



Labor unions
(1957)

Trade Unions and Democracy

—A Comparative Study of U.S.,
French, Italian, and West German
Unions

by *James B. Carey, Clinton S. Golden, Marion H.
Hedges, Eric Peterson, and Arnold S. Zander*

and A Statement by the NPA
Labor Committee on National
Policy

A LABOR COMMITTEE REPORT

(Planning Pamphlet No. 100)

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NATIONAL PLANNING ASSOCIATION
Washington, D. C.

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A Comparative Study of U.S.
Trade Union and West German
Unions

by James S. Kirby, Director of Labor Studies, W.
M. Keck, Labor Relations, and David S. Forster

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CONTENTS

STATEMENT BY THE NPA LABOR COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL POLICY . . .	v
MEMBERS OF THE NPA LABOR COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL POLICY SIGNING THE STATEMENT	ix
TRADE UNIONS AND DEMOCRACY—A Comparative Study of U. S., French, Italian, and West German Unions, by <i>James B. Carey, Clinton S. Golden, Marion H. Hedges, Eric Peterson, and Arnold S. Zander</i>	1
INTRODUCTION	1
I. THE UNITED STATES	3
Union Growth	4
The Influence of Ideologies	9
Union Structure	12
Labor Legislation and Relations to Government	24
Collective Bargaining with Management	30
The Current Status of Unions	38
II. FRANCE	44
Union Growth and Ideologies	44
Union Structure	48
Relations to Government	53
Collective Bargaining with Management and Government	54
The Current Status of Unions	56
III. ITALY	58
Union Growth and Ideologies	59
Union Structure	61
Relations to Government	63
Collective Bargaining with Management	65
The Current Status of Unions	67
IV. WEST GERMANY	69
Union Growth and Ideologies	69
Union Structure	72
Government Relations and Collective Bargaining	78
The Current Status of Unions	82

V. CONCLUSION	84
APPENDIX: National Unions in the United States with 100,000 or More Members	88
NPA OFFICERS AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES	90
NPA PUBLICATIONS POLICY	91

**Statement by the
NPA Labor Committee on National Policy on
Trade Unions and Democracy—A Comparative Study of
U. S., French, Italian, and West German Unions***

EVENTS IN THE PAST DECADE have underscored the direct relationship between the effectiveness of communist infiltration and economic, social, and political instability. Nowhere is this made plainer than in the experience of trade unions—which traditionally have been a prime target of communist propaganda and militant action. Yet, communism has not made serious inroads in the labor movement of any country where free trade unions are strong and vigorous.

The Labor Committee on National Policy of the National Planning Association long has supported U.S. programs—those of the government and the unions—to cooperate in strengthening the free trade unions of Western Europe. These unions are growing stronger, but there is still a pressing need for more understanding and use of democratic and efficient union procedures and techniques and of genuine collective bargaining by labor and management. The experience of American unions demonstrates that greater democracy in trade union organization and operation leads to improved industrial relations, more freedom for initiative and enterprise, a better division of income, support of long-range economic development, as well as counteracting the Communists' never-ceasing campaigns to infiltrate and subvert workers' organizations.

Several years ago, Clinton S. Golden, Chairman of the NPA Labor Committee, reported at one of the Committee's meetings on his observations during a trip to Europe on problems facing union and management leaders in developing more productive relationships. He felt that some significant changes in the attitudes of such leaders in Western Europe had taken place since the start of the Marshall Plan and the postwar increase in cooperative programs by U.S. unions. However, he emphasized that the changes were not so rapid or widespread as they could or should be. These conclusions, confirmed by those of other members who had observed West European labor relations, led the Committee to conclude that a comparative study of the approaches, organization, and practices of trade unions in selected countries of Western Europe and the United States would have practical value in

* See footnote by Solomon Barkin on p. vi.

accelerating the growth of democracy in trade unions on both sides of the Atlantic.

Several members of the Labor Committee agreed to undertake such a study. They had the assistance of Webster Powell and David Heaps in drafting the resulting report. The NPA Labor Committee on National Policy has had an opportunity to study and comment on several drafts of their report, *Trade Unions and Democracy*. The account of similarities and differences in unions in France, Italy, West Germany, and the United States should help to clarify understanding by the public as well as by union members of the need for strengthening free trade unions everywhere. It not only demonstrates the value of free trade unions in combating the influence of communist-dominated unions and in contributing to economic and social progress. It also points up problems involved in cooperative efforts to achieve the goals of industrial democracy. Without endorsing details, which are the sole responsibility of the authors, we thus recommend to the NPA Board of Trustees that this pamphlet be published as a Labor Committee report, signed by the following Committee members: James B. Carey, Clinton S. Golden, Marion H. Hedges, Eric Peterson, and Arnold S. Zander.

The report properly highlights, as a partial key to an understanding of the trade union movement, the contrasting political and economic environments found in the four countries.

The American trade union movement was protected in its recent growth by favorable labor legislation and the sympathetic administration of the National Labor Relations Board and the National War Labor Board. After gaining important positions of strength in key industries, it successfully bargained for economic and social gains in the period of high economic activity and growth. Employers granted these concessions in collective bargaining, accepting new obligations and guides for and limits on their conduct, although often most reluctantly and only after trials of strength. But in doing so, they fashioned the language of the agreements and the contract provisions so as to maintain, and often reinforce, their preeminence in the control of the enterprise and the operation of industry.

With the growth of our large industrial system, unions have shifted from emphasis on the worker's rights in a job to his right *to* a job. Instead of relying on their control of the labor market, unions now look forward to a society which provides full employment and in which workers can find alternative, if not better, jobs when technology and economic movements displace them from their prior employment. The trade union movement has fought for federal legislation establishing the government's responsibility for creating such an economic environment and if necessary, jobs, so that employment opportunities are available to all. The present trade union battle for assistance to distressed areas reflects this same determination.

In the thirties, and currently in some areas, the American trade union movement looked upon legislation as the vehicle for pioneering in social change. The trade unions saw in the NIRA, the Social Security Act of 1935, the Labor Disputes Act of 1935, the Government Contracts Act of 1937, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 the means for providing minimum standards and conditions. The achievements in modernizing the Social Security and the Fair Labor Standards Acts are considered necessary to advance the degree of security for unorganized workers and establish a more realistic minimum floor for all people, including union workers in the less organized industries.

More recently, the trade union movement has perceived in the advances in collective bargaining a leverage for the improvement of the labor standards prescribed by legislation or administrative act. This close tie-in has been evident in the areas of wage and social security standards. At the same time, there are areas, such as medical care for retired workers, where the trade union movement has concluded that protection is more fittingly provided by the government than through the collective bargaining process.

Although its principal reliance is still on its collective strength for economic advances, the trade union has become more flexible in its approach, carefully evaluating the support that legislation can give to private bargaining, and the assistance collective bargaining can offer to legislation in assuring more equity and security to workers.

A comment on labor's advances must not overlook the fact that the trade union movement has been relatively stabilized in size since the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act. Growth, where it has occurred, has been in industries where economic expansion itself has provided new employment. The Act and its administration by the Eisenhower-appointed National Labor Relations Board, have seriously interfered with organization of unorganized workers. Unorganized workers, as well as the trade unions have learned, regrettably, that it is a "slave labor act" for the unorganized worker who desires to help or join a union. He can expect little if any real protection from the provisions of the Act in his efforts to achieve free unionism. The license given by the Act to employers to resist unions and to discourage workers from joining them, even to the point of coercion, has completely changed the climate. Where unions are powerful and entrenched, they are respected. Where a footing has not been established, they are resisted and rebuffed with all of the employers' political and economic power and every means of persuasion at their command.

The opposition to unionism has been continuously and consistently espoused by some employer groups, including among their members individual managements having contracts and relations with unions, and operating under systems of constructive labor relations. These groups have financed and supported the movement for state "right-to-work" laws; they have capitalized on adverse developments such as the recent disclosures of corruption and misconduct of individual labor leaders, to press for restrictive labor legislation.

The trade union movements of Germany and Italy are currently undergoing vast changes. The former has successfully launched a movement for the shorter work week which has in some cases been supported by strikes.

Noteworthy successes in the basic industries, including metals, have been achieved. The noncommunist trade unionists in Italy have developed a new means to strengthen their influence in collective bargaining and to weaken the com-

munists. They have vigorously and successfully fought the latter's nominees for seats in the plant works councils. After gaining more influential roles, they negotiated independently of the national and regional contracts, and without communist participation, on specific plant or company agreements which have improved working conditions, benefits, and wage standards. These achievements reinforced their position and reduced communist influence. These developments best document the constructive role of vigorous trade union movements in increasing the loyalty of the mass of workers to democratic and antitotalitarian political and economic movements.

Recent achievements in the direction of plant and company bargaining in France give promise of similar progress, but employer conservatism and resistance have interfered with free trade union progress.—*Solomon Barkin.*

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* See footnote to Committee Statement on p. vi.

