"One reason for feeling that I need to run for the presidency one more time is the level of factionalism that has entered the SAG board room," Masur said. "Two years ago, a group of highly motivated performers came together and ran for the board out of a sense of frustration with what they saw as the failings of the current leadership. This was not in-and-of itself a bad thing. Many of the best leaders this union has ever produced have come in angry and frustrated. However, the best of those leaders listened, learned and matured as they spent more time being a part of the process, and realized how to become effective and productive members of this organization's political structure.

"In this case, however, that process seems not to be working. Though some have learned and changed and become effective, many others who have come in on a platform of negativism seem to be clinging to that negativity as a way of maintaining their power base among the members.

"There is nothing wrong with dissent and disagreement in a deliberative body like the SAG board of directors. There is everything wrong with personal attacks, staff bashing and obstructionism. In the last year, the guild's board in Los Angeles has spent an enormous amount of time on personal issues and procedural questions, which do not put a single dollar into any member's pocket. Rather than keeping our focus on the vital questions of runaway production, diversity, contract enforcement and commercial monitoring ... we are constantly being forced to put our attention on issues which I believe the members have no interest in and do not benefit them in their professional lives."

The same interview included what amounted to a declaration of war against the founders and leaders of the PA:

Masur feels "very strongly that this mood of divisiveness and factionalism must stop ... and I will continue to do everything I can to make sure that those who are creating this mood are either educated, and adjust their behavior, or are no longer on the board." (Robb, August 23, 1999, p. 1)

It was clear that Masur failed to understand an undercurrent in the Screen Actors Guild which prefers to retain a "citizen legislature" which is closer and therefore more responsive to their perceived needs. The article continued:

Masur, who has received the nomination of SAG's official nominating committee, said his decision to run again "was a very difficult decision. At the end of this term, I will have spent 10 years as a board member, vice president and president. Since I've been president, I have essentially done this as a full-time job, only taking time off to seek acting work and to do acting work. It has been very hard on my career and on my family life, and if I didn't feel it was such an important time, I wouldn't be running again."

The interview also highlighted a common ground with his opponents in acknowledging changes ahead in the industry. These very changes could threaten the delicate balance of jurisdiction between SAG and AFTRA:

"This so-called digital revolution presents enormous challenges to all of us in the industry," Masur said. "Adjustments and adaptations will have to happen very rapidly and in very imaginative ways. We have begun that process here at SAG through the creation of our low-budget agreements and through our innovative and successful film festival and trade-show program. By dealing directly with independent filmmakers, by educating them to the possibilities of working with trained professional performers, we have signed thousands of projects creating hundreds of thousands of jobs for our members."

"Another focus of mine has been to avoid the horrible problems of jurisdictional warfare that these new technologies create for SAG and AFTRA," he said. "I feel that it's vital that I stay here to complete the process on which we have embarked to separate our jurisdictions once and for all. If we can accomplish that, we can benefit all performers and be in a position to help each other instead of undercutting each other." To that end, he

said: "We're trying to draw bright lines between what is SAG work and what is AFTRA work. We have overlapping jurisdictions in half-hour television and in television commercials, and those overlaps will be exacerbated by the new technologies of digital production. But even worse, digitally recorded hour dramatic series, long form television and even feature films will be additional areas of conflict for our two unions, which will cause our past problems to pale in comparison. We must divide these jurisdictions in a fair and sensible manner" (Robb, August 23, 1999, p. 1).

**PRO-ACT WEB RESPONSE TO PA
AN ANALYSIS OF SOME
OF THE PA'S CAMPAIGN CLAIMS.**

CLAIM: "The President you elect will choose the teams that negotiate the up coming Commercial and Theatrical contracts for you....."

FACT: The National Board, not the President, appoints every negotiating committee, and always has.

CLAIM: "Actual note handwritten by Richard Masur at the 8/9/99 Commercial Contract Campaign Committee meeting."

FACT: The note has been taken completely out of the context in which it was written. The context was a highly confidential meeting at which strategy for the upcoming Commercial Negotiations was discussed. This note has been "spun" and its publication is a breach of confidentiality and a violation of Guild rules.

