a militant group that persuaded the union to adopt its demands. These included union-controlled hiring halls, better wages and working conditions with extra pay for overtime, and coastwide bargaining so that the facilities in one port could not be used to break a strike or undercut wages in another.

To a group of employers who had enjoyed virtual freedom from any union demands at all for more than a decade, this program seemed "revolutionary." The employers charged that Bridges was a Communist. Bridges, a native of Australia, often said that his ideas were those of militant trade unionism and that he had held these opinions before the Communist party came into existence. In later years the United States government would make long and elaborate efforts to deport Bridges on the ground that he was a Communist, but he always denied the charge, and the government never proved it.

The dock workers in all the Pacific coast ports went on strike on May 9, 1934, and several seafaring unions struck soon afterward. The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and the San Francisco Industrial Association held a joint meeting and made plans to support the Waterfront Employers' Union in an attempt to open the port with strikebreakers, on the ground that the longshoremen's union was "in the hands of a group of Communists." The business community was confident that it could again break the longshoremen's strike and destroy the union on the radicalism issue, as it had done in 1919.

On the morning of "bloody Thursday," July 5, 1934, 1000 San Francisco police officers tried to clear 5000 pickets from the Embarcadero, the main waterfront street, to enable strikebreakers to work. Pistols were fired on both sides. Sixty-four people were injured (thirty-one of them shot), and two strikers were killed. Governor Frank Merriam sent in the National Guard although Mayor Angelo Rossi had not asked for it. Seventeen hundred National Guard soldiers with fixed bayonets occupied the waterfront.

To this all-out attempt at opening the port, organized labor responded by closing down almost all the economic activity of most of the bay region. Virtually every union in San Francisco and Alameda counties joined in the *general strike,* which began on the morning of Monday, July 16.

William Randolph Hearst, who was in England, sent instructions to John Francis Neylan, his chief counsel, to unite the major Bay Area newspaper publishers in a strategy of denouncing the general strike as Communist-inspired. News reports, as well as headlines and editorials, gave the impression that the strike was a part of a Communist conspiracy. Bands of vigilantes, with explicit encouragement from the newspapers and from Governor Merriam, broke into several Communist party offices in San Francisco and Oakland, smashed the furniture, and beat up anyone they found on the premises.

The general strike was called off at the end of its fourth day, Thursday, July 19. It had alienated majority public opinion to such a degree that American labor has never attempted a repetition of it. But if the general strike was largely a failure, so was the intransigent effort of the San Francisco employers to retain the open shop. Federal officials, including President Franklin Roosevelt, were now determined to settle the basic issues of the waterfront strike by federal arbitration. Neylan, who had always

Strikers on the San Francisco waterfront flee from police through a cloud of tear gas on "bloody Thursday," July 5, 1934. (*Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.*)

believed in collective bargaining, now used his influence in persuading the waterfront employers to accept unconditional arbitration. The federal board's ruling, announced on October 12, provided for hiring halls and gave the longshoremen's union almost complete control of them. This was the demand that the union had emphasized most. For years afterward the maritime employers were bitter at what they regarded as a triumph for radicalism, accomplished through federal intervention.

Upton Sinclair and EPIC

At the beginning of the state political campaigns of 1934, it seemed highly probable that California would elect its first Democratic governor in the twentieth century. The blame for the depression had fallen heavily on the Republicans. In the presidential election of 1932, President Hoover had lost not only his home state of California but also his home county of Santa Clara. Almost any reasonably presentable New Dealer could probably have been elected governor of California in 1934, but Upton Sinclair, who had been the Socialist candidate for the governorship in 1926 and 1930, threw the whole campaign into a turmoil by announcing in 1933 that he was changing his party registration and would run for governor as a Democrat.