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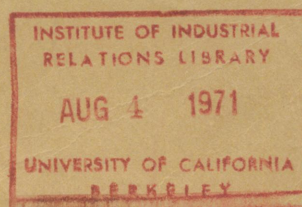
CASE STUDIES  
IN  
LABOR IDEOLOGY

(Monograph No. 3)

by  
David J. Saposs

AUGUST 1971

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII • HONOLULU, HAWAII



# CASE STUDIES IN LABOR IDEOLOGY

*AN ANALYSIS OF  
LABOR, POLITICAL AND TRADE UNION ACTIVITY  
AS INFLUENCED BY IDEOLOGY -- PHILOSOPHIC,  
STRUCTURAL AND PROCEDURAL ADAPTATIONS  
SINCE WORLD WAR I*

Monograph No. 3

American Labor Ideology

by  
David J. Saposs

AUGUST 1971

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**CASE STUDIES  
IN LABOR IDEOLOGY  
Monograph 3**

*Errata*

<u>Page</u>	<u>Paragraph and Line</u>	<u>Change</u>
✓ 8	2, last	Add “(See Appendix A.)”
✓ 182	2, 10	Change “Alexander B. Barkan” to “Alexander E. Barkan”

With the permission of their families, I am happy to dedicate this book to two of my late devoted friends and associates, Frank P. Fenton and Henry P. Melnikow, each of whom during his adult life span selflessly dedicated himself to the advancement of the welfare of the workers and all of humanity. I am regretfully cognizant that this limited recognition is not adequate to commemorate their immeasurable service in promoting the cause they so devotedly championed.

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# FOREWORD

In September 1964, the Industrial Relations Center of the University of Hawaii issued the first monograph of a trilogy dealing with labor ideology in particular industrialized countries and written by the noted labor historian, David J. Saposs. The forward to that first monograph states the scope of the proposed trilogy:

From the advent of industrialism workers were by virtue of their status impelled to organize in order to promote and protect their interests. Simultaneously intellectuals aroused by the plight of the workers, in concert with the more discerning worker leaders, began to formulate and propound systems of thought diagnosing the causes of their miserable conditions, and developing procedures for alleviating them. Programs, types of organization and specific activities were delineated in order to attain the desired objectives.

With the growth of industrialism, labor organizations assumed more precise forms, gradually emphasizing three basic but interrelated institutional activities—trade union, political and cooperative. These three manifestations with their auxiliaries usually comprise the labor movement nationally and internationally. As the movement progressed the trade union and political organizations superseded the cooperative as the two pivotal institutions in the moulding and as carriers of ideologies. However, the trade unions although actively concerned with ideology and significantly contributing to its formulation generally defer to the leadership of the political party in these theoretical matters. Consequently these two branches are discussed in tracing the initiation, expansion and transformation of labor ideologies.

These monographs are not a history of labor movements, but an historic analysis of labor thought and associated activities as these affected the development and implementation of ideologies. Since political parties have generally been accepted as the prime formulators, expounders and custodians of ideologies primary emphasis is given to the activities of these organizations. In the course of the discussion the interplay of political forces, rivalry of parties and reaction of the electorates naturally are considered. Likewise the response of the rank and file to trade union organizations as the strongest sustainers of political parties in their promotion of ideologies is described and evaluated. By selecting particular countries and geographic regions these studies in the aggregate typify the labor ideological outlook in many of the most developed nations of the world. They note historical adaptations in philosophy, organizational structure and procedure. Interaction and impact of different social forces are also stressed.

The first monograph covered the labor movement in the Nordic countries of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and Finland. The second monograph, which was published in January 1965, studied the development of the labor movement ideology of two Central European countries, Austria and West Germany. The third monograph was to deal with the labor ideology of the United States.

Professor Saposs was working on the manuscript of the third monograph when he died in November 1968. Harold S. Roberts, Director of the Industrial Relations Center and a friend of Professor Saposs, agreed to complete the editing of the American labor ideology monograph and was involved with that project at the time of his own death in February 1970. Paul F. Brissenden was also involved with the editing of the early drafts. The Industrial Relations Center completed the editing of the Saposs manuscript and now presents the final part of the labor ideology trilogy, first announced in 1964.

From the inception of the proposal to publish the trilogy, these monographs by Professor Saposs were considered academically and historically significant because of the author's many years of experience in

the field of labor relations, first as a member of the University of Wisconsin research team, headed by the renowned labor scholar, John R. Commons, which produced the two-volume *History of Labor in the United States*, and later as an investigator for the Carnegie Corporation's Americanization Study of Immigrant Workers and Trade Unions, as Educational Director of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, as research associate for the Twentieth Century Fund, as chief economist of the National Labor Relations Board, and as special assistant to the U. S. Commissioner of Labor Statistics. He has also had a successful career as a college teacher. A detailed list of his activities and publications are set out at the end of this volume. All three monographs are significant because they form a major comparative treatment of the development of the ideologies of some of the most influential and viable labor movements in the world.

The American labor ideology monograph is noteworthy for quite special reasons. It is among the last intellectual contributions of a pioneer in the study of American labor history. Indeed, the monograph represents a conclusive delineation of the author's interpretation of American labor ideology. Furthermore, the text is a very personal observation of the development of the ideology of the American labor movement. Again and again Professor Saposs draws directly from his own experience. For example, in discussing the impact of the Knights of Labor he refers to his contact with the Knights as a young research associate for John R. Commons. He dips into his rich storehouse of experience in providing an insight into the differing attitudes taken by Terence V. Powderly of the Knights of Labor and Samuel Gompers of the AFL toward the 1886 Haymarket riot, in referring to the often disputed goals of American Anarchists around the turn of the century, when he describes events in a particular phase of ideological metamorphosis, and when he explains why his interpretation of a particular development or event may differ from that of other labor historians.

Because of the historical/intellectual nature of the work and because of the personal orientation so evident in the manuscript, we have retained much of the Saposs style and flavor in the final publication. Each part deals with a different phase of ideological development in the American labor movement. Frequently the author refers to events and trends in an earlier part of the monograph in order to elucidate the topic he is discussing or in order to tie in a previously discussed event or trend with what is being considered at the moment. Although this style of disquisition tends to be reiterative, it also means that in certain respects each chapter, and certainly each part in the monograph, is complete in itself and could be read as a separate essay. Professor Saposs views the development of the ideology of the American labor movement as a competition among various ideological strands; as a constant return to and re-evaluation of the original tenets of the labor movement, i.e., pure and simple unionism; and as culminating in an overlapping synthesis of various ideologies which merges with the dominant philosophy of American society itself. His treatment of the subject reflects his views.

We should note some differences in orientation between the first two monographs and the third monograph. The monographs on the Nordic countries and on Austria and West Germany deal, of course, with labor movements which were early influenced by Socialism and which today contain significant segments which are at least nominally Socialist in outlook. The labor movements in these countries operate through a dual pattern of independent trade unions and independent political parties. In its incipient stages the American labor movement unsuccessfully attempted to create a similar pattern. However, it gradually discarded radical ideas, accepted capitalism, shunned independent political action, and, until recently, narrowly limited its interest in politics and in labor and social welfare legislation. The description of the labor movements of the Nordic countries and of Austria and West Germany concentrates on the developments of the twentieth century and includes very little discussion of the historical developments of the nineteenth century. In contrast, the American labor ideology monograph delves into nineteenth century developments, describes the vicissitudes of specific labor organizations of that era, and links the trends of the nineteenth century to those of the twentieth.

Special acknowledgement is made to Vickie L. Triplett for her assistance in the preparation of the manuscript for publication.

John B. Ferguson, Acting Director  
Industrial Relations Center  
College of Business Administration  
University of Hawaii  
April 1971

# PREFACE

As a student and author in the field of American labor, my introduction to the labor movement began when I was an inquisitive youngster in Milwaukee. I worked in the bottling departments of three widely known breweries. Since the United Brewery Workers, a pioneer Socialist union, was identified with that industry, I automatically became a member. Shortly, I took an active part in local union affairs, being elected as one of five delegates to represent our local at the meetings of the Milwaukee Federated Trades Council. As a novice in the city-wide movement, I was a silent but observant participant. The Milwaukee trade union movement was a mainstay of the challenging and vigorous Socialist movement led by the astute and learned Victor L. Berger, a key founder of the Socialist Party of the United States and one of its eminent national leaders. The stimulating Socialist movement inspired me with an ardent social consciousness, and I was also intrigued by the appealing LaFollette Social Reform movement and its charismatic leader.

Upon entering the University of Wisconsin as a freshman, fortune further favored me in that I immediately found employment as a part-time stenographer with the profound and stimulating scholar, Professor John R. Commons. He and his able associates were then engaged in completing the classic ten-volume *Documentary History of Industrial Society*. Simultaneously, Professors Richard T. Ely and Commons were planning the monumental Commons and Associates two-volume *History of Labor in the United States*, of which I subsequently was to be privileged to become a co-editor and co-author.

It was thus that I was initiated into the scholarly realm of labor studies. Following ten year's association in various capacities with Professor Commons as my mentor, I departed to pursue my chosen profession as researcher, field worker and teacher in state and federal government agencies, leading foundations and academic institutions. For a brief period I was also engaged as economic consultant by important labor organizations. In the interval, I served as lecturer, teacher and active participant in the vital field of workers' education which then was emerging in its initial stages, and I was one of the founders of the Workers' Education Local of the American Federation of Teachers. These activities were most fruitful in enabling me to come into intimate contact not only with high and low leaders of the movement but also with the rank and file, so that I learned at first hand and at all levels much about the internal functioning of the movement. Although at times detouring to study labor abroad, I constantly maintained a keen interest in American labor, tapping both human and documentary sources. The study sojourns outside the United States gave me insight into foreign and international labor movements and facilitated comparison of the activities and objectives of different labor movements.

This book is a summary of my accumulated knowledge of the American labor movement, especially with respect to its ideological developments and its adaptiveness to social realities. The reader will readily observe that the present study is not a history of the labor movement but an historical analysis of certain aspects of it. It follows the pattern of my preceding two publications dealing with selected labor movements of Western European Countries.

I have decided not to clutter the text with footnotes. These, I think, would only distract the reader. To those who may wish to check the supporting data, it is hardly necessary to consult primary sources, since authoritative secondary sources are replete with substantiating data confirming the historical analysis. Some appendices set out, in their own words, certain of the views of key labor leaders.

David J. Saposs

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Profound gratitude goes to my friend and colleague Dr. Paul F. Brissenden. His skillful and painstaking editorial contribution materially improved this text. I also want to express deep appreciation to my friend and colleague, Dr. Harold S. Roberts, for sympathetic encouragement and assistance when this study was projected and in the process of preparation. I am also indebted to my friends and associates Dr. Joseph Mire and Benjamin Haskel, both of whom brought to my attention valuable fugitive material. They also patiently permitted me to test some of my thoughts and offered helpful suggestions. Mrs. Clare Belman rendered indispensable miscellaneous editorial service.

It scarcely needs to be noted that I alone am responsible for the ideas and opinions appearing herein.

David J. Saposs  
Washington, D. C.  
October 1967

# AMERICAN LABOR IDEOLOGY

## *AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LABOR IDEOLOGIES IN THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT*

### INTRODUCTION

Historically, "ideology" as an abstract term has acquired various meanings. Recently it has become popular positively to proclaim that American labor has no ideology. Indeed, intellectuals have joyously announced that mankind has arrived at the "end of ideology." Such an evaluation of modern society is tantamount to a proclamation that the civilized world has come to an end. An eminent journalist, who devoted considerable time to the study of the theoretical and philosophical phases of labor and related radical movements, and who is now a distinguished sociologist, wrote an article with the striking title "The End of Ideology." Although the originator of this appealing phrase later qualified his generalization as applicable only to left radical movements, some leading academic labor economists and outstanding journalists thoughtlessly gave it unduly wide application. Even a few eminent economists interested in relating the labor movement to the economic setting found it convenient to rely on the original interpretation. A young academician writing on labor has thoughtfully placed the interpretation in its proper, and limited, perspective. He rightfully contends that the mistake in charging that labor has no ideology is traceable to the fact that its thinking has blended with the prevailing ideology of the nation.

Anthropologists have long since concluded that even the earliest primitive man, in an attempt to understand himself in relation to his earthly environment as conditioned by the unknown, has conjured up explanations in his crude fashion. As men became more sophisticated, those equipped with the capacity for abstract thinking refined and elaborated on the primitive ideologies. Depending on the extent to which ignorance and superstition were superseded by real knowledge and concomitantly keener perception, the ideologies embodied subtler thinking. It is therefore evident that man, possessing a mind and a capacity to react emotionally, will evolve ideas and theories which will influence individual and organizational outlook and conduct. Hence ideologies.

However, this study is not a psychological analysis. It is concerned with reactions to conditions. Historical analysis is concerned primarily with economic, sociological and political manifestations and only incidentally with psychological factors. In the course of time, with a fixation of status, sub-ideologies also are conceived. These are based chiefly on the particular situation of such a special interest group as organized labor. The term "labor ideology" as used herein could be defined as the science which deals with the history of human ideas as conceived by the labor movement, or by commentators on that movement. Labor ideologies concern themselves with the role of organized labor as revealed by its philosophies, theories, policies, and procedures. This book traces and analyzes the origin, development and practical effectiveness of labor ideologies in American labor history.

Subtle, elaborate and more or less informative analyses have been made explaining the

ideological insights of organized labor. Reduced to commonplace terminology, rank and file workers, being “average persons,” are less concerned with intangible aspirations than with those that specifically promote their immediate welfare. A worker expects concrete results from his association with the labor movement. He measures the value of the service rendered by the degree to which it improves his working and living conditions. But as the worker gains in material improvements, he begins to aspire to cultural advancement. For his offspring he desires enhanced occupational, social and cultural opportunities. Labor organizations, whether trade union, political or whatever, which provide these wants retain the allegiance of their followers and sympathizers and attract new recruits. Even at this level the average worker, like the average individual, is only incidentally interested in abstract concepts or theories, and generally is skeptical of revolutionary objectives. He judges the effectiveness of his movement and its leaders by concrete results, which, hopefully, will confer benefits, now or later. He relies upon his leaders, who, often with the collaboration of intellectuals, clarify and give meaning to his aspirations. If the extensive use of government as a corollary to trade union action is necessary to improve the lives of the people, he accepts the verdict of his leaders. Above all, he expects from his labor affiliation protection and advancement of his interests not only on the job but as a member of society.

Those labor movements that hold their followers’ loyalty thus satisfy within limited areas the tangible wants of their followers. It is the leaders’ responsibility so to adapt and direct the movement as approximately to satisfy the needs and aspirations of the members. Applicable here is the adage “nothing succeeds like success.” Movements that fail to achieve these objectives may temporarily flourish but in the end either vanish or atrophy. Among such were the Anarchists, the Knights of Labor, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, the Industrial Workers of the World, the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Party. The Communist Party with its Trade Union Educational League (later, the Trade Union Unity League) met with a similar fate. History reveals that the progress of a labor movement depends largely on the extent to which its doctrines are truly applicable to the prevailing social and cultural conditions.

Consequently, the early labor movements dedicated to the central doctrine of self-employment in a decentralized primitive social order vanished when that order was displaced. With the advent of corporations and the factory system, what became the mainstream of the movement demonstrated the futility of these early aspirations. Instead of using their energies to resist the newly developing order, the Anglo-Saxon and German immigrants accepted it and decided to devote their efforts to building a movement that would operate on the theory that the individual mechanic or wage earner was destined to remain a worker during his lifetime. Given the new conditions, the wage-earner’s prospects of becoming self-employed were nil. The slogan that described his predicament which gained currency ran: “Once a worker, always a worker.” The remedy was to concentrate on promoting such changes as would enhance the worker’s welfares. One group advocated practically exclusive reliance on strong unions, whose ideology was ultimately crystallized in “voluntarism,” or pure and simple business unionism. Another faction, without quarreling with the idea of strong unions operating through collective bargaining, at the same time believed in reliance upon sustained political activity. The purpose of this political activity was to use the government to improve the lives of the workers through social reform legislation and to develop labor’s political arm so as ultimately to supersede the capitalist order by a socialist society. Although the “voluntarists” won the greater support, “pragmatic socialists,” operating within the mainstream of the movement maintained a successful opposition which continued into the post-World War I period. Both groups made substantial advances during the industrial recovery following the catastrophic depression of the early 1890’s. AFL affiliates and some independent unions established themselves as bargaining agents in many industries. This was the period during which the size of corporations and plants greatly increased, particularly in the basic industries. Nevertheless, in those industries in which middle-sized firms dominated, business was still highly and at times ruinously competitive, giving the unions certain strategic advantages. Indeed, this period running to about 1907 marks the only instance in the history of the American labor movement when it made extraordinary headway almost

entirely under its own momentum.

But in this decade after the turn of the century the unions found themselves confronted with formidable corporate resistance. They were almost entirely eliminated or so weakened that they were no match for the powerful corporations. These powerful businesses functioned largely through multi-unit establishments strategically distributed throughout the country; they possessed gigantic resources; they had the benefit of protected markets and faced little competition; they were adept in anti-union practices; they were often aided and abetted by friendly courts and controlled local, state and federal administrations; they could (and did) conduct themselves in such a way as to merit the phrase "Rapacious and Rampant Capitalism." Whoever challenged them, whether unions or other social groups, was mercilessly destroyed or reduced to impotence. By the outbreak of World War I, the trade union movement had become almost helpless except in the highly competitive industries in which the unions served as regulatory influences, helping employers to check cut-throat competition. In other industries, unions were strong enough to counteract resistance from the small and middle-scale manufacturing and service enterprises. One ray of hope during this period was the successful leadership of the unorganized by the IWW, composed mostly of immigrants in the north and poor whites in the south. There were spectacular strikes, some of which terminated with minor improvements in working conditions, while the rest dragged out in failure. The other ray of hope was the dramatic electoral successes, chiefly on local and state levels, of the pragmatic Socialist Party.

World War I developments made it possible for the labor movement to regain and even augment its strength. Economic development was extraordinarily stimulated by war conditions and our later participation as a belligerent. A labor shortage ensued with concomitant unrest which threatened serious interruption of vital production and distribution. Organized labor naturally took advantage of this critical situation to reassert itself and to make some gains. Individual workers likewise bestirred themselves after a period of docility. On the other hand employers, having found their belligerent anti-union position successful, were unresponsive to the new attitude of both organized and individual labor. This attitude threatened serious interruption of business operations. To insure orderly labor relations in those industries where it was the principal buyer, the government ordered creation of tri-partite labor boards so that differences could be adjusted through conciliation and arbitration. Being the prime purchaser especially of basic products, the government was in a position to regulate labor relations in a manner consonant with continuous operations.

While protecting the needs of the government, this novel method of handling labor relations proved a boon to the weakened labor organizations. By their own strength, they could scarcely hope to secure recognition from recalcitrant, anti-union employers. Government imposition of the new machinery gave the unions the coveted recognition on a platter. Trade unions regained their former status, and more. Again collective bargaining coverage was introduced in powerfully anti-union multi-unit mass production.

With conclusion of the war, the natural desire of a people living in a troubled atmosphere was to return to normal conditions. Led by the AFL with its ruling faction still adhering to the failing doctrine of voluntarism, the union movement unreflectingly, almost happily, embraced the popular concept of "back to normalcy." The mistaken plunge proved disastrous. In a short period the unions, which had regained and increased their power under government aegis, again were driven from the mass production industries. But union sentiment within and to some extent outside the AFL undertook to preserve the advantage of government intervention in labor relations that had proved to be beneficial. Led primarily by the unions whose members were largely employed by the railroads, labor vigorously dissented. It was supported by the socialist unions. The latter boldly asserted the necessity for government intervention. Since their members were employed in railway transportation they concentrated on restoration of the pattern of railway labor relations established by the government during the war. Failing to sense the temper of the public, the unions embarked on an impracticable course by demanding retention of government operation of the large railroad systems.

The program they presented became known as the "Plumb Plan," named after Glenn Plumb, their brilliant General Counsel. But the railroads already had been returned to private ownership, and neither the Harding Republican administration nor the general public were in a mood to restore government control of transportation. Realizing their mistake, the leaders turned their attention towards a more fruitful course for securing government intervention in labor relations. Thus legislation was obtained restoring a workable form of government intervention in labor relations that would protect unions against employers' anti-union practices. Such legislation would impose upon management retention of orderly collective bargaining. Only the war-time compulsory arbitration requirements were omitted. The National Mediation Board was created to implement the new legislation.

Other legislation providing for the income security of railroad workers followed, such as retirement pensions, administered by the Railroad Retirement Board. Thus the railroad unions, supported by their Socialist allies, discarded the concept of voluntarism for a limited form of welfare-stateism. Indeed, they pioneered in disregarding Gompers' warning against promoting labor and social reform legislation, and intensive political action as a means of securing its adoption. Indeed, the Gompersian aphorism, "What the government gives it can take away," now seemed inapplicable. Considering this slogan as a hollow warning, the railroad unions simultaneously launched the Railway Labor Executives Association whereby they established themselves as an influential and effective national political force. At the same time, in order to educate their members, sympathizers and the general public, and to promote their political and allied activities, the railroad unions launched an informative, readable and attractive weekly publication entitled *Labor*, which still operates as an outstanding labor paper. Thus Gompers' slogan was put in workable perspective. To be sure, "what the government gives it can take away," but if organized labor functions as a knowledgeable and forceful political power it generally can forestall wholesale emasculation of desirable labor and other social statutes. In fact, it can also serve as an effective factor in securing adoption of such legislation and in bringing about its effective administration.

Thus with government intervention, the railroad unions not only maintained the favorable status they had won during World War I, but continued to grow and prosper. By contrast, most of the remainder of the trade union movement, weakened once more by the anti-union policies of the burgeoning corporations, became tragically impotent. The unprecedented depression of 1929 proved to be a further factor in the depletion of union strength. But the effect on the state of the nation was to bring to power the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Democratic administration in 1932. New Deal policies, including profound social reform and labor measures of revolutionary significance, were instituted. Among the new labor laws was the National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act, which at one fell swoop outlawed the anti-union policies that management had so successfully employed. Following the Railway Labor Act (of 1926), the Wagner Act of 1935 gave the National Labor Mediation Board (and later, the National Labor Relations Board) a mandate to safeguard the activities of unions in conducting their organizing work and obliging employers to bargain in good faith with these unions when they are selected by the employees in secret-ballot elections. Thus once more government intervention salvaged the unions and put them on the road to success. Thereafter the American labor movement acquired power and influence never previously attained. Collective bargaining was restored in nearly all mass production and many other industries, and organized labor became an important political force. While it has met with some stiff opposition, even undergoing occasional reverses, its strength and influence have, on the whole, been retained.

In the course of its evolution, the American labor movement has experienced painful ideological metamorphoses. Naturally certain groups pioneered in making these changes before the mainstream followed along. Such revolutionary transformations in thinking, objectives and strategy do not occur in a mass movement without bitter conflict. Some of the dissension, like the upheaval caused by the railroad unions, was fought out within the AFL. But the chief revolt against voluntarism shook the Federation to its

foundations, and produced a schism. A group led by the indomitable John L. Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers, was concerned about organizing the unorganized and the very important mass-production industries. It encountered determined opposition within the AFL, since the structural changes demanded encroached upon the jurisdictions of some of the key unions in the Federation. Equally disturbing to the established leadership were the ideological changes all this involved. These dissident groups insistently called for government assistance in protecting union activities and in enacting social and labor legislation that would improve working conditions, which they contended the unions were unable to obtain by their own efforts. These demands implied some questioning of the efficacy of the ideology of voluntarism. Failure to resolve the basic differences resulted in a split. The dissident group, led by John L. Lewis and others, included Socialist trade union leaders. It founded a new organization, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), consisting of some old unions but receiving its chief strength from new industrial unions of formerly unorganized workers who came mostly from the mass production industries. In order to promote labor and social legislation that would, it was hoped, correct conditions adversely affecting the workers, the new group established a political auxiliary managed by full-time professionals. This rebellious element looked with contempt upon the AFL and its inefficient political activity. The chief defect of the AFL non-partisan activity was its temporary and transitional character. The union leaders of the new movement considered such an arrangement to be amateurish and totally inadequate.

All concerned, however, took advantage of the friendly attitude of the Democratic New Deal administration and the prevailing political and social atmosphere. Consequently, each advanced beyond its fondest expectations. And since the New Deal administration promptly proceeded to enact welfare-state legislation, such as social security, minimum wages, prevailing wages on government contracts and other labor and social reform measures, the workers benefitted considerably. What the CIO and the liberals advocated had become a reality: improvement of working and living conditions of union members and others. In the course of time the AFL, without the destructive contest and emotional debate that resulted in upheaval and separation in the early New Deal days, drifted into acceptance of the welfare-state ideology. Gradually the rivalry between contending groups abated. And the reaction which set in with the enactment of the Taft-Hartley Act which regulated and checked certain anti-union practices the movement considered inimical to the maintenance of a viable trade union movement, brought the separate groups closer together. A further impetus to cooperation among these groups was the mounting unfavorable public sentiment towards the labor movement. Close cooperation in an increasingly hostile atmosphere produced the AFL-CIO merger in 1955 despite some internal skepticism in both camps.

Consistent with the welfare-state ideology, the merged movement broadened its social perspective by strengthening some departments and creating new departments, committees and auxiliaries, thereby extending and intensifying its activities and influence. Among these new or enlarged activities were community services, education, legislative representation, political action, research, housing, civil rights, international affairs, public relations, press and publications and legal. The merged movement likewise embarked upon a broader participation in national affairs and in the international labor movement. The resulting movement and activities can appropriately be described as "social unionism."

New and pressing problems confront the labor movement. The problem of cybernetics is a bothersome one. Technological improvements are changing the composition of the labor force. The character of the traditional skilled and semi-skilled occupations has been either materially altered or completely destroyed. The number of workers in white-collar and professional occupations is beginning to exceed those of the blue-collar category. This new development has created an organizational dilemma with which the movement is only slowly coping. Another problem is that of the racial integration of workers. In general, the national leaders are working seriously to overcome the deeply ingrained prejudices of the lower level leaders and rank and file. But in view of the stubborn resistance, progress is slow. Internal differences over

international and domestic policies are emerging increasingly within the movement. Personality conflicts and leadership rivalries are aggravating factors. However, there seems to be no danger in the immediate future of a definitive schism analogous to that of 1935. The possibility of a schism exists however, and it is a persistent one. Should all concerned conduct themselves thoughtfully and responsibly, these disagreements although surcharged with increasing emotion, may have results that are beneficial to the movement. Dissent in mass movements seems to be a natural phenomenon. It would be surprising if such assertiveness did not arise in the contemporary labor movement.

If past experience is any guide, the prospect is that the movement will go through both disappointing and agreeable turns of fortune. This must be expected in a dynamic democratic society. Troublesome and challenging situations can be mastered provided the mainstream of the movement retains adequate resilience for devising innovative procedures that will overcome stagnation. Insurmountable danger envelops the movement only when the leadership sinks into complacency or confusion. A striking example is the failure of the Knights of Labor to adapt itself to the challenge of social change. An energetic and reflective opposition can serve as a catalyst. The CIO performed that function in its conflict with the AFL. Contrariwise, a reckless opposition disregarding social realities falls into the error of pursuing visionary aims and destructive policies. In their extravagant emotionalism ultrarevolutionary groups, blinded by absolute dedication to rigid doctrine, are bereft of a sense of reality. Frustrated, they are wrecked by destructive tactics. In the outcome they either fail to amass an essential following or if they do gain one, they do not succeed in holding it. The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance in the 1890's is a case in point: an organization by clinging to impractical doctrines and strategy becomes a hollow shell, and vanishes. Both the anarchist movement of the 1880's and the IWW of the pre- and immediate post-World War I period, suffered the fate of becoming hopelessly mired in doctrine.

A responsible opposition conscientiously concerns itself with the promotion of constructive policies. An irresponsible opposition is maliciously interested in the advocacy of demagogic doctrines whose prospects of acceptance are negligible. The responsibility of so conducting an opposition as not to succumb to failure is the responsibility of leaders. American labor history offers instances of responsible pragmatic opposition movements which, sensing the limits set by existing economic conditions, adjust their programs and criticisms to existing realities. Such movements can develop successfully.

Although beginning with a strictly Marxian program the powerful Socialist unions (as a responsible opposition operating within the AFL) deftly adapted themselves to social realities. The CIO was another opposition group that started with a pragmatic program of comprehensive labor and social reform much of which was to be attained by vigorous political action. It developed into a viable movement. In the history of the American labor movement responsible opposition elements have served as useful gad-flies to the dominant elements. Both the Socialist unions and the CIO rendered this unsolicited and invaluable service to the "mainstream" AFL. By this prodding the Federation and its affiliates were moved to take advantage of the favorable climate generated by the government, demonstrating that the success or failure of a movement depends on its capacity to adjust itself to prevailing conditions and practices.

In perspective the foreseeable future holds out promise that the Federation, as the "mainstream" element, will remain a powerful and constructive force, but with opposition groups continuing to serve a useful purpose.

## Part 1

# SELF-EMPLOYMENT MOTIVATES EARLY LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

### CHAPTER I

#### PRIMARY BEGINNINGS BY INDIGENOUS WORKERS

Incipient labor organization made its appearance in the United States late in the 18th century. The earliest pronouncements of groups of workers were ephemeral, created chiefly to conduct a particular strike but not continuing or acquiring permanent organizational form. Formal labor organization appeared in the first quarter of the 19th century. With the turn of the century, organizational efforts took on momentum. Trade unions consisted of journeymen, artisans or mechanics, that is, they were handicraftsmen who owned their own kits of tools and plied a skilled trade such as shoemaker, tailor, hat worker, carpenter. Usually they worked at home on the raw material supplied by the employer who was also the merchant. A considerable number of these workers had at one time been self-employed, and practically all of them aspired to become so. Thus, they were motivated by the ideal of pursuing the greater part of their lives working for themselves. By 1815, most local trade unions based on particular trades or skills had affiliated into central federations. These bodies included affiliates operating in the metropolitan areas: Philadelphia, Boston, New York and other cities. They operated independently from the Atlantic seaboard as far west as Pittsburgh and Louisville. Most of them soon became interested in both economic and political action. In addition to promoting and protecting the interests of their members as employed workers, they participated in political activity to advance the broader interests of the workers. Their membership included small employers and merchants in addition to mechanics. They were all inspired by a common objective in that they subscribed to the ideal of self-employment. Most of their political demands centered on the desire to attain this status. These early indigenous workers adhered to ideals quite different from that of the hordes of immigrant workers who were to come later. These immigrants were influenced by feudalistic tendencies and the more pronounced industrial development of the countries from which they had migrated.

#### *Early Union Characteristics*

In common with those of other countries, the early efforts of American workers proved ephemeral. In the United States, this characteristic is attributable to lack of experience and conditioned by the aspiration to be self-employed. Trade union organization was needed only temporarily so that workers could obtain wage increases that would enable them, by frugal management of their affairs, to save enough so that they would be able to go into business for themselves. Once that objective was achieved, they did not require trade union services. The political association and activity which were promoted by the early trade unions also proved to be of a temporary nature. Contributing factors were lack

of political experience and the appropriation of vital issues by the better established and broader based political parties.

As industry began to separate from agriculture with the workers performing their tasks at home or on their own premises, disputes centered around wages and quality of work performed. Working conditions became important only when shop production on the employer's premises became the dominant mode of operation. With production confined to the wage earner's premises and compensation based on piece work, each worker could adjust working conditions to his own tastes. With the change to the premises of the employer, workers could no longer regulate their own working conditions. One of the earliest recorded strikes was participated in by printers employed by the Rivington Press in New York in the year 1776. The issue was not wages but an adequate wood supply to warm the shop. The early demand for shorter hours was spearheaded by the ship and house carpenters. At this stage it was customary for employers to impose a work period running from dawn to dusk, as on the farm. This meant working 13 to 14 hours in summer and some 10 hours in winter. The house and ship carpenters, working on the premises of their employers, demanded a uniform 10-hour day. These issues of hours of work and related working conditions became as important as wages. *(See Appendix A)*

Closely related to hours and wages was the regulation of apprenticeship to protect the skilled workers' income. To reduce production costs, employers introduced a division of labor. When a mechanic worked he necessarily had to perform even those tasks which required little or no skill, and which could be done in less time than the operations requiring skill. Since he was paid by the piece, his earnings could be enhanced. In dividing the work, it was possible to allocate the tasks requiring little or no skill to non-journeymen, thereby getting this type of work performed at a lower wage scale. Such an arrangement reduced the total earnings of the skilled artisan. Division of labor developed on an extensive basis when the work began to be performed on the premises of the employer. To counteract this practice, the mechanics demanded that the entire product be completed by full-fledged journeymen. Thoroughly trained mechanics naturally insisted on wages appropriate to their acquired skills. They soon learned that the precept that the worker is worthy of his hire had to be supported by joint worker association. Thus, as industry advanced and new issues arose it became desirable, if the interests of the workers were to be properly handled, to resort to collective bargaining. Such a procedure required an implementive agency, that is, a trade union.

Bargaining with employers in this early stage was somewhat primitive in character. As a merchant, the employer customarily posted price lists in his shop. Some of these newly organized unions followed suit by unilaterally posting their own wage lists without negotiating. Soon, the parties learned that such peremptory action was unacceptable. Collective bargaining between worker representatives and employers thus was initiated. Even this process was primitive in nature, with the conditions agreed upon merely being posted rather than stipulated in a signed trade agreement.

Thus the workers began through experience to appreciate the need for trade union organization. It was only later that they recognized the importance of permanent, continuously functioning unions that would constantly promote and protect their interests as wage earners. The ambition of these indigenous workers was still the attainment of self-employment. This objective loomed more importantly than strong trade union organization, with the feeling that self-employment could best be achieved through political action. To this end, legislation and other government action were essential.

There was an additional reason for political action: the unions and workers were hampered, from the outset, by unfriendly court action and obstructive police conduct during strikes. The courts were distinctly hostile, declaring all union activities conspiratorial and hence illegal. When public opinion was aroused against prosecuting union workers on grounds of conspiratorial intent, the courts shifted to the

interpretation of any union activity in strikes as resort to intimidation. Almost invariably the judges imposed fines or imprisonment. The police authorities and local government administrations were also antagonistic to union activists. In order to cope with these difficulties, the unions had recourse to political action.

### *Economic and Social Characteristics*

With the beginning of the 19th century, organizational efforts by the workers gained momentum. Whereas the early attempts were mostly those of separate local unions, these locals later banded themselves into central labor unions for the promotion of common needs. But soon another type of overall union organization was needed. By mid-19th century, national labor organizations had emerged. Nevertheless, this pre-Civil War period is primarily characterized by local labor organizations. In the beginning, the national trade unions had difficulty in competing with the regional central labor unions. Typical of the metropolitan trade union federations was the Philadelphia "Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations." Practically simultaneously, the workers embarked on trade union and political activity. Thus came into existence local labor movements in which workers first organized into separate local unions based on occupation, then federated into central labor unions.

In order to understand the ideology of these early indigenous workers, prime attention must be given to their political pronouncements and platforms. As the names of their political organizations imply, in addition to worker membership, self-employed persons (small merchants and self-employed artisans) were enrolled. Later, the base was broadened to include even farmers and merchants.

At the founding of the republic, social and economic conditions reflected the transition from the handicraft to the early factory stage, with business enterprises permanently employing considerable numbers of wage earners. The workers, threatened in their status as self-employed or prospective self-employed, responded to these changes with hostility. Their ideological outlook led them to political and other activities that would protect them in retaining a social system in which the self-employed could maintain their cherished position and in which the individual worker could hope to achieve his objective of becoming an independent producer or merchant. Even a cursory perusal of the programs expounded by these trade union and political organizations clearly reflects this self-employment ideology. From the arrival of the Pilgrims on these shores, most of their descendants were imbued with the outlook of the yeoman rather than the views of the later immigrants who had become accustomed to working for employers. Neither did the early settlers migrate to acquire precious metals and other valuable materials which they could readily turn into wealth. In contrast with the Spaniards who journeyed to Latin America as "fly-by-night" conquistadores, the British settlers in the area which was to become the United States came to develop the country and make it their permanent home. They thus applied themselves to agriculture and handicrafts. The Spaniards were interested chiefly in the exploitation of the resources of the countries they visited. Only incidentally did some of them remain permanently. And insofar as they developed permanent settlements, these were modeled on the medieval pattern of large land ownership similar to the baronial estates of Europe. By contrast, in the United States the dominant mode of making a living was that characteristic of the yeomanry. It was based on family production centering around homesteads. Insofar as urban industry was conducted, it too was based on home production wherein the craftsman owned his tools. The artisan, like the tiller of the soil, was self-employed, marketing his own product or service. He was his own master. Hence, the countryman and the townsman occupied the same social status and were motivated by the same individualistic ideology. It was not unnatural therefore for them to work together politically, which they did through Populist days into the early decades of the 19th century.

Representative of the local labor movements of this early period was the one functioning in

Philadelphia, founded in 1826. It was the first recorded trade union federation in the United States. Known as the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations, it included such artisan organization affiliates as tobacconists, ladies' cordwainers (shoemakers), printers and compositors, blacksmiths, leather manufacturers, saddlers and harness makers--all handicraftsmen's societies. It also admitted auxiliary bodies serving the mechanics, like the United Beneficial Society of Journeymen Cordwainers. The society's constitution provided support for affiliates during strikes and aid to the unorganized in organizing. But besides the usual planks concerning trade union or economic matters, the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations' constitution also concerned itself with social reform and related matters that could only be dealt with through political action. While there was some opposition to this latter type of activity, the constitution of the Mechanics' Union nevertheless committed the organization to political action. In the beginning, it was limited to non-partisan political action. Candidates running for office under the auspices of one or another of the established parties received party endorsement if they favored the type of legislation considered vital by the Mechanics' Union. However, in 1828, the Union associated itself with the Workingmen's Party, thus embarking on independent political action. This policy was instituted by the adoption of a resolution in May 1828 repudiating non-partisan political action. Since 1828 was a national election year, it was considered expedient to endorse those candidates of the two large parties favorable to the labor program. As is customary in the case of labor and similar movements, a publication was deemed essential to the successful conduct of activities, and hence, the *Mechanics' Free Press* was established as the official organ of the Philadelphia labor movement.

Similar developments occurred in other metropolitan regions. Workers first organized into local trade unions by trade or occupation, then affiliated into area federations. These regional bodies almost simultaneously embarked upon political action in order to promote legislative and administrative action that would abet the ideal of self-employment. These early mechanics' groups were mainly interested in political action because they were dissatisfied with the economic and social inequalities that interfered with their aspirations to remain or become self-employed. Workers in other population areas in Pennsylvania undertook to emulate those in the Philadelphia metropolitan region. Such cities as Lancaster, Pottsville, Carlisle, Harrisburgh, Pittsburgh and Erie followed in the footsteps of Philadelphia.

In other states, beginning with New York, similar activities rapidly developed. Because of factional differences, three political organizations began to function, each claiming to be the "true," original workingmen's party. Meanwhile, the political movement spread to other parts of the state: Albany, Buffalo, and so on. This extension of political activity resulted in a state convention which nominated candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor. In New York City, the movement enrolled mechanics and other working men. In most other New York localities, farmers also were included. As an illustration of the type of persons welcomed to membership, the New York City Workingmen's Party indicated that it considered master workmen or employers as eligible but specifically barred membership to persons not considered to be "living by some useful occupation." Among such persons were bankers, brokers, rich men and so forth! Later, these movements also excluded lawyers and saloon keepers. These political movements centering around the issue of self-employment and consisting of the frugal and industrious, who regarded those more affluent as their opponents, leaned towards temperance, and favored such religious beliefs as spiritualism. The established religions were generally aloof and even looked askance at the tumultuous behavior of the self-employed.

From Philadelphia and New York the labor movement spread rapidly to other cities and states. By 1830 workingmen's parties were known along the Atlantic coast, as far west as Missouri, and as far south as Georgia. Membership consisted mainly of self-employed artisans, wage earners and farmers. Small merchants were also admitted to membership. Between 1829 and 1832 it is estimated that at least 50 different newspapers in 15 states expressed approval of the principles propounded by these movements. Some of the newspapers were sponsored by the individual labor movements but others were independent. As is to be

expected, the idea of a nationwide movement was considered. Some of the labor publications even speculated on the prospects of nominating candidates for president and vice-president. The degree of success or failure of these early labor movements is not central to our inquiry. Both types of major activity, trade union and political, proved ephemeral. This outcome was attributable largely to the unstable conditions characteristic of an infant nation.

## CHAPTER II

### IDEOLOGY REFLECTED IN ISSUES AND DEMANDS

Our concern in this historical analysis is the ideological motivation of articulate labor groups. This is most distinctly and logically expressed in the political field: in political platforms, statements in the press, writings and declarations of the leaders and the more articulate of the lesser participants. Despite different degrees of industrial development in various parts of the country and difficulties of inter-communication and cooperation, the platforms of the workingmen's parties, wherever organized, concerned themselves with practically the same social and economic questions. The labor press, including name and content, was also similar. Even the union constitutions contained planks, in addition to those pertaining to employer and employee problems, that were similar in reflecting general economic and social issues. The political movements were distinctly efforts to unite producers of all types: farmers, merchants, mechanics, master workmen, and small employers, all of them depending on their own labor for a living.

While the labor press was liberal in encouraging free and uninhibited expression, presenting a spectrum of reform ideas in education, religion and so forth, the ideology centered around self-employment and opposition to the wealthy who were conceived of as enjoying "monopolistic" advantages causing social and economic inequalities. A class distinction was emphasized, but it was not of the Marxist class-struggle variety. This attitude was eloquently expressed by a committee report to the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and other Workmen at its 1833 convention. The report said:

We have a powerful opposition to meet, talents and wealth, prejudice and ancient usage, as against us; the clergy will be tampered with; the control of our schools and colleges will be retained by those who do not think as we do: they indeed possess the book-learning, which has been thought the great requisite for scholastic honors and duties; our uneducated but practical men may know what they want, but they will, through modesty, yield to supposed superiors the arrangement of forms and systems which is in fact to yield the whole ground....It is not for this committee to speak disrespectfully of books; for they contain the experiences of ages and the seeds of wisdom, but they have been used, also, for purposes so adverse to the interests of the people that it behooves us to guard against the false and pernicious application of book-learning.

It is evident that these were not only political movements of workers, they were parties of those who worked for themselves or aspired to. Inspired with the same ideology, they found it desirable to be aligned politically. Authoritative documentary data are generally available substantiating the self-employment ideology aspired

to by these indigenous workers and their allies. Louis H. Arky, in a scholarly article based on intensive research, gives an admirable account of the activities and ideology that motivated the earliest labor movements. It appears in an article entitled "The Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations and the Formation of the Philadelphia Workingmen's Movements," published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, April 1952.

While the leaders of this movement incidentally dabbled in various philosophies and religious creeds, their ideology aimed at safeguarding the middle-class occupational ideal of self-employment. Appreciating the importance of educating themselves and the rank and file, as well as sharpening their wits, this movement maintained a library complete with reading and debating rooms. It also published a weekly newspaper, the *Mechanics' Free Press*. Worker groups east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio River organized in similar fashion. Trade associations or unions served a limited purpose confined to employer-employee relations. But many of the objectives considered more basic in purpose could not be achieved through economic action. Hence, artisans and others aspiring to self-employment must act on the political field in order to elect men to office who would serve the interests of the working people. Trade union action was also hampered by the courts, which usually favored the employers, and government agencies injected themselves on the side of employers during strikes. As viewed by these early labor movements, legislators and government administrations compounded injustice by granting favors to the "overgrown capitalists."

A salient grievance of the workers' movement was the granting of charters of incorporation to certain wealthy organizations which made it difficult for the self-employed or those aspiring to that status to attain or retain their cherished objectives. It was charged that legislatures favored the non-producers by authorizing "labor saving machinery" which placed the self-employed, who were producing with hand tools, at a competitive disadvantage. Furthermore, the legislatures were generous in granting bank charters and the banks in turn favored the manufacturing corporations. The proponents of self-employment, on the other hand, demanded certain remedial provisions (which will be considered in the following chapters) that would strengthen and perpetuate a handicraft-self-employment social order. In contrast with Marxian ideology, this self-employment social order would operate as a free enterprise society. It may be characterized as a movement against big business though not against the ownership of private property.

These early labor movements, as their programs and literature reveal, considered that advancement of the workingmen's interests did not depend solely on unions designed to raise wages, shorten hours and effect other improvements in working conditions. Indeed, they considered trade union action as a merely temporary and auxiliary factor in the struggle of the workers, so it was important for unions to operate effectively. Thus strike funds were a common requirement to assist those forced temporarily to withhold their labor because of failure mutually to agree with their employers on terms of employment. Incidentally, the existence of a strike fund was regarded by union leaders as an inducement to the average worker to join. Financial aid was also granted to members who were prosecuted when engaged in strikes and other union activity. Unions usually were prosecuted as conspiratorial combinations and union members were prosecuted for intimidating non-strikers or otherwise interfering with the employer's conduct of his business.

Political action was considered more important than trade union organization or action however. The Mechanics' Union embarked on political action in 1828 both to prevent the courts and administrative agencies from hampering unions in the conduct of their essential activities and to promote the ideal of self-employment. In the beginning, the Union opted for non-partisan political action. Soon it decided to sponsor a separate ticket although claiming it was not a political party. Candidates were entered for all municipal and county offices but only four of these were exclusively on the Workingmen's ticket. The others were selected by delegates of workingmen who visited each of the party candidates, inquiring if he would support the "working classes" if elected. In the Congressional election, the Mechanics' Union retained its non-partisan

policy by supporting those candidates on either party ticket considered favorable to its program. It was hoped that this initial effort at independent political action would become permanent.

Before further discussing the arguments and issues of the early labor movement which clearly identify it as aiming to maintain a society based on the middle-class concept of self-employment, some occupational data revealing the social status of the leaders may provide a clue to the society envisaged by them. An analysis of the 32 leaders of the Philadelphia Workingmen's political movement during the first year shows their middle-class composition and business pursuits. No professional man participated. These leaders included one small businessman (a storekeeper) and three small manufacturers. The others followed such handicraft trades as cordwainer, brushmaker, printer, tailor, chairmaker, and house carpenter. No factory hands were included. In other words, these participants were either already self-employed or in the transitory zone between the self-employed and the wage earner. All were striving to maintain a self-employment social order.

Philosophically, these groups of workers denounced "capitalist accumulation," which enabled businessmen to form corporations to monopolize the production of goods, thus making it impossible for the mechanic and small merchant to compete. Banks were condemned because by supplying them with capital they made it possible for corporations to exist and expand. Free public education was demanded so that the children of the poor would have equal opportunities with those of the rich. Parents of children who could not afford to pay the tuition demanded by private schools were humiliated in that those of their children desiring an education were forced to attend "charity schools," and to compound the humiliation, pupils were required to wear uniforms that marked them "charity wards." Impetus to free public education was generated by the early labor movement.

Another concrete demand was for abolition of compulsory military training. Still another demand was one for the outlawry of imprisonment for debt. At this time a person who was unable to repay his debts could be thrown into prison until he met his obligations. Small businessmen were particularly affected. Indeed, outlawing imprisonment for debt laid the basis for American bankruptcy laws. Eventually, these led the labor movement to a People's Party based upon the ideals of "equality, utility, and the real intelligence of mankind."

Toward the end of the third decade of the 19th century attempts were made to start national labor movements. These movements also incorporated the concept of self-employment and advocated government policies to implement that concept. It was in the post-Civil War period that the movement emerged as a national force in the form of the Knights of Labor and the People's Party. The Knights epitomized the self-employment concepts of organized workers. Later the urban-centered Knights joined the agrarian Populists and these two movements consolidated activities pointed toward a social order based on the self-employment concept. They were anti-capitalist in the sense that capitalism implied corporations operating on a scale large enough to make it impossible for the small businessman to compete with them. They opposed large-scale business enterprises because they considered that these destroyed the social order which they aimed to retain. They differed from the socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, and other revolutionary class struggle radicals however. These latter groups also were anti-capitalist in favor of the abolition of private ownership and the control of large industrial enterprises. On the other hand, the indigenous American workers sought to arrest the momentum of incipient capitalism by legislative fiat. These artisans, small merchants and farmers wished to retain an economy of small-scale production in which the workman was identified with his product. They desired to assert their individualism at a time when the prevailing modes of production would force them into stereotypes. These early workers were also class conscious, but not of the class struggle variety of the latter day radicals, which implied revolutionary action including violent overthrow of government and a proletarian dictatorship. The indigenous labor movements denounced use of

power-driven machinery, corporations, and large-scale business enterprises which destroyed the handicraft mode of production and made small business ventures and the family farmer impossible, thus undermining the foundations of self-employment. Since large-scale business could exist only in the context of the corporate form of business enterprise, they denounced such enterprises. They did this because they considered them monopolistic. A close study of the literature reveals that to these early reformers, "monopoly" and "the corporation" implied synonymous ideas.

These developments, coupled with the introduction of labor-saving machinery, destroyed the way of life of the early workers. Mechanization and large-scale enterprise as exemplified by the corporation was the antithesis of their idealized conception of what America stood for—a nation of small independent producers and businessmen. So firmly was it accepted that the corporation was the essence of large-scale business development that a more daring faction actually advocated unprecedented government action to outlaw corporations as institutions for doing business. Actually, only one profession has succeeded in securing such legislation. Practically all of our states safeguard that profession from being overwhelmed by corporate enterprises; they make it illegal for corporations to practice law. Now, another profession is agitating for this type of legislation. The Certified Public Accountants have succeeded in obtaining such legislation in some states and are assiduously pursuing it in other states. To further implement their ideal, the dominant professional organization of accountants denies membership to corporations engaged in the business of certified public accounting. Membership is open only to individuals.

By way of digression, it may be noted that one of the reasons given for the strenuous campaign conducted by the American Medical Association against government-financed medical and hospital insurance, popularly referred to as medicare, is that it would destroy the personal relationship between doctor and patient. Underlying this plausible argument is the desire of the medical profession to retain its system of self-employment. A recent survey of salaried medical men, not engaged in private practice but employed in hospitals and other institutions, revealed that these professionals voted practically unanimously for medicare. For the most part, they are no longer self-employed. Consequently, they are disposed to support medicare. The American Medical Association frowns at "corporate practice" of medicine but it encourages doctors jointly to operate medical clinics. Thus, just as lawyers or Certified Public Accountants do not oppose partnerships practicing their professions, so the AMA favors doctors jointly operating private clinics. This arrangement is analogous to producers' cooperation. Where an individual worker could not become self-employed because he lacked the necessary resources, it was regarded as desirable practice for a few mechanics to pool their savings to form a cooperative—so becoming self-employed.

Most of the early labor movements in pre-Civil War days disintegrated. Indeed, most of the labor movements then attempting to operate on the national level also failed to attain permanency or even to continue to exist for any length of time. Some labor historians attribute this failure to develop lasting labor organization to the lure of politics. It is their contention that those labor organizations which strictly adhered to business unionism escaped this fate. This contention is false. Fundamentally, the self-employment ideology did not envisage permanent trade-union organization. According to that ideology, trade-union organization was a temporary expedient to secure better wages so that those workers who practiced frugality and industry could accumulate sufficient capital to go into business for themselves or join a few of their comrades in founding a producers' cooperative. Under a handicraft system of production, the mechanic already owned his kit of tools. What he needed was the small sum necessary to purchase a limited supply of raw materials and to meet daily expenditures. Once self-employment became the principal mode of production, the mechanic had no need for a union. It was this thinking and the structural economic instability incident to the transition to factory production that explain the ephemeral nature of the early trade unions. Those labor organizations which successfully escaped involvement in politics suffered the same fate as those which did become so involved. These, too, failed to achieve a continuous existence because of unfavorable economic

and social conditions, whether or not they participated in politics.

Most labor organizations turned to politics because their self-employment ideal could only be safeguarded and perpetuated by legislation. Actually, ideology need not always imply political involvement or opposition to it. Syndicalists, pure and simple, or business unionists among others subscribe to ideologies which eschew or minimize political action. The history of the labor movement reveals that certain ideologies require political action for attainment of their objectives. Usually this “practice of politics” runs from simple lobbying to direct involvement in political campaigns either through non-partisan or independent political action. The American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) relies on non-partisan political action, but in nearly all highly developed industrial countries in Europe and other parts of the world, the labor movements resort to independent political action through parties organized and manned by the labor movement. The reasons for this difference will be explored below.

### *Failure of Early National Attempts Regardless of Ideology*

With expansion of transportation and where important adjoining communities coalesced into an industrial and commercial unit, markets tended to expand. It was natural that labor organizations would pursue a similar course. Early efforts at national labor organization, like the early undertakings of local labor organization, proved temporary whether they were interested in union activity alone or in linking it with political pursuits. Beginning in 1834, organization on a national scale took two forms: national unions by industry, trade, occupation, or craft, such as the National Typographical Society which was formed in 1836; and the overall national trade union center or federation, such as the National Trades Union which was founded in 1834 and disappeared in 1837. Thus development took the form of a labor pyramid: local unions, city centrals, state federations, and national unions and federations.

During the formation of the National Trades Union, a debate occurred over the wording of resolutions “expressive of the views of the Convention on the social, civic and political conditions of the labouring classes of the country.” Some delegates objected to the use of the word “political” because it savored of the idea of a political party. Others argued from past experience that when unions interested themselves in politics, they were doomed. Still others took the opposite position, arguing that many of the evils suffered by the workers could be corrected only by government action. Now legislation was used to degrade them. Caustic and sarcastic remarks were made charging workers with naiveté in not distinguishing between genuine political needs and party politics. Finally, not because the delegates feared politics but in order to avoid misunderstanding, its constitution declared the object of the National Trades Union to be “moral, intellectual, and pecuniary.” Specific policies called for “...an equal, universal, republican system of education” and urged that the public domain be left open to actual settlers instead of being sold in large parcels. (This latter demand was a forerunner of the Homestead Act.)

These objectives indicate that the aim was the promotion of the ideal of self-employment. Proponents of the National Trades Union also discussed and demanded other reforms which could best be peacefully achieved by legislation, specifically in relation to education, public lands, prison labor, prohibition of child labor and adoption of the ten-hour day in government employment. The National Trades Union also concerned itself with “the sources of the great system of speculation through which those who produce nothing receive nearly all the products of the labour of producers, while those who produce all receive but a mite of their own labour.” This speculation is encouraged by the “division of the workingmen into employers and journeymen,” a system which prevents the operative from having control over his labor. As a remedy, the committee proposed cooperation; it would restore to the laborer the disposal of his own product. In addition to other recommendations, a report to the convention of a special committee on cooperation expressed the

opinion "that if the trades' unions and trade societies were to apply their funds to establishment of cooperation in societies suffering aggression, instead of exhausting their funds by supporting strikes, a much more permanent benefit would be rendered."

This first national federation of unions, while eschewing even mention of the word "politics" because of its alleged disruptive effects, lasted less than three years, undoubtedly because of the transitory nature of the economy and the general social situation. Although still imbued with the prevailing sentiment against large business, which with the aid of the banks frustrated the ambitions of the workers, the federation was dubious about pure trade union action and particularly about strikes. The alternative was producers' cooperation, that is, voluntary rather than political action.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE "HOT AIR" PERIOD--UTOPIANS, REFORMERS, HUMANITARIANS

The early American labor movements developed the elemental feature of their ideology, self-employment, by specifically designating "capitalism" as the threat to the maintenance of the "ideal system." Practically simultaneously, similar thinking emerged in Western Europe, but in a form more embellished and subtle and presented in more glowing terms. Most of the European spokesmen were intellectuals from a non-wage earner background with varying degrees of formal education. These spokesmen were termed "reformers" or "humanitarians." They were aroused by the miserable conditions of the workers and their disadvantaged position in society. The "reformers" attributed this to the threat of larger-scale business enterprises, the use of costly machinery, and better access to markets. Beginning in the 1830's, social disturbances in Western Europe resulted in mass migration to the United States. This flow of human beings brought in its wake reformers who assumed prominent roles in the agitations which stirred this country following the depression of 1837. Most of these newly arrived persons were of Anglo-Saxon or German descent. In association with their fellows they undertook in the pre-Civil War period to propagate their doctrines. So widespread were their activities, and so general was the response to them among the less privileged, that the late Professor John R. Commons, pioneer labor historian, characterized this as the "hot air" period in American labor history. Nevertheless, the core concept of both the European and indigenous thinkers was the preservation of a way-of-life and a social order based on self-employment. It was their contention that to be dependent upon another for employment destroyed a person's individuality and was immoral. The natural rights of individuals must be preserved, and those standing in the shadow of disaster must organize to protect themselves. Since these reformers and humanitarians from different cultural and better educated social strata were concerned with the predicament of the less privileged, they naturally tried, with more or less success, to identify with that class.

Outstanding among this group was Robert Owen, successful British businessman turned reformer. Others were professional men and a few were fairly affluent. Included in this group were some native Americans enjoying a similar social status. There was Albert Brisbane, for example. He was reared in ease and luxury, and like most intellectuals never experienced the life of the masses. Yet, from his association with his father, a man much given to reflection on the problems of humanity, Brisbane's mind was receptive to social theories. From travels abroad, he brought back Fourierism with its social philosophy which centered on "phalanxes" or self-sufficient colonies. Two intellectuals who enjoyed close association with the labor movements of the time were Orestes H. Brownson and the more widely-known Horace Greeley. A New Englander, Brownson was brought up in a religious environment. He particularly concentrated on attacking the

factory system and its effect on the working girls of New England. Economically, he traced these evils to monopoly and special privilege. He pinned responsibility on the state and church, but indicted the whole social system. Following the overthrow of these institutions, a rule of humanitarianism must follow, he believed, which would emancipate the individual, permitting him to express his individuality.

Horace Greeley started as Brisbane's pupil but overshadowed him. Unlike his mentor he was brought up in poverty. Greeley had a more practical approach to the problems of reform. His personal life reflected the ideals of the time. By industry and frugality, he rose to become an independent employer. His own experience in warding off bankruptcy with his knowledge of business stimulated Greeley to seek a plan whereby others, working together, could accomplish what he himself had done; that is, become the owners of their own businesses. In this way, he believed, each individual would be assured of the full product of his toil. Unlike the other reformers and humanitarians, he had a practical knowledge of what was possible. He worked for land reform, trade unionism, labor legislation, currency reforms and the abolition of slavery. Greeley was criticised alike by reformers and conservatives. The conservatives looked upon him as a dangerous radical. In confining his reformist policies to measures which he thought achievable, he was closer to the trade union leaders than most reformers, whose relation to the labor movement was chiefly platonic. The reformers looked upon the labor movement as a desirable vehicle by which to promote their pet ideas. Among them were those who carved out new societies in the wilderness like the New Harmony Colony in Indiana. Others advocated phalanxes on the Charles Fourier model in unsettled or undeveloped regions. Certain idealists have always dreamt that independence was only attainable on the land like those who coined the appealing but impracticable slogan "three acres and liberty." Others expressed it more practically, preaching "vote yourself a farm."

Indigenous Americans also spun out theories. Among the more realistic of them was George Henry Evans, the land reformer. He contended that the guiding philosophic principle must be "natural rights." According to this doctrine, the public lands should be distributed to individuals in small parcels. Any landless man was to have the right to settle on a quarter-section. These settlers would form self-governing communities.

Finally, the Homestead Act emerged, providing for the distribution of the public domain in parcels that could be tilled by the family farmer. "Banks of exchange" were advocated based on labor-cost theory, defined as consisting of manual, mental, and managerial elements. Since wage labor was not distinguished from other types of labor at this time, it was not generally thought that manual labor was the only kind of labor. The producer, that is, the master-workman, farmer or small businessman, furnished talent and management as well as manual labor. This concept was different from that of the Socialist who considered wage labor as the core of value. This concept of the labor theory of value was an outgrowth of the factory system in which workers are divorced from ownership, planning and management. The Greenback and Populist agrarian movements, closely allied with small businessmen in rural areas, as debtor movements, attributed much of their hardship to banks which they attacked as monopolies and breeders of other business monopolies.

While in the abstract these finespun theories of the utopians, reformers and humanitarians had their appeals to the imaginations of those who were suffering from hardships and frustrations, the more reflective of the activists in the labor movements considered these sublimated ideologies impractical and illusive. They regarded colonization as a chimerical way to attack the difficulties of mechanics and small businessmen in the cities. To them, theories of communities in the wilderness had little bearing on the wrongs suffered by city workers. The leaders and the more reflective followers of the urban workers realized, however, that the land-reform movement had a certain limited value in that it would drain surplus labor from the industrial areas, although it would not resolve the problems of those who remained on the

land. Other theories seemed to them remote and unrealizable. The trade unionists as practical men coping with day-to-day matters therefore discarded these abstract theories, recognizing only the practical aspects that appeared to have immediate significance and reasonable prospect of attainment. Specifically, they understood the threat of the corporate business enterprises which they challenged as monopolies. The power exercised by banks which in alliance with other corporations monopolized capital and credit also seemed to them to impede the small businessman in the successful conduct of his affairs. It was clear to them that the management of road, water, and rail transportation favored large business enterprises. In the light of this thinking, it seemed desirable to agitate for limitation of land ownership and some degree of government control or ownership of transportation and banks. Since slave labor was a threat to free labor, both on the land and in industry, its abolition was an objective worthy of support. These ideas were simple to understand and results could be expected in the foreseeable future through corrective changes in land reform and reorganization of industry, credit and money.

Consequently, few trade unions participated in the "industrial congresses," held from 1845 to 1856 and sponsored as vehicles of salvation, by the reformers and humanitarians. Some of the earlier sessions were well attended, but as they had only limited popular support, the later sessions were sparsely attended. The reformers tried to attach themselves to the labor movement, but their efforts were poorly rewarded and their success limited. The workers' leaders listened to the appeals but did not respond. Indeed, trade unionists generally tried to disassociate themselves from the reformers, who seem to have been widely regarded as "odd characters." Insofar as worker organizations collaborated with reformers, they were motivated by a desire to promote specific reforms. In general, they ignored or perhaps failed to comprehend the abstract and high-spun theories of social reorganization propounded. The grandiloquent ideas, however effusively presented, evidently transcended the mental capacities of the labor leaders and their followers. There also was the perennial suspicion between those who labored with their hands and had a limited education and those who made their living by the use of "book learning." Advocates of reform complained that the workers manifested too much caution and fear of men who did not practice a trade. Reformers would "use" them if permitted to become very active. Another barrier between some of the reformers and the workers was that the former advocated ideas that generally were regarded as outlandish and even outrageous. Among these were religious and moral reforms such as temperance and peace. One or another of these ideas might be acceptable, but their totality ran counter to the prevailing mores.

Whether generated in the United States or brought to these shores from Europe, stripped to the core, the reformers' theories and doctrines tended to center upon the self-employment ideology. The salient aim was to preserve the system of small business enterprise whereby the master-workman as producer and the small merchant would retain managerial and other business functions. Monopoly and privilege were anathema. The threat to the "free" status of the worker was the large business establishment or corporation. In this sense, the objective of the humanitarians and reformers was similar to the prevailing ideals of the workers, small businessmen, and farmers. Only the socialists and "pure and simple" or business unionists diverged from these views. Their ideals will be discussed below. A basic tenet in this system was the protection of the dignity and independence of the individual. Liberty and property rights were to be safeguarded. In essence, society would rest on individualism. Threatening these sacred attributes were large capital holdings made possible by corporations, which were labeled "monopolies." These corporations received their sustenance from other corporations, especially banks. Control of capital by the banks rested on the issuance of paper money which was difficult for the small businessman to obtain because of excessive interest rates. Moreover, with the paper money issued by the banks in constant fluctuation, the worker was a heavy sufferer. In order to correct these evils, it became popular to advocate a high degree of government control (or outright ownership) of banks and transportation companies.

Land reformers, led mostly by the social reformers, were forerunners of the advocates of the

Homestead Act and were concerned about the equitable disposition of the public domain. They opposed its disposition in large holdings, which they condemned as creating monopolies. Instead, they proposed that the public lands be divided into relatively small parcels that could be tilled and operated on a family basis. Theoretically, land ownership was to be so limited (as to size of plots owned) as to assure perpetuation of "natural" rights. This arrangement, it was expected, would drain surplus labor from populated areas and provide a haven for those who were dissatisfied with conditions in the city, thus making the city worker more independent.

Another reform element diagnosed the problem as traceable to the lack of control of the market by the producing artisan. The producer was at the mercy of the merchant who controlled the market and was also in control of capital. He was a merchant-capitalist. This reform group advocated "banks of exchange," a kind of combination of banking and merchandising enterprise, handling raw materials and finished products, that is, performing both purchasing and selling functions. Since each bank issued its own species of paper money, thus controlling the merchant function, the workers as producers should found their own banks of exchange and dispose of their products to the bank and its warehouses where they would be compensated in exchange according to the labor value of the commodity. According to this philosophy, producers' cooperatives were not the answer to the plight of the mechanic. It was control of capital and market which needed reforming. The aim, according to this theory, could best be accomplished by banks. Its leading exponent in the United States was a German immigrant journalist by the name of William Weitling. His influence was mostly based on the large number of German immigrants who came to these shores either in search of economic improvement or freedom from oppression.

A cruder type of marketing facility for the individual producer was originated by a native American named Josiah Warren. Labor historians describe Josiah Warren as the first American Anarchist. A differentiation is needed. Josiah Warren was a peaceful anarchist or ultra-individualist in contrast to the belligerent anarchists who advocated the use of violence. Warren proposed reforms that would make it possible for the individual producer to retain his independence by reforming marketing practices so as to dispense with the middle man. He advocated opening stores where goods could be sold at a price which admitted no profit. His chief economic doctrine was that price should be determined by labor cost.

# Part 2

## IDEOLOGIES AND SOCIAL REALITIES

### CHAPTER IV

#### ANGLO-SAXON AND GERMAN IMMIGRANTS AS SPONSORS

With the advance of industrialism based on large business units such as factories, banks and wholesale merchandising units, ideologies emphasizing self-employment became impractical. Instead, they were predicated on the proposition that a worker was doomed to remain permanently in that status; that is, "once a worker always a worker." On this hypothesis, two basic theories made their initial appearance in this pre-Civil War period. One of these, the theory of business unionism, had been previously propagated independently in this country but was infused with new vigour, more theoretically rounded out and more seriously practiced by the Anglo-Saxon immigrants. The other, Socialism, was brought to these shores from Europe by German immigrants. Indeed, in their full development toward the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, both ideologies were most consistently fostered in the United States by immigrants.

#### *Premature Efforts at Business Unionism*

As has been pointed out, the depression of 1837 caused the disintegration of the early trade union movements and stimulated an interest in profound social change. These theories, called "panaceas" by Professor John R. Commons, diverted the emphasis to political action and an interest in social experiments. As business improved in the early 1850's, interest in trade union activity began to revive. With intensification in economic activity, unions began to be organized on the basis of a new concept. Eschewing glowing emancipatory ideals, the skilled artisans settled down to the prosaic business of promoting and protecting their interests as wage earners by means of exclusive and, they hoped, permanent trade union organization. This is the origin of principles which immigrant leaders in succeeding periods skillfully developed into "pure and simple" or business unionism. A distinguishing attendant characteristic was the segregation of skilled workers into separate unions. Instead of the quest for the pot of gold at the end of the revolutionary rainbow, these business unionists turned away from revolutionary reform and humanitarian philosophy with their concomitant political activity. They embarked instead on policies and principles designed primarily to promote and protect their current material interests as wage earners. They opted to work within the existing order rather than to strive to supplant it. They began to establish rules to enable their organizations to function effectively as permanent institutions. Among the trade-union features tending to further this objective were initiation fees, dues, stipulated apprenticeship requirements, strike funds, union employment offices, the closed shop and the exclusion from membership of employers, politicians, friends of labor and others not actually working at the trade. From the beginning and through the period of the Knights of

Labor, trade unions in subscribing to the ideology of self-employment had welcomed employers and well-wishers as members and participants. Now unions became exclusive organizations of wage earners. These unions used collective bargaining to systematize the practice of determining minimum wages and the methods of wage payment. Other businesslike practices in the relationship between employers and employees were consistently established, in contrast to the previous crude and haphazard procedures that did not lay the basis for permanent union organization. Previously, the method which had generally been pursued by the unions was to impose the terms of employment upon the employer by submitting to him a "price list," specifying wage rates and conditions of work. Occasionally, employers as individuals were summoned to attend union meetings for the purpose of discussing terms of employment. Gradually, unions were forced by employer insistence to bargain with them systematically. Unions came to realize that attempts to force terms on employers were impractical. This practice merely placed individual employers at a competitive disadvantage with those employers not covered by the "bill of prices." So unions began to bargain with groups of employers in a competitive market area. When terms were agreed upon, they were set out in a written agreement. Of course, where bargaining with groups of employers was not feasible, arrangements with individual employers were not excluded. Naturally the early trade agreements were primitive compared to the documents now in vogue. But the "pure and simple" unions of the 1850's at least set the pattern for businesslike relations with the employers of their members. Certain unions demonstrated a high degree of business ethics by disciplining their members and assuming responsibility for their misconduct. In 1850, the United Society of Cordwainers (shoemakers) agreed that when employers employed union members, the union became responsible for the raw material entrusted to the members who customarily worked at home. Should any member abscond or make away with the work entrusted to him, the Society made good. Likewise, these unions guaranteed the quality of work performed by their members. Since it was performed on the members' premises, it could not be supervised by the employer.

These initial stages of business unionism were not fully developed nor was the rationale clearly understood until later. Yet the contentions of labor historians that only the business-union type can maintain permanency is conclusively disproved. Notwithstanding its "pure and simple" characteristics and policies, and relatively able leadership, this new or business unionism was as short-lived as were unions which adhered to the self-employment ideology. Although the business unions strove for continuity and the others considered themselves as temporary instruments to advance the master-workman status, neither type could survive the frequent gyrations of the business cycle. A succession of periods of unstable business from 1854, intensified by the panic of 1857, with disturbed conditions lasting into 1862, shattered most unions irrespective of ideology. It was not until some 30 years later that business unionism began to reestablish itself on a national level. And although the symptoms of national union organization began to manifest themselves in the 1850's, the real period of union nationalization began in the years following the Civil War, resulting in the formation of the Knights of Labor, an organization committed to the promotion of the middle-class ideology of self-employment.

#### *Premature Socialism as Another Panacea*

Various elements in the labor movement, although discarding self-employment as impracticable under prevailing economic conditions, nevertheless hankered for panaceas that would free workers from the wage system with its dependence upon individual employers. Socialism appeared to be the panacea for combating the new industrialism based on the factory system. It rejected the ideas of the land reformers, cooperators, and other advocates of early panaceas. Primarily introduced in this country by German immigrants, it also attracted a limited following of other foreign-language and English-speaking groups. Varieties of vaguely Socialist philosophies were already circulating in Europe and some of these had reached America. But with the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in 1848,

class-conscious and “class struggle” Socialism became the most popular. Its exponents preferred to refer to it as “scientific” Socialism by way of disparagement of the less doctrinaire or more humanistic varieties.

For a time, some of the leaders who came directly from Germany were devotees of the preachings of Ferdinand La Salle. He did not stress the class struggle and advocated sole reliance on political action. Marx and Engels, responding to developments in England, considered union activity equally important. At any rate, the harsh opposition the workers encountered from employers, government and society led them to accept the class-struggle Socialism. Outstanding among the leaders in this movement in the United States was Joseph Wedemeyer. During this pre-Civil War period, the hard-headed Socialists were no more successful in generating a durable mass movement than were the non-Socialists.

#### *Trade Union Structure--Irrespective of Ideology*

Beginning with the 1850's numerous efforts were made to found separate national unions confined to particular trades. These organizations differed from the incipient national trade union federations. The latter were overall organizations which included affiliates of different trades. In this period the affiliates consisted mostly of local or regional federations similarly constituted. It was not until the late 1880's, with emergence of the American Federation of Labor that the practice arose of basing a national federation on national unions, giving only nominal representation to local and state federations. Previously, national unions had been regarded as relatively unimportant.

Typical of the exclusively *craft* national-trade-unions based on special occupations was the United Cigar Makers, established in July 1856. Soon the cigar makers had effective local unions in all eastern cities. With the increase in transportation facilities, it became easier for cigar manufacturers to broaden their area of competition. This development benefited, wage-wise, the employers whose workers were not organized. Consequently, the leaders of the cigar makers realized the need for protection against non-union competition. The call for the formation of a national Cigar Makers Union explained that the purposes of the convention were to equalize wages, harmonize conflicting interests in the industry, and take action on the apprenticeship question. Following the business crises of 1857 this organization ceased to exist.

The National Union of Building Trades, consisting of skilled workers, is another example. It included among its members house painters, stone cutters, plasterers, carpenters, bricklayers, masons, and plumbers. Its existence also was short. More than a dozen other attempts at national union organization were initiated during this period. Some got underway, others did not. Only a few were successful. The period of permanent national unions was to begin in the post-Civil War years.

## CHAPTER V

### MACHINE PRODUCTION, REVERSION TO LOCAL UNIONISM AND EARLY PANACEAS

#### *Technological Innovations in Pre-Civil War Period and Market Expansion Temporarily Stimulate National Unions*

By the sixties, technological improvements in the form of mechanization and improved mechanical practices had heralded the introduction of the factory system. In textile production, machinery began

to be introduced as early as the 1830's. Contrary to European practice, in the United States machine production in the textile industry competed with women home workers. In other industries, machine production and division of labor competed with skilled male workers. The use of molds in foundries and cigar manufacturing began shortly after the 1830's. In cooperage and shoe manufacture, machinery was introduced in the 1860's and 1870's. Semi-skilled and unskilled labor could be used satisfactorily in the new processes, thus competing with skilled labor, stimulating its discontent and encouraging labor organization. While characteristic national features of the emerging American labor movement already had become manifest, they began taking firm form in the pre- and post-Civil War periods. This development paralleled the emerging nationalization of social and economic life. Indeed, the Civil War gave the United States an integrated national existence. Prosperity brought extensive industrial activity, generating not only local and regional union organization but also firmly establishing the new structural form of national unions by trade, related occupations, and industry. These types later became the pivotal organizations in the labor movement.