CLAIM: " The PA's Scott Pierce and Kurt McCourtney were involved with FTAC's fight against runaway production from the very beginning, but the powers-that-be at SAG weren't eager to jump on board until after the survey."

FACT: PROACT candidates Tom Bower and Richard Masur were warning the Guild about the growing threat of U.S. runaway production two years before the PA was formed. All the leadership on this issue has come from Masur and Bower. Masur, working with federal and state legislators and administration officials, and Bower working with FTAC, as a member of it's steering committee. Starting in 1996, Masur began preparing the ground in Washington and Sacramento to find real solutions to this threat and convinced the leadership of the DGA to join SAG in this fight. The SAG/DGA-sponsored "Monitor Report" was begun before the PA had set foot in the SAG Board room. FTAC, Scott Pierce and Kurt McCourtney were two years late in "jumping on board" the issue of runaway production. The PA scoffed at the problem of U.S. runaway production until this past summer, only two and a half months ago, and it's candidates have consistently opposed and attacked the Guild's legislative efforts. PA candidate for Treasurer, F.J. O'Neil, has constantly derided the legislative efforts as "wasteful," with not a word of opposition from his PA colleagues. O'Neil has repeatedly called for major cutbacks in our legislative program, with support from many PA leaders.

SAG PRESIDENT MASUR CHARGED WITH MCCARTHYISM

For the first time in SAG history, 1999's union election found two formalized parties running against other under organized names and using organized central location tools, such as web sites, for all top offices and control of the union. The election was a heated one.

In the final days of the election, Performers Alliance Web Master Gordon Drake Drake issues a heated attack on SAG President Richard Masur, running for reelection under the Pro-Act Ticket. Since the release refers to its author in the third person, and is an example of political press release rhetoric, it has been reproduced in its original format and in its entirety. Only the typeset has been altered to fit within the guidelines of this publication. It is written by Gordon Drake, speaking for the Performers Alliance.

PRESS RELEASE

For more information, contact,
Gordon Drake [phone number omitted] For Immediate Release

**GORDON DRAKE - HOST OF POPULAR PERFORMERS ALLIANCE WEBSITE
- ACCUSES SAG PRESIDENT RICHARD MASUR OF MCCARTHYISM IN
EFFORT TO STIFLE DEBATE, AND FILES CHARGES WITH THE- NATIONAL
LABOR RELATIONS BOARD.**

November 1, Los Angeles

As the Screen Actors Guild election nears its final act, Gordon Drake, host of the popular Performers Alliance, Website, revealed that incumbent Screen Actors Guild President Richard Masur has threatened to bring lawsuits for libel against leading members and supporters of the candidates running against him. Masur's threats actually began shortly before the ballots were, sent out. In a 15-page letter sent to Drake, two SAG Board members, two candidates running for office, and actress Bonnie Bartlett, who is the wife of Masur's opponent William Daniels, Masur complained of a "conspiracy" to defame him. According, to the letter from Masur's lawyer, even if the six did not personally publish defamatory statements, their association with others who did makes them guilty of "conspiracy to libel."

Drake, as host of a website which posts a wide variety of articles and letters, and which is visited more than 125,000 times per year, took particular offense. "This is an effort to scare people away from Performers Alliance and to discourage the open debate which occurs on our website. We have challenged Mr. Masur to show us one article or one letter posted on the website which defames him, Purportedly someone somewhere called Masur 'criminal' and his rage over being criticized has now led to a witch hunt reminiscent of some of the darkest days in Hollywood."

Drake retained NYC union democracy lawyer Arthur Z. Schwartz, known in SAG for his successful efforts earlier this year to gain a runoff of a NYC SAG Board election, which resulted in the election of Kelly Craig to the SAG Board. In Schwartz's October 22 letter to Masur's counsel, he denied the allegations and accused Masur of an effort "to stifle vigorous and vociferous debate." Schwartz continued: "What you are threatening to do here is taint Performers Alliance by threatening to sue anyone who associates with it as part of a conspiracy. Such threats are reminiscent of McCarthyism. Perhaps Mr. Masur, in his efforts to preserve his status in office, feels that it is time to revive that bleak period in SAG's history.

