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AMERICAN LABOR

Its History, Organizations, and Goals

**A Study Manual for Use in the
High Schools of California**

**Prepared by the
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California
Berkeley, California
1952**

Purpose of This Manual

This manual has been prepared at the suggestion of the California State Federation of Labor for use in conjunction with its annual scholarship awards to high school students.

It has been designed also to serve as a general aid to the study of labor and unionism in high schools. The total subject matter has been subdivided into a number of roughly equal units which are adaptable to weekly study or assignment. Each unit deals with one topic or phase of the subject and consists of specific reading suggestions and study questions relating to that topic. Thus, the manual may serve as a guide to the individual student who wishes to prepare himself to compete for the Federation scholarships. Or it may be suitable for use by history and social science teachers who wish to give individual students or groups assignments in American labor.

In addition to the specific readings listed for each study unit, a selected group of other sources is listed at the end of the manual for those students and teachers who are interested in further reading.

Suggestions For Using This Manual

For convenience in study and review, the subject matter of American labor as covered by this manual is divided into 12 sections or units. As far as possible, it is arranged so that the information and ideas studied in each section lead into the subject of the next section. This means that the student who is going to study the subject as a whole should find it most helpful to follow the manual right through in order.

Readings

Each section of study is based on a definite specified amount of reading. All the recommended reading in this manual is in the following four publications:

Faulkner, Harold U. and Mark Starr. LABOR IN AMERICA, revised edition, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1949. 328 pages, \$2.00

Goldner, William. STRIKES. Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Berkeley 4, California. 48 pages, 25¢.

Lazarus, Herman and Joseph P. Goldberg, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. The Public Affairs Institute, 312 Pennsylvania Avenue, S. E., Washington, D. C. (Report No. 3) 66 pages, 50¢.

Nichols, Osgood and T. R. Carskadon, CAN LABOR AND MANAGEMENT WORK TOGETHER? Public Affairs Committee, Inc., 22 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y. (Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 151) 32 pages, 20¢.

These publications will be referred to throughout the rest of the manual by the authors' names. If these publications are not already in your high school library, it may be able to obtain them at your request. You may also find some or all of these publications in your local public library. They may also be obtained by writing to the publishers listed above.

Certain portions of the reading are listed in two or more sections of study because they apply to more than one topic.

The specific reading recommended in this manual is the minimum amount which a student should do to gain even a modest acquaintance with the big subject of American labor. Any reading which a student finds it possible to do in addition to the recommended reading will be all to the good. To guide students in such reading there is a brief list of books and pamphlets at the end of the manual which are suitable for high school students. The book by Faulkner and Starr includes a much more extensive bibliography of general literature.

Study Questions

Included in each section is a list of questions. It is the purpose of these questions to bring out the most important facts or developments in the recommended reading and to help the student draw explanations and understanding from what he has read.

S T U D Y O U T L I N E

I. Why Labor is Important to Everyone

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. xi-xiii and 1-15, 326-328.
Goldner, pp. 1-6.
Lazarus and Goldberg, pp. 3-4, 7-9.
Nichols and Carskadon, pp. 1-8.

Study questions:

1. Why will unions and union-management relations be important to you no matter what walks of life you enter?
2. How many wage earners are there in this country? About how many of them are in unions? Which are the major industries of our economy? In how many of these industries are most of the wage earners members of unions?
3. In general, what part do unions play in industry, in local communities, in national affairs?
4. What attitudes about unions prevail in your family, among your friends, in your community? What are the reasons for these attitudes; on what sources of information or opinion are they based? How adequately informed about unions are you, your family, your friends, the people of your community?

II. The Beginnings of Unionism, 1800-1886

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 37-110.

Study questions:

1. In the early 1800's, what changes in the methods

of doing business led workingmen to act together for the purpose of attaining higher wages or shorter hours?

2. What were some of the goals of the early workingmen's political movements? After you have completed all of the study units, contrast the goals of early unions with those of the present day. To what extent have these early goals been achieved?
3. How was unionism affected by the Industrial Revolution that took place in the United States from about 1860-1900?
4. What was the organization known as the Knights of Labor? What was its approach, how was it organized, and who were its leaders?
5. The year 1886 was an eventful year in labor history. It marked the end of one era and the beginning of another one. What were the events of that year that were related to labor history and what was their significance?

III. Unions Take Root, Gain Acceptance, and Federate: 1886-1932

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 110-149, 164-178.
Goldner, pp. 18-26.