The depression which followed the panic of 1857 almost completely destroyed the weak labor organizations of the period. Union organization was resumed with the advent of the Civil War boom. Two national unions proved to be the bell-weather organizations: the Molders' International Union and the National Union of Machinists and Blacksmiths, both founded in 1859. Each union provided a leader of national prominence in the labor movement. They were William H. Sylvis of the Molders and Jonathon C. Fincher of the Machinists and Blacksmiths.

A few other national unions also came into existence during these years. But war talk depressed business activity and produced unemployment. This situation temporarily retarded union growth. It was only with the unprecedented prosperity brought on by the war that the labor movement began to expand. Within a short period, some 61 national unions appeared. Most of them became very active. Their local affiliates now were spread out over a wider territory than in earlier periods, extending west to the Mississippi River and south into Virginia. By 1864, union activity had become phenomenal. Local trade assemblies, including local unions of different occupations and trades, sprang up in competition with the infant national unions. A labor press flourished with no less than 120 daily, weekly and monthly journals. With sectionalism still strong and national markets in their infancy, the national and trade assemblies overlapped in their functions. These all-inclusive regional and national trade assemblies performed services for their affiliates similar to those of the national unions. Most of them had strike funds and guided their affiliates in the conduct of collective bargaining. This function is now primarily reserved to the national unions.

The regional trade assemblies, to the end of the 19th century, actually played a more important role in the labor movement than the national unions. It was these trade assemblies that took the initiative in 1864 in creating the National Trade Assembly, designed to coordinate organizing efforts on a national level. Theretofore, some national unions had broached the idea of a national federation in which the national unions would function as pivotal entities, but their efforts proved fruitless. The convention adopted the name, International Industrial Assembly. It consisted of local trade assemblies. Most of the delegates were without instructions and had no idea of the purpose of the gathering except the need for a national federation. However, the leaders were determined to establish an organization that would guide the movement on purely trade union lines. No panaceas or basic reforms in the social order, which usually connoted intensive political action, were to be countenanced. An effort to commit the convention to politics was resisted. Purely trade-union principles were enunciated. A strike fund was provided and its use circumscribed by the provision that strikes must be regarded as a last resort. Negotiation with employers was to be the chief aim. In accord with the philosophy of "pure and simple" unionism, it was recognized that salient union demands, not panaceas or comprehensive social reform measures, must be attained through legislation. Affiliates were urged to work for laws prohibiting the "store-order" system whereby workers were paid in company script that was honored only by establishments owned by the corporation. Abolition of the competition of prison

labor also was demanded. Local trade assemblies were to support legislation providing that eight hours should constitute a legal day's work. But because of earlier unfortunate experience, general political action was shunned. The Philadelphia Trades' Assembly stipulated in its constitution in 1864 that "no subject of political or religious nature should at any time be admitted." The Industrial Assembly eschewed politics, which some labor historians have regarded as the graveyard of union organization, but in spite of this it failed to survive long enough to hold another meeting.

#### *Return to Early Panaceas*

With improved business conditions, the national unions resumed energetic activity in the immediate post-Civil War period. Pursuing pure trade union principles, the International Molders union was at first quite successful. In order to counteract the union, employers organized into local associations which culminated in a national association known as the Stove Manufacturers and Founders Association in 1866. Resistance by employers caused prolonged strikes, particularly as business conditions worsened. Employers took advantage of depressed economic conditions to force wage reductions. In the beginning, the union was able to withstand the employers attacks, but as conditions deteriorated, the union had to accept wage reductions. In 1867, the union met its near-fatal defeat in Cincinnati. Following the demands of employers in other parts of the country, the Cincinnati employers insisted on a wage reduction of 60%. The union was willing to accept a 30% wage reduction, but the employers were by now determined to destroy it. The strike lasted nine months, and nearly bankrupted the union. The union levied several assessments on its branches throughout the country to support its Cincinnati affiliate. Each time an assessment was levied, a smaller number of locals responded favorably. Finally, a majority reported inability to meet the assessments. Many of the locals that did pay the assessments cautioned that the burden was becoming unbearable and that additional levies could not be met. Others returned their charters rather than pay the tax. Times were becoming extremely difficult. With unemployment and the reduced income of the partially employed, the national organization and its affiliates were in financial straits. William H. Sylvis, the President, reported the situation in his annual address to the convention in 1868. He complained that trade conditions were exceptionally hard, that almost half of the members were out of work and many on part-time. Simultaneously, the necessities of life became dearer. A man working full-time could do no more than take care of running expenses.

#### *Producers' Cooperation Resumed*

Strike defeats, loss of membership, widespread unemployment—all these hardships induced a fundamental change in policy. The very foundation of the ideology of "pure and simple" unionism began to be questioned; that is, acceptance of the wage system and prime reliance on trade union activity. It now became impressed upon leaders and activists in the labor movement that the principal goal of the movement must be to find a way of escaping the "wage system." The answer again was that trade union action must be replaced by producers' cooperation. This idea so caught the imagination of the movement that the preeminent International Molders' Union at its convention in 1868 actually changed its name to the Iron Molders Cooperative and Protective Union. Enthusiasm for the new course generated emotional hopes of escape from the thralldom of the wage system. Thus, the union's venerable President Sylvis joyfully announced that the institution of cooperative stove foundries marked the emergence of a new era. Sylvis cryptically explained the new ideology in philosophic terms: "The cause of all the evils is the wage system. A system must be adopted which will divide the profits of labor among those that produce them." Alas, by 1870 the producers' cooperatives had proved inadequate in competition with a mounting corporate industrialism based on the wage system. Sylvis was defeated for the presidency and the union reverted to its original "pure and simple" objectives.

Other unions which initially had made considerable strides by following "pure and simple" union policies also experimented with producers' cooperation. Among these was the Coopers International Union founded in 1868. It progressed initially but the panic of 1873 reduced its membership. Nevertheless, the Coopers' union, because of its able leadership, exercised a large influence on the labor movement even into the eighties. Technological developments in the manufacture of barrels seriously affected the coopers' trade. Machinery was introduced whereby most of the operations could be performed by unskilled labor, even child labor. Introduction of machinery spawned large factories. In addition to encroaching on the skill of the cooper, the large factories reduced his chances of ever going into business for himself. Consequently, those who attempted to escape the wage system by pooling their savings and what loans they could obtain to establish producers' cooperatives and joint marketing agencies, failed dismally.

Other skilled trades were likewise affected by the introduction of machinery. Moreover, recurrent business recessions added to the unions' hardships. During earlier years, machinery had little influence on the labor movement. As a rule, skilled labor was fundamental; no one questioned the indispensability of the mechanic. There were three notable exceptions: the textile, cooperage and shoe industries. In the textile industry, machine production had been introduced as early as the thirties; the shoe industry entered upon the factory stage of production in the sixties; and the cooperage industry in the early seventies.

The situation in the shoe industry represented the first encounter of the skilled mechanic with machine competition. Here, machinery began to displace a great proportion of the skilled mechanics. Threatened by this competition, the workers in 1864 organized nationally into the Order of the Knights of Saint Crispin. The main object of the Knights was not so much to advance wages and shorten hours as to protect journeymen against the competition of unskilled labor. Wage conflicts and trade agreements were to be treated as purely local matters. The national union agreed not to resist the use of machines provided skilled mechanics were exclusively employed in operating them, a practice later introduced successfully by the International Typographical Union. The employers rejected this compromise. The Knights of Saint Crispin had to fight it out. Strikes were conducted with varied success. At first the union was generally successful, but with cut-throat competition in the industry, the employers were impelled to resist. During 1872, 1873 and 1874, the manufacturers seldom failed in their efforts to destroy the local unions. Even during their period of success, the Crispins held firmly to the myth of cooperation. This ambition was cryptically stated by one of the national officials: "The present demand of the Knights of Saint Crispin is steady employment and fair wages, but his future is self-employment." This aspiration was accentuated when the journeyman began to realize that he was losing his strategic hold on the employer as machinery encroached upon his skill. Even when prosperity was at its height in 1872, the Crispins began to suffer defeat. As early as 1870, it was recommended that the strike fund be invested in cooperative manufacture under the supervision of the national organization. The recommendation was not adopted because the ideal of self-employment would be interfered with if control were taken out of the hands of the locals. The conflict between those who favored centralized control of cooperation, a form of voluntary socialism, and surrender of control to the locals was later vigorously debated by the Knights of Labor. The policy of leaving control to the locals won out as perpetuating the basic ideal of the time, self-employment. Centralized cooperation would be tantamount, it was thought, to vitiating that ideal. Nevertheless, the Order of the Knights of Saint Crispin declined. An attempt was made to revive the Crispins on "pure and simple" union principles—an effort which led to an anemic existence into 1878. Producers' cooperative shops became numerous after 1870, but with the usual outcome. Cooperative establishments were founded also for the joint purchase of supplies. The vicissitudes of the molders, coopers, and shoemakers unions show conclusively that the decline of the unions in this period cannot be attributed to the voluntary abandonment of "pure and simple" trade union principles. On the contrary, their misfortunes are mostly traceable to the swing in the business cycle, the introduction of machinery, and the concomitant growth of the factory system. As a matter of self-preservation, the unions turned to the panacea of self-employment. Originally, self-

employment meant that an individual worker who, through frugality, saved sufficient money to buy raw materials and continue working and living while disposing of his stock, could go into business for himself, that is, become an individual entrepreneur. With the expansion of business, the capital required for the increased investment was beyond the capacity of an individual mechanic. Hence, the practice was introduced of pooling savings or whatever funds might be assembled to found a producers' cooperative. Thus, self-employment evolved from the individual entrepreneur to collective entrepreneurship. In the end, producers' cooperation was no more successful in competing against large-scale, corporate industrial establishments than the individual entrepreneur had been in maintaining his business with meager funds against the wealthy merchant-capitalist who had ready access to markets and credit. Failing in producers' cooperation, these unions returned to "pure and simple" union principles. But due to unstable business conditions they did no better than when they turned to political action to secure improvements by legislation or tried the panacea of cooperation. Neither ideology was adequate to cope with incipient industrialism.

## CHAPTER VI

### NEW PANACEAS FOR RESTORING SELF-EMPLOYMENT

#### *The Eight Hour Movement and Greenbackism*

Aspiration for an overall national federation to coordinate the labor movement and spearhead its activities on the national level persisted despite previous failures. An ambitious effort was the formation of the National Labor Union, 1866-1872. Ideologically, the NLU was the successor of the National Trades' Union of the thirties, and the predecessor of the Knights of Labor. Initially, the NLU concentrated on promoting the eight-hour-day movement. But in 1867, it shifted its interest to the advancement of greenbackism. This idea captured the imagination of many labor leaders and reformers seeking a basic social transformation of the developing society. In other words, a panacea was sought that would replace the wage system and halt the growth of corporate industrialism, so as to assure perpetuation of private enterprise in the form of self-employment. Both the eight-hour movement and greenbackism aimed to promote the salient objective of each mechanic becoming an independent producer.

Self-educated Ira Steward, a machinist who rose to become the owner and operator of his own shop, was the vigorous expounder of the revolutionary aspects of the eight-hour movement. The idea of stipulated hours of work that eventuated in the eight-hour day became current with the introduction of the factory system because the wage earner was now required to work on the premises of the employer. When performing his duties at home and when paid by the piece, he could regulate his hours to suit himself. Now engaged under the roof of the employer, the work day was dictated by the owner of the shop. The first justification for the eight-hour day was based on the "pure and simple" trade union principles of bringing about improvements in working conditions within the system. The argument ran that by reducing the supply of labor, the bargaining position of the worker would be strengthened and would result in a wage increase. But Ira Steward introduced a revolutionary aspect which was generally accepted by those who aspired to create a social order that would be based on independent producers. Steward, in his theory, stressed the concept of psychological and cultural wants as being above the animal or mere physiological wants that maintain only life and the species. That is, the worker is not an animal, but a human being with other than material needs and aspirations. In essence, the theory, a sort of primitive Keynesian tenet, ran as follows: Wages do not de-

pend upon the amount of capital or the supply of labor but upon the habits, customs and wants of the working classes. The worker requires wages to support his standard of living. The standard of living could be raised by increasing his wants and necessities, which have an expansive and indefinite limit, provided the laborer has the leisure that awakens desires, broadens opinions, improves habits, and multiplies wants. But such increases in wants would not be possible if the competition of low-standard labor was permitted to drive out the labor having higher standards.

In quest of this objective, Steward discarded "pure and simple" union procedures. He argued that it was not necessary to prohibit immigration, and that it was unsatisfactory to depend on trade union activity. Instead, he advocated reliance on legislation and political action. It was necessary, he thought, to adopt a universal eight-hour law which would compel the low-standard laborers who could barely live on their ten and twelve hour wage to demand the same pay for eight hours. Soon this compulsory reduction of the laborer's hours would increase his wants and compel him to demand still higher pay, which the growing surplus, created by machine production, would permit the employer to grant. Then, to interest those who supported self-employment and subscribed to the prevailing labor theories which attacked the injustice and needlessness of interest and profits, he predicted that ultimately the laborers' rising standards of living would take both interest and profit away from the capitalists and thus gradually introduce the cooperative commonwealth. This argument gave the eight-hour movement a class-conscious coloration.

The revolutionary character given by Ira Steward to the eight-hour theory, leading to its enthusiastic acceptance as a watchword and rallying cry for labor, stemmed from its disregard of trade union action and its reliance on universal state and Federal eight-hour laws. Whether the movement should rely on non-partisan or independent political action was left to the local and regional affiliates.

As the movement grew and in order to promote the cause more effectively, a succession of labor congresses was held between 1866 and 1872. Representation was granted to local trade assemblies, national unions, eight-hour leagues, anti-monopoly associations, and "land and labor" leagues. These latter organizations represented farmer interests, but only a small fraction of the numerous farmer political clubs which were then rapidly forming in the agricultural states of the west participated. The largest number of delegates represented union organizations, or such organizations as eight-hour leagues, composed chiefly of wage earners from urban industrial centers. The increased number of representatives from national unions was significant, and these delegates were mostly high officials. The union delegates, as representatives of the mainstream of the labor movement, expected the government to intervene in advancing the welfare of the workers by positive legislation. Even the national-union delegates staunchly held this view. Only one prominent head of a national union consistently opposed chief reliance on political action. He was Jonathan Fincher, president of the Machinists and Blacksmiths, and editor of the influential *Fincher's Review*. While national unions were beginning to become important organizations in the trade union movement, the local trade assemblies were still in a dominant position. Friction was developing between these two groups with the local trade assemblies still the more potent. Nevertheless, delegates from key national unions were in attendance. Among them were representatives of the machinists and blacksmiths, molders, bricklayers, coachmakers, tailors, typographical workers, and miners.

Since the demand for the eight-hour day was of interest primarily to the industrial classes, the movement, anxious to draw support from other social groups, particularly farmers, also made a strong declaration on the land question. It declared that the public domain was extensive enough to give every man a farm sufficiently large for his sustenance by distributing the public domain to actual settlers. The following slogan was proposed: "The tools to those who have the ability and skill to use them and the land to those that have the will and heart to cultivate them." Thus, the idea of self-employment, whereby each individual would be an independent entrepreneur, embraced the farmer as well as the mechanic. In this manner, small-scale industry and limited land ownership as contrasted with corporate or large-scale industrial enterprise

and extensive land holdings were to be the ideals. The middle-class ideal of a self-employment social order was to be sustained and perpetuated.

At the outset, cooperation received scant attention. Soon, however, it was realized that this form of organization fitted in with the basic concept of combating capitalism or the corporate ownership of business enterprise for profit. Consumers' cooperation was also advocated so that the worker collectively might retain the full product of his labor. Consumers' cooperation, like unionism, was initially stimulated by a desire to secure immediate benefits, but was soon discovered to have revolutionary implications. Unionization promised improvement in wages and working conditions; cooperation promised to reduce prices by eliminating the middle-man. Just as union organization was regarded as an instrument that would enable the wage earner to save so as to go into business for himself, so consumers' cooperation could be used to further the same objective. Consumers' cooperative stores served a two-fold purpose: to accumulate capital for the establishment of factories and, simultaneously, to gain the necessary experience to manage industrial enterprises.

Fortuitously, the struggling farmers were likewise interested in cooperation. While they managed their own farms, they lacked the marketing skill, and the advantages inherent in the large-scale buying of the commodities they needed to operate their farms more efficiently, and the time consumed in marketing their produce encroached on their farm operations. The disadvantage of marketing the produce in small quantities could be overcome by those experienced in merchandising.

#### *Greenbackism and Credit*

By encouraging self-employment, the labor movement came face to face with the credit problem. Even though sufficient funds were available to initiate business undertakings, capital was usually lacking to finance a going concern in the purchase of raw material, the continuation of production during the marketing process and the expansion of the business. As competition with the factory system became more acute, larger cooperatives were needed. To organize these larger establishments, capital funds were required. It became more difficult to raise capital. This need of a good credit system led to demands for monetary reforms which, by the fluid flow of money at low interest rates, would make credit more readily available. Farmers, whose capital also was limited, were similarly circumstanced. The two groups, wage earners and mechanics aspiring to become or continue as independent businessmen and farmers desiring to maintain themselves, were confronted with a credit problem. Thus, the National Labor Union shifted emphasis from issues exclusively concerned with the worker as a wage earner to those confronting a businessman who needed capital and credit in order to conduct his business successfully. This change in approach stimulated in workers thought processes characteristic of producers and particularly of family farmers. This latter group was likewise organizing to promote and protect its producing and business interests. Hence, the monetary issue touched the interest of all small producers, including the farmers. It was this crucial issue that paved the way for close political collaboration between the organized workers, small urban businessmen and the farmers, and led the Knights of Labor and the Populists to join hands politically in the late 1880's.

In succeeding conventions, the movement of the National Labor Union away from pure trade-union questions was clearly evident in the issues that received the major share of attention. Little time was devoted to such questions as strikes and apprenticeship, while much attention was given to the discussion of questions of interest to the small producer, such as monetary reform, taxation of United States bonds, and interest rates. Thus, the outstanding national labor federation of the time (with which the most important local and national unions were affiliated) sought to identify its interests with those of the "producer," that is, the small businessman in the urban areas and the farmer.

Naturally, legislation establishing the eight-hour day, monetary reform, credit control and interest rates could not be attained through trade union action. Here, political action was imperative. In an address to the "workingmen of the United States," the National Labor Union called upon them to "cut aloof from the ties and trammels of party manipulation in the interest of capital" and to use the ballot in their own interests. But, beyond the purely trade union demands, the 1867 Labor Congress stressed what it flamboyantly considered the leading issues affecting the "producing classes." Political action was called for to secure enactment of such legislation as the eight-hour law and measures designed to abolish the "iniquitous monetary and financial system," which "reduced the 'producing classes' to a state of servitude." The National Labor Union thus identified the interests of the wage earners with those of the small businessman and farmer, that is, the independent entrepreneur.

Like the eight-hour theory, the Greenback theory was also of revolutionary importance. The monetary reforms propagated by the independent producers or self-employed were based on the labor theory of value. It postulated that any rate of interest in excess of the labor cost of operating the banking business was robbery. This concept had been promulgated at an earlier period but gained wide acceptance among the individual producers and their sympathizers in the Civil War era. The government financed the war by issuing paper money, payment being promised in gold. In other words, the paper money units which popularly were nicknamed "Greenbacks" were promissory notes. As this paper money deteriorated in value, interest rates were adjusted accordingly. The government promised that the war debt would be converted into nonconvertible bonds and that the rate of interest would be 3%. The creditor class wanted the Greenbacks recalled and a return to the gold standard. The independent producers were opposed to a return to the gold standard which would make money more costly. In essence, the platform, or "Declaration of Principles," was modeled after the Declaration of Independence. It was a document of some 3,000 words, about 2,000 words of which were devoted to financial reform. It declared that the law creating the so-called national banking system was a delegation by Congress of the sovereign power to make money and to regulate its value to irresponsible banking associations, and "that this money monopoly is the parent of all monopolies--the very root and essence of all monopolies--railroad warehouses and all other monopolies of whatever kind or nature are the outgrowth of and subservient to that power." As a remedy for this monopoly, the platform set forth at great length a scheme for the issuance of interconvertible bonds and legal tender paper money and, as an auxiliary to the latter, the repeal of the exemption from taxation of bank capital and bonds. Exemption of government bonds from taxation was considered as "of very grave importance" and as removing "a burden imposed on labor for the benefit of capital."

In addition to the pivotal question of financial and fiscal reform, the National Labor Union Congress' declaration denounced land monopoly, favored an eight-hour law, cooperation, improved dwellings for workmen, and recommended to the unemployed that they "proceed to the public lands and become settlers." Finally, there was a plank deprecating strikes. Thus, the National Labor Union, having already abandoned trade union action for the legislative and political action, now took up "greenbackism." This stance followed naturally from the state of business from 1866 to 1868. The government policy of issuing greenback currency resulted in the fall of prices and severe unemployment.

In 1868, the President of the National Labor Union, Sylvius, one of the outstanding labor leaders of the time, crystallized in one of his circulars what he evidently considered to be the sentiment of the organization. He declared that "there are about 3,000 trade unions in the United States...(and) we must show them that when a just monetary system has been established, there will no longer exist a necessity for trade unions." Thus, the National Labor Union, led by some of the most astute labor leaders of the period, and largely influenced by depressed business conditions and mounting unemployment, abandoned trade union action for political action. At its 1870 convention, it decided on the formation of a political party of its own. The National Labor Union transformed itself into a national labor party. In 1872, it adopted the name,

National Labor and Reform Party. Its demise followed soon thereafter.

However, with changing economic conditions, the need for permanent trade-union organization was now beginning to be recognized. Consequently, a parallel body was founded, known interchangeably as the Industrial Congress or the Industrial Brotherhood. Following the original precedent, the overall trade union organization was based primarily on trades assemblies. It was recognized that the two salient branches, labor political organization and union organization, complemented each other. Each branch had a vital function to perform in advancing the interests of the wage earners. With self-employment as the controlling ideal, there was uncertainty whether permanent trade unions were not superfluous. Yet it could not be denied that as long as a worker was not self-employed, he needed a union to protect his interests. While there was a subtle theoretical contradiction implicit in the support of permanent union organization, that was overlooked in the struggle to maintain standards for the workers and at the same time to cleave to the ideal of self-employment. In establishing two branches (each of which was doomed), the labor movement pioneered in setting up a pattern characteristic of practically all modern industrial countries. In these countries, a powerful trade union movement and a forceful and influential political party operate side by side as mediums serving the workers.

In the meantime, business conditions began to improve, thus providing an impetus for trade union activity. The national unions began to flex their muscles. With the expansion of markets beyond local and even state boundaries, the unions felt that industrial branches based on trade assemblies founded by the National Labor Union encroached on their activities as competitors. The national unions began to withdraw. By the time the National Labor Union had split into two branches, incipient prosperity and withdrawal of the national unions caused its decline. With the deterioration of national unions, as often has happened in labor circles, intellectuals and semi-intellectuals or social reformers came into the ascendency. The disappearance of the National Labor Union was now but a matter of time.

Feeble and bungling as the movement was, something was achieved. The prevailing sentiment of anti-corporation industrialism was effectively propagandized. The plight of the socially disadvantaged was more adequately delineated. In some of the more advanced industrial states, unworkable eight-hour laws were placed on the statute books. Cleverly drafted by lawyers their flaw was not detected by their inexperienced promoters. These laws invariably lacked adequate enforcement provisions. This disappointing experience bred a sustained hatred of lawyers among the laboring elements and a considerable portion of the general population. Notwithstanding this experience, the effort to secure eight-hour legislation later led to enactment of enforceable laws. Through lobbying, the labor leaders succeeded in inducing President Ulysses S. Grant to issue an administrative order establishing the eight-hour day for federal government employees. But it too was rather vague, giving hostile bureaucrats wide range for evasion. On the negative side of the ledger, many questioned the usefulness of lobbying and political action. This doubt gave ammunition to the exponents of business unionism that has continued, in holdover form, to the present time. A law prohibiting further circulation of Greenbacks, which was passed by an almost unanimous vote of both houses of Congress and went into effect on February 4, 1868, met the demand of the monetary reformers at least halfway.

The greatest achievement of the land-reform movement was to limit land ownership to actual cultivators. In 1862, the Homestead Act came into effect limiting appropriation of land in the public domain to 165 acres per family.

Despite the rocky road it travelled and its failure to prevent corporate industrialism from advancing, the self-employment objective of indigenous workers nevertheless continued as a mass movement. It was taken over by the Knights of Labor which became the dominant labor organization and the champion and exponent of a social order based on the independent entrepreneur.

## CHAPTER VII

### ANOTHER TRY AT BUSINESS UNIONISM

In order systematically to pursue our historical analysis of the course of American Labor Ideology, an intervening step in the evolution of the labor movement needs to be considered at this stage.

#### *Substantial Precursors of Business Unionism*

Notwithstanding the disintegration of the National Labor Union, the pressure for labor organization persisted. Some individual unions succeeded in withstanding the depression. The idea of a national trade-union federation remained strongly imbedded among union leaders and active rank and filers. Shortly after the 1873 panic, with evidence of business improvement, the more hardy began to move in the direction of founding a new national union federation. This time the initiative was undertaken by leaders of national unions that had withdrawn from the National Labor Union when it chose to concentrate on political action. Spearheading the new move was a unique and unprecedented step for the national unions. Previously, local labor organizations pioneered in the formation of national labor federations and later the local trade assemblies were in the forefront of such undertakings. Now the national unions took charge, and a new epoch was inaugurated. It marked the first appearance of a labor federation similar in structure and objective to the American Federation of Labor. The basic unit was to be the national union, subsequently referred to in the parlance of the labor movement as the "international." (This cognomen was used because a large number of the United States unions also operated across the international line, in Canada. For a brief period, one or two organizations also had local union affiliates in Mexico, immediately across the border.) In its activities, the new-model federation, like the later American Federation of Labor, stressed concern with pure trade union matters. It deviated to some extent to consider legislative matters of greater importance than did the AFL previous to New Deal days. While this new labor federation committed itself to fostering "pure and simple" unionism, it did not divest itself of some language and practices followed by preceding labor movements dedicated to the ideology of self-employment.

The call for the founding of the new federation was signed by the heads of the most important national unions, such as the Iron Molders International Union, Machinists and Blacksmiths International Union, Coopers International Union, and the International Typographical Union. The language in the call largely followed that commonly used in the labor movement by those advocating self-employment. Attention was directed to the "rapid and alarming concentration of capital placed under the control of a few men." Also, it complained that "almost the entire legislation of the country, both state and national, is in the interest of concentrated capital, giving it almost imperial powers." This development the authors declared was causing "a rapid decrease of our power as trade unions in comparison with that of capital." It further charged that "already the farmers of the West and Northwest are driven to desperation by the bold, barefaced robbery of the fruits of their industry by legalized monopoly, and have organized powerful state organizations." Only the trade unions still remain disunited. Then a word of encouragement: "Let not the failures of the past deter us from making renewed efforts but profiting by our dear(ly) bought experience build up and perfect an organization (to) promote the ideals expressed hereafter." This indictment of the existing social order would be acceptable, with but slight modification, to all those desiring social change whether moderate or revolutionary.

In naming the type of organization eligible to send delegates, there was a deviation from the later practice of union federations which admitted only trade unions as affiliates to national federations. As illustrated in its address "To the Organized Workingmen of the United States" in which a list of grievances is set out, an invitation was extended to "every trade organization in the United States, be it local, state or national, and every anti-monopoly, cooperative, or other association organized on purely protective principles." (While individual national unions operated across international boundary lines, the national federation confined itself to affiliates with headquarters in the United States.) The word "protective" (it seems clear from the following analysis of purpose) meant "interested in pure trade union action." The signers pledged themselves "that the organization, when consummated, shall not, so far as is in our power to prevent, ever deteriorate into a political party, or become a refuge for played-out politicians, but shall to all intents and purposes remain a purely industrial association, having [as] the sole and only object the securing to the producer his full share of all he produces." This latter phrase was popularized by the socialists.

Although the officers of the four national unions sincerely intended to establish an organization on strict trade union principles, they had not thought through the concept of a federation that would consist exclusively of trade union organizations. It remained for the American Federation of Labor to perform that task. The AFL gratefully accepted and even solicited support from friendly non-worker organizations and individual sympathizers. It did not accept them within the organization. The Federation welcomed into membership organizations or producers: mechanics and others self-employed or engaged in cooperatives. The militant preamble couched in the idealistic language of the disadvantaged of the times was clearly counterbalanced by the specific, strictly mundane, trade union demands. Thus, the Federation repudiated basic radical doctrines that were usually associated with political action. The address stated: "We desire it distinctly understood that we have no agrarian ideas; we neither believe or preach the doctrine that capital is robbery." Similarly, all connections with the "Paris Commune," which at that time greatly disturbed the well-to-do classes, were disclaimed. By denying that they "either believed or preached the doctrine that capital is robbery," the bill of grievances must have meant that only certain forms of capital were thus tainted. These were labeled as "legalized monopoly," since the address charges categorically that the farmers who owned limited capital are thereby "robbed of the fruits of their victory." As we have seen, the term "monopoly" used in the labor movement and by others complaining against accumulated wealthy applied mostly to corporations and large-scale businesses and land holdings.

The address enumerated the causes responsible for the cited evil conditions: Instead of fostering trade unions, the law treats them as conspiracies, while the wages of labor are being reduced on the plea that the supply thereof far exceeds the demand, the country is slowly but surely being overrun by imported Chinese, brought here in vessels subsidized by the government; labor has not benefitted from the improvement in machinery, but it has suffered from increased unemployment because the same hours must be worked today that were worked in a day thirty years ago; the growth of large monopolies has put restrictions upon the channels of trade with the result that the cost of living has risen; labor has no reliable information about its conditions such as would be furnished by a Federal bureau of statistics. Other complaints in the circular were that cooperation had no legal recognition or assistance; that the country is without an apprentice system; and that consideration should be given to arbitration. Some of these latter reforms would, of course, require legislation, including incorporation of cooperatives. In general, this statement of grievances and suggestions for correcting them indicated that this was clearly a trade union document which appreciated the need of a limited amount of legislation.

In 1873, the new Federation was brought into existence under the name of "The Industrial Congress." Its constitution for the first time provided for the dominance of national unions. Most of the delegates represented trade union organizations. The convention and proceedings resembled more a convention of the later AFL than the conventions of the earlier "national union federation." The subjects enumerated

in the call were fully discussed; therefore, only a little amount of time was devoted to non-trade union questions. While some of the old non-union subjects were discussed, they were given only a perfunctory endorsement, and were relegated to a purely theoretical position, sort of paying nostalgic tribute to folklore. In conformance with the pledges of the Congress call, a negative attitude was adopted towards independent political action. The platform merely declared: "While we recognize in the ballot box an agency by which these wrongs can be redressed when other means fail, yet the great desideratum of the hour is the organization, consolidation, and cooperative effort of the producing masses, as a stepping stone to that education which will in the future lead to more advanced action, through which the necessary reforms can be obtained."

Notwithstanding its dedication to business unionism, the Industrial Congress succumbed to the vicissitudes of the unstable business cycle. Launched only two months before the panic and the ensuing depression, it, like previous union efforts, was doomed to failure. Because of the changed economic conditions affecting the fortunes of the unions, differences arose, at the succeeding convention in April 1874, as to the constitution of the organization. The staunch trade unionists criticized the document as throwing the doors wide open to all industrial organizations. Reference here evidently was to farm organizations, self-employed mechanics, cooperative societies, and social reform groups. The trade unionists advocated tightening the constitution to the strictest possible exclusion of all non-trade-union elements. The aim was to prevent what usually occurred, transforming the Federation for political purposes. Other delegates, even those holding high positions in their respective national unions, were still imbued with the old ideas favoring intimate cooperation with the farmers' movement and were not at all frightened at the prospect of political action. They held that political action would be absolutely necessary and affirmed the need of a redoubled emphasis on the financial plank, a cardinal principle of the self-employed. Thus, within a year, because of depressed economic conditions, the unions originally emphasizing pursuit of "pure and simple" union policies began nostalgically to revert to politics and the endorsement of self-employment principles. Minority and majority reports were submitted by the committee on the constitution. The latter report proposed temporary retention of the present constitution with some minor changes, but recommended the appointment of a new committee to prepare a definite plan of organization. The minority report recommended a complete reorganization into a secret organization. (In this respect, it proved to be a forerunner of the Knights of Labor.) It also advised the merging of the Industrial Congress with like-minded organizations that would follow the pattern of reform bodies. After debate, the majority report was adopted.

One of the organizations, known as the Industrial Brotherhood, did fuse with the Congress and contributed its name and ritual. The Preamble of the Brotherhood, which was later adopted with some modifications by the Knights of Labor (Appendix B) stated the demands of labor at that period. It advocated continuing the type of organization which would be committed to the self-employment ideology that subordinated trade union action to political action. The customary declaration of principles closely resembled those enunciated previously by labor organizations. It envisioned basic social change primarily by political action, although it did not completely discard trade union activity. It referred to the alarming development of aggregated wealth, and the imperative necessity for a system which could secure for the laborer the fruits of his toil. "The great desideratum of the hour," the report said, "can be achieved by the organization and direction of the power of the producing masses as a way of attaining their substantial elevation." The ballot box was recognized as the great agency through which wrongs could be redressed. Specific objectives were enumerated to fulfill the aspirations previously expressed. Through the organization of every department of productive industry, a just distribution of wealth would be achieved. Other demands called for the establishment of national and state bureaus of labor statistics, the establishment of productive and distributive cooperative institutions, the issuance of public bonds for actual settlers, abrogation of class legislation, removal of unjust technicalities and delays in the administration of justice, measures for the promotion of safety and health, monthly wage payments, wage lien laws, the abolition of the contract system of public works, a system of public markets, cheap transportation, substitution of arbitration for strikes, prohibition of the impor-

tation of "members of servile races," equitable apprentice laws, abolition of contract labor, equal pay for equal work, and the eight-hour day. Finally, the cardinal tenet of the self-employed (as the debtor class) was also set out in the form of a demand for a national greenback currency issued directly to the people and interchangeable with government bonds bearing not over 3.65 percent interest.

All this proved of no avail. Depressed business conditions forced the affiliated trade unions to strain all efforts to resist the cuts in wages which followed, so that they lacked energy to devote themselves to promoting the Industrial Brotherhood. Hence, at the 1875 convention, representation was provided for feeble fringe organizations founded directly by the national federation. The convention commented upon "the terrible conditions of the world." It also reorganized, in such a way as to provide a model for the Knights of Labor. The national trade unions were reduced to unimportance in the control of the organization. Once again, the structure was changed so that the state organizations instead of the national unions became the basic unit, and the city and county assemblies were made accountable to the national federation. As a desperate effort to stir the masses, the major resolution designated July 4, 1876 as the date for the eight-hour system to go into effect by a "united movement on the part of the working masses of the United States." This organization failed to survive that date but the idea took hold and was initiated by the AFL ten years later in 1886. However, the Knights of Labor, as the most popular organization and therefore the best known to the workers, was regarded by them as the organization with which they should be associated.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FARM ORGANIZATIONS ASSUME INITIATIVE IN LEADING ASPIRING MIDDLE-CLASS ELEMENTS

The unprecedented depression of 1873 struck a near fatal blow to the trade unions. It particularly affected the national unions, most of which were seriously weakened, and many of which disappeared. Consequently, the initiative in promoting a movement for social change fell to the farm organizations. Farmers, struggling to maintain their middle-class status as self-employed, had basic grievances that could best be corrected by legislation and other forms of government intervention. Also, some of the evils could be remedied by voluntary organization and cooperation. While some of the improvements sought by organized farmers were different from those desired by the small businessmen, independent mechanics and labor unionists all aimed at retaining their status of self-employment. Having that fundamental objective in common, it was natural that they should cooperate in promoting and protecting their main goals. This practice began in primitive form in the colonial period, as is evidenced by Shay's rebellion. There followed a succession of activities and undertakings in which farmers, workers, independent mechanics, other small businessmen and those similarly motivated participated to promote common efforts. These were joined by sympathetic professional and intellectual reformers.

#### *Greenback Party*

Usually, cooperation was most ardent in the political arena. Various attempts occurred intermittently. These regional movements reached the national level in the formation of what became popularly known as the Greenback Party (1874 to 1877) in which farm organizations were the catalysts. Local and

regional farm parties appeared from time to time, chiefly in the western states. These political efforts of the farmers took shape *inter alia* in the Patrons of Husbandry, itself an educational movement for focusing on problems of mutual interest to farmers. Originally, their complaints were directed against unfair treatment by the railroads and warehouses, difficulties in obtaining credit, excessive interest rates, high prices for goods purchased, and low prices for products sold. These onerous burdens and grievances (which they suffered in common with other middle-class groups) were attributed to monopolies exploiting the producing classes. The continued depression (which had begun in 1873), affecting agriculture and other industries alike, turned attention to the prospects of a national greenback party. Initiative to promote formation of such an organization was undertaken at the convention of the farmers' party of Indiana in August 1874. Labor leaders and other non-farmer groups were invited to participate. As usual, the hardy souls who maintained the skeleton union movement embraced the idea of political action. The conference to plan for a preliminary convention formulated a program designed to unite the participating elements. The money question was selected as the one in which all had a common interest. It declared that the solution of "the money question more deeply affects the material interest of the people than any other question in issue before the people," and demanded the payment of the national debt in greenbacks and the issue of interconvertible legal tender currency and bonds bearing not more than 3.65 percent interest per annum.

In March 1875, the new party was formalized and christened the Independent Party. Because of its emphasis on paper money, it became known popularly as the Greenback Party. The convention consisted of farmers, lawyers, a few outstanding labor leaders and a sprinkling of politicians. The platform adopted was clearly designed to favor the small businessman, who was also inevitably a debtor. The Independent Party concerned itself both with the role of the interest rate and the level of prices. It called for immediate and unconditional repeal of the Specie-resumption Act and also came out against the policy of further limitation in the supply of greenbacks. It also asserted that interconvertible notes were the best circulating medium ever devised.

Peter Cooper, the famous industrialist and philanthropist, was nominated to head the national Independent Party ticket. In addition, there were state tickets in every state north of the Mason and Dixon Line except Rhode Island and Colorado. Congressional candidates were nominated in thirty-six widely scattered districts. Leading labor leaders participated in founding the Greenback Party, but even so the response in the cities was negligible. By 1878, this Party had disappeared, thus following the pattern of other attempts at independent political action. This outcome again reflected the general social instability from which the strongest trade unions also suffered. The average wage earner was experiencing a transition in status. Imbued with the desire to become an independent entrepreneur, he lacked the necessary resources. Still unreconciled to his new status as a permanent wage worker, he was in a quandary in making his alliances.

### *Sovereigns of Industry and Cooperation*

Another organization which simultaneously aimed to better the daily living conditions of its members and to change the social system was the Order of the Sovereigns of Industry. It was an outgrowth of the Patrons of Husbandry founded in 1868 to provide for the education of farmers and promote mutual aid, especially by bringing producers and consumers together. The local affiliates were known as granges. The organizers of the Sovereigns of Industry, especially in New England, began to question the justice of excluding all but farmers from that organization. Perhaps as a result of these doubts a meeting was called in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1874 which favored the inclusion of all classes of workingmen--the real producers of wealth. The principles enunciated by the members of the Sovereigns of Industry reveal the difference in thinking of many of those leaders who articulated the sentiments of American workers during this period. The Sovereigns of Industry sought to improve the daily conditions of the workers and simultaneously to

achieve their emancipation from wage thralldom. Emphasis as to which of these objectives should have priority seems to have been related to the difference in industrial advancement in the west as compared with the east. In the west where the size of business enterprise was small so that workers found it realistic to strive for immediate self-employment, this objective was stressed. With larger industrial establishments in the east becoming the mode, workingmen were beginning to become reconciled to remaining in a wage-earning status for a long time. Hence, reducing living expenses through consumers' cooperation seemed a desirable objective—one at least equal to that of raising wages. But this procedure did not imply negation of the original aspiration of the worker ultimately to free himself from his wage-earner status.

The leaders and founders of the Sovereigns expressed their objectives as follows: "We propose to have purchasing agencies through which consumers reach the product direct, without so many needless middlemen who do nothing to merchandise but add to its cost....We are determined to secure pure goods at lower prices....We pay cash and combine our orders in large numbers, and are saving from ten to fifteen percent on our purchases." Then follows the inspirational part declaring that the organization is for the "hard handed" workers, "...the real producers of wealth, and its purpose is to enable them to control the whole of what they produce, and exchange it as near as may be... with other hand workers, thus saving for themselves the fortunes which those who are devoted to manipulating other people's labor, and to getting rich thereby having heretofore taken by extortion." The principle that the activities of the organization must be entrusted to the local affiliates to conform with the philosophy of self-employment dictated that small groups voluntarily, on the basis of self-help, should conduct all activities on their own. Only "benevolent guidance" should be rendered by the national organization. This attitude on the decentralization of salient activities in order to fulfill the ambitions of the rank and file strikingly reveals the middle-class nature of the desire for self-employment. In the Knights of Labor, this issue was brilliantly debated. Those who favored centralized control of producer cooperation aimed at a socialist society, whereas those who favored decentralization, that is, resting the ownership and control in the hands of the small groups operating cooperative shops, preferred to adhere as closely as possible to the philosophy of self-employment.

At the outset, the Sovereigns made considerable progress. In addition to organizing affiliates, they succeeded in absorbing existing independent labor organizations. Several independent cooperative societies became local councils. In New Jersey, all the lodges of the Industrial Brotherhood affiliated with the Sovereigns. The Sovereigns took root in nearly all the northern states, but 75 percent of the membership was located in the New England states, 43 percent of it in Massachusetts, industrially the most advanced state. In their anxiety to expand, the Sovereigns fell afoul of the trade unionists whose members organized as "lodges." Alarmed at the threat to their objectives, the trade unionists began a systematic attack on the Sovereigns. Their chief weapon was the *National Labor Tribune* of Pittsburgh. It charged that "the only object of the Sovereigns was to buy cheap, even if their course resulted in reducing wages." The *Tribune* hit at the core of the trade-union grievance by accusing the Sovereigns of disregarding the cardinal trade union principle of protecting and elevating the interests of the worker as a wage earner. The philosophy of the Sovereigns was restated in concise form by way of answer to the specific charges. In countering the charge that the Sovereigns were deliberately interested in reducing wages, they asserted that the great mass of their members worked for wages and were, therefore, as much interested in high wages as anyone. Nevertheless, they desired to buy without paying unnecessary profits to middlemen. The charge that the Sovereigns ignored the cardinal principle of labor, that of protecting and elevating the interests of labor, was likewise repudiated. Indeed, the Sovereigns' answer implied that it was the trade unionists who overlooked this cardinal principle for advancing the interests of labor since the Sovereigns aspired to substitute cooperation, production and exchange for the present competitive system. The Sovereigns was attacking the whole wage system by demanding for labor the entire results of its beneficial toil. The Sovereigns denied that they were rivals of any existing labor organizations. In this dialogue, the Sovereigns restated the two-fold purpose of their movement: to buy cheaply by eliminating the middleman, and ultimately to replace the wage system by a

cooperative society.

Within a few years, the Sovereigns began to decline rapidly. This movement repeated the unfavorable experience of its predecessors. There are many reasons for the failure to construct a social order based on self-employment, either through creating a social climate in which the prevailing mode of doing business would be that of the independent individual entrepreneur, or substituting decentralized producers' cooperation for the wage system. Incompetent and dishonest management, fierce competition of private dealers, and other sorts of discrimination are cited as causes for the failure to establish a non-capitalistic social order. Basically, it was the superlative dynamism of our industrial system which frustrated any attempts at halting its growth. Conquering a half-continent required bold, imaginative large-scale business operations. A system dedicated to the maintenance of primitive methods could only initiate feeble undertakings which could not cope with what might be described as "galloping industrialism." Self-employment could not succeed and neither could the ultimate objective of the socialists, socialization.

## Part 3

# ATTEMPT TO CHECK CORPORATE INDUSTRIALISM

### CHAPTER IX

#### THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR AND THE IDEA OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT

So deep-rooted were the ideals of labor that despite tragic reverses, they culminated organizationally in the temporarily powerful Knights of Labor. The Knights functioned as the viable and dominant labor movement for about a decade and a half. Consisting largely of newly-organized units, which usually are belligerent and reckless, their activity not only frightened the public but produced bafflement and consternation among the labor leaders and many of their followers. In the transition from the handicraft and small business enterprise stage to the burgeoning factory stage, the followers of the Knights were both angered and perplexed. Its ideology and its bellicose activities were paradoxical. Its leaders were apologetic about the turbulent behavior and violent strikes of its affiliates which were contrary to the cardinal principles of the K of L and unduly alarmed the public. The leaders protested that strikes were transient procedures, matters of "last resort" and that other activities were more basic for the achievement of the ultimate objective of self-employment. Their middle-class philosophy led them to regard strikes with trepidation, as temporary expedients which would not be necessary once the ideal of a society based on independent entrepreneurs was established. But the impatient members, forced to become factory hands and most of them new, unwilling urban residents, smarted because of their subjugation to unaccustomed confinement, rigid plant discipline, and above all, they were frustrated by the loss of their independent entrepreneurial status. This accumulation of grievances and disappointments made them defiant. Hence, as will appear, some of the most spectacular and destructive strikes in our history occurred in this period, contrary to Knights' ideology and to the bafflement and consternation of its founders and leaders.

#### *Modest Beginnings*

From an indifferent start, the Knights mushroomed into a formidable and challenging movement which then slowly disintegrated. It epitomized from inception to decline the vicissitudes of the ideological labor movement. It is certain that its founders did not envision the strength, notoriety and fame the organization would attain.

In December 1869, a local cutters' union came under the guidance of one Uriah Smith Stephens, who although educated for the ministry was compelled to learn the tailoring trade to make a living. He also taught school for a time and his intellectual outlook was broadened by a trip in the sixties to Europe.

Stephens and his associates were members of a cutters' union which functioned in 1862 or 1863. After exercising considerable influence in the trade, it declined. This was a common experience in those days. The employers fiercely resisted union organization and fluctuating business conditions played havoc equally with employer enterprises and unions. It was Stephens' contention that the union could regain its strength if it and its members were shielded by secrecy. Despite opposition, Stephens organized the first union "assembly" in Philadelphia. The organization was given the grandiloquent name of "the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor," "Assembly" being the designation adopted for the local bodies. While "trade" jurisdiction was in the hands of the cutters, men of all callings were welcomed as members. It was expected that the "sojourners," who were not required to pay dues, would serve as missionaries in organizing and training their fellow tradesmen so that they could found their own assemblies. On the national level, the Order did not become important until 1873.

Philosophically, the Order adopted a platform similar to the one propounded by its predecessors--a platform which clearly had the ideal of self-employment as the central objective. Education was the first aim: "We mean to create a healthy public opinion on the subject of labor." Labor was considered the only source of value or of capital. Next in importance to labor organization was believed to be legislation: "We shall with all our strength, support laws made to harmonize the interests of labor and capital, for labor alone gives life and value to capital, and also those laws which tend to lighten the exhaustiveness of toil." Harmony of labor and capital implied control of both by the individual entrepreneur, who performed both functions. The clause calling for lightening of exhaustive toil indicates the influence of the factory system. As long as the producer worked on his own premises, he did not need legislation to regulate the conditions under which he performed his task. However, when employed on the premises of employers, he was required to follow a discipline imposed by the owners. Therefore, unless he could receive adequate protection from his union, he was helpless. A third principle was mutual aid; also a common function of labor organizations of the time. "We shall use every lawful and honorable means to procure and retain...employ(ment) for one another, coupled with a just and fair remuneration, and should accident or misfortune befall one of our number, render such aid as lies within our power to give, without inquiring into his country or his creed."

During the first three years, attempts at organizing additional assemblies proved futile. But by the spring of 1873, six assemblies were organized in Philadelphia. In order to coordinate the activities of these assemblies, a committee was established which proved to be the precursor of the District Assembly, a body that consists of the local assemblies of a metropolitan area. Soon the Order expanded beyond Pennsylvania into bordering states. Thus, the need of permanent regional central bodies began to be felt, so District Assembly 1 was founded in the winter of 1873, headquartered at Philadelphia. As the Order grew in the East, District Assembly 2 was created in the fall of 1874 in Camden, New Jersey. In their desire to make the Order a national institution, the leaders turned westward, and in the summer of 1875, District Assembly 3 was organized with headquarters in Pittsburgh. Now that the Order was established in an important industrial region of the United States, it was in a position to expand further. Thus, the Order reached as far northeast as Massachusetts, and as far west as Indiana and Illinois, clustering around the industrial areas. While unorganized workers were brought into the fold, most of the recruits came from local unions that had survived the dissolution of the national trade unions of the previous period. Also, locals that had from their inception operated independently, sought refuge by affiliating with the Knights' District Assemblies in their territory. Thus, the District Assemblies included experienced affiliates. In the light of past experience, it was taken for granted that in time a national organization would be formed. In the transition period, District Assembly 1 was tacitly recognized as head of the Order. Rivalry developed, however, between District Assembly 1 and District Assembly 3. Located in Pittsburgh, the latter, as a matter of course, became the chief representative of the Order in the west. It was successful in organizing new assemblies and districts, and so regarded itself as not only equal, but even superior, to District Assembly 1.

## CHAPTER X

### PROBLEMS OF FORMING A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

#### *"Junior Sons" Take Initiative*

Sentiment for the formation of a national labor federation was mounting. Not only the scattered Knights of Labor organizations favored taking this step, but other labor groups were similarly motivated. It was understood from the outset among those who owed allegiance to the Knights that eventually a national organization would be formed, and an attempt made to associate all existing labor organizations to create a consolidated national labor federation. This undertaking was initiated by another secret organization known as the Junior Sons of '76, in which some outstanding Knights of Labor leaders were highly influential. Purporting to be a national movement, the membership of the Junior Sons was chiefly confined to the State of Pennsylvania. Like most of the labor reform movements of that time, it subscribed to the ideology of self-employment. At the head of its program stood monetary reform. Of prime importance and the only means of averting disaster to industrial and commercial interests was an enlightened system of financial management in harmony with the interests of the producing classes. It also advocated recall of public officials and opposition to the militia, which was used freely in suppressing strike activities. Independent political action was also propounded by the Junior Sons. Certain elements in society that were distrusted were only to be admitted by a four-fifths vote of all the members of the local lodge. The "untrustworthy" groups were listed as strictly professional persons, practical politicians, speculators, and "monopolists." Among these occupational groups, most were regarded as "ambitious self-seekers," or at any rate as "siding with the capitalistic interests." It was felt that they had to be scrupulously sifted before being admitted to membership.

#### *First Appearance of Socialists*

Not only the Knights of Labor affiliates responded to the invitation of the Junior Sons, but also a new element on the American labor horizon, the Social Democratic Party of North America. This marked the first instance of organized Socialist participation in a national labor convention in the United States, which resulted in an ideological conflict that superbly illustrates the differing ideas of the indigenous workers and the Socialists as to the kind of social order that was appropriate for the emancipation of the workers from wage slavery. The convention, which met in the winter of 1875, was well attended. Nearly all the delegates came from Pennsylvania, and all of the elected officers chosen to manage the convention were from that state. The chairman of the convention was John M. Davis, an official of the Knights of Labor from District Assembly 3, and the well-known editor of the foremost labor paper, the *National Labor Tribune*. He was regarded in labor circles throughout the country as an outstanding labor leader.

Discussion of the platform revealed the irreconcilable or divergent ideological views of those participating in the convention. Two reports were presented by the committee on platform. The minority report, presented by P. J. McGuire of the Social Democratic Party, wished to commit the convention to a socialist program. Later, McGuire, after sampling the different varieties of Socialism, became General Secretary of the International Brotherhood of Carpenters, played a prominent role in the formation of the AFL, and became

an outstanding business unionist. However, in 1875 he was a devout socialist. The majority report was drafted in the phraseology of the Junior Sons. Thus, a clear-cut confrontation of two ideologies was presented. Based on the preservation of a self-employment social order, the majority report contained a comprehensive "greenback" plank, including a plan for interconvertible bonds and paper money. It also favored the restoration of depressed industries through the immediate repeal of the specie payments, and demanded the repeal of the legislation creating the national banking system and the redemption in legal tender greenbacks of all national bank currency. Another conspicuous demand, featuring the removal of a middle-class handicap in conducting business, was for the increase of the exemption of bankrupt debtors to \$10,000. Trade union difficulties were also touched upon, such as the demand that the law of conspiracy be amended to provide for civil damages only. It was the practice of the courts to try trade unionists under the criminal law and when convicted, the penalty was usually imprisonment or a money fine. Union members were also discriminated against by employers; therefore, one plank called for a law that would forbid employers to resort to such practices. Before adjournment, leaders of the Knights were elected to the two principal offices, president and secretary, respectively, of the temporary national executive committee.

In the spring of 1876, the Junior Sons convention met in Pittsburgh. It failed to attract any labor organizations other than those that had been represented at the previous convention. Again, the Knights and the Socialist delegates confronted each other, with the Knights' delegates dominating the convention. Nevertheless, the Socialists were well organized and a force to be reckoned with. The controversy naturally centered chiefly on the platform. The Socialists massed their strength to capture the convention for their ideology. They presented an address which was based on the spirit of the Socialist International dominated by Karl Marx and popularly known as the First International, to be discussed more fully in the following pages. The Socialist program boldly called for the abolition of wage slavery, conceived of as the goal of the labor movement. It advocated the establishment by the trade unions of a separate political party, and concluded by emphasizing that economic (trade union) organization must precede and form the basis of political organization. By way of a concrete commitment to socialism, the Socialists introduced a resolution favoring state aid to cooperative societies. It was passed by an overwhelming vote. But the proponents of self-employment soon realized that under the circumstances, the resolution meant endorsement of socialism. Consequently, they arranged for recommitment of the resolution to the resolutions committee, and it was never returned to the convention floor.

The open breach came when the committee on resolutions presented its first report, which repeated endorsement of the demands made at the first convention unequivocally committing the gathering to a middle-class ideology. The resolution called for the repeal of the specie-payments redemption act, and favored the scheme for interconvertible bonds and paper money. When the report was adopted by the not very decisive vote of 59 to 46, the Socialists angrily protested and withdrew as a body from the convention.

Having decided in favor of a self-employment social order, the Pittsburgh convention proceeded to endorse the full sweep of labor and anti-monopoly resolutions which had been generally adopted at every preceding labor gathering, thus demonstrating that it was in tune with the early historical aspirations toward maintaining a middle-class social order. Cooperation in trading and manufacturing was endorsed as the means by which the working classes would eventually emancipate themselves from the wage system. Other typical demands included enforcement of the eight-hour law and its passage by the several state legislatures, a liberal homestead policy to enable wage earners to settle on the land, a liberal policy of internal improvement, stringent usury laws, the prohibition of the truck system and the contract convict system, the prohibition of discrimination by common carriers, a change in the postal laws, the requirement that the manufacturer disclose the cost of patented machines, mechanics' lien, the attachment of penalty clauses to labor protection laws, and suitable apprenticeship laws that would require at least three years apprenticeship to insure the competence of workers.

There was unanimity of opinion that most basic policies to assure the maintenance of a middle class and some specific trade union demands could only be achieved through legislation and its sympathetic implementation. There was disagreement on methods: should it be independent political action or non-partisan political action? Finally, the convention declared that independent political action was extremely hazardous and detrimental to labor interests, that it ought to be preceded by education and discipline through organization, and that the existing political parties could be made the vehicle for the attainment of the workmen's ends by personal and organized efforts at primary elections of both parties and through the primaries in the nominating conventions.

### *Contrasting Ideologies*

Confrontation between the Socialists and the middle-class elements distinctly reveals the differences in revolutionary ideology. Both ideologies call for abolition of the wage system and are, therefore, equally class-conscious. Whereas the Socialists advocate replacement of private enterprise by socialization of industry, the middle-class advocates wanted a social order based on small business units owned either by individual entrepreneurs or through decentralized small cooperative associations directly managed by the participants. The Socialists however desired a centralized form of cooperation or socialized industry directed from the top by an organization which would take the place of the state. Thus, while the middle-class concept of cooperation was voluntary, or a form of small-scale collectivism dominated by those who operated and worked in the business enterprises, the Socialists favored large-scale socialized collectivism managed from a central source and thus removed from the individual workers. This issue was later debated in the Knights of Labor movement by the contending parties with the voluntary, decentralized concept winning out.

## CHAPTER XI

### KNIGHTS OF LABOR BECOMES A MASS NATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION

The failure of the Junior Sons of '76 to consolidate differing groups into one national labor organization led the Knights to return to its original interest in creating a separate organization consisting of its own adherents. While there was consensus as to the need to strengthen the Order into a sound and permanent organization, there was rivalry between District Assemblies 1 and 3. Each called its own convention in 1876. In the meantime, a number of turbulent and bitterly contested strikes occurred in which members of the Knights participated, mostly without official sanction of their respective District Assemblies. Some of the strikes were lost for lack of funds, others were settled. Generally, big strikes, irrespective of outcome, were followed by political action. Secrecy was an additional problem confronting the Knights.

Another secret organization with some tenuous labor implications operated in the anthracite coal fields of Eastern Pennsylvania. It was popularly known as the "Molly Maguires" and had been exposed as a conspiratorial criminal body. Since the adherents of this organization were Irish Catholics, the Church strongly condemned such secret organizations. Public criticism reinforced the doubt about the wisdom of maintaining secrecy.

This troublesome situation led the contending factions of the Knights to realize the need for a national organization that could guide and discipline its followers, so a call for a convention was issued for January 1, 1878 in Reading, Pennsylvania, which, being between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, was presumably neutral ground. A central national organization of the Knights of Labor was founded at this convention. A preamble and constitution were adopted which, with minor changes, continued throughout the existence of the Order. The philosophy expressed in the preamble was analogous to that proclaimed by its predecessors. Indeed, Socialists who did not dogmatically scrutinize the apparently satisfactory phraseology could also accept this preamble. It declared that wealth, with its growth and power, lead to the pauperization and hopeless degradation of the toiling masses. It postulated further that if the toilers were to enjoy the blessings of life, they must organize every department of productive industry in order to check the power of wealth and put a stop to its unjust accumulation. Three cardinal points were featured in the preamble as first principles bequeathed by the founding fathers. These were unionization of all trades, education, and cooperation.

With the limited number organized and the impelling need to organize the great mass of unorganized, the Knights' structure and procedures were more satisfactory than those of individual trade unions. Knights' organizers could and did organize workers irrespective of occupation. The organizers were, therefore, in a position to operate in areas where scattered trade existed. On the other hand, a feeble national trade union could hardly afford to employ an organizer for areas wherein one small local might be founded. The expense, particularly in those days of limited union finances, would be prohibitive. Besides, mixed assemblies acted as recruiting agencies until enough workers in one trade could be gathered to form a separate trade local.

Terence Vincent Powderly succeeded Uriah Stephens as Grand Master Workman at the time the Order began to operate in full force as a national movement. Powderly was typical of most of the labor lead-

ers of the period from the inception of the American labor movement through the period of the Knights of Labor. He was native born, an active member of the Machinists and Blacksmiths Unions, had been Mayor of Scranton, Pennsylvania, elected on a labor party ticket, and was a devout believer in cooperation. He also was indelibly identified as a firm believer in self-employment as the ultimate ideal of society. Those who founded the Order and continued to lead it through the height of its power and activity were all of that same type. With self-employment as the beacon light, admission to the organization was not limited to wage workers. All individuals subscribing to the program, including farmers, small businessmen, and self-employed mechanics, were welcomed. Only lawyers, bankers, and saloon keepers were barred from membership. The first were accused of championing legislation favoring the rich, the second of garnering money and making it available primarily to corporate industrialists and other large-scale businessmen, and the third of placing temptation in the way so that those of limited means would squander their money on drink instead of saving it to go into business for themselves.

A central fund was created by the Order. This fund, which was alternatively known as Resistance Fund, Defense Fund, and Assistance Fund, was divided into three parts, thus disclosing that the Knights was not intended to serve exclusively as a trade union organization. One part of the fund was to be used to promote cooperation, another for the support of strikes, and the third for education. Through this third division it was intended to carry on propaganda, including non-partisan or independent political action, to secure needed labor and social legislation. But above all, it was to be used to expedite a self-employment social order. Some authorities interpret this arrangement as a compromise to reconcile the different elements composing the Order. In a limited sense, that was true. Actually, however, the founders of the Knights merely codified the practice less systematically and institutionally pursued by its predecessor labor movements. Thus, the Order was in a more concrete form characteristic of these movements. To be sure, events fortuitously forced the Order, despite its leaders, to become the vehicle for some of the most dramatic, violent, and disorderly strikes in the history of the labor movement. It will be shown below, however, that its leaders did not initiate those momentous strikes; they resisted them and were frightened to the point of paralysis at having become involved in them.

Because of the inconsistent and confused reactions of the leaders, some labor authorities describe them as hair-brained incompetents and have labeled the Order as a haphazard organization swayed by the whims of the period or the weakness of the leaders. Other authoritative labor historians frankly acknowledge that the Grand and Noble Order of the Knights with its flamboyant name baffles their capacity accurately to describe it.

(If I may be permitted a personal note. When doing the research on the Knights, I journeyed to various centers in search of source material. I took advantage of this opportunity to do some interviewing and I gratified my desire and longing to visit with one of the truly pioneer and respected labor historians, the late Professor George E. Barnett of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland. When I informed him that one of my research assignments by the late Professor John R. Commons was to assemble and sketch the history of the Knights to be included in the two-volume Commons and Associates, *History of Labor in the United States*, he politely remarked that he could not envisage the Knights of Labor being treated historically as a scholarly study. It was Professor Barnett's view that the Knights lent itself admirably to being treated in fictional form. My analysis of the Knights revealed that it could be treated analytically as well as descriptively in the traditional historical manner. The following treatment rests not only on basic research into original sources supplemented by authoritative secondary sources, but on personal interviews with leaders of the Order as distinguished as Terence V. Powderly, Robert Schilling, James V. Archibald, John Hayes and local leaders in such key cities as Milwaukee, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Washington. I also interviewed such opposition leaders as Samuel Gompers and others. In addition thereto in my teaching of American labor history, I have pondered the nature of the Order on the basis of the data thus assembled.)

## *Strikes and the Fear of Strikes*

In the minds of rank-and-file workers and the contemporary public, the Order was associated with spectacular strikes and attendant lawlessness. Most strikes were spontaneous, erupting when unorganized or poorly organized workers turned to the Order for leadership. The leaders were horrified at this mass influx, but because of the notoriety attendant on spectacular strikes, the workers regarded the Knights as the David that could slay Goliath. The helpless workers felt that through this magic organization, they could challenge the most powerful financiers and corporations. Neither the public nor the rank and file concerned themselves with whether these notorious strikes were successes or failures. The workers looked upon the Knights as their champion and protector, even their avenger. Significant in this regard is the fact that none of these strikes was initiated by the national leaders. Indeed, the reactions of these middle-class-minded leaders conclusively showed that they were baffled and perturbed by them, usually frightened out of their wits, and anxious to settle them regardless of results.

Above all, the leaders were interested in arbitration. Failing in that, they readily accepted any kind of adjustment that would terminate the strike. Thus, during the height of the strike period, 1885 and 1886, Powderly complained that trade union activity and strikes were a waste of time. Large-scale, turbulent strikes had occurred at an earlier period. Most notable was the violent railroad strike of 1877 which received unflattering national attention in the press. In the case of the Knights, a succession of strikes of a similar nature took place. Each strike was more spectacular and disorderly than the others. This escalation of strike disturbances attracted nation-wide attention. The effects were cumulative, and the Knights, in the eyes of the aroused workers, became the great and beneficent messiah. Many local and area strikes occurred. Some were won and some were lost, but they advertised the Order no matter what the outcome. Frustrated and suffering from grievances, workers yearned for action. Here was an organization that could come to their aid. The nature of the outcome was incidental.

A national commercial telegraphers' strike in 1883 was the first to attract attention. Two specialized firms employing telegraphers capitulated, but Western Union (controlled through the fabulous tycoon and financial wizard, Jay Gould) resisted, and the strike was lost. Because of criticism, the Knights' Defense Fund was reorganized. But the half-hearted interest of the leaders in yielding to the pressure of the more militant is illustrated by the declaration "that strikes are deplorable in their effect and contrary to the best interest of the Order." Powderly, fearful of strikes, yielded to strike sentiment but went on record expressing his distrust by declaring that "even though we do not favor strikes, we should establish an emergency fund to be used in upholding the rights of oppressed members who may be imposed upon." While the Knights preferred arbitration, employers were basically anti-union and were not interested in dealing with unions unless forced to do so. For a brief interval, the Order and other labor organizations favored union incorporation, erroneously believing that as corporations, they could force employers to recognize and bargain with them. They soon became aware of the fallacy and pitfalls that incorporation would entail. Nevertheless, to the enraged workers smarting for action, the outcome was irrelevant.

Other nation-wide strikes against powerful corporation fared better, and between 1884 and 1886 a rash of such strikes broke out, keeping the Knights in the limelight as the powerful champion of labor. On May 4, 1884, the Union Pacific shopmen at Denver went out on strike against a wage reduction. This is another instance where workers struck spontaneously. Being without organization or experienced leadership, they appealed to the Knights. In this case, Joseph Buchanan, a man with daring imagination and leadership qualities, took hold. He organized the workers and this resulted in the entire Union Pacific system being struck. Four days later, the corporation capitulated by withdrawing the wage reduction. Buchanan later wrote a fascinating autobiography entitled *The Story of a Labor Agitator*.

Another dramatic railroad dispute in 1884 added to the glamour of the Knights. The Wabash railroad first laid off members of the Knights, then followed by closing down the shops. The District Assembly leaders charged that this act was a lockout, intended to break the union. The dispute dragged along, with the national headquarters declaring its inability to aid financially because, among other reasons, other districts were also asking for financial aid, and the Order was beset with too many strikes. Unable to get access to the railroad management in charge, the union leaders turned to Jay Gould. He ordered the management to settle with the union. In negotiations, it was agreed by both parties that all participants in the dispute would be reinstated before others were hired and that there would be no discrimination against members of the Order. But the leaders failed to take advantage of their success to demand an agreement that would establish the union as the permanent bargaining agent. Experienced trade union leaders would have demanded union recognition and the institution of orderly collective bargaining arrangements. Some labor historians interpret this omission as ineptness on the part of Powderly and his associates, but this charge is not well-founded. By and large, the Knights' leaders were as competent and intelligent as the average labor leader. The fault, if it is to be considered such, was that these leaders of the Order, as their pronouncements and actions clearly reveal, did not consider it of primary importance to build permanent unions. To them, unions were merely transitional agencies to a higher goal, the establishment of a social order consisting of small businessmen. The officials by and large were so emphatically opposed to strikes that any kind of a settlement was preferable, but despite the views of the Knights' leaders, the bulk of the workers accepted the Knights as the instrument that would lead them to salvation.

The public, however, regarded the Order as the labor organization responsible for the strikes and disorders that threatened the security of society. In its success in securing conferences and even concessions, the Order, despite itself, acquired a reputation for undue power in that, for the first time in the history of the American labor movement, it demonstrated a capacity to deal with modern corporations on a basis of equality. Previously, these business giants had been regarded as invincible. Thus legends circulated exaggerating the Knights' strength, its numbers, its presumed "hidden purposes," and power for good or evil. The Order had become newsworthy. The leaders complained of the exaggerated reports in the news media with respect to membership and activities, but to no avail. This was rather strange behavior for an organization regarding itself as the champion of the workers and the underprivileged. But some of the acts attributed to it gave it an air of lawlessness and subversiveness, which offended the middle-class minds of the leaders.

The estimates of K of L membership ranged from 500,000 to 5,000,000. Actually, at its peak, the membership approached the 700,000 mark. The Order was like a revolving door. At the beginning of a strike, the workers joined in droves. When the strike was concluded, members left nearly as rapidly. The keen interest of the general public in strikes is aptly described by the New York State Bureau of Statistics and Labor in 1889: "That the public desires some information upon the subject of strikes is plainly evidenced by the prominence given the subject in the public prints during the past years and the eagerness with which even the most minute details regarding them have been followed, their movements watched, and all sorts of theories regarding the causes of labor troubles accepted." This story was copied by newspapers and magazines throughout the country, aiding considerably in bringing the Order into prominence.

In the autumn of 1885, at the height of the spectacular strikes, the *New York Sun* detailed one of its reporters to write a story on the strength and purposes of the Knights of Labor. An extract illustrates the exaggerated notion of the power of the Order:

Five men in this country control the chief interest of five hundred thousand workingmen and can, at any moment, take the means of livelihood from two and a half million souls. These men compose the executive board of the Knights of Labor of America. The ability of the president and cabinet to turn out all men in the civil service, and to shift from one post to another the duties of the men in the army and navy, is a petty authority compared with that of these five Knights. The authority of the late Car-

dinal was, and that of the bishops of the Methodist Church is, narrow and prescribed, so far as material affairs are concerned, in comparison with that of these five rulers.

They can stay the nimble touch of almost every telegraph operator, can shut most of the mills and factories, and can disable the railroads. They can issue an edict against any manufactured goods so as to make their subjects cease buying them, and the tradesmen stop selling them.

They can array labor against capital, putting labor on the offensive or the defensive, for quiet and stubborn self-protection or for angry, organized assault, as they will.

Some publications credited the Knights with a fabulous treasury of \$12,000,000. This was indeed a frightful picture of the power of the Knights in view of the cringing, even cowardly, attitude of the leaders. Yet it was copied by newspapers and magazines throughout the country. At the same time, this exaggerated picture of the Knights tended to influence workers to take unauthorized strike action in the name of the Order, expecting to receive its blessing and support.

Workers flocked to come under the protection of this "giant" organization. From a membership of some 42,000 in 1882, it swelled to over 700,000 in 1886. This deluge of members had a diluting effect on its composition. Whereas in the early period it consisted mainly of indigenous mechanics, farmers and small businessmen, new elements began to swamp the Knights. Figures on membership in the Knights according to country of birth are not available. The following figures from the Illinois Bureau of Labor report for 1886 are probably illustrative for industrial areas: 45% American born, 16% German, 13% Irish, 10% British, and 5% Scandinavian. Only 4% of the total were non-wage-earners. Industrial development in the United States had passed beyond the craftsman stage upon which the early labor movement was founded. Factory workers in a wide variety of occupations and having an equally wide variety of beliefs flocked into the Order. From a relatively homogeneous membership, the Order now acquired a heterogeneous following, with the larger number inexperienced in labor organization procedures and mostly interested in strikes.

Strikes, in any case, again became an issue, revealing the strong division brought on by the outlook of the new members chiefly from the East and mid-West, and reflecting the point of view of workers of the new corporate industrialism. With limited experience and pressing grievances, they groped for an organization that would lay stress on trade union practices, although there was no consensus among them as to what ideology the Order should espouse. The older membership, primarily from the West, sided with views of the harried leaders that the Order revert to first principles, by which they meant dedication to land and monetary reform, cooperation and education—all related to the middle-class self-employment ideology. But despite its key leaders and reformers, the Order was becoming more trade-union in character than its founders intended. In the rapid transition to corporate industrialism, the factory workers felt that their foremost need was trade union protection and action, now that hope of becoming self-employed was more difficult, if not out of the question. The leaders failed to appreciate this new development. They were confirmed in this failure by the farmers, small businessmen, mechanics, professional men, and doctrinaire reformers. With the support of these groups, the General Assembly meeting in Cleveland in May 1866 enacted a "law" that, if strictly enforced, was intended not merely to control and limit strikes, but if possible, to prevent them altogether. It reflected the views of the non-wage-earner membership and the wage earners who still adhered to the self-employment ideal. These elements were so emphatically opposed to strikes that any sort of settlement was preferable to end them. Settlements in some of the important strikes and lockouts made such drastic concessions to the employers as to indicate the anxiety of the leaders to free the Order as quickly as possible from all strike involvement and responsibilities.

The 1886 strike edict provided for a most elaborate procedure that would weary any group and would give a mere handful of persons the power to delay, settle, or frustrate any strike effort. Control of

strikes was placed in the hands of the General Executive Board. The strike "law" stipulated that the local or district assembly should take a secret ballot, and a two-thirds affirmative vote was required before entering upon a strike. At any time after that, at the suggestion of the Executive Board a ballot might be taken on the advisability of continuing the strike and a majority vote could call it off. No strike involving over twenty-five members, which would require financial or other aid from outside the local assembly, was to be started until the General Executive Board had attempted to settle the difficulty and failing, had ordered the strike. If the General Executive Board was not called upon for permission to call a strike, then no aid was to be given by the Order.