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SOURCES

During preparation of this report, information has been obtained from staff members of the International Cooperation Administration and its predecessors, the U. S. Labor and State Departments, and other government agencies; from a number of specialists in the labor relations departments of leading universities; as well as from many unpublished as well as published materials. No attempt has been made to footnote each of the numerous sources of information. However, special—though general—acknowledgment is due the publications of the United Nations, including those of the International Labor Organization; the materials of the U. S. Department of Labor; and the books, articles, or communications of John Clark Adams, Walter Galenson, Val R. Lorwin, William H. McPherson, Philip Taft, and John P. Windmuller. Some individuals read and criticized portions of the study. All, without exception, have been generous with their time and knowledge.

TRADE UNIONS AND DEMOCRACY

A Comparative Study of U. S., French, Italian, and West German Unions

by

James B. Carey, Clinton S. Golden, Marion H. Hedges,
Eric Peterson, and Arnold S. Zander

Introduction

THE MODERN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT is the product of industrialized society. Developed in response to the vast problems created by the growth of urban industrial areas, the early voluntary associations of workers have now become a major economic institution in Western society. The trade union is the worker's response to the demand for economic security in an insecure world. It is a collective organization, designed to protect the individual's interests by group action in pursuit of common goals. Today, in every democratic country and in every craft and industry, workers are organized into trade unions. Although these unions differ in structure and program from country to country, they all claim one basic objective: the attainment of greater economic security and industrial democracy for the members they represent.

Never have these labor organizations occupied so important a position in the lives of their countries as they do today. Throughout Western Europe, governments and political parties intimately associated with the labor movement either strongly influence or dominate the national scene. In the United States, the recent merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations strengthens the force of organized labor in American life. In considerable measure, the policies and programs of the trade unions of these nations decisively condition the fundamental issues of social and economic stability.

In the critical struggle now being waged between democracy and communism, the allegiance of the West European worker is of supreme importance. To an increasing degree, U.S. policy toward Western Europe must recognize and understand the aspirations, policies, and significance of the free trade unions of these nations. In those countries where relative social and economic equilibrium has been achieved, communist influence is negligible. Conversely, in countries where cumulative injustice has bred a spirit of futility and

despair, totalitarian solutions have greater attraction. Long recognizing the strategic importance of the trade unions in modern society, communist policy is characterized by a disciplined and systematic effort to capture the trade union movement. It has not succeeded in those areas where free trade unions are strong and vigorous. In a very real sense, therefore, the fate of free institutions and the future of the labor movement are inseparable.

This pamphlet, prepared by a group of U.S. trade unionists, presents a short summary of labor developments in this country. From that perspective, the trade union movements in France, Italy, and West Germany are briefly surveyed in an effort to discover both similarities and differences. The selection of these particular unions for study does not imply that the democratic and active unions of Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, and other countries of the free world are unimportant. Their study would also offer interesting illumination on the strengths and weaknesses of free trade unions, and their potentialities in combating totalitarianism. In order to achieve brevity, however, restricting the study to a few countries in continental Europe seemed warranted. Because France, Italy, and West Germany are so significant in terms of future world political developments, the trade unions of these nations assume increased importance as they exercise their influence upon the thinking of their members and the policies of their governments.

In order to present a relatively parallel survey of developments in the United States and these three West European countries, an attempt has been made to follow a similar pattern of analysis wherever possible. In each country, the following factors are examined:

1. The way the unions grew and the influence of ideologies on their actions and policies.
2. The union structure—from the central federations to national, regional, and local unions—and the extent of participation by unions of each country in international bodies.
3. The relationships of the unions with their governments and their collective bargaining with management.
4. The current status of the unions.

Chapter I.

The United States

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT as it exists in the United States today goes back to 1881 when the American Federation of Labor (AFL) was founded. Since establishment of that nationwide federation of trade unions, there has been a steady growth in the number of unions and their members, and in their effectiveness in gaining economic and social benefits for workers. The greatest impetus to growth came during the 1930's, and it was during those years that the second large federation of unions—the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)—came into being.

During the past two decades, in addition to the continual drive for higher wages, shorter hours, and improved working conditions, the unions have been occupied in establishing their position in American industry and in building their strength. New labor legislation assisted in the struggle to obtain more union recognition and collective bargaining agreements and to eliminate company unions. The day-to-day activities of numerous paid lawyers, economists, and other specialists, and of both paid and unpaid elected union officials and representatives, have been concerned with negotiating, interpreting, and seeking enforcement of written collective bargaining agreements. A closely related aspect of union activities has been the protection of fundamental union rights before such governmental bodies as the National Labor Relations Board and various state boards.

Throughout this period, thoughtful leaders in the AFL and CIO recognized that both federations and their affiliates were expending unnecessary time, effort, and funds in competing for membership and bargaining rights. And it was recognized that, too often, they were working at cross purposes on matters of local, state, and national legislation which affected the interests and well-being of members and of wage earners generally. As a result, there were continuing attempts—some formal, others informal—to unify the two federations into a cohesive body which could better serve the interests of members, the management with whom they dealt, and the economic system as a whole.

As the social and economic climate in the United States changed during the 1930's and 1940's, corresponding adjustments were made in the approach, methods, and structure of both the AFL and CIO. The result was a steady decrease in the basic differences between the two federations. This continued into the fifties, and by mid-1954 a no-raiding pact which had been worked out by committees of both

federations and which attacked serious jurisdictional problems had been signed by a significant number of AFL and CIO affiliates. This cooperative action spurred efforts to achieve further unity.

By February 1955, a merger agreement was reached which spelled out the objectives and principles of the combined body, its structure, and its government. This was ratified at the AFL convention on December 1, 1955, and at the CIO convention a day later. The long-discussed, formal merger took place immediately, on December 5, bringing more than 15 million union members into the largest federation in the world—the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, usually referred to as AFL-CIO.¹ Difficult problems face the merged body, but unionists throughout the country are convinced that the stage is set for a growing, more effective, and more responsible U. S. labor movement.

Union Growth

Prior to 1933, collective bargaining was an established practice in only a few American industries—notably railroads, men's and women's clothing manufacture, mines, and the printing and building trades. However, the growth in trade unionism has been especially marked since then. In 1935, there were only about 3.5 million union members in the United States; at the beginning of 1955, the total membership of 195 unions with headquarters in the United States was estimated at 18 million.² These union members made up about one-fourth of the total labor force, whereas in 1930, union members amounted to only about one-fourteenth of the total labor force. Another measure of size is that union members accounted for over one-third of all employees in nonagricultural establishments (those

¹ For a series of articles on the background and aims of the merger, the structure, government, approach, and outlook for the future of the AFL-CIO, see: "The AFL-CIO Merger," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, quarterly of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, Vol. 9, No. 3, April 1956.

² This estimate of the number of union members and most others used in this report are taken from *Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the United States, 1955*, Bulletin No. 1185, Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, Superintendent of Documents, 1955. The Bureau's figures are based on answers to a questionnaire sent to unions in 1954, supplemented where possible from other available sources of union data. It does not include changes since the merger action. The basic requirement for inclusion in the Directory, the Bureau notes, was affiliation with the AFL or CIO or, in the case of independent unions, the existence of collective bargaining agreements in more than one state. A drawback in obtaining union membership data, the Bureau points out, is the fact that individual unions have different methods of computing membership. For example, some may report the average annual dues-paying membership; others may include or exclude the unemployed, those involved in work stoppages, those in the armed forces, apprentices, or retired and inactive workers. Furthermore, Canadian members of some U. S. unions are also included.

employed as proprietors, self-employed persons, domestic servants, and in the armed forces, as well as in agriculture).

In the early 1930's, the unions had no legal recourse against an employer who refused to bargain in good faith. Particularly in the mass production industries, industrial relations were chaotic. The huge automobile, steel, rubber, and electrical equipment industries were for the most part unorganized. Where unions existed, attempts to secure higher wages or better conditions were resisted; strikes were often accompanied by violence, and unions frequently were the losers. Collective bargaining agreements were usually for a single plant or locality and gains achieved did not extend beyond the immediate area. Now, the key manufacturing, mining, and transport industries and the crafts are highly organized (with over 80 percent of the involved workers union members).

It would be misleading to create the impression that the job of unionization has been completed. During the 1930's, both the AFL and the CIO set themselves the task of organizing workers in the mass production industries. Later came much less successful efforts to organize the white-collar workers in private industry and in government service, and those in particular geographic areas. Throughout the country, various groups—such as clerical, professional, department store, and government employees, and workers in small shops—still for the most part are unorganized, except for skilled craftsmen. And in the South, unions have made very little headway compared to growth in other areas of the country. Furthermore, while real gains in labor-management relations have been achieved in those industries and occupations which have been successfully organized, many employers and unions still have not achieved an effective working relationship.

The new AFL-CIO has made clear that one of its primary purposes is to organize the unorganized workers—especially to add to the number of organized workers in the chemical, textile, and construction industries and in teaching, white-collar, and civil-service fields—so that the size of membership will come closer to the number of wage earners in the United States. And George Meany, the first president of AFL-CIO, has expressed the hope that unity will help in establishing and maintaining industrial peace and will contribute to the wider use of successful techniques in labor-management relations.