Masur's lawyer, John Lavelly of Los Angeles, responded that Mr. Drake had allowed statements on the Performers Alliance Website to the effect that Mr. Masur was involved in "boardroom election irregularities," and that Mr. Masur was motivated "by his own political agenda." According to Lavelly's letter, a call for election on an "honest President of SAG" implied criminal behavior on Masur's part.

Drake responded., "Besides the fact that most of what Richard Masur complains of did not appear on the Performers Alliance website in the way his lawyer accuses, all of those statements are statements of opinion. The ability to publish opinion is the very cornerstone of our political democracy. Leaders in the entertainment field should not be seeking to limit expression and threatening lawsuits over the publication of

opposing, viewpoints. We should lead by example, Masur's actions are a sad day for SAG and for the acting profession."

Drake also pointed out that Masur published the allegedly libelous statements on his very own website, "a curious act for someone who claims to be seriously injured."

Drake announced that he had filed charges against Masur with the National Labor Relations Board in Los Angeles, alleging that Masur's threats coerced, restrained and interfered with his exercise of his right to organize under the National Labor Relations Act.

#

END PRESS RELEASE

Related Article, Backstage.com - Wednesday, November 3, 1999

Related Article, LA Times - Tuesday, November 2, 1999

Anyone wishing to volunteer their help or contribute to the Campaign is encouraged to contact the Alliance at:

Performers Alliance
11684 Ventura Boulevard #355
Studio City, CA 91604
323 460-2528

(www.pro-union.org and hard copy of press release, November 4, 1999)

1999 ELECTIONS RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In national voting completed on Wednesday, November 3, 1999, PA candidate William Daniels defeated incumbent Richard Masur. PA candidate Karen Austin won the position of Recording Secretary. Incumbent F.J. O'Neil, who switched his alliance from Masur to the PA when Pro-Act snubbed him in favor of Mitch Ryan, retained his office. The vote counts for the Guild's 12 National Vice Presidential races included a tight race between PA candidate Sumi Haru and incumbent Amy Aquino for the First Vice Presidency, representing Hollywood and the General Membership. Following her defeat, the new administration promptly removed her from the chair of the critical National Communications Committee and stripped Aquino of her other committee assignments. She remains on the board with one year remaining in her concurrent seat representing Los Angeles. In New York PA candidate Lisa Scarola unseated long time New York President Mel Boudrot. The Performers Alliance launched a challenge to Boudrot's initial tight victory and succeeded in disqualifying enough votes to significantly turn the tide. The New York President serves as National Third Vice President and chairs the Eastern Section of the National Board in the president's absence. Founding members of the Performers Alliance also captured the remaining Hollywood and the General Membership Vice Presidential seats. Much of the country did not have board elections, as individual bylaws allow for differing election dates, and term expiration years are staggered. The following is the official election results as posted on the SAG Web Site on November 11, 1999:

Los Angeles - William Daniels has been elected National President of the Screen Actors Guild. In national voting completed on Wednesday, November 3, Daniels received 10,008 of the 21,068 ballots (47.5%) cast for President. Daniels's opponents were incumbent Richard Masur, who garnered 8,972 votes (42.5%), and Angeltopkins, who received 2,015 votes (9.5%). The position of Recording Secretary was won by Karen Austin, who received 9,451 votes (46.7%), defeating challengers Dena Dietrich, with 5,450 votes (26.9%), Renee Aubrey with 2,921 votes (14.4%), and Carole Elliott, with 2,356 votes (11.6%). Incumbent F.J. O'Neil defeated Mitch Ryan for the position of SAG Treasurer. O'Neil received 10,810 votes (53.3%), while Ryan received 9,384 votes (46.3%). Ballots were mailed to 99,062 eligible SAG voters nationwide, and 21,724, 21.9% of that total, were returned and counted. The vote counts for the Guild's 12 National Vice Presidential races were as follows:

1ST VICE PRESIDENT
(General Membership/Hollywood)
Sumi Haru 4,999 PA
Amy Aquino 4,734

7TH VICE PRESIDENT
(Florida)
Laird Stuart — unopposed PA

2ND VICE PRESIDENT
(New York)
Lisa Scarola 3,249 PA
Mel Boudrot 1,924

8TH VICE PRESIDENT
(Regional Branches)
D.J. Sullivan — unopposed

3RD VICE PRESIDENT
(General Membership/Hollywood)
Richard Herd 5,570 PA
Tom Bower 2,400
Googy Gress 1,461