Ironically, events were moving at such a rapid pace that the national leaders could not fully keep up with developments to put a stop to strikes. The workers were restless and ached for action. The eight-hour movement of 1886 provided the vehicle. Actually, the Order did not initiate the eight-hour movement but despite itself, was precipitated into it by fortuitous circumstances. Demand by organized labor for the eight-hour day had become popular around the Civil War period. With the factory system the dominant mode of production, the eight-hour-day movement soon grew to extensive proportions. Labor organizations adopted resolutions and energetically agitated for it. Some unions won reductions from the prevailing ten-hour day. In addition to resort to the strike, legislation and other government action to introduce the eight-hour day became a popular demand. But the move to elevate it to a cardinal issue fell to the lot of a rival organization. Unions, mostly of skilled immigrant workers or at least led by immigrants, were dissatisfied with the Knights for a variety of reasons which will be discussed in the following pages. In order effectively to perform their functions, these unions organized a rival, national trade union center. It was given a clumsy name which was later changed to a simpler one that could easily be remembered. Christened as the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada, its name was changed later to American Federation of Labor, familiarly referred to in abbreviated form as AF of L, and later, merely as AFL. Founded in 1881, it made little headway at first. On the other hand, its rival, the Knights of Labor, was thriving. Indeed, American labor movements had never experienced such a surge of organizational activity as that of 1884-1886. It became apparent to the leaders of the American Federation of Labor that a dramatic move must be instituted in order to galvanize the movement and direct the trend to its advantage. For this purpose, an issue both simple and of universal appeal was needed. Wages and most working conditions vary with industry, occupation and geographic areas. Other issues like sanitation, general working conditions or apprenticeship were too technical and could hardly be couched in emotional terms. Only the eight-hour issue, which had already been highly popularized, lent itself to universal appeal and therefore was admirably suited to the purpose. Consequently, it was decided to launch a concerted movement for the eight-hour day. The AFL convention issued a call for the institution of the eight-hour day as a legal day's labor from and after May 1, 1886 (an appropriate historical and folklore date for mass assertiveness and celebrations). It was recognized that this aim could not be achieved by legislation. Only through the strike was attainment possible.

Since the Federation was a puny organization of some 5,000 members, the cooperation of the more powerful Knights was indispensable, but the request of the Federation that the Knights of Labor cooperate in the general movement to establish the eight-hour reform received scant attention at the Knights' 1885 General Assembly. Indeed, the eight-hour declaration was coolly received, even by the trade unions affiliated with the Federation, but the rank and file workers reacted spontaneously and enthusiastically. While the Federation profited in some measure from the enthusiasm, the Knights, being in the limelight, were regarded by the unsophisticated and undiscerning masses as the organization leading this holy crusade. New assemblies were being founded and membership began to swell. It became evident to the national leaders of the Knights that the new acquisitions were mainly interested in the eight-hour movement. As the date for the eight-hour strike approached, the hostility and concern of the Knights of Labor leaders grew to panic proportions. In March 1886, Powderly deemed it vital to issue a secret circular in which he advised the Knights

not to rush into the eight-hour movement. This cautionary signal did not dampen the ardor of the impulsive rank and file. Neither did it deter the organizers who were paid a commission for every new local assembly organized.

Powderly did not regard the eight-hour day as a panacea for social ills. In his *Thirty Years of Labor*, he expressed his point of view: "To talk of reducing the hours of labor without reducing the power of machinery to oppress instead of benefit is a waste of energy. What men gain through a reduction of hours will be taken from them in another way while the age of iron continues...the advocates of the eight-hour system must go beyond a reduction of the hours a man must work, and labor for the establishment of a just and humane system of land ownership, control machinery, railroads, and telegraphs, as well as an equitable currency system before he will be able to retain the vantage ground gained when the hours of labor are reduced to eight per day." This view effectively contrasts the ideological differences between the Knights of Labor and the Federation. The latter was interested in accepting corporate industrialism, aiming to rally the wage earning masses into trade unions that would function in promoting and protecting their interests under the existing social order.

But no reasoning could faze the emotionally surcharged rank and file. The masses, aware of the dramatic activities of the Knights in the past few years, had come to look upon the Noble Order as the all-powerful liberator of the laboring class from oppression. In their ignorance, they now eagerly seized upon the eight-hour demand as the issue upon which the Knights would lead them in the first significant battle with rapacious capital. The new and prospective members could hardly have been aware of the negative attitude towards strikes of the national leaders. At the same time, the universal condemnation of the eight-hour demand by the "capitalist" press during the months preceding May 1, 1886 could only heighten their attachment to the Knights. In this mood, they were encouraged by the paid organizers who found it profitable to agitate the popular eight-hour issue as a means of augmenting their incomes. In a remarkably short time, over 600,000 people living in practically every state in the union joined the Knights of Labor. The organization grew from 989 local assemblies with 104,066 members in good standing in July 1885 to 5,892 assemblies with 702,924 members in July 1886. The greater portion of this growth occurred after January 1, 1886. Evidently, those who were unorganized looked to the Knights as their deliverers who would lead them in the eight-hour strike movement.

As droves of new members swarmed into the Order, the leaders panicked, prompting Powderly, as Grand Master Workman, to take the unprecedented step (for a labor organization) of issuing a secret circular ordering the discontinuance of organizing new Knights' assemblies for forty days. This novel act of stopping organization has no parallel in the history of the American, or any other, labor movement. The reasons given for it were as fantastic as the act itself. In another circular in March 1886, the Order was warned of the danger of too rapid growth, and declared that no assembly must strike for the eight-hour system on May 1.

The eight-hour movement had limited success. In most instances where the employers, caught unawares, had granted shorter hours, they immediately prepared to cancel the concession. Hence, the following year, the inexperienced workers were forced to surrender their gains. Thus, although both the Knights and the Federation gained in membership, the reaction which set in, in the end caused both organizations to lose heavily. Throughout the nation, the Knights were charged with responsibility for the crimes laid at the door of organized labor, including the Haymarket bomb tragedy. The Haymarket tragedy occurred at an open air meeting in Chicago held under the auspices of the Anarchists. But it had become a habit to attribute all unpleasant labor occurrences to the Knights. Within the labor movement, the trade unions took advantage of the Knights' hostility to the eight-hour movement by failing to insist on a fair trial for the Anarchist leaders. Also, the Knights' unfriendly attitude towards trade unionism *per se* gave the unions ammunition for attack.

This blundering attitude toward the strikes in which the Knights' members participated and the outspoken hostility toward strikes bordering on outright opposition could only have been prompted by the ingrained self-employment, middle-class doctrines of the leaders of the Knights of Labor.

### *Skepticism as to Permanent Trade Union Organization*

The experience of those who wanted to establish effective unions under the Knights' auspices was like traveling a rough and circuitous road. While the original intent was to organize unions on a parity with other organizations, the idea was gradually circumscribed. The early assemblies were confined to one craft or trade. Sojourners, or workers in other occupations, were admitted with limited privileges until a sufficient number were recruited, when they were organized in separate assemblies. Using the existing assembly for the incidental purpose of recruitment was not contrary to trade union practice. Even now, the AFL has Federal Unions which serve as recruiting agencies. Provision was also made by the Knights' constitution for permanent mixed assemblies which were composed predominantly of non-wage earners, such as farmers and small businessmen. Although also operating in urban areas, the mixed assemblies provided an organization admirably suited to the rural areas in the West and South.

As craft and trade assemblies multiplied, sentiment developed for grouping those of a similar calling into an overall organization. This practice precipitated differences which help to explain the ideological orientation of the dominant elements within the Order. In order to better understand the resistance to trade union organization, it is necessary to consider the structure of the Knights of Labor. All the early national trade union centers preceding the Knights of Labor were organized differently from those that later aimed to establish viable trade unions. In these latter, the national unions are the pivotal units, enjoying a voting strength proportionate to their membership. All other subsidiary units, such as state federations, local federations and departments, receive one vote, irrespective of membership size, and are in the parlance of the trade referred to as "one lungers." Thus, the national union--or the so-called "international"--is the dominant body in the modern trade union movement. This characteristic is common to present-day labor movements throughout the world. Not so with the Knights and its predecessors. When the Knights' national organization was established, its constitution codified its structure. In this national organization, the local assembly was the pivotal unit. It was chartered by the national office. In the federations, where the national union is the key unit, local unions are not in any way affiliated with the national federation, nor chartered by it. They are exclusively a unit of the particular national trade union. Suggesting that the Order was more than an organization of wage earners is the constitutional provision that local assemblies must consist of at least three-fourths wage earners. Persons not working for wages might be admitted, providing their total did not exceed 25 percent of the membership. Middle-class reformistic coloration is revealed by the constitutional prohibition of membership to lawyers, doctors, bankers and those who sold liquor or made their living by its sale. In 1884, the constitution was amended, adding gamblers and stock brokers to the prohibited list. In 1888, Powderly loosened the membership qualification, ruling that capitalists might be admitted if the local assembly so desired. This ruling tacitly acknowledged that there could be some good capitalists! In defining the functions of the local assembly, the true ideological orientation of the Order is further manifest:

The local assembly is not a mere trade union or beneficial society; it is more and higher. It gathers into one fold all branches of honorable toil without regard to nationality, sex, creed or color. It is not founded merely to protect or to discharge one duty, be it ever so great. While it retains and fosters all the fraternal characteristics and protection of the single trade union, it also, by the multiplied powers of union, protects and assists all...while acknowledging that it is sometimes necessary to enjoin an oppressor, yet strikes should be avoided whenever possible. Strikes at best only afford temporary relief and members should be educated to depend upon thorough organization, cooperation and political action, and through these, the abolishment of the wage system.

As the Order grew, trade assemblies encompassing local assemblies in a special region and therefore equivalent to central labor unions in the AFL, superseded the local assemblies. Local assemblies now were chartered by the district assemblies. However, local assemblies still retained their direct affiliation with the national Order, contrary to the practice in exclusively trade union national federations.

Through pressure of the trade union elements as they increased in influence, pure trade districts were permitted in addition to mixed trade assemblies. These districts included only local assemblies of a particular occupation, trade or industry. Some wage-worker elements, strongest in the west and south, strenuously but unsuccessfully opposed these "trade-district" assemblies. Later, they also unsuccessfully opposed the formation of national trade assemblies. Nevertheless, the trade and local assemblies remained directly affiliated and participated in the sessions of the General Assembly, as did locals of mixed district assemblies. The opposition in the Order to "trade district assemblies" grew, further revealing suspicion of ordinary trade union organization. Hence, in 1879, after full discussion, the General Assembly in regular session ordered deletion of the clause permitting the organization of special trades districts. In theory, this act abolished not only trade districts but also trade assemblies. Events and industrial development brought on a reversal of this order without doing much damage. Although the Knights was, in theory, a highly centralized organization, in practice it was a poorly coordinated body exercising little and only occasional control over its subordinate units. In its usual manner the Order wavered and in 1882 the General Assembly returned to its original attitude toward trade union organizations. It not only permitted but encouraged trade union organizations.

Actually, the leaders of many of the District Trade Assemblies were self-employment conscious, and sided with the agricultural-rural and others in supporting the basic objective of the Order as expounded by the older leaders. Despite this attitude, elements in the industrial regions, realizing the need of unions, continued to establish and maintain themselves in separate bodies within the Order. Actually, the affiliated trade assemblies profited from affiliation with the Order and because of the lackadaisical administrative control, they did not lose much, if any, of their trade autonomy. Many trade unions existing precariously outside also found it advantageous to join the Knights. In the turbulent year of 1884, National Trade Assemblies were formally but grudgingly acknowledged. Opposition came mostly from southern and western delegates. Actually, some had existed within the Order and were functioning successfully. The glass workers national union is an apt example. Consisting of French-speaking Belgian skilled glass workers, this organization even conducted its official business in the French language. Starting as a relatively successful independent national trade union in the United States, it sought affiliation with the mainstream of the labor movement as represented by the Knights of Labor. Since the Knights' constitution did not provide for national trade union affiliation, a mutual agreement was arrived at whereby this national union of glass workers was admitted as a local assembly.

Following the 1886 successes, many trades asked permission to form trade assemblies. In typical Knights of Labor oscillating fashion, the General Executive Board whimsically granted charters in some cases and refused them in others, even expelling some for insisting on operating as trade assemblies when ordered to desist. Indeed, the General Executive Board remained unenthusiastic about the formation of trade unions. It was rather the members themselves that persisted. For instance, although permission was granted for the formation of trade units, it was ruled in 1887 that local trade assemblies could not withdraw from a mixed District Assembly without permission. This erratic and hostile attitude led many trades to feel uncomfortable within the Knights. Some even withdrew and joined the American Federation of Labor. But as the membership began to fall off and the split between the Order and the AFL appeared irreconcilable, the leaders of the Knights, and Powderly particularly, made efforts to keep the trade assemblies within the Order. Even when negotiations between the two rivals were going on, Powderly in 1886 urged the steel workers union to affiliate with the Knights. Notwithstanding that he was at heart unfavorable to separate trade organizations, he assured these unions that they would retain their individual identity, maintain their system of

government, control their own officers, and in no way lose any of their trade autonomy, that is, their right to conduct their internal affairs without interference by the national officers of the Knights.

Later, both federations even permitted dual affiliation. In 1890, Powderly and Gompers agreed that the scattered miners unions should combine into the United Mine Workers of America and be affiliated with both the AFL and Knights of Labor. Other unions were also permitted this privilege. Thus, the brewery workers were affiliated with both national trade union centers and many cigar makers' locals were members of the National Cigar Makers Union, an affiliate of the AFL, when that union belonged to the Knights of Labor. This arrangement gave them the benefit of being able to use both union labels--symbols so important to unions producing commodities purchased extensively by workers and their sympathizers.

When the Knights of Labor came under control of the self-employment leadership of James Sovereign, however, he contradictorily, as Grand Master Workman, gave effect to the latent order of the General Assembly that Knights of Labor members withdraw from the AFL. At the same time, National Trade Assemblies were ordered to discontinue functioning, dismember themselves, and divide into trade districts. Most of them refused and withdrew from the Order. As the bitterness intensified the AFL retaliated, ordering unions that also were affiliated with the Knights to disaffiliate on pain of expulsion. Because of the inhospitable atmosphere within the Knights, most of these national unions remained in the AFL. The resumption of hostility to trade union organization led most of the Trade Assemblies also to withdraw, denuding the Knights of Labor of trade unions and a substantial membership. This trade union secession contributed materially to the decline of the Order. The general disintegration of the Knights will be dealt with in due course.

## CHAPTER XII

### OTHER CAUSES FOR KNIGHTS' DECLINE

The two other cardinal principles which animated the early labor movement in its quest for fulfillment of its self-employment aspirations were cooperation and political action. They proved no more successful than trade union activity. Temporarily, like the trade union activities, they produced tangible results. Certain groups enthusiastically embraced and ardently promoted cooperation and political action. In applying these two cardinal principles, there was friction. Towards neither of them was there, however, the manifest suspicion and opposition that existed in the self-employment-oriented labor movement against the believers in trade unionism.

#### *Producers' Cooperation as an Instrument of Liberation from Wage System*

In the beginning, stimulated by inflated enthusiasm, cooperation flourished. Later, this activity met with misfortune traceable primarily to lack of competent management, adequate resources to match the exuberant enthusiasm, and the severe competition of the hostile business community.

Although not as extensive or dramatic an activity as the organization of trade unions, political and legislative cooperation strikingly illustrate the nature of the ideology that motivated these early workers and the general Knights of Labor membership. Naturally, confusion and differences appeared as to the kind

of cooperation, but all were guided by the ideal of emancipating the workers from the wage system. Basically, the differences can be reduced to two contradictory concepts. One form can be described as voluntary collectivism or socialism. The other type can best be denominated individual or group private enterprise. Since both aspired to replace corporate industrialism, they were motivated by a common basic tenet. Those who favored voluntary socialism preferred centralized cooperation in which the worker would be divorced from management. Thus, ownership was clearly separated from management. All property used in the operation of the enterprise would be socialized. On the other hand, those who favored decentralized cooperation, while not accepting corporate industrialism, nevertheless favored private property in that the individuals operating the establishment would own it. This type perpetuated, with minor modifications, the self-employment concept wherein the worker was his own master, accountable neither to a private employer, the state, nor to the centrally controlled cooperative establishment. These two concepts clashed within the Knights, with the decentralized form favored because it more closely approached the self-employment ideal. These early workers were individualists, not collectivists.

Both ideas had ardent advocates within the Knights. In the early stages, before the two concepts were clarified as being antithetical, the Knights encouraged both types. Either through the national organization or district assemblies, it undertook to promote centralized cooperation, yet at the same time by financial aid, encouraging the other type. Supporters of centralized cooperation felt that the decentralized type had not proved successful. Their motto was "Cooperation of the Order, by the Order, and for the Order." Cooperative undertakings were to be financed by the Order from the dues of the membership and to be under the control of the Order.

Such an arrangement is analogous to state socialization financed by taxation. It started out with the organization of consumers' cooperation to create a market for the production establishments that were to follow. Circumstances led the Order to embark first on producers' cooperation. It purchased a defunct coal mine in 1883 in order to give employment to eight miners who were locked out by an adjoining coal company. Its trials and tribulations will be discussed in later pages. No further efforts at direct ownership of cooperative ventures were undertaken by the Order because of the cost and other difficulties. However, some of the district and local assemblies also resorted to collectivist cooperation.

A notable illustration of management by the organization was that of District Assembly 49 of New York. Management was conducted with the utmost secrecy, and holders of shares were not given either a voice or a vote. The money was invested by a committee chosen by District Assembly 49. No interest was paid on the stock, but shares were to be redeemed in the course of time and the ownership of the plant was to remain with the employees. This arrangement was a cross between the two ideas—collectivist and individualist. In the beginning, District 49 made considerable progress. It sought to establish a comprehensive cooperative society by financing a cigar factory, a fancy leather goods shop, a plumbing shop, a publishing association, a marketing association, and so on.

However, most of the cooperative ventures were of the decentralized kind. A few mechanics, encouraged by the prevailing sentiment for self-employment through producers' cooperation, would pool their resources and open a shop. Invariably, the undertakings were small enterprises with limited funds. It is estimated on incomplete data that the average investment per establishment amounted to about \$10,000 so it was only possible to found cooperatives in those industries where a limited amount of capital was required. With technological advancement in its incipient stages, the field for small business undertakings was indeed wide.

By 1884, individuals with a philosophic bent began to differentiate between the two kinds of cooperation, centralized and decentralized. The outcome distinctly reveals the prevailing ideological predi-

lections of the workers of this period. Within the Knights, Henry L. Sharp was the champion of collectivist cooperation. His plan, Integral Cooperation, called for initiation of cooperatives by the central headquarters and financed, owned and operated by it. This form also was referred to as centralized cooperation. Its opponent, an ardent advocate of decentralized cooperation, was John Samuel. To him, the ideal form of cooperation was one in which a small number of mechanics assembled their resources and became independent entrepreneurs. The function of the Order was to educate members and others in the principles of cooperation, that is, to encourage the cooperative movement. Hence, the Executive Board issued forms of constitutions and laws which, with a few modifications, could be adapted to any individual undertaking. The Board also published articles on the dangers and pitfalls in cooperative ventures, such as credit risks and poor management, and on specific kinds of cooperation. In the ensuing controversy between the advocates of centralized and decentralized cooperation, the decentralized concept was overwhelmingly approved by the General Assembly and John S. Samuel was made Secretary of the new Cooperative Committee. Another revealing instance of the strong sentiment for decentralized cooperation was the difficulty the national headquarters had in inducing local assemblies to make voluntary assessments to its national cooperative fund. There seemed to be more interest in raising money to assist local ventures.

In the final outcome, neither type succeeded. Industrial expansion was moving too fast for cooperation to become permanently established as it had been in Europe and elsewhere. Many causes brought failure to most of the cooperative enterprises: hasty action, selection of inefficient management, internal dissension, lack of capital, injudicious borrowing of money at high rates of interest and, finally, discrimination instigated and vigorously practiced by the large competitors. Railroads were heavy offenders. They resorted to delaying tactics on one pretense or another, refusing to furnish cars, or refusing to haul them. Competing manufacturers applied pressure upon machinery producers and wholesalers of raw materials to prevent sales to the cooperatives or to delay deliveries. Banks were reluctant to grant credit. Thus, a few years after it had so enthusiastically blossomed out, the cooperative movement had run the full life cycle, and both the centralized and decentralized forms had succumbed. While the specific causes for the failure of producers' cooperation were not always evident, basically it was rapid industrial development that made this type of cooperation impossible. With the introduction of the factory system requiring expensive outlays, these undertakings transcended both the financial means and the required managerial acumen.

Significantly, it was the Knights that fathered the cooperative movement. The practical trade unions subscribing to either voluntarism or socialism had kept aloof from such ventures during this period. Their leaders had discarded middle-class psychology and ideals, beginning to recognize that the wage system was not thus lightly to be overthrown. But the Knights of Labor leaders did not abandon the middle-class ideal, despite the failures of the cooperative ventures. They merely sought another avenue. In 1890, the majority of the Cooperative Board established by the Order suggested that cooperation be abandoned and that the Knights join the Farmers' Alliance and kindred organizations interested in independent political action.

#### *Discordant Political Activity and Legislative Achievements*

In the political field, the Knights' activities were not as vigorously carried on by the Order as were those of the trade unions and cooperatives, nor were they as promising in the beginning. Throughout the major part of the Knights' existence, political action was entrusted to the judgment of subordinate units with less supervision and guidance than that rendered by the national headquarters in conducting trade union and cooperative activities. Most of the subordinate units preferred the non-partisan course of supporting friendly candidates running on the major party slates. Where they indulged in independent political action, it was in association with other middle-class reform and labor elements. Only rarely did the Knights present their own slates.

Political action, like trade union action, concerned itself with both promotion of legislation of a purely ameliorative kind, such as improving immediate working and living conditions, and with legislative demands designed to pave the way to the ultimate ideal of self-employment. While in the early period the results were not impressive, a certain amount of substantial legislation was enacted. Some legislation designed to advance the ultimate goal of the trade unionists actually proved more immediately beneficial to self-employed mechanics, small merchants and other businessmen. And even when legislation was not enacted or demands did not reach legislative halls, the propaganda conducted as part of the political and ancillary educational activity proved sufficiently potent to lead to enactment of laws of social and economic benefit to the less privileged.

The following legislation designed to promote a self-employment society was secured: the Homestead Act provided for distribution of the public domain in small enough parcels to enable the family farmer successfully to maintain his establishment without being dependent on anyone else for employment; the Moreland Act for the support of land-grant colleges made higher education available for the common people and provided scientific agricultural training and technical knowledge for the practicing individual farmer and farm community. Incidentally, the demand for free public education began to blossom into impressive proportions after its initial support from middle-class political forces. Laws making greenbacks legal tender enabled the small businessman and family farmer to continue operating their enterprises more easily. Payment in coins, or especially in gold as demanded by the wealthier creditor class, would have bankrupted the great majority of the small businessmen and other self-employed. Abolition of imprisonment for debt not only laid the basis for future bankruptcy acts, but had immediate beneficial effect on the marginal businessman and debtor, who were able to continue making a living as free men instead of serving jail sentences during which they were hired out and their earnings used to compensate their debtors. The mechanics' lien laws forbade sequestration by creditors of the indispensable assets such as tools required for making a living. Moreover, in liquidations in bankruptcy, adequate sums were assured to the debtor so that he could make a fresh start in life.

State and federal government railroad regulation was initiated and popularized in order to protect the little shipper from discrimination favoring his wealthier competitors. Anti-trust laws were demanded limiting the size of business establishments, undue concentration of economic power, and collusions in restraint of trade. Some states enacted laws to that effect, and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890 was the culmination of these early beginnings, as were state railroad commissions and the Interstate Commerce Commission. Legislation favorable to cooperatives, such as tax exemption, was also demanded. Similar legislation designed to protect the small businessman and other less privileged persons was vigorously promoted and some of it enacted. To be sure, much of the early legislation contained loopholes, which often made it ineffective, and these early laws were not always conscientiously administered. However, the precedent was established.

Legislative results were neither far-reaching nor impressive. But this was an era in which the common people, including wage earners, were determined that the government must encourage and sustain the quest for self-employment. A start was made on legislative programs dealing with fundamental problems affecting the workers, even if these laws were imperfect and readily evaded. In any case the ground was prepared for future improvement. Laws regulating hours of labor, ineffective as they were, at least registered significant sentiment favorable to such legislation. Laws abolishing the truck system were certainly a revolutionary accomplishment. They made it obligatory for employers to pay wages in cash rather than script exchangeable only for goods purchased in the store owned by the employing establishment. Limited factory legislation dealing with ventilation, sanitation, lighting, and factory inspection was also obtained in some states. Other demands, while not always enacted, popularized the need for them; they included provisions for bureaus of labor statistics, limitations on the use of conspiracy laws, the indiscriminate issuance of in-

junctions in labor disputes, and legislation forbidding sale in the free market of commodities produced by convict labor.

## CHAPTER XIII

### KNIGHTS TURN TO INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION

#### *Failure of Cooperation and Secession of Unions Leave Knights Only One Avenue*

As the Knights began to decline in membership and influence, still clinging romantically to its original ideal of self-employment, it turned to intensive political action as a drowning man clings to a straw. Its effort in this direction was no more successful than its use of trade union action and cooperation. Changing social and economic conditions had outmoded the quest for self-employment. In the meantime, the complexion of the membership had drastically changed, and the two other cardinal or first principles had proved ineffective. In resentment at harassment and unfriendly treatment, the trade unions, which were the most cohesive groups, began to desert the Order in the middle eighties. Most of them affiliated with its arch rival, the American Federation of Labor. The Federation appreciated the importance of substantial and permanently functioning unions and offered hospitable sanctuary. Other tightly organized groups, the cooperatives, had begun to disappear, unable to cope with the growth of large business enterprises. This loss was recognized by the Knights' General Executive Board in 1888. The Knights thus were left with a heterogeneous and poorly knit membership, located primarily in urban areas of the Midwest and Rocky Mountains. Determined to promote its cherished ideal, its only available avenue was through intensive political action. Too feeble to undertake this adventure alone on a national scale, it became associated with the formidable political movement of farmers, coordinated by the Populist Party. The arrangement was made easier because the bulk of the Knights' membership, or at least its most assertive part, emanated from the regions where the farmers' political movements were most successful.

#### *Agrarian Parties Hatch National Movement*

The agricultural, like the political, labor movements were active even in the early history of the country. In the post-Civil War period they expanded, and in the 1880's they began to associate with each other where they operated in adjoining regions. Gradually, two political organizations of farmers, one in the south and the other in the north, assembled the scattered local parties in their respective regions. The two parties assumed similar names, although they functioned independently. One became known as the Southern Farmers' Alliance, and the other as the Northern Farmers' Alliance. Since their objectives were so similar, these two organizations considered merging, so they could function as a national political movement. However, they could not agree on procedures. The Southern Alliance, confronted by the firmly-established Democratic Party, preferred to undertake the capture of that party. The Northern group, not bothered by a similar situation, opted for independent political action. While the Southern faction made little headway, the Northern segment proved impressively successful. Operating mostly in the northern wheat belt, it had by 1890 secured control of five state legislatures, elected three governors, a United States senator, and forty-four congressmen.

The sharp contrast between the victories won by the Northern Alliance third party, and the futile results of its Southern counterpart's efforts to use the Democratic Party made the southerners realize that they would have to join in forming a national third party. Meeting in Cincinnati in 1891, the two groups decided to found the People's Party. A full ticket was presented in the national presidential election of 1892. Associating itself with that Party, the Knights served as the urban medium. Despite the loss of substantial units and drastic decline in membership, the Order still possessed a magical appeal to the rank and file workers and other urban elements seeking radical reforms. The showing made by the People's Party was deeply disturbing to conservatives. It elected several governors, a number of senators and congressmen, and a host of lesser officials. Its presidential candidate polled more than a million votes, 8½ percent of the total. He carried Colorado, Idaho, Kansas and Nevada. Indeed, the People's Party proved to be the only formidable, radical middle-class political movement to reach national proportions. The profound depression of 1893, which saw the birth of the terms "hobo" and "tramp" made it possible for the Populists to be welcomed into the Democratic Party, which adopted many of the salient Populist planks and nominated the outstanding Populist propagandist, William Jennings Bryan, as its presidential candidate. With the absorption of the People's Party by the Democrats, the Knights made a feeble effort to maintain itself.

## CHAPTER XIV

### DEMISE OF MASS MOVEMENTS FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT

The two mass organizations that ultimately epitomized the historic self-employment movement inevitably succumbed to the persistent advance of corporate industrialism. Representing the urban and industrial elements, the Knights slowly disintegrated, giving way to the more realistic AFL. As the channel for the rural and agrarian elements, the Populists fused with the Democratic Party which after the Civil War functioned as a minority party. This was the beginning of the Democratic Party policy of catering to dissident minority groups aspiring to penetrate the American political mainstream.

#### *The Floundering of the Knights*

Just as the labor congresses of the sixties were the forerunners of those held in the 1870's, so the "Noble Order" was the lineal ideological descendant of all previous efforts from the beginning of the labor movement in the United States. Its fate was both to nourish the early middle-class labor movement to full fruition and to preside at its demise. Temporarily, it functioned as the dominant labor movement. With the factory system becoming basic and corporate industrialism becoming the dominant mode of conducting business, the Knights' ideology, composition, structure and policies were revealed as anachronistic. It was abandoned by its substantial trade union supporters, most of whom joined the modernistic AFL, which soon superseded the Knights. Simultaneously, the cooperatives began to disappear. Only accumulated momentum enabled the Knights of Labor to continue thereafter for a brief and checkered period. It rapidly deteriorated and its disappearance marked the end of a labor movement based upon self-employment. As generally happens in labor and radical organizations, when the Knights began to decline, it was beset with bitter internal intrigues. Expulsions of rivals of the Knights became the order of the day. A combination of Socialists led by the irrepressible Daniel DeLeon and middle-class elements removed Powderly and most of the other officials. James R. Sovereign, leader of the middle-class groups, was elected Grand Master Workman in 1893.

Shortly thereafter, the victorious but irreconcilable groups fell upon each other with the dominant Sovereign faction expelling cantankerous DeLeon and his allies. With Sovereign in control, the Order reverted to the ideology of self-employment. Treated as stepchildren, the remaining substantial unions drifted away to the AFL. Stripped of its virile affiliates, the Knights continued primarily as an uncertain educational and political organization.

The struggle between the Knights and the AFL proved an uneven one. Most trade union organizations abandoned the Order for the AFL. A few preferred independent existence, but like the People's Party, which also espoused a return to a middle-class self-employment social order, they ceased to be important and continued only as isolated, straggling "ghosts" into the early twentieth century. The Knights' national headquarters degenerated into a ragtag panhandling affair. The officers sustained themselves by capitalizing on the residual good will toward the Order among the credulous rank and file by whom the Knights were still regarded as the old reliable champion of the underprivileged. When the sources of income dried up, the national headquarters closed shop.

### *Postscript*

A few trade union remnants of the Knights' survived into the early decades of the twentieth century. Even into the third decade of the twentieth century, I found Knights' assemblies listed in a few cities. Upon inquiry, I learned that these isolated fringe units were struggling to maintain themselves as unattached local trade unions.

The decadence of the Knights of Labor and absorption of the People's Party by the Democratic Party marked the disappearance of substantial national labor and farmer efforts to achieve self-employment. As a comprehensive mass movement, this epoch in American history came to an end. In modified form, farmers in voluntary cooperative organizations have continued to operate successfully with governmental aid. Their function is to purchase and market collectively. The dairymen's leagues are outstanding. Others are sponsored by the National Farmers Union and the Grange. Political action as a non-partisan undertaking has become the medium for government legislative aid, such as exemption of cooperatives from provisions of the Anti-Trust Acts and tax exemption. Production is in accordance with the original ideal by private individuals who own and manage the enterprise.

In the modern labor movement, the ideology of self-employment has been completely discarded by the mass organizations. Ideological differences centered on the best method of contending with corporate industrialism and expanding big business. The business unionists, guided by their voluntaristic ideology, favored operating within the existing order, securing union status and continuing improvements, or as Samuel Gompers summarized it: "More and more." Political action was at first regarded as minor and used to obtain negative legislation by non-partisan political means. This strategy was considered inadequate by the Socialists to oppose voluntarism and corporate industrialism. However, they differed among themselves on strategy and tactics.

The moderate Socialists regarded it as more practical to operate temporarily within the existing order, obtaining improvements through trade union action. Thus, they built up political power by independent political action both to bring about labor and social reforms in alliance with sympathetic groups, and ultimately to introduce a Socialist social order through peaceful means. The ultraradicals favored militant revolutionary action of a voluntary nature to overthrow the capitalist order. Some accepted independent political action for propaganda purposes only; others discarded reliance on any form of political action. To them, the most desirable procedure seemed to be through revolutionary trade union action, supplemented

by one or another form of civil disobedience. Neither the business unionists nor the radicals relied on producers' cooperation to meet their ideological aspirations. Consumers' cooperation, however, was accepted by all. There were those who gave it lip service merely to appease believers. Others took it seriously. In any event, this form of cooperation has not developed any perceptible importance in the United States.

## CHAPTER XV

### SELF-EMPLOYMENT LABOR MOVEMENT IN RETROSPECT

#### *From Yeomanry to Super-Industrialism*

From its inception through the period of the Knights of Labor, the American Labor Movement was motivated by the self-employment ideology. What became the super-industrial United States was settled chiefly by a yeomanry who migrated here firmly intent on carving out homes for themselves. In contrast to what happened in other wildernesses of this hemisphere--areas subdued chiefly by fortune seekers interested in plunder or in establishing themselves as large land owners--the Anglo-Saxon settlers of the northern United States were interested in conquering a wilderness for permanent settlement by the self-employed. Beginning with the Pilgrims, the United States was developed largely by hard-working pioneers, determined to carve out niches where each family could make its living by its own labor. Particularly in the northeast the rigorous climate, rocky and rolling terrain, and the primitive technology were not appropriate to large-scale farming. Industry based on the handicraft system of production, paucity of capital, and crude transportation facilities, necessarily focussed on the master-workman status. Under these conditions, the individual produced goods and services as an independent entrepreneur, either upon order or to sell in the market. He was his own boss. He invested his infinitesimal amount of capital or savings in providing his own shop, tools, and raw materials, finally marketing his product in the immediate neighborhood. He combined all essential business functions in himself: he was capitalist, manager, worker, and merchant. The family farmer also performed all business functions by himself.

The key to understanding the early labor movement is, therefore, to be found in a self-employment ideology--with every man his own boss. Thus, the early labor movement was revolutionary, but chiefly in the negative sense. It strove to prevent large-scale business (primarily corporate in form) from superseding a mode of doing business wherein it was possible for the individual to go into business for himself if he was industrious and frugal. Unlike the Socialist movement, this one was not anti-capitalist. Its chief stumbling block was large-scale capitalism which could only function through corporations. Hence, the mechanic or master workman, in common with self-employed farmers and merchants, opposed or wished to limit corporations. They were denounced as monopolies irrespective of size. In contrast to the Socialist ideology which opposed private property, this labor movement believed in it, but it believed that private property ought to be widely diffused rather than concentrated in the hands of a limited number of owners. Similarly, the adherents of self-employment contended that all wealth is created by labor including the manual and managerial skills exercised by the mechanic or master workman who operated his own shop. The commonly quoted declaration by Abraham Lincoln that "Labor creates all wealth" was undoubtedly based on the self-employment concept and not on the Socialist version that labor alone creates all wealth. Lincoln's dictum reads as follows:

Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor and could not have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital and deserves the much higher consideration. Thank God we have a system of labor where there can be a strike.

It was generally accepted that this ideal could be achieved in three ways: by trade union organization, by government intervention through political action and legislative processes, and by small-scale or local cooperation. These activities were accepted as complementary, though their relative importance differed at different times; depending on the circumstances, one or the other was regarded as preminent.

By way of *obiter dicta*: while the self-employment ideal still lingers as a romantic holdover among wage earners and salaried employees, it no longer has a viable organizational meaning. As urban business began to reach a point where costly investment and keen market competition made self-employment impractical, the romantics introduced slogans such as "three acres and liberty" and "vote yourself a farm." With the evolution of agricultural production and marketing these slogans also became meaningless. The so-called family farmer at present is also a capitalist of considerable proportions, and with burgeoning urban and rural industrial development the original concept of the composition and objectives of the middle class is vanishing, if it has not completely disappeared. In common with the family farmer, self-employment is rapidly losing its importance in society, notwithstanding efforts of our government to sustain it through such agencies as the Small Business Committee. In its place, phoenix-like, a new middle class is arising which encompasses large segments of the more skilled and highly paid workers. But the lure of the old type of middle-class status still haunts large numbers. A recent survey of graduating college students on their life aspirations revealed that the great majority hoped in due time to be in business for themselves. A similar testing of the preferences of the better-paid workers showed that they, too, would like to attain a status in life in which they could work for themselves.

#### *Early Middle Class Replaced by New Type*

Nevertheless, the early standard type of middle class, like the family farmer, the master mechanic owning his own shop, the small merchant, and even producers' cooperation is a vanishing mirage. Insofar as self-employment exists, it functions either as a satellite to big business or in the retail and service trades with a large proportion struggling to eke out a living. Even the efforts of the government to sustain this group through the Small Business Committee, laudable as they are, are rather ineffective. And similarly limited are the admirable efforts of the Agriculture Department to resuscitate the marginal farmer.

But a new middle class has taken the place of the old. Being well-off and comfortable, it has a stake in society to protect. It is interested in maintaining and advancing a stable and orderly social system which will gradually promote social progress, thus acting as a balancing force against rapacious capitalism. It is politically and socially as influential as its predecessor. Indeed, as a worthy successor to the old group, it is more liberal and generous, promoting the extensive development of the social and public sectors of society, broadening the scope of governmental social responsibility and widening the vision of mankind in the promotion of the great society. This new middle class consists primarily of professionals, white-collar salaried workers, better-paid skilled and semi-skilled wage earners, small businessmen and family farmers. By following the initiative of the United Automobile Workers and demanding the guaranteed annual wage (already granted to white-collar professional workers), organized labor intends to assure the status of the "blue-collar" worker as a permanent member of the new middle class.

### *Salient Characteristics of Early Labor Movement*

Recapitulation of the preceding analysis supports previous generalizations about the nature, conduct and operation of the early labor movement. The "self-employment labor movement" arrived at its apex in the Knights of Labor, which epitomized that movement. Its early growth, meteoric rise and lingering demise are pathetically akin to the experience of all the mass agrarian middle-class movements during the hectic and dynamic transition from primitive industrialism to advanced, modern corporate industrialism with its factory system, intricate technology, and large-scale business operations. Bewildered and unable to keep up with the lightning industrial pace, these self-employment movements inevitably fell by the wayside.

At its formation as a national organization, the Knights of Labor constitution included a provision for a fund which was to be allocated for three specific purposes. These purposes indicate the guiding ideology and activities of the early institutionalized labor movement. While the fund never accumulated moneys of significant proportions, it did reveal the thinking of the leadership and articulate membership, and was undoubtedly a reflection of the intellectual climate of the times. It, therefore, epitomizes labor movements dedicated to a self-employment social order. One portion of the fund was to be devoted to fostering education, which was unequivocally interpreted as political education to be manifested through an undefined form of political activity and the promotion of legislation desired by the movement. The legislation sought was to protect temporary union activity and to sustain a self-employment social order. A second part of the fund was intended for the stimulation and assistance of cooperation, which was to be the economic basis of a self-employment society. The third portion was dedicated to the support of trade union activity, particularly strikes. Unions were regarded as a temporary instrument, however, designed to increase wages so that workers could accumulate enough capital to go into business for themselves.

These three groups of activities can best be understood by the filling in of some detail. Politics: As previously explained, education to the Knights meant political action and legislative demands. Within the Order as within the entire labor movement, there was no consensus as to the type of political action. Some favored concentration on lobbying, others on independent political action, and still others on non-partisan political action. Unable to reconcile these differences, the Order decided to grant authority to take autonomous action to its subordinate units. As for itself, throughout most of its existence it favored lobbying and non-partisan political action. Only toward the end, when it was rapidly declining, did it opt for independent political action in conjunction with the People's (Populist) Party. Its affiliates followed one or another of these forms in different regions and at different times. There was almost a unanimous understanding that political and legislative action were equally important with trade union and cooperative activities. There was little difference as to the kind of legislation necessary, although differences emerged as to the relative importance of specific proposals. It was generally agreed that comprehensive social and labor legislation was essential to protect the rights of the workers and to carry on trade union activities. Above all, legislation was needed to protect the small businessmen and extend self-employment. In this respect the Knights' successor, the American Federation of Labor, materially differed until recently.

The Federation regarded the self-employment ideal as generally unattainable in a dynamic capitalist society. It also firmly disagreed on the political procedures and types of legislation needed for building a viable labor movement. It was positively opposed to independent political action, preferred lobbying, and turned to non-partisan political activity only after being rebuffed by legislators for not being able to muster votes to show that it possessed political power. Its legislative demands were of a limited nature. It opposed all types of social reform legislation and sought only a few measures of a negative kind to restrain courts and administrative bodies from interfering with legitimate activities of unions and safeguard the labor market from being flooded by immigrants. Positive social reform and labor legislation, it was thought, would encroach on what trade unions aimed to secure through collective bargaining, reinforced by strikes. Legisla-

tion that would impede corporate industrial development was scoffed at by the AFL as irrelevant to a labor movement in a modern industrial society. While it is true that trade union organizations throughout the history of the labor movement were interested in politics, the question of degree has remained debatable. The early labor movement was profoundly interested, but the AFL regarded politics as a minor, incidental activity.

The labor historians who hold that this early labor movement was destroyed because it favored political action are absolutely wrong. The few instances in which trade unions were organized on the "pure and simple" pattern and vehemently opposed involvement in politics fared no better than those that oscillated between emphasis on trade unionism and advocacy of political action. Two of the trade union federations that strenuously attempted to operate in accordance with "pure and simple" trade union policies or on "business unionism" principles fared no better than those that considered political action an integral function of the labor movement.

Founded in 1834, the National Trades' Union was based on a "pure and simple" trade union platform which specifically forbade direct involvement in politics. In fact, it manifested all the characteristics of the later business unionism as represented by the AFL. It provided for exclusive trade-union jurisdiction, opposed direct involvement in politics. It favored limited objectives, equal pay for equal work, and the standard rate. In the end, it went the way of all other labor organizations of the period. Its existence was brief. It ceased functioning in 1836.

Another example was the National Labor Union founded in 1866. Its attempt to establish a trade union federation on business-union principles was aborted. Originally it included non-trade union labor organizations and endorsed independent political action.

An outgrowth of the National Labor Union was the Industrial Congress and Industrial Brotherhood (1873). The important national unions tried to make this organization into a "pure and simple" trade union federation but failed. The thinking of the times among labor and reform elements was against it. Within two years, it disintegrated.

A number of local trade union federations also attempted to operate in accordance with "pure and simple" trade union principles. They also were short-lived. Among them was the General Trades' Union of New York City, established in 1833. It survived for only a short period. Similarly, the Philadelphia General Trades' Union, founded in 1836, also opposed participation in political action, but failed to maintain itself for any appreciable time. Indeed, even the organizations which were set up on business-union precepts could not resist the persistent intellectual and ideological climate of the times. They endorsed such reforms as producers' and consumers' cooperation, financial reforms and other measures expounded by those advocating self-employment as the "remedy" for the evils of the wage system. They recognized that some of these measures could be attained only through political action, but they opposed separate political parties.

These and other unions which shunned independent political action vanished in the same manner as those which favored politics, and for the same reasons. In the transition from the handicraft to the factory stage, social and economic conditions were unstable, as was evidenced by the variations in the business cycle, with its successive recessions and depressions. Naturally, labor organizations were affected by these conditions and proved ephemeral, irrespective of philosophic tendencies. This low propensity for permanency was accentuated by employer opposition, the hostility of the courts, and limited community acceptance.

### *Cooperation as Means to Self-Employment*

Reliance upon cooperation is a fundamental indicator that these early workers aspired to establish a primitive industrial order. While trade-union and political action and specific legislation were regarded as essential to the pursuit of their ideals, it was cooperation that was regarded as crucial to achieve self-employment and middle-class status. Originally, self-employment implied that, through trade union action, each mechanic would be able to earn enough to lay aside sufficient funds to go into business for himself. Incidentally, he might be aided by small loans from his friends or by his labor organization. In this manner he could look forward to becoming an independent entrepreneur. But this method of escaping from the "thrall-dom" of the wage system became difficult as larger amounts of capital were required than an individual mechanic could raise. Not only did he need capital for the raw material; he also needed funds to continue producing until the finished product was sold. With the "custom order" practice (producing to fill specific orders) receding, there was also the problem of marketing the finished product. The family farmer was in a better position to remain self-employed. If he lacked sufficient capital to purchase the farm outright, he usually could get a mortgage, and a mortgage loan could be safely secured by tangible collateral. The self-employed mechanic could rarely offer this. His "good will" was negligible, and his other assets were usually intangible. The farmer's grievance was high interest rates, and he needed a cooperative for the purchase of equipment, fertilizer and seeds at lower prices than he could get as an individual. He also needed an agency to market his produce to advantage. Through a cooperative, he was enabled to bypass the middleman.

It soon became evident that producers' cooperation was the remedy. Cooperation as a form of voluntary activity was not in contradiction of labor movements which opposed concentrated capital, particularly as embodied in corporations. Cooperation in a partnership form managed by a small number of participants was a new concept for perpetuating a self-employment social order. In the course of time confusion arose as to which type of cooperation was most feasible. Consumers' cooperation with its revolutionary function of providing a market for producers' cooperation was not originally seriously challenged, nor was centralized producers' cooperation. But as the significance of producers' cooperation in promoting self-employment was realized, serious differences developed. This was most succinctly brought out in the Knights of Labor by the differences between the exponents of integral cooperation and decentralized producers' cooperation. Both were opposed to the capitalistic concept of the profit system. Under integral or centralized cooperation, as a form of voluntary socialism, the individual worker was alienated from the managerial function. Under the decentralized type of producers' cooperation the worker, in conjunction with his partners, exercised all of the functions involved in operating the enterprise, thus preserving the self-employment ideal. Small-scale or decentralized cooperation was preferred because private enterprise of a limited number of individuals who manage the business and jointly share the proceeds eliminated the employer or capitalist. Naturally these small enterprises could not compete with burgeoning industry.

### *Rise and Fall of Self-Employment Movement*

Organizationally, the self-employment movement was epitomized by the Knights of Labor. For wage earners and for farmers, merchants and so on, it was the People's (Populist) Party that coordinated and dominated the self-employment movement. Toward the end of this middle-class movement, the Knights aligned with the People's Party. This coalition provided the last mass attempts to promote the interests of the less affluent through government intervention as epitomized in both major parties by Bryan, LaFollette, and Theodore Roosevelt. Later the Democrats took over the main task with Woodrow Wilson championing the New Society; Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the New Deal; Harry S. Truman, the Fair Deal; John F. Kennedy, the New Frontier; and Lyndon B. Johnson, the Great Society. For labor, it was carried on by the railroad unions, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, and after an extended hiatus, the American Federation

of Labor. The Socialists, starting with Marxism, gradually discarded that philosophy and succumbed with the rest of the labor movement to welfare stateism. This later development in the American labor movement, leading to a complete ideological metamorphosis (and apotheosis of the welfare state) will be considered in full in succeeding chapters. The ultraradicals were thus completely isolated from the mainstream of society.

In this way the early self-employment movement became the forerunner of the present welfare state ideology, wherein the government intervenes more and more to improve social and economic welfare. In this new function, the state increasingly guides big business and big labor in promoting and safeguarding the common public interest. As the country developed, the self-employment movement implied a recognition that certain essential activities could inevitably be conducted only by a corporate industrialism that incorporated monopolistic traits. Among these services are public utilities: railroads, canals, turnpikes, banks, and municipal utilities like transportation, gas, and water. Exploitation of natural resources also could best be promoted by corporations. And, in order to protect the public interest, the monopolistic private enterprises required government regulation. In guiding the conduct of these operations, some favored socialization, others nothing more than regulation. Both ideas have been and are applied. Thus, the concept of the welfare state emerged.

### *Middle-Class Metamorphosis*

With the advent of corporate industrialism, the urban middle class experienced a drastic transformation. At best, small business was reduced to operation in a neighborhood market as a service trade or a satellite to big business, supplying parts and distributing products. In the meantime, a new middle class was emerging which depended for employment and income upon corporate industrialism. In its beginning, this class consisted primarily of professionals, either salaried or on retainer, such as engineers, lawyers, accountants, supervisors, and managers. Closely related were the white-collar workers, including clerks, stenographers, bookkeepers, salesmen. They differed from wage earners in that they were salaried, paid by the week or month instead of the piece, hour, or day, and usually assured of year-round employment. They enjoyed more commodious working quarters, shorter hours, and substantial vacation periods of varying duration. Also, they dressed differently, both at work and away from it. While these people may nostalgically aspire to self-employment, they have in practice become reconciled to a new and lower status, dependent upon employment for income. Yet, they proudly struggle to maintain a status different from that of wage earners. Subjectively, they feature their individualism, dignity and self-expression. They scorn union organization, preferring professional societies, even though they are not as effective as unions in serving their interests. In essence, they still vainly seek to be recognized as completely independent in their pursuit of a living by associating themselves with management. Objectively, they strive to associate themselves with the employing and business classes, on the theory that their interests are similar to those of big business. In reality, they have openly or tacitly accepted the role of appendages to their employers. In any case, they consider themselves superior to wage earners.

In this sense, these white-collar workers significantly differ from those in the original self-employment middle class. This earlier group was class-conscious in that it considered the struggle between corporate capitalism and the independent entrepreneur irreconcilable. It defined a revolutionary in the following terms: One who is impatient to overthrow the existing order outright, without intermediate steps, the ultimate result being to replace it by one that will introduce a basic change, thereby ushering in the millennium. In this sense, the self-employment middle-class movement was a revolutionary movement. But as a middle class that also worshiped private property, it did not favor socialization. It accepted private property as basic to a functioning social order in which the individual was the pivotal participant, and favored a democratic political order and peaceful procedures. The articulate middle class was the champion of

individual liberty. It shunned authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Its successor middle class has inherited and perpetuated these traits.

The succeeding generations of American workers also discarded the middle-class aspiration to self-employment, and in the course of time slowly embraced the modern middle-class concept. It does not take a soothsayer to recognize that under a prevailing concentrated and advancing corporate industrialism, the old ideal of self-employment was not feasible. Nevertheless, the worker aspires to raise himself and especially his kin on the social ladder to a higher status in working and living conditions, including living standards on a level with those of the white-collar and professional worker. New ideological concepts were needed in order to promote the interests of the wage earners under corporate industrialism. This metamorphosis will be considered in following chapters.

## Part 4

# GENESIS OF MODERN LABOR MOVEMENT IN CORPORATE INDUSTRIALISM

### CHAPTER XVI

#### IMMIGRANT BUILDERS OF THE MODERN LABOR MOVEMENT

Simultaneously with the growth of the country and expansion of corporate industrialism with its factory system came mass immigration, historically referred to as the "old immigration." These immigrants, coming mostly from north European countries, were largely habituated to urban life, possessed some skills, were literate, and had had experience with labor organization. Among them were highly educated individuals, some with leadership experience. Finding employment was not difficult in an expanding economy. Most of these immigrants, who became workers or attached themselves to the workers' cause, migrated from countries where corporate industrialism was also emerging. One group was German-speaking Teutonic stock. While industrialism in the homeland of these immigrants was not as well advanced as in some other regions, the German-speaking workers at least had acquired industrial skills and organizing experience. Another group came from England, Wales and Scotland, and had been brought up in a region where industry was well advanced, and stable trade unionism was functioning successfully. Irish mass immigration to the United States had started at an earlier period, in the 1830's following the tragic potato famine. The German and British movements began in the 1840's and later.

The Irish immigrant movement was significantly different from the German and British movements. Ireland was industrially underdeveloped, a primitive agricultural and rural society with very limited technological know-how. The Irish immigrants lacked the skills so necessary in a growing industrial society. At best, they could do no more than serve as common laborers. They were wholly unaccustomed to urban and factory life. They spoke English with a pronounced brogue, often difficult to understand. Most of them were illiterate. Lacking the background of the German-speaking and British workers, they were not readily adaptable to the new ways of urban and industrial life. To be devout Roman Catholics in a somewhat bigoted Protestant country was an added disadvantage. Consequently, they were singled out for persecution and derision. This unfortunate situation isolated them from the mainstream of society. However, as the twentieth century advanced, their offspring became the dominant ethnic element in many skilled occupations in the American Federation of Labor. But in this early period, they were a despised minority qualified only for the arduous and unpleasant tasks of common labor. With no knowledge of labor organization and looked upon as social outcasts, they remained unorganized, and abused into the bargain.

Both the British and German-speaking workers scoffed at the self-employment concept, and both joined in organizing the AFL because they appreciated the need for an effective trade union movement. However, they differed as to basic ideology. They disagreed as to the kind of social order best calculated to

serve the long-run interests of the workers. British workers were becoming accustomed to relying practically exclusively on trade union organization for advancing and safeguarding their interests under the capitalistic order. In Germany, on the other hand, with industry at a more incipient stage, the leaders and alert rank and file workers adhered to the more rigid class struggle concept, grounded in a belief in Socialism as the ultimate salvation of the workers. To these Socialists, independent political action was the chief means of attaining their objective. Trade union organization was secondary, designed to improve immediate conditions and as a recruitment agency for the education of the workers in Socialism. Lack of freedom in Germany as compared to Britain helped to accentuate this determined attitude.

But both groups were unequivocally united in the opinion that the Knights of Labor was not the kind of labor movement needed. These immigrant elements agreed that under the corporate industrial system, workers would always remain workers. Thus, permanent and viable unions became an indispensable organizational need. These immigrant groups also accepted the inevitability of corporate industrialism and repudiated the self-employment ideology with its concomitant idea that trade unions served only a temporary purpose in advancing and safeguarding the interests of the workers. It became evident to them that it would be entirely impossible for an individual wage earner, or even a small number banded together in a producers' cooperative, to compete against the larger firms, even with the help of the government.

Even the workers who clung to the hope of finally abolishing the wage system realized that self-employment was not the remedy. To them, developments in the late nineteenth century revealed that the overthrow of the wage system could not be readily accomplished by such inadequate methods. Most of those who desired a basic change appreciated that a long process of social reform would be necessary. Consequently, the immigrant workers, keeping in tune with social realities associated themselves in creating a trade union movement that would meet the needs of the times. Convinced of the need for a viable trade union movement, both sides remained in the AFL. And so keenly did they appreciate the importance of a viable trade union movement that they joined in building the same trade union federation. The German group which differed with those who advocated sole reliance on trade union organization for the kind of social order to which they aspired nevertheless continued adhering to its beliefs and agitating for them within the Federation. Indeed, the Socialists resisted attempts by fringe groups to found a dual trade union federation.

### *Ideological Differences*

The mainstream labor movement remained united in the AFL up to recent times. The minority which aimed for a Socialist society to be attained by a gradual process became known as reform Socialists. They planned to achieve their objective by strong and efficiently managed trade unions bargaining with employers on a businesslike basis, supplemented by independent political action for social reform and labor legislation. By this procedure, they expected to undermine the capitalist order so that it could ultimately be transformed into a Socialist society. Certain fringe elements differed. Their activities will be considered in due course.

The "pure and simple" trade unionists accepted the capitalist system and decided to work within it to promote and protect the interests of the workers. They believed that workers functioning organizationally in the existing social milieu as a distinct interest group have a concern in the progress and prosperity of the country. They developed the theory that workers must be taught to rely, in safeguarding their interests, nearly exclusively on their trade unions. Consequently, political action, and especially independent political action and labor and social reform legislation, were to be shunned. A political party or government concerned with the protection of the workers by labor and social reform legislation would only introduce

factors calculated to wean the workers from unions. It was thought that a separate political party would introduce a rival organization striving for the loyalty of the workers, something analogous to the dual or rival union organizations which the AFL found so destructive in the Knights of Labor.

Insofar as the AFL favored labor legislation it was of the negative type, such as would restrain the courts in their indiscriminate suppression of the boycott and excessive resort to government interference with the legitimate activities of unions during strikes. But legislation of a positive nature through which the government instituted improvements in wages and working conditions was opposed as an encroachment on the prerogatives of unions. Minor legislative gains could be won by resort to limited lobbying requiring only action of a non-political type. Later, the AFL slightly modified its position. In essence, this has been the ideology up to recent years. In the following pages a detailed analysis and interpretation of the beliefs and activities of these two contending groups, as well as note of their achievements and ideological metamorphoses, will be presented.

### *Immigrants Adapt Union Organization to Corporate Industrialism*

In dealing with the new labor movement which had discarded self-employment as its ideal, our concern is with the role of the German-speaking and British workers who now agreed upon the proposition: "once a worker always a worker." They assumed that the average worker was destined to remain a wage earner. As has been suggested, while both these ethnic elements agreed on the imperative need for viable trade union organizations continuously conducting their affairs in a businesslike way by collective bargaining, they differed diametrically as to whether the movement should be indefinitely content to have the workers remain under the capitalist system, or whether they should aspire ultimately to emancipate themselves from the thralldom of the wage system by striving for a Socialist social order. Thus, they differed over the kind of future society that would best serve the interests of wage earners. But both groups were convinced of the need of replacing the Knights. It was considered imperative, therefore, that a separate trade union movement be launched. As a consequence of this experience, the earlier middle-class aspirations were discarded and the AFL was formed.

### *Growth of AFL and Crystallization of Contending Ideologies*

Thus, with both immigrant elements committed to an outmoded ideology in the Knights of Labor which constrained them to regard trade unions as incidental and temporary agencies, the workers banded together to create a new trade-union federation. At the outset in 1881, the new organization was christened the Federation of Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada. Its early years did not hold out great promise. Even the strong unions seemed hesitant to become associated with the new organization. However, as the unions encountered menacing difficulties with the Knights, they became interested in a new trade union federation. By 1886, this sentiment had become firmly fixed. Simultaneously, the name was changed to a simpler form more readily remembered--the American Federation of Labor--and an imaginative and dynamic individual, Samuel Gompers, became head of the organization. Thus, the American Federation of Labor and the name of Gompers were inseparably linked, almost continuously until his death in 1924.

In the constitution of the AFL, a number of new principles were adopted that differentiated it from predecessor federations. Most distinctive of these was the idea that the national trade union was to be the dominant unit with voting power on the basis of membership. Previously, it was the local union that had had this status, with other units such as local trade assemblies and state organizations. The other units, such

as city centrals and state federations, irrespective of membership, are entitled to one vote at AFL conventions. In the jargon of the movement, they are referred to as "one lungers." Another inalienable principle strictly observed forbade Federation interference in the internal affairs of the affiliated "international" unions, whereas the subordinate units like city-central and state organizations were made directly accountable to it. This provision also differed from earlier practice. In accordance with the constitution of the AFL, the national unions enjoyed complete autonomy internally, and a new term was coined to define this new relationship, "trade autonomy."

### *Anomalous Ideological Implications of Preamble*

In common with other organizational undertakings, labor organizations set out their objectives in the preambles to their constitutions to inform members, prospective members, and the public about the purposes of the organization. They outline the needs and expound the ideologies. Some labor historians have expressed the opinion that the AFL preamble reflects the Marxist Socialist class struggle concept. Actually a comparison of the Preamble of the former Industrial Brotherhood, adopted in 1874 and readopted by the Knights of Labor in 1878, with that of the AFL reveals startling similarities, although the earlier ones were not written by immigrants or Marxists. (See appendices B and C.) What misled the labor historians was the wording of the first paragraph of the AFL Preamble. It uses such phraseology as: "a struggle is going on in all the nations of civilized world between the oppressed and oppressors," and "struggle between the capitalist and the laborer." This kind of language was popularized in Socialist literature, although some of the vocabulary such as "worker" or "proletarian" are missing. Similar language appears in the Industrial Brotherhood Preamble. Compare these clauses: "The recent alarming development and aggression of aggregated wealth," and "a check shall be placed upon its power and unjust accumulation, and a system adopted which will secure to the laborer the fruits of his toil." Indeed, quotations from pronouncements of proponents of self-employment speak of "capital" and "capitalists" and the "struggle of the disadvantaged to correct injustices," language used also by the socialists. Ideologically, the AFL Preamble was a reaction to the rapacious capitalism of the period. In general, the Preamble reflects a frustrated and bitter reaction to corporate industrialism, a reaction which is characteristic of the advocates of self-employment as well as of the Marxian Socialists. The Preamble was accepted by all because it lent itself to different interpretations. Actually, in both its original and revised form it continued to reflect the views of the self-employment advocates.

It is also significant to recall that when the AFL Preamble was adopted, the ideological differences which were to appear later on were not distinctly manifest. The intellectual and emotional atmosphere in the labor movement and among social reformers was still largely saturated by self-employment ideals, particularly as reflected in the dynamic movement spearheaded by the Populists and weakly supported by the declining Knights.

It took some time for the AFL to hammer out its ideology of voluntarism in opposition to that of the socialists, as actions at AFL conventions attest. "Pure and simple" unionists were not yet sure that intensive political and legislative activities were measures that ran counter to their incipient ideology. In 1883, the AFL called for government ownership of the telegraph system, undoubtedly influenced by the hotly contested general strike of the workers in that industry. Yet it rejected a resolution providing that a committee be appointed to appear at the national conventions of the two major parties. This negative decision must have pleased the Socialists who favored independent political action. In 1886 the AFL initiated the movement for a general eight-hour strike. In 1892 it endorsed a popular panacea by favoring the single tax, and in 1896 it accepted the idea of non-partisan political action by endorsing William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic Party's Presidential candidate. In the early stages of voluntarism, lobbying was used only occasionally and on a non-partisan basis. Other forms of political action were ideologically taboo.

Endorsement of Bryan was an early portent of a later close relationship with the Democratic Party.

### *Outcroppings of Ideological Differences*

What the leaders of all persuasions in the AFL clearly did agree upon was that the wage system was not lightly to be overthrown. Once this idea was accepted, the elite in the labor movement could band together to create a permanent and viable trade union movement. As the AFL became established, ideological disagreements inevitably came to the surface. These disagreements had already manifested themselves in local trade union organizations. One Socialist group in alliance with a former faction became sufficiently strong to bring about the defeat of T. V. Powderly as Grand Master Workman of the Knights of Labor in 1893. This Socialist faction also was influential in various subordinate units of the Knights and even came into complete control of one of the largest district assemblies, District Assembly 49 in New York City. With the large concentration of immigrant German and Jewish workers committed to Socialism, it was easy to alter ideologies in this New York District. The reward for Socialist support of the candidate who defeated Powderly was the editorship of the Knights' official publication. Failure to secure fulfillment led the Socialists to turn against the Order.

In the meantime Socialists were actively participating in building the AFL, working in relative harmony with non-Socialists. Each side seemed to trust the other. But the aggressive element which gained the dominant position within the mainstream of the Socialist movement and which had stressed independent political action under Socialist auspices, undertook a vigorous campaign to commit the Federation to Socialism and its variety of independent political action.

Gompers and his group became concerned, even though they had not yet fully evolved their ideology of Voluntarism. Beginning to doubt the efficacy of political action, of which the Socialists were the chief champions, they logically associated the Socialist philosophy with independent political action. The two ideas, in fact, became synonymous. Also, influenced by the experience of the early labor movement and of the Knights of Labor, the Gompers group had begun to appreciate the need to disassociate trade union organizations from all political party entanglements. Coincidentally personality frictions developed, especially involving pestiferous Daniel DeLeon of the Socialist Labor Party.

The first contest between the Socialists and the future upholders of "pure and simple" trade unionism arose at the Detroit AFL convention in 1890. Under the leadership of the Socialist Labor Party as the spearhead of the Socialist movement, affiliation of Socialist party branches with central labor unions was introduced. By 1890, sixteen central labor unions scattered through the East and Midwest seated delegates from local Socialist branches. The non-Socialist Federation leaders became concerned. Their opportunity to take action presented itself in New York City, the center of Socialist strength, where conflict between Socialist and non-Socialist trade unionists was common. With the support of German and Jewish trade union locals, the Socialists organized their own central labor union, which worked with both the Knights of Labor local organizations and Federation affiliates. Dissatisfaction with policies of both groups led the Socialists to withdraw and in 1890 they resurrected their own central labor union. But their application for an AFL charter was rejected. Gompers and his associates contended that the AFL as a pure trade union organization must insist that its subordinate units also be free from political influence, whether Socialist or any other. The matter was thoroughly thrashed out at the 1890 AFL convention, resulting in victory for Gompers' position.

While the Socialists acknowledged defeat by withdrawing their delegates from the sixteen central labor bodies, they did not relent in their efforts to win the Federation over to their cause nor did they

counsel their followers to leave the Federation. They realized that the battle would be a difficult one, and took advantage of the destructive effects of the then “unprecedented” depression of the 1890’s, court prosecutions and aggressive employer policies, to take the offensive.

Simultaneously, resolutions adopted by the 1892 Federation convention seemed to portend a change of attitude toward politics. Two of the leading planks of the Populist platform, the initiative and referendum and government ownership of the telegraph and telephone system, were endorsed by the convention. Even more significant was the instruction given to the executive council to use its best endeavor to carry on a vigorous campaign of education, including the supply of economic literature to affiliated organizations to widen the scope of usefulness of trade unions in political action. However, it was distinctly emphasized that partisan politics should be separated from the ordinary business of trade unions. Interest in political action was encouraged, but was limited by two conditions: politics was not to interfere with trade union activity, and independent political action was ruled out. This dictum could scarcely be objected to by the Socialists at this time. They, too, appreciated the need for permanent national unions. In common with the “pure and simple” trade unionists, they looked with disfavor upon the middle-class concept of transforming unions for political purposes. Moreover, if independent political action had been endorsed, given the mood of the workers and reformers, it would have meant endorsing the Populist Party. As a matter of strategy, the Socialists were content with the endorsement of non-partisan political action.

#### *Business Unionism and Socialist Conflict Clarified*

Ideological and policy differences were constantly erupting in AFL affiliates, particularly at lower levels. On the national level business unionists were largely in control of the administration. As Socialist aggressiveness mounted, the AFL leaders began to manifest hostility toward Socialist efforts to gain strength within the unions. It seemed that ideological clarification was necessary.

In 1891, the trade unions seemed to be at the height of their power, but their fortunes came to an abrupt end. A succession of disastrous defeats of a dramatic nature were meted out to some of the powerful unions in 1892. Notable was the notorious Homestead strike which received nationwide attention because of the bloody encounter of unionists with Pinkerton detectives. The Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers was then the most powerful union in the country, but it was defeated by the Carnegie Steel Corporation which possessed practically boundless resources. Other strikes, such as that of the switchmen in Buffalo and the miners in Tennessee and Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, met with defeat, reflecting the overwhelming if not invincible strength of employers.

Neither did the courts relent in their hostile attitude towards unions. As a corollary, union political action, primarily regional and local, began to flourish once more. It seemed like a repetition of previous periods when unions and their members, frustrated in their efforts, turned to politics. A very large number of union members were candidates for office. A majority of them ran on the People’s Party or Populist tickets. Most of them failed of election.

Thus, defeats in strikes, depression in trade, a rapidly declining labor market with its concomitant massive unemployment, coupled with court prosecutions and hostile government administrations, added encouragement to the Socialists and reformers to press for Federation endorsement of their programs. Deciding on a bold step, the Socialists sponsored a political program at the Federation convention in 1893, to be submitted for consideration by affiliated unions. All eleven planks implied political and legislative action for their implementation, but not all were essentially Socialist in principle. The program contained planks demanding compulsory education, the initiative, a legal eight-hour work day, government inspection of

mines and workshops, abolition of the sweating system, employer liability laws, and abolition of the contract system for public work. These demands involved labor and social reform issues that could be supported by others than Socialists. Indeed, most of the other planks had been advocated by the Populists. These planks called for municipal ownership of electric light, gas, street railway and water systems; the nationalization of telegraphs, telephones, railroads, and mines; and the use of the referendum in the enactment of legislation. The all-inclusive plank calling for the collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution was unequivocally Socialist. The program was introduced by Thomas J. Morgan, a prominent Socialist trade union leader, who represented the International Association of Machinists at the 1893 convention. Furthermore, the preamble to the program implied that its objectives could only be attained through independent political action. The preamble also noted that the English trade unions had recently launched a program of independent political action.

The business unionists also used the British unions as their model. This was a vital transition period in the British labor movement, the birth of new unionism, so it was possible for both sides to point to the English unions as supporting their type of labor movement. In the light of considerable confusion as to the role of trade unions in a Socialist movement, it should be emphasized that the preamble of this Socialist program unequivocally stated that the English trade unions had recently launched a program of independent political action. The dominant and pragmatic Socialist group in the United States consistently adhered to this significant doctrine, a viable trade union movement working jointly with an effective Socialist Party. Misconceptions and even canards to the contrary are disproved by the existence of powerful Socialist unions, which even pioneered in introducing practical and ingenious improvements in collective bargaining procedures in the early twentieth century. Other resolutions adopted at the 1893 convention were similarly politically tendentious. The Executive Council was instructed to bring about an alliance with the farmer organizations so that the best interests of all might be served. There was also a declaration in favor of the free coinage of silver as one means of relieving monetary stringency and as a method of inducing farmer and other self-employment adherents to join.

There did not seem to be any serious opposition to submitting the free-coinage program to affiliated unions. Its proponents were even bold enough to insert a recommendation to the affiliated unions to give it their favorable consideration. An attempt to delete this recommendation was lost by the narrow margin of 1,182 for omission, and 1,253 for retention. Submission of the entire program with recommendation for favorable consideration carried by the overwhelming vote of 2,244 to 67. The prevailing confusion as to the desirable type of labor movement seemed to persist, and the unfavorable economic conditions for exclusive trade union action did not help to clarify the thinking on this subject.

Following the convention, affiliated unions began to give their endorsement to the political program. Some of the strongest unions, like the iron and steel workers and cigar makers, approved the program. Two important unions, the typographical and web-weavers, voted to strike out Plank Ten which unqualifiedly endorsed Socialism. A considerable number of the larger state federations and city centrals approved the program. By an historic anachronism, the bakers seemed to be the only national union that rejected the program in its entirety. Later this union, mostly German in composition and leadership, showed itself to be one of the staunchest Socialist units in the Federation.

In the beginning, the opposition was casual, but it soon began to coalesce under the leadership of influential union officials. Spearheaded by Samuel Gompers, President of the Federation, and two former ardent Socialists, P. J. McGuire, General Secretary-Treasurer of the Carpenters, and Adolph Strasser, the astute President of the Cigar Makers, they mustered an effective opposition. In the meantime, in 1894, the trade unions actively participated in politics. Pending the referendum on the program, the Federation refrained from partisan politics, confining itself to desultory agitation and lobbying for measures it considered

desirable. Many of the measures were specifically related to trade union requirements, such as shorter hours or restriction of immigration.

Prepared for the attack, the opposition took the offensive at the opening of the 1894 convention. Taking up specific provisions of the program, it challenged the declaration in the preamble, charging that the statement that the English unions had declared for independent political action was false. By a motion to strike out the preamble—a motion which carried by 1,345 to 861—it was evident that the opposition was in control. This revealed that the opposition had planned its attack in advance, effectively organizing its following.

Next the crucial plank which endorsed Socialism was challenged by one of the most influential unions, the Typographical Union. Apparently appreciating that a mass movement needed an abstract myth, it was not considered wise strategy merely to call for deletion of Plank Ten. Consequently, upon motion of the Typographical Union, a substitute was adopted calling for “the abolition of the monopoly system of land-holding and the substitution therefor [of] a title of occupancy and use only.” This statement in a way, savors of the Single Tax philosophy, which enjoyed considerable favor among the lower income groups. In view of the deep-seated yearning for the land manifested in the Homestead Movement, the availability of the public domain and the prevailing middle-class concept of self-employment which could most easily be attained on the land, this issue burned brightly in the popular imagination. With this ideal was coupled the idea that monopolies blocked the aspirations of the individual with small means. Thus, in a social milieu dominated by agriculture and struggling small-scale industry, opposition to monopolies understandably was a sublimated ideal, sufficiently attractive and yet adequately abstract to capture the imagination of the less advantaged as a substitute for socialism, which leaves no room for individual or group self-employment enterprises. In substituting for the Socialist plank which advocated free land for those who would work it, condemned monopolies and the restoration of individual occupancy, Gompers and his associates cleverly provided a substitute abstract-theoretical-myth that conformed to the prevailing aspirations of large masses emotionally indoctrinated to checking large-scale business, if not abolishing it.

This maneuver on the part of the Socialist opposition made it possible for delegates from unions endorsing the program to vote for the substitute plank. It was adopted. With the changed program, sufficient general dissatisfaction was engendered among the differing groups to vote down the motion to endorse the amended platform as a whole by 735 to 173. By this action the convention did not entirely repudiate support of non-labor measures. For instance, it once more placed the Federation on record as favoring the free coinage of silver. Voluntarism had not yet wholly become the ideology of the AFL.

Incensed at their defeat, the Socialists combined, chiefly with supporters of John McBride, a leader in the miners' union movement, to deny Samuel Gompers' reelection as President of the Federation. While President McBride was immobilized by illness, the brilliant, articulate and dynamic Gompers, as Vice-President of the Cigar Makers Union, was enabled to travel around the country ostensibly on behalf of his union, mending his political fences. At the 1895 Federation convention he was restored to the Presidency, serving in that capacity until his demise in 1924. Disheartened but not discouraged, the Socialists remained in the Federation and persisted in committing the movement to their policies. One of their group introduced a resolution declaring that it was the duty of the trade unions to organize an independent labor party. Instead of merely rejecting this resolution, the opposition countered with a substitute which distinctly acknowledged that it was clearly the duty of union workingmen to use their franchise to protect and advance the class interests of the men, women and children of labor; that the interest of the workers as a class was of paramount importance to party interests; that the class interests of labor demanded specific measures in preference to party measures. It was therefore recommended that the workers resort to independent voting, irrespective of party lines. The substitute resolution carried by the overwhelming vote of 1,460 to 158. The

non-Socialists were in control of the Federation. Use of the words “class” and “class interests” could hardly have been intended to mollify the doctrinaire Socialists. They were terms that had been used in preceding labor movements by non-Socialists. They undoubtedly satisfied the general run of leaders and rank and file members in whose vocabulary the use of these words was common.