Study questions:

1. In what significant way did the structure of the American Federation of Labor differ from the large national labor organizations that preceded it?
2. In what industries and occupations were unions important during this period?
3. What were the original goals and policies of the AFL? Have they continued to be applicable through the years? How have they changed?
4. How do you account for the fact that the main labor organizations in the United States have not followed the socialist or communist philosophies?
5. What law passed near the turn of the century was destined to have important effects on the labor movement? What were these effects?

6. Who were the principal leaders of the AFL in its early days and how did they influence the growth of the Federation?
7. What were some of the major accomplishments of organized labor up to 1920?
8. During the 1920's unions lost much of their membership. How do you account for this?

IV. The Labor Movement Becomes a Major National Force: 1932-1951

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 149-163; 192-240.
Lazarus and Goldberg, pp. 10-15.

Study questions:

1. What principal causes were responsible for the unprecedented growth of unions in this period? In what industries did much of this growth occur?
2. How did the unemployment of the early 1930's affect workers and unions? Did it have equal impact on organized and unorganized workers?
3. Why would you expect the membership of unions to increase at a slow rate in the early 1930's?
4. What issues gave rise to the split between the AFL and CIO in the middle 1930's. Why were these issues important for the labor movement?
5. Why did numerous strikes accompany the growth of unions in the period 1936-1940?
6. What was the significance of the New Deal for the labor movement? Name and describe briefly some of the federal legislation that benefited the unorganized as well as the organized working groups.
7. In general, what was the impact of World War II on American unions?

V. Unions: How They Are Organized and How They Operate

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 110-114, 242-268.
Lazarus and Goldberg, pp. 15-18, 52-53

Study questions:

1. What are the principal differences between a local union, a national union, and a federation of national unions? Why is each an important organization in the labor movement?
2. In general, how do unions govern themselves, how do they make decisions, how are they financed, and what are their internal activities?
3. What are some of the differences between the AFL and the CIO in terms of the kinds of union members, unions, and top union leaders which make up each group? Despite these differences, what are the basic similarities in functions and policies between the AFL and CIO?
4. What are the principal differences which distinguish the craft type unions from the industrial type of unions? Are all AFL unions of the craft type?
5. Why do jurisdictional disputes arise between unions?

VI. What Unions Do Besides Collective Bargaining

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 268-278, 286-306.

Study questions:

1. How do unions go about achieving their political objectives?
2. What kinds of services and facilities do many unions seek to provide for their members? Why do unions engage in these activities?
3. In what ways can and do unions take an interest in and contribute to community welfare?
4. In what ways do American unions show their interest in international affairs?

VII. What Unions Want From Management: Security and Satisfactory Procedures for Handling Mutual Problems

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 279-282.
Lazarus and Goldberg, pp. 19-28, 49-51.

Study questions:

1. What does collective bargaining mean? How does it change the situation in a plant where previously there had been no union?
2. What are the procedures by which collective bargaining is carried on? How is a union agreement negotiated? Once an agreement is negotiated, how is it administered day after day?
3. What is conciliation and what is arbitration? What is the relation and importance of these procedures to collective bargaining?
4. Why do employers in some industries band together in employer associations to bargain with unions?
5. Why are American unions so concerned about the matter of recognition and gaining security? By what means do unions seek to guarantee their security?

VIII. What Workers Want Through Unions and Collective Bargaining: Protective Rules and Good Employment Conditions

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 317-326.
 Lazarus and Goldberg, pp. 56-59.
 Nichols and Carskadon, pp. 8-22.

Study questions:

1. What kind of a document is a union agreement? What purpose does it serve? What does it mean for the individual wage earner who is covered by an agreement?
2. What principal subjects are dealt with by most union agreements? In what sense may many provisions of union agreements be termed rules? Whom do such rules regulate?
3. Explain why it can be said that many union agreement provisions are designed to give workers job security? What kinds of threats to their security do workers face in industry today?
4. Why is the grievance procedure in a plant important both to the union and to the worker? Is it important to the employer also?

IX. Union-Management Conflict: Why Does It Occur?

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 107-108.
Goldner, pp. 6-10, 14-17, 18-26, 36-44.
Lazarus and Goldberg, pp. 43-44, 46-47.
Nichols and Carskadon, pp. 22-32.