Union membership has grown rapidly as the unions have demonstrated their ability to achieve wage increases, shorter hours, better working conditions, and a generally higher standard of living for workers. But labor has come of age in more ways than in size. Large segments of American industry which originally engaged in unremitting warfare against trade unions now recognize that unions are here to stay. In 1954, an estimated 125,000 or more collective bargaining

agreements were in effect. Many national unions had less than 1,000 agreements each, but 19 of them accounted for more than 50,000 of the total. Terms reached between a powerful union and a powerful employer tend to spread throughout the industry over wide geographic areas and from one industry to another. Though there remain many diehards among individual employers in certain industries and geographic areas, labor and management in most cases now work out collective bargaining agreements without government assistance or intervention. Moreover, labor officials are consulted on national policies affecting the welfare of workers.

Wage controls during World War II caused unions to stress types of benefits other than wages, paid holidays, and vacations. Terms of many union agreements now include such subjects as "escalator" wage clauses tied to changes in the cost of living; wage increases to compensate workers for advances in productivity—the so-called "improvement factor"; and health, welfare, and pension plans, as well as unemployment benefits or guaranteed employment plans.

The significance of such benefits is illustrated by figures on private pension plans. In 1954, according to a report of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare,³ more than 12.5 million workers were covered by some form of private pension plans. About 60 percent of these workers were under collectively bargained programs. Total contributions to these plans in 1954 amounted to almost \$3.3 billion, of which the employers contributed close to \$2.9 billion and employees \$427 million. According to more recent estimates, by the end of 1956 such pension plans were covering about 14 million workers and the percentage of collectively bargained programs remained about the same. Total contributions for pension plans in 1956 amounted to about \$3.6 billion and total reserves, about \$27.8 billion. The pension plans vary considerably in the types of benefits. The great majority are administered by the employer. Some, however, are jointly administered by the unions and employers, and some are wholly administered by unions.

Fewer workers are covered by contracts under which employers provide benefits to laid-off workers, although the number is growing. The AFL-CIO found that unemployment benefit plans of various types had been negotiated which, in 1955, covered more than one million workers; by the end of 1956, an estimated two million workers were covered. The largest number of workers are under a number of contracts negotiated by the United Automobile, Aircraft & Agricultural Equipment Workers of America (UAW), but sub-

³ *Final Report of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare*, submitted by its Subcommittee on Welfare and Pension Funds, Senate Report No. 1734, 84th Congress, 2nd Session, April 16, 1956.

stantial numbers are affected by contracts negotiated by unions in the steel, rubber, aluminum, and other industries. Such plans take different forms, depending upon the particular needs of the different industries. Through the UAW plans, for example, a fund provides benefit payments to laid-off workers—under specified conditions relating to company contributions, eligibility of workers, amounts of benefits, duration of payments, etc.—and supplements the workers' state unemployment compensation. Some unions have indicated that other measures may be more suitable for their situations than such unemployment benefit plans, but many plan to move forward on this front. In this connection the AFL-CIO has stated that "wherever feasible, provisions such as guaranteed employment plans should be negotiated to promote stability of workers' incomes and eliminate fluctuations in employment."⁴

In response to the needs of their members, many of the larger unions have also undertaken increased activities in such fields as workers' education, training of union officers, labor legislation, health, public relations, politics, and recreation. The central federations and many national unions have long been active in the planning of community welfare, with their officers and representatives participating in the work of various voluntary and civic bodies. The AFL-CIO *Policy Resolutions* reiterated the proposition "that what is good for the community is good for labor," and the federation has established a permanent National Committee on Community Services. At the same time, it has urged that all affiliates establish such committees, with full-time staff wherever possible.

The number of union publications has greatly increased in recent years, and such publications also have been improved in appearance and content. In 1954, at least 166 of the national unions had one official publication each and a few had two, while many of the locals also issued their own publications on a periodical or irregular basis. The AFL-CIO is issuing a weekly newspaper, a monthly magazine, and two monthly research publications, as well as pamphlets and special reports at irregular intervals. With a few important exceptions, the labor press is not a forum for the exchange of conflicting opinions, but is designed as a platform for stating a union's policy views and informing members about activities of the union. Many union publications are used as source material by people outside the unions and by the daily press.

Similarly, there has been a steady growth in the use of staff specialists in union research and education departments, which are now

⁴ *Policy Resolutions of the AFL-CIO*, adopted December 1955 by the First Constitutional Convention of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, AFL-CIO Publication No. 3, Washington, January 1956.

backed up and supplemented by the merged research and education staffs of the AFL and CIO. In 1954, about 50 national unions had full-time research directors; 36 had full-time education directors, and about 30 additional unions had full-time staff members responsible for both research and education.

Workers' education has taken many forms. The central federations have made a practice of sponsoring institutes on economic and industrial problems; conducting educational meetings at conventions of affiliated unions; and holding regional conferences, individual lectures, and lecture series. Film libraries are being maintained and workers are able to take courses in such subjects as labor law, job analysis and evaluation, leadership training, techniques for union legislative committees, political problems, welfare plans, economics, and trade union history. In addition to year-round educational programs on their own premises, the national unions and some of the larger locals have used university facilities for summer institutes. Many universities have incorporated labor courses as a special part of their regular programs or have set up extension services for union members. Several other institutions outside the immediate trade union field, such as the American Labor Education Service, offer programs in labor education. Although still in its experimental phases—and despite difficulties in many of the unions created by apathy, lack of agreement on program content, and inadequate finances—workers' education has achieved permanent recognition.

The AFL-CIO Constitution makes clear a continuing emphasis on these and other broad interests. Committees or staff departments in the central office have a wide range of functions: civil rights, community services, economic policy, education, ethical practices, housing, international affairs, legislation, organization, political education, public relations, research, safety and occupational health, social security, and veterans affairs.

These achievements of labor organizations have not come without a struggle. Although it is difficult to evaluate the various factors accounting for the real progress that has been made, the labor and social security legislation passed during the depressed years of the 1930's undoubtedly made a major contribution. After four years of depression, public sentiment was sufficiently favorable to the organization of unions to give the national government the necessary support for such measures. Unions now operate openly inside organized shops under legal safeguards. The facilitation and practice of collective bargaining and the extension of political democracy into industrial thinking and acting have played a definite part in this transformation. The Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Labor-Injunction Act of 1932, Section 7a of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 (NIRA), the National Labor Disputes Act (the Wagner Act) of 1935, the

Social Security Act in 1935, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (Wage-Hour Law)—all of these have contributed to the protection and growth of responsible unions and to an increase of genuine collective bargaining in industry. Union leaders feel, however, that the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 (Taft-Hartley Act) is a setback to the effort to achieve more equitable labor-management relations.⁵

Even with protective legislation, the great improvement in industrial relations could not have been achieved if organized labor had not grown strong in its own right. Union members—in a mood to try something new to meet the crisis of low union membership—seized upon legislative protection and launched organizational drives. The work of the men and women in local unions was and continues to be the core of union strength. Their willingness to volunteer time and energy; their daily efforts to secure new members, persuade workers to attend meetings, and get out all types of literature; and their understanding of the need to pay adequate dues—these have made democracy in trade unions a reality. From the ranks have come strong and responsible union leaders who have proved that gradualism pays and that gains can be achieved without constant resort to strikes. This does not mean, however, that labor refuses to strike when it is convinced that militance is the only way to secure the gains to which it feels entitled.

The Influence of Ideologies

Trade unions in the United States are primarily, although by no means exclusively, concerned with advancing the economic interests of their members. This means a constant struggle to maintain and improve the purchasing power of wages and other benefits. The welfare of their members has also become a matter of deep concern to unions. But their interest in politics has been limited primarily to a concern with legislation and administrative action that directly affect workers and their families. Although there have been sporadic attempts ever since unions appeared on the American scene to set up labor parties or to run labor candidates for office, such attempts have never extended throughout the labor movement. As long as they can achieve what they believe to be necessary legislation by influencing the party in power, the unions will have no incentive or widespread desire to become affiliated solely with one of the existing parties or to form a separate labor party of their own.

With the increased interest in labor legislation during the early years of the New Deal, the unions and their leaders stepped up efforts

⁵ A discussion of these laws appears on pp. 25-9.

to influence political action. Generally, they supported the Democratic party, although the AFL and CIO and their various affiliates often endorsed different local, state, or national candidates, and the AFL remained somewhat more reluctant to enter partisan politics than the CIO. In 1935, the American Labor party in New York State was established with support of both AFL and CIO. In 1939, as a result of an internal struggle for power, the noncommunist elements withdrew from the American Labor party and founded the Liberal party in New York, which is still active.

Subsequently, both the AFL and CIO established groups, financed primarily by voluntary contributions from members, designed to stimulate effective and concerted political action by organized labor. The CIO, in 1943, established its Political Action Committee (PAC) to present CIO views on public issues and the records of candidates for public office, and to encourage members to vote in national, state, and local elections. Labor's League for Political Education (LLPE) was set up by the AFL in 1947 to prepare and publish political educational material for members, provide speakers for meetings, organize local LLPE units, provide research services, and sponsor a radio department. Labor organizations, however, are forbidden by law from making direct contributions to finance political campaigns for federal offices.

The constitution of the AFL-CIO and statements of the federation's officials make it clear that the trade unions in the United States will continue and extend their interest in public affairs and politics. At the same time, the fact is emphasized that there is no sentiment toward a new labor party, but that the federation will continue to work within the confines of the two-party system. The emphasis will remain on the traditional policy of Samuel Gompers—"Stand faithfully by our friends and elect them. Oppose our enemies and defeat them." The AFL-CIO constitution states, as one of its objects and principles:

While preserving the independence of the labor movement from political control, to encourage workers to register and vote, to exercise their full rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and to perform their rightful part in the political life of the local, state, and national communities.