### *Clarification of Ideologies*

Most if not all of Gompers' early collaborators shortly passed from the labor scene. But Gompers surrounded himself with a small number of brilliant associates, and under his leadership the ideology and policy of business unionism were developed. Gompers preferred to call business unionism “voluntarism,” a term which will be used in these pages interchangeably with others to denote “pure and simple” unionism. The Socialists, while disappointed, decided to remain within the Federation operating as an effective and responsible opposition. In the process they nurtured powerful unions and even pioneered in improvising collective bargaining machinery. In this contest not only within the Federation but in the general labor movement, each side refined its position. Within the Socialist movement infighting tended to create confusion, temporarily weakening the movement and leading toward a sharper clarification of thought, particularly relating to strategy. The pragmatic Socialists left the Socialist Labor Party to the impatient DeLeon who embraced dual unionism. The pragmatic Socialists chose to operate within the Federation.

One objective of both immigrant groups was on the way to achievement. The British as well as the German labor leaders scornfully repudiated the original practice by which labor organizations readily responded to the swing of the business cycle. In the earlier labor movement, it had become customary to concentrate on prosperity and enthusiastically to subordinate union considerations—or even abandon them entirely—during depressions, in the interest of intensive political activity. This strategy was regarded by these immigrant groups as undesirable. Often trade unions were transformed into political bodies. To be sure, a few in the movement ardently strove to maintain unions during these trying interludes, but in general the practice was different. Now despite the most devastating depression up to this time, most unions remained intact although they suffered losses. Gompers could rightfully boast that contrary to earlier experience, the serious depression of 1893 failed to destroy the trade union movement.

Some labor historians credit this achievement to business unionism. This is not strictly accurate. Most of the unions, irrespective of ideological outlook, plunged into politics during the depression, but they were not abandoned or transformed for political purposes as they had been earlier. The new practice indicates that the basic organizational institution of the modern American labor movement was becoming firmly established. The imperative need for permanent unions was unquestioningly accepted by the mainstream of the movement. Of course, conditions in the earlier period were not as favorable for the maintenance of permanent unions as they had become towards the end of the nineteenth century. But neither did the early labor leaders fully appreciate the need for stable organizations.

The better to understand the evolution in thought and fortune of the contending groups, their development must be examined group by group.

Gompers, McGuire, Strasser and their associates, as they explained, modeled their concept of business unionism upon the precedent set by the British unions. Those unions, until the advent of the new unionism in the late 1880's, centered usually on skilled workers. At this time, most of the skilled workers accustomed to factory production were immigrants. Indeed, within the Knights of Labor, the complaint was widespread that the skilled jobs were being monopolized by immigrants. This was exactly the reverse of the situation in the later period when the new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe supplied the

unskilled labor and the descendants of the early immigrants, now indigenous, monopolized the skilled jobs held by their forebears.

The concept that the British unions were models of business unionism was challenged by the Socialists who, as has been noted, also used the British unions as authority for their contention that unions in Britain were also interested in politics. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, in their *History of Trade Unionism*, and other writers as well, have told us that this was a transition period marked by the emergence of the "New Unionism" which undertook to organize the unskilled and semi-skilled into industrial and general unions. These unions and their leaders were adherents of Socialism and advocates of intensive political action. Neither the business unionists nor the Socialists were interested in making fine academic distinctions in describing the labor situation in Britain, so each used the precedent of prevailing practice in the British labor movement to support its case.

The business unionists assiduously and skillfully set about the creation of a viable trade union movement which, according to their ideology, was to be the basis of a successful and effectively functioning labor movement. The unions were to be the basic institutions through which the labor movement was to operate. All other activities were to be regarded as auxiliary, to be dominated and guided by the trade unions through their central organization, the American Federation of Labor. The idea, based on past experience, was that if the unions were to be maintained as continuous institutions, the worker must be schooled to rely exclusively upon them to promote and protect his interests. If any other agency--political party, government or employer--injected itself into the situation, it would detract from this exclusive reliance of the wage earner upon his union. Any division of function, it was thought, would tend to weaken the union by the intrusion of competitive organizations which, on this theory, would dilute the allegiance of the union members. Therefore employer welfare policies, labor or socialist parties, positive social and labor legislation must be avoided. All these institutions and programs compete with the unions. If exceptions were to be made, they must be made cautiously and be strictly limited to a minimum. Thus, independent political action and positive labor and social legislation were distinctly ruled out.

Recognizing that some interest in politics was inevitable because of the power of government over the life of the people, a concession was made originally to lobbying of a cautious and casual nature. But no major labor or social legislation was to be promoted. Only legislation that would indirectly strengthen union activity would be favored. A close analysis of the type favored by business unionists suggests that legislation of a negative nature was to be favored and it must be designed to accomplish aims which trade unions on their own could not successfully pursue. A serious obstacle to successful trade union activity was judicial restraint upon union strike and boycott activity, chiefly under the common-law doctrine of conspiracy and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Strikes, picketing and boycotts were regarded as indispensable union weapons. Judges were excessively liberal in granting ex parte injunctions in cases involving such activities. Ex parte injunctions are temporary orders granted without notice in labor cases, usually on the application of employers. They are returnable within a relatively short period, but in the meantime unions were restrained from picketing and other ordinarily legitimate activities. Almost invariably the injunctions were so vague that even skilled lawyers, and certainly untutored workers, were often not able to decipher what the court forbade and what it permitted. As a general rule the enforcement authorities, prodded by insistent employers and their eager lawyers, liberally, indiscriminately and with utter disregard for civil rights enforced these orders. The law was so interpreted that violation of an injunction even outside of court was deemed a direct affront to the judge. Thus, jury trials were dispensed with. Basically unsympathetic to organized labor and personally affronted by the actions of the arrested workers, the judges generally were severe in their sentences. This condition became a crucial problem for the unions and created a situation which could only be corrected by legislation. The business unionists had no choice but to promote the necessary legislation. But legislation restraining the courts was negative legislation. It performed no positive

service for the workers, such as improvement in wages and other working conditions. This was the distinction made by the business unionists; chiefly negative legislation was to be sought. Moreover, it was to be achieved by lobbying rather than by any form of participation in political activity, at least so the labor leaders originally thought. This policy of necessity abandoned even non-partisan political activity.

Another serious court interference that, among other disadvantages, threatened the depletion of union finances was the ruling of the courts that under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act certain boycotts were illegal. According to that law, violations subjected the offending parties to triple damages. This attack on the unions also could only be corrected by legislation. But again, such legislation was of a negative nature. It did nothing positive or tangible for the workers. Another form of negative legislation favored by the business unionists was the restriction of immigration to protect the labor market from being flooded.

Positive legislation was taboo, for in that case the government instead of the unions would be performing basic services for the workers. It also unequivocally implied that political action was as important as trade union action, and might even become a significant rival to trade union activity as it often did in earlier periods and as advocated by the arch rivals of pure and simple unionism--the Socialists and their associates. Consequently, the champions of business unionism opposed such positive legislation as government regulation of hours of labor, minimum wage legislation and even workmen's compensation laws. A slight concession was made in that the labor movement historically and consistently favored free public education. But that service was for children and it was more than evident that education for the youngsters was too remote for union enterprise. A more closely related concession was legislation protecting women workers and regulating child labor. To skilled workers, women and children were hardly fit union members; hence, the government rightly should safeguard their interests. And children of tender age under no circumstances should be deprived of educational and recreational opportunities.

#### *Non-Partisan Political Action*

Uppermost in the minds of the AFL labor leaders was the problem of coping with the practices of government and the courts which threatened the effectiveness and even the existence of unions. Most damaging of all was the hostile and often arbitrary attitude of the courts. It was imperative to check these destructive judicial practices if the trade union movement was to exist and thrive. Obviously, legislation was the remedy. At first the AFL, its affiliated unions, and its allies and sympathizers resorted to public appeals. They denounced court actions and government practices. Finding this procedure ineffective, they resorted to lobbying. Lobbying, however, was not conducted systematically. Moreover, there was no permanent, well-staffed unit operated by specialists to keep abreast of legislative developments. Ad hoc committees served the purpose only very inadequately. In the course of this activity, union lobbyists were asked whether they had voter support for their legislative demands. Appreciating this defect, the AFL launched its now famous non-partisan political action program. Since it was skeptical of independent political action, the Federation decided that organized labor should concentrate on supporting candidates on both major party tickets who promised to support key measures supported by labor. The slogan was "reward your friends and punish your enemies."

The AFL found it necessary in 1906 to rescind its previously adamant opposition to any form of political action. It restricted itself, however, to non-partisan political action, a practice it followed effectively later after World War I. In its initial attempt its chief target was Congressman Charles E. Littlefield of the rural state of Maine. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, he was extremely hostile to any legislation that would mitigate the deleterious effect of injunctions and other unfavorable court action in labor disputes. A modest fund was collected and Gompers energetically spearheaded the campaign against Littlefield

with the aid of other prominent labor officials. Aroused, the Republicans threw in many of their national leaders to counteract the labor attack. These included the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of War and certain widely-known and respected United States Senators. Even President Theodore Roosevelt entered the campaign with an endorsement of Littlefield. While the Congressman was reelected, it was by a distinctly reduced majority. This outcome naturally pleased the Federation leaders. They had demonstrated that they could exercise influence even in farm areas. An incidental policy to further labor non-partisan political activity turned out to be less successful. For a brief period, the Federation launched a movement to elect "card carrying" union members to Congress. One such candidate, a member of the Telegraphers' Union, was elected. There was much ado about this achievement in Federation circles. Unfortunately, it became known that this card-carrying Congressman engaged in certain unsavory practices, and this proved a boomerang.

In its campaign program, the Federation listed its demands with the *leitmotif* "human rights versus dollars." This was a traditional slogan used to arouse the masses. Non-partisan political activity now became a permanent auxiliary undertaking of the AFL. One qualification was made where the AFL had no friends in either the Democratic or Republican parties; there a straight labor candidate was to be nominated. This procedure, however, was seldom resorted to. At first the Socialist Party was ignored since the non-partisan policy implied support of candidates of the two major parties, but when Victor L. Berger, the Milwaukee Socialist, was elected to Congress in 1910, the AFL accepted him as a representative of labor.

When Woodrow Wilson became President in 1912 with the support of the AFL, the political fortunes of the Federation began to bloom. Thenceforth organized labor with some exceptions was closely linked nationally to the Democratic Party. Its regional and local affiliates in most large urban areas had already followed this policy. While this link to the Democratic Party had its pragmatic implications, there were certain ethnic and other factors that were of considerable influence. The Democratic Party split wide open during the Civil War and remained the minority party. Moreover, having absorbed the People's Party, it acquired progressive people who were accustomed to working with organized labor, and included many labor planks in its platform. With a predominantly Irish leadership in both the unions and in the local branches of the Democratic Party, it was natural that the party should cater to ethnic and other minority groups and receive a hospitable response. Immigrants and their progeny have since been a significant element participating in and supporting the Democratic Party.

Thus, the new ethnic group which became the dominant element in the Federation played an important role in associating the AFL with the Democratic Party. This group consisted of the descendants of the Irish immigrants of the "potato famine" period of the 1830's and 1840's. When these immigrants arrived in the United States, they were not only untutored in urban ways but lacked experience for any work except common labor. They had no political sophistication except a bitter hatred for British landlords and the British authorities who supported their exploiters. The Republican Party was dominated by Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Generally illiterate and devout Roman Catholics, the immigrant groups received their tutelage from the Church. Since the struggle in Europe between the Catholic Church and the Socialists was intense, it was not difficult to enlist them in opposition to the "Anti-Christ" Socialists. The descendants of the Irish immigrants, also under the close tutelage of the Church, inherited that hatred. As these descendants became Americanized, they entered industry and became semiskilled and skilled workers.

By the early decades of the twentieth century the Irish trade union element was dominant. In the building trades unions, it provided the majority of union officials. Indeed up to the present time, Irish Roman Catholics are by far the largest ethnic group occupying official union positions on all levels of industry. In the struggle between the business unionists and Socialists in the AFL, the Irish provided the main support for Samuel Gompers, born in London's East side of Dutch parents who traced their ancestry to Jews

expelled from Spain during the Inquisition. When the Socialist threat in the AFL became serious, the Catholics (predominantly Irish) organized the "Militia of Christ" to resist Socialist advances. The Militia was guided by a Roman Catholic priest as chaplain, and included most of the Catholic trade union leaders. The Militia of Christ issued literature, maintained a headquarters headed by a prominent trade union official, employed a small staff of lecturers and used prominent national and local trade union leaders as auxiliary lecturers. Most of its educational activities were conducted with the cooperation of local parish priests. Church guild halls were usually used for meetings. Ironically, Gompers was regularly invited to address their annual banquets and he twitted them good-naturedly that while he was a most ardent anti-Socialist and they honored him as the principal speaker, he was not eligible to membership among them. Gompers was very proud of his Jewish lineage. When asked if he were a Jew, he would raise himself on his toes to accentuate his five-foot-four stature and reply, "A safardic Jew," that is to say, not a common garden variety Eastern European Jew.

The ethnic link to the Democratic Party was also promoted because of the isolation of the Irish in an Anglo-Saxon Protestant country. They found it difficult, because of their religion and race, to penetrate urban business and industry in any role above that of a wage earner. Many of them made use of their natural gifts of leadership and their histrionic ability and drifted into local politics. With the Republican Party in control of the non-Catholics and the Democratic Party catering to ethnic and immigrant groups, they naturally affiliated with the Democrats to advance themselves above mere wage-earner status. As the Democratic Party in the large population centers expanded its activities among Irish and other recent immigrant arrivals from Southern and Eastern Europe, the Irish rose to local party leadership. The paid positions were largely filled by Irish Catholics. This was their opportunity to become white-collar workers in county and municipal offices. The police and fire departments, street cleaning and other municipal and county services such as maintenance work became "Irish feeding grounds." Thus, in large population centers, the Irish became the dominant political element. The ethnic factor was an important one in leading to this relationship. The Irish were now the dominant leaders in the Democratic Party on the local level and also in the trade unions. The Irish trade union leaders were associated with the Irish political leaders by religious, fraternal, and frequently social and family ties. Their bent for the Democratic Party, therefore, was strong.

With the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912 and the domination of Democrats with union support in the federal government, labor organizations became influential factors in national politics. This development had become evident in the 1910 election which brought sixteen trade unionists into the House of Representatives and one into the United States Senate. A considerable number both in the House and the Senate were labor sympathizers. Through their efforts the AFL, following its issuance of a Bill of Grievances, successfully introduced in Congress bills restricting the use of injunctions in labor disputes and relief from the onerous disabilities suffered by seamen. These measures were the ones the AFL had steadily concentrated on since the turn of the century. Now liberal Republicans were being elected to Congress, and with the victory of the Democrats in the 1912 presidential campaign, the prospects for favorable legislation improved.

Finally in 1914 the Clayton Anti-Trust Bill became law. Elated at this success, Gompers erroneously labeled the law "Labor's Magna Carta" because it declared that "the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce" (Section 6). The Clayton Act also stipulated that labor organizations were not to be construed as illegal combinations in restraint of trade under the Sherman Anti-Trust Laws, limited the courts in their indiscriminate procedures in issuing injunctions in labor cases, and forbade the issuance of injunctions prohibiting workers singly or jointly from striking, peacefully assembling or performing other acts which were legal if performed in the absence of a labor dispute. Enactment of this vital legislation (the Clayton Act) was indeed a great victory for labor and revealed its increased political influence. The enactment of the Clayton and Taft-Hartley Acts and related labor legislation further proved that

organized labor could only make headway in securing favorable legislation with the sympathetic support of liberals, friendly Republicans, Democrats and independents. To achieve these results however it was imperative to participate in politics. Actually, the laws were rendered largely ineffective by the courts, but their enactment did demonstrate the influence of organized labor in Congress. Organized labor also exercised influence in the Federal administration, which brought it into even closer cooperation with the Democratic Party.

## CHAPTER XVII

### PRESENTING LABOR'S DEMANDS AT NATIONAL PARTY CONVENTIONS

The friendly attitude of the Democrats to AFL non-partisan political action stimulated a determination to intensify the Federation's political activity. It was therefore decided in 1908 for the first time in the history of the Federation, to present labor's grievances to the political conventions of the two major parties as they met to nominate their presidential candidates and draft their platforms.

Since the Republican convention was the first to meet, a delegation headed by Gompers, with two vice-presidents who were known to be Republicans, put in an appearance with their legislative demands. Previously, the Federation leaders had appealed for Republican legislative assistance. But Republican indifference only strengthened the determination of the labor leaders to press their case at the convention. However, the Republican Convention Committee on Platform refused to grant the AFL delegation a hearing before its entire committee. Instead it shunted the delegation aside to a hearing by a subcommittee. In the subcommittee's hearing room, the AFL delegation was confronted by two outstanding political representatives of the National Association of Manufacturers, its bitterest enemy--and, of course, a prime vehicle for anti-union propaganda. To add to the insult, the President of the NAM, James Van Cleve, a vigorous leader in the Association's determined anti-union campaign was also present. Van Cleve was also head of the Buck Stove and Range Co. which sponsored the anti-boycott litigation under the Sherman Anti-Trust Law, a statute which empowered the courts to assess triple damages against unions and their members in boycott cases. Damages in another boycott case were also awarded against members of the hatters' local in Danbury, Connecticut. Many union members lost their homes as a result of awards of the courts in these boycott cases. It was reported that as Gompers and his associates on the AFL delegation entered the subcommittee room, Van Cleve rose. Pointing his finger at Gompers, he declared that Gompers and his delegation had no business to appear before a convention committee of the Republican Party. He told them that they belonged to the Democratic Party.

The AFL delegation requested endorsement by the Republican convention of the following legislative measures: trade unions should not be regarded as combinations in restraint of trade; some limitation in the use of injunctions in labor disputes; provision for trial by jury in cases of contempt of court occurring outside of the court room; an amendment extending the existing eight-hour law to all persons employed on government work, irrespective of whether employed by contractors or subcontractors; provision for general employers' liability coverage wherever federal jurisdiction extended; creation of a Department of Labor headed by a Secretary having a seat in the Cabinet; establishment of a Federal Bureau of Mines; creation of a United States Government postal savings bank; submission to the States of a constitutional amendment to provide for suffrage for women.

Ignominious failure was the only result of the Federation's efforts. The Republican convention completely omitted seven of the eight items recommended. The clause dealing with the labor injunction was the only plank accepted for the Republican platform. Gompers denounced it as a flimsy, tricky evasion of the issue and pronounced it a pro-injunction, not an anti-injunction declaration. The AFL leaders were also distressed because the Republicans nominated William Howard Taft as their presidential candidate. Prior to the convention, the AFL delegates interviewed him believing that he probably would be the convention choice. He received them coolly and displayed no sympathy for their proposals. Moreover, he was the first federal judge to issue a sweeping injunction based on the Sherman Anti-Trust Act against a strike by railroad workers.

Disheartened, the labor delegation turned to the Democratic National Convention. There they were cordially received. A hearing was granted them by the full committee. Incidentally, the chairman of the resolutions committee was Judge Alton B. Parker, who had also served as counsel for the AFL in the *Buck Stove and Range* case. The identical request which the delegation had submitted to the Republican committee was presented and discussed with the Resolutions Committee. Inasmuch as the recommendations of the Committee to the convention seemed to embody a reasonable phrasing of the recommendations of the labor delegation, its members believed that they had succeeded in their quest. Of the eight items of legislation requested by the Federation, the Democratic platform pledged the party to all but those on woman suffrage and government postal savings banks. In its official publication, *The American Federationist*, President Gompers, as editor, summarized the experience of the labor delegation with both conventions. He clearly pointed out the Republican indifference, if not hostility, and cited the friendliness of the Democrats. He also set out a list of offenses deemed to have been committed by the Republican Party against the trade union movement. He concluded treatment by calling upon the Federation's membership to punish the Republicans at the polls.

Thus, another precedent was introduced by the AFL. It now went on record in condemning one party in a presidential election and endorsing another. Gompers and his associates distinctly emphasized and reiterated that favoring the Democratic Party presidential ticket was not a partisan act. They insisted that they would urge the workers to support any party that incorporated their demands in its platform and promised to work for their fulfillment. While the Federation supported a few Republican Congressional candidates, events usually forced it to support the Democratic presidential ticket. Up to the present, history records only one exception, when in 1924 the AFL endorsed the LaFollette Progressive Party ticket. An active campaign was conducted in support of the Democratic ticket and William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic candidate, whose favorable labor record inclined him towards labor and social reform. Bryan publicly expressed his gratitude for Federation support, pledging himself if elected to appoint Gompers to his Cabinet as Secretary of Labor, as soon as a Department of Labor might be created. Gompers in return expressed his appreciation but announced that he preferred to continue as AFL president, and that he did not seek personal reward. In general, the Democratic Party gladly welcomed the support of organized labor. Literature was widely distributed, some of it financed by the Democratic National Committee. Most of the affiliates followed the AFL and, with a few notable exceptions, the leaders actively participated in the campaign. Two minor parties that participated in the campaign threatened to attract votes that might otherwise have gone to the Democrats. These were the Socialist Party and William Randolph Hearst's newly created Independent Party. Gompers and his associates warned workers and sympathizers that a vote for either of these parties would be a vote against the Democratic slate.

Taft defeated Bryan by the overwhelming electoral vote of 321 to 162. Despite the strenuous AFL campaign, the large popular vote for the Republican candidate was concentrated in the North-Eastern states where the bulk of its membership was located. Evidently the skilled union workers had become content under Republican administrations which made possible "full dinner pail" prosperity. Past business

union preachments that the desired goals were immediate gains, continued employment, and reasonably good wages were difficult to overcome, and it was to require drastic changes in the composition of the labor force, a transformation of the industrial structure, and a cataclysmic depression to alter the attitude of the workers. It took the rank and file some time to unlearn the early teachings of the labor leaders that the unions must be kept out of politics.

The disappointing outcome of the 1908 Presidential election temporarily put a damper on enthusiastic trade union political activity. Trade union indifference toward vigorous political action was evident in the 1910 Congressional election. There was a paucity of official trade union pronouncements urging political activity. While in traditional form Gompers advised trade union affiliates to continue trusting in the definite and time-honored trade union economic methods, nevertheless cautiously advocated resort to the ballot. Consequently the Federation, while still subordinating politics to trade union action, began to alter the initial business-union policy of abstention from political action. The Federation, therefore, continued to publicize the legislative records of congressmen as well as to urge its members to participate in political campaigns. Pamphlets were published and distributed to affiliated organizations and others. Even some speaking engagements were undertaken. All these were cautiously limited primarily to educational work, and did not seem seriously to disturb the doctrinaire of "pure and simple" trade unionists.

In the meantime, judicial hostility to, and Congressional disregard of, labor's legislative demands were indeed disturbing. In the 1910 Congressional session, an amendment to an appropriation bill sponsored by the AFL, which would have cut off any funds to the Department of Justice that could be used by the government to prosecute unions, was unceremoniously defeated. Meanwhile, continuance of the unfriendly attitude of government, Congress and the courts, coupled with the mounting and successful aggressiveness of the powerful multiplant employers who intensified their anti-union activities, became a dangerous threat to union survival that could not easily be disregarded by organized labor. If the labor movement was to be safeguarded, relief was imperative. Such relief could only be obtained through legislation that would limit the courts in their decisions in labor cases and modify the unfavorable government administrative position towards labor unions. In their unequal contest with rapacious employers, these obstacles proved effective in frustrating union activity, making it possible for employers not only to weaken unions, but to destroy them. It seemed absolutely essential, therefore, that these frustrating conditions should be removed. Despite the position of the die-hard "pure and simple" unionists, political action seemed to be indicated as the chief channel through which the necessary reforms could be made. Unless relief could be had, the remaining rank and file members and workers would lose faith in trade unions as then conducted and turn elsewhere for succor. There was imminent danger that the continued weakening of union organization and the impotence of the Federation would only give aid and sustenance to the increasingly formidable Socialist opposition within and outside the Federation.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PROGRESSIVES AND LIBERALS TO THE RESCUE

Fortunately for organized labor, an element in American society which invariably collaborated with the more advanced groups in the labor movement appeared on the horizon. This element was critical

of the aggrandizing, corrupt and oppressive policies of business which dominated politics and government. In the second decade of the twentieth century, growing discontent and concern over the widening of the gap between the wealth of the few and the poverty of the many were beginning to be evident. Intellectuals and reformers, generally labeled "muckrakers," skillfully exposed the evils of large-scale business and corrupt machine politics. The reform movement against corporate industrialism of the late nineteenth century and its economic and political abuses--a movement which was still smoldering at that time--was rekindled by these muckrakers. They were joined by the pragmatic Socialists and those in the labor movement who were becoming disillusioned with the growing impotence of "pure and simple" unionism. They revived and rejuvenated the earlier middle-class ideal of placing in public office honest, humane men dedicated to the increase of government control over monopoly, restoration of competition in industry, the reopening of opportunity for small business, and giving labor a "square deal." Once again, the demand for a government with positive functions that would serve the interest of common people was emerging, and stirring the popular imagination. The "negative" state had shown its inability to protect workers, consumers, small businessmen, and other low-income groups against acquisitive and rampant individualism based on a laissez-faire ideology. As a result, there were revived some of the older aspects of the "American dream," which, accepting the essential assumptions of capitalism, nevertheless insisted that the destructive and sordid practices associated with it must be eradicated. It was believed that this objective could only be attained through a benevolent, that is to say a "welfare," state. And political action was believed to be the appropriate instrument for attaining this objective.

The first fruits of this progressive political revolt on the national level were outgrowths of the Congressional elections of 1910. The Republican Party, commonly regarded as associated with big business and reaction, lost its control of the House of Representatives in that year. The Democratic Party, up to that time the minority party, came into control. In addition to the old Populist element which merged with the Democratic Party in 1896, the new immigrant groups, joined with the reformers as the leavening elements within the Democratic Party--elements which contributed the liberal middle-class and pro-labor spirit.

As a result of this wave of progressivism with its determined pro-labor stand, the AFL was enabled to list twenty-seven pro-labor measures that became law between March 4, 1911 and March 3, 1913. In addition, the AFL took pride, perhaps undeservedly, in the fact that the new chairman of the House Labor Committee was a Democratic Congressman from a Pennsylvania mining region and the former Secretary-Treasurer of the United Mine Workers. This was William B. Wilson, who was not a doctrinaire business unionist. Thus, as a result of a wave of progressivism, the AFL stimulated not a little pro-labor activity in the House of Representatives. Having secured, with little effort, this favorable response in a Democratic-controlled House of Representatives, Gompers and his associates began to realize what might be expected if both legislative houses and the executive branch of the government should come under control of the Democrats. The emergence of such control supplied ammunition to Gompers and his supporters to counteract more effectively the Socialist sentiment for independent political action than in the ascendancy. Thus, contrary to his warning in 1894 against any kind of political action, Gompers now changed his tune. While warning the rank and file in 1912 against the Socialists, whom he charged with beguiling them with chimerical political programs designed to transport the labor movement to some utopian land of promise, he nevertheless counselled the workers to strive for a better "here and now." He emphasized that the proper aims of trade unionism must be the achievement of desirable material benefits. He emphasized that political action was an important means to that end.

#### *Significant Application of Non-Partisan Political Action*

Recognizing that Democratic Party prospects were going to be better than in previous years

because of the liberal reform tide stirring the nation, Gompers decided to work with it more closely. The Democratic Party had already demonstrated by the bills it had passed in the House that it was giving more substantial assistance to labor than the Republican Party. Gompers and his associates now decided to use their influence in the Federation to swing the labor vote to the Democrats. But in order to stress the non-partisan stand of the AFL, and demonstrate the differences between the two major parties in their sympathy toward labor legislation, he made the gesture of affording the Republican Party the opportunity to bid for the support of organized labor. To expose its hostility he also submitted the Federation's legislative demands to the Platform Committee at the Republican Party convention. The outcome was indeed unfavorable to labor. The differences between the Republican and Democratic convention planks appear in Appendix D.

That the AFL was selective in granting its political support became evident when it refused to support the newly created Progressive Party. Founded by a group of insurgent Republicans led by former President Theodore Roosevelt, this new party was also dissatisfied with the conservative policies of the Republican Party and with President William Howard Taft. Neither Roosevelt, who was nominated as the presidential candidate, nor Hiram Johnson of California, its vice-presidential choice, was patently anti-labor. Indeed they had been fairly friendly. Their platform contained more pro-labor planks than those of the two major parties. They called for a multitude of reforms relating to government, labor, currency, social legislation, taxes and conservation—all of which were acceptable to liberals and most of organized labor. Gompers and his associates were political realists and decided that practical considerations required that the Federation support one of the major parties. Since the Democratic Party accepted practically all of the labor planks, and considering its recent congressional successes, it appeared wise to support it. Sentimental considerations also helped in making the decision. The AFL and the rank and file had become accustomed to the faces of the Democratic politicians, and felt more at home with them.

Hence in 1912 the Executive Council of the Federation, following the political conventions, reaffirmed its political decisions of 1906, 1908, and 1910 to continue its non-partisan political policy of rewarding friends and punishing enemies. It clearly indicated that it considered the Democratic Party its proven friend and thus entitled to receive its support. In its two official publications, it undertook to exhort its followers and sympathizers to support the Democratic Party. These official publications explained why the AFL had decided to favor the Democratic Party and outlined the facts in all fairness so that readers might judge whether the decision was justified. The Republican, Democratic, and Progressive parties were praised for including pro-labor planks in their platforms.

The Republican Party was chided for having been unfriendly to labor during the many years during which it controlled the government. The Democrats, in power in the House of Representatives which convened in March 1911, had passed twenty-eight measures desired by labor, while the Republican-controlled Senate had rejected seventeen of these bills. As for the leadership outlook of both parties, the Federation stressed the traditional animosity of William Howard Taft and the Republican Party toward labor in contrast to the consistent friendliness of the Democratic leadership. In accordance with Federation non-partisan political policy, however, the AFL supported friendly individual Republican candidates, so Senator William E. Borah of Idaho was endorsed for reelection because of his outstanding pro-labor record. In AFL campaign literature the Progressive Party and its candidates were disregarded, presumably because of the AFL policy of supporting the major party candidates whose prospects of election were more favorable.

With the reform movement at its height and the Republicans' split by the popular and formidable Theodore Roosevelt, the Democrats elected their candidates by a plurality vote. Taft received but three-and-a-half million votes, carrying only the "rock-ribbed" Republican states of Maine and Vermont,

whereupon humorists derisively modified the old adage to run: "As Maine goes so goes Vermont." Theodore Roosevelt, having had to create a new national organization, revealed his personal popularity by topping the Republican candidate with four million votes. Despite the reforms that Wilson and Roosevelt promised the electorate, Eugene V. Debs, the Socialist candidate, also benefitted from the pervasive reform sentiment. He received the largest vote ever won by a Socialist presidential candidate in this country, 901,062. Particularly elated were the AFL leaders and their supporters. At last they had supported the winning candidate. With the Democratic Party in control of both houses of Congress, and with the aid of the small group of progressive Republican members, prospects for attaining the legislative measures sought for so many years were promising. This happy experience seemed to forecast similar successes in the future by associating with the Democratic Party on the national level, and even at lower levels. Now Gompers and his associates had ready access to the President of the United States and could count on his sympathetic attitude and that of his subordinates.

Central among the aims of organized labor at this time was labor's desperate need for complete relief from prosecution under the Sherman Anti-Trust law. Under this law injunctions, contempt proceedings and damage suits hung over the heads of unions as long-time threats to their security. Legislative redress was badly needed. The courts continued their judicial intransigence in issuing and upholding injunctions under the sanctions of the Sherman Act of 1890. The memorable *Danbury Hatters* and *Buck Stove and Range* cases had been before the courts for a decade. The AFL had incurred heavy costs in appealing decisions from inferior courts, and was not securing more favorable decisions from the higher tribunals. Relief could only be obtained, apparently, by legislative curtailment of the hostility of the courts toward unions.

With the aid of the Democratic administration and liberal reformers the Clayton Act became law in 1914. It declared that "the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce." A concluding clause read: "nor shall such organizations, or the members thereof be held or construed to be illegal combinations or conspiracies in restraint of trade under the anti-trust laws." Gompers and his associates were highly elated at this extraordinary victory. It capped their political efforts and justified, beyond their hopes, the resort to vigorous political action. Gompers hailed the Clayton Amendment as "Labor's Magna Carta." He proclaimed that "the rights incorporated in the labor provisions of the Clayton anti-trust act will be the foundation upon which the workers can establish greater liberty and greater opportunity for all those who do the beneficent work of the world." Legal authorities were skeptical as to the likelihood of the Clayton Act fulfilling the expectations of the AFL leaders, once the courts began to interpret it. The Socialists, vociferous opponents of the Federation's non-partisan policy, agreed with the legal experts. In the end these expectations were fulfilled by succeeding court decisions, but for the time being the Federation leaders could claim an unprecedented victory. Referring to Gompers' 1896 disparagement of the non-partisan efforts of the trade unions, the Socialists gleefully criticized contemporary Federation policy. But now the AFL was in a position to show results. In control of Federation machinery, the leaders proceeded to pursue this course with substantial backing by the rank and file.

Experienced now in the ways of conducting effective lobbying activities in Congress, the Federation did not rely solely on the Democratic Party. In order to assure the passage of desired legislation, a new feature was introduced in addition to that of labor leaders maintaining contact with Congress and the administration. A paid representative soon became versed in the techniques of legislative procedures and lobbying. A prominent trade unionist was employed full time to pursue the legislative interests of the labor movement.

The seeds were thus sown for a full time efficient legislative department manned by a staff well acquainted with legislative needs and experienced in promoting them in the halls of Congress. Personal conferences with Congressmen and Senators who were staunch friends of labor were held regularly so that

strategy and tactics could be discussed which would facilitate passage of desired labor bills. Representatives of labor skillfully presented the views of labor before committees of both houses of Congress. Since World War I these representatives have been reinforced by academically trained and competent staff members of the Research Department and other specialized technical departments such as Social Security, Housing, Civil Rights, Education, and Legal. In order to maintain its influence labor had to be in a position to deliver votes, so a political arm was gradually developed to muster its political influence in the country. For these purposes organized labor lined up its affiliated unions, training and guiding them as effective auxiliaries in the non-partisan political field. Members were also stimulated to contact their representatives in Congress in support of specific pieces of legislation. In addition they were being educated to become politically conscious and urged to participate in primaries and elections. Ultimately a full-fledged department was established with a trained staff of professionals selected from the movement to conduct political activities. Organized labor thus became a most powerful political "pressure group." There will be further discussion of this development of professional and academically trained staffs later.

At the end of the Democratic-controlled Congress in the spring of 1915, the AFL could evaluate with some satisfaction the results of its non-partisan political activity and its lobbying during the first two years of the Wilson administration. Its chief lobbyist could proudly declare that the Democratic-controlled session had shown labor more consideration than had any previous Congress. On the plus side of the ledger were listed twenty-six laws. The more significant of these statutes provided that (1) labor organizations would be exempted from the purview of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act; (2) the use of injunctions would be more limited in labor-dispute cases; (3) contempt of an injunctive writ would be limited and punishment would be less severe; (4) the Department of Justice would be prohibited from using anti-trust funds to prosecute labor organizations under the Sherman Act; (5) seamen's contractual rights, working conditions, and welfare would be improved and humanized; (6) the *eight-hour law* would be extended to women and children workers in the District of Columbia.

On the debit side were a number of measures in the AFL program that had failed of enactment. The more important were (1) an immigration restriction bill with a literacy test; (2) a bill protecting labor against the competition of domestic or foreign convict labor; (3) a bill against child labor; (4) an employers' liability bill and a workmen's compensation bill for government and railroad employees; (5) a bill establishing a Bureau of Safety in the Department of Labor. It will be noted that most of the legislation demanded by the AFL and business unionists was of the negative variety. Only a few measures pertained to positive undertakings by the government to improve conditions for the workers, that is, to do things for them that unions could or might be expected to accomplish through collective bargaining. Outstanding among these affirmative measures were workmen's compensation and the limiting of hours of labor for women, children and government employees. Thus gradually the business unionists began to appreciate that positive legislation was also necessary as a complement to trade union achievements, and that it would not lessen worker interest in unions. This attitude grew stronger as time went on.

As pragmatists, the AFL leaders appreciated that they could not expect that all the measures they asked for would become laws. They were fully aware and let their adherents know that their legislative program had been more successful under a Democratic administration than under previous Republican ones. This has been true up to the present. It was vital for the leaders to impress this new opinion upon rank and file members who had become habituated to voting Republican since the Civil War. Breaking this habit was essential for the success of a non-partisan labor policy and the close collaboration of organized labor with the Democratic Party. AFL leaders therefore further impressed upon their members that the Democratic administration had shown a friendliness for labor which the previous Republican administrations had scorned. During the years in which Wilson occupied the White House AFL leaders could write or call upon him and receive prompt and friendly attention. They could ask for various kinds of help and find a sympathetic response.

Nevertheless, at its conventions the Federation has continued its practice of appealing to both parties. With some exceptions that will be considered later the response of the Democratic Party has consistently been more favorable to labor. Moreover, most of the legislation considered desirable has been enacted during periods of Democratic control of Congress and the administration. Of course, there have been a few Republican Senators and Congressmen friendly to organized labor. Undoubtedly the AFL leaders would have preferred to pursue a broad non-partisan policy, but the generally hostile attitude of the Republican Party made such a course impossible. Furthermore, the success of organized labor in securing desirable legislation and sympathetic governmental administrative responses under Democratic administrations encouraged labor to intensify political activity. This situation also led the AFL into closer informal alliance with the Democratic Party, which began rather casually with the 1908 Democratic Party convention. This collaboration continued during the Wilson administration and was mutually profitable. Nonetheless, the AFL continued to dispatch delegations to each major-party convention. Unlike previous ones, the Republican convention of 1916 adopted several of the AFL legislative demands in its platform. However, these fell short of the number incorporated at Democratic conventions. Gompers, restating the Federation's non-partisan position, nevertheless frankly stated that the Federation was satisfied with Democratic support in the past, and as long as it was not disappointed in the present and future it would continue to work with the Democratic Party. He added that should the time come when that party turned its back on organized labor, the AFL will look elsewhere for redress in securing its rights.

Satisfied with the labor planks of the Democratic Party, the AFL cooperated in the 1916 presidential campaign even more fully than it had in the past. With Gompers' encouragement, one of the key AFL leaders wrote a pamphlet entitled *Wilson and Labor*. It was published by the Democratic National Campaign Committee and showed the pro-labor record of the Wilson administration. Gompers wrote a foreword affirming that he had never experienced anything like the friendly spirit toward labor pervading all branches of the Wilson administration. Other literature in support of the Democratic ticket was independently printed and widely distributed by the AFL through its Representation Committee. Campaigning was intensified. At the 1916 convention of the AFL which occurred a month before the election, a bold and forthright "declaration" was presented. It proclaimed that the issues in the campaign revealed conflicting interests of labor and Wall Street. It reiterated that the Democratic Party was the proven friend of labor, whereas the Republican Party had not been and could not be because its candidates were friends of Wall Street and its satellites. These pernicious elements seek to retain the special privileges and power that they secretly stole from the people. This sentiment was widespread among the common people and was popularized by the reformers and muckrackers. Thus the AFL boldly and categorically associated itself with the revolt of the general public. It pictured itself not as a special-interest group but as a part of the mainstream of rebellion against the aggrandizing tactics of the "special interests."

Nevertheless the election outcome was close. Charles Evans Hughes, a long time Republican leader who resigned from the Supreme Court to accept the Republican nomination, carried the industrial states of the Northeast as well as many of the Northwest. This indicated that many workers continued voting Republican despite vigorous Federation campaigning. However, the San Francisco Central Labor Council aided by Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson had conducted a vigorous campaign on behalf of the Democratic Party which proved of tremendous help in putting California and Washington in the Democratic column. Other complications and factional differences in California also contributed to the loss of California by Hughes, but the record clearly revealed that organized labor had materially aided in the Wilson victory. Although the Democrats retained control of both houses of Congress and the administration, the election returns were close. The electoral vote stood 277 to 254 and the popular vote gave Wilson 9,126,600 to Hughes' 8,538,200. Allan L. Benson, the Socialist Party nominee, received 585,100, about half of the vote cast for Debs in the preceding national election. Organized labor was elated at the outcome, even extravagantly claiming that it had tipped the balance in favor of the Democratic Party.

## CHAPTER XIX

### TRADE UNION SURVIVAL UP TO WORLD WAR I

Following the 1893 depression and subsequent business improvement, the trade unions made progress in securing employer recognition and establishing collective bargaining despite employer resistance reinforced by the courts and government. Trade union organization was definitely and rapidly advancing. This took place even though employers' labor policies were altered, and the more powerful employers took a more determined anti-union stance, as a result of which trade unions eventually encountered catastrophic reverses.

#### *Progress Toward Stability*

As we have seen, with the return of industrial prosperity in 1898 there was a rapid expansion of trade union organization. While the important gains were not as spectacular as those of the turbulent year 1886, trade union achievements were by no means ephemeral. Some of the unions founded during the stirrings of 1886 remained in existence or laid the basis for succeeding organizations, but an important AFL accretion resulted when union leaders and their rank and file became more disciplined and thus acquired more stability and permanence. The most substantial unions disaffiliated from the Knights of Labor and joined the AFL. These unions consisted chiefly of skilled workers. From this time up to the First World War a paradoxical situation prevailed: in certain industrial areas the unions made advances but in other areas unionism was being systematically eroded and practically eliminated, especially in industries in which multiple-plant firms predominated. Even as this latter catastrophe was occurring, stability and permanence characterized the remaining unions. Moreover the trade union movement, chiefly under the guidance of the Federation, began to institutionalize industrial relations.

The strength of unions that succeeded in establishing themselves is illustrated by various accomplishments. Despite the financial panic of 1907, they prevented large reductions in wages during the hard times that followed, and even more striking was their ability to withstand membership losses after 1900 despite depressions in the early years of the century. More remarkable was the extraordinary spread of trade agreements. Joint participation between organized labor and organized capital in the conduct of labor relations was becoming a reality. A pioneer model was the national agreement between the Molders Union and the Stove Founders' National Defense Association entered into in 1898. A somewhat similar agreement was entered into between the International Association of Machinists and the National Metal Trades Association which covered the machine construction industry. Trade agreements now became the central objective of unions which aimed at continuity and stability. The concept of trade agreements spread to other industries like coal; newspaper, book and job printing; pottery; and shipping on the Great Lakes. Innumerable local trade agreements were entered into between unions and employers in building, construction, streetcar and other industries.

To be sure some trade agreements did not last long, chiefly because of lack of experience on both sides and the undue desire of one side or the other to disregard the usual mutual considerations. With experience, the agreements were more carefully drawn and more sincere efforts were made to observe them meticulously on both sides. Success in maintaining agreements depended on recognition by both sides of the value of industrial government and adequate flexibility in adjusting differences. The agreements usually stipulated conditions of employment such as wages, forms of payment for piece work, hours of labor and

employee conduct in the shop. Sanitation, ventilation, safe working conditions and other practices safeguarding the health and comfort of the workers were also spelled out. Since most of the trades covered were skilled, apprenticeship provisions were an important factor. The age, length of training, rate of pay, and assurance that the learner be given the opportunity to master the entire trade were definitely provided for.

Provisions of which labor was particularly proud were those that discouraged strikes and lock-outs while the agreement was in effect. Unlike the present judicial attitude toward them, trade agreements in this early period were treated by the courts as voluntary understandings independently arranged by the parties and therefore not legally enforceable. They were gentlemen's agreements whereby both sides pledged themselves as honor-bound to observe their provisions. Consequently, a clause stipulated that differences over interpretation of the agreement or separate provisions thereof must either be settled amicably by the parties or, if that was not possible, submitted to binding arbitration. Neither side considered it wise to submit determination of the substantive provisions to a third party. The making of an agreement was considered best done by the parties to it. These parties because of their intimate knowledge of the trade are more qualified to draft such an instrument than outsiders. On the other hand, adjustment of differences that might arise about the meaning of contract clauses already incorporated in an agreement could satisfactorily be submitted to arbitration. Occasionally when serious deadlocks occurred, arbitration as to the meaning of substantive terms was reluctantly agreed to. In a few industries, like book and job printing and streetcar operation, voluntary arbitration became the established practice.

Because the turbulent strikes in the 1870's and 80's and even later had created a public impression that unions were irresponsible organizations chiefly interested in strikes, organized labor particularly stressed the importance of the meticulous observance of agreements. There are innumerable instances in the history of trade unionism where unions refused to call sympathetic strikes even in branches where their own members were undergoing a life and death struggle because the trade agreement by its terms forbade strikes during its duration. There are other instances where national unions expelled local affiliates for violation of the no-strike clause, and these unions did not hesitate to provide members to replace the strikers. The trade unions were proud of their strict observance of the no-strike clause. They and their sympathizers publicly called attention to this practice of good faith as evidence of union responsibility.

This concept of the trade agreement was not only adhered to by the business unionists but also was accepted by their principal rivals, the unions which subscribed to moderate Socialism. It was only the extreme radicals who scored trade agreements as evidences of class collaboration. This irresponsible attitude of the extremists undoubtedly accounts for the failure of the unions to retain their hold on the masses whom they brilliantly led. Indeed, the moderate, Socialist-oriented unions actually pioneered in improving collective bargaining procedures, thereby assuring more stable and amicable labor relations. It was these Socialist-led unions, with the assistance of philanthropically-minded businessmen, socially inclined professional men and politicians, and social workers, that played an important role in creating permanent machinery to police and administer the trade agreement for its duration. This new agency consisted of a mutually respected administrator and his staff and was jointly financed by the parties to the agreement. Much of its work was to guide the parties to an amicable adjustment before they reached the boiling point. Where such guidance failed the head of the third-party agency, known popularly as the Impartial Chairman, or arbitrator, would adjudicate the dispute. Efforts were made on all sides to reduce disputes to a minimum or amicably adjust them to avoid the necessity of taking them to the Impartial Chairman for determination. Prime emphasis was placed upon the desirability of having settlements reached by the parties themselves.

#### *AFL Supports War Effort*

Paradoxically, despite the AFL's traditional anti-military sentiment bordering on pacificism,

developments of the pre-World War I period brought the Federation and the Democratic Party into even closer collaboration. German aggressiveness and recklessness caused the Wilson administration and the country generally to become concerned. Aid and comfort were given to the Allies in various ways. Preparations were begun for eventual participation in the war. Simultaneously a vociferous anti-war attitude colored by a pro-German sentiment began to manifest itself. It assumed threatening proportions among the large articulate German population, South and East European immigrants who had suffered under the brutal Russian yoke, Irish who sided with their blood relatives who had revolted against England, pacifists, those feeling that this was a European quarrel, and Socialists who regarded it as a capitalistic war. Among them were a substantial number of union members. In Congress this popular sentiment was reflected by prominent members of both parties voicing opposition to involvement in the European conflict. Some of them, like Senator Robert M. LaFollette, were staunch supporters of organized labor. The most popular Cabinet member, William Jennings Bryan, who as presidential candidate had assembled a huge following, now as Secretary of State expressed outright pacifist opinions. A few other Cabinet members were privately unhappy about the prospect of our being drawn into the war. President Wilson and his intimate associates were disturbed. They realized the need of counteracting this growing anti-war sentiment. They realized that alert mass support was vitally necessary. Organized labor was one articulate and cohesive movement whose backing was inestimable value. It had demonstrated capacity for mustering mass support. Moreover, its allegiance was imperative in order to assure continuous and adequate production and distribution of war and consumer products. Gompers and his associates were sympathetic and their close relations to the Democratic administration would make them congenial collaborators.

Previous unfortunate experience with the military and National Guard in industrial disputes fostered a strong anti-militaristic reaction within the labor movement. The National Guard and even the regular Federal troops had frequently been used to suppress union activities in industrial disputes. These interferences often contributed to union defeats in strikes. Naturally the reaction to this use of military power was bitterness and resentment. Besides, Socialists and other radicals who had considerable influence within and without the labor movement had been incessantly tutored that all wars were instigated by capitalists and had become demonstrably pacifist.

From its inception the American Socialist movement, founded mainly by Germans and modeled after the powerful German Socialist movement, had developed pro-German predilections. Now that this country, wholeheartedly supported by the German Socialist trade union and political organizations, was veering toward support of the Allies as antagonists of Germany, the anti-war predilections of the American Socialist movement were still further stimulated. Socialist adherents primarily from Southern and Eastern Europe who had fled their homeland because of Russian oppression also were adamantly unsympathetic to the Allies. Within the Federation, the Socialists had become a formidable opposition, usually mustering approximately a third of the delegate votes at conventions. Possessing an able and forceful leadership with effective publicity media, they threatened to influence the latent anti-militarist and pacifist sentiments of organized labor and its sympathizers.

Wilson wanted and badly needed the support of the Federation. Gompers and his associates were favorable but knew that they would have to contend with large and insistent anti-war elements within the Federation. All the support that Gompers could muster was not adequate to induce the AFL to support the war effort. He therefore sought the aid of President Wilson, just as the latter solicited his aid, in promoting favorable war sentiment. So important did President Wilson consider AFL endorsement and the cooperation of organized labor in the war effort that, despite his preoccupation with burdensome and pressing domestic and world affairs, Wilson undertook the tiresome and time-consuming railroad journey from Washington to St. Paul, Minnesota, to address the 1917 AFL convention. This was indeed an auspicious occasion. It was an unprecedented honor for organized labor. For the first time in the history of the labor movement a President of the United States was honoring organized labor by personally appearing to address a labor

convention. He appealed for increased cooperation between labor and management as a means of promoting the war effort. The response was enthusiastically favorable. The attitude of Woodrow Wilson towards organized labor, and particularly the Federation, was more favorable than that manifested by any previous president. Moreover, his appearance reemphasized his recognition of the growing importance of labor as a powerful social force. This extraordinary recognition became more evident in the various procedures set up to establish successful workable programs of collaboration between labor and the war agencies. This recognition of the new status of organized labor was further promoted by the government's stipulation in its contracts with business organizations of collective bargaining as the established procedure in the conduct of labor relations.

Naturally the appearance of the President at the AFL convention and the solicitous attitude of the Wilson administration in encouraging amicable relations with employers tended to loosen the unswerving attachment of the rank and file of labor to the Republican Party. The leadership came even closer to the Democratic Party than before. While more detailed account of the benefits which accrued to the trade unions during the war as a result of their loyalty and devotion in the promotion of the war effort is given in later chapters, we now consider the forces which were working against survival.

## CHAPTER XX

### CATASTROPHIC UNION REVERSALS

#### *Expanding Corporate Industrialism Suppresses Unions*

As large-scale industry came into the ascendancy with the spread of multiplant firms, now popularly called trusts, management resistance and outright hostility to trade unions and collective bargaining became the persistent pattern. This change in industrial structure precipitated a profound union crisis. In the last few decades of the nineteenth century manufacturers succeeded in shaking off the merchant-capitalist or middleman. Originally production was conducted by entrepreneurs with limited capital. These manufacturers lacked financial resources to exploit the new and expanding markets made possible by new forms of transportation such as canals and railroads which radiated out from the larger population centers into the hinterland of village and farm areas. In order fully to exploit these markets the manufacturers became dependent upon the middleman who possessed capital to finance the penetration and exploitation of distant markets. Consequently, being squeezed by the middleman, the manufacturer's profit margin was likely to be extremely narrow. In order to protect his share of the proceeds he was compelled to resist union demands which caused strikes and bitter conflict. Other fundamental industrial and business changes intensified employer determination to eliminate unions. Gradually, as the size of industrial establishments grew with the steady expansion of the market, employers were enabled to accumulate reserves and with the development of the banking system to obtain credit. Thus, the manufacturers were in a position financially to exploit the distant markets without depending on the middleman. In the process their margin of profit widened. Instead of risking interference with continuous production by labor disputes, the employers with a widened profit margin now found it the better part of valor to make reasonable concessions to responsible unions and even recognition. With the assurance that the employer could count on steady production at established costs during the period of the trade agreement, collective bargaining flourished. Employers now could accept orders at set prices for a long period in advance. Union recognition thus became an accepted feature of standard business practice.

Another service rendered by unions which stabilized business conditions and which the employers valued highly was a union informal regulatory service which made it possible to maintain relatively uniform production costs. While technological equipment continued to be an important factor in production costs, labor cost was still a controlling consideration. Under severe competition relatively uniform labor costs were important in limiting destructive competition. Employers therefore began to look to trade unions to perform this limiting function. If unionization was extensive in an industry it was possible to maintain uniform labor costs. Hence unions performed a vital regulatory service. That employers in the highly competitive industries appreciated this fact is evidenced by their insistence that unions organize their competitors. In the coal industry operators even insisted in inserting clauses in trade agreements obligating the Miners' union seriously to address itself to the unionization of the entire industry.

This period of the late nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth was the heyday of organized labor. Business units were relatively small so unions could render valuable assistance and besides, were a match for the industrialists. With the spread of huge corporations operating many plants in different parts of the country which had considerable financial reserves and the backing of large financial institutions, the situation changed. Management came to feel that the disadvantages of dealing with unions outweighed the benefits and decided to go "non-union." The unions found it impossible to withstand the opposition of such financial giants. Only during the first and second world wars and the New Deal era under the National Labor Relations Act was it possible for the unions to reestablish themselves with the aid of government intervention.

A review of the difficulties encountered reveals the change. Union organization followed market expansion so that it spread from the large urban centers into the smaller towns and villages as manufacturing enterprise penetrated those regions. Union membership between 1897 and 1904 mounted rapidly. From 447,000 it mushroomed to 2,072,700, a truly impressive development. The unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor made especially large gains and rose from 264,000 members in 1897 to 1,676,000 in 1904. An even more revealing criterion of the influence unions exerted is the extent of union recognition and acceptance by employers. As is to be expected, unions are strongest in the urban centers and in mining regions with large wage-earning populations. Yet union membership was still largely confined to skilled workers in factories and in building and construction. As a result the building trades unions, with the metal trades as runnersup, became the dominant union groups in the Federation, giving it a highly skilled complexion. A further index of union achievement is the size of the establishments in which they were more easily able to secure recognition. It is easier for unions to organize smaller establishments, because the two contending parties are more evenly matched economically and the unions are able to hold out against employers in negotiations and strikes more easily. An ancillary factor is that competition is more keen in industries where smaller business enterprises predominate. A firm whose production is tied up by a long strike is likely to lose its customers to competing firms. Unions are well aware of this advantage and utilize it skillfully. Indeed, there are numerous instances in which unions, having firmly established themselves in these highly competitive industries, forced employers to organize into associations. Unions find that this arrangement stabilizes labor relations and marketing practices. When employers resort to reckless competition both the labor and commodity markets are kept in turmoil. Such an undesirable condition is damaging to orderly business and to labor relations. Thus, the union becomes a regulatory force in what might otherwise be a very chaotic situation. Employers soon learned to appreciate this union role.

Significant achievements of unions in the competitive industries in the 1890's provided them with resources for organizing the workers in industries with the larger establishments, and where marketing competition was disorganized and less severe. Later, union reverses occurred in industries controlled by powerful corporations as management began to attain a firmer hold. But at this time we find union recognition and collective bargaining accepted by these growing firms, albeit with reservations. Industries operating

on a large scale were especially successful such as those in steel, metal and machinery manufacturing, meat packing, textile, transportation and mining. In these heavy industries the initially amicable labor relations often were later marked by irreconcilable conflict. Employer belligerency resulted in practically complete elimination of unionism from these industries. Union organization retreated to industries with comparatively small production units operating in highly competitive markets or small fringe establishments servicing mass production industries by supplying specialized parts.

### *Expanding Corporate Industrialism Eliminates Unionism*

Even as trade unions were making spectacular strides beginning in the 1890's, many large corporations were starting to resist and destroy union organization in their plants successfully. As multi-plant corporations grew in size to become supercorporations, the trade unions were constantly in conflict with management and generally at a considerable disadvantage. The Homestead Strike of 1892 against the Carnegie Steel Corporation, even before the formation of the gigantic United States Steel Corporation, found organized labor in contest with a really modern corporation, possessing practically boundless resources. The Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, the strongest trade union in the entire country, which had negotiated on relatively amicable relations with firms in the steel industry for years, was forced to strike in order to preserve its existence. Its members reacted with savage violence against armed Pinkerton detectives imported into the local communities to protect strikebreakers. The upshot of the bitter and deadly conflict was that the company went non-union and remained so for nearly half a century, until the enactment of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935.

Great hostility to the unions was revealed by American big business in the Pullman Strike of 1894. The Pullman Palace Car Company operated parlor and sleeping cars under contract with the railroads. It also manufactured these cars for itself and the general market. The contest with the Pullman Company initially involved unorganized workers who sought to establish a union in the employer-owned town of Pullman, Illinois. The principal motive of the workers was to protect themselves against wage cuts and price rises for goods at the company store and services in the company-owned town. The strikers were supported by the American Railway Union, founded in 1893 and headed by Eugene V. Debs. That labor leader had resigned as Secretary-Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen. Having become disillusioned with the practices and policies of his own union and the other railway labor organizations, Debs concluded that only an industrial union including all the workers employed in the industry could successfully cope with the problems confronting them. The B. L. F. E., in tune with the times, accepted only railway employees "born of white parents."

Efforts by the National Civic Federation to bring the contending parties together were peremptorily rejected by the company. As the Pullman Company's officers obdurately persisted in refusing negotiation the union declared a boycott. This action resulted in sympathetic responses by other unions. Soon the railroads were paralyzed. On complaint of the Post Office Department to the Justice Department that mail delivery was being obstructed, the latter secured injunctions against the leaders of the American Railway Union. Since the strikers ignored the injunctive orders and used force in interfering with train movements, the United States Marshal requested military aid, which was duly sanctioned by President Grover Cleveland. After the arrival of troops in the Chicago area, violence increased. Despite the urgings of union officials for obedience to law and order, the riots spread and property valued at hundreds of thousands of dollars was burned or otherwise destroyed. In the clashes between the rioters and marshals, several persons were killed or wounded. Although fully supported by organized labor, the Pullman strikers were forced to surrender, being unable to withstand the powerful and determined corporation aided by a sympathetic government.

Despite the differences in previous relations of the steel workers and railroad workers with their employers, the lost strikes were luminous examples of the dogged determination of the developing industrial giants. They used their full resources to rid themselves of a lesser power that sought to share in the handling of labor relations in their plants. A new pattern of belligerent anti-unionism on the part of management thus emerged. The steel companies sharpened the issue by charging that sharing power with representatives of organized labor implied sharing it with outsiders.

#### *Multi-Plant Corporations Wield Anti-Union Cudgels*

At the outset, the dispute between the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers spread to other Carnegie Corporation plants. In all of these disputes the union was defeated and thus one of the outstanding vertical corporations demonstrated its strength in destroying unionism within its domain. This outcome encouraged other steel corporations to follow the lead of the great Carnegie company. Unionism was completely eliminated in the Pittsburgh steel area, and the powerful Amalgamated Association was almost fatally stricken.

The culmination of industrial mergers was the formation of the billion-dollar United States Steel Corporation. Now one firm controlled operations from the mines to the manufacture of primary and secondary steel products. It also owned and operated ore-carrying vessels on the Great Lakes and a railroad connecting its operations. The Amalgamated Association, the basic union, was now confronted with a most challenging dilemma since it had collective bargaining agreements with most of the firms absorbed by the United States Steel Corporation. How to cope with this multi-plant giant firm became the vital strategic consideration. The Amalgamated Association took cognizance of the merger movement at its 1900 convention by deciding that should one mill in a combine or trust have difficulty resulting in a strike, "all mills in said combine or trust shall cease work until such grievance is settled." This act was a necessary defensive move, but the union did not realize the magnitude of the task confronting it. Unless the union treated all the mills of a combine as a single bargaining unit, nothing could prevent the combine from defeating the union piecemeal by shifting work from union to non-union plants with little inconvenience to itself. The United States Steel Corporation, however, being chiefly interested in firmly establishing itself, decided to avoid open head-on collision with the union. Such confrontation, the corporation thought, would attract too much public attention. It therefore authorized subsidiary corporations, at least temporarily, to continue their labor relations as before. This mandate precluded unionization of plants already operating non-union. Such a labor policy was unacceptable to the Amalgamated Association, leading to a series of strikes against Steel Corporation subsidiaries. These strikes attracted national attention. Again a third party intervened but this time to no avail. Colonel George Harvey, editor of *Harper's Weekly*, induced J. P. Morgan and two of the key officers of the parent corporation to meet with union representatives on July 27, 1901. Thus the heads of the United States Steel Corporation led by its finance manager from the J. P. Morgan bank, superseded the officials of its subsidiaries. Various offers were made by each side, the union making concessions that certain plants remain non-union. The corporation heads, insistent on eliminating union recognition, decided that no agreement was possible. Therefore the steel companies arbitrarily refused to bargain further.

The Amalgamated Association called upon the American Federation of Labor for aid. In conference it was decided to order a general strike in all the mills of the United States Steel Corporation on August 10th in 1901. Gompers, as President of the Federation, urged the head of the Amalgamated Association to make the focal issue in the strike a fight for unionism. The workers in the mills in South Chicago hesitated to break their contractual obligations and refused to respond to the general strike call. Other defections began to occur and more and more mills were reopened under non-union conditions. As steady

gains were made by the Steel Corporation, union leaders, members of the National Civic Federation, tried to intervene without success. The union finding itself weakened, offered to return without reservations to the status quo. The Corporation made a less satisfactory counter offer which the union rejected. The strike continued into September on a diminishing scale. Distressed, the union dispatched its president to New York to seek a conference with J. P. Morgan and Charles Schwab, United States Steel Corporation president. With the strike on the wane, these officials saw no reason to meet with union leaders, and refused to see the President of the Amalgamated Association. A compromise with two subsidiaries was made in which the union surrendered its right even to accept steel workers in membership from their non-union mills. Finally the union also lost out in the two subsidiaries.

This success of the United States Steel Corporation in defeating organized labor so early in its career added encouragement to other large industrial interests to follow its anti-union strategy, so as to eliminate unionism. This practice spread from the huge steel industry to most of the other heavy industries which were then getting into their stride. Many of these industries were customers of the Steel Corporation, whose price and labor policy they sought to imitate, but the defeat of the Amalgamated Association instilled confidence in other mass production industries in the United States to also expel unionism from their properties.

In metal and other heavy industries controlled by large corporations, the vicissitudes of the unions were similar to those in steel. The expanding metal trades industries, producing a wide range of products, found labor organization a hindrance to the introduction of vital technological and other managerial changes which they considered essential. After a short trial, they refused to continue relations with organized labor. In these industries the anti-union onslaught was conducted by powerful employers' associations.

In contrast to stove foundry operations, the machine and jobbing foundries found union dealing not to their advantage. Stove foundries confined themselves largely to the production of a limited number of standardized items, and the skill required of the journeymen was relatively simple. Moreover, the market was limited and highly competitive. Both the moulders' union and the employers appreciated the importance of avoiding excessive labor relations strains and preventing runaway or cutthroat competition. With machine and job foundries, however, conditions were different. They manufactured a multitude of items ranging from those weighing a few ounces to castings weighing hundreds of tons. The raw materials they used were varied and included such items as gray iron, malleable iron, steel bars, copper and aluminum. The products made it impossible to control the piece work prices upon which the union insisted. Union rigidity seriously affected successful operation in accordance with what management considered desirable business practice in order to operate profitably. Hence the employers decided to oust the unions.

Despite differences in industrial products, at first the American Foundrymen's Association, organized in 1896, encouraged by the Moulders Union, agreed to a collective bargaining arrangement similar to that in the stove foundry industry. A new employer association was created in 1898, known as the National Founders' Association. A new trade agreement was negotiated which provided machinery for administering the agreement and for adjustment of differences between an employer and his employees. But friction developed. Some of the differences were of a minor nature, but there were no provisions in the agreement to arbitrate differences which the parties could not settle themselves so disputes became deadlocked. Continued wrangling intensified employer dissatisfaction. Numerous local strikes were called which the National Moulders Union could not prevent. Other vital differences engendered increased employer irritation. Employers wanted exclusive determination of the apprenticeship ratio per journeyman and the use of machinery. While the union was willing to accept the machines, it demanded that skilled moulders operate them at customary wages. The employers insisted on using semiskilled workers. Other grievances tended to magnify the differences between the two parties. As is usual in such controversial matters, distrust of

the integrity of the parties aggravated relationships. In the end, following prolonged conferences, the relationship was severed. The National Founders' Association became an opponent of labor organizations and contended that the union had failed to recognize the changing character of the industry and the need to adapt labor policy to the demands of the times. It insisted that the union with its restrictive policies, its bare tolerance of technical change, and its desire to limit apprenticeship ratios was interfering with industrial progress. Furthermore, unlike the situation in the stove foundry industry, the union in the machine foundry industry could not render indispensable service as a regulator of competitive practices which protected the commodity market of the employer and the labor market of the worker. Consequently, while the Moulders Union was able to devise a workable program in the stove industry, it failed in machinery and job founding. A not unimportant factor was the failure of many locals to accept changes, even though these were favored by the national officers.

Anti-union sentiment spread to another important and related industry in which the International Association of Machinists became primarily involved. In the metal trades, including machinery and job founding, employers first recognized and dealt with the machinist union, but later finding it a hindrance to expansion, refused after a short trial to continue collective bargaining relations with that union. Machinists unions in the metal trades, in common with other unions, came into existence before the Civil War. They experienced the same difficulties of maintaining continuity and disappeared with the ups and downs of the business cycle. What eventually became the International Association of Machinists managed, under different names, to maintain a semblance of continuity. Following the destructive depression of the 1890's, the machinists union began to assume substance and stability. It joined the AFL in 1895 and under new leadership undertook to implement the business union philosophy of developing into an effective institution for negotiating agreements with employers. In this it was supported by the AFL leadership which aimed to use it as a model of what business unionism could do. As the union increased its activity the employers organized into the National Metal Trades Association. The Machinists Union and this employers' association entered into collective bargaining relations, interrupted occasionally by strikes. This uneasy relationship culminated in a national agreement in 1890 providing that both sides abide by contract provisions for its duration. Differences soon arose over wage reductions to compensate for reduced hours of work. The union wanted the National Metal Trades Association to adopt a uniform policy, but the latter insisted that the issue had to be settled on a local basis. Failure to agree led to a strike which affected machinists in the principal centers of the industry. As a result the Association cancelled its agreement with the union and announced an open shop policy. This was copied in other industries. Therefore it is instructive to review the position assumed by the National Metal Trades Association.

In a declaration of principles the Association announced that its members would not admit any interference in the management of their business operations. Strikes and lockouts were disapproved. The regulation of work, including the number of apprentices, helpers and journeymen required to perform a particular task was to be the function of the employer. No negotiations over wages or other terms of employment with a union would be undertaken. Members of the Association were charged dues and assessments to support its activities. In case of strikes, the Association assumed control. It disapproved of strikes and lockouts even when alternative means of adjustment had failed; nor were its members to deal with striking employees. A strike service was established by the Association under which it maintained a card file of strikebreakers in its different local offices and when strikes occurred the Association mobilized strikebreakers available in different cities for service at struck plants. It also maintained an extensive card catalogue of men skilled in metal trades occupations. The union affiliations of the men were recorded for reference by any of its members. In other words a blacklist was set up. And in many instances the photographs of the union men were attached to these cards. Rather humorous stories are told of efforts of blacklisted men to change their physical appearance to circumvent the blacklist.

The Association also provided strike guards who were usually deputized by cooperating police authorities. Both members and non-members could avail themselves of this service. Non-members paid the guards directly. These guards were generally recruited through so-called detective agencies. Anyone engaged in field work had no difficulty in detecting that most of these guards had criminal--or at least dubious--records. In addition special contract operatives were employed, also usually provided by the so-called detective agencies. These men assumed the role of ordinary workers. Their function was to spy on their fellow workers in order to ferret out those who might be union men or sympathizers. They were labor spies hired to prevent labor organization in the metal trades industry. The Metal Trades Association even extended its spying and infiltration activities into trade unions. The objective was for them to work their way into positions of confidence on all levels from local to national unions. There are instances where labor spies were found among the top national union officers. In addition to spying on the unions, these labor spies worked to create discord within the union to disrupt and weaken it by engendering discord and suspicion.

Thus, like the National Founders' Association, the Metal Trades Association started as a conciliatory organization, established to deal with labor organizations. Their shift to belligerency came about as a result of difficulties with the union over policies arising out of changing technology, and the knowledge that other associations utilized anti-union techniques which gave them power to eliminate unionism in the plants of their members. The National Metal Trades Association became the leading employer representation of the anti-union forces in the country. It cooperated closely with other belligerent employers' associations, seeking to prevent the expansion of union influence generally and to reduce its political influence in municipal, state, and federal governments and legislatures. Not until New Deal legislation was enacted did these belligerent employers' associations abandon strikebreaking and other anti-union activities.

### *Employer Justification for Belligerency*

To a considerable extent the cause of employers' belligerency was the desire of trade unions to share in the handling of labor relations in ways which would have restricted the authority of the employer. Moreover, the unions in the metal trades and similar industries at the turn of the century were basically craft organizations. Their members regarded with suspicion the introduction of technological and other managerial changes which diluted their skills and introduced what the unions considered speed-up methods. This union attitude was regarded by employers as a barrier to expansion, increased productivity and the reduction of costs. Insistence upon limiting the numbers of apprentices, opposition to piece work, and the objection to the use of semiskilled labor on newly introduced machines were therefore found intolerable by employers. Failure of the unions to accommodate policies to employer practices strengthened those in the Association who considered the union position a barrier to industrial progress. In a later period, finding themselves reduced to practical impotence, the unions with the aid of sympathetic technicians devised a formula whereby they could cooperate with management in jointly introducing the desired changes. Some employers accepted this proffer of cooperation but it took government intervention to enable organized labor to reestablish itself as a viable force in basic mass production and other industries from which it was eliminated during this period.

Employer opposition to organized labor spread to other industries. Anti-union organizations were founded on all levels: local, regional, and national. Some specialized in political activity; others in legal and various specialized fields. These national anti-union organizations undertook to coordinate their activities. At the forefront of them all was the National Association of Manufacturers. This anti-union proclivity of employers began to manifest itself with the defeat of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers in the disastrous *Homestead strike*. Then as industrial firms grew larger and larger and especially in the multi-firm corporations like the United States Steel Corporation, the determination of big business to

eliminate unions from their plants became intensified and more and more successful. The extreme and very frank attitude of employers at this time was expressed by George F. Baer, President of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company. This company controlled half of all anthracite coal production in Eastern Pennsylvania. Baer was also head of the Reading Coal and Iron Company and, although shrewd and able, was evidently not as concerned with public opinion as other management chiefs. His attitude was reflected in the phrase "the public be damned." He sanctimoniously declared that business management was authorized unilaterally to conduct the establishments entrusted to it by Divine right. The public and the news media, revealing a sense of humor, immediately dubbed him "Divine Right Baer." While most of the business tycoons privately held similar views, they couched their sentiments in a less grandiloquent vocabulary. Some of them were even conciliatory in language, proclaiming that they no more questioned the union beliefs or affiliations of their workers than they would their religious predilections. Handling labor relations however was considered to be an exclusively managerial prerogative necessary to assure efficient and profitable operation. Unions, many employers charged, interfered with these management responsibilities. Union interference was detrimental to good business management. Hence, they took the position that there was nothing to discuss with union representatives, who at any rate were "outsiders."

In brief, the transformed character of the conduct of industry and the new mode of doing business impelled management to reorganize production processes. Management deemed such reorganization essential for successful functioning. These large industrial corporations undertook to modernize their labor practices to secure optimum output at minimum cost, disregarding the physical and psychological effect on their workers. Technological innovations were adopted, such as new machinery which could be operated by semiskilled and unskilled workers which increased the quantity of production with fewer hands at lower wages than the skilled workers previously performing these tasks. Other practices eliminated unnecessary bodily movements by making time and motion studies and reorganizing shop management and practices. Such reorganization of work methods came to be popularly known as "scientific management."

Naturally, not being consulted and concerned about the threat to the interest and welfare of their members, the unions, taking a leaf from management, arbitrarily resisted. Organized labor unqualifiedly opposed scientific management and other shop management changes which reduced previously needed skill and often added extra effort without providing equivalent compensation. Nor was it particularly sympathetic toward the introduction of the new machinery which threatened the jobs of its skilled members.

Firmly entrenched and supremely confident of their power to withstand union opposition, the employers embarked on merciless anti-union campaigns during which they practically destroyed union organization in multi-firm industries. The union policy was not wise. Neither was that of management. Both were blinded by irreconcilable stubbornness. Those in control of the large corporations would brook no interference in the management of their operations. Union leadership, marked by lack of imagination and limited experience in collective bargaining, proved equally nonconciliatory.

Failing to make any progress in resisting management determination, the unions pushed along yet another avenue of resistance to the campaign for scientific management. The unions whose members were employed in federal government establishments, especially in army arsenals and navy yards turned to Congress and succeeded in having legislation enacted forbidding the use of appropriated moneys to finance time and motion studies in those limited sectors.

After the disastrous defeats of the post-World War I period, chastened organized labor arrived at a more receptive attitude toward technological and other shop management changes. It accepted scientific management provided it was jointly administered by labor and management. The railway shop unions assumed the lead and the AFL Railway Employees Department employed a professional engineer so that joint

shop committees could be established to install and administer technological and other managerial changes. As an additional inducement to the acceptance of this plan, the unions obligated themselves to assist friendly managements. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Corporation ardently accepted and applied the program which became known as the B & O Plan. Most of the railroads however had succeeded in crushing the unions and spurned the union offer of cooperation. In other corporate industries the reaction of management was not unlike that of the majority of railroads. Union organization made little headway in recouping its losses. Under the prevailing hostility of industrial corporations it is questionable whether organized labor's new astuteness and offer of cooperation could have changed the developments that forced them out.

Since World War II organized labor has become more realistic about labor management relations. Management, confronted with strongly functioning unions protected by government in their collective bargaining procedures, has also become more realistic.