Study questions:

1. What are the basic characteristics of strikes? Name four kinds of strikes and discuss their special characteristics. Which kind of strike occurs most frequently at the present time?
2. In what other ways besides a strike may unions take economic action to achieve their goals?
3. For the nation as a whole, strikes seem to occur in waves. What are three factors that help to account for changes in the number of strikes and how do you suppose they affect the volume of strikes?
4. Some people say that strikes are caused by unions always wanting higher wages and better working conditions. But these factors are also the issues in collective bargaining that never reaches the point of conflict. How does this happen? What are the causes of strikes?
5. What is business unionism? How does the prevalence of this type of unionism affect the volume and kind of strikes that occur?

X. Union-Management Conflict: The Importance of Strikes

Reading:

Goldner, pp. 1-8, 11-14, 27-35, 44-48.
Lazarus and Goldberg, pp. 44-46.

Study questions:

1. How have management and labor succeeded in limiting labor-management conflict through the process of collective bargaining?
2. How can the costs of strikes be measured? How serious are the costs of strikes? If most strikes cost something, does that mean we should try to prohibit strikes?

3. What statistics are available to measure the volume of strikes? Do the several kinds of data measure the same thing? In what ways do they differ?
4. What are the most important federal laws that involve strikes? Do these laws prohibit strikes? Do they encourage strikes?

XI. Unions and the Government

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 180-216, 223-240.
Goldner, pp. 27-35.
Lazarus and Goldberg, pp. 63-66.

Study questions:

1. Which government agencies have as their functions the handling of matters of public policy involving industrial relations? What are these functions and how are they important to unions? To employers? To unorganized employers?
2. The U. S. Department of Labor has sometimes been referred to as the agency representing labor in the federal government. To what extent is this true?
3. What are some of the influences that have led to the federal and state governments taking a more active part in industrial relations?
4. Over the last fifty years has government become less and less or more and more involved in union-management relations? Why? Name and identify at least four federal laws which demonstrate this trend.
5. What were and are the major purposes of the Wagner Act and the Taft-Hartley Act, respectively? Why are these two laws, only 12 years apart in time, so different otherwise?

XII. Labor and the Defense Economy

Reading:

Faulkner and Starr, pp. 222-230.
Lazarus and Goldberg, pp. 43-44.

XII. Reading (continued):

In addition to the reading listed it is expected that students will need to do some outside reading in order to handle the study questions on this topic. It is important, for example, that students keep in touch with pertinent developments as reported in the daily press and news magazines. Students will also find it helpful to check back over the issues of the past year or so in such publications as Business Week, U. S. News, The American Federationist (issued by the AFL), The CIO News, Fortune, Monthly Labor Review (issued by the U. S. Department of Labor), etc. All of these publications have carried key articles or news reports dealing with mobilization problems, price and wage stabilization, important union-management negotiations, and labor's stake in the defense effort.

Study questions:

1. What major labor problems face the government in a period of war or defense preparation?
2. What major problems face workers and unions in such a period?
3. Is it necessary that unions participate in setting war or defense policies? What problems are solved by having labor representation on government policy boards? What problems are made worse?
4. The press has reported several crises in our national defense mobilization setup during the past 18 months in which unions have had an important part. Why have these occurred?
5. One of the major problems facing our economy during the present mobilization is the maintenance of stability and prevention of undue inflation. This was also the key problem during World War II. However, the stabilization methods we are employing this time and the attitudes of unions and other major groups toward such efforts are quite different. How do you explain these differences?
6. Do you know in general terms how the government measures changes in the cost of living? How much has the cost of living risen since before World War II? How much since the start of the Korean conflict?

Supplementary List of Books and Pamphlets
on American Labor Selected for High School Use

I. Labor History

U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT. Bulletin 1000, Washington: 1951, 66 p.

Austen, Aline. THE LABOR STORY. New York: Coward-McCam, 1949. 231 p.

Dulles, Foster Rhea. LABOR IN AMERICA. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1949. 402 p.

II. American Unionism

Peterson, Florence. AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS, WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW THEY WORK. New York: Harper and Bros., 1945. 1952 ~~338~~ p. 270p. *Revised.*

PIONEERS OF LABOR. Chicago: Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, 1949. 55 p.

III. Union-Management Relations

Warren, Edgar L. and Irving Bernstein. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Los Angeles, California, 1949. 35 p.

Williamson, S. T. and Herbert Harris. TRENDS IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. New York: the Twentieth Century Fund, 1945. 250 p.

Millis, Harry A., ed. HOW COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WORKS. New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1942. 986 p. This book consists of a series of descriptions of actual union-management relations in a large number of major American industries.