To carry out this function, the PAC and LLPE staffs have been combined into the AFL-CIO's new Committee on Political Education. It works closely with the federation's Committee on Legislation in educating members on the unions' policies on such basic issues as employment, education, housing and slum clearance, social security, health, and civil rights, which affect the great mass of American people.

American workers and union leaders traditionally have been opposed to socialism as well as to communism. A number of liberal and radical parties have appeared on the national and state scenes since the 1870's. Among these, in the early part of the 20th century, was the Socialist party. Its peak was reached in the presidential election of 1912 under the leadership of Eugene V. Debs, who polled about 6 percent of the total popular vote. But the party's political strength represented less a conversion to socialism than temporary dissatisfaction with the major parties. The Socialist party never secured permanent, widespread support from organized labor.

From its inception in 1921-1922—first as the Worker's party and later as the American Communist party—the communist movement had little political success in the United States. In the 1924 presidential election, for example, the candidate of the Worker's party won about 36,000 votes in a total of over 29 million. The largest popular vote for a Communist party presidential candidate was in the 1932 election when there were only about 103,000 Communist votes in a total of nearly 40 million. During World War II, the Communist party was temporarily dissolved and replaced by a political association which took no independent political action. After the war, it resumed as a political party, but did not run separate candidates in national elections.

The newly formed Progressive party, which Communists infiltrated before the 1948 election, was strongly opposed by the great majority of organized labor. Henry Wallace, presidential candidate of the Progressive party, received less than 1.2 million of the total of nearly 49 million votes cast for President. After the Progressive party endorsed the Soviet Union's position on Korea, Wallace and other leaders resigned, and dwindling support of the Progressive party came mainly from Communists and fellow travellers. The Progressive party's 1952 presidential candidate, endorsed by the Communist party, received just over 140,000 votes in a total popular vote of more than 61.5 million.

As in other countries, Communists not only have tried to win the political support of unionists, but have tried to penetrate U. S. trade unions since the early 1920's. Attempts were made to form revolutionary groups inside the AFL. At the same time, in line with Soviet international policy, Communists founded the Trade Union Educational League which other militants joined. The AFL promptly labelled that movement as dual unionism and took steps to prevent the Communists from "boring from within" its organization. It continued its successful opposition to communist domination.

Although leaders of the CIO had actively opposed communism for many years, the rapid growth and expansion of the CIO unions permitted communist penetration in some of the new organizations.

Communists were successful in securing several important CIO unions in basic industries. Following various efforts to overcome their power, in 1949 the top leadership in the CIO declared war on this infiltration and by 1950 rid itself of 11 unions which were dominated by communist leaders. As a result of mergers, disbanding, or loss of members to other unions affiliated with the CIO, there remained only four of these expelled unions in 1955.

In general, communist influence in the labor movement is no longer effective, although communist control of a few independent unions remains a threat in particular industries and areas, and is still troublesome in a few union locals.

Union Structure

The individual union member looks to a number of different but closely related organizations for economic and social assistance. First is his local union, which usually participates in city-wide and state-wide organizations made up of representatives of other locals with the same affiliation. Then there is his national or international union,⁶ which may be set up on a craft or an industry-wide basis or somewhere in between the two. His national union, in turn, is usually affiliated with a central federation although some, called "independent" unions, are not so affiliated. He may participate in meetings, conferences, or conventions of any one of these bodies, and he receives direct and indirect services from each. The union member has a relationship, too, though a somewhat more distant one, to fellow unionists in Western Europe and other parts of the world through participation by his national union or central federation in organizations set up for joint international action by the democratic trade unions of a number of countries.

The AFL-CIO and the Independents

The structure and governmental procedures of the AFL-CIO reflect those of the two federations before the merger. The constitution, adopted in December 1955, spells these out in some detail, although leeway is left for adjustments in the necessarily complex machinery involving local and national democratic unions which retain a high degree of autonomy. Efforts have been made to increase democracy in unionism by guaranteeing that workers of any race, color, creed, or national origin may share in the benefits of trade unionism. Methods have been developed and applied for the purpose of keeping the new organization free of unions controlled by communism

⁶ Many of these unions are called "internationals" because they have locals in Canada as well as in the United States. However, in this report they are called "nationals," in order to simplify reference to this type of union in the organizational structure of trade unionism.

or other totalitarian groups, and to penalize unions which are guilty of corrupt or unethical practices. The equal status of craft and industrial unions is recognized, and the autonomy and rights of each affiliated national union are safeguarded. At the same time, steps are being taken to encourage the end of jurisdictional problems and the merger wherever possible of unions and bodies which have overlapping jurisdictions and purposes.

The similarities and differences of the AFL and CIO before the merger help to clarify understanding of the present organization.

The oldest federation of trade unions in the United States, the American Federation of Labor, remained the largest before the merger. Though founded by craft unions, the AFL by 1955 was composed of amalgamated or semiindustrial unions and industrial unions as well as craft unions.⁷ In 1954, the AFL had an estimated membership of almost 11 million, who belonged to 108 national unions with about 50,000 local affiliates. One of the AFL's major instruments was its departments for the coordination of activities of several unions in one industry and for the elimination of jurisdictional disputes among AFL affiliates—which nevertheless continued to plague the organization. There was also a department with the primary purpose of publicizing the union label and promoting union standards of workmanship and job protection through its use. In addition to working through affiliated national unions and through its departments, the AFL also granted charters to city central bodies and state federations of labor. These bodies were directly controlled by the AFL, although they were made up of local unions belonging to AFL-affiliated national unions.

The Congress of Industrial Organizations was the second largest nationwide union federation before the merger. Its forerunner, the Committee for Industrial Organization, was founded in 1935 after a split within the AFL over the organization of unskilled workers in such mass production industries as automobile and steel. Although made up predominantly of industrial unions, it also included some craft and semiindustrial unions. The CIO membership in 1954 was estimated at over 5 million in 30 affiliated national unions which had 10,000 locals. It had city, county, and state councils whose purposes were roughly comparable to the AFL's state and city groups.

Neither the AFL nor the CIO had a great deal of direct authority over their national unions, but, on the whole, the CIO in practice maintained somewhat more power over its affiliates—especially over the more recently established organizations—than the AFL. Both

⁷ A craft union is one in which the membership is restricted to individuals possessing or working at a specific skill. Some craft unions include workers with more than one skill. Many of these are the amalgamated (or multicraft) type. An industrial union is one in which the membership is composed of employees in a particular industry, regardless of the type of work performed or skill required.

had, in addition to national affiliates, some directly affiliated unions which were not part of any national union. There were in both federations broad policy and program requirements which, if violated, provided grounds for expulsion. Each affiliated union has the right to determine its dues, policies, and programs in accordance with its own needs.

Both federations served their affiliated unions in many useful and similar ways. Maintaining research services of an overall character, each gathered together and analyzed material for use in collective bargaining negotiations of directly affiliated locals or when requested to do so by specific national unions. Nationally, they maintained educational, political, and publicity programs and assisted in the organization of unorganized workers. Each held annual conventions which were the supreme ruling bodies of the federations, where officers were elected and bodies established for governing the federations between conventions.

Delegates to the first convention of the AFL-CIO, held in December 1955, agreed to hold future conventions at two-year intervals instead of annually, but special conventions may be called at any time to consider a particular problem. Basic policy matters are determined at the convention. In the interim, the Executive Council is the governing body of the federation. It is made up of the executive officers of the AFL-CIO (the president and secretary-treasurer) plus 27 vice presidents, all of whom are elected by majority vote of the convention. This council, instructed to meet not less than three times a year, is "authorized and empowered to take such action and render such decisions as may be necessary to carry out fully and adequately the decisions and instructions of the conventions and to enforce the provisions contained in this constitution." The president and secretary-treasurer are responsible for putting the policy decisions into effect and supervising the affairs of the federation. A smaller eight-member group, composed of the two executive officers and six vice presidents designated by the Executive Council, make up an Executive Committee which is directed to meet every two months and advise on policy matters. In addition, there is a larger body, the General Board, which has the power of deciding policy questions referred to it by the executive officers or Executive Council. The board is made up of members of the Executive Council and the principal officer of each national union and each Trade and Industrial Department. It must meet at least once a year or upon call by the president of AFL-CIO.

The composition of these bodies and of the headquarters staff has taken into account not only the numerical strength of the two separate federations but also the former positions held by both AFL and CIO officials. On the Executive Council, for example, there are

17 former AFL and 10 former CIO vice presidents. The president and secretary-treasurer, who held the same posts in the AFL, and three former AFL and three former CIO vice presidents make up the Executive Council. The staff departments and committees of the two federations have been merged, with specialists from the CIO heading some, and those from the AFL in charge of others.

There are six AFL-CIO Trade and Industrial Departments with which many of the national unions are affiliated. Five departments—Building and Construction Trades, Maritime Trades, Metal Trades, Railway Employees, and Union Label and Service Trades Departments—which had been set up in the AFL have been retained, and a new one—the Industrial Union Department—has been added. This new department, headed by the former president and former secretary-treasurer of the CIO, includes most of the former CIO affiliates and some former AFL unions as members. Another important new development, in the light of the AFL-CIO's announced intention to press organizing drives, is the creation of a Staff Department of Organization, which will conduct its activities under the supervision of the federation's president.