### *Unions Succumb to the Onslaught of Super Corporations*

This terrific onslaught on unions had disastrous effects. Unions lost affiliates, which resulted in depletion of finances. By the time of the first world war, unions were almost entirely eliminated from the important industries which now had sufficient control of markets not to suffer from destructive competition. Harmful competition was controlled by administered prices and by the administration of other business practices. Verbal understandings were easily instituted by these large corporations, and even business collusions in violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act were becoming common.

On the whole, union organization was forced to retreat to fringe industries and businesses. There the relatively smaller business unit still was the prevailing form, accompanied by intense and even cut-throat competition. Unions therefore served as a balancing force in controlling competition and in maintaining orderly labor relations. Another advantage favoring unions was that these smaller firms lacked resources to combat unions as effectively as did the gigantic corporations with practically unlimited funds. The difficulty in union organizing was accentuated by the introduction of large numbers of unskilled workers made adequate by technological changes. These unskilled workers were mainly South and East Europeans from backward rural areas. Most of them were illiterate, unaccustomed to urban living and generally lacking even the rudiments of English. For a considerable length of time the officers of the craft unions regarded these immigrant workers as unorganizable. Many of the closest associates of Samuel Gompers told me in casual conversation that it would be unfair to squander dues paid by members to undertake the hopeless task of organizing these unskilled, illiterate immigrants employed by the huge corporations. Such a foolhardy act, they thought, would be a betrayal of trust. Perhaps these leaders were right under the existing circumstances. But their excuse was not completely valid, as was evidenced by the success of the United Mine Workers and the garment and other unions in founding viable unions consisting predominantly of South and East European immigrants. In 1918, John Mitchell, President of the United Mine Workers during the period when these immigrants were solidly organized by his union in the competitive area of coal mining, told me that the American labor leaders were wrong in their belief that these workers were either unorganizable or made poor union members. He estimated that some 85% of the union members in his organization were at that time South and East European immigrants.

An apt illustration of the fact that unions were forced to retreat to those industries that still operated in either smaller production units or in highly competitive industries or portions thereof is presented in the coal mining industry. In that part of the industry where the mines were owned by large corporations which supplied them with coal, the union had little or no chance of organizing the miners. Such large-scale industries as steel, railroads, and public utilities which used large quantities of coal found it advantageous to

own and operate their own mines. These enterprises became known as "captive mines." The large corporations instituted vicious and effective anti-union policies to eliminate labor organizations from their main plants. Since the captive mines had an assured market, they did not need the union to serve as a market-stabilizing force.

Up to the first world war, unions were restricted to industries with the smaller units operating in highly competitive markets. This was particularly true in mining, the garment trades, building and construction, printing and publishing and the service trades which operated primarily in highly competitive and small-unit industry.

Actually, union membership is a deceptive criterion for gauging union strength or bargaining influence. During the period from 1890 to World War I, union membership fluctuated considerably. However, between 1904 and 1910 it reached a plateau and showed no substantial increase thereafter. This trend was also characteristic of the AFL affiliates. Although union organization had even begun to penetrate to non-manufacturing areas, it was simultaneously losing out in the mass production industries and their satellites, regardless of geographic area. Therefore the chief bench mark for gauging the strength of union organization is not primarily membership but the extent of effective collective bargaining. This criterion does not lend itself to statistical measurement. Rather, educated and empirical observation serves the purpose better. The most casual observation reveals that union organization was either effectively eliminated or reduced to impotence in the mass production industries operating through gigantic units and chiefly multi-plant ownership, possessing reserves of considerable proportions, and resorting to techniques of an exceedingly subtle and efficient nature with which unions could not readily cope.

The war situation and our ultimate participation in the war completely changed the labor relationship. With the government as the leading customer and the Wilson administration not only friendly to organized labor but needing its cooperation in maintaining continuous production and its political support, it was possible for organized labor to become a partner with industry in the handling of labor relations. Those labor historians and commentators who had become the intellectual expounders and devotees of voluntarism attributed the cataclysmic union reverses to organized labor's resort to legislative and other political action, such as lobbying. It is their contention that by diverting their energies and finances to the promotion of legislative and political objectives, the unions automatically neglected their chief responsibility of promoting trade union organization. This interpretation is superficial and doctrinaire. Actually, in taking this critical point of view they differed from their prime hero and high priest, Samuel Gompers who was the initiator and articulator of voluntarism. He originally violently condemned any form of political action, but now cautiously directed the interests of organized labor to legislative and political activity.

It was the hostile attitude of the courts, reflected in their liberal issuance of injunctions and ready conviction of alleged violators, that prompted Gompers and his associates seriously to resort to lobbying and limited political action. Unions clearly were handicapped by court rulings such as those holding unions subject to the Sherman Anti-Trust Act which outlawed secondary boycotts and limited strike activities. Such decisions tended to mulct union treasuries by exaction of heavy fines for violations and imposition of heavy litigation costs. These decisions made it possible to attach union funds and even the property of individual members. In face of these rulings, the unions had no choice but enter the political arena. They tried to resist but met defeat and now were helpless and at the mercy of big business and its allies—the courts, public authorities and unfriendly public opinion. During this period I interviewed a number of the federal district court judges who were most zealous in issuing injunctions and in fining and imprisoning alleged violators. Their general attitude was that unions were harmful, detrimental to the public interest, and should be firmly restrained. A reading of their decisions and those of the higher courts bears out this conclusion.

In retrospect: The two Nordic immigrant groups regarded the self-employment objective of the indigenous labor movement as unrealistic in a dynamic society. Instead they founded a labor movement that would organize on a permanent basis. While they differed on the type of action called for, they agreed on the need for building strong and stable unions that would function continuously, resorting to strikes when necessary, but aiming at establishing businesslike and amicable relations with employers through systematic collective bargaining, wherein the terms agreed upon would be stipulated in written trade agreements to run for specific periods. Each side was to pledge itself to observe these terms meticulously, including the prohibition of strikes or lockouts, while the contracts were in effect. Should disagreements arise as to the intent of certain provisions or practices, they were to be adjusted through negotiation. Failing in that, they were to be arbitrated with both sides pledged to accept the arbitration award. Pursuing this course, and favored by the existence of small production units selling their products in highly competitive markets, trade unions became established with collective bargaining as the accepted method of determining conditions of employment. As the country grew and industry expanded into large units, often with multi-plant operations, irreconcilable differences appeared which caused many large employers to reject collective bargaining belligerently and organize to combat unions to eliminate them from their plants. Labor relations, they declared, were their sole prerogative. In order to prevent unions from penetrating their plants, employers founded anti-union associations. In addition they introduced a variety of practices in the policing of their plants to inoculate their workers against union "contamination," and enlisted the aid of the courts and friendly public authorities further to enforce their anti-union policies.

Union policies were not always the wisest, but had they been more astute, it is unlikely that reliance on their own efforts would have sufficed. At any rate, unionism was practically eliminated in mass production industries. The leaders of business unionism, who were in control of the American Federation of Labor were desperate. They realized that relief could only be obtained through legislation so they turned to lobbying, but they soon learned that without a voting constituency the politicians were unresponsive. Consequently, despite their intense opposition to any form of political action, they decided to embark on a course of non-partisan political action. Their chief concern was negative legislation to restrict the courts in hamstringing legitimate union activity and subjecting the unions to excessive financial outlays to contest court decisions and other forms of litigation. By concentrating on negative legislation the business unionists were protecting their principle: that workers should be taught to rely upon the unions alone for the protection of their interests. Their inclusion of demands for positive legislation was halfhearted. Gradually, and only after World War II, the AFL became actively interested in major positive legislation. However, some assertive AFL unions with members employed by the railroads, supported by some former Socialist unions and those with a large Socialist membership like the United Mine Workers, showed interest in affirmative legislation. It was these unions that effectively pioneered in disregarding Gompersian voluntarism by demanding government intervention through positive social and labor legislation notwithstanding strong opposition from the hard-core business unionists.

## Part 5

# BUSINESS UNIONISM TURNS TO GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

### CHAPTER XXI

#### UNIONS SEEK GOVERNMENT AID DESPITE PURE AND SIMPLE UNIONISM

Gompers, despite his ideology and the skepticism of many of his colleagues, was wise enough to appreciate that it was futile to rely entirely on pure trade union action to remedy the legal difficulties confronting and obstructing organized labor. To remove serious obstacles to union progress in the most important industrial sectors, it was imperative that organized labor secure the necessary legislation to limit the courts in their damaging interference with legitimate trade-union activity. Courageously, Gompers decided upon lobbying as the means of achieving his objective. But while lobbying he and his associates were asked by the practical politicians whether they had any votes to deliver, that is, did they have the support of electors. Gompers and the others were non-plussed. They thought that their cause was so highly just that mere explanation of the grievances suffered by trade unions would convince legislators of the need for remedial legislation. But they were practical men and upon reflection they realized that they must supplement their lobbying with political activity. They also realized the impracticability of organizing a separate party. Previously independent parties, including the People's Party, which temporarily had been exceptionally successful, proved unable to break the established habits of the mass of electors supporting the two major parties. Moreover, the threatening Socialists were shouting from the house tops for independent political action, by which they meant supporting the Socialist Party. Under the circumstances, the only logical procedure was non-partisan political action, that is participation by favoring those candidates of the two major parties who either promised to support or manifested some sympathetic interest in the few pieces of legislation organized labor desired. As a corollary, the AFL vigorously opposed those candidates of either party who were ardently anti-labor. Gompers refused to lend support to Socialists and other third party candidates on the ground that only the two major parties were in a position to elect their candidates. By this non-partisan procedure the needed remedial legislation could be enacted and public authorities could be influenced to discontinue their hostile attitudes. Hence the slogan: "Reward your friends and punish your enemies."

This new venture into politics was costly but scarcely reached the astronomical sums consumed in litigation. Naturally political activity necessitated the expenditure of union funds and diverted union energies, but this was not like throwing money down the drain in costly litigation. Actually the bulk of union funds were spent for legal defense. Such expenditures brought only negative results without remedying the causes that contributed to weakening the unions. Union activity was not completely abandoned. Some of the funds and energy were diverted for political purposes, but the turn to politics was good strategy as was clearly demonstrated by the legislative achievements that resulted.

A complicating factor, used to advantage by employers and ineptly coped with by the unions, was the immense inflow of immigrant workers. The craft unions considered unskilled immigrant workers unorganizable. Taking advantage of this, the Socialists, social workers and reformers severely criticized craft unionism for neglecting immigrant workers, maintaining that industrial unions were necessary to cope with the problem of organizing workers in mass production industries. The Socialists stumbled on the idea of industrial unionism as the effective method, taking a leaf from the success of such German-dominated unions as the Brewery Workers, which happened to organize all wage earners employed in a particular industry. Pointing to the neglect of immigrant workers, they made this issue a cardinal tenet in their platform. Gompers, more sensitive to realities than most of the craft union leaders, secured their unenthusiastic consent to the launching of an organizing campaign in the steel industry in 1913, which temporarily ignored craft demarcations. He placed the young and resourceful John L. Lewis in charge, with headquarters in Pittsburgh. But the strenuous employer opposition in this capital of the steel industry could not be overcome and the organizing campaign proved to be a failure. This outcome provided additional ammunition for the socialist-led opposition. It also pointed up the powerfully entrenched position of the mass production industries, against which unions were no match. Only government intervention, probably with the unions functioning as industrial organizations, would be able to bring about the organization of these industries. This conclusion was substantiated during the first and second world wars and the New Deal era when, with the aid of the National Labor Relations Act and other forms of government intervention, it was possible for the unions to reestablish themselves in the mass production industries by operating through industrial unions.

#### *Government Intervention Accepted Irrespective of Union Ideology*

While the unions and the employers considered it imperative that collective bargaining be based on the voluntary cooperation of independently organized groups, there also developed recognition by the public and the government that a labor problem is a phenomenon of normal social life, and therefore of concern to the public. Previously the labor question had forced itself upon the attention of the public merely for brief moments and then invariably in a catastrophic setting. When eruptions in peaceful labor relations occurred, the idea of public intervention grew. Moreover, labor found itself stymied by persistent anti-union employer resistance and also welcomed government intervention. In the beginning, public intervention was limited to bringing the contending parties together. Soon state and federal government mediation services were created, usually on the initiative of organized labor or with its support. Thus, while in theory business unionists scorned public or government intervention, in practice they not only welcomed it, but even solicited it. This theoretical attitude towards the intervention of outside parties in labor disputes is analogous to organized labor's distrust of the courts. In the early period the courts were regarded as enemies of organized labor and hence were anathema to it. It was considered undesirable for trade unions to resort to judicial action because of their unfortunate experiences when courts intervened. Gradually as the social outlook of judges became more realistic and difficulties with employers or other outside parties could not be adjusted otherwise, unions began to turn to the courts. More recently trade unions and labor leaders even have begun to turn to the courts to adjudicate differences between themselves. Labor leaders or rank and file members also appeal to the courts against their own union, other unions or trade union officials. Thus the original firm opposition of "pure and simple" trade unionism to any reliance on government agencies in connection with labor disputes became slightly dented, to say the least.

Employers, also, have been and are constantly decrying outside interference in labor disputes, but like labor gladly welcome it at critical times. Up to the present, both organized labor and management complain about injection of third parties in the determination of the substantive terms of trade agreements. They particularly denounce either voluntary or compulsory arbitration, and loudly call for voluntary collective bargaining. But under trying circumstances they welcome arbitral intervention, albeit under professed

objection. Such third party or government intervention not only continues but is increasing. When labor disputes are threatened or occur in strategic industries vitally affecting the public interest, intervention by the government or other outsiders becomes well-nigh imperative. Generally one or the other party to an important dispute welcomes it. Hence, irrespective of ideology, trade union leaders and employers have reconciled themselves to government and even court intervention in industrial disputes.

With the expansion and belligerent assertiveness of trade unions and the strenuous resistance of employers frequently leading to long strikes or lockouts, especially in strategic industries affecting the public interest, the public began to be aware of the existence of a labor problem affecting the public interest. In previous periods when there were industrial disputes in which ephemeral unions were involved, the public had become only temporarily aroused. As soon as industrial disruption ceased and the unions either stopped functioning or became inactive, public interest vanished. Labor problems had forced themselves upon the attention of the public merely for brief periods, and then usually in a catastrophic setting. By the end of the nineteenth century as trade unions attained continuity and labor disputes were prolonged in industries where they caused intense public inconvenience, a more insistent public interest began to appear. While third party intervention in industrial disputes previously had occurred intermittently, it was not until the great anthracite coal strike of 1902 with its hardships to householders as well as to industry that an insistent public demand arose for government or other third party intervention. President Theodore Roosevelt in his usual strenuous manner and a voluntary citizens' organization known as the National Civic Federation also intervened. Thus it was generally recognized that the public had an abiding interest in labor relations. The National Civic Federation was composed of public spirited persons and included employers, trade union leaders and others likely to reflect general public opinion. Its prime purpose was to promote trade agreements and to educate the most farsighted members of the business and financial community to the importance of the solution of labor differences.

#### *A Case of Public Intervention*

Under the brilliant leadership of President John Mitchell, the United Mine Workers had established uneasy relations with the leading coal-mining firms. Despite their tacit acceptance of the union, the operators utilized every opportunity to weaken it and to interfere with its operations. This anti-union attitude had at this period become a characteristic of large industrial corporations. Active union men were frequently discharged, and the inspection of union cards by union representatives was not permitted on company property. Corporations still labored under the mistaken impression that unions were not a permanent institution in industry. The unions reasoned differently and resolved to attempt to secure recognition through formal conferences with the coal operators.

Following the refusal of the operators to discuss working conditions and the formulation of a wage scale, the miners' union in convention assembled went on record demanding the recognition of the union, an increase in wages, union-supervised weighing of coal, an eight-hour day, and a uniform wage scale. In the event of a refusal by the operators to grant the demands of the union by April 1, its officers were authorized to call a strike. Being anxious to avoid this, the union appealed to the National Civic Federation to use its good offices in an effort to effect a peaceful solution of the differences. Influential members closely associated with the business leaders among the coal operators succeeded in bringing about meetings between the union and leaders of the important coal firms. The operators remained obdurate and refused to make any concessions. Failure of the meetings galvanized the union into action. Still anxious to avoid a strike, the union leaders proposed that the questions at issue be arbitrated, the arbitrators to be selected by the National Civic Federation. If this proposal should prove unacceptable to the coal mine operators, the union leaders offered the alternative of an arbitration committee consisting of two bishops and a third person to

be chosen by these two. To narrow the issues the union proposed that the committee decide only the wage question. If the operators would agree to this arrangement the union would consent to withdraw the other demands. Feeling that they had the advantage and by now determined to break the union, the operators rejected the union offer. Having exhausted all its peaceful overtures, the union had no choice but to recommend strike action to a hurriedly assembled convention of the three districts composing the anthracite mining region in Eastern Pennsylvania. A strike was ordered by the convention. It is to be noted that throughout the history of labor relations in the United States both the employers and unions, notwithstanding their proclaimed theoretical opposition to intervention by outsiders, were likely to welcome and even to court such intervention when in a difficult position.

In the beginning the strike was conducted peacefully. As it was prolonged both sides became impatient. The union made some demands which the operators refused to grant so it withdrew the maintenance men. In ordinary strikes unions usually permitted members to stay on the job where equipment and the work place needed to be safeguarded. In a strike unions are no less interested than management in having the plants maintained in proper condition so that when the strike or lockout ends the workers will have jobs to return to. But where employers are determined to destroy the union these practical and ethical considerations are likely to be brushed aside.

When the maintenance crews were withdrawn the employers began to recruit strikebreakers through detective agencies in accordance with the prevailing employer custom. Generally such strikebreaker recruits came from the least desirable elements in society. The miners, now incensed at outsiders taking their jobs, became emotionally aroused. Violence broke out. Strikers' lives were lost which made the miners even more resentful. Rioting increased and strikers and company officials were killed or maimed. Pitched battles occurred between the strikers and the police authorities. Property was destroyed. The Governor of Pennsylvania ordered out the national guard to police the strike area. Despite the presence of large numbers of soldiers and police, coal output was insignificant.

In the meantime the public was being greatly inconvenienced. There was intense interest in the prolonged industrial dispute and outside intervention was demanded. Anthracite or hard coal was a universal household necessity. When the strike continued into winter the hardship became practically unbearable. Without coal homes remained heatless and almost cookless and public clamor for intervention grew. President Theodore Roosevelt, not unsympathetic to organized labor and concerned with the mounting power of large corporations, interested himself in the situation and finally intervened on humanitarian grounds. With the threat of a fuelless winter, Republican United States Senators, whose party was in power, feared an unfavorable public reaction also became interested in the dispute. Simultaneously, because of the intense worry and unrest in many communities, mayors of 139 cities went on record as favoring government control of the anthracite coal mines. In his efforts to end the protracted strike, President Roosevelt undertook to enlist the assistance of the powerful financier, J. P. Morgan. The operators actually were induced to agree to a commission to arbitrate the dispute. Since the union, with its back to the wall, favored arbitration, it readily accepted this arrangement. Hearings were conducted with the union, a non-union mine workers' committee, and the operators' representatives presenting their cases. Following prolonged hearings the commission handed down its award on March 18, 1903. It provided for a 10% increase in wages; recommended a board of conciliation to adjudicate all disputes between the contending parties; provided that check-weighmen be allowed; condemned the employer practice, which was becoming extensive, of hiring "peace" officers instead of leaving this responsibility to the county and state officers; and criticized the employment of children as breaker boys. The commission failed, however, to agree that the union be recognized as the responsible representative of the miners in the handling of their labor relations with the operators. That is, it did not recommend the closed shop, so eagerly sought by the union. Thus ended the 1902 anthracite coal strike with the union now in a firmly established position.

Without third party intervention it is questionable whether the union could have brought the employers to terms. This experience has continued: success in penetrating an industry dominated by resisting super corporations was only attained by outside intervention, mostly governmental. Thus the union struggle for freedom to exist and practice collective bargaining, which according to the doctrines of business unionism was to be achieved by its own efforts without either government or other third party intervention, proved difficult if not impossible as corporate industrialism expanded and became more powerful. Indeed, the absolutistic ideology of Voluntarism, like most rigid abstract concepts, proved inadequate to the challenge of reality. Further analysis will reveal its complete failure as well as that of socialism, eventuating in an ideological metamorphosis of the American labor movement.

## Part 6

# SEVERE IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS FROM LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO WORLD WAR I ERA

## INTRODUCTION

With the labor movement having grown to considerable proportions and having demonstrated in the 1880's that it was a vital social force, violent ideological conflicts ensued for its domination and even control. The contending groups represented proponents of decaying middle-class concepts and the strongly emerging Marxist or class-conscious champions. Concurrently violent differences occurred among the Marxist factions. Later the struggle shifted, engaging the Syndicalists, Socialists and business unionists, each group strenuously aiming for hegemony. What follows is an attempt to describe this multiple infighting within the developing labor movement. An evaluation of the outcome of these volatile battles is likewise attempted.

### CHAPTER XXII

#### CLASS STRUGGLE IDEOLOGIES

##### *Revolutionary Ideologies in Pre-World War I*

Revolutionary labor ideologies proposing to transform the social order were numerous in the transition period from individualistic industrialism to corporate and large-scale industrialism. These revolutionary ideologies differed from the numerous varieties of radical self-employment ideologies which expounded the idea of harmony between capital and labor. These latter operated on the theory that through small-scale industry owned and operated by the producers, the independence of the worker-mechanic or merchant could be preserved. For the most part they advocated association of producers primarily through a cooperative form of ownership and production. These radical groups were closely related to the early indigenous self-employment movement.

The class struggle revolutionists like the Anarchists, Syndicalists and Socialists, diagnosed the predominant social order according to Marxist tenets. To them, instead of harmony or mutuality existing

between capital and labor, a class struggle prevailed brought about by the private ownership of property. The property owners dominated society which includes the government and religious and other social institutions.

Only those revolutionary ideologies that had a substantial impact on the labor movement (as a result of organizational participation by their proponents) are considered in this study. The leaders and rank and file were recent immigrants and were influenced at the outset by Marxism. They were mostly German-speaking and their press and other important literature was in the German language. Other less significant immigrant groups included Bohemians, Scandinavians, Irish, British and a small French group. A few outstanding leaders were American-born, like Philip Van Patten and P. J. McGuire. Of all of them the most lasting as a viable group was the one made up of the moderate or pragmatic Socialists. This group survived schisms, factional struggles and bitter "pure and simple" union antagonism. Two other revolutionary ideologies temporarily developed mass followings of sorts, but left little if any tangible contribution. These were the revolutionary Socialists, Anarchists and Syndicalists—all of them being extremely dogmatic. During different periods they proved serious competitors both to the moderate Socialists and simple trade unionists. They attracted a high degree of notoriety which stirred sympathy among liberals and other non-revolutionary groups, but their volatile and lawless activity elicited general public condemnation. In the early post-World War I period, as the labor movement became somewhat stabilized, these ultrarevolutionary ideologies faded away.

In 1875 all the adherents of revolutionary ideologies active in the labor movement and still in their embryonic stages, coalesced into one national organization when they joined in founding the Workingmen's Party. Previously they had functioned through local or regional bodies. This arrangement paralleled the pattern created by the Marxian class-struggle adherents practically a decade earlier when the International Workingmen's Association, better known as the First International, came into existence in 1864 in Europe. In 1876 the name of the Workingmen's Party was changed to the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), which persists to the present in shadowy miniature. From the outset, as occurred in the First International, strategy differences arose ultimately erupting into irreconcilable ideological conflicts that inevitably led to schisms.

A disagreement over strategy occurred early within the Socialist Labor Party. In due time, as is common, strategic differences crystallized. One element insisted that trade union organization and action was the most desirable basis for advancing the cause of Socialism. Another as insistently favored emphasizing political action. Both groups applied these strategems in their own manner. Some unspectacular victories were won. In undertaking union organization, the trade union proponents made out reasonably well. As the controversy between these two groups became more intense, separation became inevitable.

Events not within control of either faction accentuated their differences. Thus practical experience stimulated clarification in respect to both ideology and strategy. In Chicago police interfered with normal civil rights activities which inspired the German subsection to take defensive action. The police had illegally invaded and ransacked labor headquarters and otherwise brutally disrupted ordinary propaganda and agitational activities. Consequently this Chicago German Socialist section in 1878 organized the *Lehr und Wehr Verein*, that is, a para-military organization. Naturally this defensive venture aroused bitter controversy within the Socialist movement.

Disillusionment with political action within the Socialist Labor Party grew in intensity, but unfortunate experiences promoted clarification of thinking. Not only were the electoral results disappointing, but even the successful election of a single alderman frustrated the Socialists because he was not permitted to take his lawfully-won seat. As a result of political manipulation on the part of the two major parties, this successful candidate was barred from assuming office. These disappointing experiences promoted the idea

that trade-union action was the prime channel by which to advance the march of the workers in achieving their goal of overthrowing the capitalist order. The central idea however was not that these unions were to concentrate on immediate gains via negotiation and collective bargaining. Rather they were to serve as revolutionary instruments motivated by a violent and physically combative strategy. Mass disturbances and violent encounters with public authorities were to be supplemented by terroristic tactics. Such tactics were intended to demoralize the capitalist leaders and create a chaotic social order so as effectively to conquer it. Thus the Anarchist ideology was crystallized. The clarion call was "propaganda by the deed," whereas the Socialist call for arousing the masses was: "expropriate the expropriators."

In New York ideological clarification followed another course. The faction which unequivocally accepted the importance of political action and agreed that trade union organization was an important auxiliary for promoting the attainment of Socialism disagreed on current strategy. One more moderate element took the position that collaboration with liberal reform political organizations was desirable. The other faction staunchly rejected the idea of alliances with non-Socialist parties, insisting that better results would be attained by keeping the movement sterilized in a clear-cut separate organization.

These differences within the revolutionary labor movement eventuated in bitter controversy which culminated in the formulation of rigid dogmas and the emergence of concomitant splits. Each side proclaimed philosophy, strategy and tactics in conformity with its new ideological outlook. Naturally the outcome was the formation of separate organizations.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### ANARCHIST EMERGENCE, SEPARATION FROM SOCIALISM

Differences between the Socialists and Anarchists within the Socialist Labor Party grew as political undertakings became more futile. They came to a head with the electoral results of the 1880 Presidential campaign. Participation by the Socialist Labor Party in local elections in 1879 proved disappointing. Matters were further aggravated by a majority decision favoring collaboration with the non-Socialist Greenback Party. Election results were meager. Both Greenback Party candidates and the independent Socialist candidates recorded dismal showings. Even before this election, those in Chicago who opposed compromises with non-Socialists or stressed the importance of political action had already seceded from the SLP. Following the election the New York ultrarevolutionary faction also disaffiliated. The next step (in October 1881) was to convene the ultrarevolutionary Socialist factions in Chicago in order to effect a national organization of these defecting elements. In the interim, the New York Social Revolutionary Club made a complete break from the Socialists by joining the International Working People's Association, rival of the Marxist International, thus embracing unalloyed anarchism. By way of identification, this International was dubbed "The Black International." In order to feature their determination to bring death to capitalism, the Anarchists adopted the black flag as their symbol. It was designed to emphasize their differences with the Socialists who believed in peaceful procedures and chose the red flag as symbolizing brotherhood. It signified that red blood flowed equally in the veins of all human beings. Founded by European revolutionists the Black International, organized in 1881, was designed by an Anarchist group as a rival to the pragmatic Socialist International based on Marxism. Disagreement over philosophy and strategy within the First International and its Socialist successor was similar to that within the SLP, which adhered to the Socialist ideology.

Anarchist thinking was expressed in a Manifesto that largely accepted the Marxian indictment of the capitalist system but differed on the method for overthrowing it and on the nature of the society which should replace it. The Anarchists condemned the state, the church, and even the school system as barriers to worker emancipation. The Manifesto affirmed that these institutions would be eliminated with the overthrow of capitalism. Hence the struggle for reform as advocated by the pragmatic Socialists who adhered to peaceful procedures through practical and trade union action was futile. This contention was explained as follows:

We could show by scores of illustrations that all attempts in the past to reform this monstrous system by peaceable means, such as the ballot, have been futile, and all such efforts in the future must necessarily be so....The political institutions of our time are the agencies of the propertied class; their mission is the upholding of the privileges of their masters; any reform in your own behalf would curtail these privileges....That they will not resign these privileges voluntarily we know....Since we must then rely upon the kindness of our masters for whatever redress we have, and knowing that from them no good may be expected, there remains but one recourse--FORCE!...

By force have our ancestors liberated themselves from political oppression, by force their children will have to liberate themselves from economic bondage. 'It is therefore, your right, it is your duty,' says Jefferson--'to arms!'

What we would achieve is, therefore, plainly and simply:

First:--Destruction of the existing class rule by all means, i.e., by energetic, relentless, revolutionary and international action.

Second:--Establishment of a free society based upon co-operative organization of production.

Third:--Free exchange of equivalent products by and between the productive organizations without commerce and profit-mongery.

Fourth:--Organization of education on a secular, scientific and equal basis for both sexes.

Fifth:--Equal rights for all without distinction of sex or race.

Sixth:--Regulation of all public affairs by free contacts between the autonomous (independent) communes and associations, resting on a federalistic basis.

It is important to note that the second proposal of the Anarchist Manifesto advocates a society based upon cooperative associations of producers. In this sense their concept of the mode of production resembled that of the indigenous middle-class radicals whom the Anarchists despised. In common with this group the Anarchists favored a primitive social order consisting of small-scale production and business units. Unlike the radical middle class however the Anarchists did not feature private property as one of the cornerstones of their society. But they agreed with the early middle class that large-scale industry was the enemy that blocked achievement of their ideal.

#### *Anarchists' Disagreements--Trade Unions vs. Miscellaneous Groups*

Notwithstanding universal agreement among the Anarchists at the 1881 Chicago Convention, disagreement arose between the Chicago-led group and that led by the New York contingent regarding the salient type of organization and procedure for attainment of their revolutionary objective. The Chicago faction regarded political action as incidental and useful solely for propagandistic purposes. Following a brief try in 1882 which proved barren this idea was completely abandoned by the Chicago group. The New York

group leaders repudiated outright political action. Hence this issue disappeared as a divisive factor. Another salient issue induced clear-cut disagreement but did not divide the contending groups to the point of separation. Resort to trade union action was favored by the Chicago group. The New York contingent was lukewarm about this policy but did not oppose the idea outright.

Organization of trade unions on “progressive” principles was strongly endorsed by the Chicago convention which pledged active support to such existing unions. In actual practice the Chicago group concentrated on trade union organization and action, although it also organized miscellaneous “clubs” for propaganda purposes. The New York group was little concerned with trade union organization or activity. Instead it supported strikes and other trade union activities merely as a means of stirring up the masses and spreading Anarchist doctrines. The convention also declared itself in favor of those societies which stood ready to render armed resistance to encroachments upon the rights of workingmen. The official name of the new organization was the “Revolutionary Socialist Association.” The Black International was also endorsed. In accordance with Anarchist principles, the movement was to be a decentralized federation of autonomous societies with an information bureau acting as a clearinghouse, to be located in Chicago. Each constituent group was to be left absolute master of its own activities, except that it was expected to be guided by the general program and resolutions of the Revolutionary Socialist Association.

The Pittsburgh Manifesto of the International Working People’s Association, which was accepted by the Revolutionary Socialist Association, succinctly sets out the world-wide Anarchist ideology. As previously explained, the indictment of the burgeoning capitalist system was borrowed from the *Communist Manifesto* written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. However, the program for correcting the evils imputed to the system is characteristically Anarchist. Political action and peaceful tactics are discarded. Force is the strategy for accomplishing objectives and is the only means whereby class rule can be destroyed. Moreover, the new social order is not to be based on government ownership and operation, but on a free society based on cooperative organization of production and distribution with a free exchange of equivalent products by and between the productive organizations without commerce and without “profit mongery.”

In substance, the economic and business order advocated by the Anarchists was analogous to that desired by the indigenous self-employment labor movement. Differences between the two were over accepting private property as the pivotal factor. Disagreement also appeared over attitudes toward religion and other traditional cultural beliefs and practices. Achievement of the objective was another source of profound difference. The indigenous self-employment movement relied more on political action, eschewing violent means and conduct, whereas the Anarchists regarded such strategy as basic to their activities.

In endorsing the Black International and the Pittsburgh Manifesto, the Socialist Revolutionary Association was committed to favor societies that stood ready to offer armed resistance to encroachments upon the rights of the workingmen. Differences over reliance on trade union organization or miscellaneous propaganda organizations as the chief agency in carrying on revolutionary activity were not touched upon. Indeed, the dominant personality at the convention, Johann Most, lukewarmly accepted trade union organizations. It was the Chicago group that stressed reliance upon unions. But it also fostered para-military groups as a means of creating civil disturbances and other forms of civil disobedience.

Johann Most, German-born in 1846, early became a stormy petrel in the Socialist and, later, the Anarchist movements. He migrated to Vienna in 1864 where he embarked upon a belligerent career as a revolutionist. For this activity he was arrested and sentenced to five years imprisonment. He was released in 1871 and soon thereafter expelled from Austria. Returning to Germany he founded and edited a paper. Again in 1873 he spent eight months in jail for his revolutionary views. Now somewhat of a celebrity, he was, upon gaining his freedom, elected to the Reichstag. Following another arrest in 1877 he was compelled

to leave Germany. He first settled in London in 1878 and once more began publishing a weekly paper. Up to this period he associated himself with the extreme social-revolutionary group of the Socialist movement. In 1878 he became converted to anarchism of the terroristic Michael Bakounin variety. He was expelled from the German Social Democratic Party in 1880 for embracing anarchism. He was jailed in London for preaching violence, and particularly for praising the 1881 assassination of Alexander II of Russia. Released from jail he journeyed to New York. Since his fame as a revolutionist had preceded him, he was greeted in New York by the revolutionary socialist faction. Following an agitational tour of the United States, he settled in New York, resumed publication of the paper he had founded in London and assumed the leadership of the New York faction of the Socialist Revolutionary Association.

Most became the arch-priest expounding Anarchist philosophy in its pristine guise. His ideal society was an agglomeration of loosely federated autonomous groups of producers. Each group plied one trade, owning its productive equipment. The groups directly interchanged products with the aid of paper money. Each group had the power to establish either absolute communism or a system of wages for work performed. No superior authority ruled over these autonomous groups, the state and church having been "abolished." In the use of tactics, Most was a staunch and uncompromising believer in "propaganda by the deed," that is, acts of violence, including assassination of dignitaries of church, state and those in key positions in capitalistic enterprises. Other terroristic deeds and property destruction were key tactics. Most entertained and preached an undiluted Anarchism. He scorned social reality and orderly changes in social development. He sternly denied that there could even be a temporary truce between anarchism and capitalism. In brief, his program of pure and simple anarchism of the most doctrinaire variety called for the execution of reactionaries and confiscation of all privately owned property. To him political action was anathema and he had little faith in trade union action. He advocated reliance on miscellaneous organizations.

The socialist revolutionaries of the East and elsewhere eagerly embraced Most's brand of Anarchism. Having had little if any participation in the trade union activity either here or abroad, they failed to appreciate its importance in a developing industrial society. Pure and simple anarchist philosophy had more reality in most of Europe with its absolute monarchies, lack of manhood suffrage and the hostility of the dominant Roman Catholic Church than it had across the Atlantic. Worker organization in Europe was either entirely suppressed or permitted only precarious existence. Propaganda organizations concentrating on illegal defiance seemed to be the most desirable form of strategy with which to combat hostile, suppressive societies. While in the United States public authorities generally were hostile to labor organizations and particularly trade unions, manhood suffrage and constitutional protection of such organizations made it possible for unions to cope with many of the obstacles.

### *Trade Union Anarchism*

Having already operated through trade unions and having developed a mass following, the Chicago-led anarchists could not accept the doctrines of Johann Most. Such acceptance would mean the dismantling of a going and reasonably effective movement. Nevertheless they did not disfavor miscellaneous units which also carried on Anarchist activities, mostly of a propaganda nature, interspersed with civil disobedience. But in their view, the trade union was the embryo of the future free society. They regarded the trade union as an autonomous commune in the process of incubation. The union consisted of a homogeneous body of workers engaged in producing a particular product. Unlike the followers of Most, the Chicago Anarchists merely found fault with those unionists who employed the unions as an instrument for improvement of conditions within the Capitalist order instead of one for fighting it. To them the trade union was the ideal medium for abolishing Capitalism and replacing it with a system of universal free cooperation. Thus the Chicago Anarchists became the most cohesive and largest group within the Black International,

relying on the trade union as the prime instrument in promoting the social revolution. Moreover, in contrast to the miscellaneous groups supported by Most which preached reliance upon individual action, the Chicago Anarchists preferred well-disciplined organizations through which the group acted collectively under capable leadership. They even organized *Lehr und Wehr Verein*, as armed auxiliaries of the unions. These societies were actually first founded in 1875 by German Socialists as a reaction to physical intimidation by politicians and police. Perpetuated by the anarchists, these para-military groups owned parks in neighboring rural areas where the armed contingents were drilled. These parks also served as a kind of "poor man's country club" where the entire family could enjoy outings. But instead of featuring a golf course, tennis courts, and other bourgeois recreational facilities, their chief physical activity centered around the shooting range. The Anarchists put this training to good use in their agitational and strike activities, so that at times even the Chicago police were terrorized.

The Chicago idea reached its height in 1883. Its model union, the Metal Workers Federation Union of America, founded in 1885 voiced the Anarchist philosophy in a Declaration of Principles as follows:

"The Emancipation of Labor cannot be brought about whether by the regulation of the hours of labor or by the schedule of wages. The demands and struggles for higher wages or shorter hours, if granted, would only better the conditions of the wage-workers for a short time." The form of organization of most of the trade unions as organized today is defective because they "are controlled by a few persons called an executive committee, who, however honest, are unable to see clearly much less to instruct others as to the true position of the laboring masses." But, instead of the opportunism of the trade unions, the maxim should be adopted by the labour movement that "the entire abolition of the present system of society can alone emancipate the workers; being replaced by a new system, based upon co-operative organization of production in a free society." To this end the trade union should be so organized that "every member should be enabled to do his part in the work of progress; the management not centralizing in the few, but resting with the whole body of workers." And further, "our organization should be a school to educate its members for the new condition of society, when the workers will regulate their own affairs without any interference by the few, who are always more capable to betray their cause." ...At the same time "our organization aims to secure for its members such remunerations as will enable them to live as human beings should live." But under no consideration should they resort to politics. "Since the emancipation of the productive classes must come by their own efforts, it is unwise to meddle in present politics." ...On the other hand, "all direct struggles of the laboring masses have our fullest sympathy."

Use of the term "Federation" was in accordance with the Anarchist concept that each separate affiliated local union was an autonomous unit. This provision followed the policy established by the Black International and its American affiliate, the Revolutionary Socialist Association.

### *Forerunner of Syndicalism*

In a sense the Chicago (trade-union-based) Anarchists, without realizing it, anticipated to a major degree the later syndicalist philosophy and temporary mass movement represented by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). They lacked, however, the more characteristic and distinctive ingredients of full-fledged syndicalism. Syndicalism in its American form, namely, the Industrial Workers of the World, recognized that the nascent and infant capitalistic order upon which the anarchists patterned their free society was irretrievably gone. Burgeoning capitalism with large-scale industry, that is, mature super industrialism, was rapidly replacing it. Hence, the type of organization needed was not the autonomous commune or its embryo, the local union. In order to achieve social revolution, it was necessary to accept large-scale business enterprise, and to combat and replace it, the industrial union was a more adaptable structure than the commune.

To combat this gigantic and powerfully entrenched capitalistic system, anarchist strategy was primitive and outmoded. Syndicalism considered reliance upon individual action, with the terroristic tactics of the New York group, a minor and ineffective tactic to be used if at all, only incidentally. Likewise reliance on the autonomous local union is inadequate in a modern industrial society. Rather the industrial union was the structural unit to be entrusted with the task of carrying on the struggle to replace the capitalist structure. Thus, while accepting the Chicago-Anarchist concept of collective action through union organization instead of individual action, stimulated by miscellaneous groups, the syndicalists introduced other features considered essential in attacking capitalism. They introduced collective action in the form of sabotage, mass picketing and, preferably, national strikes that would ultimately eventuate in the general strike whereby capitalist society would be so paralyzed that the syndicalists would step into the breach and take it over. As an incidental side line in the agricultural areas of the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Northwest regions, their cardinal activities consisted of free-speech fights in local communities. In actual practice the IWW did not completely attain its strategic and tactical objective. It was organizationally too ephemeral and too much preoccupied with spontaneous strike developments to perfect its ideal structure. The IWW relied on individual action but not that of the assassination of prominent leaders. Sabotage practiced mainly in the shop was the preferred tactic. Also, the "blanket stiff," or itinerant organizer, was allowed unlimited leeway.

Some authorities have coined the term "Anarcho-Syndicalism," claiming that the two are related in philosophy and strategy, with Syndicalism being the lineal descendant of Anarchism. It is true that some Syndicalist characteristics distantly resemble those of Anarchism, such as distrust of government and politics and dependence exclusively on voluntary trade union organizational activity coupled with certain illegal activities. Nevertheless, Syndicalism has copied practices from non-Anarchist labor groups. Its industrial structure was used by the Knights of Labor and Socialists in that it was based on national industrial unions; its concept of the free society drastically differed from that of the Anarchists. However, like the Anarchists, the Syndicalists borrowed from the Socialists the basic philosophy indicting the capitalist system and, accepting the socialist recognition of a growing and developing industrialism, they adopted a new structure and new policies to combat it. They thereby rejected the anarchist models of either the free commune or the local union. While the syndicalists favored a decentralized society, it was to be based on national industrial organizations. Hence, like most mass movements, the syndicalists borrowed as much from non-Anarchist predecessors as they did from the Anarchist, but developed a distinct personality of their own. While the Anarchists, after their movement disintegrated, flocked in droves to syndicalism, it is also true that when syndicalism began to fade away, its followers generally embraced Communism with its highly centralized, monolithic, one-party system that directed all human activities through a bureaucratic national party and government. In both situations, the Anarchists and Syndicalists chose the movement that was most extreme in its anti-capitalism and endorsed an ultramilitant strategy for dealing with the existing order. To be sure, a small group of the Anarchist and Syndicalist elite defected, but their mass following became devoted Communists. This outcome reveals that the rank and file anarchists and syndicalists were less interested in a subtle philosophy than in a strategy to combat the capitalist order by volatile and drastic methods. A comprehensive analysis of syndicalist activities will be made in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### RISE AND FALL OF ANARCHISM

Anarchism became a substantial and highly belligerent movement. Its constituents were chiefly German immigrants together with some other European immigrants and some native born. The leadership was overwhelmingly German and its literature appeared mostly in that language. The Chicago trade union group was the more cohesive and compact. While discounting interest in tangible results, it realized that some improvements must be attained in order to hold the allegiance of the rank and file. It also tolerated miscellaneous societies which carried on effective propaganda activities. The Chicago trade union faction even organized its locals into a separate Central Labor Union. For a brief period this body exercised considerable influence on the Amalgamated Trades and Labor Union, one of the other central trade unions. The Knights of Labor also had its own central labor organization. As the most belligerent, the Anarchist unions profited considerably from the 1884 depression and general unrest among workers newly introduced to the factory system. Chicago was the city where the Anarchist movement had its deepest roots and where the ablest brains were to be found. A considerable number of English-speaking wage earners and some non-German intellectuals also were attracted to this revolutionary movement in Chicago. The Chicago group entered aggressively into the eight-hour campaign originally initiated by the AFL, and in which the Knights of Labor units also actively participated. However, it differentiated itself from the other labor groups by reiterating its Anarchist position in a resolution adopted by its Central Labor Union in October 1885 as follows:

Be it Resolved, That we urgently call upon the wage-earning class to arm itself in order to be able to put forth against their exploiters such an argument which alone can be effective: *Violence*, and further be it resolved, that notwithstanding that we expect very little from the introduction of the eight-hour day, We firmly promise to assist our more backward brethren in this class struggle with all means and power at our disposal, so long as they will continue to show an open and resolute front to our common oppressors, the aristocratic vagabonds and exploiters. Our war is "Death to the foes of the human race."

A clear expression of the "Propaganda by Deed" was thus daringly pronounced by the Chicago Anarchists. As we will see these unqualified and belligerent pronouncements and similar ones later served to plague their leaders after the Haymarket tragedy. To show their spirit of solidarity in this limited uprising against the capitalists, the leaders of the Anarchist-controlled Central Labor Union contributed generously to the Eight-Hour Association which consisted of its rivals, the Amalgamated Trades and Labor Assembly, the Socialist Labor Party and the Knights of Labor. It was the Eight-Hour Association that led the non-Anarchist labor movement in the eight-hour struggle in Chicago. The Anarchists were uninvited participants.

#### *Unintentional Tragic Role of Anarchists*

By conducting its important activities separately though unofficially associated with the general Chicago eight-hour movement, and publicly (and boisterously) advocating violence, the anarchists gave public authorities and the public a clear opportunity to associate them with the Haymarket catastrophe. The hysteria resulting from the bomb explosion at an Anarchist-sponsored mass meeting tended to intensify the public emotional reaction. The Anarchist leaders were easily, albeit circumstantially, charged with the heinous deed notwithstanding that there was no direct evidence presented at the trial specifically connecting them with the crime.

Two spectacular events that were notoriously exploited by the press and the authorities tended to create the erroneous impression that individual Anarchists had instigated or even participated in the bomb

throwing on the third of May. On the day before the Haymarket catastrophe, a group of lumber shovers conducted an open air meeting in the vicinity of the McCormick reaper works in Chicago, which had been involved in a strike for some time. Somehow this strike became linked with the eight-hour general strikes called on May 1st. As the strikebreakers left the plant for their homes, they were attacked by some of the bystanders at a meeting which was being addressed by one of the leading Anarchists. The police arrived in large numbers and were received with stones, missiles and other forms of violence. They fired, killing four and wounding many. Burning with indignation the Anarchist leader in charge of the meeting rushed to his office where he issued a call for revenge that contained the clause: "Workingmen, arm yourself and appear in full force." On the following day, May 4th, on Haymarket Square, a mass meeting of some 3000 persons was assembled to protest the shooting. A threatening rain storm dispersed most of the crowd, leaving but a few hundred. The Mayor of Chicago, who attended in order to try to maintain order, left with the bulk of the crowd. Soon a squad of 180 police, irritated by constant previous Anarchist harassment and abuse, shaped up and began to advance upon the crowd. The speaker, a leading Anarchist, cried out aloud to the police captain that this was a peaceful meeting. While the police captain turned to give an order, a bomb was hurled at the police. A sergeant was killed and about sixty other policemen were thrown to the ground. The police indiscriminately opened fire. Seven leaders of the Black International were arrested, indicted and placed on trial. They were found guilty of the crime committed by "a person unknown" at the Haymarket meeting. Three of them had addressed the Haymarket gathering. Appeals to higher courts were rejected. In the end four were hanged and one committed suicide while in jail. The others were sentenced to life imprisonment. In 1893 Governor John P. Altgeld, a devoted Bryan Democrat and a professed liberal, pardoned the incarcerated Anarchists. He simultaneously issued a ringing denunciation of the trial, terming it unfair because of the irregular selection of the jury, the prejudicial conduct of the judge and the fact that the state had never identified the thrower of the bomb.

Immediate and bitter public reaction to the Haymarket affair branded the Anarchists as a lawless element and a menace to society. The hysterical and denunciatory alarms of the general press generated a panic throughout the country. While this cast a temporary shadow on and weakened the entire labor movement, public wrath was more specifically directed at the Anarchists who were directly blamed for the Haymarket violence. The attacks on the Anarchists discredited them as an undesirable element and ultimately led to their collapse as a mass labor movement. This mass hysteria even frightened their own members so that their unions based on "the Chicago model" rapidly disintegrated. Regarded as outlaws by the general public they were shunned by the rest of the labor movement. Thenceforth the Anarchist remnants continued to function on the model of the eastern group as miscellaneous and autonomous propaganda units. The mantle of leadership fell exclusively upon the shoulders of the irascible Johann Most. In the public eye, with the guidance of the press and public opinion media, he and his followers were viciously denounced as social pariahs. Johann Most was especially branded as a social outcast. On the other hand, as a reckless element, the Anarchists joyously basked in this unsavory limelight.

Large numbers of intellectuals, liberals and radicals outrightly denounced the injustice and hysteria. Many became profoundly alerted to the problems of the workers and the importance of a labor movement. Not many condoned violence as a mode of correcting the existing evils. The non-Anarchist part of the labor movement, supported by social reformers, even resorted to political action as a protest against conspiracy and anti-boycott legislation. In the beginning this effort was unsuccessful.

Terence V. Powderly, Grand Master Workman of the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor, and Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, took different positions on the Haymarket affair. Neither of them condoned the throwing of the bomb or the violence. Powderly disassociated himself from the affair. Gompers, on the other hand, refrained from condemning the Anarchists, and forthrightly discouraged the hysterical denunciation, demanding a fair trial of the indicted men. Some labor historians

and others have judged Powderly a coward, and Gompers a man of strong character. I have met both men in the course of my activities as a labor historian. I saw more of Gompers and therefore knew him better. I interviewed Powderly on one occasion, some years after he had been deposed as head of the Knights and had become Commissioner of Immigration, appointed by President William McKinley as a reward for campaigning for the Republican presidential ticket. I studied the writings, public pronouncement and activities of both men intensively and have concluded that Powderly was judged wrongly. The two men were markedly different personalities. There is no question that Gompers was the more sophisticated and abler leader, but Powderly was not a coward. Each of them could be firm and defend his views and decisions daringly not only within his own circle but toward outside prominent figures in all walks of life. Although a devout Catholic, Powderly courageously held his position even against those high in the hierarchy of his church. His apparent timidity in strike situations and in labor negotiations was consistent with his forthright denunciation of the Anarchists and his refusal to criticize the hysterical condemnation poured upon the arrested Anarchist leaders. He demanded as did Gompers a fair trial for them. His attitude probably is explained by the fact that he was American-born and oriented to a middle-class, self-employment ideology. This ideology repudiated violence, although many followers of the Knights of Labor resorted to it. Middle-class thinkers lacked the innate consciousness of working class solidarity which Gompers, European-born and bred, had ingrained into his consciousness. To Gompers' way of thinking, workingmen from the disadvantaged class were generally oppressed and must be defended against the prevailing prejudice that workers invariably indulge in illegal acts. Hence they must be fairly tried. In other words, while Gompers rejected class consciousness, he was labor conscious. It was their ideological background and breeding that influenced Powderly and Gompers to react differently to the Haymarket tragedy. One took the stand that he was completely outraged and unconcerned; whereas the other took the intuitive worker viewpoint that this might be a trumped-up charge and that the arrested Anarchists were entitled to a fair trial.

Even within the Anarchist movement it became evident to the majority that violence was not desirable in a relatively orderly country. Thus, the Haymarket affair had a positive effect upon the nature of the ultrarevolutionary movement: It led to the abandonment of the advocacy of "Propaganda by Deed" and a lessening of emphasis upon force. Some held that greater reliance should be placed on social evolution and that force should be used primarily to counter aggression.

The movement was not shattered immediately and the Chicago Anarchists even rallied their forces by holding a convention in 1893 which was well attended and at which discussion was as vivacious as at previous conventions. However, the movement in Chicago could not maintain its trade union base. The Chicago-led group now reverted to the form of the New York group. By this transformation the Anarchist movement in the United States became entirely a movement of miscellaneous groups and individuals. It now relied largely on general propaganda and had little concern for trade union activities to improve working conditions or conduct strikes.

As the Anarchist movement disintegrated it also degenerated morally. Most of it came under the leadership of two Russian immigrants who, like so many others, had fled to our shores to escape Czarist oppression and persecution. The flaming, histrionic, articulate, and learned Emma Goldman became its High Priestess. Her consort was the morose and introspective Alexander Berkman. These two persisted in perpetuating the primitive concepts of Anarchism, as a system of autonomous communities to be created by "Propaganda by the Deed." In addition, under their leadership the movement began featuring the general Anarchist and libertarian idea of freedom of the individual in all life's activities, including free love. In her writings and talks, as well as in her personal conduct, Emma Goldman preached and practiced free love. In the public eye this became a fundamental doctrine of latter day Anarchism. Its feature as a cardinal principle represented, apparently, an escape from frustration and was an outgrowth of the weakness of the Anarchist movement. This sect proudly proclaimed itself as "varietists," and practitioners of sexual promiscuity.

In her autobiography, *Living My Life*, Emma Goldman glowingly and boastfully discusses her beliefs and personal participation in fulfilling them. Hutchings Hapgood in his readable, indeed eloquent, but thinly disguised novel, *The Spirit of Labor*, pictures the caprices of the Chicago Anarchist "varietists'" faction. The participants in that movement revealed the real names of the heroine and hero in his novel to me. They boasted of scorning legal marriage as a symbol of their defiance of the state. Ironically when World War I came many of the younger Anarchist men became legally married in order to escape the draft. To them, getting legally married under these circumstances was considered an act of sabotaging the state. But this act was not prompted by any pacifist predilections, but by their opposition to capitalistic wars and perhaps to escape such hazards as imprisonment and the dangers attendant to battles.

In condoning violence the last tragic events in practicing "Propaganda by the Deed" were undertaken by the Goldman-Berkman Anarchist group. Two notorious instances in which this element resorted to assassination, because of the prominence of the persons attacked, marked the death knell of Anarchism in this country even as a ragtag movement. Alexander Berkman undertook to put this basic primitive Anarchist principle into practice in superlative form by attempting to assassinate Henry C. Frick following the failure of the Homestead strike. As head of the Carnegie Steel Corporation, Frick had been responsible for bringing in Pinkerton detectives which led to the fatal pitched battle between them and the strikers. He also was blamed for the loss of the strike. As a result he had acquired the reputation of being the archenemy of organized labor. Berkman, according to the account in his *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, decided that removal of this "tyrant" was a holy act of revenge. It would also dramatically demonstrate the efficacy of a strategic Anarchist principle in dealing with an implacable capitalist. In 1892 he journeyed from his home in New York to Pittsburgh. He made his way to Frick's office and shot at and slightly wounded him. For this attempt on the life of Frick, Berkman was condemned to a twenty-two year term of imprisonment. To better understand the bravado spirit of this anarchist group, the attempt to deliver Berkman from prison should be carefully noted. In his *Memoirs*, Berkman describes the daring and dramatic undertaking, meticulously planned to enable him to escape. By sheer coincidence the plot went awry, but the failure was not the fault of Berkman or his accomplices. Later Berkman, now an old man, settled on the Riviera where he was supported by his youthful wife. In 1931 he committed suicide.

Another spectacular effort to put "Propaganda by the Deed" into practice which received even more extensive publicity and condemnation was the assassination of President William McKinley at the dedication of the Buffalo Exposition, September 5, 1901. One Leon Czolgosz, a Polish immigrant and an avowed Anarchist, journeyed from Chicago to Buffalo, stood in the reception line, and shot the President as he approached. Anarchist literature belonging to Czolgosz included some pieces written by Emma Goldman. The efforts of the authorities to implicate her proved futile, but the public blamed the Anarchist movement.

Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, various articles appeared relating to the history of Presidential assassination. Since the assassin Oswald had defected to Russia upon his dishonorable discharge from the Marines, and upon his readmission to the United States had become associated with various Communist activities, there was a suspicion that his act was part of a Communist plot. The "Warren Commission" appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in its findings declared that the assassination of the President was an individual act. Writers generalized that in all cases of Presidential assassination the acts were those of lone individuals, including the act of Czolgosz in the case of McKinley. In casual conversations over a period of time with Anarchists in the inner circle of the Chicago group, I learned that this conclusion was not valid in the Czolgosz case. From the heroine called Red Esther in Hutchins Hapgood's novel, I learned that Czolgosz roomed in her house prior to leaving for Buffalo to perform his heinous deed. He associated intimately with prominent Anarchists in Chicago, and Red Esther hinted that his mission was discussed with them and that he was aided financially. I know of no documentary data that would substantiate my findings. Since my association with this Anarchist group, as with others in the labor movement, was of a friendly nature rather than that of an alien investigator, I consider this information authentic.

This catastrophic event, and other and lesser events, have effectively discredited Anarchism. Therefore, its seeds have not taken deep root in the United States. Believers in Anarchism began to describe themselves as philosophic Anarchists if they publicly professed to adherence to that ideology. They were Anarchists in thought but not “in deed.” Some, to further dissociate themselves from the social revolutionary Anarchists, even described themselves as “libertarians.” But it faded away even as an esoteric movement, leaving only old followers still nostalgically and peacefully clinging to their memories.

## CHAPTER XXV

### FAILURE OF SOCIALIST COLLABORATION WITH MIDDLE-CLASS GROUPS

As a result of the 1877 strikes in which the suppressive practices of the police, militia, courts and other government agencies had aroused deep resentment, the Socialist Labor Party made considerable political progress and profited from an increase in membership. Following the 1880 presidential election, however, the Party met with reverses. Simultaneously, as often happens in a political movement, the following it attracted, although having the objective of advancing the cause of Socialism in common, was divided over policies and strategy. One faction believed in making alliances with non-Socialist liberal elements. This group was led mostly by English-speaking leaders who stressed the supreme importance of political action. It was their influence that led to the endorsement of the “Greenback” presidential ticket in the 1880 national election, although their plank which was mostly concerned with government ownership was sidetracked by the Greenback leaders. By way of mollifying the Socialists, the plank was adopted by a large majority following the action on the platform. Considerable dissatisfaction arose among the Socialists over the compromise. In order to appease the dissenters and critics, the Secretary of the SLP inquired of the Greenback party presidential candidates whether they also accepted the plank. They gave absolute assurance that they endorsed the plank. The compromisers hailed this assurance as a victory.

Even up to recently, socialists have been obsessed with the notion of government ownership. Hence, any commitment to government ownership of some form of private property was considered a step towards socialism. Actually both the Single Taxers and Populists also favored government ownership of public utilities and kindred industries which tend to become monopolies by virtue of their services. But since government ownership in some form was endorsed, the Socialists were satisfied. The endorsement read as follows:

We declare that land, light, air and water are the free gifts of nature to all mankind, and any law or custom of society that allows any person to monopolize more of these gifts than he has a right to, to the detriment of the rights of others, we earnestly condemn and seek to abolish.

The unfavorable outcome of the presidential election and the poor returns for the lesser candidates for local office encouraged the opposition. Mostly because of its support from important trade unions Chicago had become the center of the Socialist movement. The bulk of the Chicago affiliates, completely disillusioned by political action, turned to trade union anarchism. The Eastern faction also became disillusioned by the meager election results in 1880. It also rebelled against the compromises with the non-Socialist elements, but for different reasons. It regarded the trade unions as being mere auxiliaries instead of the basic institution of the labor movement as envisaged by the Chicago faction. It agreed, however, with

the Chicago anarchists that the unions must be discouraged from stressing current improvement in conditions for fear that this would influence the rank and file to become opportunistic. The Easterners also denounced political action that would concentrate on achieving social reform legislation as diverting the rank and file from revolutionary objectives. Such a policy not only was considered ineffective, but it was believed that it tended to encourage compromises with non-Socialist elements.

Improvement in conditions in 1880 also contributed to wage earners' lack of interest in politics. Union organization which could gain immediate improvements seemed more alluring. This situation encouraged the pure and simple unionists who also opposed concern with labor and social legislation, which could only be attained by political action. These developments left the SLP reduced to a weak movement, and as usual when a radical group deteriorates, dissension and schism became rife. Socialist experience with separation from the Anarchists was thus repeated in attempts to collaborate with middle-class political groups.

### *Labor Political Upheaval*

The upsurge in trade union activity following 1880 was countered by the privileged classes. The courts, police and public authorities became active in successfully interfering with union activity. This hostility and the economic disturbances in 1886 stimulated an interest in political action. Disastrous strikes, the wholesale conviction of union members on criminal charges of boycott, conspiracy, intimidation and rioting revealed the turning of public opinion against labor as a result of the Haymarket bomb tragedy, and the identification in the minds of the general public of the Knights of Labor and the trade unionists with the anarchists and lawlessness. The enactment of legislation designed to restrict the freedom of action of labor organizations and the presence of a large non-wage-earning element among the K of L which was able to assert itself only through political action favored a political upheaval. Political action seemed the road whereby labor could cope with the difficulties it encountered.

Union labor parties under different names sprang up between 1880 and 1888 throughout the country both in agricultural and urban regions. The Knights of Labor, trade unionists and miscellaneous reform organizations participated in the composition of these parties in the cities or industrial areas. Nowhere in these campaigns was there evidence of any serious friction. In rural or semi-rural areas there was cooperation between "Greenback" and farm organizations. Similarly, Socialist branches supported the labor party tickets. There does not seem to be evidence of a separate Socialist ticket where labor party candidates were in the field. Platforms included planks of interest to the different participating elements. To satisfy organized labor planks included prohibition of child labor, abolition of contracting out public work to private entrepreneurs, prevention of competition between free and convict labor, enactment of weekly-payment laws, more adequate safety legislation, improved federal contract labor laws and the reduction of hours of labor in proportion to the improvement of machinery. The platform devoted most attention however to the middle-class self-employment ideology. It reiterated the Greenback demand for currency reform in order to satisfy the farmers and the self-employed businessmen and mechanics. Nor was the single-tax issue ignored. A tax upon improved land was demanded and public ownership of land and municipal utilities was called for. Other reform measures of interest to the low income population were inserted in the platforms, such as a progressive or graduated income tax, and even the reform of patent laws.

Encouraged by the success of the scattered labor parties, the sentiment for independent political action grew to such proportions that even the attitude of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, the name of which was shortened in 1886 to American Federation of Labor, was temporarily altered in favor of independent political action. At its 1885 convention it had voted down a resolution declaring in favor of a strictly workingmen's party. But following the successful results of the election in 1886, the

legislative committee at that year's convention declared:

We regard with pleasure the recent political action of the organized workingmen of the country...by which they have demonstrated that they are determined to exhibit their political power. We, in full accord therewith, recommend to organized labor throughout the country that they persist in their recent efforts to the end that labor may achieve its just rights through the exercise of political powers.

The Federation endorsed this recommendation, urging "a most generous support to the independent political movement of the workingmen." Few labor leaders, no matter what their views on independent political action, could resist the political sweep. Samuel Gompers, now President of the AFL, was also in this vortex during Henry George's mayoralty campaign in 1887 in New York. As candidate of the United Labor Party, George was opposed by the two major parties and disapproved by the Catholic hierarchy. Assuming the attitude of sympathetic outsider, Gompers made campaign talks in favor of the George candidacy, but he characteristically dissociated himself from George's philosophy in the following declaration:

"The labor movement, to succeed politically, must work for present and tangible results. While keeping in view a lofty ideal, we must advance towards it through practical steps, taken with intelligent regard for pressing needs. I believe with most advanced thinkers as to ultimate ends, including the abolition of the wage system." However, "as many of us understand it, Mr. George's theory of land taxation does not promise present reforms, nor an ultimate solution."

Even Powderly, the only one of the outstanding labor leaders who staunchly and publicly was opposed to independent political action, yielded to the momentary pressure from the movement. Shortly before election day a canard was circulated by the Democratic politicians that stated that Powderly was opposed to George's candidacy. Although he had decided not to participate at the beginning of the campaign, he realized that his attitude was misunderstood as opposing George and ordered his organization to arrange a mass meeting in New York. At this gathering on the eve of the election, Powderly strongly endorsed the candidacy of George, whose showing was most encouraging. While the Democratic candidate, with the backing of a strongly organized party with branches in the wards, was elected by 90,000 votes, George came in second with 68,000. He ran ahead of the Republican candidate Theodore Roosevelt, who trailed with only 60,000 votes. Some of these who followed the election believed that George was counted out of thousands of votes, which commonly occurred to parties manned by inexperienced personnel and with inadequate organization. Success in other parts of the country generated an enthusiasm for a national labor party.

#### *National Labor Political Action*

Efforts to promote national independent farmer-labor parties were launched previous to this period. They did not attain stability or permanence. But failure did not deter the movement. Local regional successes encouraged them to make another try. Naturally the Socialists energetically participated as did other labor groups.

The participants forming a national independent party in opposition to the two major parties were essentially the same as those of the local and regional parties. While labor organizations and leaders including the Socialists played an important role, the dominant group was an amalgam of farmers, professionals, self-employed mechanics and merchants, reformers and other middle-class groups. As in the local parties, the prairie and other largely agrarian areas predominated, but labor interests were recognized in the various social reform and labor planks in the platforms. The Socialists were satisfied because government ownership of various private enterprises was generously approved. Some elements supported these demands reluctantly. This attempt was a successor of the earlier farmer, urban self-employed and labor parties and a forerunner of

the People's or Populist movement. Actually, the Populist Party was the lineal descendant of all the independent political undertakings since the beginning of the nation. Only the Socialists did not participate as a mass movement. By this time they had separated from indigenous ideologies in order to promote their own class-conscious ideology. But in the 1886-1888 independent political movement the Socialists, still hopeful of winning over the independent farmer-labor political movement by boring from within, joined in the latest undertaking.

Shortly after the encouraging 1886 elections, steps were taken to give permanence to the temporary political organizations. In general the initiative was taken by agrarian and Knights of Labor organizations. Powderly, alone, advised against it. A Chicago reform paper, upon the request of 500 petitioners, issued a call in 1886 to the Knights of Labor, the Farmers' Alliance, the Farmers' and Laborers' Cooperative Union, Grangers, Greenbackers, Corn Planters, and Anti-Monopolists to send representatives to a convention to be held in Indianapolis to organize a national political party in which to enroll the industrial voters of the nation. Since representatives from only six states responded, no action was taken at this convention except to call for another meeting to convene in Cincinnati on February 22, 1887. John Swinton, one of the leading organized labor champions, began urging in his paper that as many labor organizations as possible should be represented at this Cincinnati convention, because it was believed that labor could not create any great national political movement in this country without the aid of the farmers. Such alliances had already been effected between farmer and labor organizations in several predominantly agricultural states. It was optimistically expected that such a union of farmers with labor organizations would make it possible to ameliorate all evils oppressing both classes. Although the Cincinnati convention was dominated by farmers, the platform endorsed important wage-earner demands. The National Union Labor Party was created by this convention. Organized labor, however, was not united in affiliating with or supporting the party. Much friction and controversy occurred. But this unsettled situation did not seriously affect the enthusiasm of organized labor in the spring municipal elections of 1887. Labor tickets appeared in at least fifty-nine localities, including some of the largest cities. On the whole, the labor candidates made satisfactory showings and in some areas succeeded in winning. So frightened were the non-labor elements that in some areas they joined in running one ticket against the labor candidates. Vicious attacks and false charges were made against the labor parties consisting of Anarchists and other lawless elements.

The tide turned, however. Friction and quarrels over issues grew. Thus the Single Taxers would not cooperate unless their doctrines were endorsed. The Socialists became restless and in many cities ran their own candidates, who proved to be spoilers by dividing the labor vote. By the autumn of 1887, the independent labor party movement was clearly losing strength chiefly as a result of the bitter dissension within the movement. The election results in 1888 revealed the decline of the movement. Forces had already begun to split in the local elections of 1887, and in the presidential election of 1888, the division of these same political forces became general. The United and Union Labor parties nominated their separate presidential candidates. Late in the campaign the Union Labor Party discontinued its activities except in New York. In general the United Labor Party campaign was clearly a farmer's party although it retained the labor planks in its platform. Because of the dissension and in order to protect their own interests, many of the most prominent labor leaders served as old-party campaigners. The Union Labor Party presidential ticket received almost no votes in industrial centers in the 1888 election. Thus the independent labor political movement had by this time reached a state of collapse.

#### *Unfruitful Socialist Coalition*

As revealing its future internal struggles, ideological evolution and ultimate metamorphosis, the role of the Socialists merits special attention. By about 1884 the Socialist movement recovered from the

blow it received from the Anarchist defection. Not being strong enough to run independent tickets and primarily anxious to give support to independent political action, the Socialists embarked upon the opportunistic course of associating with others in promoting labor parties, first on a local and regional level and then on a national scale. While the platforms of these parties were deficient from the Socialist point of view, the Socialists consoled themselves and justified their strategy, since planks on government ownership committed the labor parties at least to partial Socialism. The Socialists thus wandered in the wilderness of labor political action in the hope of ultimately finding their way to separate Socialist political action. This objective particularly motivated those Socialists who stressed political action as the prime consideration. Differences began to appear within the all-inclusive political parties in which the Socialists found themselves as a minority. Trying to overcome this handicap the Socialists asserted themselves aggressively. This overly positive action inevitably eventuated in serious cleavages. The Socialists were irritated by the domination of agrarian elements and other non-Socialist groups that insisted on promoting their ideologies at the expense of the general movement. As the Socialists gained strength they became more confident that they could proceed separately.

Not exactly representative but illustrative of the struggle between the Socialists and other elements was the conflict in New York in which serious disagreements created a situation wherein the Socialists were forced to capture the labor party or organize one of their own. Following the favorable show in the Henry George mayoralty campaign in New York differences grew tense as George wanted to change the name of the Party so that it would not be labeled a labor party. He aimed to transform the party into a purely single tax organization. In doing so, the George group planned to disregard the labor character of the party. It aspired to make the party one of all producing classes against the landlords and "special-privilege" groups of all sorts, based on a single-tax philosophy. A specific labor character which would give it a class connotation was considered inadvisable. There was active opposition by the Socialists. Their only reason for joining was the expectation that the party by retaining its labor features would in the course of events embrace Socialism. The George group began to manipulate matters in preparation for the state convention to be held in August, 1887. While the name United Labor Party was retained because the Georgists could not agree on a better one, the convention call specified three issues as important: the taxation of land values, currency reform, and government ownership of railroads. Complete omission of labor demands in the convention call aroused the Socialists to open criticism of Henry George and the management of the party. Both sides waged open battle through the publications they controlled and in public speeches. Both sides carried on a strenuous campaign for delegates to the county conventions, through which the delegates to the state conventions would be chosen.

The liveliest contest occurred in New York county. The United Labor Party in this county contained a constitutional provision that no person should be eligible as a delegate unless he had severed connections, with all other political parties, organizations or clubs. Since the Socialists, as a party, conducted the campaign for retaining the word "Labor" in the party's title as well as in the labor planks, the followers of Henry George managed by a considerable majority to have the Socialists expelled from the county organization of the United Labor Party. In this action the Georgists were indirectly aided by the general press which also featured the news that the Socialists were about to capture the United Labor Party. Now the fight between the two groups became intensified. The supporters of the Socialists adopted resolutions urging that the word "Labor" should be retained in the party's name and labor demands should be preserved in the platform. The trade unions concurred in this demand, especially the German unions. But even the Socialist unions did not support the contention that the Socialist Party as a separate organization could participate in the deliberations of the United Labor Party. On the other hand, the Socialists denied the charge that they aimed to capture that Party. Indeed the New York section of the Socialist Labor Party declared at a meeting that it was not a political party in the sense of the clause in the constitution of the United Labor Party. Its leaders proposed a reconciliation, but Henry George rejected the suggestions. He firmly declared that, "The

question between state or German Socialism and the ideas of that great party of equal rights and individual freedom which is now beginning to rise all over the land, may as well, since the Socialists have raised it, be settled now." The socialists countered by urging that nothing be done to antagonize the working men in large industrial cities. They also condemned as demagoguery the attempt to represent the issue as one between American and foreign ideas. By assuming this attitude, the Socialists attempted to present themselves as not championing their doctrines, but acting as the spokesmen of the workers and decrying the efforts to brand the immigrants as un-American.

Following the usual heated debate at the state convention, George appealed to the delegates not to compromise, because the greatest danger that could befall the party would not be the separation of its elements, but a continuation within its ranks of incongruous groups. The convention voted to support the single tax leaders by not seating Socialist delegates who still had retained their connection with the Socialist Labor Party.

Since the platform made the single tax the principle issue, it was the Single Taxers who supported the principle of separatism whereas the Socialists at this period stood for unity in one party of all labor and reform groups. The platform adopted specially disavowed any leaning towards Socialism and featured the single tax. The remainder of the platform consisted of planks characteristic of earlier labor parties. It reflected the point of view of farmers, self-employed mechanics and merchants, as well as workers. In that sense the platform of the United Labor Party was in the historical tradition of the less privileged indigenous elements. It included such demands as currency reform, municipal ownership of public utilities and a list of labor and social reform demands. The Socialists did not object to these provisions; their objection was to making the Labor Party an exclusively single tax instrument. They did not insist on an exclusive Socialist party. Indeed, the Socialists seemed to be more interested in stimulating and nurturing a sentiment for independent political action, consoling themselves that this interest coupled with planks for government ownership would ultimately eventuate in a desire for socialism.

Having been defeated at the Syracuse convention in their attempt to prevent the United Labor Party from becoming a purely single tax vehicle, the Socialists addressed themselves to organizing a rival party that would operate on the principle of including all labor and allied groups, as envisaged by the original labor party movement. This policy of Socialist participation in labor parties had officially been sanctioned at the 1877 Socialist Labor Party convention. The SLP therefore called a conference to form a labor party based on the traditional model. In accordance with the established pattern the attendance consisted of delegates from 56 trade unions, 31 political organizations in New York and Brooklyn, and 16 sections of the Socialist Labor Party of New York and vicinity. The meeting founded the Progressive Labor Party. Conforming to the current Socialist objective, the platform expressed the ideals of the preceding indigenous labor political movements more pronouncedly than those of the United Labor Party. It declared that the emancipation of the working class would be accomplished by the workingmen themselves through the establishment (as demanded by the Knights of Labor) of cooperative institutions, which would tend to supersede the wage system by the introduction of a cooperative industrial system. It must be borne in mind that the K of L was at this juncture still the dominant labor federation which had captivated the imagination not only of the great mass of workers, but also that of other underprivileged groups. While its affiliates were not as cohesive and stable as those of the AFL, they nevertheless exercised a strong ideological influence. In addition, the platform specifically enumerated a long list of labor demands. It also called for reforms in taxation in a demand for the public ownership of the means of communication and transportation and other public utilities.