9TH VICE PRESIDENT
(General Membership/Hollywood)
Gary Epp 4,991 PA
Cynthia DeCure 4,261

4TH VICE PRESIDENT
(New York)
Eileen Henry — unopposed

10TH VICE PRESIDENT
(New York)
Maureen Donnelly 2,679
Avis Boone 2,415

5TH VICE PRESIDENT
(Chicago)
Mary Seibel — unopposed

11TH VICE PRESIDENT
(General Membership/Hollywood)
David Jolliffe 4,787 PA
Wren T. Brown 3,113
Jerry G. Velasco 1,542

6TH VICE PRESIDENT
(San Francisco)
Chuck Dorsett — unopposed

12TH VICE PRESIDENT
(New York)
Larry Keith 2,866
Ben Van Bergen 2,263

APPENDICIES

GLOSSARY

MERGER RESULTS REPORTED

INTERVIEW REFERENCE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following is a partial list of terms to assist in the understanding of materials contained in this thesis. Not all terms found in this document defined in this limited glossary, nor is this a full directory of industry terms. Expanded directories are easily available at most book stores, libraries and on the Internet, and are customized to the needs or interest of the particular individual. Further information or definition of historic events may be found in the references listed in this thesis, on the Internet or in texts found in various bookstores or libraries.

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences: The Academy was originally created by a group of motion picture studio moguls as a benifatory organization (to hold off the union movement) for craftspeople and the trades, including actors. The Academy has evolved into a support organization, which makes it clear that it is not a labor or political organization. The Academy is best known as the organization that awards the Oscars. A modern definition is best defined on the Academy's own web page:

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is a professional honorary organization composed of over 6,000 motion picture craftsmen and women. The purposes of the Academy are to advance the arts and sciences of motion pictures; foster cooperation among creative leaders for cultural, educational and technological progress; recognize outstanding achievements; cooperate on technical research and improvement of methods and equipment; provide a common forum and meeting ground for various branches and crafts; represent the viewpoint of actual creators of the motion picture; and foster educational activities between the professional community and the public-at-large. The Academy's field of activity does not include economic, labor or political matters. (<http://www.oscars.org/accademy/history.html>)

Academy Players Directory (Players Directory): A photo directory, of primary value to actors on the West Coast, used by agents and casting directors to assist in the casting process. An on-line sister publication, operated by the Breakdown Services, offers résumé's, multiple poses, video and audio showcasing for talent at various fee levels. The Players Directory is a non-profit publication of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The on-line version of the Directory is known as The Link. Among a series of print and on-line competitors, the fastest growing and most viable is CastNet.

Actors Equity Association (Equity): The union covering legitimate stage talent, including actors and stage managers. This East Coast dominated union uses a traditional single employer by single employer organizing strategy, has union stewards and operates much the same as traditional craft unions.

Advertising Agency (Ad Agency): The company hired by the client to produce, place and monitor the client's advertising and account for the client's advertising dollar.

AFTRA (American Federation of Radio and Television Artists): A performers union which covers all audio recording artists (records, tapes and CD's), all radio, all broadcast journalism and announcers, some broadcast producers and writers, all live TV, most television recorded on video tape, most corporate video and most Interactive or Internet production. AFTRA and SAG are sister unions, which cooperate on most film and recorded performance jurisdictions. In broadcast AFTRA organizes by employer, while in entertainment programming AFTRA, like and with SAG, organizes by industry. AFRA (The American Federation of Radio Actors) is the predecessor and early development parent of AFTRA.

AD (Assistant Director): The assistants to the director, operating similar to stage managers and assistants in theater, who kept the production moving. First AD's answer to and work directly to assist the director. Second AD's are usually assigned regular positions, such as management of production assistants and background talent.

ADR (Automated Dialog Replacement): A sister to looping, this is the system used to replace dialogue or add off camera voices to a scene, while keeping the voice synchronized with the action or lips of the actors. ADR is also used in foreign language dubbing.