No final method of eliminating jurisdictional disputes has been discovered. However, the new federation recognizes the importance of this problem and is tackling it in a number of ways. In the first place, one of the functions of the AFL trade departments was to reduce factional disagreements among the unions in their fields; this will continue and will also be a function of the new Industrial Union Department. In addition, a number of national unions have worked out agreements on their own to reduce the areas of disagreement and frequency of internal disputes. Major reliance for the present, however, is placed on three voluntary plans which were in effect before the merger of the AFL and CIO.

The CIO Organizational Disputes Agreement had been signed by a substantial number of CIO affiliates as had the AFL Internal Disputes Plan by its affiliates. Both of these had been effective in the past in reducing internal disputes within the separate federations, and they have been retained for the terms agreed to by the signatory unions. The AFL-CIO No-Raiding Agreement, adopted in 1953, which had been voluntarily signed by most of the AFL and CIO affiliates, has been extended for a period of two years to help solve internal organizational and raiding problems pending adoption of a single plan. A new committee has been organized to develop such a plan, which will incorporate the three voluntary agreements into a combined no-raiding and organizational and jurisdictional disputes agreement, for presentation to signers of the earlier plans as well as to those unions which had not participated in one of the earlier plans.

The new federation holds all of the assets of the AFL and received

all of the net assets of the CIO except a substantial amount which was contributed directly to the Industrial Union Department. Each national affiliate and organizing committee of the new federation pays four cents per member per month to the AFL-CIO. This amount is the same as that formerly required by the AFL but considerably less than the 10¢ per month which had been required by the CIO. To help finance the intensified organizing drive, the AFL-CIO will seek special financial contributions from its affiliates—some of which have already pledged considerable amounts for the purpose. The activities of the new Committee on Political Education will not be financed by the AFL-CIO, but will seek voluntary contributions from members of affiliated unions.

Although the vast majority of unions were affiliated with the AFL or CIO, in 1954 there were at least 57 independent unions which were not connected with either. Members of these independent unions—which differ widely in size, structure, and general approach—were estimated at 1.8 million in that year. This figure includes members of the large United Mine Workers of America as well as several groupings of independents. Among these are four railroad brotherhoods made up of “operating” employees and several federations, including the Confederated Unions of America, the National Independent Union Council, and the Engineers and Scientists of America. In addition, there were the remaining unions expelled by the CIO for following the Communist line in defiance of CIO practices. Of the 11 expelled unions, the four which remained in existence had about 230,000 to 300,000 members in 1954. The rest of the independents, with a few exceptions, were relatively small unions and were local rather than national in scope.

Acting as a strictly voluntary organization, the Railway Labor Executives' Association (RLEA) in 1954 included the chief executive officers of 19 labor organizations—16 AFL, one CIO, and two independent unions—representing all but a few of the “nonoperating” railway workers in the United States and Canada. Formed in 1926, this association coordinates and directs policy for its participating members in legislative and other fields of national interest. It is not, however, a central federation in the sense of the AFL-CIO.

The National Unions

The local organization has been and continues to be the chief source of union strength. But, in most instances, the national unions rather than the locals or central federations have the greatest influence on the U. S. trade union movement. This is because they have the necessary experience and resources and are in the most strategic position to coordinate the activities of geographically scattered locals, which have widely differing approaches even though they may be in

the same craft or industry. The national unions, under the new AFL-CIO constitution, continue to be largely independent, and their own constitutions which affect relationships with locals remain in force.

At the end of 1954, there were at least 195 of these national unions in the United States. Their growth in importance has been attributed in part to three factors which bulk large in the American trade union development.

First, a definite proportion of the relatively sizable dues paid regularly by local members (ranging from \$1.50 to \$5.00 per capita per month) is assigned to the national unions. These dues have enabled the national union with a large membership to build a permanent staff of organizers and other specialists who augment local activity and perform vital services for the entire membership. In addition, the income has been sufficient to set aside substantial strike funds.

Second, the authority of the national officers over the locals has been established to a point where the charter of a local can be revoked whenever deemed necessary by its national union.

Third, the elaborate system of welfare benefits developed by some national unions provides a backlog of relatively stable members, who—if for no other reason—are loyal to their national because they wish to preserve accumulated benefits.

As the scope of collective bargaining has widened to cover many complex subjects and as unions have grown in size, locals have become more and more dependent on the experience of national officers with long training in union administration, wage negotiation, and the many other technical and economic aspects of the union agreement. Increased reliance on the nationals, thus, has become a virtual necessity in the interest of greater efficiency and better use of union funds. This is especially true of the industrial unions.

Collective bargaining is basically the function of the locals, but in many instances it has been replaced or supplemented by company-wide and industry-wide bargaining in a number of important mass production industries. After prior consultation with the locals, the nationals' representatives often take the initiative in negotiating an overall contract. Based on this, the locals then negotiate supplementary agreements to fit the particular needs in their plants and localities. The trend toward bigger and more powerful units in industry, with their highly centralized administration, has undoubtedly spurred centralization of authority in the national unions. This necessitates extensive research and coordinated action over wide areas. The executive boards of national unions, in which power resides during the year or more between scheduled conventions, must

be prepared to meet emergencies quickly. In practice, many of these decisions are made by the president of the national union and others located at the national headquarters.

In some cases, but by no means in all, the executive board not only controls strike action, collective bargaining, and charters, but also has authority over the constitution and the hiring and firing of local officers. The executive board may even direct the affairs of a local when that seems desirable, including the hearing of appeals on claims and grievances from locals and other subordinate bodies. Finally, the executive board chooses auditors for the preparation of a financial report to the convention, supervises the publication of the official journal, and levies assessments in conformity with the constitution.

Some idea of the vast scope and variety of problems of a large national union may be gathered from a brief description of the International Association of Machinists (IAM). With over 860,000 members in 1955, it was one of the four largest U.S. unions. Most members of the IAM are engaged in manufacturing, but about 200,000 work in such industries as mining, construction, retail and wholesale trade, transportation, communications, public utilities, services, and government. This membership is scattered in 1,957 local lodges in seven regions spread throughout the United States and Canada. Membership in the locals varies from 15 to 15,000, and in some cases local lodges may group together into district lodges. In order to administer the affairs of such an organization, national headquarters (the Grand Lodge) operates through 800 business and national representatives, who provide services to the local and district lodges and serve as a link between the locals and the general vice president in charge of a given region.

Regional, State, and City Groupings

Important elements in the union structure in the United States are several different types of regional, state, and city groupings. The national unions have such offices to bring together all of their local affiliates in a given area. Their purpose is to help maintain uniform conditions of employment, to give aid in organizing drives, to settle grievances, and to enforce discipline. In many instances, it has been found desirable to bargain on a district basis. Even in those cases in which bargaining is conducted nationally, supplementary agreements are usually made for smaller geographical areas.

In addition, regional, state, and city bodies have been organized directly under the AFL and CIO, and these are continuing for the time being. Each is made up of locals of the federation's national affiliates and organizing committees as well as of directly affiliated local unions. Their purpose differs from the nationals' groups in

that primary attention is given to coordinating general policies and activities for purposes of legislative and community activities at the state or municipal level. At the beginning of 1955, the AFL had 829 city central bodies, 48 state federations, and two regional bodies for Alaska and Puerto Rico. The CIO reported 44 state industrial union councils, including an organization for the District of Columbia and one for Puerto Rico, and 296 city and county councils. These separate bodies of the AFL and CIO have been allowed two years from the adoption of the AFL-CIO constitution to complete plans for their merger.

The AFL has had another type of local grouping, which has worked separately from the city and state bodies. This is a system of local councils set up to coordinate in each area activities of all local unions affiliated with the nationals which are members of the different AFL Trade Departments. These councils will be continued by the AFL-CIO and similar local councils are anticipated for the Industrial Union Department.

Local Unions

The basic unit in American labor organizations is the local union. This may include workers in the same trade or craft or workers in the same industry. Members of a local union may all come from one community or may come from neighboring towns. If the number of workers in a particular shop or plant is large enough a separate local is formed for that group. If not, union members from several plants form a single local union. The local union takes care of the immediate economic needs and grievances of its members, supplies the organizational drive and enthusiasm necessary to keep the union healthy, undertakes educational activities, and acts as a social center for trade union families. In many locals, the maintenance of effective control of jobs is a major concern. This is especially true of the craft unions with their carefully worked out systems of job classification and apprenticeship training.

In 1954, union membership was scattered throughout the country in some 77,000 locals. The size of the locals varies widely. Many have less than 100 members but there are some with thousands of members. It is estimated that one out of seven members participates actively in union affairs by serving as an officer and engaging in various activities—usually on a volunteer basis.