In a less dramatic and vitriolic fashion the entire labor political movement went through a similar experience. By 1886 a rash of independent labor candidates were contesting those of the two major parties in numerous areas and under various party names. The results surprised even the most optimistic.

By the end of 1887 the independent labor party movement began to lose ground. This decline coincided with improved business conditions. The labor upheaval had spent its force. Interest in politics began to lag. As in New York the diverse groups began to press for their cardinal doctrines. Radical and labor groups are prone to quarrel when their efforts encounter reversals. As long as success seems likely, they manage to reconcile their differences. But when the cement of success begins to crumble, the divergent factions want to go their separate ways. The Socialists where possible organized their own parties or took control of the functioning labor party. But, only in rare instances in which the Socialists dominated did they use the name Socialist. They continued using names that would attract others as well as Socialists to the party and deliberately refrained from separatism or isolationism. By 1888 the independent labor party movement had dwindled to insignificance. A contributing factor, since each group ran its own candidates, was the competition of independent labor parties. In a number of cases a combination of the votes for the competing labor parties would have made it possible to defeat the combined major parties. As the movement disintegrated, most of the labor parties made alliances with one or the other of the two major parties and many of the most prominent labor leaders served as candidates or campaigned for them.

Notwithstanding that the independent labor movement failed in attaining permanence, the political upheaval of the 1880's had considerable effect on the old parties. It caused them to take note of the social atmosphere as reflected by the independent labor political uprising. Considerable social reform and labor legislation was enacted. Some of it was of spurious nature, like the eight-hour laws which omitted enforcement provisions and therefore were merely declarations of intent. Other laws, however, were genuine. Among these were laws setting up departments of mediation and arbitration, providing for regulation of tenement houses, providing for the labeling and marketing of convict-made goods, perfecting the mechanics' lien laws, regulating employment of women and children and hours of labor on public or municipal transportation, and providing for limited protection of workers in joining unions. Nor was this independent labor political undertaking the last attempt in independent political ventures of the combined efforts of farmers, self-employed mechanics, merchants and organized labor. Subsequent efforts were on a larger scale, included the national arena, and were more successful, but these also proved temporary. The Socialists did not participate in this last hurrah. From now on they chose to carry on their political activities independently.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SOCIALIST SEPARATION AND INTERNAL CONFLICT

In assessing the disappointing outcome of the independent labor political resurgence in the 1880's, the traditional evaluations were heatedly debated in the Socialist Movement. It had been the hope of the Socialists that by participating in this non-Socialist political movement converts could be won to their cause in the political parties and in the unions. The Socialists particularly hoped to win the trade unions to their side and to use them in building a purely Socialist Party. But this Socialist strategy, which later was labeled as "boring from within," that is, converting the unions to Socialism by assiduously working within them, did not bring the desired results. It was then agreed that the SLP should concentrate on separate political action.

As the Party began to operate on its own, it fortuitously came under the control of a positive personality who proved to be the stormy petrel of the movement. He injected a dichotomous tone that

eventuated in an irreconcilable schism. Daniel De Leon was his name. The scion of an old Jewish Spanish family that settled in South America in the sixteenth century, he was born in 1852 in the Dutch West Indies Island of Curacao. He received his early education in Germany and graduated from Leyden University. He came to the United States in 1872 and was appointed to teach International Law at Columbia University. His first initiation into political activity was in the Henry George campaign. He dabbled in other political activity, joining the Socialist Labor Party in 1890. By 1892 he had become a power in the Party, founding and editing the *Daily People*. The SLP under his leadership adopted more vigorous tactics. Originally De Leon did not scorn working within the established unions. He differed on the advisability of unions featuring what became known as immediate demands, that is, current improvements in working and living conditions. He was convinced that a union must concentrate on educating workers in revolutionary activities that would finally be used to overthrow the capitalist society by transforming it into a Socialist one. He used vituperative and colorful language in attacking pure and simple unionism and its conservative trade union leaders. Among his milder denunciatory charges was that the pure and simple trade union leaders were labor fakery and capitalist lackeys.

While others were merely directing their efforts to changing the AFL, De Leon took it upon himself also to lead the fight against the rapidly declining leaders of the Knights of Labor. He came near capturing the national organization, being expelled in the end. With the Socialists having also lost out in their efforts to commit the AFL to Socialism, De Leon concluded that "boring from within" was useless strategy. He then decided that it was necessary to destroy the conservative unions by organizing rival Socialist organizations. This policy became known as "Dual Unionism." In 1895 De Leon founded the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. This undertaking proved a failure, but it stirred up an explosive controversy within the SLP.

The Socialist trade union leaders, who represented the pragmatic point of view within the AFL, were not consulted before this momentous step was taken. Neither were others prominent in the Party and the movement. While the leaders agreed that a Socialist Party and independent political action were essential to promote the cause, they nevertheless held to the view that current improvements in working and living conditions through labor and reform legislation and trade union action through collective bargaining would gradually bring Socialism. Moreover, they believed that trade unions as mass organizations were consciously or unconsciously promoting the class struggle. Hence it was imperative for Socialists to remain in these organizations to agitate and educate for Socialism. They emphatically opposed dual unionism with its objective of destroying the existing unions. Thus the exponents of dual unionism with their emphasis on ultimate demands were confronted by the advocates of the strategy of boring from within which stressed immediate demands. Consequently there was a violent struggle for power within the SLP. In control of the Party machinery, the De Leonites began to expel Party branches that opposed the De Leon policies. Efforts at mediation and conciliation proved fruitless. De Leon would have his way. To clinch his views, the 1900 convention of the SLP made radical changes in its platform. All immediate demands, for which the SLP had fought for a decade, were denounced as nonsense and a fraud, and were stricken out. Such reform measures, the new platform declared, meant trying to sugar-coat Socialist principles. Advocacy of immediate demands was an illusory and dangerous practice, for it meant emphasizing issues that did not in any way affect the fundamental objective of the SLP, the abolition of the wage system. This repudiation of immediate demands, subordinating traditional trade union action to political action and resorting to dual unionism, was looked upon as merely widening the breach within the Socialist movement. This movement reached its crisis in 1898. The anti-De Leon faction withdrew and held a convention in 1900. It repudiated the hostile attitude of the SLP towards the non-Socialist trade unions and featured what became known as evolutionary Socialism which would be attained gradually by political means, with the support of the unions and union members converted to Socialism by "boring from within." The immediate-demand planks, which called primarily for social reform and labor legislation, were restored, but the ultimate-demand planks were also included.

Simultaneously a form of social democracy was developing in the West. Its recruits were discontented elements of various sorts; Grangers, Greenbackers, Populists, social reformers, non-Marxian Socialists, and those like Victor L. Berger of Milwaukee who were well versed in Marxism. These groups formed the Social Democratic Party in 1897. For a time they cooperated with non-Socialist political groups and extended their following and influence to eastern industrial towns. In 1901 these moderate Socialist groups joined in forming the Socialist Party of America (SP). But this did not happen without much bickering, rancour, and recrimination. The usual suspicions of each other as wanting to control the party were intermingled with strategy differences. Personality clashes, such as often occur, played a role. Nevertheless the SP was launched on a moderate or pragmatic program, as the platform of the Party reveals.

#### *Pragmatic Socialists Become a Mass Movement*

Burgeoning industrialism, arbitrary employer handling of labor relations, unfriendly government interference particularly by the courts and police authorities, and generally bad working and living conditions convinced a goodly number of workers and others that the moderate Socialist analysis of the causes for these conditions had merit. These highly dissatisfied and aggrieved persons nevertheless shunned violent and extreme remedies. The moderate SP program seemed to appeal to them. Thus, from the outset, the Socialist Party began to make surprising gains both as a political party and in the trade union movement. Between 1901 and through the first World War, the Party prospered in both fields. In common with the independent parties that preceded it, this success proved temporary but the intellectual ferment generated influenced social, political and trade union thinking and played a part in subsequent legislative results. Parties like the SLP and trade union and other movements like the Knights of Labor, the Anarchists and later the Industrial Workers of the World that scorned reality and aimed for panaceas also proved unsuccessful. However, some of them also stirred up an interest in social problems. The difference between the pragmatic Socialists, who were derisively labeled by their adversaries as the "opportunists," and the ultraradical or unrealistic Socialists, who were derogatorily accused of being "impossibilists," is underlined in a succinct classification by Nathan Fine in his informative book, *Labor-Farmer Parties in the United States*.

#### *Political and Trade Union Accomplishments of the S.P.*

As a mass movement, the Socialists were primarily supported by immigrants and the party membership consisted overwhelmingly of immigrants. Nevertheless, it acquired a substantial following among native-born educated groups and non-workers. It also gained some converts among well-known American publicists. It thus was enabled to exercise an influence in the community far beyond its vote-getting strength. From the outset the Socialist Party, with emphasis on its moderate program and pragmatic strategy, superseded the SLP in political and trade union achievement. The SP had a spectacular rise in both membership and vote getting. Between 1901 and the first World War, it increased its vote in presidential elections from 100,000 to close to 900,000 in 1912, or about 6% of the total vote cast. Socialist Party candidates in some industrial areas made dramatic gains in local elections. At the beginning of 1912, the Party counted 1,039 dues paying members in public office. Among these were 56 mayors, over 300 aldermen, some county officials, a number of state legislators, and one Congressman. Milwaukee, with its large German population, in 1910 had electrified the country by electing a Socialist Mayor and a Socialist majority of the municipal council. It also sent its learned, astute and dynamic leader, Victor L. Berger, to Congress. Four years later the New York Socialists elected the able lawyer, Meyer London, to Congress from an Eastside constituency with a predominantly Jewish population. Both Victor Berger and Meyer London were immigrant intellectuals. Victor L. Berger migrated from Austria-Hungary; Meyer London was an East-European. The perennial presidential candidate, Eugene Victor Debs, on the other hand, was a native American, born of Alsatian

parents. His middle baptismal name was intended to honor Victor Hugo. He was a truly horny-handed son of toil, who at 15 had fired a locomotive. He soon rose in the ranks of the officialdom of organized labor, becoming Secretary-Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, one of the railroad-union groups derisively labeled by its critics as "aristocrats of labor." The publicity received by his spectacular organization and leadership of the railway strike of 1894, which culminated in a prison term, elevated Debs to a position of martyrdom which magnified his evangelical attributes. A number of the Socialist leaders and elected officials in various localities were also American-born.

In the aggregate, the Socialists polled a larger vote in local elections than in national. While teaching at the University of Chicago Professor Paul H. Douglas, later a United States Senator, made a survey of the Socialist vote in the elections of 1917, after war was declared against Germany and its allies. He found that in 15 cities from which he had accurate election returns, out of a total vote of 1,450,000, the Socialists polled 314,000 or 21.6%. Had the Socialists polled an equal proportion in the presidential election of 1916, their total vote would have been approximately 4,000,000. This is not surprising since the Socialist Party unlike the SLP was not doctrinally absolutist. While the SP would not join coalitions with bourgeois parties, it was tolerant and made allowances for differences over procedure and ultimate expectations. The SP was not averse to cooperating with other reform groups as long as they agreed on measures called for in the planks on "immediate demands."

Actually the Socialist Party from its inception was a mixture of heterogeneous and conflicting elements. In its ranks could be found opportunist Socialists who favored emphasis upon immediate demands and municipal ownership and reform. As it grew it also included "impossibilists" who advocated a clear-cut revolutionary program which attracted liberals and reformers who were not Socialists, but who believed in supporting a party of protest. In the course of time the Socialist party began some specific doctrinaire tightening up of its discipline. Under the pressure of the growing influence of the "impossibilists" within and outside Party, it adopted a resolution in 1903 calling for expulsion of any local or member "compromising" with a labor party. That the Party was sincere was demonstrated in 1910 by the National Executive Committee when it expelled its Arizona branch for participation in the formation of a labor party. The Washington State branch also suspended locals and members for alleged participation in a labor party convention. As will be noted, following World War I the party officially began participation with non-Socialist reform groups.

Another instance of determined discipline involved William D. Haywood, the charismatic leader of the Industrial Workers of the World. As the IWW became more active and received more publicity and began leading strikes of unorganized immigrant workers, the Party felt it imperative to dissociate itself from that organization's cardinal tenet on illegal acts by adding an anti-sabotage clause to its constitution. Haywood, because of his popularity, had been elected a member of the SP National Executive Committee in 1911 and 1912. Hence it was incumbent on the Party to act. A referendum of the membership in 1913 voted for Haywood's recall. That only about 30% voted in the referendum, although this was not unusual in referendum voting, may reflect the superficial indoctrination in Socialist principles of most of the members.

During these years the influence and prestige of the party grew. While party membership is not as satisfactory a criterion as vote getting, it is a secondary indicator of the strength of the party. Starting with less than 10,000 members the SP recorded 118,045 dues paying members in 1912. In addition to a fair voting record in the election of members to public office and a growing membership, the party had a well financed organization for the conduct of its propaganda and political campaigns. With literature, a press, lecturers, organizers, and a variety of auxiliary bodies with which to carry the message of Socialism into every nook and cranny of the United States, the SP played a significant role in public life. A further

criterion of Socialist influence, probably exaggerated, was the belief among the two major parties as well as among Socialists that the Party had become a permanent political force to be reckoned with. Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed that the Socialists were a growing threat. He considered them more dangerous than the Populists. He warned that they must be counteracted by the reform of capitalism.

In implementing its trade union boring-from-within policy, the Party was equally successful. It was the position of the Socialist Party that trade unions, no matter how small or how conservative, would strengthen the power of the working class. But the Party warned that exploitation of labor can only be eliminated when society takes possession of all the means of production for the benefit of all the people. It considered the function of every Socialist to be to make the members of the trade unions acquainted with the principles of Socialism and induce them individually to work for and join the Socialist Party. The Party also emphasized in its public pronouncements that it had neither the right nor the desire to interfere in any controversy which might exist within the labor trade union movement over questions of form of organization or technical methods of action in the industrial struggle. Actually as the SP grew in strength and influence, it modified this policy. It favored industrial unionism and was otherwise strongly critical of "pure and simple" trade union strategy.

Deciding to remain in the functioning non-Socialist trade unions within and without the AFL, the Socialist leaders, as delegates to union conventions, tried by various resolutions to commit the trade union movement to political action and government ownership, particularly within the AFL. These Socialist delegates were men of outstanding ability and usually presented their positions with clarity and force. In addition the Socialists periodically presented a rival candidate for AFL president. From the recorded roll-call vote it is evident that up to World War I the Socialist candidates mustered about a third of the votes. A few of the voters supported the Socialist candidates because of grievances against Gompers, but most of them clearly voted as Socialists. The Socialist support came from various unions with a considerable Socialist membership. Outstanding among them was the powerful and overwhelmingly German United Brewery Workers Union. Later it was joined by the compact and superbly successful Jewish needle trades organization, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Other national unions and lesser units, such as city centrals and some state federations, likewise officially endorsed Socialism and worked for the support of the Socialist Party.

From its inception, the Socialist Party with its boring-from-within policy and belief in trade union activity by maintaining responsible relationships with management through collective bargaining, increased its following and influence within the AFL. Many of its leaders were elected as delegates and officers to local, regional, state and national trade union conventions and other gatherings, including AFL national conventions. Many of these delegates were supported by non-Socialist "rank and filers." Other Socialist unionists were advanced and retained in important positions in unions with a considerable Socialist membership. Socialists elected as delegates to union conventions usually came from non-Socialist unions with a fair or considerable Socialist membership, chiefly made up of immigrant workers. Naturally the unions controlled by the Socialists entrusted responsibility to those of like persuasion. But irrespective of the circumstances in which they were elected, these men, unlike the Communists of later days, did not conceal their Socialist affiliation and beliefs and openly and vigorously fought the pure and simple trade union ideology and principles.

Max Hayes, an outstanding Socialist spokesman at AFL conventions, was perennially elected by referendum vote as a delegate representing the International Typographical Union, a non-Socialist union. Similarly, Mahlon Barnes, while Secretary of the Socialist Party and following his retirement from that position, served as a delegate at AFL conventions. He was elected by referendum vote as a co-delegate with Samuel Gompers from the International Cigar Makers Union. On a larger scale, a similar situation existed in

the United Mine Workers of America. A considerable portion of that union's AFL convention delegates were prominent Socialists, who championed the Socialist cause within and outside the trade union movement. For a considerable period the Vice President, Frank Hayes, who also served briefly as President of the United Mine Workers, was a well-known Socialist. The largest United Mine Workers district, that in Illinois, was solidly controlled by the Socialists. In addition to the early German-dominated international unions, the needle trades unions popularly known as the Jewish unions, soon joined the others as Socialist unions. During this period in cities where a large worker population and trade union membership of German extraction functioned, separate central labor bodies called United German Trades existed with AFL approval. These bodies were invariably staunch proponents of Socialism. A similar course was followed by the needle trades unions in creating United Jewish Trades which likewise supported the Socialist movement. They too were acknowledged by the AFL. A United Hebrew Trades Council still operates in New York City.

In the course of time, further Socialist gains were made within the trade unions. At its convention in 1903, the International Association of Machinists adopted a resolution calling upon the AFL to subscribe to Socialism. Its international officers ignored the mandate. The Socialist sentiment mounted within the IAM. In 1910 the old officers were voted out and an entire Socialist slate replaced them. It was more than a coincidence that the deposed president of the IAM was one of the closest associates of Gompers and highly sophisticated in the ideology of Voluntarism.

Contrary to the contention of some labor historians and most non-Socialist labor leaders that the non-Socialist unions under the guidance of pure and simple trade union leaders proved most proficient in building viable unions and in conducting successful collective bargaining, it is an undisputed fact that the Socialist unions were equally successful in building powerful and viable organizations in their respective fields. Up to prohibition days the Brewery Workers Union was effectively organized and had as satisfactory collective bargaining relationships with management as any outstanding non-Socialist international union in or outside the AFL. Insofar as collective bargaining practices and policies are concerned, the Socialist needle trades unions adhering to pragmatic Socialist principles even pioneered in perfecting collective bargaining processes. Both the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' unions, as outgrowths of bitterly contested organizing campaigns and strikes, led in making significant innovations in collective bargaining machinery. It was in these industries that the "Impartial Chairman" concept was introduced. This arrangement provides for permanent machinery to administer and police the implementation of the trade agreements entered into voluntarily by both parties. It provides also that a paid impartial administrator or "arbitrator" assisted by a staff, be in charge. Originally he was usually selected from academic circles, and generally from among teachers in the social sciences. Differences over the interpretation and application of the agreement had to be submitted to the impartial chairman for adjudication, if the parties could not agree. The agreements obviated, and indeed forbade, strikes for the duration of the agreement. This procedure proved eminently successful and in various forms has been copied by organized management and labor in many industries. Thus, as in politics, the Socialists exercised considerable influence within the trade union movement into and beyond the First World War period. Indeed, some of the outstanding and most viable unions subscribed to the Socialist ideology.

By way of contrast, under the leadership of Daniel De Leon, the Socialist Labor Party more and more embraced a rigid sectarian stand, which did not tolerate even a minor deviation. Concomitantly its following, as measured by membership and election results, and its influence in the trade union movement shrank. Its trade union arm, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, vanished for lack of a mass following. The Socialist Labor Party still functions, but as scarcely more than a gadfly. As the ghost of a distant past it exercises practically no influence, being taken seriously only by a handful of zealots. Nevertheless it still possesses the wherewithal to issue scads of stilted literature. It still resorts to an ancient vocabulary, with which it vigorously excoriates its rivals and the capitalistic system. It even has funds to indulge in the lavish luxury

of periodically buying full-page advertisements in the expensive *New York Times* where, condensed in small type, it expounds its philosophy. The question may be propounded as to how many of the *New York Times*' readers take the time even to skim these advertisements and whether the courageous handful who do successfully digest the antiquated vocabulary. It would be foolhardy to try to guess how many are influenced by these ads. With its ironclad centralization and rigid bellicosity, the SLP has become nothing more than an antiquated symbol of the past.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### NEW STYLE REVOLUTIONARY RADICALISM--THE IWW

In the course of the history of the American labor movement several attempts have been made to found a revolutionary dual union movement as a rival to the AFL and as opposition to the pragmatic Socialist movement. The Chicago Anarchists unions were followed by the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, sponsored by the Socialist Labor Party. In the course of time, both failed. Others that followed also failed to reach the proportions and influence of the Industrial Workers of the World, but they did pave the way for it. The IWW which also ultimately failed, acquired the dubious distinction of serving as the apogee of revolutionary dual unionism. The later Communist attempts after World Wars I and II were puny adventures by comparison. During its brief virile and tumultuous period of barely a decade and a half, the IWW functioned as the inspirer and leader of the unorganized migratory and factory workers, whose ideological beliefs were hardly related even in the vaguest sense to the Syndicalist concepts professed by the IWW.

This revolutionary manifestation of a colorful and superbly dramatic nature was preceded in the late nineteenth century by the Western Federation of Miners, which had its origin in the Rocky Mountain region. It undertook, with little success, to extend its activities eastward. Finally, joined by radicals of all sorts, it blossomed out in 1905 as the Industrial Workers of the World. At the height of its activities, the IWW stirred the imagination of the unorganized, lower paid, chiefly unskilled migratory and factory workers employed predominantly by large, mechanized corporations. Previously unorganized, unseasoned in orderly collective bargaining, laboring under abusive employer practices and therefore angry and impatient, IWW recklessness appealed to them. On the other hand, because of its volatile procedures and vituperative revolutionary terminology, it came to be looked upon by the authorities and general public as a heinous and threatening social force. It attained a notoriety unexcelled by any other labor group. Because of its ultra-revolutionary philosophy and vitriolic strategy, it failed to grow into organic cohesiveness and normal stability during its transitory and tumultuous existence as a mass movement.

The IWW seriously challenged both the moderate Socialists and the conservative AFL. Unlike previous ultraradical movements in the United States, the initiative for this turbulent movement came from indigenous stock rather than newly-arrived immigrants. Neither was it an offshoot of an existing radical movement. The Western Federation of Miners originated in a belligerent trade union movement aimed to correct current unsatisfactory labor conditions and labor relations practices. Operating mostly in the frontier and less orderly Rocky Mountain region, it extended in a limited way to the neighboring East and West. Its mainspring was not migratory workers, factory workers, or a miscellaneous group, but chiefly metal miners. Labor unrest in this region was more disorderly and intense, and on a larger scale with more protracted strikes than in the mid-West or East. Resort to violence, pitched battles and murders were a frequent if not

standard practice by both employer and union elements--a practice which had sometimes marked the earlier period of the Knights, and even earlier periods. Workers took possession of property, and the Rocky Mountain unionists, possibly because they were miners, even used dynamite. While non-participating moderate elements in the community intervened, the situation in general resembled class war between two hostile and determined groups. The courts and government administrations were generally partisan and participated mostly on the side of the employers. Governors did not hesitate to send troops without investigating the need and often against the advice of local government officials. Even federal troops, on the initiative of the pro-employer regional community leaders, generally intervened freely to assist employer interests. Labor disputes frequently assumed the characteristics of civil wars. In many communities, citizens alliances or other vigilante-type organizations were brought into existence in order to combat union organizations. Civil rights often were ignored and human life was not always regarded as sacred. However, the unions also wielded some political influence. Particularly in local communities the mayors, sheriffs, and locally-elected state officials such as senators and assemblymen were sympathetic. In Colorado, the unions even exercised influence with the aid of moderate non-labor elements, securing some favorable legislation such as the eight-hour laws.

In many respects these turbulent eruptions were not dissimilar to the virulent class struggles in the mid-West and East during the previous period. To enumerate a few: the bloody 1877 railroad strike in which the workers in a pitched battle surrounded the militia in a Pittsburg round house; the explosive strikes of the Knights of Labor in which workers took possession of property, ostensibly to protect it in the interest of the employer, but actually to immobilize it; the general eight-hour strikes; the bloody Homestead strike and many others. The difference between these struggles and those of the Rocky Mountain and neighboring regions was that the latter were not only more intense but more prolonged and the obdurate stand on both sides was more persistent and more durable. In the mid-West and East the battles would continue for brief periods and were either compromised or lost by the workers. In the Rocky Mountain region, the struggle was practically continuous and cropped out successively in one region after another. Also it tended to be concentrated within restricted areas. Organizationally, the entire movement was led by the Western Federation of Miners, formed in 1892. Previously thereto local unaffiliated miners' unions functioned. Some Knights of Labor local assemblies operated in the early stage but soon faded away as the Western Federation took control. As the membership core consisted of miners and mining was the dominant industry in these communities, the Western Federation also took under its wing other trades, mostly service trades, involving such groups as restaurant workers, barbers, and so on. In its operations, since the WFM already had embraced a mild variety of socialism, it strove to function in its relations with employers as a responsible trade union organization on an orderly collective bargaining basis. Most employers, being of the belligerent, anti-union type, resisted even this conciliatory form of unionism. This obdurate position on the part of the employers led the union, and especially its local affiliates, to retaliate by resorting to violent and other non-legal practices. As described heretofore, the war was "to the death," with the WFM shaping its pragmatic ideology into an ultraradical cast.

The experience of the Western Federation with the AFL and its unions (generally of the craft type) had an unfortunate outcome. Gompers denounced regionalism, urging affiliation with AFL international unions. Some of the internationals tried to invade WFM territory. This meant that the miners who were organized in an industrial union had to abandon it and join unions of specific crafts and occupations. For a brief period in 1896 the WFM even accepted an AFL invitation, but the ideological and structural dichotomy between the two was too marked to favor conciliation. The WFM pleaded for AFL help in its life and death struggle with management and government authorities, but such help did not materialize. Gompers justified this apparent neglect of the WFM by the preoccupation of the AFL with organizing activities in the industrial mid-West and East. In the meantime, the struggle between the employers and the WFM became a community conflict, especially in mining camps. Faced with competition by intrusion of the AFL

affiliates, and receiving no help from the AFL, the WFM concluded it must broaden its field. Realizing the need for labor allies and a wider influence in the various communities, a separate Western labor movement independent of the AFL became imperative. Gompers once more warned against regionalism but was unheeded. Still, the difference between the WFM and the AFL was more consistently aggressive than ideological. Thus, the WFM's action in organizing the Western Labor Union in 1898 was entirely prompted by practical considerations. The WFM, like AFL affiliates, was concerned with protecting the immediate interests of its members and other workers in the region. Another pragmatic interest of the WFM was in maintaining its industrial union nomenclature. Industrial unionism as an ideological principle appeared somewhat later, undoubtedly as an outgrowth of the few existing industrial unions challenged by the AFL craft and trade unions. Most of the industrial unions, however, functioned within the AFL. It was these unions that began to feature the idea of organizing the lower paid and unskilled workers, originally because of a pragmatic need to strengthen the organizations. Only later was industrial unionism made a cardinal policy of the radicals as against the AFL craft unions. The Western Labor Union promoted these ideals in other industries and services within the jurisdiction it had carved out for itself.

The dynamic president of the Western Labor Union, Edward Boyce, who fathered its formation, had become a Socialist and had made contacts with Socialists in the East. His influence and the attempts by AFL affiliates to invade the territory of the WLU stimulated incorporation of industrial unionism as a part of socialist ideology. Shedding its regional connotation in order to expand its activities throughout the country, the WLU was transformed into the American Labor Union in 1903. This shift proved to be a serious error. Removed from its strongest affiliate, the WFM, the ALU made no headway. It could not compete with well-established and hostile craft unions. This same difficulty was experienced by other rivals of the WFM. Where WFM affiliates were firmly established and brought satisfactory results, opposition unions had no success in winning members over to their leadership. The Industrial Workers of the World is an illuminating example. After failing to penetrate existing unions, it concentrated its efforts among the unorganized where, because no other union group was interested, the response was electric.

In branching out to cover the entire country, the ALU endorsed socialism, the cooperative commonwealth, and collective ownership of the means of production and distribution. Thus a rival had appeared which challenged the AFL structurally and ideologically. The ALU's acceptance of Socialism was of the pragmatic variety. It regarded constructive and responsible collective bargaining as a policy essential to the improvement in working conditions for its members. Commitment to socialism was arrived at less because of a profound understanding of its tenets than because of the unhappy experience of these western unions in their struggle for existence against a ruthless capitalism, aided and abetted by the power of government, and a hostile public.

### *Ideological Dual Unionism*

A new and formidable dual unionism appeared on the labor horizon to plague the AFL and harass the moderate socialists. It functioned through the Socialist Party, and succeeded in arousing the sympathy of liberals and related intellectuals. This new organization took the name of Industrial Workers of the World. The earlier dual union movements like the Western Labor Union and its successor, the American Labor Union, were founded because of the practical requirements of the WFM which wanted to broaden its base of support. The IWW was instigated by doctrinaire intellectuals assisted by trade unionists of a like predilection. Their aim was to create a trade union movement that would boldly and aggressively promote the Socialist cause and the industrial union concept in opposition to the "pure and simple" craft unionism of the AFL. Among its leaders was the vituperative and energetic Daniel De Leon, a man steeped in ideological learning who first pioneered in dual unionism in the unsuccessful Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. Failing

in his initial undertaking, this indomitable personality ardently yearned for another try. His associate was the intellectual William E. Trautmann, who paradoxically served as Secretary of the United Brewery Workers, a Socialist union, which was at this time deadlocked with the AFL over the issue of industrial unionism. Others of similar background also participated. Though well grounded in doctrine, they lacked familiarity with American conditions. The only substantial trade union interested was the Western Federation. A few smaller unions affiliated with the American Labor Union participated and also a secessionist faction from the Machinists' Union. Two outstanding Socialist leaders in the AFL unions, key promoters of the SP, contemptuously declined to participate in this ideological dual unionist venture because they understood American life.

At the first meeting of the IWW in 1905, friction developed between the experienced trade unionists and the doctrinaire intellectuals. This fracas led to the withdrawal of the Socialist Party members. The Western Federation of Miners tried, in 1907, to conciliate the contending factions but its efforts proved futile. With the disaffiliation of the small number of Socialist Party delegates, there remained within the IWW two fiercely contending ideological elements. One faction, led by the domineering De Leon, heatedly insisted that political action, as practiced by the Socialist Labor Party, linked with revolutionary dual industrial unionism was the most essential organizational form for successfully fighting capitalism. The other faction favored relying exclusively on revolutionary dual industrial unionism. To this element any form of political action was anathema. It ultimately became the American core of international Syndicalism. Being in control, the future Syndicalists expelled De Leon on the spurious technicality that he was a delegate from a union functioning in an industry in which he himself was not working.

De Leon's vitriolic and insulting denunciation of the opposition leaders previous to and during the convention hardly helped him in winning supporters. As a persistent past master of controversy, educated and cultured, he took umbrage at the uncouth verbiage and behavior of the horny-handed sons of toil of limited education who prided themselves in singing "Hallelujah, I am a bum" and who made up a large portion of the opposition delegates. Angrily and emotionally De Leon denounced them as the "bummery" and added other uncomplimentary invectives. Although De Leon was superlatively adept in coining derogatory epithets about those he attacked, he was outmaneuvered for control of the IWW by these "uncouth, uncivilized" rabble rousers, as he termed them. He had been briefly successful in creating havoc within the leadership of the Knights of Labor and the Socialist Party and he repeated the performance within the IWW. It also got rid of him as did the Knights and moderate Socialists. His success in capturing the Socialist Labor Party was largely due to his control of the Party machinery. He caught the opposition leaders by surprise, but he did not hold the rank and file.

Being only a delegate, De Leon was no more effective in maneuvering for control of the IWW than he had been in taking over the Knights. The persons whom he contemptuously termed "uncivilized rabble rousers" were not only in control of the machinery but also revealed considerable astuteness as parliamentarians. Characteristically, for the second time, De Leon and his handful of followers founded a separate trade union federation called the Workers International Industrial Union (WIIU). The WIIU remained a paper organization as did the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance and vanished from the scene as unceremoniously. De Leon remained with the phantom SLP during his lifetime, using it as his instrument to torment his many adversaries by hurling vindictive barbs at them.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### WOBBLY FAILURE ON REVOLUTIONARY TRAIL

Henceforth the IWW took on an unequivocally ideological coloration. Its leaders were reckless, adept at leading spontaneous uprising of unskilled immigrants, unorganized workers in mass production industries, and migratory workers in the harvest fields and lumber camps. It was particularly adept at leading free-speech fights among the workers in the lumber camps of the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Northwest regions. It also manifested extraordinary skill in leading the neglected and abused unskilled immigrants and "hillbilly" southern white workers in the large mechanized establishments in the South, mid-West and East. These spectacular and theatrical activities attracted nationwide attention and even sympathy. IWW organizing stimulated helpful responses among liberals, social reformers and many well-intentioned people. Employers, conservatives and patriotic organizations condemned the IWW as un-American and revolutionary. The activities of the IWW were clearly traceable to the Syndicalist revolutionary ideology, that is, sabotaging and exposing capitalism as a means of overthrowing it by mass action. To its sympathizers the IWW was accepted as a contemporary humanitarian movement devoted to serving the underprivileged by obtaining current improvements and wider acceptance by employers and the community. Later analysis will reveal that these objectives were purely incidental. Indeed, the IWW feared that an abundance of improvements in working and living conditions would dampen the revolutionary ardor of the masses.

To relate IWW developments seriatim: In the begging, the IWW concentrated on winning over members of existing unions. Its success in this field was practically nil. It concentrated particularly on Socialist unions in the needle trades and unions with a substantial Socialist membership, such as the United Mine Workers. But irrespective of ideology, workers in established unions with substantial achievements preferred to remain in those unions.

Failing to attract a following from successful existing unions, the IWW by force of circumstance directed its attention to the relatively helpless unorganized, poorly-paid and largely unskilled workers and thus became their champion. In the West, it led turbulent and spectacular free-speech fights of migratory workers in lumber camps, on construction jobs, and in agriculture and fruit growing. Usually the local communities proved hostile and the authorities suppressed the meetings and jailed the leaders and the more active among the rank and file. Very few who willingly, even thankfully, accepted IWW leadership understood syndicalist philosophy. Even very few of the local leaders, as I learned from extensive field work in 1914 and 1918, were conversant with IWW objectives. To be sure, concessions usually were wrangled from employers and these brought some immediate gains to the participating workers. But this was a negligible factor to the IWW leaders who realized that in order to retain the confidence of the rank and file more tangible benefits were needed. Their main objective was to educate the workers to revolutionary ideals. On the other hand, what the IWW valued most was the dramatic and violent response of the authorities which advertised the IWW as a leader and protector of the disadvantaged.

In the East and Southeast, the IWW assumed leadership of spontaneous uprisings of unorganized factory workers. These workers were the ones neglected by the AFL affiliates and were widely regarded as unorganizable. In the Northeast, the workers were predominantly recent immigrants. In the Southeast, they were the so-called hillbillies. In both instances, they possessed an agricultural or backward rural area background, were generally unlettered if not wholly illiterate, and were unaccustomed to indoor factory work or to urban life. Whether immigrant or American-born, they felt helpless in their strange surroundings where they were imposed upon and exploited. As conditions became unbearable they rebelled. They eagerly

welcomed IWW guidance because it could provide experienced and articulate leaders. Those of the hillbilly type were deeply religious followers of revivalistic, emotionally surcharged sects and hence, no strangers to excitable mass demonstrations such as those sponsored by the IWW. Usually they lacked the social sophistication required to differentiate among competing labor movement ideologies. What they badly needed was competent leadership and material and moral assistance. In the South, the local leaders generally had no knowledge of world social philosophies. Among the immigrant workers, the more literate local leaders had absorbed vague Socialist ideas. Some of the more alert among the rank and file were hazily Socialist-oriented.

As a rule, local leaders and workers were interested above all in redressing current grievances. On the other hand, the IWW leaders were only casually interested in mundane issues and then only in order to hold the loyalty of the rank and file. Their cardinal objective was to indoctrinate these workers in the need for an ultimate social revolution. What pleased the IWW leaders was the long drawn out, dramatic and frequently violent strikes that produced newspaper headlines. Public interest and considerable sympathy were thus aroused. Financial and other forms of relief were generously given by well-wishers. The strikes could not, however, be maintained indefinitely. Usually they were ultimately adjusted with mild concessions that seemed to satisfy the rank and file.

#### *Failure of the IWW to Build Stable Unions*

Despite its superb leadership of inexperienced, largely illiterate, unskilled and low-paid workers in mass strikes and demonstrations, the IWW dismally failed to create viable trade union organizations. It demonstrated superior skill in conducting large-scale demonstrations, in dramatizing the suffering and abuses of the disadvantaged by aggressive activities, in arousing sympathy, and in securing considerable moral and material aid. Its failure in building stable and strong unions was not for lack of talent. It was not thoughtless neglect. It was deliberate and was dictated by the rigid revolutionary ideology of its leaders.

I discuss and analyze these IWW policies in my book *Left Wing Unionism*. My findings there were based not only on documentary sources but on intimate observation in the field during several trips, including follow-up in the areas of the most intensive IWW activity during the height of its career. In brief, the aim of the IWW leaders was to encourage strikes regardless of provocation in order to condition the masses to make them strike-prone. A strike to the IWW was a proving ground in preparing the workers for the ultimate general strike whereby capitalism would be displaced by a new social order. According to syndicalist ideology, the great mass of workers were an inert mass which needed bait in the form of minor gains from strikes to activate them. It was the militant minority that made revolutions, the sophisticates who understood that immediate gains were mere sops that would keep the rank and file content and within the fold. Securing substantial improvements and establishing strong functioning unions possessing treasuries would only make the workers want to preserve the gains and the organization. To make their point indelibly clear, the sophisticates ridiculed the established unions. They dubbed them "coffin unions" because some of them paid funeral funds or death benefits. Paid officials were described as "pie-card artists," that is, persons interested in "soft," paid jobs. Instead, they glorified the "blanket stiff," a roving, unpaid organizer who subsisted on collecting modest initiation fees and dues. He carried a blanket so that he could "flop" wherever it was convenient, thereby avoiding hotel expenses. Another IWW ideal was that of "footloose rebels" who were agitators "on the loose" and without permanent habitation. In the industrial areas, they decried high dues, accumulation of funds, paid officials and orderly collective bargaining with written trade agreements stipulating terms and contract duration. Such obligations, it was considered, would interfere with intermittent strikes on propitious occasions.

These informal tactics were more practicable among migratory workers who were engaged for limited periods. Unless quick action was possible the work could be completed before the grievances were

adjusted. In the industrial areas with permanent, stationary plants, slower negotiation was more risky. It was in the industrial regions that the local leaders rapidly became disillusioned with the national IWW leadership.

In the South, when the National IWW leaders withdrew, the organizations rapidly and completely collapsed. Two field investigations, in 1914 and in 1918, revealed that the local leaders lacked the sophistication and willpower to perpetuate their organizations. In the East and some mid-West areas, the local immigrant leaders who had acquired some labor organization know-how were better oriented in labor problems. Possessing a limited radical knowledge from their home countries which was nurtured in their new surroundings to an understanding of practical labor organization needs, they undertook to continue the fragile organizations which had been established before the IWW entered the scene. But they abhorred and distrusted the AFL because of its previous neglect and its obvious contempt for the presumed unorganizability of immigrant workers. Indeed, top labor leaders who frankly discussed the problem of organizing the immigrant workers in mass production plants not only regarded them as unorganizable, but added that their responsibility to their members forbade them to squander union funds on such risky ventures.

Some of the more literate and inquisitive local radical leaders learned that Socialist industrial unions existed which were made up of immigrant workers who had succeeded in creating effective unions following successful industrial struggles with ruthless managements. Among these Socialist, immigrant-led unions, the ideal one was considered to be the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. It was not affiliated with the despised AFL, and despite bitter opposition from the AFL it managed to become a powerful organization. Some of the more literate radical leaders decided to imitate it. With the help of the Amalgamated, other Socialist unions and liberals, several such independent, Socialist-oriented, industrial unions were founded. Most notable among these new unions were the Amalgamated Textile Workers and the International Federation of Workers in the Hotel and Restaurant Trades. These unions encountered difficulties, but maintained weak organizations which later fused with the more substantial AFL unions in their respective jurisdictions.

Forming and maintaining permanent unions in the unorganized mass production industries, employing unskilled South and East European workers reared in backward agricultural regions was no easy task. Composed of a heterogeneous amalgam of languages, different racial and nationality origins and often traditionally hostile, they presented difficulties. Nevertheless they revealed extraordinary solidarity and camaraderie in participating in spontaneous strikes and revealed an eagerness to work together despite old country differences. In the light of this, it should have been possible to weld these immigrant groups into workable unions, as the experience of the United Mine Workers had demonstrated. It is therefore clear that the fault lay with the IWW leaders. Doctrinarily pursuing the dictates of their Syndicalist revolutionary ideology, the IWW leaders conscientiously resisted and scorned the pleas of the local leaders to remain on the scene following strike settlements and help them build and manage going unions. Unions consisting of similar immigrant elements whose leaders seriously applied themselves developed successful labor organizations, overcoming vicious anti-union management opposition. The needle trades unions served as shining examples. While not possessing among their members as wide a variety of different ethnic groups, and operating in less integrated industries, they consolidated their following into extraordinarily viable unions and even pioneered in initiating ingenious and workable collective bargaining procedures. These extraordinary accomplishments were possible because their leaders, although in the beginning less experienced than the IWW leaders, had the necessary determination and were not deterred by ideological preconceptions. Yet they retained their Socialist ideology.

Most labor historians subscribe to the theory that the IWW was reduced to a tiny propaganda body because of persecutions growing out of war hysteria and the court convictions of some of the key

leaders. This postulate is erroneous since most of the spectacular spontaneous strikes which failed to materialize into permanent unions occurred previously to the period of IWW war difficulties. Indeed, there is only one instance on record where an IWW unit attempted to function as a traditional union organization. Its experience reveals the faulty syndicalist ideological policies. Oddly, this was the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union whose membership consisted primarily of migratory workers. A few of its farsighted leaders realized the importance of consolidating the scattered locals into a national body so that they could operate effectively to further their objectives. A few other industrial unions endeavored to imitate the agricultural workers' union in its attempt at genuine practical unionism. It has been argued that it was only the war persecutions that frustrated these efforts. Actually it was the national leaders who blocked this attempt.

By fortuitous circumstances, the leaders of a mildly radical political group, the Farmers' Non-Partisan League, which was influential in North Dakota and adjoining agricultural areas, approached the IWW agricultural workers' union leaders suggesting that an agreement be worked out between it and the farmers' political organization. Such a tentative agreement was drawn up by representatives of both sides. In demonstration of their good faith, the IWW leaders pledged to supply workers promptly and expeditiously and not to precipitate strikes during the term of the agreement. The leaders also obligated the union to pay the railroad fares of their members to free them from the need for stealing rides on freight trains which would make their arrivals uncertain. The stumbling block proved to be the inclusion of provisions stipulating that the agreement would not be binding on IWW members until it had the approval of the General Executive Board of the IWW. William D. Haywood, its astute and influential General Secretary, assented only when assured that this would be a verbal agreement. The IWW local leaders then insisted on a verbal agreement but asked that an unsigned written version of the terms arrived at in negotiation be conspicuously posted. However, under no circumstances was this unsigned document to contain reference to its duration. This new approach cut the heart out of the agreement. Despite the advanced political views of the Farmers' Non-Partisan League, many members were unenthusiastic about the arrangement. They recalled frequent difficulties with IWW members who suspected and abhorred their employers, adhering firmly to the idea that the working class and its employers had nothing in common. The arrangement was not consummated by a written, binding agreement and did not prove successful. Consequently, the only instance where an effort was made to follow traditional trade union practice was frustrated by the top leader as contrary to Syndicalist ideology.

The greatest IWW success occurred in the pre-World War I period. By 1913 the organization was exhausted from its peripatetic efforts and its funds were depleted by the costs of litigation. It pledged itself in 1916, when it was a mere shadow of its former self, to resist the war by all means. Its remnants became discredited. Some of its leaders were convicted for opposing the war and it was this that led labor historians to conclude that persecution of the IWW led to its downfall.

In an effort to resuscitate itself during 1938 the IWW agreed to permit its affiliates to enter into trade agreements but required the cumbersome practice of securing the approval of the national organization. Little was done by the straggling affiliates to take advantage of this new policy. During the second World War, the IWW made a modest comeback by taking advantage of National Labor Relations Act machinery, but it soon came to regard government intervention as a menace to independent labor organization. When the Taft-Hartley amendments to the NLRA were enacted in 1946, the IWW became deeply concerned. According to its Secretary-General, Fred Thompson, writing the official IWW history, *The IWW--Its First Fifty Years 1905-1955*, it changed its policy as to utilization of the services of the NLRB:

The IWW felt that the labor movement was veering in a disastrous direction growing into big business of labor brokerage, suppressing the organized self-reliance, that is, the yeast of unionism and becoming increasingly a pawn of government in both internal and world relations.

Unions in general denounced the Taft-Hartley Act at first as unduly restricting legitimate union practices. For a brief period, most unions refused to avail themselves of its services. Gradually they relented, realizing that the NLRB was rendering a valuable service to the trade union movement. But the IWW stubbornly clung to its decision. The dominant syndicalist influence in the IWW soon was revealed. Its Cleveland local rebelled, feeling that its refusal to turn to the NLRB would place it at a disadvantage in competition with other unions. Consequently, at its 1946 convention the IWW expelled its Cleveland local. In describing this drastic action, the General Secretary laconically stated that when the Cleveland local, its largest, departed in 1946, something like half of the IWW membership was lost.

Following this significant comment, the General Secretary proudly reported that now the organization was completely dominated by the “no contract dyed-in-the-wool wobs.” (“Wobs,” or “Wobblies,” is a nickname of which IWW followers became proud.) Moreover, “since that time the IWW had to confine its efforts substantially to local instances of promoting inter-union solidarity and its educational work. The latter is no small chore.” And the author optimistically predicted future important performance. His hopefulness was reinforced by the declaration of the 1955 IWW convention which authorized the publication of this sacred record on the understanding that it be “not the history of the IWW but the history of its first fifty years.” The IWW has shrunk to a puny sect of doctrinaire zealots. Or, as some biting critics from the ultraradical ranks put it, the IWW, like the SLP, was relegated to the “scrap heap of the social evolution.” Unions that scorned businesslike practices and revolutionary political movements that scoffed at pragmatic policies have failed to attract or hold mass followers. Persecution and prosecution were merely incidental to the atrophy or demise of such ultraradical movements.

#### *End of Substantial Revolutionary Labor Movements*

Middle-class revolutionary movements disappeared long before World War I. Radical revolutionary labor movements of the Marxian variety ceased functioning either before or during World War II. In neither case, however, was war the key factor. Rather it was changing social and economic conditions that played havoc with these movements. The ultraradical or extremely doctrinaire movements like those of the Anarchists, SLP and IWW either completely disappeared organizationally or deteriorated to mere insignificant fringe and nuisance proportions. Those that continued as remnants hardly served as troublesome gadflies. Only the pragmatic Socialist Party with its effective trade union base survived. For a brief period through and immediately following World War II, that Party was a significant force. But social developments also began to bypass the SP so that since New Deal days, it has drifted into a rag-tag affair barely making a dent in the labor movement. Thus both the moderate revolutionary middle-class self-employment movement and the Marxian-oriented radical revolutionary movement, both of which were formidable in their time, have disintegrated with changing conditions.

Following World War II, a new extremist world revolutionary movement, likewise Marxian-oriented, appeared. It became known as Communism. Although it grew into a powerful mass movement in a number of non-Communist countries, particularly those of Western Europe, it has shrunk to nuisance proportions, except in a few cases. In the United States, it failed to rise to the heights of an open mass movement of the size of the Anarchists, IWW, or Socialist Party either politically or in trade unions. Insofar as it has exercised influence, it has been by infiltration and camouflaged strategy. Its overt efforts were invariably feeble. Its covert maneuvers made it an influential factor for a short time within the government and trade unions and among the general public. Communist activities and machinations will receive adequate treatment as this analysis is further developed.

## Part 7

# WORLD WAR I, GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION AND UNION DECLINE

### CHAPTER XXIX

#### WARTIME GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION ESTABLISHES LABOR MOVEMENT AS VITAL FUNCTIONAL SOCIAL FORCE

##### *War Temporarily Rehabilitates Trade Unions*

Outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, consequent prosperity, and later entry of the United States into the conflict produced an atmosphere in which the trade union movement, aided by government, found it propitious to rebuild and fortify its forces. The necessity to supply the Allies created an intensive demand for labor. With the possibility of our entering the war, the government became concerned that uninterrupted production be assured. As the labor market became tighter, the unions regained confidence. On the other hand, employer anti-union recalcitrance intensified as union insistence grew, especially in the unorganized heavy industry and other war industries. Consequently, the government found it imperative that it intervene and become the controlling influence in the conduct of labor relations in order to assure the industrial peace needed for promotion of the war effort. Concomitant with the government's desire for continuous production was the intuitive sympathy and understanding of the Wilson administration that organized labor, as a key social and economic force, was entitled to its rightful role in the conduct of industrial relations.

In order to understand the Wilson administration's outlook on labor relations, it is necessary to review its association with organized labor. When President of Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson manifested the common critical position towards organized labor that prevailed throughout the country. Trade unions were generally regarded as an alien force or at best as a troublesome and hardly desirable movement. When Wilson began to consider a political career, he learned that labor was close to the Democratic Party and that its support was indispensable. He thus became more familiar with its role in politics and society, particularly while serving as Governor of New Jersey. By the time he entered the national political arena, he had become more friendly with the leading labor leaders, including Samuel Gompers, President of the AFL. In his Presidential campaign, he had the benevolent support of most of organized labor. By way of recognizing that labor was a significant ally, Wilson in assembling his cabinet offered the office of Secretary of the newly created Department of Labor to Gompers, the outstanding labor leader. When the latter declined the offer, expressing a desire to remain the head of the AFL, Wilson asked him to recommend someone for the position. On Gompers' advice, William B. Wilson was designated the first Secretary of Labor. Wilson, a former Secretary of one of the leading and best known labor organizations, the United Mine Workers of America, had resigned his position to become the successful Democratic candidate for a seat in the United States House of Representatives. As a Congressman, he became recognized as the legislative spokesman for

organized labor, which was flattered by his elevation to a cabinet position.

As our entry into the war approached, President Wilson's concern with the persistent anti-war sentiment among radicals, liberals, intellectuals and pacifists mounted. He turned to organized labor and Gompers for support in counteracting this anti-war element. The Socialists in particular seemed to exercise considerable influence among workers. Moreover, with keen competition for labor there was not only danger of serious interference with steady production but also the possibility that the labor market, without the support of organized labor, might become chaotic. Organized labor readily responded. In 1916 the AFL convention delegates, who were assembled in Baltimore, journeyed to Washington in order to express their confidence in the President and to assure him of support. The President received the delegates and responded gratefully. Following the declaration of war in the spring of 1917, President Wilson in turn traveled to St. Paul, Minnesota, to address the convention of the AFL. This was the first time that a President of the United States had honored a convention of organized labor by addressing it. The cordial and cooperative relationship continued throughout the war and extended into the post-war period of the Wilson administration.

These and other events publicly and dramatically showed that organized labor was recognized by the government and the larger segment of the public as an integral and functional institution in American society. Big business, nevertheless, stubbornly resisted any policy involving recognition of the trade unions. To meet this predicament, the government, as the prosecutor of the war and prime business customer, initiated the establishment of tripartite labor relations boards, consisting of worker, management, and public representatives, for the amicable adjustment of differences between labor and management. Management reluctantly agreed to participate in the unprecedented labor relations procedures required by the government. Organized labor with a negligible number of dissenters, confident in the administration, and stymied by the opposition of the powerful corporations, eagerly accepted government intervention. The labor leaders realized that this new arrangement presented the unions an opportunity to recapture the major lost industries. Labor relations under absolute employer control had been unsatisfactory, so awards of these war-time boards were usually favorable to labor. With government instructions to promote collective bargaining, the unions either directly or indirectly received recognition, which they were generally unable to obtain by their own efforts. In general, the boards discharged their duties with a minimum of friction.

As the war effort intensified, it became evident that a general agency must also be devised for prevention of disputes in crucial war industries whose products were wholly or primarily purchased by the government. For this purpose a National War Labor Board was established in 1918 under government initiative and pressure with joint participation of organized management and labor. Those industries, such as ship building, Great Lakes shipping, meat packing and railroads, covered by special industry boards were excepted from the jurisdiction of the National War Labor Board.

In order to make government intervention more effective, a War Labor Conference Board consisting of equal numbers of representatives of organized labor and management was set up to devise a labor program for the duration of the war. This Board enumerated certain salient principles for the regulation of labor relations which since have been incorporated in legislation as permanent government policy. These principles and policies had been long sought by organized labor but successfully resisted by management. It was decreed that collective bargaining, historically a cardinal demand of organized labor, was the desirable method of determining and adjusting labor relations. To obtain that objective, workers were not to be interfered with in their right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing and employers were not to discriminate against employees because of union membership. On the other hand, employers were permitted to form their associations and the workers forbidden to interfere with such activities. Although this policy enabled workers to found unions, it also taught employers how

to counteract independent union organization by encouraging the organization of employer-dominated plant unions, otherwise known as "company unions."

### *Phenomenal Increase in Membership and Collective Bargaining*

Aided by a favorable labor market situation and by protective government policies, union membership multiplied during the war period. Within four years AFL membership doubled, mounting from 2,072,702 in 1916 to 4,078,740 in 1920. Total union membership swelled from 2,716,900 in 1914 to 5,110,800 in 1920. In industries directly active in war production the growth was phenomenal. In transportation the total union membership increased from 623,000 in 1916 to 1,256,100 in 1920; the seamen's union membership from 21,700 in 1916 to 103,300 in 1921; the longshoremen's union membership from 25,000 in 1916 to 74,000 in 1920; the maintenance of way employees' union from 8,900 in 1916 to 54,200 in 1919; the railway clerks' brotherhood from 178,000 in 1918 to 186,000 in 1920; the teamsters' union from 59,000 in 1916 to 110,800 in 1920; the meat cutters' union from 7,300 in 1916 to 65,000 in 1920. Growth in the metal trades unions started earlier, owing to our munitions trade with the Allies. Machinists' membership numbered 71,900 in 1915 and reached the 330,800 mark in 1920; boilermakers had a membership of 31,200 in 1917 and 103,000 in 1920; the blacksmiths' membership was 12,000 in 1917 and 48,000 in 1920. The building and construction workers also made extraordinary gains. The carpenters rose from 231,700 in 1917 to 331,500 in 1920; the electricians had 41,500 in 1917 and 139,200 in 1920. Organized labor again became a vital force in all important industries except steel which, under the leadership of Judge Elbert H. Gary, head of the U. S. Steel Corporation, resisted signing an agreement to handle labor relations through a government-sponsored labor board.

Government intervention through legislative measures and administrative orders gave organized labor an impetus which it was unable to generate by its own efforts. Much of this administrative thinking was inspired undoubtedly by the unstinted political and war support of organized labor, so urgently needed by the Wilson administration. Besides, the two key cabinet members of the Wilson administration who had chief contact with industry during the war effort, Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, and William G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury and Director General of Railroads, had been sympathetic to organized labor before they were appointed. Secretary Baker required that business enterprises filling orders for the government conform to orderly labor relations as stipulated by the labor boards, and Secretary McAdoo took the same position.

Organized labor not only regained its pre-war losses but increased its strength and prestige as an influential social force. As the scholarly study issued by the Twentieth Century Fund on *Trends in Collective Bargaining* concluded: "Government intervention in labor relations during the war marked a turning point in collective bargaining." Collective bargaining coverage, a more revealing index to union power although not quantitatively as exact a measurement as union membership, was extended to practically all key industries from which the unions were driven out in the vigorous pre-war anti-union campaign.

### *Post-War Trade Union Debacle*

With the election of Warren G. Harding to the Presidency in 1920 under the slogan "Back to Normalcy," the fortunes of the labor movement began to recede. Taking advantage of the favorable atmosphere, the employers began to re-establish pre-war labor relations with management in exclusive control. Inaugurating a forceful anti-union campaign the mammoth industrial establishments not only reintroduced their previously effective anti-union practices but initiated new and more drastic ones. Realizing that during

the war the workers had become accustomed to being represented by collective bargaining agencies, and knowing that some firms had used them to good advantage, company unions were widely introduced. Only a few hard core firms like the United States Steel Corporation chose to hold fast to the original tenet of employers, that they knew best what was needed for the welfare of their workers. Use of labor spies was extensively introduced, and in order to sugarcoat the harsh and even brutal labor policies, a variety of employer welfare features were established to demonstrate to the workers and the public that corporations possessed souls and practiced humanitarian policies.

Stubbornly indoctrinated in the ideology of voluntarism, overlooking the advantages unions enjoyed under government intervention, and realizing that such favorable conditions could not be expected under the Harding administration, the labor movement under the guidance of Gompers readily reverted to business union policies. Despite the disastrous reverses incurred by the unions because of the hostile attitude of the Harding administration which encouraged management in reintroducing its belligerent anti-union policies and to some extent stimulated by the irritations of many impatient labor leaders because of disappointments in not securing from the labor boards results considered adequate, Gompers and his followers persisted in their opposition to political action and dependence on government for assistance. As a warning not to rely on government aid, Gompers and his disciples revived the slogan: "What the government gives it can take away." What the advocates of voluntarism failed to realize by not carefully reading labor history was that this slogan can be applied equally to pure and simple or any other trade union activity. It can similarly be declared: "What the employer gives he can take away."

Through bitter experience the labor movement came to realize that this slogan only imperfectly described the conditions with which it had to cope. An additional phrase was later added by the labor leaders: "What the government gives it can take away, unless the labor movement remains politically strong enough to prevent it from doing so." Alternatively, it can be said: "What the employer gives he can take away, unless the trade unions remain strong enough to prevent him from doing so."

#### *AFL Cautiously Diverges from Voluntarism*

Unable to cope with the vigorous anti-union employer policies, the labor leaders began to search anxiously for some means of supplementing pure trade union action. In desperation and without expectation of aid from the Harding administration, the labor leaders, now without the guidance of Gompers, decided to supplement voluntarism by ingratiating themselves with employers and their superiors, the financial tycoons. President William Green and other labor leaders, high and low, devoted more energy and time to winning the confidence of Chambers of Commerce and businessmen's service organizations than consorting with their own members or with the unorganized. Some of the city centrals even joined local Chambers of Commerce. Their ineffective siren song in the twenties and thirties centered around the refrain that organized labor was procapitalist. Hence they featured themselves as the valiant knights best qualified to protect the capitalist system from the rapacious Communists. Although the solicitous labor leaders were hospitably received, generously entertained and otherwise patronized, union organizations were being steadily weakened and eroded.

The sale of unionism without strenuous and consistent organizing campaigns to counter anti-union management proved a wasteful and unsuccessful effort. The labor movement was receding into somnolence. Even during the "unprecedented" inter-war period of prosperity union membership tobogganed precipitously, and the great depression which began in 1929 made the decline an avalanche. Union membership was reduced to 2,122,796 by 1933. The extent of collective bargaining coverage shrank at an even faster pace. Once again, with some minor exceptions, organized labor was routed from the mass-production industries. It again retreated to highly competitive industrial sectors of fringe industries.

## Part 8

# INSURRECTION AGAINST VOLUNTARISM

### CHAPTER XXX

#### RAILROAD UNIONS PIONEER IN RESTORING GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

The unions with exclusive or a considerable membership employed by railroad corporations were the first openly to turn away from voluntarism. Like other huge enterprises, the railroad companies took advantage of the changed conditions to check the power of the unions and to return to pre-war, non-union labor relations. The railroad unions, other than those whose members were directly engaged in train operation and who enjoyed a privileged position, were quickly eliminated and usually replaced by company unions. But even the operating unions, bereft of government protection, found that their bargaining power was being materially reduced. Instead of accepting the changed conditions, the railroad unions determined to restore as nearly as possible the war policies governing labor relations under which they had profited so handsomely. Not feeling strong enough to accomplish the task by their own economic power, they turned to the government. At the outset, they launched a program for restoring conditions closely analogous to those existing during the war. This initial step proved impossible to achieve.

Railroad transportation had become practically paralyzed during the war, threatening collapse of the war effort and forcing the government to assume control of the major railroad systems. William G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury, was also appointed Director General of Railroads. He immediately issued orders forbidding resort to anti-union policies and giving union organizers access to railroad premises so that they could freely solicit union membership. A Railroad Labor Board was created with representation of management, organized labor and the public. Under the principle of permitting the workers to choose freely the union which was to represent them, regular unions were immediately restored. In addition, working conditions were greatly improved.

Following the war, the disposition of the railroad properties had to be decided upon by Congress. Should they be retained and operated by the government or returned to private management? Railroad operation had already been recognized by the courts as a "public-utility" function subject to regulation even during normal times. The railroad unions reasoned that post-war government intervention in labor relations could pass court scrutiny and, finding themselves at a disadvantage vis-a-vis management, preferred government aid. They first championed the Plumb Plan, devised by an attorney named Glenn E. Plumb, which called for a form of government ownership and operation. A Plumb Plan League was formed under the auspices of leaders of the railroad unions to promote the program before the public and in Congress. Considerable friction developed between the railway unions and the staunch supporters of voluntarism in the AFL. The issue was ably and heatedly discussed by both sides at several AFL conventions. Finally proponents of the Plumb Plan secured grudging endorsement at the 1921

AFL convention. Gompers, although skeptical of the wisdom underlying the Plumb Plan agitation, agreed to serve as Honorary Chairman. However, enactment by Congress in 1920 of the Railroad Transportation Act (The Esch-Cummins Act) had returned the railroads to their private owners. A United States Railroad Labor Board with tripartite representation appointed by the President also was established to regulate labor relations. Criminal penalties, distasteful to the unions, were provided for the violation of the Board's orders. With the exception of the labor member, the Board appointed by President Harding was employer-oriented. Board awards proved unfavorable to the workers, usually taking away conditions gained during the war under the Wilson-appointed Board. Rank and file revolts led to unauthorized strikes that gradually faded out. Most of the members in the non-operating unions had been newly organized during the war. Inexperienced and inadequately disciplined, they rebelled at successive wage reductions ordered by the Railroad Labor Board. While the leaders were unfavorable to a strike, knowing that it would be lost, the pressure of the members forced them to yield in calling the 1922 shopmen's strike. The Board outlawed the strike and recognized the representatives selected by the workers remaining on the job as the bargaining agents. Despite negotiations with President Harding and the willingness of the railroads to make an amicable settlement, the Attorney General applied for and was granted a sweeping injunction against the strikers. The result was a severe defeat for the unions from which they did not recover until the thirties when New Deal labor legislation more favorable to the unions was enacted.

Following the disastrous outcome of the shopmen's strike, the union leaders of the railroad shopmen concluded that an intransigent attitude was unwise. They therefore made conciliatory overtures, offering to cooperate in improving production practices and increasing business for the railroads. A few managements responded by resuming collective bargaining. Failing to make the desired headway, the leaders of the shopmen's unions as well as those of the other unions began to think that government intervention similar to that practiced during the war was needed in order to stabilize railroad labor relations and restore collective bargaining. They therefore disregarded Gompers' admonishment that what the government gives it can take away. Instead, they reasoned that if railroad labor became a powerful political force it could prevent unduly hostile government action as well as secure favorable legislation. To achieve these objectives the railroad unions, they also reasoned, must enter politics as energetically as they entered trade union activity. In assuming this attitude, the railroad unions blazed a new trail for labor ideology and action.

### *Exploring Political Action*

The railroad union leaders appreciated the importance of consistent political action in order to supplant pragmatic trade union action. They had limited political experience and naturally experimented. After a few failures, they discovered a practical political procedure. In this immediate post-war period, as generally occurs following disaster, human beings were more inclined to make unorthodox experiments. With little mass following and with AFL opposition, these leaders suddenly were infused with increased strength by the support of their railroad unions. A few other unions joined, such as the coal miners (with a large Socialist membership) and the needle trades, which were entirely committed to Socialism. Representatives of a group of liberal organizations, including church elements, also participated. The realistic Socialist Party with political experience likewise entered the fold. Being the largest group and providing a good deal of the money, the railroad unions assumed leadership. In 1921 an organization named the Conference for Progressive Political Action was created to conduct the political activities. Although some of the participants favored independent political action, the preponderant opinion decided for non-partisan activity.

At the second conference in 1922, the issue again arose as to what type of political action was most desirable. Those favoring independent political action mainly represented groups such as the Socialist Party and the needle trades unions. They aimed at ultimate basic reform of political and economic

institutions. The railroad trade union leaders, representing unions with mass memberships, were more interested in political action as a means of enacting specific legislation that would be of immediate benefit to the workers and so favored non-partisan political action. The railroad unionists won out.

While favoring a policy of endorsement of, or opposition to, candidates of the two major parties, the railroad unions were confronted with a perplexing dilemma. In 1924 their choice for the Democratic Presidential candidate, William G. McAdoo, who had so generously befriended them as Director General of Railroads during World War I, failed to win the nomination in a prolonged contest with Alfred E. Smith at the Democratic Party convention. Instead, John W. Davis, scion of a notorious anti-union coal operator family of West Virginia and a famous Wall Street lawyer, was the convention's compromise selection. Calvin Coolidge as Republican choice was no more acceptable. His rise to fame by breaking the Boston policemen's strike, coupled with his general hostility to unions, bothered the union leaders. Meeting in 1924, the Conference for Progressive Political Action decided to launch a separate ticket by nominating for President the famous liberal and social reform leader, former Governor of Wisconsin and United States Senator, Robert M. LaFollette. He accepted the honor and burden despite his failing health. Realizing that the AFL could not remain neutral as had become its custom in Presidential campaigns, Gompers, on his own initiative, communicated with the leaders drafting the platform to make sure that planks would not be included that would not be included that would make it difficult for the AFL to join in endorsing the CPPA Presidential candidate. The AFL officially endorsed the LaFollette ticket with two Executive Council members dissenting, but it appropriately pointed out that the endorsement did not indicate its abandonment of labor's established non-partisan political policy. Carrying only Wisconsin, the LaFollette ticket nevertheless made a creditable showing considering the lack of permanent machinery, limited funds and personnel, and total lack of patronage.

#### *Permanent Non-Partisan Political Organization*

By 1925 the practical trade union leaders in the railroad transportation industry realized that non-partisan political action was the most effective procedure for attaining the political power and the legislation needed in promoting the interest of their members. Hence the Conference for Progressive Political Action was voted out of existence in 1925. The railroad unions learned from their experience in the political field something which the AFL leaders at this time failed to appreciate, that political activity must be conducted by a solid and amply financed organization manned by specialists. Moreover, they considered it fatal not to participate in political action on the same basis as other pressure groups.

Following the abandonment of the Plumb Plan League, the union leaders were more fully aware that in continuing intensive political activity they must have a publication for the political information and guidance of their members and for the presentation of their views to the public and to politicians. Hence, a weekly, named *Railroad Democracy* (later renamed *Labor*) was launched in 1919. Under able management, *Labor* became one of the most skillfully edited and influential labor papers, a reputation it still enjoys. Next they created permanent machinery manned by a paid staff by founding the Railway Labor Executives Association in 1926. The Association's purpose as stated was to promote "cooperative action to obtain and develop consistent interpretation and utilization of the Railway Labor Act, and for other purposes affecting the labor activities of the associated organizations." In this manner, the railroad unions proceeded with considerable success in obtaining legislation further benefiting the workers.

### *Tangible Results Obtained*

Since railroads are strategic public utilities, both management and labor appreciated that some kind of government intervention in their labor relations was inevitable. They were dissatisfied with the Transportation Act of 1920 and now realized that by joint effort the needed legislation could be obtained. Their efforts were finally rewarded by the passage of the Railway Labor Act of 1926. In many respects the principles governing labor relations introduced during the war appeared in this act. Significant to the unions was the stipulation that employers must not interfere with the right of workers to choose the organization to represent them in collective bargaining, the first such legislation in the history of the United States. The United States Supreme Court sustained this act as constitutional.

In 1934 Congress guaranteed the right to organize in supplemental legislation, requiring management to bargain with the organization chosen by the workers. It also established a system of old age benefits for railroad workers. With this assistance from the government, the railroad unions again began to regain their strength and status as legitimate functional groups in the field of labor relations. From now on, the union security of railroad workers was assured by additional legislation favorable to railway employees. Thus, government intervention introduced a new era for railroad labor.

## **CHAPTER XXXI**

### **UNIONS REVOLT AGAINST VOLUNTARISM IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY**

#### *Government Intervention Saves Unions During the Depression*

What the belligerent employers failed to accomplish in reducing organized labor to near impotence the ravages of the 1929 depression did for them. It is conservatively estimated that unemployment reached the 12,000,000 mark and that at least an equal number were underemployed. Union membership declined precipitously; and most unions were reduced to penury because of the loss of union dues, their chief source of income. Union expenditures were of necessity drastically slashed. The paid staffs were reduced to skeleton proportions. The few remaining key officials voluntarily cut their salaries, and the movement became moribund.

The AFL floundered in this tragic morass. Its outstanding leaders, staunch Gompers disciples, ardently persisted in relying on traditional business union policies. Certain leaders, led by the audacious John L. Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers, dissented. They contended that in this catastrophic predicament new policies and strategy must be initiated. Although some of the old guard leaders also began to appreciate the need for the movement to resort to non-voluntaristic policies, in the end they shrank from supporting a more extensive program.

The New Deal administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt initially provided a ray of hope for rehabilitating the economy by launching the National Industrial Recovery (NIRA) program. The dominant labor leaders, prodded by the opposition and by liberal criticism, realized that some action was imperative. They therefore presented a narrow, long-range program, the kernel of which called for legislation limiting the five-day work week to thirty hours. Not only would this reform involve protracted delay in Congress

but President Roosevelt and his advisers felt that the economy needed an immediate and more forceful stimulus to bring about a speedy industrial recovery. The NIRA program was designed to remove obstructions to the free flow of commerce, to promote cooperative action between labor and management and to check unfair competition and reduce unemployment. For dispirited organized labor, shell-shocked from the weakened movement and the loss of labor standards painfully built up during the war, Section 7(a) of the NIRA was chiefly significant in that it aimed to guarantee labor the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of its own choosing. President William Green, speaking for the entire labor movement, advocated more specific language so that there would be no misunderstanding that the intent was to make it possible for free unions to operate. The employer representatives attempted to weaken the provision, but the original provision was retained.

By way of implementing the NIRA, legislative provisions were formulated for a National Recovery Administration (NRA). Among its functions, this agency (popularly referred to as the Blue Eagle) was empowered to determine conditions of employment through government boards. A National Labor Board was created to assure that workers could choose their own representatives with whom management would be required to bargain. With this government intervention, unions again began to revive and their membership mounted.

Initially this labor revival occurred in industries in which skeletons of local unions had survived. In due course, labor organization began functioning once more in the unorganized mass production industries such as rubber, automobile, steel, aluminum, glass, chemicals, metal, mining, and other industries where unions had been completely dislodged at the time of the world war reaction. Organization in these industries occurred mostly in the form of locals organized on a plant basis (federal labor unions) under the direct control of the AFL. These federal labor unions were designed, as provided for in the AFL constitution, as universal recruiting agencies to supplement the activities of the national unions. When a sufficient number in a particular trade had been initiated, they were either organized in a separate trade local or turned over to an already existing local of that trade. In either case, they became affiliated to the national union whose charter covered the particular jurisdiction.

In May 1935, the United States Supreme Court declared the NIRA unconstitutional, and the advances made by organized labor under its protection came to an abrupt end. Labor leaders denounced the decision. Immediately following this decision, employers reintroduced the post-war anti-union offensive, spearheaded by the giant steel and automobile firms. Wages were arbitrarily reduced, hours increased, and other working conditions changed to the disadvantage of the helpless workers whose unions were too feeble to protect their interests without government aid. Within the AFL the leaders were baffled and seriously divided. Despite the inability of unions to withstand the super-corporation onslaught, most of the influential leaders wanted to return to a regime of voluntarism. A few advocated legislation to restore government protection of the right to organize. Others took a broader position and also insisted that other government aid was needed, such as legislation improving working conditions as supplementary to the gains made by the economic power of organized labor. They also demanded social reform legislation of a comprehensive nature.

The labor leaders, who advocated continuance of government aid as unions began to lose ground in the post-NIRA period, felt that organized labor on its own could not successfully resist the strongly aggressive anti-union employer tactics. Labor, irrespective of philosophy except for some diehards, rallied to support the Roosevelt administration's move to reenact legislation which in 1935 became the Wagner Act (or the National Labor Relations Act). The diehards had misgivings which proved to be well founded. They believed that this legislation was likely to encroach on their craft jurisdictions and that federal labor unions, which included all workers irrespective of craft, trade or occupation in an industrial establishment, menaced

their sovereign prerogatives. In this regard, the old line labor leaders were right since the federal labor unions served as the embryonic basis for industrial unions.

These and related differences resulted in bitter conflict within the AFL. The disagreements crystallized into two basic issues: (1) the question of the desirable structural organization for effectively organizing the mass production industries, and (2) the question of the amount and nature of government intervention required fully and effectively to serve the needs of the workers in their struggle against the belligerent multi-plant super corporations of the mass production industries.