Agent: Talent agents represent performers in the marketplace. Some agencies are franchised, which means licensed by and approved by the talent unions, and offer payment and working conditions protections to performers that non-franchised agencies do not. A franchised agent receives 10% of a performer's pay, usually in the form of a plus ten mark-up. The agent works, in theory, for the actor.

AGMA (American Guild of Musical Artist): a predominately East Coast small union representing a portion of live stage musicians and performers. Member of the Four A's.

AGVA (American Guild of Variety Artists): a predominantly East Coast union representing variety artist. Member of the Four A's.

Associated Actors and Artistes of America (proper spelling): the four A's is an umbrella organization for the Screen Actors Guild, AFTRA, AGMA, AGVA and several other performers organizations. Through the four A's, these organizations are members of the AFL-CIO and other national and international organizations.

ATA (Association of Talent Agents): an loose association of the larger talent agencies, mostly on the West Coast, who represent actors in negotiation with large producers for film, television, commercial and live entertainment.

Audition: The application and screening process by which actors and many other forms of performing artist find and secure work. Unlike most job application processes, auditions are frequent and an ongoing a part of working as a performer. Because of the contract nature of their jobs, performers move from employer to employer frequently within their industry.

Branch: A branch office or local government within the Screen Actors Guild serving and representing a geographically limited area. Nevada SAG is a branch of the Screen Actors Guild. SAG branches are found in heavy production or location production states.

Casting Director: A professional who works for the director of production company and is charged with finding a selection of appropriate talent for the roles available. Location Casting Directors work with smaller roles, while the primary casting director helps package star talent and select the actors or performers who finally perform in the finished product.

Client: The company or individual that hires the ad agency or production company and is the ultimate benefactor of the commercial advertising and its placement. This is usually the top level of management in commercials and industrials.

Commission: the money paid to an agent or manager by the performer in exchange for services rendered, usually help in securing a job. Commissions are deducted from the actor's legal salary, even in a plus ten arrangement.

Casting Society of America (CSA): A loose members only association of professional casting directors formed to provide a list of standards and practices and provide networking opportunities for those whom make their livings as casting directors.

Day Player: a term based on an actor being hired for one days work in a speaking role, or as a principal in a commercial. Performers may actually work many days and be paid for off days and still be classified as Day Players based on the size of their speaking role.

DGA: Director Guild of America, the union with jurisdiction over motion picture and television directors, assistant directors and select other crafts professionals.

Downgrade: when a principal performer in a commercial ends up cut out of the final product, they can be downgraded after the fact to background performer.

Equity: see Actors Equity Association.

Extra: Background talent, Background Actors or Background Extras are performers who populate a scene or image but have no lines or specific method of advancing the plot.

Foley: The artificial enhancement of sounds on film and video utilizing live performers, sound effects experts or electronic technology. This is done when natural sound or the sound recorded at the time of filming, do not reflect the expectations of the audience or the mood. Examples are the sound of waves crashing, walking through leaves, or the crack of a baseball bat.

Four A's: Associated Actors and Artistes of America (proper spelling).

Franchised: Talent agents or agencies approved to represent members of the Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA. These agencies agree to certain protections, such as bonds, to guarantee the wages and working conditions of actors. Franchised agents agree to take no more than 10% of a performer's pay for jobs that they play an active role in securing for the performer or talent. There are many other restrictions, some of which were under negotiation in early 2000.

FTAC: The Film and Television Action Committee is an organization formed in 1998 by a coalition of labor unions, businesses and individuals concerned about the large loss of production revenue for greater Los Angeles by productions being filmed or produced in other countries and, to some members of FTAC, in other states. The organization was developed to fight runaway production through traditional social movement channels of marches, lobbying legislatures and Congress, mail campaigns and indirect marketing support of Los Angeles based talent, unions and business.

FX: Special effects are images created either through special illusions performed live on the set for the camera or through computer generated images. Special effects are used to enhance the entertainment value and realism of the images captured on film or video.

General Membership: From a Screen Actors Guild perspective, any member of the union who has not declared a branch affiliation.

Headshot: an 8 by 10 photo of a performer's head, ideally featuring how they will look when they enter a casting director's office. Often these photos are mass-produced through

various processes with the performer's name and agent emblazoned below the photo and are presented with the performers professional resume attached to the back.