Most local officers are unpaid except that they may receive compensation for time lost in their regular jobs while attending to union business and for incidental expenses in such work. A paid secretary is employed if the membership of the local is sufficiently large. The larger locals usually have one business agent or more, and some of the locals having several thousand members also may employ a

business manager to supervise the work of the business agents. Business agents perform an overall function—recruiting new members, supervising the terms of the collective agreement, seeing that disputes are settled as quickly as possible. In short, they deal with both workers and employers, and they also promote general union activity in the community. In addition to the business agents, elected shop stewards handle employee grievances for the union, and when unions do not have business agents, the shop stewards take over many of the business agent's functions and the union may pay them for devoting practically full time to union business. There are wide variations among the locals in the amounts which are paid to part-time and full-time salaried officers and employees. Generally, such salaries are tied to the amounts they would be earning if they were working in the plant or at their trades instead of for the union.

Within the collective bargaining process the initiation and maintenance of a smoothly working grievance system is an activity of major importance. Thus, the shop steward, who has primary responsibility for grievance handling, has been called the cornerstone of the local union. He is elected to his job as representative of the union in the plant or, if the plant is large, in a department, or he may be selected to represent one of several craft unions in a plant. His duties, broadly speaking, are to uphold the rights of the workers in terms of the collective bargaining agreement or contract; that is, to take up the grievances of individual workers and to carry out union policies in dealing with the company.

The steward must keep up to date with arbitration decisions and with the latest interpretations of the various clauses in the contract. In addition, he must know the many technical processes, the piece rates, wage rates, seniority arrangements, and personality problems of the workers in his department. In a case where the grievance submitted is very slight or does not fall within the scope of the contract, the shop steward must make the worker understand why the grievance cannot be taken up. When convinced that a worker has a genuine grievance, the union representative checks the facts and usually gets them down in writing and has them signed by the worker involved.⁸ When the worker and union representative are in agreement on the grievance, it is ready to be taken up with company rep-

⁸ An example of the stages through which the grievance machinery operates is given on pp. 35-6. In a series of case studies of companies and unions with a background of good industrial relations made under the auspices of the National Planning Association, it was found that in many situations informal and flexible methods of handling grievances were preferred by both union and management representatives. These people refrained purposely from putting most grievances into writing. A summary of findings in the 30 companies studied in the series appears in *Fundamentals of Labor Peace, a Final Report*, by the NPA Committee on the Causes of Industrial Peace under Collective Bargaining, NPA, Washington, 1953, viii and 120 pp., \$1.00.

representatives. Customarily, both the union representative and the worker attend conferences with the appropriate management officers.

In addition to dealing with company officials on grievances, the shop steward acts as a link between the members and the union office. Through departmental meetings and day-to-day contact, he keeps the members informed of union activities and policies and, in turn, becomes thoroughly familiar with the members' points of view on such matters as wage increases and other improvements which they believe should be put into effect. By keeping in touch with members who have not attended local meetings, the steward can see that they understand actions that have been taken by the union. He refers various in-plant difficulties to the union or labor-management committee handling such questions. In many plants and communities, the shop stewards hold periodic meetings to discuss mutual problems.

The efforts of all local union representatives are primarily devoted to activities relating to the collective bargaining agreement, to administering union affairs, and to organizing and conducting additional local functions, including the direction of picketing and other activities during a strike. The degree of local participation in contract negotiation varies. In many unions—such as those in the building and printing trades, hotels and restaurants, and among longshoremen and motion picture operators—the local conducts the entire negotiation, and approval of these agreements by the national office usually is a formality. In general, few local officers make a strike decision on their own responsibility. On both contract and strike questions, the members almost always register their approval or disapproval before final action is taken. Through informal as well as formal discussion the local union representatives usually know what terms will satisfy the members.

As a forerunner to industry-wide bargaining, it is the practice in some of the unions for delegates from locals in the same industry to participate in city, area, or state-wide conferences and review the experience of their locals under the existing collective bargaining agreements. Out of these conferences come suggestions for the new contract which are sent to the national office. The national office then draws up bargaining proposals and presents them to a national conference of all locals in the industry. After the contract has been negotiated it is submitted to the locals for their ratification. Many locals then negotiate further with local management to add provisions to the contract which are particularly needed in their plant or community. This is a democratic procedure although, from the point of view of some unions, it undoubtedly has the drawback of being expensive and time consuming.

Although American unions have democratic constitutions lodging final powers in national conventions of elected delegates, there is a

tendency for union members—even the duly elected convention delegates from the locals—to leave major policy decisions generally to the national's elected officers and representatives. So long as national officers—who usually have long experience in union administration, union politics, collective bargaining, organizing, publicity, and other departments of union activity—produce desirable results, they are likely to be re-elected without serious opposition; but this does not always hold true. Sometimes opposition groups offer slates of officers leading to hotly contested national elections.

Attendance of members at union meetings varies widely, not only from local to local, but also in any one local. A conservative estimate of attendance at regular monthly meetings is an average of 5 to 10 percent. However, attendance jumps substantially when contract terms are being discussed, when strike decisions are being taken, or other matters of current significance to a large proportion of the membership are being considered. Many union officials are concerned by the fact that more members do not come regularly to union meetings—particularly that the younger members, who are not as aware as the old-timers of the benefits which the unions have struggled for and won over the years, do not participate. They and other responsible union leaders are taking various steps to stimulate more active participation and expression of the will of the rank and file in meetings. On the other hand, many leaders point out that the reason more members do not participate actively may stem from the fact that members are generally satisfied with what is being done by their unions. They feel sure that members will make themselves heard if they have complaints or dissents on particular policies. And they offer as further evidence of democratic functioning the fairly high turnover in local unions of elected officers and representatives.

Participation in International Affairs

American trade unions—despite an early history of isolationism and a prewar concentration on economic gains for workers in the United States—have long been active in the international labor movement. This activity has been centered mainly in the offices of the central federations, although some important national unions have taken a similar interest. Both the AFL and the CIO—and a few national unions—have had special staffs concerned with participation in bodies made up of unions from many countries, the direct exchange of information with and provision of assistance to unions in other countries, and support of labor's positions on U. S. foreign policy.

The international union organization which draws together the greatest number of the world's free trade unionists is the International

Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) with headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. The AFL-CIO is a member of this organization, which was preceded by a number of earlier bodies with a similar purpose.

In 1910, the AFL, with some misgivings regarding the socialist leadership, joined the International Secretariat of Trade Union Centers, which in 1918 was renamed the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), made up of central trade union organizations from various countries. It dropped out of the IFTU in 1921, but rejoined in 1937. The dissolution of the IFTU in 1945 coincided with the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). The AFL refused to participate in the new organization because of the participation of the government-run unions of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, in an atmosphere of supposedly friendly relations with one of our wartime allies, the CIO played a leading role in creating the WFTU in an attempt at joint international action by democratic unions and communist-controlled unions. In 1949, the CIO and democratic trade union centers in Western Europe withdrew from the WFTU because of the communists' tactics and domination. The CIO, AFL, and United Mine Workers of America (UMW) then combined with other democratic trade unions of the world to help form the ICFTU in 1949.

Organized on a regional basis the ICFTU is vigorously aiding the growth of democratic national unions while also helping to strengthen democratic union activities throughout the world, particularly in underdeveloped areas. It has an organization department, an economic and social department, and a press and publications department, as well as special standing committees to deal with these and other activities. The ICFTU Congress, supreme authority of the confederation, is convened every two years. The AFL and CIO have taken an active part not only in the ICFTU but also in its Inter-American Regional Organization (ORIT).

A number of national unions from the United States belong to the International Trade Secretariats (ITS), each of which is an independent federation composed of free trade unions with similar interests from different countries. There are 21 of these ITS's, and in 1954 at least 32 U. S. national unions belonged to and took an active part in 16 of them.

In addition to these activities, the two federations and some national unions have undertaken their own programs of assistance to free trade unions in other countries. Both the CIO and AFL have had representatives in Europe who have maintained liaison, advised on organizational and other union activities, distributed foreign-language labor publications, and in some cases provided financial assistance to democratic unions. The AFL, through its Free Trade

Union Committee formed in 1945, has undertaken more of these independent activities than the CIO.

Unions in the United States also made advances during and after World War II in gaining direct representation in governmental posts, both at home and abroad, having to do with labor's interests in international affairs. In addition to the more traditional type of representation on such bodies as the International Labor Organization, labor leaders serve on a number of advisory bodies of U. S. agencies and are often consulted on the selection of labor positions, including labor attachés, in the government's offices abroad. The unionists of the United States have been particularly active in supporting and assisting in the development and administration of American foreign policy as embodied in the Marshall Plan for European Recovery and the subsequent economic aid and Point 4 programs for technical cooperation with underdeveloped countries. Union leaders have served not only in labor posts, but in several instances as heads of missions, under the Economic Cooperation Administration and its successors—Mutual Security Agency, Foreign Operations Administration, and the current International Cooperation Administration (ICA). This form of labor support and participation has been especially important in combating the Communists' contention that U.S. aid abroad is only "an instrument of American capitalism."

American labor's interest in the ICA and its forerunners has centered in the attempt to find satisfactory answers to the economic difficulties which affect workers' welfare—seeking ways to increase purchasing power and raise productivity and efficiency and, at the same time, to insure for the workers a fair share of the benefits from increased production. American unions and industrialists as well have participated wholeheartedly in the U.S. government's program under which a substantial number of democratic unionists, technicians, and management and government representatives have come to the United States from foreign countries to learn U.S. techniques.