In the meantime from the NIRA period of government protection through the National Labor Relations Act, the AFL dutifully continued organizing workers into federal labor unions in the mass production industries on an industrial basis. So popular was the sentiment for free union organization that in some instances the company unions as a body transformed themselves into AFL affiliates on the basis of grants of federal labor union charters. Since the intent was that, in accordance with established practice, these newly-recruited workers should be assigned to the national unions of the appropriate jurisdiction, the craft unions demanded that this constitutional provision be rigidly enforced. Those convinced that only industrial unions could function successfully in the mass production industries encouraged the newly-created federal labor unions to resist. Naturally the matter was brought to the AFL convention floor, where, in 1933 following heated but statesmanlike debate, there was adopted by way of compromise a vague resolution intimating that industrial unions had a role to play in organizing the unorganized. At the 1934 convention it became evident that the controlling powers, under domination of the craft unions, did not intend to abide by the resolution. Indeed, the hierarchy attempted to dismantle the federal labor unions in mass production industries so as to distribute the members to the national trade unions claiming jurisdiction. The industrial-union proponents rebelled, creating an irreconcilable crisis.

The second contentious issue as to the amount and nature of positive economic and social reform legislation that organized labor should demand was less clear-cut. Even the staunchest proponents of voluntarism, including Gompers himself, had earlier deviated from their ideological position by supporting limited positive legislation. Following World War I, the AFL had promulgated its plan for the new era. In its Reconstruction Program of 1919 it proposed government ownership of public and semi-public utilities, development of water power and water transportation by government, improved workmen's compensation laws, and legislation for improved housing. This program of economic and social reform deviated from traditional business union ideology which held that trade unions should not rely on government for extensive positive legislation. Hesitation and contradictions were evident, as exemplified by the opposition of the key AFL leaders to the Plumb Plan, which called for government ownership of the railroads.

Another instance revealing labor's nostalgic devotion to voluntarism, notwithstanding adoption of the 1919 Reconstruction Program, was the attitude of the AFL towards solution of the devastating unemployment problem during the 1929-33 depression. Labor leaders have historically been cognizant of the ills of unemployment. Hence, when unemployment rose to unprecedented proportions among union members, the American Federation of Labor was impelled to suggest remedies. Although the unemployed needed immediate help, the Executive Council of the Federation both in 1929 and 1930 emphasized that long-range preventive measures should receive preferred consideration. Holding fast to its doctrinaire devotion to pure and simple unionism, the 1930 convention of the Federation rejected a number of resolutions demanding immediate remedies in the form of unemployment insurance. Incredibly, the opponents seriously claimed that such a program would endanger the civil rights of the workers, requiring them to carry identification cards as evidence that they were eligible for unemployment benefits. This attitude now seems odd, to say the least; at any rate, Social Security numbers now are universally required for identification even of college students, and it can hardly be argued that civil rights have been impaired.

President William Green, who previously as a member of the AFL Executive Council had supported the comprehensive social security program of the American Association for Labor Legislation, was now infected by the virus of voluntarism and also opposed unemployment insurance legislation. In discussing the proposal of New York Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt to establish a state system of unemployment insurance, Green voiced the fear that unemployment insurance was paternalistic, a dole that would demoralize ambition, stultify initiative and blight hope. Implausibly, AFL leaders argued that unemployment insurance might encourage workers contentedly to continue at work in declining industries and obsolete trades. In their view, moreover, unemployment insurance might prove a crutch that would permanently weaken initiative in industry by keeping it from solving this perplexing problem on its own. Therefore the AFL Executive Council reiterated its demand for reduction of the work week to five days and hours to six per day. It further urged the creation and enlargement of work opportunities and planned production. Despite Federation condemnation of unemployment insurance, it came to realize in due course that some form of immediate aid was necessary to alleviate the hardship caused by widespread unemployment. Consequently and contradictorily the Federation leaders urged that federal, state and local governments as well as philanthropic agencies begin immediate planning for relief of the needy.

The opposition, which was later to emerge as the Committee for Industrial Organization and as the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), took fierce issue. The unabashedly assertive John L. Lewis, already the CIO's acknowledged leader, vehemently castigated the dominant leadership in most unparliamentary language for opposing unemployment insurance. To him and his associates, this type of legislation was the most effective remedy. Since other leaders and delegates not necessarily aligned with the opposition also realized the need for unemployment insurance legislation, the 1933 convention reversed Federation opinion and endorsed this non-voluntaristic policy.

#### *Factional Conflict Eventuates in Schism*

In the course of the contest within the AFL over organizing the mass production industries through industrial unions and the indispensable need of an outright recognition that government intervention to supplement voluntary collective bargaining labor activities was imperative, the opposition came to the conclusion that a formal opposition organization within the AFL fold was needed to rally effective support within and without the Federation. Thus the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) was brought into existence. This move alarmed the established leaders since the vested interests of their craft unions were threatened. Actually, by now nearly all unions affiliated with the AFL were amalgamations of related skilled and, to a lesser extent, semi-skilled trades and occupations. This change is revealed by the names of some of the international unions, such as the National Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers, and the International Union of Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers. Some unions already operated as craft unions in certain industries and as semi-industrial or fully industrial unions in others. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) functioned, for example, as a craft union in the building industry and an industrial union in the electrical manufacturing and generating industries. Moreover, unions in some important industries had merged into "departments" such as building trades and metal trades, and their local trade councils in many instances bargained jointly for the affiliated crafts. The proponents of industrial unionism pointed to the practice of these departments as illustrating the resort to collective bargaining on an industry-wide basis.

Efforts on both sides at reconciliation proved futile. The craft unions assumed the offensive. They dusted off the hoary charge of dual unionism and semantically gave it an additional dimension. Hitherto this obnoxious term applied to rival unions outside the AFL orbit. Now its meaning was enlarged to apply to organized opposition blocs within the Federation. Heated debate and a physical tussle of two

outstanding leaders was concluded by an order that the CIO disband on pain of expulsion of the unions composing it. Not in a mood to adhere to this ultimatum, the unions involved withdrew from the AFL and in 1935 reorganized the Committee for Industrial Organizations into the Congress of Industrial Organizations, thereby retaining the magic CIO initials which had begun to electrify the imagination of large numbers of the unorganized, as well as other important segments of the population.

## Part 9

# IDEOLOGICAL METAMORPHOSIS

### CHAPTER XXXII

#### DEVISING A NEW IDEOLOGY

##### *Welfare Statism, Social Unionism and the Role of the CIO*

In the course of the conflict within the labor movement, the CIO leaders and more sophisticated followers had begun to construct an ideology clarifying and explaining their course of action. As heretofore noted, after World War I, the AFL leaders, while verbally clinging to voluntarism, had for practical purposes grudgingly begun to deviate from that ideology. Nevertheless, it was the CIO that carried forward what had been begun by the railroad unions as a full-fledged espousal of welfare statism. They articulated the concept that in modern society the government must assume a considerable responsibility in promoting social welfare and must intervene on behalf of the public against powerful and entrenched private interests. They scoffed at the fear that government would become dictatorial or that the workers would be less dependent upon the labor movement if they benefited from positive labor and social reform legislation and sympathetic, socially-minded government administrations. With Fascism rearing its menacing head, the argument against welfare statism was cogent, but the CIO leaders and other progressive elements insisted on differentiating between democratic welfare statism and totalitarianism. Simultaneously the larger public sector had evolved the concept that the government of necessity had a vital responsibility in promoting the public welfare. The trials and tribulations generated by the 1929 depression, accentuated by traumatic experiences during the war and its aftermath, affected the social outlook of American society in the same manner as it influenced the labor movement. The result was the revolutionary New Deal program sponsored by the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration.

This new labor ideology implied that in order to be as influential in the political field as the labor movement had been in the economic it was essential that the national trade union center or federation establish permanent political and legislative agencies staffed by full-time, experienced personnel who would specialize in the political field in the same fashion as those managing union activities. Mere reliance on informal lobbying and casual political action directed by ad hoc committees was inadequate for this important purpose. It was important that such permanent political and legislative machinery be established not only by the national federation but also by the national trade unions. Duplicate units must also be sponsored on all levels by the affiliated bodies.

As a pragmatic organization, the CIO accepted the traditional American political strategy of non-partisan political action, but the CIO did not depend upon the established AFL practice of merely

maintaining a legislative committee consisting of high national officials, chiefly concerned with the responsibilities of their respective national unions. The CIO improved on AFL policy by creating, as did the railroad unions, a special department headed by a staff that devoted its full time to political affairs. In 1936, the CIO leaders joined with some leaders of the more progressive AFL unions in forming Labor's Non-Partisan League, which actually came under the domination of John L. Lewis and the CIO. In 1938 the AFL attacked the League as being a creature of the CIO, and ordered its affiliated bodies to withdraw. The CIO now had become a rival of the AFL.

Following the retirement of the irascible Lewis as head of the CIO, that organization introduced a more positive departure in American labor political procedures. With a strategy pioneered by the Railway Labor Executives Association, it assumed a more aggressive political stance than that taken by the AFL. It cast aside AFL suspicion, with its ingrained fear of government, and discarded Gompers' dictum that what the government gives it can take away. It recognized that by being strong politically organized labor not only can influence the enactment of progressive labor and social legislation but can resist political efforts to rescind it once enacted. In other words, as history has revealed, just as unions by safeguarding their power can resist efforts of employers to take away achieved gains, so by remaining politically strong organized labor can protect its political interests. These important developments will receive attention in due course.

In 1943 the Political Action Committee (PAC) was founded in order to mobilize CIO members, other organized workers, their families and sympathizers for effective action on the political front. In addition to establishing a national headquarters, fourteen regional offices were created. A paid, full-time director and staff was in charge of each office. Appreciating that political support from non-workers would be required, the CIO also established the National Citizens Political Action Committee. Thus, the CIO recognized that year-round, effectively directed political activity is a necessary and indispensable part of the labor movement.

#### *Welfare State Ideology Broadens Non-Economic Activities*

In devising the new labor ideology, the CIO incidentally introduced a new union concept that could best be described as social unionism. That kind of unionism connotes a labor movement that is interested in social reform extending beyond collective bargaining and affecting all others who are socially disadvantaged.

In order to sustain this enlarged responsibility, the CIO established a number of new departments not previously regarded as necessary auxiliaries of a functioning labor movement. These new departments, in addition to CIO-PAC, included: the Community Services Committee, designed to help affiliated unions and the community as a whole to join forces in strengthening family life and social living; the Civil Rights Committee; the Housing Committee; the Education Division; and the Research, Legal, Legislative, Press and Public Relations, and Social Security Committees.

In this extension of organizational activity, the CIO was a pioneer. It recognized that industrial unions were imperative in mass production industries and that major labor and welfare legislative measures were indispensable in promoting the welfare of the workers as well as of other citizens. As a pragmatic movement, the CIO accepted the practical principles practiced by the AFL, such as non-partisan political action. It accepted also the trade union as the sole basic institution controlling the economic, political, and social activities of the labor movement. Unlike the extreme and unrealistic dissident labor fringe elements, it refused to discard these well-tested and useful policies of the AFL, from which it had seceded. Furthermore, the CIO stimulated the greatest organizing campaign in American history. It committed itself to rejection of

the principle of exclusive jurisdiction so that unions could broaden their coverage to the extent of becoming industrial or multiple-industrial.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### COLLAPSE OF TRADITIONAL REVOLUTIONARY RADICALISM

#### *Pragmatic Socialists Absorbed into Welfare Statism*

Despite unemployment and general dissatisfaction with their status, American workers were proud to be Americans. Consequently, revolutionary radicalism of the traditional variety, which advocated abolition of the existing system, failed to enchant the masses as it did in Europe and other parts of the world. Even the descendants of minority immigrant groups who had been exploited, abused, and largely isolated from the main stream shunned the radical ideologies in their eagerness to become Americanized. Even the followers of the pragmatic Socialists who, in conjunction with their unions, had played such a significant role in Americanizing and improving the conditions of their immigrant membership were gradually influenced by empirical experience and began to veer away from Socialism towards social reformism or welfare statism. During New Deal days, they completely abandoned Socialism and embraced the New Deal ideology.

Before and immediately following World War I, the welfare state Socialists had made excellent progress within the unions. They entirely dominated some of the immigrant unions, such as the predominantly German brewery workers, which was among the older Socialist unions. Besides other early unions like the Amalgamated Wood Workers which later merged with the carpenters, also German in background, the Cigar Makers; the United Mine Workers; the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers; and the Machinists included influential Socialist segments. Some of the United Mine Workers' Districts, for example the Illinois District, were totally Socialist. The Machinists came wholly under a Socialist national administration in 1911. The unions in the garment industries, consisting mostly of workers of Southern and Eastern European origin, and their Jewish leadership were solidly committed to Socialism. These included the International Ladies' Garment Workers; Hat, Cap and Millinery Workers; Fur Workers; Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and smaller units like the belt makers. There were also locals in other industries and trades that consisted chiefly of South and East Europeans which were Socialist-oriented. These unions subscribed to practical collective bargaining policies and followed the leadership of the pragmatic Socialist Party.

Before World War I the Socialist Party made considerable political gains, though it was not as influential in the political arena as in the unions. In municipal elections, particularly, the Party was reasonably successful. Milwaukee was the largest city to elect a full Socialist municipal administration. In smaller industrial towns in Massachusetts, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin and California, Socialists held important city offices. The same was true in Butte, Montana; Schenectady, New York; and Berkeley, California. The year 1912 saw 1,039 Socialists holding office in more than 300 municipalities in the United States. The Socialists could also boast of one and occasionally two members in the United States House of Representatives. Victor L. Berger, the Milwaukee leader, and Meyer London, a New York East Side labor lawyer, proudly wore the Socialist Party label as Congressmen. Berger was elected in 1910 and London in 1914. Socialist Party membership also showed impressive gains, having increased from 41,000 in 1909 to approximately 126,000 in 1912.

As the spearhead of the Socialist movement, the Socialist Party was confronted with a profound crisis at the outbreak of World War I. Having tamed their revolutionary ardour, the European Socialists did not find it difficult at the beginning of the war to support the belligerency of their respective countries. In the United States, the Socialists had three years in which to consider the problem. As the war progressed, with the United States not yet a fighting participant, a variety of mostly extraneous factors fanned positive anti-war sentiment. As an outgrowth of the Socialist concept that all wars were of capitalist origin, a determined pacifist sentiment pervaded the Socialist movement although this feeling weakened the doctrine of the class struggle, which held that worker revolts always were justifiable and inevitable.

Within the Socialist Party there was an exotic pro-German sentiment, strengthened by an anti-Czarist mood that was expressed as opposition to Russia as an ally. Moreover, the influential Jewish and Slavic groups within the American Socialist movement have always regarded Russia as a barbaric oppressor. Most Socialists and sympathizers were conditioned to regard the German Social Democratic Party and its trade union counterpart as the beacon light guiding American and world Socialism. This belief was reinforced because the German Socialist movement was at that time the most powerful in the world and produced the most notable Socialist philosophers and theoreticians. This concept was fostered in the United States by the dominant German element. The reactions of these ethnic and nationality elements, coupled with the pervading pacifist sentiment in the Socialist Party, intensified anti-war feeling within the movement. The revolutionary faction helped to keep this feeling at high pitch. It urged forthright condemnation of United States participation by vigorously opposing our aid to the Allies.

In order to counteract the extremists and prevent a split in the party, the moderate leaders also reluctantly joined in the anti-war protest. At its 1916 convention the Socialist Party adopted a forthright statement against military preparedness and war. A few of the highly articulate leaders, mostly of Anglo-Saxon origin, dissented. By coincidence, an emergency convention assembled in St. Louis in April 1917, one day after the American declaration of war. The moderate leaders were now confronted with a serious dilemma. It was relatively simple to condemn the war when our country was not a belligerent, but opposing the war after the United States had become a participant would not only brand the Socialist Party as disloyal but subject it to harassment, popular condemnation and possible prosecution. Having labored and sacrificed to build the Party, the leaders were not enthusiastic about jeopardizing its standing. Consequently, following bitter haggling, they pursued a course, commonly adopted by politicians, of forcing through an ambiguous war resolution. As a compromise declaration, it failed to please most of the delegates and created confusion within the Party ranks. In order to maintain a patriotic stand, the dominant moderate leaders proceeded unenthusiastically to support the war. The extremists and other solidly anti-war elements maintained that they had been betrayed. The Party was torn by dissension. To add to the Party's woes, the general public interpreted the St. Louis resolution as an unpatriotic anti-war declaration. Its famous propagandist and practically perennial Presidential candidate, Eugene V. Debs, who publicly campaigned against the war, was convicted and jailed in 1918. Indeed, the hitherto compact and advancing Socialist Party was in difficult straits. A considerable portion defected to the newly-born Communist movement; others abandoned the party. Even before adoption of the anti-war resolution, the party had suffered because of its vociferous anti-war contingent.

Another extraneous blow to the Socialist movement was the changing intellectual climate in the United States. With the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912, a spirit of progressivism, already manifest in Congress, pervaded the country. Legislation desired by organized labor, the Clayton Act and other social reform measures, were enacted. This new development seriously affected the fortunes of the Socialist Party. Reform elements that opted for the Socialist Party as the only political organization through which they could register their support of advanced labor and social reform policies now had another outlet in the Democratic Party. Consequently, the Socialist Party suffered a loss of one-third of its voting strength in the 1916

Presidential election. In 1912 the party had garnered over 897,000 votes, but in the 1916 election its votes were reduced to 585,000. Besides the defeat of Victor L. Berger, the Party's Milwaukee Congressman since 1910, Meyer London, the other Socialist Congressman, elected in 1914, also lost. Concomitantly the Party encountered losses in state and municipal elections. There was a sharp drop in Party membership from the peak of nearly 126,000 in 1912 to 80,379 by 1917. Simultaneously, the Socialists began to lose support within the AFL. Whereas in 1912 they mustered one-third of the votes for their Presidential candidate at AFL conventions, between 1912 and 1917 they lost considerable ground. By 1917 the Socialist Party was no longer the party of promise. It had not kept its adherents in national, state and municipal offices for a sufficient length of time to enable it to build up solid support of a permanent nature.

In the 1920 Presidential election a faint hope appeared that the Socialist Party was beginning to overcome the reverses it had suffered since 1912. Eugene V. Debs was once more its Presidential candidate. Notwithstanding the fact that he was serving a jail term, he received a somewhat larger vote than he did in 1912. In actual numbers it was 915,302 or 3% of the total vote cast of 26,661,606. The dismal future which these electoral results predicted is made evident when the percentage votes cast for the Party in previous campaigns is compared with those of 1920. In the 1912 election, Debs received 5.9% of the total vote; in 1916 Benson received 3.2%, and in 1920 Debs raised the percentage only to 3.4%. By way of contrast, Robert M. LaFollette, as a non-Socialist social reform candidate, obtained 16.6% of the total vote in 1924, which was two and one-half times the record poll of the Socialist Party in 1912. Another phantom hope was the re-election of Meyer London to Congress in 1920 and the return of Berger in 1922. But in state and municipal elections, the Party continued to lose ground. An additional sign that the national gains were but temporary flurries was revealed by the phenomenal post-war gain in membership and equally rapid drop which followed. From the low point of 80,379 in 1917 it rose to 108,504 in 1919; but it dropped to 12,000 by 1926. Very likely, the minor temporary gains can be attributed to the post-war revulsion to war.

The interpretation offered by some authorities that the anti-war smear and the prosecution of some Socialist leaders demoralized the Party's following and were primarily responsible for its decline is an error. These were contributing factors, but the fact that the Party acquired a foreign image proved to be the fatal blow against its being accepted by American workers. In 1920 over half of the members belonged to the non-English-speaking affiliates of the Party known as foreign language federations. Its new recruits were chiefly immigrant arrivals. As descendants of the immigrants eagerly embraced the American way of life, they failed to follow in the political footsteps of their fathers. The processes of acculturation of immigrant offspring who were more intrigued by social reform than by social revolution were the chief obstacles which the Socialists could not overcome. As will be pointed out below, events during the great depression amply substantiate the foregoing generalization. For instance, during the 1929 depression, the Socialists and Communists made every effort to enlist followers, but they failed miserably.

### *Marxian Radicalism Reduced to Impotence*

Both surviving factions of the Socialist movement in the United States, the more extreme Socialist Labor Party and the pragmatic Socialist Party, have become insignificant sects. The Socialist Labor Party never developed beyond the status of a sect while the Socialist Party grew to a minor yet significant movement, exercising influence within the unions and in the political arena. As a moderate party stressing concern for social reform legislation and practical trade union policies, it attracted dedicated non-Socialist reformers and liberals. Nevertheless, its hard-core constituency and leadership was immigrant. With cessation of mass immigration and the advent of reform elements in the Democratic Party and to a limited extent in the progressive wing of the Republican Party, the Socialist Party lost its mass following. At present, it is an unimportant propaganda sect.

The IWW, with its emphasis on revolutionary aims and discouragement of immediate or practical procedures, was a shining star for a brief period, but like the Socialist Labor Party is reduced to a minute ultradoctrinaire faction. The Communists, who capitalized on Soviet Russia as the trail blazer of a new, idealistic society and later as an ally of the Western democracies in World War II, temporarily expanded to impressive proportions. But even before World War II it became evident that the Soviets had instituted horrible and inhuman practices such as a police state and slave labor camps and had suppressed free speech and a free press in order to impose their government programs. Outside of Russia, the Communists undertook to dominate or destroy democratic labor movements. As those policies became clear, the glamour of Soviet Russia as the vanguard of a new social order rapidly wore off. An additional blow to Communist reputation was struck when the Soviets became an ally of the Nazis before World War II. The bland public declaration of foreign minister Molotov that adherence to Fascism was a matter of taste shocked the radical and liberal-minded public. Communist fortunes were indeed at a low ebb.

That Marxian radicalism was not able to attract even the most underprivileged is illustrated by the failure of either the mild Socialists or the belligerent Communists to attract the desperately unemployed and the uncounted number that were underemployed during the depression. Many of these workers were forced to live in ramshackle towns known as "Hoovervilles," so named because Herbert Hoover was then President. It is estimated that some twelve to fifteen million were unemployed during the devastating depression of 1929-1933. Their desperation was dramatized by their famous march on Washington and encampment on the Anacostia flats, where the marchers were determined to remain until relief was forthcoming from the administration. Only military action by the Federal government dispersed them. Both the Socialists and Communists agitated strenuously for converts and followers. That they had no success was revealed by the 1932 Presidential election returns. Despite the frightful human suffering and degradation, radicals failed dismally. Even bitterly suffering Americans preferred social reform to social revolution. Revolutionary radicalism even in its mildest form, as advocated by the Socialist Party, was unacceptable.

The turn of events in World War II presented a splendid opportunity for the Communists. Distrusting Soviet Russia, Nazi Germany attacked it and forced the Soviets, as a matter of self-preservation, to seek alliance with the despised Western democracies. Our own government and the public at large accepted the allegations of the Communists who now shed their popularized slogan, "The Yanks are not coming," and became ardent war supporters dedicated to saving democracy. During this friendly period, the Communists succeeded in exerting their influence on government policies and public opinion to a degree which was out of proportion to the size of their following.

In the unions, which were their prime objective, they covertly penetrated and controlled significant sectors, directing them during and following the war. While they had some success in the poorer or newly-organized AFL unions, their extraordinary opportunity presented itself in the newly-created CIO. Overwhelmed by the great numbers of unorganized workers who insisted on being organized, the CIO was hard pressed for experienced workers to cope with the avalanche. Even persons with limited experience were welcomed. The Communists had established nuclei through their Trade Union Unity League in important urban and industrial areas and worked in the propaganda and political fields, so the CIO took advantage of this source of trained personnel. Willing and hard working, the Communists were welcomed into the fold. While applying themselves conscientiously in forming unions, the Communist adherents, under Communist national and international direction, also schemed successfully to entrench themselves so as to direct the unions in which they had acquired influence or control in promoting Soviet foreign policy ambitions. For instance, when the Soviets advocated a second front that would divert Nazi armies from Russian borders and the Western Allies did not think the moment propitious for such a strategic undertaking, the Communists and their supporters launched a massive campaign for a second front. Ostensibly this action was a patriotic move in the interest of the United States; actually it was intended to favor Soviet Russian interests. Within

the CIO, the Communists became a formidable force not only in local and state councils and in many national union affiliates, but within national headquarters. For a considerable period, they actually guided CIO policy on foreign affairs. It is vital to understand how Communists came into control of these CIO units. Unions that were organized by experienced non-Communist labor leaders and their staffs were scarcely, if at all, penetrated by the Communists. Examples are the United Steelworkers and the Textile Workers. Unions which lacked experienced leadership were usually the ones most likely to be taken in hand by the Communists.

Communist influence in the United States among the general public and within the government and labor organizations cannot be gauged by votes polled by the Party or by its public membership figures. Successful Communist activities were conducted by infiltration of non-Communist labor, civic and other organizations, as well as government agencies, by Communists who masqueraded as liberals. Their strategy was to induce groups or organizations to join with them to promote some common aim. Then, by placing their faithful in control, invariably they secretly directed the organization in their own interests. Thus, in addition to penetrating non-Communist bodies, the Communists used to great advantage what became known as "front" organizations. These methods enabled the Communists to wield extraordinary power and influence. Meanwhile, they influenced the sympathetic but uncritical to overlook or justify inhuman practices administered by the dictatorial governments of Soviet Russia and its satellites. Instead, these uncritical persons accepted the Communist claims that Soviet Russia and its satellites represented the wave of the future.

#### *Communist Influences Counteracted and Destroyed*

With the emergence of the cold war atmosphere after 1945, many became alarmed by what was considered to be the growing menace of Communism. Unfortunately, reactionary extremists took advantage of this awakening to the Communist threat by insisting on unnecessarily drastic retaliation. As usually occurs in such emotional situations, the reactionaries were primarily interested in fanning hatred for selfish purposes, but the more thoughtful of them insisted upon and secured an orderly house-cleaning of the Communists. Patriotic liberals dissociated themselves from dishonest "front" organizations; unions expelled Communists and ardent fellow travelers; and the government began to divest itself of these traitors. Some thoughtless injustices occurred, but in general the elimination of Communists and their sympathizers was accomplished in an orderly and judicious manner. Once a dangerous source of power exercising undue influence, the Communists were reduced to an insignificant, albeit still somnolent and lingering group. In the American labor movement their influence has drastically declined, although it has not been completely eradicated. In my two books, *Communism in American Unions* and *Communism in American Politics*, this subject is more comprehensively treated. In elections, extremist groups make little headway in the United States. Insofar as they have exercised influence, it was and is through infiltration and other covert activities.

## Part 10

# IDEOLOGICAL METAMORPHOSIS CONSUMMATED

### CHAPTER XXXIV

#### NEW IDEOLOGY GAINS STRENGTH WITH MERGER OF AFL AND CIO

##### *Competition Revives Labor Movement*

Historically there have been periods when competition in the labor movement generated ambitious and constructive activity. An outstanding example was the bitter rivalry between the romantic Knights of Labor affiliates and the emerging realistic unions that eventually formed the American Federation of Labor. Another such period was the confrontation between the nascent industrial unions and their established AFL opponents. In contrast to the success of the AFL in completely displacing the Knights of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the CIO, although equally pragmatic in its procedure, did not ever eclipse the Federation. Instead, the conflict between the two brought success to each, since both organizations relied on practical trade union policies. Prodded by the competition of the CIO unions and taking advantage of government protection, the AFL units were jolted out of their tottering somnambulism and galvanized into energetic organizational activity. Covering a larger skeletal organizational area than did the CIO and generally not confronted with the powerful resistance of the mammoth multi-plant corporations in the mass production industries, the AFL unions regained their aplomb and soon exceeded their hated CIO rivals both in membership and collective bargaining coverage.

##### *AFL Begins to Appreciate Supplementary Labor Legislation*

Thanks to the beneficial effects of major New Deal labor and social legislation, the AFL began to appreciate that such measures, instead of supplanting the accomplishments of the unions, served to supplement them. Consequently, the AFL began to veer away from its suspicion of such legislation. Indeed, it soon became a sincere proponent of this type of social reform legislation. In the Executive Council Report to the 1948 AFL convention this thought is succinctly expressed: "While every effort must be made to oppose and repeal anti-labor legislation, it is essential that we also introduce and support constructive legislation for the improvement of working conditions."

With this recognition of welfare statism as an essential philosophy for promoting the well-being of the people and counteracting anti-labor forces seeking legislation obnoxious to labor, the AFL, in order to make its new outlook more effective, began to enlarge its existing departments and to add others. In 1947 it improved its traditional political machinery and ceased to rely chiefly on such casual political practices as

publishing and distributing the voting records of members of Congress. The Federation found that the periodical reestablishment of an ad hoc Non-partisan Campaign Committee with a merely temporary staff was far from satisfactory as such action did not meet the needs of the time. When the hostile Taft-Hartley Act became law, the AFL realized that devotion of only a minor fraction of its energies and resources to political action was a mistake. Therefore, Labor's League for Political Education was created with a paid, permanent staff to carry out its duties. State leagues also were founded. Later, confronted with menacing anti-labor political opposition, the CIO Political Action Committee and the AFL Labor's League for Political Education began to cooperate, notwithstanding considerable dissatisfaction with this arrangement from some influential AFL sources. This arrangement, the first collaboration by the two rival federations, proved to be an important undertaking.

### *Merger of AFL and CIO*

As soon as the CIO demonstrated that it possessed qualities of permanency, it was inevitable that sentiment for merger should develop. By 1938, only a few years after the birth of the CIO, the problems of unity and the idea of unification were being discussed by both organizations. Nevertheless, it took some 17 years to effect union. As frequently happens where bitter rivalries exist, personality, internal political and policy problems blocked unity. Some on both sides advocated merely cooperation. At times it seemed that fusion was imminent, then obstacles intervened frustrating all prospects. In the meantime the two federations, as well as some of their affiliates, found it profitable to cooperate on specific matters. Both sides were sincerely interested in the successful prosecution of the war. Consequently, they collaborated with the government in such agencies as the War Production Board and the War Labor Board and participated jointly in the affairs of other governmental executive and administrative activities. In the political field they were thrown together in resisting legislation they both considered detrimental to organized labor, such as the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. Similarly, they cooperated in favoring particular items of labor and social legislation, such as statutes dealing with the minimum wage, social security, hours of labor and so on.

In the beginning the AFL and CIO violently disagreed on international matters, which in some instances was disturbing to the administration. Representation in the International Labor Organization (ILO) and participation on its committees were bitter bones of contention. Initially, the two federations vehemently disagreed as to the founding of an international trade union federation that would include the government-dominated unions of Communist countries. Despite AFL opposition, the CIO joined with most of the European unions and the free trade unions in other democratic countries to form the World Federation of Trade Unions, which included unions from Russia and other Communist countries. Temporarily this action aroused bitter Federation criticism and hostility; but when the World Federation of Trade Unions was captured by the Communists, obliging the democratic unions to abandon it, the AFL cooperated with the CIO and the other free trade union federations in the founding of the non-Communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

Naturally, holdover friction between the AFL and CIO persisted, and exaggerated rivalry in the form of raiding among individual affiliates of both organizations perpetuated ill feeling in some circles, thus interfering with merger negotiations. A fortuitous development that expedited merger was the elimination of certain key individual leaders. John L. Lewis, the brilliant but domineering labor leader, voluntarily isolated himself and his union, the United Mine Workers. William Green and Philip Murray, honored chiefs of their respective federations, who might have delayed unity by disputation as to who should head the fused organization, died in 1952 within a few months of each other. The new head of the CIO, the astute and mercurial Walter P. Reuther, had not yet become solidly established, so that his bargaining power in the merger negotiations was weakened. His authority was challenged by the jealous head of one of the strongest

CIO affiliates, David J. McDonald, President of the United Steelworkers. As a matter of fact, Reuther had to hasten the merger settlement before more dissension developed within the CIO. There was also opposition and skepticism within the AFL; but George Meany, its determined President, was more firmly established and therefore could more easily overcome the dissidents. Finally, merger was consummated in 1955 in the formation of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

Basic ideological differences had disappeared since both sides, with some exceptions, accepted the New Deal philosophy of comprehensive labor and social legislation, sympathetically implemented. However, several major policy differences had to be resolved. It could not be denied that industrial unions now successfully functioning in mass production industries were indispensable, but the AFL constitution granted to each of its affiliates exclusive jurisdiction over a specific craft, trade or occupation. Before the CIO could enter the merger, this exclusive jurisdiction clause had to be deleted. Since some raiding on both sides had occurred, a no-raiding clause seemed to be essential. These changes were readily made. Also, with both sides accepting the concept that government responsibility in protecting trade union rights and otherwise promoting public welfare was desirable, it was readily recognized that greater emphasis on political action was necessary. Hence the political branches of the two organizations were combined in the dynamic Committee for Political Education (COPE). The two organizations now being committed to the welfare state and social unionism, the other departments were fused, incorporated and strengthened as permanent units of the merged federation. Thus, the nomenclature of the AFL-CIO assumed a new character and new proportions—including collective bargaining, political action and the departments necessary to enable them to operate at maximum efficiency. (See appendix D for AFL-CIO Social Unionism Program, 1965.)

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE WELFARE STATE—SOCIAL UNIONISM IN PRACTICE

#### *Expanded Functions and Attendant Problems*

President George Meany in his 1966 Labor Day message pithily wrote: "There is no aspect of American society that is not also the concern of the AFL-CIO." With social unionism as a derivative of welfare statism, the American labor movement encompasses the entire well-being not only of the workers, although that is a primary consideration, but of all of society. Because it is interested in a prosperous and progressive social order, the labor movement particularly extends its concern to other social groups not adequately participating in the opportunities and benefits of an affluent, democratic society.

Pragmatic labor leaders and trade union members understand that their destiny is integrally interwoven with the entire society and fully appreciate that their power and influence are inseparable from the responsibilities they must exercise in accordance with the status they enjoy. The labor movement, in broadening its scope beyond collective bargaining is vitally interested in a social order benefiting all; and it also understands that without constant economic growth the country cannot maintain standards commensurate with the aspirations of an advanced people. Internationally, labor leaders realize that it is imperative for them to aid labor movements abroad, to participate in maintenance of peace, and to grant succor to weaker nations threatened by aggressor countries.

Our dynamic economy is subjecting labor as well as other groups to severe and perplexing situations. Some of the salient disturbing factors are disproportionate wage payments and income, a steadily mounting cost of living, and increasing productivity and swollen profits. These problems are further aggravated by the added wants of workers generated by education, propaganda and an affluent environment. The average worker wishes to enjoy comforts and leisure, and in addition he experiences a mounting desire to provide better education and wider opportunities for his children. The accelerated introduction of technological improvements, while increasing productivity, required rapid and unaccustomed adaptations by individual workers. These changes not infrequently result in lessening the importance of, or completely discarding, established skills. They also endanger job security so that rank and file reactions frequently develop into fear and hysteria, stimulating the workers to pressure their leaders to champion demands considered excessive by management and large sectors of the public. Such reactions frequently lead union members to reject settlements made by their leaders. In these cases rarely, if ever, in a democratic society is a near-perfect disposition possible. Compromises are inevitable. Yet where doctrinaire ideological extremists or highly emotional individuals or groups are in the ascendency, the difficulties are fought out to the bitter end, while where pragmatic leaders control, such decisive confrontations are rarely permitted to occur. Adaptation is the key to survival, progress and success. Extremists, the history of labor shows, either fade out or vanish into impotence.

The prolonged strikes which do occur, perhaps as the result of a union opposition interested in discrediting incumbent leaders, or because of unreasonable discontent on the part of the rank and file, often tend to put the parties under pressure of vociferous public dissatisfaction and may require that a settlement be achieved through the efforts of government or other outside groups. Public discontent may tarnish the rational image of organized labor. This becomes an irritating problem to a labor movement which desires to maintain a public image of reasonableness. Confronted with these profound difficulties, debate is precipitated within the movement as to procedures for settlement of disputes. If reason finally prevails on both sides, an amicable adjustment will be reached. If not, either the union loses out or outside intervention brings both parties together in search of an amicable settlement. Recently the government has begun to intervene more frequently in crucial bargaining situations, either as an informal intermediary or by outright assumption of authority to impose settlement. Generally the government is reluctant to exert compulsory pressure openly. It prefers to act in a mediatory capacity, applying, if deemed necessary, heavy pressure tantamount to those of an enforcement agency, and usually a voluntary adjustment is reached as a result of this mediation between the contending parties. In general, the mediation process has public support. Thus the procedure, although wearing the guise of mere mediation, becomes *de facto* compulsory arbitration. In this manner, consensus has been temporarily destroyed and later apparently becomes repaired.

In some situations consensus may be completely lacking. Some large business firms with multiple plants, either openly or surreptitiously, categorically resist dealing with unions. The struggle in these cases usually persists, with management devising ways of withholding union recognition despite NLRB intervention. It resorts both to legal and illegal strategy in strenuously maintaining its obdurate position. The unions involved, possibly with the support of the entire labor movement, persist. Only in a limited number of cases following unusually long strikes and boycotts, resembling a war of attrition, does the union succeed in forcing such a determined firm partially to capitulate, generally with the aid of the National Labor Relations Board. Some of the strikers, in conformity with an NLRB decision sustained by the courts, may be reinstated, and if not interested in returning, may receive compensation for earnings lost while on strike. Many firms supported by legal counsel may avoid bargaining in good faith with the union. In all probability where unions have not become initially firmly established, such festering sores will continue to exist. Nevertheless, perfect consensus, an unusual occurrence in the relationships of life, although rarely attained, is now and again achieved. Bitter quarrels may break out, but in the end, peace may be patched up and it may even bloom into a workable consensus! Such is life.

Other difficult problems, most of them solvable with patience and intelligent treatment, rise to confront the labor movement. Disadvantaged ethnic groups, denied their civil rights and otherwise subjected to serious discrimination, present an agonizing problem. Coming from a rural background not dissimilar to that of the South and East European immigrants, the Negroes have been even more shamefully neglected and exploited. Not only do they present a problem to the labor movement, but they are above all a social problem. Long denied or grudgingly granted their civil rights, subjected to unjustified prejudicial and discriminatory treatment, the difficulty of integrating them becomes compounded. Limited familiarity with urban living, lack of adequate elementary education, language deficiencies, and lack of industrial experience combine to relegate them to the most menial jobs. Moreover, unskilled occupations are steadily becoming less numerous. Low incomes, added to marked color differences, force the Negroes to live in ghettos and slums. In the case of the Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans, Latin appearance, in addition to language difficulties, accentuates intuitive prejudices. Added to the burdens of these ethnic elements is the assumption that these groups are unorganizable, a belief that long prevailed in regard to the South and East European immigrants, and to agricultural migratory workers.

Prior to the New Deal era, unions were blamed, in some measure justifiably, for neglecting South and East European immigrant workers. Actually, where unions were organized on an industrial or broader than skilled worker basis, the immigrants were included and became devoted unionists. The United Mine Workers and the needle trades unions are striking examples. But on occasion, even where sincere organizing efforts were made in industries employing masses of unskilled immigrants, as in the 1918-1919 steel organizing campaign and strike, they failed. It has often been charged that this failure was traceable to the undertaking having been made by a combination of unions instead of one industrial union. As one of the investigators for the Commission of Inquiry of the Inter-Church World Movement of the 1919 Steel Strike Inquiry, I was in intimate contact with the AFL's National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers and became convinced that it was the entrenched anti-union position of management and its impenetrable policies for the prevention of organizing that created an iron barrier which the Committee was unable to surmount. With the removal of that barrier by the Wagner Act and, in due course, the Taft-Hartley Act, these mass production industries have become solidly organized. It was the favorable climate, in this instance created by the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act and their enforcement by the NLRB with the support of the courts, that made it possible to overcome the opposition of the powerful multi-plant, anti-union firms.

The wholesale organizing of the mass production industries also included Negroes, who for the most part were doing unskilled work. Moreover, in industries with smaller units operating in an almost cut-throat competitive market, employers did not possess the wherewithal to resist union organizing drives. Negroes have been loyal members of unions for a long time in industries and services employing large numbers of unskilled and semiskilled workers. Such industries as dock and longshore, mining, the needle trades, and the hotel and restaurant industry present formidable examples. Likewise, Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans are in general welcomed in the labor movement and belong to unions having a considerable membership of unskilled and semiskilled workers. Even in the building trades, which are notorious for the exclusion of members of certain ethnic groups, the Laborers' International Union, originally composed of unskilled workers, has traditionally welcomed Negroes and more recently Latin American workers.

It is mostly in occupational sectors where predominantly skilled workers are employed and which require lengthy apprenticeship before a worker can become a journeyman or a full-fledged skilled worker that the unions have been remiss in accepting these disadvantaged ethnic elements, as apprentices or otherwise. The AFL-CIO is exerting itself to correct this situation, and the government, through the powers granted to it by civil rights legislation and administrative effort, is also applying pressure. Gradually these unions, most of which operate in the building trades, are beginning to yield, albeit reluctantly and at times

making only token concessions. Government-sponsored vocational training is also opening doors for the disadvantaged in semiskilled and some skilled occupations. Unions generally admit these government-trained workers when they possess the required qualifications.

Indeed, the labor movement, inspired by its new ideology of welfare state-social unionism, supplemented by public pressure, is doing its utmost in pressuring affiliates to grant equal opportunity to qualified workers irrespective of ethnic origin. Unfortunately resistance emanates primarily from the rank and file who are less oriented to the spirit of the times and are unduly worried about job security. In time, egged on by pressure from the outside and educated by the union leaders, workers are bound to overcome these narrow, selfish and ungrounded fears as their income security in a near-full-employment society is shored up by social security and by fringe benefits obtained through collective bargaining.

### *White Collar and Professional Workers*

Another occupational group which is presenting problems for the labor movement is that of white collar and professional workers. Traditionally white collar and professional workers, out of false pride and proximity to executive status, considered themselves as part of management. Also, out of snobbishness, they regard themselves as superior to blue-collar workers although most of them are not as well compensated as skilled workers. Because unions have been traditionally discredited by the upper classes for including the socially inferior manual workers, the white collar and professional elements assume that they would tarnish their higher status by joining unions. However, some professionals began to appreciate that organization was essential in a modern society. Some banded themselves into professional societies motivated by the premise first expounded by the medieval guilds that maintenance of professional quality standards would result in larger incomes. Still others came to appreciate that it was not degrading to associate in unions. Among the earliest of such groups were the actors on the legitimate stage. Led by outstanding stars with humanitarian promptings and a conviction that the general run of actors needed bargaining protection, the Actors' Equity Association was founded in 1913. Some strikes were required to induce the theatrical managements to grant recognition. Notable stars like the Barrymores and Drews walked the picket lines on Broadway with the lowliest. Their participation enlisted support from prominent personages, and eventually recognition of the Actors' Equity Association was obtained.

Following in the footsteps of Equity, other branches of the entertainment field are equally well organized. Among the early groups is the American Guild of Variety Artists. In the wake of the United States Supreme Court decision in 1937 upholding the constitutionality of the NLRA, came the ruling by the same tribunal that the motion picture industry was engaged in interstate commerce. This gave the NLRB jurisdiction over the mechanical trades and the professional occupations. Thus both these important groups easily won union recognition and collective bargaining rights. Screen actors, writers, directors, extras and others established themselves as powerful unions. Likewise, the professional workers in radio and television soon founded successful unions. Most of these unions of professionals in the entertainment field are affiliated with an overall organization, the Associated Actors and Artistes of America, which in turn is affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

Unions of federal, state, county and municipal employees encompassing white collar and professional as well as "blue collar" workers are growing at a rapid pace. Fire fighters have their separate international union. Teachers are beginning to organize. Since the legislatures reserve the right to determine compensation rates and hours of labor, these unions enjoy only a limited collective bargaining status. With strikes against the federal government and most state governmental units forbidden, employees of these unions must rely on pressure and lobbying, thus inevitably becoming quite active and politically conscious.

Most of these unions have constitutional provisions forbidding their members to strike. Nevertheless strikes have occurred. To these unions, affiliation with the AFL-CIO largely in order to enlist the support of the entire labor movement in their relations with governments, is doubly important. Sentiment within unions of government employees favoring resort to strikes when occasion requires is growing. Notwithstanding the prohibition of strikes, some of them have reopened this question at their local meetings and national conventions. Recently a few of the unions have created special committees to study the practicability and legality of resorting to strikes when satisfactory terms cannot be otherwise obtained.

A peculiar situation exists in the teaching profession. The National Education Association, a widely inclusive organization of teachers, is divided according to specialized function. One such division is class-room teachers. As a result of excessive teaching loads and related responsibilities, increasing cost of living, and consequent limitation of opportunities for gratification of expanded tastes, the teachers recently have become restless. With the rival American Federation of Teachers expanding its activities and even engaging in successful strikes, teacher groups in the NEA, finding school authorities unresponsive to their demands, also have resorted to militancy. In some instances they have even turned to the strike. More frequently the teachers as a body have refused to sign renewal contracts, which may be considered a modified strike tactic. As a professional organization, the parent NEA found itself in a quandary. It could not disown its members; yet the feeling persisted that it was unprofessional to resort to open or disguised strikes. Finally the NEA endorsed the less obvious procedure of collectively refusing to sign renewal contracts and calling on teachers elsewhere not to accept positions in schools where teachers had refused to return to work because the school authorities did not meet their demands. This act is analogous to the strategy resorted to by union members refusing the jobs of strikers, reflecting their unwillingness to be strike breakers. Restlessness and pressure from teachers over unsatisfactory working conditions as well as the advances made by the American Federation of Teachers led the NEA to invite the Federation to associate with the Association for joint action. The AFT rejected the invitation.

Professional and semi-professional groups employed in the medical field have also joined unions or organized themselves into separate unions. Nurses in private and public hospitals have acted collectively to improve their conditions of employment. An increasing number have engaged in strikes. Others have used the tactic of feigned sickness, not reporting for work until their demands were granted. In the meantime their leaders conduct negotiations with management, publicly announcing that the nurses will return to work en masse if satisfactory adjustments are made. The American Nurses Association has for several years asked that the institutions employing their members be brought under NLRA jurisdiction so that they might have the protection of the National Labor Relations Board. This Association is also appealing for state legislation guaranteeing them the right to organize and engage in collective bargaining. Medical doctors in public clinics and similar institutions have followed in the footsteps of the nurses, as have laboratory workers.

Criticism is being directed, perhaps unjustly, at the labor movement for not making maximum effort to organize white-collar workers. But unions constituted predominantly of manual workers have for close to half a century taken in white-collar workers. To be sure they chose the easiest course by merely including the white-collar workers employed in offices located on premises where manual workers also were employed. The Directory of National and International Unions in the United States, 1965, issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor lists the unions which include white-collar workers.

With the adoption of the Railway Labor Act, unions covering railway transportation extended their jurisdictions to include white-collar workers. The Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees, in addition to organizing the manual workers in railroad freight offices, has exercised jurisdiction over the office workers employed therein. Later, it extended its operations to include

the main offices located in business centers, a distance from actual transportation operations. It also extended its jurisdiction to maritime establishments; and when air transportation was placed under the Railway Labor Act, the railway clerks union began to organize white-collar workers employed in transportation by air.

It thus is clearly evident that white-collar and professional workers are organizable into unions. The membership of unions of professional workers is steadily increasing. Some of them are founding separate unions but usually they become part of the AFL-CIO.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### LABOR POWER, MALPRACTICES AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION

#### *Labor-Management Relations Act*

Managerial interests and some sectors of the public became disturbed by the strength developed by organized labor under the protection of the NLRA and related federal and state legislation. This sentiment naturally penetrated Congress. In any case, in 1947 the National Labor Relations Act was drastically amended and renamed the Labor-Management Relations Act. Popularly this amended statute has become known as the Taft-Hartley Act. Twice President Truman vetoed the bill, but the second time it was passed over his veto. There was a split in the Republican Party which was in control of the Eightieth Congress, convened in January 1947. The extremist faction strove to emasculate the NLRA to the extent of rescinding the basic provisions protecting the right of workers to form and join unions of their choice and requiring employers to bargain in good faith. On the other hand, the majority faction led by the late Senator Robert A. Taft proclaimed that the Republican Party subscribed to the proposition that collective bargaining was desirable. The Senator declared that the social gains which workers received from the NLRA and other laws like the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932 must not be disturbed, but that nevertheless certain inequities suffered by employers and workers must be remedied.

Coverage for foremen and other supervisory employees was excluded. The closed shop was outlawed but the union shop permitted, provided that a majority of those in the bargaining unit authorized inclusion. In situations in which union-shop clauses were at issue, elections were to be conducted by the NLRB to determine the choice of the workers involved. Generally, these elections overwhelmingly favored the union shop. As a result Senator Taft, accepting these facts, later agreed to the elimination of the elections provision. A most serious change in the NLRA was the insertion of a provision authorizing the states to prohibit the union shop. As previously pointed out, a number of states had enacted such prohibitory legislation. This legislation undoubtedly hampers establishment of viable union organizations. It is for this reason that labor seeks repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act which provides that:

Nothing in this Act shall be construed as authorizing the execution or application of agreements requiring membership in a labor organization, as a condition of employment in any State or Territory in which such execution or application is prohibited by State or Territorial law.

Other regulations governed the conduct of unions in order to preserve the free choice of

individual workers and management from coercion by unions and to safeguard the public interest in cases of emergencies. Just as employers were restrained from coercing workers in making their choice of collective bargaining representatives, so now unions were likewise forbidden to coerce employers to discriminate or cause employees to discriminate against fellow workers, demand payment for services not performed, or engage in jurisdictional strikes or secondary boycotts. Upon complaint of an employer that unions have indulged in the enumerated forbidden activities, the Board is required to apply for an injunction.

There are other restrictions which the unions consider harmful to their customary and traditional activities. Under given conditions, workers are permitted to petition for decertification elections. If a majority favors it, the union loses the right to continue acting as bargaining agent. Also, in a labor conflict that could create an emergency affecting the public interest, the government can seek an injunction to postpone or suspend the strike for a limited period. Unions and business establishments are forbidden to make contributions in elections for federal political office. Unions seeking Board services are required to file their constitutions, by-laws, and financial statements with the United States Department of Labor. Union officials must file an affidavit that they are not members of the Communist Party or any organization associated with it. Certain vital administrative and enforcement responsibilities of the Board have been transferred to its General Counsel, who remains closely associated with the Board but has been given autonomous status. The labor leaders were invited by Senator Taft to participate in conference as the law was being drafted, but scorned the invitation. It is possible that had they participated there might have been further modifications. In the end, the basic provisions of the Wagner Act were not weakened. Nevertheless some serious restrictions on the power of the unions in their relations with management were introduced. These had the effect of rendering ineffective a number of customary union activities of considerable value to unions in maintaining strength, particularly when confronted by recalcitrant managements. Union discipline and control of members were weakened, but despite predictions of catastrophic results to the labor movement, it did not suffer the reverses of the twenties when the government protection of unions was discontinued with the advent of Republican administrations and Republican Congresses.

Indicative that these restrictions were not unduly harmful is the fact that the unprecedented social reform and welfare legislation adopted during New Deal days was not basically disturbed. Similarly, union security, as provided for in the original NLRA, was not seriously affected by the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act; and neither the Social Security Act nor its related legislation dealing with unemployment compensation, minimum wage legislation and other basic social and labor reform provisions were seriously challenged or drastically amended. Some of this legislation, like the minimum wage law, has been improved. Trade union efforts to win additional benefits have been blocked or grudgingly granted even by Democratic Congresses.

Organized labor vigorously opposed the Taft-Hartley bill before the appropriate Congressional Committees. It mobilized its forces to rally public support. Despite these efforts, the bill became law in the spring of 1947 over the veto of President Truman, who declared it to be unfair and discriminatory against labor. For a brief period, the inflamed anger of organized labor reached such a high pitch that it thoughtlessly denounced the new statute as a "slave labor act." Upon reflection, it was realized that such a characterization was unwarranted. Besides, with the cold war raging it gave the Communists unsought ammunition in their attack on the United States. In any event, organized labor abruptly discontinued the use of this abusive language. However, it intensified its political and propaganda efforts either to repeal the alterations in the NLRA or so to amend it as to eliminate the more objectionable provisions. Thus far these attempts have not had tangible results.

### *Select Committee on Improper Activities*

As administration of the Taft-Hartley Act continued, public charges of serious misconduct by labor leaders in high and low positions became common. Sufficient violations of the rights of members, the integrity of fiduciary trusts and other malpractices were either unearthed or bruited about to arouse public concern. With the labor movement expanding and amassing substantial finances and power, temptations and opportunities for dishonest dealings increased. It was easy for weaker individuals to succumb to unconscionable practices.

Scandals multiplied, and there emerged a growing public demand that they be investigated. Finally in the winter of 1957 the United States Senate authorized creation of a Select Committee on Improper Activities, headed by Senator John McClellan, to investigate alleged malpractices in the labor and management field. Its hearings, televised and amply covered by the news media, revealed corruption and malfeasance by officials in a number of unions. Even more disturbing was the exposure of operations by underworld racketeering elements in some unions. Actually the Committee's disclosures were traceable to only a few unions. On the whole, these dubious practices did not penetrate entire unions, although some top international union officials were clearly tainted. Generally it was subordinate branches and local union officials that were involved. Moreover the massive evidence merely confirmed that union corruption was confined to industries and services in which such practices had generally existed and to areas where business practices lent themselves readily to corruption on all levels. It became evident that racketeering and other malpractices reflected not simply a labor failing but were social evils which involved some labor leaders and unions.

It appears that malpractices were confined chiefly to AFL affiliates, a characteristic historically dogging the AFL. By virtue of the character of the industries in which the CIO operated, its unions were mostly free of corruption and racketeering. In a few isolated instances where unsavory practices occurred the national CIO headquarters acted with dispatch. Since the CIO was a younger federation, chiefly responsible for bringing most of its affiliates into being, and mothering them in their infancy, it was not so completely indoctrinated with the autonomous concept as the AFL. Thus, it was possible for the CIO to exercise more direct influence over its affiliates. More important is the fact that the industries in which the CIO unions operated were mostly of the large-scale variety whose business practices and powerful economic position made them less susceptible to corruption and other malpractices. Historically, the AFL had condemned unethical practices, but as a decentralized organization, which granted its affiliates complete autonomy over their internal affairs, it could scarcely do more than resort to exhortation and appeal to the international union officials to clean house. In some instances, these appeals for rectitude did not move the malefactors, who were effectively entrenched in their organizations.

Exposures continued to keep labor's misdeeds before the public. AFL leaders, sensitive to these revelations, pressed for more positive Federation action. In 1953 following a bi-state agency exposure of corruption in the International Longshoremen's Association and the failure of its officials to act, the AFL reluctantly expelled the union. When in 1955 the AFL-CIO merger was consummated, one of the conditions required by the CIO leaders was that an Ethical Practices Committee be created to draw up an ethical code to govern the conduct of AFL-CIO affiliates and be given the authority to ferret out culprits. This act was an unprecedented encroachment on international union autonomy and gave the central Federation the power to inject itself into the internal affairs of union affiliates. A small number of affiliates were tried and ordered to clean house, and those failing to comply were expelled. Rival unions were established by the Federation to compete with ousted organizations, and resulted in the reform of some of the tainted unions and in the development of satisfactory substitutes for the more recalcitrant ones. Because the Teamster leaders were so powerfully entrenched, an exception was made, and no raiding or rival union organization

was attempted. Exposed to nothing more than verbal criticism, the teamsters' union continued to grow in membership and became the largest union in the country. With its domineering president, James Hoffa, and some of his powerful associates in jail or under indictment, the prospects that this union shortly will cleanse itself of corrupt elements are promising. The return of this organization to the AFL-CIO fold may occur in the not too distant future.

### *Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act*

The limited success of the Federation in eliminating racketeering and other improper practices impelled Congress in 1959 to enact the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, popularly referred to as the Landrum-Griffin Act after the names of the Senator and Congressman who sponsored the bills. This Act requires all unions to file financial statements reporting income, expenditures, and salaries. It forbids union officials to engage in activities that would conflict with the interests of their respective organizations, including the borrowing of more than \$2,000 of union funds by officers or members. It also requires the bonding of officers and staff members. The rights of members to free speech, assembly and trial are assured. The holding of elections is provided for, and the maximum time-span between them is stipulated. Misuse of funds is made an offense, and the Secretary of Labor is empowered to seek remedies in the courts for misdeeds of officers and denial of rights to members. This law marked an additional step in government intervention in union affairs, and it was not the kind of intervention which labor welcomed. However, most of the fears expressed by labor did not materialize, nor did the elaborate reporting and complaints disclose widespread misuse of funds or violation of the rights of members. The unions immediately amended their constitutions and introduced other practices so as to conform with the law. In the end, the activities of the board administering the law confirmed the general belief of persons familiar with the labor movement, that in honesty and decency its leaders and members compared favorably with their counterparts in other American interest groups.

### *The Reaction of Organized Labor to Regulatory Legislation*

Confronted with legislation providing for regulatory intervention, labor became unnecessarily aroused. The Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin Acts, particularly, limited the power and activities of unions, in addition to supervising the internal managerial practices of unions vis-a-vis their members. In common with other functional economic and social groups similarly regulated, organized labor displayed its dissatisfaction. It reacted with the same kind of vigor that it displayed in fighting for legislation which positively strengthened the unions and tangibly benefited their rank and file. Initially, labor considered the idea of mustering support for repeal of those provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act which more directly affected union efforts. Appreciating the difficulty of doing this and actually learning to live and even thrive under this regulatory legislation, it wisely turned to efforts to bring about changes in cumbersome administrative policies in the implementation of the Landrum-Griffin Act and to obtain repeal only of the most objectionable provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act. Administrative adaptations in the implementation of the Landrum-Griffin Act were readily secured without incurring opposition from either employers or the public. In the efforts to bring about desired changes in the Taft-Hartley Act, labor has so far been dismally unsuccessful. In considering this problem it is desirable to describe the changes that labor has requested in the Taft-Hartley Act and the reasons therefor.

Two prohibitions under the Taft-Hartley Act are considered by labor as especially unfair. The first is Section 14(b) of the Act, which hampers the organizing of unorganized workers and interferes with the efforts of unions to achieve necessary discipline among newly-organized workers. This objectionable

section permits states, if they so desire, to forbid by legislation the union shop and the check off of dues from the pay of each worker, even if such requirements were negotiated with management through free collective bargaining. Management and its allies have carried on a well-financed and ably-directed campaign for this type of state legislation under the euphemistic slogan of "Right to Work." Actually, under union shop provisions, an employer is free to hire whatever workers he chooses; but after his probationary period, the worker is obligated to join the union recognized by his employer. Thus no worker is denied the right to work.

Practically all the states adopting such legislation are located in Southern and border states that are predominantly rural and agricultural. These states, in inducing manufacturing firms to locate within their borders, offer various advantages such as guarantees of tax exemption, financial aid in the construction of plants, assurance of non-union labor, and protection against future unionization. Only one highly industrialized state enacted such legislation, Indiana, and its statute was shortly repealed. In a number of states, "right to work" legislation was rejected by legislatures or by voter referendums.

In the communities governed by "right to work" laws, the public and state government authorities generally sympathize with the firms resisting unionization of their employees. Resort to vicious anti-union practices not dissimilar to those previously used in industrialized regions is common practice. In order to protect itself, organized labor has concentrated on securing the repeal of Section 14(b) as a "must." To this end, both the Republican and Democratic Presidential Conventions inserted sympathetic planks in their platforms. The Democratic administration as usual supported labor's demand, and the President in his State of the Union Message to the 1966 Congress recommended repeal. Nevertheless, a coalition of Republican, Southern and some Northern Democratic Senators, including a few dependent upon labor support, defeated the amendment. Ironically the amendment passed in the House of Representatives, receiving its death knell in the Senate whose record generally had been more favorable to liberal and labor legislation. Defeat of the movement to repeal Section 14(b) in the Senate was by filibuster rather than by vote.

A second unfair prohibition under the Taft-Hartley Act arises out of court interpretation of the Taft-Hartley clause outlawing "secondary" boycotts. The secondary boycott involves union interference with the business operations of an employer not engaged in a labor dispute. Hence picketing an establishment, when picketing is intended to inform workers and the public that the employees of a particular firm there are on strike, has been declared by the courts to be a secondary boycott when it also affects other employers not involved in the labor dispute but doing business on the same premises or "site." Usually in such cases, union workers employed by the employers not directly involved, according to union practice and tradition, would refuse to cross picket lines. Customers often will also observe the picket line; and as a result, the innocent employer often is penalized. As a rule, the courts will issue injunctions against unions and their members in such cases, generally forbidding all picketing.

Efforts have been made to reinterpret "situated" picketing, but the courts are adamant in considering picketing in such cases as secondary boycotts. This situation has seriously and effectively interfered with building trades unions participating in a strike because a multiplicity of contractors are simultaneously engaged in building and construction operations on the same site. Unions with members employed in other industries are also troubled by these court decisions, but not to the same extent as the building and construction unions. Even industrial unions have encountered difficulties if the plant employs workers belonging to other unions, such as office workers and maintenance and repair crews.

Recently, railroad unions encountered this ban on picketing. A stubborn and prolonged labor dispute in effect between the Florida East Coast Railway and certain unions of its employees provides an example. The railway refused to accept the agreement entered into between the unions and managements of

all the other Class A railroads. A strike resulted. Initially picketing was conducted in the customary manner; but as the strike was prolonged, the implicated unions in their desperation picketed the Washington, D. C. railroad station. Since several railroads jointly used this station, an injunction could be and was obtained forbidding all picketing there. Another case arose involving the Jacksonville, Florida, railway terminal. Later, the courts ruled that an injunction in this instance was unjustified because the other railroads were handling transfer business that originated on the Florida East Coast System.

Initially, only the building trades unions advocated corrective legislation. Other unions now want the amendment to apply to industry in general. A united labor movement is supporting the remedial legislation. Despite administration endorsement and Democratic and Republican Party support, nothing has been accomplished.

## **CHAPTER XXXVII**

### **POLITICAL ACTION AND SOLE ALIGNMENT WITH ONE MAJOR PARTY**

Confronted with the failure to secure passage of these two salient trade union measures, the repeal of Section 14(b) and the reinterpretation of the "situated" picketing rule, from an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress urged to take favorable action by the administration, deep disappointment enveloped the labor movement. Those few diehards who had reluctantly accepted comprehensive political action now joined with more moderate elements to question its value. Others began to question especially the advisability of being too firmly dependent upon one party. Unions that had contributed lavishly to the Democratic Party had second thoughts. Either they refused to continue granting financial aid or decided on selective support of particular individual candidates. President George Meany heatedly announced that the movement did not need the Democratic Party, but would neither discontinue, nor diminish the intensity of, its political activity. Comprehensive political action had now become as important an arm of the labor movement as trade union activity. With the wealth of social and labor legislation enacted since the New Deal era, large-scale political action had become indispensable.

As tempers cooled and a reflective mood was restored, the leaders concluded, upon taking stock, that labor had not suffered unduly by the failure to secure enactment of some legislative measures. They pointed to their successful role in contributing to the passage of such monumental legislation of social significance as the bills on medicare, housing, education, the minimum wage, civil rights and others. While labor support helped to popularize the need for such legislation and to promote enactment by financing the campaigns, and while lobbying undoubtedly contributed substantially to the generation of a favorable public atmosphere resulting in a successful outcome, the laws were not exclusively labor measures. Still, an optimistic tone was introduced which encouraged the desire to maintain and strengthen labor political action. With this spirit grew a determination again to concentrate on securing desired labor legislation.

From the labor viewpoint, the distinguishing and determining difference between the two major parties lies in the locus of hostility or coolness to labor and many liberal policies. Within the Republican Party this opposition is widespread; in the Democratic Party it centers around a fringe element. Democratic administrations, through their key leaders, accept organized labor as part of the family. At the same time, pragmatic thinking on the part of labor dictates maintenance of cooperative relations with individual liberal

Republicans. Realistically, this is the only practical course available. Those old-fashioned trade unionists who strenuously resisted the transformation from voluntarism to welfare state-social unionism feebly voiced a protest which was lost in the overwhelming sentiment for continuing the chartered course and accepting the reverses with the gains.

#### *Dramatic Outcome of Mid-Term Election of 1966*

The 1966 mid-term federal and state elections were notable in many respects. In number and percentages, the voter turnout set a record for mid-term elections. Notwithstanding that the labor movement devoted greater effort and expended larger sums than it had in previous similar elections, a surprisingly large number of the candidates whom it supported failed to win office. More aggravating was the number of pro-labor incumbents who were defeated. In other words, labor failed to deliver the necessary votes or induce its followers and sympathizers to heed its advice and exhortations. At this writing, immediately following the election, a decisive analysis of the reasons for this outcome and its possible effect on future labor political plans is not feasible, but certain explanations seem unfounded even when subjected to cursory scrutiny.

The broad generalization that it was a "Republican landslide" which overwhelmed labor efforts and Democratic campaigning needs dissection. This assertion scarcely explains the disastrous outcome. An excessively large number of the electorate merely reverted to their former practice of voting Republican, having temporarily deserted that party in reaction to the unacceptable program and preachings of its 1960 Presidential candidate. On the other hand, a large number of Democrats, among whom were an unexpected number of union members and labor sympathizers, voted Republican. Their reaction was not motivated by opposition to the welfare state ideology or to reasonable labor measures. Rather their turn to the Republicans was influenced by certain issues and events which they considered by-products of Democratic Party policies, which the Republicans condemned. Mounting consumer prices distressed not only wage earners but middle-class and other lower and medium income groups. Concomitantly, general inflation with the threat of a possible serious recession or worse also became a worrisome consideration.

Other developments which may have played roles were widespread and increasing unrest and lawlessness, civil disobedience, violence, violation of individual security, destruction of property, and physical attacks on citizens and public officials engaged in law enforcement. These no doubt motivated large numbers of the electorate to lodge their protests in the form of votes for the opposition. They also generated a white backlash among those who were overwrought, mostly among those of modest incomes, including considerable numbers of union members who disregarded the frantic pleas of their leaders. In general, this backlash blended with an undercurrent of disapproval of other manifestations of civil disobedience such as anti-Vietnam demonstrations which consisted of publicly burning draft cards, urging draftees not to respond when called for induction, boisterous sit-downs, interfering with troop and war material movements, and the disruption of peaceful pro-Vietnam gatherings. A Negro backlash also contributed to Democratic losses in some constituencies. Dissatisfied because of the inadequacies of the civil rights, poverty and related programs, this element resolved to punish the party that had ardently fought for the programs. The accumulation of routine, imaginary and real grievances customarily attributed to a party long in power influenced independents and some Democrats to cast their ballots for the opposition party.

It must not be overlooked that the overriding issues in the 1966 campaign were not directly connected with labor or trade union problems. The prominent and absorbing issues were heavily surcharged with general prejudices. It was these and other temporary aberrations rather than the customary labor and social reform issues that led many socially-inclined persons including workers and union members to

disregard the advice and pleadings of their leaders.

### *Future of Political Action*

Organized labor was only momentarily dismayed by the election results. Nevertheless stock-taking was in order. Only a very few questioned the value of political action. As realists they appreciated that changing conditions made it imperative for the labor movement to continue and even augment political action. Because it is a movement that guides itself by close study and analysis, it was decided to order specialists to scan thoroughly the election returns and related factors so that labor would be able to chart its future course.

Will the considerable number of moderate Republicans hastily repeal or damagingly meddle with welfare state and labor laws? No, the Republican leaders of both houses of Congress, leading state governors and other prominent state political personalities have publicly announced that they will not interfere with important social and labor legislation but will attempt to improve it. It will be recalled that during the Eisenhower administration no serious efforts were made to disturb previously enacted social and labor laws even when Congress was controlled by the Republicans. Nor is it recorded that Republicans in control of state administrations have profoundly damaged legislation enacted by preceding Democratic governments. It would seem, therefore, that the optimistic prognostications of labor leaders are more than wishful thinking. This development is clear evidence that the majority of Republicans have entered the mainstream of public opinion, acknowledging that the welfare state is the accepted way of life in the United States.

In viewing the situation, some labor leaders see a silver lining beyond the presumably dark election cloud. They are beginning to feel that the so-called reverses may prove to be to the advantage of labor. The new developments, in their view, have created for labor a broader field of maneuver within and between the two major parties. Accepting the conclusions of political analysts that reapportionment makes it possible for the urban electorate to exercise greater influence, labor leaders surmise that most Republicans elected to Congress and state offices are not of the ultraconservative variety but moderates and that some of them are even liberals; hence they are not likely to be viciously anti-labor, and most of them will desire to have friendly relations with labor. Under these circumstances it should be possible for the movement to pursue a more balanced non-partisan political policy. This situation should be advantageous to labor by making it less dependent on one party. Because organized labor is not a monolithic movement, deviations from the general practice of supporting Democratic candidates have been occurring regularly. Exercising their autonomy, regional, state and local units have supported moderate and liberal Republicans. The rank and file also have demonstrated dissent by disregarding the recommendations of their leaders. Hence the legislation anticipated as retaliation by Republicans may not prove too serious, even in its effect on purely trade union matters. It seems certain, therefore, that the legitimate status of organized labor as a desirable, functional, social institution will not be materially disturbed.

Given the composition of our democratic-pluralistic society, labor, in common with other functional groups, is beginning to recognize that even under a friendly administration and Congress, it cannot expect entire fulfillment of its program. While under such circumstances it is bound vociferously to protest and even vehemently denounce and threaten drastic retaliation, it tacitly accepts the inevitable. In a "checks-and-balance" society, this latter type of behavior is necessary in order to satisfy the masses. On the other hand, labor and party leaders readily understand that the intent of the protest is not as profound as the forceful rhetoric would imply. Even a labor or a socialist government in modern society finds it imperative to consider the total social situation and to modify or deny the trade unions many of their demands.

Numerous examples could be cited illustrating the rapid change after the 1966 election from hostile criticism to fervent praise of the Democratic Party and its administration. In the course of venting its wrath on the Democrats for failure to obtain adoption of "must" legislation and for failure to support adequately measures proposed by labor, the leaders, upon second thought, soon realized that they had permitted their anger to exceed the dictates of long-range policy. Consequently they rapidly reversed their position. A counsel of caution began to emanate from AFL-CIO headquarters and its affiliates urging discontinuance of the vitriolic denunciations for fear of arousing the membership and sympathizers to such an emotional pitch as to cause them to wreck vengeance on the Democratic Party in the 1968 national election. To counteract the previous heated condemnation, the movement undertook to enumerate proudly the various pieces of important legislation enacted during the Johnson administration. Simultaneously the movement launched a complementary campaign lauding the incumbent administration for its ardent championship of desirable pending legislation in Congress.

On the other hand, to contrast the favorable position of the Democrats more firmly, the labor movement avidly began to promote an attack on the Republicans for their generally unfriendly attitude towards needed labor and social legislation. In addition the movement escalated its offensive by accusing the Republicans serving in Congress of irresponsibly attacking the incumbent administration for negligence in correcting the accumulated root problems plaguing the ghettos. The Committee on Political Education of the AFL-CIO issued a warm statement praising the Johnson administration for its conscientious efforts to deal with problems of the poor who populate our slums. COPE charged that while the Republicans had contributed little in the fight against poverty, they audaciously sought to profit politically by falsely blaming the Johnson administration for the rash of violent riots throughout the country. As the 1968 Presidential election approached, the labor movement intensified its pro-Democratic and pro-Johnson political campaign.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE PRESSURE OF PROBLEMS AND FUTURE OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

#### *Problems*

Certain problems of profound interest to labor make it imperative that it should not relax its vigorous political activities. Some of these problems have been, and still are, partially handled through collective bargaining, but there are vital gaps which require government participation. The more salient problems are herewith briefly reviewed.

**Racketeering.** With the aid of such agencies as the AFL-CIO Ethical Practices Committee, the labor movement undertook sincerely to correct the evil of racketeering and had some success, but it soon began to appreciate that because racketeering extends beyond trade union bounds and is a social evil, with powerful underworld organizations controlling it, the committee had neither the required police power nor the necessary machinery to cope adequately with this vexing problem. To deal with it, government power, with its trained investigatory force, judicial machinery and enforcement agencies, would be indispensable. Publicly, through President Meany, it was acknowledged that labor racketeering being an integral part of racketeering at large, was primarily a governmental responsibility. Yet it was recognized that to safeguard

the labor movement against government action which would encroach upon its legitimate activities, labor must sustain itself as a political force.

Automation. Organized labor also struggled with the menacing problem of automation. As a decentralized movement, its individual affiliates, through collective bargaining, were more successful in coping with technological changes than in the attack on racketeering. Arrangements for job protection, severance pay, retraining, and other protective measures were written into many trade agreements. Nevertheless, labor had to admit reluctantly that despite its efforts and despite its dislike for third party intervention in labor-management relations, an overall problem existed, the handling of which exceeded its powers. In order to get the necessary corrective action, the government was called upon by organized labor to participate through its legislative and administrative machinery.

Civil Rights. In the pressing field of civil rights, which vitally affects the solidarity and integrity of the American labor movement, organized labor found itself unable to deal successfully with the problem even though a good deal has been accomplished by individual national unions. Within the movement, the rank and file, some national leaders, and especially many lower-level leaders are strenuously resisting reforms. As a movement governed by autonomy, the powers of the Federation are primarily limited to exhortation. Even national unions with considerable constitutional disciplinary powers over their subordinate units and over individual members were not able to cope with this problem. Again the labor movement was obliged to acknowledge that it alone was not in a position to correct all evils. Therefore, in addition to aligning itself with the civil rights movement, it is relying on governmental intervention.

Effect of Cybernetics on Free Collective Bargaining. With the accelerated introduction of cybernetics, mostly computers, industries which are practically completely automated can continue operating for indefinite periods during strikes with the use of supervisory and other non-striking staff employees. Organized labor has recently encountered this problem in telephone, oil, chemical, and other industries. The unions which are implicated are thus confronted with a challenging dilemma. In order to pressure management for an amicable settlement, withholding the labor of their members is not sufficient. Some unions in desperation have resorted to such distasteful tactics as sabotage and violence, thereby disrupting service and making it so costly that management finds it better to adjust its differences with the involved unions. Where such strategy has aroused public concern, prompted by labor political pressure, key state officials have been moved to intervene. It is indeed conceivable that as such situations multiply even in supercomputerized industries, in order to salvage their organizations and to avoid reliance on undesirable tactics, will turn to some form of government intervention.