Hollywood: As a place, Hollywood is a district of the city of Los Angeles. As a Southern California institution, Hollywood refers to the studios, production companies and employers within the motion picture and television industry throughout the Greater Los Angeles area. As a concept, Hollywood is the personified image of the motion picture industry dream machine, an American institution that includes all film and television production for studios and networks based in the United States. It also represents social constructs and in some cases modern mythologies. For the Screen Actor Guild, the Hollywood membership includes most of Southern California excluding San Diego.

International Association of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE): This is the shorthand for the International Alliance of Theatrical State and Motion Picture Machine Operators of the United States and Canada (IATSE). This union represents set designers, electricians, stagehands, camera operators, editors, and other crafts in the motion picture, television, stage and convention industries. A second competing union is NABET.

Industrials: Corporate or business films or video intended for use in training or motivating employees or in some cases limited distribution as repetitive loops at conventions, amusement parks or in outdoor advertising.

Interactive: A film, video, CDROM or Internet usage of a performers talent whereby a player or user may interact with the character, This can be live or in a series of pre-programmed options.

Joint Contract: Contracts negotiated jointly on behalf of the SAG and AFTRA with producers in the areas under which the contracts apply. The joint contract process, under the Phase One Agreement, minimized jurisdictional disputes while offering the maximum in benefits for members under performance and other contracts with management.

List-Trans: A computer process for performing multiple transmission or repetitive processes without having to enter and spell out each individual recipient or step in the process, List-Trans are used extensively in e-mail and in the preparation of mailing labels and form letters.

Local: AFTRA's equivalent of a SAG Branch, however for AFTRA there is a much stronger local empowerment on contracts and government. AFTRA locals are usually centered around major broadcast or production cities.

Location: Location production is production that is filmed or videotaped outside of a studio. On a national level it is defined as any production filmed or tapes outside of the Greater Los Angeles studio zone.

Loop: Similar to ADR, where dialogue or human voice are added to a film either to sweeten or replace existing sound or dialogue.

Manager: A person who contractually manages a person's career. Each state has its own rules for granting managerial licenses and restrictions on managers, however as a rule they work with agents to maximize the income of performers while guiding the performers on the selection of tools such as photographs, videos, self promotional advertising, clothing and workshops.

Motion Capture: The industry term for what the Screen Actors Guild refers to as Performance Capture. This process uses sensors and multiple cameras interfaced with a computer to capture natural movements. These captured images are then used to develop computer models to simulate human, animal or other natural movements.

NABET: The National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, one of a few unions that represent camera operators and other crafts in movies, television and broadcasting. Another such union is IATSE.

NAPTE: The National Association of Television Program Executives, best known for their annual convention at which producers showcase programs and concepts for sales or distribution opportunities.

Payola: The process of taking money or merchandise in exchange for favorable consideration or specific actions outside of a contract or legal limitations. Radio payola involved record companies offering everything from new cars to homes to prominent disc jockeys to give favorable airtime to their artist or label.

Performers Alliance: The PA is an loose organization started by commercial actors who were dissatisfied with the way contracts within the Screen Actors provided compensation for the use of a performers talents. Their primary concerns were in the area of cable usage, new technologies and in the accurate tracking of television programming, video sales and commercials for the purposes of providing performers with accurate and fair use-fee or residual compensation.

Phase One Merger (Phase I): A formal agreement of cooperation between the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists spelling out areas where joint contracts, joint actions or joint meetings of the two unions boards will have legal and cooperative weight in the areas of union management and industry contracts. With the defeat of merger, both boards chose to continue the phase one merger arrangement until further action can be taken to negotiate a new agreement.

Principal performer: Under SAG the term principal performer refers to anyone who speaks a line of dialogue on or off camera, or in commercials someone who is recognizable to advance the message. Under AFTRA a principal performer is anyone who speaks a line in a situation comedy or dramatic show or anyone who speaks over five lines in a variety show or soap opera. Under both unions anyone who speaks a line, demonstrates a product or who is seen reacting during a commercial or industrial presentation.

Producer: The employer, which includes those responsible for the final product and with decision-making authority over the production and distribution of the film, program or product.