The merged AFL-CIO is continuing to emphasize the importance of labor's role in international affairs. It has set up a Committee on International Affairs to deal with matters of broad policy and a Department of International Affairs for administering international activities. Both the committee and the department include former AFL and CIO officials who have had long experience in similar work.

Labor Legislation and Relations to Government

American unions, in general, have a twofold interest in political activities. Their predominant interest is to protect labor's right to organize and engage in collective bargaining, and next is their interest in increasing the social security and welfare of union members

through legislation. However, social security legislation is not as important to labor in the United States as it is abroad, because many of the items covered by social security legislation in Western Europe are determined in this country by collective bargaining.

In the United States, federal and state laws protect certain fundamental rights of unions and individual workers, but the government rarely engages in or influences directly the bargaining process or the terms of the contract. Exceptions are found in certain strike situations as well as through the ban on the closed shop and other restrictions imposed by the Taft-Hartley Act. However, minimum wages for some categories of workers are fixed by law. The legal minimum wage for workers covered by federal law in the Fair Labor Standards Act was advanced in 1956 from 75¢ to \$1.00 an hour. This law covers about 24 million wage and salary earners, but leaves out workers who are not engaged in interstate commerce or who are in specifically exempted groups. Some states have minimum wage laws but many are far less than, and none is as high as, the federal minimum. The unions have pressed legislation for a minimum of \$1.25 an hour and for extension of coverage to about 20 million additional low-paid workers who are not covered by federal law.

Prior to the 1930's, although there was no legal barrier to organization, there was nothing—with the exception of the Railway Labor Act of 1926—to compel employers to negotiate with unions or to refrain from discrimination against employees belonging to unions. The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), passed during the early depression days of the Roosevelt Administration as a measure to aid economic recovery, set forth a broad statement of national labor policy. Section 7a contained provisions designed to secure from employers compliance with the labor provisions of the codes of fair competition. These were intended to speed the recovery from depression by helping to equalize bargaining power. Although NIRA was soon declared unconstitutional, the National Labor Disputes Act—the Wagner Act—which was enacted in 1935, contained the same statement of policy as that included in NIRA. It stated:

The inequality of bargaining power between employees who do not possess full freedom of association or actual liberty of contract, and employers who are organized in the corporate or other forms of ownership association substantially burdens and affects the flow of commerce, and tends to aggravate recurrent business depressions, by depressing wage rates and the purchasing power of wage earners in industry and by preventing the stabilization of competitive wage rates and working conditions within and between industries.

The Wagner Act did not attempt to set up a detailed labor code or establish elaborate machinery for collective bargaining. The core

of the law was its assertion of certain rights of employees and its definition of unfair labor practices which employers could not pursue with legal impunity. Section 7 of the Wagner Act provided that "employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in concerted activities, for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection." Section 8 defined unfair labor practices of employers as follows:

1. To interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed in section 7.
2. To dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of any labor organization or contribute financial aid or other support to it. . . .
3. By discrimination in regard to hire or tenure of employment or any term or condition of employment to encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization. . . .
4. To discharge or otherwise discriminate against an employee because he has filed charges or given testimony under this Act.
5. To refuse to bargain collectively with the representatives of his employees. . . .

The Wagner Act did not cover agricultural laborers, domestic servants, workers in interstate transportation, or government employees. It applied to all other types of workers engaged in interstate commerce. Railroad workers continued to be covered under a separate law.

The theory of the Wagner Act was that free opportunity for negotiation between official employer representatives and accredited representatives of employees was likely to promote industrial peace and might bring about the adjustments and agreements which the Act in itself did not attempt to compel. Its administration was in the hands of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) which was left relatively free to work out administrative and judicial procedures and rules of evidence in this new field of administrative law.

In addition to deciding cases of unfair labor practices, the Wagner Act required the NLRB, upon request of the union, to conduct an election by secret ballot. This was to determine whether or not the petitioning union should represent the employees in a given plant—or in a given department (or craft) of the plant if it were big enough or its operations varied enough to have been subdivided into smaller bargaining units. In case more than one union claimed to represent a majority of the employees in a given plant, department, or smaller

bargaining unit, the NLRB was to conduct an election to determine which union should represent the workers. Thereafter, until the expiration of the contract, only the union selected by the majority of workers in the unit could be their representative in relations with their employer, although individual workers might still belong to whatever union they wished.

State laws called "little Wagner Acts" were passed to cover labor's rights in such establishments as retail stores and service shops which conducted business only in one state. During the 1930's, such state laws generally were patterned on the federal law, but since adoption of the Taft-Hartley Act, they have become more restrictive on union organization and bargaining activities.

When the United States entered World War II late in 1941, organized labor gave President Roosevelt and the public a "no-strike" pledge which, on the whole, was well observed. Employers also gave a "no-lockout" pledge. The War Labor Disputes Act set forth special wartime regulations designed to reduce strikes or other labor disturbances which threatened to interrupt production. This Act was administered by the National War Labor Board (NWLB) which also administered the wage stabilization program.

After the war, defects—both real and fancied—in the Wagner Act led certain groups to press for amendments. These were embodied in the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947—the Taft-Hartley Act—which was passed despite the vigorous opposition of the unions and over President Truman's veto. While the Taft-Hartley Act governing industrial relations in interstate commerce maintained the Wagner Act's provisions on unfair labor practices and collective bargaining, it also placed certain restrictions on the unions and even prohibited some trade union activities which had long been accepted in labor-management relations.

Administrative changes called for in the Taft-Hartley Act, which make it more difficult for union complaints to be accepted for adjudication and brought to a successful conclusion, are among the provisions to which the unions object. The closed shop, strikes by government employees, boycotts, and sympathetic strikes are now considered "unfair labor practices," and are subject to injunctions and damage suits. Strikes must be preceded by a cooling-off period of 60 days and a vote on the final offer of the employer, while a declaration of an 80-day injunction is required prior to a strike which might create a national emergency. Permission has been given to employers to express views concerning the union without fear of committing an unfair labor practice, unless the views contain a threat of reprisal or promise of benefit as an effort to change the employees' attitude toward the union. The right of unions to file petitions or charges with the NLRB is now conditional upon prior filing of the union

constitution, the union's financial report, and other information with the Secretary of Labor, as well as the filing with the NLRB of non-communist affidavits by union officers. Unions have been made responsible for the acts of their agents whether or not the specific acts were actually authorized or ratified. Unions maintain that a provision which prevents striking employees from participating in NLRB elections permits an employer to destroy any union he does not like. Finally, employers as well as unions are now authorized to petition for NLRB elections and other changes relating to union representation.

Union leaders predicted that the Act would have serious consequences. Their failure to materialize, except in certain areas and industries such as southern textiles, is attributed by union leaders and many other competent observers to the relative prosperity and the high employment which have prevailed since the Taft-Hartley Act was passed. Nevertheless, the unions claim that the new law has retarded trade union organization and has adversely affected industrial relations.

One union observer has summed up the feeling of critics of the Taft-Hartley Act by stating in substance that the Act, despite the fact that it had corrected certain abuses, changed national labor policy for the worse through the creation of unnecessary tensions and conflicts, the disarrangement of reasonably satisfactory working relationships, and the increase of litigation and government regulation in labor relations. While the law accepts the principle of collective bargaining, union leaders believe that many provisions furnish encouragement to an employer who seeks to prevent union organization or to delay collective bargaining. Negotiation is hedged about with so many restrictive and often ambiguous provisions that the parties either have been forced to take, or have welcomed, the opportunity to seek refuge in the courts rather than in the development of more mature and responsible bargaining attitudes which the Wagner Act envisaged under a less hampered system of bargaining. In all states, under Taft-Hartley, collective bargaining agreements are treated as legal contracts which may be enforced in the civil courts. This could lead to endless litigation of matters which could be handled more satisfactorily by direct negotiation between the parties to the agreement.

After a decade of experience with the Taft-Hartley Act, the unions' opposition is unabated. A policy resolution adopted at the first convention of the AFL-CIO summarized the federation's objections to the Act—which, it said, “had been used to block union organization, to weaken unions, and to interfere with free collective bargaining.” It emphasized the unionists' belief that, in recent years, the NLRB's interpretation and administration of the Act in connection with a number of important issues have imposed “anti-labor restrictions”

which go beyond those required by the law. The AFL-CIO, the resolution stated, would "press for the elimination of the evils of the Taft-Hartley Act and the enactment of a sound and fair labor relations law based on the principles of the Wagner Act."

Regardless of the Taft-Hartley Act, in the vast majority of cases unions and employers continue to arrive at collective bargaining agreements without recourse to strikes or lockouts. Where conflicts arise, either employer or union may request the services of conciliation or mediation experts from federal and state governments, or they may resort to mutually agreed upon arbitrators—who are provided for in many contracts. There is nothing compulsory about the use of any of these officials.

During the depression of the 1930's, despite U.S. labor's greater traditional interest in economic power than in political power, the unions' attitudes toward governmental assistance changed considerably. The previous *laissez faire* attitude gave way to acceptance of and reliance on government aid, as it became apparent that labor legislation and court decisions were providing the basis for a vastly strengthened trade union movement. And as government played an increasingly important role in economic affairs, the unions concerned themselves more and more with the political party in control of the administration and with the policies it advocated. The reasons for political action were increased when the Supreme Court upheld governmental intervention in labor disputes.