#### *Government Intervention in Labor Dispute Settlement*

Compulsory arbitration in its traditional form has generally become outmoded. Under this type of arbitration the common practice is for the government to select an ad hoc board and entrust it with responsibility for designing and imposing on the contending parties an entire award in settlement of all the issues in dispute. This practice completely replaces free collective bargaining, and participation by the contestants is confined to presenting their case in formal hearings.

Gradually an alternative procedure has been introduced for preventing costly labor stoppages in emergency situations in which strategic industries are involved and the national economy as well as the vital interests of major population centers or indeed the general public are affected. In this arrangement, free collective bargaining with the aid of government mediators assumes the chief role in determining the contents

of the prospective agreement. Only when an impasse arises in the course of free collective bargaining does the government impose collective bargaining to finality. In this procedure, an arbitration board is authorized to complete the free collective bargaining negotiations by passing only on the deadlocked issues. However, the board must first undertake to mediate these unsettled issues. Should this initial step fail, the board holds hearings and drafts a tentative award on the basis of testimony presented by all parties involved. The recommendations are then offered to the contestants for consideration. If they are not accepted by both parties, the board is authorized to render a binding award. By this prolonged procedure in which all parties participate, compulsory arbitration is invoked only in the final stages and confined to the unsettled issues.

An example of government intervention in labor dispute settlement occurred in 1963 when labor negotiation deadlocks in the railway industry affected operations of the major railway systems and impelled the federal government to enact emergency legislation imposing limited compulsory arbitration if necessary in its final stages. Confronted by a deadlocked situation, railroad management welcomed government intervention. Business leaders generally and vociferously opposed this practice in accordance with their long-held views. Organized labor ardently denounced the imposition of compulsory arbitration by government, and scholars and professional mediators also expressed concern about this form of government intervention.

In addition to the general opinion that free collective bargaining was threatened, reluctance on the part of a pro-labor administration and sympathetic bipartisan concern in Congress forced crystallization of a meaningful term for this procedure in labor disputes in which arbitration was invoked. The mounting fear and criticism would be allayed by an appropriate term and a lucid explanation of procedure. Consequently, the propitious designation "Mediation and Collective Bargaining to Finality" was coined, with the implication that this method of adjusting deadlocked labor disputes is consonant with free collective bargaining and the assurance that the practice would be applied only in emergency cases.

In our increasingly interdependent society it is becoming apparent that some form of permanent dispute settlement legislation on the federal level is inevitable. Not only is social and economic stability threatened by certain labor stoppages in strategic private industries, but such disputes may affect indispensable federal, state, county and municipal services. Some states have enacted legislation forbidding stoppages in vital government services and imposing, in case of violations, severe penalties for leaders, members and unions. Such punitive, negative legislation does not remedy the evil. Positive legislation providing for mediation and collective bargaining to finality would seem to be the more desirable approach. Unions with members exclusively in federal government employment voluntarily forbid strikes by their members. Supplementary legislation banning such strikes would materially improve labor relations in the federal service. Appearing before a special government Review Board, appointed by the President of the United States, AFL-CIO President George Meany, speaking on behalf of affiliated unions whose members are in government employment, expressed approval of machinery for the adjustment of labor disputes. While he made no specific recommendations, it would seem that he must have had in mind some appropriate form of mediation and collective bargaining to finality.

Government intervention in deadlocked labor-management negotiations might be made a mandatory objective, even in private industry. Leaders in management and labor circles, fearing that limited arbitration may become a permanent feature of government policy, especially for strategic industries and services, are considering a substitute program of voluntary binding arbitration of unresolved issues. The subject, although merely in the discussion stages, has its strong opponents and proponents in both camps. Hopefully some form of voluntary binding arbitration mutually acceptable to both concerned elements will materialize.

The concern that government intervention eventually will encompass most, if not all, of

industry seems unfounded, at least for the foreseeable future. It is evident that neither Congress, the administration, political leaders, nor the sophisticated public are happy even with the present limited intervention, particularly in private industry. On the other hand, it is reluctantly recognized that some intervention is unavoidable although it may not be necessary to invoke it frequently if both labor and management avoid such intervention by resort when necessary to voluntary binding arbitration. In that event, the very threat of government intervention may render an inestimable public service by inducing labor and management to intensify their efforts to dispose of their own difficulties.

Notwithstanding the traditional and emotional opposition of labor to third party intervention, the labor movement has successfully and without undue harm to its objectives adapted itself to changing conditions. It has not generally pursued an absolutist policy, and may therefore bow to the need of a mild form of compulsory arbitration in certain industries. Nor will the public disapprove. Historically, the public has frequently clamored for government interposition in regulating public utilities, and even private businesses, when consumers have been powerless to cope with these situations on their own. Nevertheless neither business nor labor has suffered substantially, if at all, from reasonable government regulation. Opposition and vague philosophic arguments as to the danger of giving government undue power over individual and group freedoms must be carefully sifted and examined. The delicate balance between authority and freedom cannot in our modern society be maintained on eighteenth century absolutist principles. Contemporary situations must be thoroughly examined as they are conditioned by reality, that is, as they affect the fortunes of a viable and wholesome society.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### IDEOLOGICAL METAMORPHOSIS IN RETROSPECT

With the maturing of the ideology of welfare state-social unionism, the American labor movement broadened its scope as a participant in old and new economic and social areas. The expansion of activity and assumption of additional responsibilities have been discussed in the foregoing chapters. Here the more significant features are reviewed.

#### *Political Action Reexamined*

As organized labor became interested in broader social and economic matters, it pragmatically elevated non-partisan political action to a major function, on a parity with trade union and collective bargaining action. Nevertheless, the political action branch does not operate independently, as it does in European and other countries. On the contrary, it is a prime auxiliary of trade union organization. However, it is directed by a separate specialized personnel. In the conduct of its activities it aids the trade union branch where possible, and the former assists the political unit in the same manner. Interchange of personnel frequently occurs, but the functions of the two branches are distinctly defined although the constitutional structure remains as originally devised for unions operating in the industrial field. This provision gives the trade union function priority. There are still some in key positions in the movement who are skeptical or at least ambivalent about the latest development which places comprehensive political action on a parity with trade union activity, but they are a vanishing breed. It can hardly be questioned that the movement is irrevocably and enthusiastically committed to welfare statism and its significant derivative, social unionism. This ideology dictates the need for large-scale political action conducted as a basic labor function through

separate machinery managed by experienced personnel devoting its full time to the enterprise as specialists in this field. The most cursory perusal of official labor publications, union convention proceedings, and reports of talks of labor leaders reported in the press reveal the sincere commitment of the movement to extensive and intensive political action in all its phases, stimulating voter registration and voting, conducting educational and propaganda work, participating in election campaigns, and employing trained and experienced lobbyists. The AFL-CIO supports a permanent Committee of Political Education (COPE) and a Legislative Department and so do most national unions, state and local bodies. These units are amply financed and ably staffed. The staffs of the subordinate and affiliated units are effectively synchronized to cooperate intimately with COPE.

With the new responsibilities that the government is forced to undertake to advance the public interest, other interest groups are also impelled to take a positive involvement in politics. Previously their interest was as casual as that of labor. In the early industrial history of the United States employers were forced to imitate their workers who organized into unions by countering with their own regional and national organizations to confront unions jointly. Since organized labor embarked on comprehensive and formalized political action, business interests have found it advisable to strengthen their political power and influence by banding together to promote political action and political education. The United States Chamber of Commerce and its state branches are rapidly imitating organized labor. The National Association of Manufacturers, which has been politically active for a long time, is enlarging its activities. Specialized business and employers' associations have launched formal political branches. Indeed, large business enterprises and individual firms are encouraging their junior executives to interest themselves in political affairs, even to the extent of running for office. These activities are intimately meshed with the enlarged lobbying staffs of business interests. Similarly, business enterprise is realizing that it, too, must keep in the mainstream of community life by conducting various non-partisan political and social activities. Even professional organizations are learning that government intervention is beginning to affect their members vitally. Outstanding among them is the American Medical Association. Concerned over the strong sentiment for and adoption of legislation popularly known as "Medicare," which it strenuously opposed, it founded the American Medical Committee of Political Education (AMA-COPE). Having failed in forestalling this legislation, it is continuing its activities in the faint hope of securing repeal or preventing enlargement of the program and simultaneously safeguarding the interests of its constituents. In a pluralistic, democratic society with the government steadily expanding its social and economic role, it is both desirable and inevitable that interest groups will organize supplementary political auxiliaries and pressure agencies.

### *Expanded Social Unionism*

In its early history the bulk of the labor movement was avidly dedicated to the transformation of society. Unimportant remnants of these tendencies within the movement, promoted mostly by romantic and unreflective idealists, persist to the present. On the other hand, a minority faction still regards it as inadvisable for the movement to concern itself with broader social and economic problems. As the general movement gained experience and acquired substance, it began pragmatically to assume a social responsibility beyond the originally circumscribed trade union areas. At present, guided by its social unionism philosophy, it consciously and systematically strives to fulfill these objectives by taking an interest in all basic problems confronting the country and the world from civil rights to foreign aid, from the war on poverty to international security, from education to cold war politics, from medicare to the United Nations and its special agencies.

Since the beginning of the New Deal/Welfare State era, the AFL has been articulating a broad economic and social program closely related to the progressive thinking of the dominant groups in American

Society. The CIO, as a new and pioneering group, was first a dissident faction and then a rival organization. From its inception it subscribed to the welfare state-social unionism ideology. With the merger of the AFL and CIO in 1955, the combined group unequivocally embraced welfare state-social unionism and intensified efforts to multiply and enlarge what became popularly referred to as fringe benefits via the collective bargaining route. Politically, through COPE, it assiduously champions state and federal legislation to establish and improve such programs as those for minimum wages, social security, health and hospital care, supplemental unemployment benefits, guaranteed annual wages, civil rights, housing and other social welfare measures. Some of these activities are conducted and otherwise guided through its Department of Civil Rights and Department of Community Services. These activities are followed up by the Legislative Department whose representatives are in daily contact with members of Congress and regularly testify on major legislative measures, including political issues, before Congressional committees. In the international field the AFL-CIO is constantly supporting foreign aid to rehabilitate war-devastated and underdeveloped countries. It also takes a firm position on foreign policy and is interested in supporting and participating in the free world international labor movement. Its Department of International Affairs serves the AFL-CIO in focusing and guiding these international activities.

Thus social unionism exercises an impact on American society through collective bargaining, political action, and a variety of social activities. Many of the social gains not originally regarded as related to collective bargaining, such as fringe benefits, now are attained by the unions through collective bargaining procedures. Similar and additional gains have been achieved with the aid of allies through extensive and assiduous political action. In short, social unionism implies that a mature labor movement assumes widespread social interests and responsibilities as a corollary to those of union recognition and collective bargaining. As a responsible social instrument, the labor movement now participates in shaping and managing the destiny of the entire society, both national and international.

### *Internal Conflicts*

While near unanimity prevails within the movement with respect to ideology, differences nevertheless exist. Disagreements over strategy and the relative importance to be attached to certain policies constantly arise. These dissents are further aggravated by personality clashes and power ambitions. Infighting is as endemic in the labor movement as it is in other social groups.

Current conflicts center around the strategic course the movement should pursue within the international labor movement. Disagreement is raging with regard to the position the movement is taking toward the activities and policies of government in the international field on the following issues: the relative desirability of a generous or a cautious attitude toward relations with Communist countries and Communist movements; the unconditional admittance of Communist China to membership in the United Nations; suspicion of intentions in connection with the Russian offer of peaceful coexistence; the question whether unions in Communist countries are free rather than government administrative appendages; the matter of undue unilateral concessions to Communist countries, with critical examination of the consequences; the question of the proper attitude, whether friendly or otherwise, towards authoritarian and military governments. All such issues, vital as they are, do not have sufficient impact to threaten the unity of the labor movement.

Similarly, differences over domestic issues scarcely threaten internal stability. Since the movement is not a monolithic one, criticism and disagreements are generally aired publicly. The less observant and those bent on weakening the movement, whether enemies, so-called friends, or merely sensationally inclined, are enthusiastically hoping for a clear break. Knowledgeable persons consider such dissensions in viable mass movements as desirable and not seriously threatening to their unity. Quarrels of this nature are less

harmful than exhibitionist calisthenics. Moreover, the serious Communist threat to the movement in the immediate post-World War II period has dwindled to insignificant proportions. Extremism of the left or right has little prospect of seriously challenging the unity of the movement in the foreseeable future. Moreover, any extremist group must contend with the fact that only a negligible number of Americans question the wisdom of welfare state-social unionism as the established ideology of the labor movement.

### *Union Membership Attitudes*

In spite of general ideological agreement, the labor movement has been confronted with a crescendo of criticism. It is charged that the movement is hopelessly in the doldrums, is eroding and tending towards obsolescence. It is also suggested that the leaders are aged, inept and visionless. Consequently, an unbridgeable gap seems to be widening between leaders and rank and file. Concerned and disappointed by the unfavorable outcome of the midterm 1966 elections and alarmed by critics who warned that the labor movement is deteriorating, labor leaders initiated a quantitative study. In the past, objective evaluations of union membership attitudes have been based on qualitative observations interlarded with casual data for illustrative purposes. For the first time in the history of the American labor movement, quantitative scientifically gathered data are available which measure, by percentage, members' outlook towards their leaders, union, and the salient economic and social issues supported by the movement.

Study findings undermine some of the criticism. For example, wild charges based on a few scattered instances contend that workers' earnings are exorbitant. This study reveals that 32 percent of union families interviewed fall within the \$5,000 to \$7,500 range, and 46 percent come within the \$7,500 to \$15,000 annual income bracket. In such cases these figures include earnings of wife or offspring or both. Such family incomes hardly can be regarded as excessive in our affluent society.

By large majorities, union members supported national issues endorsed by the labor movement in recent years. Thus medicare received 74 percent approval, and expansion of the scope of workmen's compensation was endorsed by 76 percent. For expanded federal aid to education the support was somewhat lower, only 67 percent. The proposal to increase the minimum wage, which could not directly affect union members, received 71 percent approval. It is therefore evident that the vast majority of union members are social reform minded, regardless of whether they are directly benefited.

With reference to one isolated issue, the pressing and highly inflammable problem of civil rights, practically half of those surveyed differed with the official policy. While most of those voting approved general civil rights and public accommodations programs, support for open housing legislation was slightly under 50 percent. This phenomenal aberration is chiefly explained by the fact that some 50 percent of union members are home owners. This attitude is best understood in the light of an analysis of age and habitat distribution of union members. Gaps are evident here, but they are not of threatening proportions. Twenty-five percent of union members are less than 30 years old. Nearly 50 percent are less than 40. Close to 50 percent of the members live in suburbs and are usually commuters. Home ownership is largely confined to these members. A fair number of wage earners live either on the outskirts of urban areas or in areas where home ownership is common. An imperative interest of this group of householders is protection of their major investment.

Another characteristic especially manifest in the case of suburban and younger members is the attention directed to local and community issues affecting the welfare of their families. These groups are concerned especially with local tax assessments, zoning, street repairs, sewage and garbage disposal, transportation and school bond issues. With children in school and nearing or in college, education is important.

Members in their forties and fifties stressed education as particularly important, including federal aid to education. By way of contrast, younger members differ with their elders on the importance of other social welfare issues. Thus medicare gets 78 percent from members 50 and over, 75 percent from members in their forties, and 70 percent from members under 30. It would seem that this problem is not likely to concern the younger members in the immediate future. Education may loom more importantly before the younger members. The larger proportion have had some high school education, and a considerable number are high school graduates. A fair number have attended college, and a still smaller number are college graduates. Considering these increases in education, which compare favorably with those received generally by the lower middle class, it is clear that the American wage earner has been elevated to a middle class status.

Wage increases and relatively steady incomes enable wage earners to own automobiles, television sets, and even to make other similar investments, such as furnishing and making their homes more comfortable and attractive. Fringe benefits and social security not only reduce concern for old age and survivorship but reduce the costs of health maintenance. Consequently, the worker and his family are able to enjoy their increased leisure time, lengthened by vacation time and reductions in hours of work. By and large, with the exception of pockets of deplorable unemployment and poverty, the average worker now has a variety of vested interests protected by his union and by government. He is no longer a propertyless wage earner. He is thinking and acting as behooves those with middle class status. An increasing number, especially those approaching the \$15,000 family income bracket, now find themselves on the border between the lower and higher middle class.

This middle class outlook of the younger, suburban, higher income members does not mean necessarily that they have shed their liberal views or their loyalty to their union and the labor movement. To be sure, their votes of approval of basic social reform programs, such as medicare, are not as high as those for local and other general issues bearing immediately on their welfare. It is merely that for the present they are preoccupied by issues which affect them more intimately. Absorbed in raising families and getting adjusted to their newly-found social status, they opt for such reforms as will bolster immediate objectives. That the younger members retain their progressive outlook as do their older colleagues and leaders is best attested by their political party allegiance. Of those interviewed, 58 percent identified themselves as Democrats, only 16 percent as Republicans, 17 percent as independents and 9 percent as uncertain. A residential and education gap exists between the older and younger members, but it is not of an unbridgeable nature. To relate this gap to the larger generational gap in our society is erroneous. The latter gap spans groups of teenagers, adolescents and young adults. These groups are alienated from society and are motivated by a negative outlook. The younger suburban union members are more mature, possess a constructive social approach, and take their responsibilities more seriously. They are raising families, own homes or aspire to own them, and have other vested interests, such as seniority rights, fringe benefits, prospects of promotion, and some savings so that they are interested in conserving and improving the present social order.

At first glance it would appear from the survey data that union members lack strong union attachment, are but casually concerned with union affairs, and do not rely upon their leaders for guidance. From their expressions of greater interest in local and national matters unrelated to union affairs, the impression is conveyed that younger and suburban members regard their unions as less important. For example, in regard to such exclusively trade union issues as repeal of Taft-Hartley Section 14(b), which permits states to forbid the union shop and checkoff of dues, only 54 percent agreed to such prohibition, 23 percent disagreed, and 23 percent were uncertain. However, support for repeal of Section 14(b) was strongest where awareness of the "right to work" issue was highest. In states with "open shop" laws and where the labor movement made this a live issue, union members overwhelmingly want Section 14(b) repealed. This seems to indicate a serious gap in communication between leadership and the rank and file rather than a flagging interest in the welfare of the union. Other data even more firmly convey the impression that union members are sincerely

concerned with their unions and their progress. When asked to name organizations to which they belong and to enumerate the chief activities in which union members participate, a substantial number named the union third or fourth; but 64 percent immediately mentioned union membership when asked to list affiliations with public, private, church or job-related organizations. All those questioned answered affirmatively when asked directly whether they were union members. Twenty percent reported attending every local union meeting, a remarkably good figure when compared with attendance at sessions of fraternal, church and other organizations. Another 14 percent acknowledged quite frequent attendance, but 36 percent attended rarely. Paradoxically, members under 30 years of age rate higher in regular attendance. At the same time, this age group also accounts for the largest percentage rarely attending meetings.

A majority of union members regarded union channels as helpful and reliable sources of information. A majority of 64 percent said that they read their publication "a lot," and President George Meany rated high as a helpful source of information. The highest readership was recorded among members 50 and older, 77 percent of whom said they pay "a lot" of attention to their union publications. This hiatus between older and younger members is understandable in that older members are likely to be less active in their free time than the younger members. The latter usually would be engaged in social, athletic, and miscellaneous activities. It is clear that despite overwhelming competition with mass information media members still look to union sources as helpful providers of information.

Critics have concluded from these figures that members waver in their loyalty to and interest in their union, but figures alone are not adequate for such generalizations. Critics and detractors of the movement fail to realize that union members, in common with those in other walks of life, participate in a variety of associations, interests and activities. Only a minor number of members permit their life to center entirely or mostly around the union. Their interests and social activities generally are closer to them since they are of a continuing kind, usually involving the family. These contacts are bound to consume most of the free time of workers, as they do of others; but other evidence indicates that members appreciate and value the services their union renders in promoting and protecting their interests as workers and as citizens. When a crisis occurs, union members respond rapidly and earnestly although not always wisely. When a new agreement is being negotiated which will be submitted to the members for consultation and a vote of approval, the membership manifests a keen interest, and attendance at union meetings swells to such high proportions that the regular meeting place cannot accommodate the crowd. A large auditorium is often rented for this momentous occasion. Emotional debates, frequently volatile in nature, dissect the merits of particular issues or question the entire proposed agreement and usually prolong the sessions beyond the time set for the meeting. Secret votes on acceptance or rejection of the proposed agreement register an extraordinarily high participation. Similarly in case of a strike the turnout is practically unanimous, and its prolongation rarely diminishes the ardor of the strikers and non-striking members. It is such manifestations that more accurately gauge membership loyalty and devotion to the union, that is, union consciousness.

The need for an intensive and meaningful educational program is made evident by other findings of the survey. Some 25 percent of the members are virtually newcomers. They have been members for five years or less. In all, 54 percent had belonged to unions for ten years or more. An additional phenomenon similar to what the country at large is experiencing is that the labor movement is increasingly becoming a youth movement. Labor history and folklore are largely unknown to many young union members. They are unacquainted with the early struggle and costly sacrifices of their predecessors who built the movement against almost unsurmountable odds when public opinion and public authorities sided with the recalcitrant employers in countenancing disregard of civil and other constitutional rights and there was violent suppression of workers' efforts to found unions and conduct legitimate organizational activities. The majority of union members are not conversant with the vicious resistance of employers in the thirties when the bulk of the present movement was established. Only a small percentage of union members actually experienced the

trials and tribulations incident to winning union recognition, and only a few experienced or recall the sufferings during the depression of the early thirties.

The formidable achievements of the older union leaders and members are taken for granted since most contemporary unionists became union members after the labor movement had become relatively firmly established, enjoying fairly amicable relations with management, and participating in the life of the nation as a responsible and constructive social force. It follows that most of the members lack the emotional attachment that enhances and solidifies human association. Broad and enlightening communication is imperative for development of this more profound and more intimate sense of belonging. From even cursory observation it is evident that the movement is aware of this need and is increasingly and assiduously addressing itself to promoting its previous casual educational efforts and to making them a major trade union activity. Only a sustained and ably directed educational program will close this hiatus. (A comprehensive analysis of the survey of union members attitudes has been presented by AFL-CIO COPE Director, Alexander E. Barkan, in the August 1967 issue of *The American Federationist*, official monthly AFL-CIO publication. A condensed version can be found in the informative *John Herling's Labor Letter* for July 15, 1967.)

#### *A Pragmatic Course Better Than "Pure and Simple" Idealism*

It is evident from the foregoing chapters of this historical analysis that ideologically the American labor movement has moved through various stages. Dissenting groups have always existed and they have influenced the character of the movement both negatively and positively. Through conflict and experience in a rapidly changing social order, ideologies were hammered out by opposing groups. The survivors were those who pursued a pragmatic course, empirically dictated by social realities. Low income and other underprivileged workers, like those better situated, may be temporarily seduced by the siren song of perfectionist ideologies and even by extremist action. As soon as they realize that these are utopian dreams, they adhere instead to movements pursuing practical results of an achievable nature.

In the United States the labor movement functions through one basic institution, the trade union. In most democratic, Western European countries, the movement consists of several separately functioning institutions. The two major ones are the trade union federations and the separate political parties. In some countries the cooperative movement also is intimately associated with the other two, likewise retaining its separate organizational entity. Generally all of the elements collaborate in advancing the fortunes of the entire movement. It is common practice for the different bodies to operate through interlocking governing boards, each functional group being represented on these boards by officially designated individuals.

In the United States it has become traditional for trade union federations to control the other organized activities identified with the labor movement. With some exceptions, the national unions and other affiliates pursue a similar practice. This arrangement seems to have served the needs of the movement in this country. Therefore, not only do American unions devote their attention to basic trade union functions but they are no less interested in all of the activities, political, educational, cultural, that a full-fledged labor movement requires in order fully to promote and protect the interests of its followers both as wage earners and as citizens.

As the welfare state ideology implies, American organized labor is not class-conscious in the sense that its ultimate objective is the abolition of the capitalistic social order. On the contrary, the American labor movement is labor-conscious in that, as a functional social group, it is dedicated to promotion of the interests of labor, to improve working and living conditions and to advance other aspirations of labor. It is the firm conviction of organized labor that with the aid of government intervention its ideals can be achieved

within the existing social order. The dominant labor movements in most highly developed industrial countries are veering towards a similar objective. Because of traditional practice and in order not unduly to upset the indoctrinated masses by discarding folklore, the old slogans instead of being discarded are subtly given new meanings.

Generally, the American labor movement's social and economic program differs only in detail from the programs of the Socialist and Labor parties in the most advanced industrial nations, especially those of Western Europe and Australasia. The significant difference is that the movements in these other nations operate in varying degrees within mixed economies. Because they recognize the need in a modern society for a substantial "private sector," they endorse a welfare state mixed economy social order. While subscribing in principle to the dogma of nationalization, these countries regard it more important to attain their objective of "social justice," that is, the equal distribution of wealth, by exercising their political power through fiscal and taxation policies. Thus, a welfare state with a mixed economy is subtly treated as Socialism. On the contrary, the American labor movement fully accepts private enterprise and does not consider nationalization, except in isolated instances, to be a vital policy for the promotion of its objectives. There is also a difference in the manner of implementing such comprehensive social and economic programs. As pointed out above, whereas the other movements operate through separate political parties, the American movement finds it more practical to pursue the non-partisan political course controlled and directed by the trade union movement as a significant auxiliary.

#### *Consensus Practices and Limitations in a Pragmatic Labor Movement*


Revolutionary radicalism of all varieties has vanished as a mass movement, and the non-radical or reformist movement has grown into a powerful and influential social institution. Achievement of such reformist goals is now the ideological objective of the American labor movement. With the aid of government the movement has made historical strides of a permanent nature. As a thoughtful collaborator in society, a considerable consensus has emerged between it and other social forces. The composition of special government commissions and their various reports underlines this new development. In the area of labor relations the same thing is evident. As social groups mature in a pluralistic democracy, consensus is becoming more common. Rarely do differences erupt in open conflict or get beyond control. Still, friction and occasional labor-management conflict do occur, and at times critical situations arise wherein reconciliation is forestalled. The impasse may be due to genuine or imaginary causes and impatience and emotionalism temporarily supersede reason. In such cases, it is imperative for a third party to intervene in order to avoid or lessen prolonged and destructive conflict. As our social order becomes more delicately interdependent, it often becomes essential for the government to intervene, guiding the contending parties to an adjustment of their differences.

Labor, although a moderate movement, still is suffering from a public image of undue voraciousness and characteristics antithetical to social progress. It is consciously concerned with erasing that misconception by proving that it is functioning honorably in the mainstream of American life. Recalling its trials and tribulations to attain status, it anxiously strives to avoid antagonistic conduct. It desires to present an image of constructive devotion to social objectives and the better service of its followers and has seriously embarked on social unionism; articulation of its interest in community life; support of education, social services, civil rights, social reform, cultural activities, and other desirable social, economic and humanistic projects. In order to promote its new objectives, it has supported and financed a growing program to educate its members. While effectively advancing its newly-chosen role of welfare state-social unionism, it is also intensifying its trade union and collective bargaining activities, being solicitous not to subordinate the latter to the newly-adopted program. A reasonable testing of new ideas is imperative to ensure that such a program

functions effectively and to achieve practical and generally acceptable solutions, which are likely to be marked by some measure of sensible compromise. Pragmatic social programs, although resorting to hyperbole and emotionalism in their propaganda, should be free of romantic or extremist elements. Otherwise progress is not advanced. Historically the American labor movement has steadfastly endeavored to follow this path.

## APPENDIX A.

### UNILATERAL REGULATION OF WORKING CONDITIONS BY A GROUP OF HANDICRAFTSMEN

# **RULES**

TO

# **REGULATE THE WORK**

OF THE


## **JOURNEYMEN SHIPWRIGHTS JOINERS CAULKERS AND MAST MAKERS OF PHILADELPHIA**

The Journeymen, Shipwrights, Joiners, Caulkers and Mast Makers, deeming it proper as Citizens and Freemen, to regulate the hours in which they are to Labour, reasonably and more consistent with the Constitution of Man---propose the following Rules, by which they are willing to be governed, and which shall be all the year regulated by the ringing of the mechanics Union Bell.

In May, June, July & August, we will begin work at Sunrise and leave off at 6 o'clock, p.m.reserving one hour for breakfast and two for dinner.

In December, January and February, we will get breakfast before going to work. begin work at 45 minutes after Sunrise, reserving one hour for dinner, and work untill Sunset.

The remainder of the year from Sun to Sun, reserving one hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner.

 The hour for dinner 12 o'clock, the year round, September 4th., 1830

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*Mystic Seaport Press Printers*

## APPENDIX B.

### PREAMBLE TO CONSTITUTION, INDUSTRIAL BROTHERHOOD (1878)\*

#### Preamble

The recent alarming development and aggression of aggregated wealth, which, unless checked, will invariably lead to the pauperization and hopeless degradation of the toiling masses, render it imperative, if we desire to enjoy the blessings of life, that a check should be placed upon its power and upon unjust accumulation, and a system adopted which will secure to the laborer the fruits of his toil; and as this much-desired object can only be accomplished by the thorough unification of labor, and the united efforts of those who obey the divine injunction that "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," we have formed the \* \* \* \* \* with a view of securing the organization and direction, by co-operative effort, of the power of the industrial classes; and we submit to the world the objects sought to be accomplished by our organization, calling upon all who believe in securing "the greatest good to the greatest number" to aid and assist us:--

I. To bring within the folds of organization every department of productive industry, making knowledge a stand-point for action, and industrial and moral worth, not wealth, the true standard of individual and national greatness.

II. To secure to the toilers a proper share of the wealth that they create; more of the leisure that rightfully belongs to them; more societal advantages; more of the benefits, privileges, and emoluments of the world; in a word, all those rights and privileges necessary to make them capable of enjoying, appreciating, defending, and

perpetuating the blessings of good government.

III. To arrive at the true condition of the producing masses in their educational, moral, and financial condition, by demanding from the various governments the establishment of bureaus of Labor Statistics.

IV. The establishment of co-operative institutions, productive and distributive.

V. The reserving of the public lands--the heritage of the people--for the actual settler;--not another acre for railroads or speculators.

VI. The abrogation of all laws that do not bear equally upon capital and labor, the removal of unjust technicalities, delays, and discriminations in the administration of justice, and the adopting of measures providing for the health and safety of those engaged in mining, manufacturing, or building pursuits.

VII. The enactment of laws to compel chartered corporations to pay their employes weekly, in full, for labor performed during the preceding week, in the lawful money of the country.

VIII. The enactment of laws giving mechanics and laborers a first lien on their work for their full wages.

IX. The abolishment of the contract system on national, State, and municipal work.

X. The substitution of arbitration for strikes,

\*Terence V. Powderly, *Thirty Years of Labor, 1859-1889* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1967).

whenever and wherever employers and employes are willing to meet on equitable grounds.

XI. The prohibition of the employment of children in workshops, mines and factories before attaining their fourteenth year.

XII. To abolish the system of letting out by contract the labor of convicts in our prisons and reformatory institutions.

XIII. To secure for both sexes equal pay for equal work.

XIV. The reduction of the hours of labor to eight per day, so that the laborers may have more time for social enjoyment and intellectual improvement, and be enabled to reap the advantages conferred by the labor-saving machinery which their brains have created.

XV. To prevail upon governments to establish a purely national circulating medium, based upon the faith and resources of the nation, and issued directly to the people, without the intervention of any system of banking corporations, which money shall be a legal tender in payment of all debts, public or private.

## APPENDIX C.

### PREAMBLE TO CONSTITUTION, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR (1886)\*

#### Preamble

WHEREAS, A struggle is going on in all the nations of the civilized world between the oppressors and the oppressed of all countries, a struggle between the capitalist and the laborer, which grows in intensity from year to year, and will work disastrous results to the toiling millions if they are not combined for mutual protection and benefit;

It, therefore, behooves the representatives of the trade and labor unions of America, in convention assembled, to adopt such measures and disseminate such principles among the mechanics and laborers of our country as will permanently unite them to secure the recognition of rights to which they are justly entitled.

We, therefore, declare ourselves in favor of the formation of a thorough federation, embracing every trade and labor organization in America, organized under the trade union system.

\**American Federation of Labor, History, Encyclopedia and Reference Book* (Wash., D. C.: AFL-CIO, 1960).

## APPENDIX D.

### 1912 CONVENTION PLANKS\*

#### Democratic Platform of 1912

We, the representatives of the Democratic party of the United States, in national convention assembled, reaffirm our devotion to the principles of Democratic government formulated by Thomas Jefferson and enforced by a long and illustrious line of Democratic Presidents.

#### TARIFF REFORM

We declare it to be a fundamental principle of the Democratic party that the Federal government, under the Constitution, has no right or power to impose or collect tariff duties, except for the purpose of revenue, and we demand that the collection of such taxes shall be limited to the necessities of government honestly and economically administered.

The high Republican tariff is the principal cause of the unequal distribution of wealth; it is a system of taxation which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer; under its operations the American farmer and laboring man are the chief sufferers; it raises the cost of the necessities of life to them, but does not protect their product or wages. The farmer sells largely in free markets and buys almost entirely in the protected markets. In the most highly protected industries, such as cotton and wool, steel and iron, the wages of the laborers are the lowest paid in any of our industries. We denounce the Republican pretence on that subject and assert that American wages are established by competitive conditions, and not by the tariff.

We favor the immediate downward revision of the existing high and in many cases prohibitive tariff duties, insisting that material reductions be speedily made upon the necessities of life. Articles entering into competition with trust-controlled products and articles of American manufacture which are sold abroad more cheaply than at home should be put upon the free list.

We recognize that our system of tariff taxation is intimately connected with the business of the country, and we favor the ultimate attainment of the principles we advocate by legislation that will not injure or destroy legitimate industry.

We denounce the action of President Taft in vetoing the bills to reduce the tariff in the cotton, woolen, metals, and chemical schedules and the Farmers' free bill, all of which were designed to give immediate relief to the masses from the exactions of the trusts.

The Republican party, while promising tariff revision, has shown by its tariff legislation that such revision is not to be in the people's interest, and having been faithless to its pledges of 1908, it should not longer enjoy the confidence of the nation. We appeal to the American people to support us in our demand for a tariff for revenue only.

\*Kirk H. Porter and Donald B. Johnson, *National Party Platforms, 1840-1956* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956).

## HIGH COST OF LIVING

The high cost of living is a serious problem in every American home. The Republican party, in its platform, attempts to escape from responsibility for present conditions by denying that they are due to a protective tariff. We take issue with them on this subject, and charge that excessive prices result in a large measure from the high tariff laws enacted and maintained by the Republican party and from trusts and commercial conspiracies fostered and encouraged by such laws, and we assert that no substantial relief can be secured for the people until import duties on the necessities of life are materially reduced and these criminal conspiracies broken up.

## ANTI-TRUST LAW

A private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable. We therefore favor the vigorous enforcement of the criminal as well as the civil law against trusts and trust officials, and demand the enactment of such additional legislation as may be necessary to make it impossible for a private monopoly to exist in the United States.

We favor the declaration by law of the conditions upon which corporations shall be permitted to engage in interstate trade, including, among others, the prevention of holding companies, of interlocking directors, of stock watering, of discrimination in price, and the control by any one corporation of so large a proportion of any industry as to make it a menace to competitive conditions.

We condemn the action of the Republican administration in compromising with the Standard Oil Company and the tobacco trust and its failure to invoke the criminal provisions of the anti-trust law against the officers of those corporations after the court had declared that from the undisputed facts in the record they had violated the criminal provisions of the law.

We regret that the Sherman anti-trust law has received a judicial construction depriving it of much of its efficiency and we favor the enactment of legislation which will restore to the statute the strength of which it has been deprived by such interpretation.

## RIGHTS OF THE STATES

We believe in the preservation and maintenance in their full strength and integrity of the three co-ordinate branches of the Federal government—the executive, the legislative, and the judicial—each keeping within its own bounds and not encroaching upon the just powers of either of the others.

Believing that the most efficient results under our system of government are to be attained by the full exercise by the States of their reserved sovereign powers, we denounce as usurpation the efforts of our opponents to deprive the States of any of the rights reserved to them, and to enlarge and magnify by indirection the powers of the Federal government.

We insist upon the full exercise of all the powers of the Government, both State and national, to protect the people from injustice at the hands of those who seek to make the government a private asset in business. There is no twilight zone between the nation and the State in which exploiting interests can take refuge from both. It is as necessary that the Federal government shall exercise the powers delegated to it as it is that the States shall exercise the powers reserved to them, but we insist that Federal remedies for the regulation of interstate commerce and for the prevention of private monopoly, shall be added to, and not substituted for State remedies.

## INCOME TAX AND POPULAR ELECTION OF SENATORS

We congratulate the country upon the triumph of two important reforms demanded in the last national platform, namely, the amendment of the Federal Constitution authorizing an income tax, and the amendment providing for the popular election of senators, and we call upon the people of all the States to rally to the support of the pending propositions and secure their ratification.

We note with gratification the unanimous sentiment in favor of publicity, before the election, of campaign contributions—a measure demanded in our national platform of 1908, and at that time opposed by the Republican party—and we commend the Democratic House of Representatives for extending the doctrine of publicity to recommendations, verbal and written, upon which presidential appointments are made, to the ownership and control of newspapers, and to the expenditures made by and in behalf of those who aspire to presidential nominations, and we point for additional justification for this legislation to the enormous expenditures of money in behalf of the President and his predecessor in the recent contest for the Republican nomination for President.

## PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

The movement toward more popular government should be promoted through legislation in each State which will permit the expression of the preference of the electors for national candidates at presidential primaries.

We direct that the National Committee incorporate in the call for the next nominating convention a requirement that all expressions of preference for Presidential candidates shall be given and the selection of delegates and alternates made through a primary election conducted by the party organization in each State where such expression and election are not provided for by State law. Committeemen who are hereafter to constitute the membership of the Democratic National Committee, and whose election is not provided for by law, shall be chosen in each State at such primary elections, and the service and authority of committeemen, however chosen, shall begin immediately upon the receipt of their credentials, respectively.

## CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

We pledge the Democratic party to the enactment of a law prohibiting any corporation from contributing to a campaign fund and any individual from contributing any amount above a reasonable maximum.

## TERM OF PRESIDENT

We favor a single Presidential term, and to that end urge the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution making the President of the United States ineligible to reelection, and we pledge the candidates of this Convention to this principle.

## DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS

At this time, when the Republican party, after a generation of unlimited power in its control of the Federal Government, is rent into factions, it is opportune to point to the record of accomplishment of the Democratic House of Representatives in the Sixty-second Congress. We indorse its action and we challenge comparison of its record with that of any Congress which has been controlled by our opponents.

We call the attention of the patriotic citizens of our country to its record of efficiency, economy and constructive legislation.

It has, among other achievements, revised the rules of the House of Representatives so as to give to the Representatives of the American people freedom of speech and of action in advocating, proposing and perfecting remedial legislation.

It has passed bills for the relief of the people and the development of our country; it has endeavored to revise the tariff taxes downward in the interest of the consuming masses and thus to reduce the high cost of living.

It has proposed an amendment to the Federal Constitution providing for the election of United States Senators by the direct vote of the people.

It has secured the admission of Arizona and New Mexico as two sovereign States.

It has required the publicity of campaign expenses both before and after election and fixed a limit upon the election expenses of United States Senators and Representatives.

It has passed a bill to prevent the abuse of the writ of injunction.

It has passed a law establishing an eight hour day for workmen on all national public work.

It has passed a resolution which forced the President to take immediate steps to abrogate the Russian treaty.

And it has passed the great supply bills which lessen waste and extravagance, and which reduce the annual expenses of the government by many millions of dollars.

We approve the measure reported by the Democratic leaders in the House of Representatives for the creation of a council of national defence, which will determine a definite naval program with a view to increased efficiency and economy.

The party that proclaimed and has always enforced the Monroe Doctrine, and was sponsor for the new navy, will continue faithfully to observe the constitutional requirements to provide and maintain an adequate and well-proportioned navy sufficient to defend American policies, protect our citizens and uphold the honor and dignity of the nation.

#### REPUBLICAN EXTRAVAGANCE

We denounce the profligate waste of the money wrung from the people by oppressive taxation through the lavish appropriations of recent Republican Congresses, which have kept taxes high and reduced the purchasing power of the people's toil. We demand a return to that simplicity and economy which befits a Democratic government and a reduction in the number of useless offices, the salaries of which drain the substance of the people.

#### RAILROADS, EXPRESS COMPANIES, TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE LINES

We favor the efficient supervision and rate regulation of railroads, express companies, telegraph

and telephone lines engaged in interstate commerce. To this end we recommend the valuation of railroads, express companies, telegraph and telephone lines by the Interstate Commerce Commission, such valuation to take into consideration the physical value of the property, the original cost, the cost of reproduction, and any element of value that will render the valuation fair and just.

We favor such legislation as will effectually prohibit the railroads, express, telegraph and telephone companies from engaging in business which brings them into competition with their shippers or patrons; also legislation preventing the overissue of stocks and bonds by interstate railroads, express companies, telegraph and telephone lines, and legislation which will assure such reduction in transportation rates as conditions will permit, care being taken to avoid reduction that would compel a reduction of wages, prevent adequate service, or do injustice to legitimate investments.

#### BANKING LEGISLATION

We oppose the so-called Aldrich bill or the establishment of a central bank; and we believe our country will be largely freed from panics and consequent unemployment and business depression by such a systematic revision of our banking laws as will render temporary relief in localities where such relief is needed, with protection from control of dominion by what is known as the money trust.

Banks exist for the accommodation of the public, and not for the control of business. All legislation on the subject of banking and currency should have for its purpose the securing of these accommodations on terms of absolute security to the public and of complete protection from the misuse of the power that wealth gives to those who possess it.

We condemn the present methods of depositing government funds in a few favored banks, largely situated in or controlled by Wall Street, in return for political favors, and we pledge our party to provide by law for their deposit by competitive bidding in the banking institutions of the country, national and State, without discrimination as to locality, upon approved securities and subject to call by the Government.

#### RURAL CREDITS

Of equal importance with the question of currency reform is the question of rural credits or agricultural finance. Therefore, we recommend that an investigation of agricultural credit societies in foreign countries be made, so that it may be ascertained whether a system of rural credits may be devised suitable to conditions in the United States; and we also favor legislation permitting national banks to loan a reasonable proportion of their funds on real estate security.

We recognize the value of vocational education, and urge Federal appropriations for such training and extension teaching in agriculture in co-operation with the several States.

#### WATERWAYS

We renew the declaration in our last platform relating to the conservation of our natural resources and the development of our waterways. The present devastation of the Lower Mississippi Valley accentuates the movement for the regulation of river flow by additional bank and levee protection below, and the diversion, storage and control of the flood waters above, their utilization for beneficial purposes in the reclamation of arid and swamp lands and the development of water power, instead of permitting the floods to continue, as heretofore, agents of destruction.

We hold that the control of the Mississippi River is a national problem. The preservation of the depth of its waters for the purpose of navigation, the building of levees to maintain the integrity of its channel and the prevention of the overflow of the land and its consequent devastation, resulting in the interruption of interstate commerce, the disorganization of the mail service, and the enormous loss of life and property impose an obligation which alone can be discharged by the general government.

To maintain an adequate depth of water the entire year, and thereby encourage water transportation, is a consummation worthy of legislative attention, and presents an issue national in its character. It calls for prompt action on the part of Congress, and the Democratic party pledges itself to the enactment of legislation leading to that end.

We favor the co-operation of the United States and the respective States in plans for the comprehensive treatment of all waterways with a view of co-ordinating plans for channel improvement, with plans for drainage of swamp and overflowed lands, and to this end we favor the appropriation by the Federal Government of sufficient funds to make surveys of such lands, to develop plans for draining of the same, and to supervise the work of construction.

We favor the adoption of a liberal and comprehensive plan for the development and improvement of our inland waterways, with economy and efficiency, so as to permit their navigation by vessels of standard draft.

#### POST ROADS

We favor national aid to State and local authorities in the construction and maintenance of post roads.

#### RIGHTS OF LABOR

We repeat our declarations of the platform of 1908, as follows:

The courts of justice are the bulwarks of our liberties, and we yield to none in our purpose to maintain their dignity. Our party has given to the bench a long line of distinguished justices who have added to the respect and confidence in which this department must be jealously maintained. We resent the attempt of the Republican party to raise a false issue respecting the judiciary. It is an unjust reflection upon a great body of our citizens to assume that they lack respect for the courts.

It is the function of the courts to interpret the laws which the people enact, and if the laws appear to work economic, social or political injustice, it is our duty to change them. The only basis upon which the integrity of our courts can stand is that of unswerving justice and protection of life, personal liberty, and property. As judicial processes may be abused, we should guard them against abuse.

Experience has proved the necessity of a modification of the present law relating to injunction, and we reiterate the pledges of our platforms of 1896 and 1904 in favor of a measure which passed the United States Senate in 1898, relating to contempt in Federal Courts, and providing for trial by jury in cases of indirect contempt.

Questions of judicial practice have arisen especially in connection with industrial disputes. We believe that the parties to all judicial proceedings should be treated with rigid impartiality, and that injunctions should not be issued in any case in which an injunction would not issue if no industrial dispute were involved.

The expanding organization of industry makes it essential that there should be no abridgement of the right

of the wage earners and producers to organize for the protection of wages and the improvement of labor conditions, to the end that such labor organizations and their members should not be regarded as illegal combinations in restraint of trade.

We pledge the Democratic party to the enactment of a law creating a department of labor, represented separately in the President's cabinet in which department shall be included the subject of mines and mining.

We pledge the Democratic party, so far as the Federal jurisdiction extends, to an employees' compensation law providing adequate indemnity for injury to body or loss of life.

## CONSERVATION

We believe in the conservation and the development, for the use of all the people, of the natural resources of the country. Our forests, our sources of water supply, our arable and our mineral lands, our navigable streams, and all the other material resources with which our country has been so lavishly endowed, constitute the foundation of our national wealth. Such additional legislation as may be necessary to prevent their being wasted or absorbed by special or privileged interests, should be enacted and the policy of their conservation should be rigidly adhered to.

The public domain should be administered and disposed of with due regard to the general welfare. Reservations should be limited to the purposes which they purport to serve and not extended to include land wholly unsuited therefor. The unnecessary withdrawal from sale and settlement of enormous tracts of public land, upon which tree growth never existed and cannot be promoted, tends only to retard development, create discontent, and bring reproach upon the policy of conservation.

The public land laws should be administered in a spirit of the broadest liberality toward the settler exhibiting a *bona-fide* purpose to comply therewith, to the end that the invitation of this government to the landless should be as attractive as possible, and the plain provisions of the forest reserve act permitting homestead entries to be made within the national forests should not be nullified by administrative regulations which amount to a withdrawal of great areas of the same from settlement.

Immediate action should be taken by Congress to make available the vast and valuable coal deposits of Alaska under conditions that will be a perfect guarantee against their falling into the hands of monopolizing corporations, associations or interests.

We rejoice in the inheritance of mineral resources unequalled in extent, variety, or value, and in the development of a mining industry unequalled in its magnitude and importance. We honor the men who, in their hazardous toil underground, daily risk their lives in extracting and preparing for our use the products of the mine, so essential to the industries, the commerce, and the comfort of the people of this country. And we pledge ourselves to the extension of the work of the bureau of mines in every way appropriate for national legislation with a view to safeguarding the lives of the miners, lessening the waste of essential resources, and promoting the economic development of mining, which, along with agriculture, must in the future, even more than in the past, serve as the very foundation of our national prosperity and welfare, and our international commerce.

## AGRICULTURE

We believe in encouraging the development of a modern system of agriculture and a systematic effort to improve the conditions of trade in farm products so as to benefit both consumer and producer.

And as an efficient means to this end we favor the enactment by Congress of legislation that will suppress the pernicious practice of gambling in agricultural products by organized exchanges or others.

#### MERCHANT MARINE

We believe in fostering, by constitutional regulation of commerce, the growth of a merchant marine, which shall develop and strengthen the commercial ties which bind us to our sister republics of the south, but without imposing additional burdens upon the people and without bounties or subsidies from the public treasury.

We urge upon Congress the speedy enactment of laws for the greater security of life and property at sea; and we favor the repeal of all laws, and the abrogation of so much of our treaties with other nations, as provide for the arrest and imprisonment of seamen charged with desertion, or with violation of their contract of service.

Such laws and treaties are un-American, and violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution of the United States.

We favor the exemption from tolls of American ships engaged in coastwise trade passing through the Panama canal.

We also favor legislation forbidding the use of the Panama Canal by ships owned or controlled by railroad carriers engaged in transportation competitive with the canal.

#### PURE FOOD AND PUBLIC HEALTH

We reaffirm our previous declarations advocating the union and strengthening of the various governmental agencies relating to pure foods, quarantine, vital statistics and human health. Thus united, and administered without partiality to or discrimination against any school of medicine or system of healing, they would constitute a single health service, not subordinated to any commercial or financial interests, but devoted exclusively to the conservation of human life and efficiency. Moreover, this health service should co-operate with the health agencies of our various States and cities, without interference with their prerogatives, or with the freedom of individuals to employ such medical or hygienic aid as they may see fit.

#### CIVIL SERVICE LAW

The law pertaining to the civil service should be honestly and rigidly enforced, to the end that merit and ability shall be the standard of appointment and promotion, rather than service rendered to a political party; and we favor a reorganization of the civil service, with adequate compensation commensurate with the class of work performed for all officers and employes; and also favor the extension to all classes of civil service employes of the benefits of the provisions of the employers' liability law. We also recognize the right of direct petition to Congress by employes for the redress of grievances.

#### LAW REFORM

We recognize the urgent need of reform in the administration of civil and criminal law in the United States, and we recommend the enactment of such legislation and the promotion of such measures as will rid the present legal system of the delays, expense, and uncertainties incident to the system as now administered.

## THE PHILIPPINES

We reaffirm the position thrice announced by the Democracy is national convention assembled against a policy of imperialism and colonial exploitation in the Philippines or elsewhere. We condemn the experiment in imperialism as an inexcusable blunder, which has involved us in enormous expense, brought us weakness instead of strength, and laid our nation open to the charge of abandonment of the fundamental doctrine of self-government. We favor an immediate declaration of the nation's purpose to recognize the independence of the Philippine Islands as soon as a stable government can be established, such independence to be guaranteed by us until the neutralization of the islands can be secured by treaty with other Powers.

In recognizing the independence of the Philippines, our government should retain such land as may be necessary for coaling stations and naval bases.

## ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO

We welcome Arizona and New Mexico to the sisterhood of States, and heartily congratulate them upon their auspicious beginnings of great and glorious careers.

## ALASKA

We demand for the people of Alaska the full enjoyment of the rights and privileges of a Territorial form of government, and we believe that the officials appointed to administer the government of all our Territories and the District of Columbia should be qualified by previous *bona-fide* residence.

## THE RUSSIAN TREATY

We commend the patriotism of the Democratic members of the Senate and House of Representatives which compelled the termination of the Russian treaty of 1832, and we pledge ourselves anew to preserve the sacred rights of American citizenship at home and abroad. No treaty should receive the sanction of our government which does not recognize the equality of all of our citizens, irrespective of race or creed, and which does not expressly guarantee the fundamental right of expatriation.

The constitutional rights of American citizens should protect them on our borders and go with them throughout the world, and every American citizen residing or having property in any foreign country is entitled to and must be given the full protection of the United States government, both for himself and his property.

## PARCELS POST AND RURAL DELIVERY

We favor the establishment of a parcels post or postal express, and also the extension of the rural delivery system as rapidly as practicable.

## PANAMA CANAL EXPOSITION

We hereby express our deep interest in the great Panama Canal Exposition to be held in San Francisco in 1915, and favor such encouragement as can be properly given.

## PROTECTION OF NATIONAL UNIFORM

We commend to the several States the adoption of a law making it an offence for the proprietors of places of public amusement and entertainment to discriminate against the uniform of the United States, similar to the law passed by Congress applicable to the District of Columbia and the Territories in 1911.

## PENSIONS

We renew the declaration of our last platform relating to a generous pension policy.

## RULE OF THE PEOPLE

We direct attention to the fact that the Democratic party's demand for a return to the rule of the people expressed in the national platform four years ago, has now become the accepted doctrine of a large majority of the electors. We again remind the country that only by a larger exercise of the reserved power of the people can they protect themselves from the misuse of delegated power and the usurpation of government instrumentalities by special interests. For this reason the National Convention insisted on the overthrow of Cannonism and the inauguration of a system by which United States Senators could be elected by direct vote. The Democratic party offers itself to the country as an agency through which the complete overthrow and extirpation of corruption, fraud, and machine rule in American politics can be effected.

## CONCLUSION

Our platform is one of principles which we believe to be essential to our national welfare. Our pledges are made to be kept when in office, as well as relied upon during the campaign, and we invite the co-operation of all citizens, regardless of party, who believe in maintaining unimpaired the institutions and traditions of our country.

## Republican Platform of 1912

The Republican party, assembled by its representatives in National Convention, declares its unchanging faith in government of the people, by the people, for the people. We renew our allegiance to the principles of the Republican party and our devotion to the cause of Republican institutions established by the fathers.

It is appropriate that we should now recall with a sense of veneration and gratitude the name of our first great leader, who was nominated in this city, and whose lofty principles and superb devotion to his country are an inspiration to the party he honored—Abraham Lincoln.

In the present state of public affairs we should be inspired by his broad statesmanship and by his tolerant spirit toward men.

The Republican party looks back upon its record with pride and satisfaction, and forward to its new responsibilities with hope and confidence. Its achievements in government constitute the most luminous pages in our history. Our greatest national advance has been made during the years of its ascendancy in public affairs. It has been genuinely and always a party of progress; it has never been either stationary or reactionary. It has gone from the fulfilment of one great pledge to the fulfilment of another in response to the public need and to the popular will.

We believe in our self-controlled representative democracy which is a government of laws, not of men, and in which order is the prerequisite of progress.

The principles of constitutional government, which make provisions for orderly and effective expression of the popular will, for the protection of civil liberty and the rights of man, and for the interpretation of the law by an untrammelled and independent judiciary, have proved themselves capable of sustaining the structure of a government which, after more than a century of development, embraces one hundred millions of people, scattered over a wide and diverse territory, but bound by common purpose, common ideals and common affection to the Constitution of the United States. Under the Constitution and the principles asserted and vitalized by it, the United States has grown to be one of the great civilized and civilizing powers of the earth. It offers a home and an opportunity to the ambitious and the industrious from other lands. Resting upon the broad basis of a people's confidence and a people's support, and managed by the people themselves, the government of the United States will meet the problems of the future as satisfactorily as it has solved those of the past.

The Republican party is now, as always, a party of advanced and constructive statemanship. It is prepared to go forward with the solution of those new questions, which social, economic and political development have brought into the forefront of the nation's interest. It will strive, not only in the nation but in the several States, to enact the necessary legislation to safeguard the public health; to limit effectively the labor of women and children, and to protect wage earners engaged in dangerous occupations; to enact comprehensive and generous workman's compensation laws in place of the present wasteful and unjust system of employers' liability; and in all possible ways to satisfy the just demand of the people for the study and solution of the complex and constantly changing problems of social welfare.

In dealing with these questions, it is important that the rights of every individual to the freest possible development of his own powers and resources and to the control of his own justly acquired property, so far as those are compatible with the rights of others, shall not be interfered with or destroyed. The social and political structure of the United States rests upon the civil liberty of the individual; and for the protection of that liberty the people have wisely, in the National and State Constitutions, put definite limitations upon themselves and upon their governmental officers and agencies. To enforce these limitations, to secure the orderly and coherent exercise of governmental powers, and to protect the rights of even the humblest and least favored individual are the function of independent Courts of Justice.

The Republican party reaffirms its intention to uphold at all times the authority and integrity of the Courts, both State and Federal, and it will ever insist that their powers to enforce their process and to protect life, liberty and property shall be preserved inviolate. An orderly method is provided under our system of government by which the people may, when they choose, alter or amend the constitutional provisions which underlie that government. Until these constitutional provisions are so altered or amended, in orderly fashion, it is the duty of the courts to see to it that when challenged they are enforced.

That the Courts, both Federal and State, may bear the heavy burden laid upon them to the complete satisfaction of public opinion, we favor legislation to prevent long delays and the tedious and costly appeals which have so often amounted to a denial of justice in civil cases and to a failure to protect the public at large in criminal cases.

Since the responsibility of the Judiciary is so great, the standards of judicial action must be always and everywhere above suspicion and reproach. While we regard the recall of judges as unnecessary and unwise, we favor such action as may be necessary to simplify the process by which any judge who is found to be derelict in his duty may be removed from office.

Together with peaceful and orderly development at home, the Republican party earnestly favors all measures for the establishment and protection of the peace of the world and for the development of closer relations between the various nations of the earth. It believes most earnestly in the peaceful settlement of international disputes and in the reference of all justiciable controversies between nations to an International Court of Justice.

## MONOPOLY AND PRIVILEGE

The Republican party is opposed to special privilege and to monopoly. It placed upon the statute-book the interstate commerce act of 1887, and the important amendments thereto, and the anti-trust act of 1890, and it has consistently and successfully enforced the provisions of these laws. It will take no backward step to permit the reestablishment in any degree of conditions which were intolerable.

Experience makes it plain that the business of the country may be carried on without fear or without disturbance and at the same time without resort to practices which are abhorrent to the common sense of justice. The Republican party favors the enactment of legislation supplementary to the existing anti-trust act which will define as criminal offences those specific acts that uniformly mark attempts to restrain and to monopolize trade, to the end that those who honestly intend to obey the law may have a guide for their action and those who aim to violate the law may the more surely be punished. The same certainty should be given to the law prohibiting combinations and monopolies that characterize other provisions of commercial law; in order that no part of the field of business opportunity may be restricted by monopoly or combination, that business success honorably achieved may not be converted into crime, and that the right of every man to acquire commodities, and particularly the necessities of life, in an open market uninfluenced by the manipulation of trust or combination, may be preserved.

## FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

In the enforcement and administration of Federal Laws governing interstate commerce and enterprises impressed with a public use engaged therein, there is much that may be committed to a Federal trade commission, thus placing in the hands of an administrative board many of the functions now necessarily exercised by the courts. This will promote promptness in the administration of the law and avoid delays and technicalities incident to court procedure.

## THE TARIFF

We reaffirm our belief in a protective tariff. The Republican tariff policy has been of the greatest benefit to the country, developing our resources, diversifying our industries, and protecting our workmen against competition with cheaper labor abroad, thus establishing for our wage-earners the American standard of living. The protective tariff is so woven into the fabric of our industrial and agricultural life that to substitute for it a tariff for revenue only would destroy many industries and throw millions of our people out of employment. The products of the farm and of the mine should receive the same measure of protection as other products of American labor.

We hold that the import duties should be high enough, while yielding a sufficient revenue, to protect adequately American industries and wages. Some of the existing import duties are too high, and should be reduced. Readjustment should be made from time to time to conform to changing conditions and to reduce excessive rates, but without injury to any American industry. To accomplish this correct information is indispensable. This information can best be obtained by an expert commission, as the large

volume of useful facts contained in the recent reports of the Tariff Board has demonstrated.

The pronounced feature of modern industrial life is its enormous diversification. To apply tariff rates justly to these changing conditions requires closer study and more scientific methods than ever before. The Republican party has shown by its creation of a Tariff Board its recognition of this situation, and its determination to be equal to it. We condemn the Democratic party for its failure either to provide funds for the continuance of this board or to make some other provision for securing the information requisite for intelligent tariff legislation. We protest against the Democratic method of legislating on these vitally important subjects without careful investigation.

We condemn the Democratic tariff bills passed by the House of Representatives of the Sixty-second Congress as sectional, as injurious to the public credit, and as destructive to business enterprise.

#### COST OF LIVING

The steadily increasing cost of living has become a matter not only of national but of world-wide concern. The fact that it is not due to the protective tariff system is evidenced by the existence of similar conditions in countries which have a tariff policy different from our own, as well as by the fact that the cost of living has increased while rates of duty have remained stationary or been reduced.

The Republican party will support a prompt scientific inquiry into the causes which are operative, both in the United States and elsewhere, to increase the cost of living. When the exact facts are known, it will take the necessary steps to remove any abuses that may be found to exist, in order that the cost of the food, clothing and shelter of the people may in no way be unduly or artificially increased.

#### BANKING AND CURRENCY

The Republican party has always stood for a sound currency and for safe banking methods. It is responsible for the resumption of specie payments and for the establishment of the gold standard. It is committed to the progressive development of our banking and currency systems. Our banking arrangements to-day need further revision to meet the requirements of current conditions. We need measures which will prevent the recurrence of money panics and financial disturbances and which will promote the prosperity of business and the welfare of labor by producing constant employment. We need better currency facilities for the movement of crops in the West and South. We need banking arrangements under American auspices for the encouragement and better conduct of our foreign trade. In attaining these ends, the independence of individual banks, whether organized under national or State charters, must be carefully protected, and our banking and currency system must be safeguarded from any possibility of domination by sectional, financial, or political interests.

It is of great importance to the social and economic welfare of this country that its farmers have facilities for borrowing easily and cheaply the money they need to increase the productivity of their land. It is important that financial machinery be provided to supply the demand of farmers for credit as it is that the banking and currency systems be reformed in the interest of general business. Therefore, we recommend and urge an authoritative investigation of agricultural credit societies and corporations in other countries and the passage of State and Federal laws for the establishment and capable supervision of organizations having for their purpose the loaning of funds to farmers.

## THE CIVIL SERVICE

We reaffirm our adherence to the principle of appointment to public office based on proved fitness, and tenure during good behavior and efficiency. The Republican party stands committed to the maintenance, extension and enforcement of the Civil Service Law, and it favors the passage of legislation empowering the President to extend the competitive service as far as practicable. We favor legislation to make possible the equitable retirement of disabled and superannuated members of the Civil Service in order that a higher standard of efficiency may be maintained.

We favor the amendment of the Federal Employers' Liability Law so as to extend its provisions to all government employes, as well as to provide a more liberal scale of compensation for injury and death.

## CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

We favor such additional legislation as may be necessary more effectually to prohibit corporations from contributing funds, directly or indirectly, to campaigns for the nomination or election of the President, the Vice-President, Senators, and Representatives in Congress.

We heartily approve the recent Act of Congress requiring the fullest publicity in regard to all campaign contributions, whether made in connection with primaries, conventions, or elections.

## CONSERVATION POLICY

We rejoice in the success of the distinctive Republican policy of the conservation of our National resources, for their use by the people without waste and without monopoly. We pledge ourselves to a continuance of such a policy.

We favor such fair and reasonable rules and regulations as will not discourage or interfere with actual *bona-fide* homeseekers, prospectors and miners in the acquisition of public lands under existing laws.

## PARCELS POST

In the interest of the general public, and particularly of the agricultural or rural communities, we favor legislation looking to the establishment, under proper regulations, of a parcels post, the postal rates to be graduated under a zone system in proportion to the length of carriage.

## PROTECTION OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

We approve the action taken by the President and the Congress to secure with Russia as with other countries, a treaty that will recognize the absolute right of expatriation and that will prevent all discrimination of whatever kind between American citizens, whether native-born or aliens, and regardless of race, religion or previous political allegiance. The right of asylum is a precious possession of the people of the United States, and it is to be neither surrendered nor restricted.

## THE NAVY

We believe in the maintenance of an adequate navy for the National defence, and we condemn the action of the Democratic House of Representatives in refusing to authorize the construction of additional ships.

## MERCHANT MARINE

We believe that one of the country's most urgent needs is a revived merchant marine. There should be American ships, and plenty of them, to make use of the great American Inter-Oceanic canal now nearing completion.

## FLOOD PREVENTION IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

The Mississippi River is the nation's drainage ditch. Its flood waters, gathered from thirty-one States and the Dominion of Canada, constitute an overpowering force which breaks the levees and pours its torrents over many millions of acres of the richest land in the Union, stopping mails, impeding commerce, and causing great loss of life and property. These floods are national in scope, and the disasters they produce seriously affect the general welfare. The States unaided cannot cope with this giant problem; hence, we believe the Federal Government should assume a fair proportion of the burden of its control, so as to prevent the disasters from recurring floods.

## RECLAMATION

We favor the continuance of the policy of the government with regard to the reclamation of arid lands; and for the encouragement of the speedy settlement and improvement of such lands we favor an amendment to the law that will reasonably extend the time within which the cost of any reclamation project may be repaid by the landowners under it.

## RIVERS AND HARBORS

We favor a liberal and systematic policy for the improvement of our rivers and harbors. Such improvements should be made upon expert information and after a careful comparison of cost and prospective benefits.

## ALASKA

We favor a liberal policy toward Alaska to promote the development of the great resources of that district, with such safeguards as will prevent waste and monopoly.

We favor the opening of the coal lands to development through a law leasing the lands on such terms as will invite development and provide fuel for the navy and the commerce of the Pacific Ocean, while retaining title in the United States to prevent monopoly.

## PHILIPPINE POLICY

The Philippine policy of the Republican party has been and is inspired by the belief that our duty toward the Filipino people is a national obligation which should remain entirely free from partisan politics.

## IMMIGRATION

We pledge the Republican party to the enactment of appropriate laws to give relief from the constantly growing evil of induced or undesirable immigration, which is inimical to the progress and welfare of the people of the United States.

## SAFETY AT SEA

We favor the speedy enactment of laws to provide that seamen shall not be compelled to endure involuntary servitude, and that life and property at sea shall be safeguarded by the ample equipment of vessels with lifesaving appliances and with full complements of skilled, able-bodied seamen to operate them.

## REPUBLICAN ACCOMPLISHMENT

The approaching completion of the Panama Canal, the establishment of a Bureau of Mines, the institution of postal savings banks, the increased provision made in 1912 for the aged and infirm soldiers and sailors of the Republic and for their widows, and the vigorous administration of laws relating to Pure Foods and Drugs, all mark the successful progress of Republican administration, and are additional evidences of its effectiveness.

## ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

We commend the earnest effort of the Republican administration to secure greater economy and increased efficiency in the conduct of government business; extravagant appropriations and the creation of unnecessary offices are an injustice to the taxpayer and a bad example to the citizen.

## CIVIC DUTY

We call upon the people to quicken their interest in public affairs, to condemn and punish lynchings and other forms of lawlessness, and to strengthen in all possible ways a respect for law and the observance of it. Indifferent citizenship is an evil against which the law affords no adequate protection and for which legislation can provide no remedy.

## ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO

We congratulate the people of Arizona and New Mexico upon the admission of those States, thus merging in the Union in final and enduring form the last remaining portion of our continental territory.

We retify [ratify] in all its parts the platform of 1908 respecting citizenship for the people of Porto Rico.

## REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION

We challenge successful criticism of the sixteen years of Republican administration under Presidents McKinley, Roosevelt, and Taft. We heartily reaffirm the indorsement of President McKinley contained in the platforms of 1900 and of 1904, and that of President Roosevelt contained in the Platforms of 1904 and 1908.

We invite the intelligent judgment of the American people upon the administration of William H. Taft. The country has prospered and been at peace under his Presidency. During the years in which he had the co-operation of a Republican Congress an unexampled amount of constructive legislation was framed and passed in the interest of the people and in obedience to their wish. That legislation is a record on which any administration might appeal with confidence to the favorable judgment of history.

We appeal to the American Electorate upon the record of the Republican party, and upon this declaration of its principles and purposes. We are confident that under the leadership of the candidates here to be nominated our appeal will not be in vain; that the Republican party will meet every just expectation of the people whose servant it is; that under its administration and its laws our nation will continue to advance; that peace and prosperity will abide with the people; and that new glory will be added to the great Republic.

# LIST OF ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS OF DAVID J. SAPOSS

## P O S I T I O N S

- 1913        Field Investigator of company towns for United States Commission on Industrial Relations
- 1914-1917   Research Assistant to Prof. John R. Commons, University of Wisconsin
- 1917-1918   Expert, in charge of Accident Prevention and Industrial Service Work, New York Department of Labor, Albany, New York
- 1918-1919   Investigator of Immigrant Workers and Trade Unions, Carnegie Corporation, Americanization Study, New York City
- 1919-1920   Investigator, Inter-Church World Movement, Steel Strike Inquiry, New York City
- 1920        Educational Director, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, New York City
- 1920-1922   Labor Bureau, Inc., New York City, Economic Consultant to Labor Organizations
- 1922-1933   Brookwood Labor College, Katonah, New York; Barnard College Summer Session; Extension Division, Columbia University; Director of Social and Economic Study of Post-war France (Sponsored by Columbia University)
- 1934-35     Research Associate, Twentieth Century Fund, Inc., New York City
- 1935        Director, Company Union Study, U. S. Department of Labor
- 1935-1940   Chief Economist, National Labor Relations Board, Washington, D. C.
- 1940-1942   Labor Consultant, Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Washington, D. C.
- 1942-1945   Chief Economic Advisor, Office of Labor Production, War Production Board, Washington, D. C.
- 1945-1946   Chief, Reports & Statistics Office, Manpower Division, Office of Military Government for Germany (U. S.), Berlin
- 1946-1948   Special Assistant to Commissioner of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor
- 1948-1952   Special Advisor to Director, European Labor Division, Mutual Security Administration, Paris; Special Assistant to Commissioner of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor
- 1954-1956   Research Associate, Littauer Center, Harvard University

- 1958      Visiting Professor, University of Illinois
- 1962      Delegate to conference on "Challenge of Industrial Relations in Pacific-Asian Countries,"  
University of Hawaii-East West Center
- 1964      Visiting Senior Scholar, East-West Center, University of Hawaii
- Adjunct Professor, School for International Service, American University, Washington, D. C.;  
Lecturer, Foreign Affairs School, Institute of Foreign Affairs, U. S. Department of State;  
Lecturer, Defense Intelligence School, U. S. Department of Defense

## P U B L I C A T I O N S

### I. Author

#### A. Books

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2. *The Labor Movement in Post-War France*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1931.
3. *Communism in American Unions*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959.
4. *Communism in American Politics*. Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1960.
5. *Labor Ideology Impact on Industrial Relations*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Industrial Relations Center, 1962.
6. *Case Studies in Labor Ideology, Monograph I—The Nordic Countries*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Industrial Relations Center, 1964.
7. *Case Studies in Labor Ideology, Monograph II—The Central European Countries*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Industrial Relations Center, 1965.

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2. "After-War A. F. of L. Politics," *American Labor Monthly*, March 1923.
3. "Realism in Labor Strategy; About the B. & O. Plan and Workers' Participation in Shop Management," *American Labor Monthly*, September 1924.
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5. "Labor," *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1928, May 1929, May 1930, May 1931, May 1932, May 1933.
6. "Industrial Unionism," *Journal of Political Economy*, February 1935.
7. "The Role of the Middle Class in Social Developments: Fascism, Populism, Communism, Socialism," in *Contemporary Problems in the United States*, edited by Horace Taylor. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935-36.
8. "Employee Representation as Labor Organization," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March 1936.
9. "The A. F. L. and the C. I. O.; Principles, Policies, Tactics," in *Collective Bargaining for Today and Tomorrow*, edited by Henry C. Metcalf. New York: Harper, 1937.
10. "Voluntarism in the American Labor Movement," *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1954.
11. "Rebirth of the American Labor Movement," *Proceedings of the IRRA 8th Annual Meeting*. Madison: Industrial Relations Research Assn., Pub. no. 16, 1956.
12. "Labor Racketeering: Evolution and Solutions," *Social Research*, Autumn 1958.

13. "Postwar Developments in International Labor," *Social Research*, Spring 1960.
14. "The Wisconsin Heritage and the Study of Labor—Words and Deeds of John R. Commons," in *School for Workers 35th Anniversary Papers*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, The School for Workers, 1960.
15. "Ideological Conflict in the International Labor Movement," in *National Labor Movements in the Postwar World*, edited by Everett M. Kassalow. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963.
16. "Ideological Developments in the International Labor Movement," in *The Challenge of Industrial Relations in the Pacific-Asian Countries*, edited by Harold S. Roberts and Paul F. Brissenden. Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1965.
17. "The Labor Movement: A Look Backward and Forward," in *The Labor Movement, A Re-Examination*, A Conference in Honor of David J. Saposs, edited by Jack Barbash. Madison: University of Wisconsin, Industrial Relations Research Institute and State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967.

## II. Co-Author

1. *History of Labor in the United States, Volume I*. (John R. Commons and Associates). New York: Macmillan, 1918.
2. *Public Opinion and the Steel Strike*. (with Bureau of Industrial Research for the Interchurch World Movement of North America). New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1921.
3. *Labor and the Government*. (with the Twentieth Century Fund). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935.
4. *Anti-Labor Activities in the United States*. (with Elizabeth T. Bliss). New York: League for Industrial Democracy, 1938.

## III. Editor

1. *Readings in Trade Unionism*. (with Bertha Tigay Saposs). New York: Doran, 1926.
2. *Governmental Protection of Labor's Right to Organize*. Washington, D. C.: National Labor Relations Board, Bull. no. I, 1937.
3. *The Effect of Labor Relations in the Bituminous Coal Industry Upon Interstate Commerce*. Washington, D. C.: National Labor Relations Board, Bull. no. II, 1939.
4. *Collective Bargaining in the Newspaper Industry*. Washington, D. C.: National Labor Relations Board, Bull. no. III, 1939.
5. *Written Agreements in Collective Bargaining*. Washington, D. C.: National Labor Relations Board, Bull. no. IV, 1940.
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7. Special Technical Reports on Labor and Manpower Problems in Germany.

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## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CENTER • UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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- 3. *Seizure in Labor Disputes*, by Harold S. Roberts (1949)
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- 36. *Government Intervention in Industrial Relations in the United States*, Reprint No. 2, by Harold S. Roberts (1962)
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