Residuals: a method of compensation for the use of a performer's talents in motion pictures and television entertainment or information product, as well as video and select other forms of distribution. A payment to the actor for each re-airing of a commercial (use fee) or television program after the initial airing.

Runaway Production: Currently defined as any production filmed or produced for primary initial use or distribution within the United States, which films all or in part outside of the United States. Screen Actors Guild defines runaway production as production where the majority of the finished product is produced outside of the United States for initial distribution within the US. Other organizations vary the definition. Many individuals in Los Angeles continue to cling to the original definition of any production.

SAG: Screen Actors Guild, the largest of the performers unions with jurisdictions including motion picture, most television, most commercial and industrial production, some interactive and other new media.

SAG Board of Directors: 104 elected officers and board members who represent the membership in a democratically elected board of governors, charged with primary fiduciary (monitory) and legal responsibility for the actions and contracts of the Screen Actors Guild as a union.

SAG Card: The union identification card for members of the Screen Actors Guild. This card carries added value as on an international level proof of membership in the Screen Actors Guild is a valued commodity signifying one of the key steps in declaring a performer to be a professional at what they do.

SEG: The Screen Extras Guild, a union which held jurisdiction for background talent or extras nationally, with the exception of portion of the East Coast surrounding New York City, which retained representation by SAG. When SEG folded in the early 1990's, the Screen Actors Guild moved to regain national jurisdiction with some contractual restrictions.

SFX: Sound effects are folley sounds, sometimes performed by live technicians over a microphone, but more often created in computer audio environments.

Signator: A producer, ad agency or production company which have signed an agreement to use union talent and abide by the contracts which apply to their productions.

Sound Stage: A soundproof building or space used for shooting commercials, film, television or other visual product in a controlled sound and lighting environment.

Studio: A company that oversees the production and distribution of film and television product. A studio may also be defined as a geographic space on which film, television and other forms of visual production are produced.

Studio Zone: SAG and AFTRA define studio zones as geographic areas where any production, even location production, can be considered a direct extension of a local studio infrastructure. The dominant studio zone is in a specific radius surrounding Los Angeles. Studio Zones are contractual in nature.

Stunt Performers: Professional artist and athletes who perform stunt or dangerous activities in place of actors. Examples include stunt drivers, high fall experts, martial artists and technicians skilled at imitating the effects of a gunshot impact.

Taft-Hartley Act: An act of Congress which states that an employer that has a union shot and wants to hire nonunion employees may do so without union interference. It is through application of the Taft-Hartley Act that non-union performers are able to work on union productions and thus qualify, should they decide to do so, to join the union. that does not film in Greater Los Angeles, regardless of distribution intent or nationality.

Use Fees: A method of calculating compensation for the use of a performer's image in television commercials and on the Internet.

Vanity Card: Slang for members of SAG who pay their dues twice a year for the sole purpose of being able to say that they are members of the Screen Actors Guild. These prestige seeking members are a key target of the Performers Alliance, who feel that such non-professionals should not have the right to vote on contracts which effect performers who are attempting to make a living within the jurisdictions of the Guild.

Voice Over Talent: Actors who perform on the audio tract, without being seen on camera, including ADR artist, animation character voices and narrators.

WGA: Writers Guild of America is the union with jurisdiction for screen writers, television writers and select other areas of professional writing.

UNOFFICIAL SIDES ON THE MERGER ISSUE

While the Performers Alliance remained officially neutral on the issue of the merger plan between AFTRA and SAG to form a new union, SAG/AFTRA, the positions of the two webmasters, using their organizations broadcast e-mail lists, make it obvious where the PA and Pro-Act line up on the issue of merger.

The following is how Pro-Act Web Master Jack Shaw announced the results of AFTRA's membership vote on the issue of merger with SAG.

Wed, 27 Jan 1999 16:24:29 -0500 (EST)

From: Jack Shaw <jshaw@execpc.com>

I just got the info that 67.66% of the AFTRA members have voted in favor of merger. Now if the Hollywood members have not messed everything up, we should have results by Friday on the SAG member vote. Keep your fingers crossed.

-Jack

Proponents had predicted an 80% favorable vote by AFTRA, however only 60% was required for the issue to pass. However, both unions must approve the merger for it to take effect and the results on the SAG side went the opposite way, ending for the foreseeable future any change of merger. The following is the way PA Web Master and appointed permanent National Board Replacement Gordon Drake used his web site and the Screen Actors Guild National New Technologies e-mail list trans (broadcast list) to announce the results of the election.

Date: Thu, 28 Jan 1999 20:06:05 -0800

To: newtechdiscuss@lists.sag.com

From: Gordon Drake <gordon@rebop.com>

This is a LOT more appropriate than my posts.

SAG Union Members have voted the merger down.

The vote count, subject to a recount of the New York ballots, stand at:

Total votes returned == 41,769 or 43% turnout

Yea == 19,419 or 46%

Nay == 21,745 or 52%

invalid == 605

-Gordon Drake

The recount did not change election results. Proponents greatly underestimated turnout and the overall feel of the membership, predicting a 70% favorable return. Since 60% was required to approve merger, a return of 46% in favor fell 14% below the number required for ratification. The failure of the long planned merger helped place the Performers Alliance into a position of strength in opposing pro-merger candidate Richard Masur and his slate. It also placed the election playing field on their home turf of the Los Angeles dominated Screen Actors Guild. (personal correspondence, plus www.sag.org, and www.pro-act.org and www.pro-actor.org)

INTERVIEW ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a participant observer based qualitative research study, many resources were utilized, including interviews and observations of the members of the Screen Actors Guild, of working actors and of other players in the drama, which unfolded before my eyes. Acknowledgement is due to each and every person whose comments, observations, history or insight helped in developing an in depth understanding of the inner workings of the Screen Actors Guild and the Performers Alliance.

Interviews conducted in preparation for this thesis include the following SAG officer and officials: National First Vice President Sumi Haru (elected by the Hollywood membership to be their chair, Haru sat on the small merger committee and was against merger, has served for over two decades on the SAG Board and currently a Vice President on the AFL-CIO National Board), past President Barry Gordon (small merger committee member, practicing entertainment lawyer), Past President Ed Asner (known as the most liberal and probably most controversial president in Guild history), Past President Richard Masur, National Board Members James Carroll, John Connolly, Lev Mailer, Ed Vascursin, Jim Hutchenson, David Carradine, Cliff Robertson, Joe Ruskin, Steve Fried, Performers Alliance webmaster Gordon Drake, Pro-Act webmaster Jack Shaw, Screen Actors Guild webmaster Sever Graham, Eighth Vice President Lon Carley, and Eleventh Vice President Chuck Dorsett; SAG staff members Southwest Regional Director and National Director of Organizing Jerre Hookey, Nevada Executive Bobbi Hughes, National Executive Director Ken Orsatti, Los Angeles Executive Director Leonard Chassmen, National Communications Director Katherine Moore, National Screen Actors Guild Publications Director Greg Krissman and others. AFTRA interviews

include National President Shelby Scott, Vice President Marvin Kaplan and various officers and employees of that union. These interviews provide varied perspectives on the internal politics of the Screen Actors Guild and the perspective of a variety of interested parties in the process.

Additional interviews include casting directors Barbara Clayman, Mary Jo Slater, Danny Goldman, Joy Todd, Ray Favero and Mary Lee Lear, agent Gary Fuchs (of Contemporary Artist Santa Monica), agents Jaki Baskow, Wendy Wenzel, Tena Hauser, Margee Butto and Donna Wauhob of Las Vegas, producer/director Don Bennett, film maker Ted Mikels, producer/director Robert Weimer, and a growing number of professionals in Hollywood, Las Vegas, Chicago and nationally.

In addition observation of privileged board room or confidential discussions provide a foundation for the behind the scenes research so necessary to this research.

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Dr. Barlow;

Attached is the revised copy of my Thesis.

It is my intent to graduate in August. Please review any updates, changes or materials needed for the completion of my degree and all necessary paperwork. Since I am having problems with my Internet access, please call me to pick up this paper and let me know what materials I may need to meet all of the Graduate College requirements.

What is required to receive two bound published copies of my thesis?

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Art Lynch', written in black ink.

Art Lynch

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