Quite apart from their support of particular campaigns, issues, and individual politicians through subsidiary political organizations, the major federations and larger unions have conducted extensive lobbying activities in support of labor and social legislation of benefit to union members and other workers. The AFL-CIO, like many of the national unions, is continuing to maintain a legal staff to prepare new bills or amendments to existing laws, to furnish factual supporting data for legislation, and to defend union rights before federal agencies and state boards.

Despite the increased political activities of unions, it is significant that, by and large, labor has not departed from the tradition of nonpartisan political action established by the AFL's first president, Samuel Gompers. He believed that labor stands to gain more by holding the balance of power than by establishing its own party. The president of the AFL-CIO has reaffirmed this position:

We expect to continue our historic policy of being nonpartisan in relation to political parties but partisan in relation to principles. As law-abiding citizens, we shall continue, of course, to "pass the hat" for contributions with which to finance our activities in the field of political action. Finally, the AFL-CIO will work within the established framework of

American politics: the two-party system. So long as our rights as citizens are in no way diminished or jeopardized simply because we are trade unionists, there is no foreseeable reason why there should ever be a political labor party. Indeed, we believe that our legislative successes to date are a direct result of our refusal to transmute the labor movement into a political movement. We have been, and expect to remain, primarily an economic organization dedicated to improving the well-being of workers through collective bargaining without interference from the government.⁹

The major test of political support remains primarily the legislative record of the individual politician, regardless of party, although other issues have also been used as tests. Party discipline of the type customarily followed in Western Europe is lacking in the United States, which makes for a wide divergence in the political and social behavior of members of the same political party. Both the Democratic and Republican parties have conservative and liberal wings and they differ markedly in political complexion from region to region. These factors make it difficult for labor to follow a national pattern.

The Gompers dictum of rewarding your friends and punishing your enemies still prevails and the American worker continues to view his union primarily as a bread-and-butter or economic organization rather than as a political one.

Collective Bargaining With Management

The focal point of interest and activity for union members almost everywhere—and certainly in the United States—is collective bargaining with management, particularly bargaining on wages. But the day-to-day functioning of collective bargaining in the United States varies widely. Not only does it differ among industries and among companies of different types, sizes, and locations, but it also varies from plant to plant within one company. The same variation is found among different locals of one national and among national unions affiliated with the same central federation.

There is some evidence, however, of fairly similar management and union attitudes toward bargaining where favorable industrial relations prevail, as indicated by the NPA *Case Studies of the Causes of Industrial Peace Under Collective Bargaining*.¹⁰ This is illustrated by the study of bargaining between Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company, a medium-sized, mass production enterprise, and the Federation of Glass, Ceramic and Silica Sand Workers of America (CIO), a union

⁹ "The AFL-CIO Merger," *op. cit.*, p. 350.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*

which had, when the study was made, about 30,000 members of whom about 7,500 worked for Libbey-Owens-Ford.¹¹

According to that study, the union wants to be "in the know" as the spokesman of the workers. Collective bargaining does not mean to the union merely the settlement of this or that grievance and the bargaining of this or that rate. The union considers itself the channel of communication between workers and management. The company sees in collective bargaining relations an opportunity for getting the workers' slant on managerial problems and getting the union's help in interpreting important managerial decisions to the men in the shop. Authors of the study describe the union-management approach at Libbey-Owens-Ford this way:

The parties have a broad concept of the function of day-to-day collective bargaining. It is not merely a procedure for adjudicating grievances; nor is it concerned primarily with the interpretation and administration of the contract. In the eyes of both the company and the union, labor relations is a process of union-management and hence worker-management consultation—a means of continuous communication on an ever-increasing range of company and union problems.

Methods of Negotiating Contracts

The degree to which local union representatives in the United States participate in contract negotiations depends upon the union and upon prevailing bargaining practice in the industry. The latter, in turn, is set by the particular industrial pattern involved and is not governed by law. Neither the AFL nor the CIO exercised much direct influence on its affiliates in contract negotiation, and the merged federation continues this policy.

Despite the trend toward bargaining by national unions, most collective bargaining negotiations with employers still are conducted by local unions. This is particularly the case where small shops prevail or in such localized industries as the building trades. The responsiveness of a local union's bargaining committee to the opinion of the local's membership is bound to be much greater than that of a negotiating committee consisting of national representatives. Even when the local carries primary responsibility for contract negotiations, however, a representative of the national often participates in local negotiations, not only to provide assistance to local union representatives but also because the national has an interest in maintaining certain uniform standards throughout its industry.

A committee usually represents the union in negotiations with the employer and his representatives. Some of the union negotiators may

¹¹ *Case Study No. 2*, by Frederick H. Harbison and King Carr, NPA, Washington, 1948, xii and 64 pp., \$1.00. This union, now known as the United Glass and Ceramic Workers of North America, had over 47,000 members in 1954.

be salaried officers with long experience; others may be elected for the specific negotiating sessions. The importance of a research department to the modern American union cannot be overemphasized. With data provided by the national union's research department, sometimes supplemented by material from the central federation, the union negotiators can go to the bargaining table armed with expert economic and statistical information about the company, the industry, and the economic state of the nation.

As a general practice, unions—through a sense of responsibility and accountability to the membership—submit contracts to the local union membership as well as to the national union for final ratification. The extent of popular control of union policy may be judged by the extent of this practice of requiring local ratification. Popular control also is indicated by the fact that in a number of industries the members frequently reject the recommendations of their bargaining committees and send them back for further negotiations. When an agreement has been reached, it usually is reduced to writing, making it less probable that conflict will arise because of misinterpretation of specific provisions. Regardless of whether the bargaining is local, regional, or national in scope, or with a single employer or on a multi-employer basis, after the agreement has been ratified its enforcement and the handling of grievances through at least the preliminary stages are the responsibility of the local union.

The geographic area covered by craft and industrial agreements has spread out in many cases from a single plant and single community to entire regions. In recent years, a few have been extended to the whole country. Unions appear to favor industry-wide bargaining more than management does, but the nationwide extent of markets in certain industries makes this type of bargaining a natural objective. Such nationwide bargaining is undertaken, however, with a few employers and does not include all employers in an industry. The agreement with the few then forms the pattern for other employers.

Industry-wide bargaining takes various forms. In certain mass production industries, characterized by large corporations and big operating units such as automobiles and steel, negotiations begin with one or a few of the leaders in the industry. It is the practice for the national union to negotiate a general separate contract with each company which covers all the company's plants throughout the country. Following the company-wide agreement, negotiations are held at the plant level to take care of particular local differences and to apply the general benefits of the company-wide agreement to the specific local situation. Union negotiators believe that this technique results, in certain industries, in a higher scale of wages than could be obtained by industry-wide bargaining with all producers simultaneously, a practice which could permit less efficient producers to set the rates.

A similar process is followed in some of the smaller industries, as exemplified by the flat glass industry—where wage rates are vitally affected by those in the steel and automobile industries. Since a strike in 1936 which shut down the two largest flat glass manufacturers, Libbey-Owens-Ford and Pittsburgh Plate Glass have held joint company-wide negotiations with the principal union in the industry. This contract or agreement is called the “Big Glass” agreement, which sets the wage pattern for both companies. Agreements subsequently negotiated with the small flat glass manufacturers follow closely the pattern set by “Big Glass.” This is similar to the pattern in steel, where the hourly wage scale is based on the amount which the largest and presumably the most efficient companies will agree to pay. In the flat glass industry, the piece rate, amounting to approximately half the total wage bill, is worked out between each company and the union.¹²

Industrial relations is notably good in the highly competitive clothing industries. Here bargaining takes place on an industry-wide basis between the unions and associations of manufacturers. Most of the women’s and the men’s clothing industries are made up of small shops. Significantly, it is in these industries that two of the most efficient, democratic, and intelligently led unions operate—the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. Both unions resort to voluntary arbitration which is final for the settlement of grievances and other disputes that cannot be ironed out at the shop level through regular grievance procedures.

Union Security

American trade unionists, like union members in all countries, are extremely interested in job security. They believe that this can be achieved best by unions which are strong enough to produce results in collective bargaining with management. Thus, over the years, there has been a continuing effort to incorporate into agreements with employers provisions which make union membership a condition of employment. The unions feel that they can achieve greater responsibility and stability if they can concentrate on industrial relations rather than on continuous membership drives. They feel further that since, under the law, the union selected by a majority of employees in a bargaining unit has the exclusive responsibility for representing all workers of the unit, all workers should share equally in supporting the union’s efforts. The dues-paying union member naturally resents bearing the cost of negotiating agreements and processing grievances for the “free riders”—the employees who get all the benefits without becoming union members.

¹² *Case Study No. 2, op. cit.*

The provisions affecting union membership in agreements worked out by employers and unions vary widely, reflecting to some extent the degree of employment stability in the industry. Some unions have sought closed shops, others union shops, maintenance-of-membership clauses, or check-off systems.

A closed shop, narrowly defined, is one which requires that all employees covered by the agreement be union members, and that all new employees must become members at the time they are hired and remain members for the duration of their employment. In a number of industries and trades with shifting employment patterns—such as those in the maritime, printing, and building trades—closed shops have been prevalent for decades. In industries offering more stable employment, the union shop usually has been sought by unionists. Under this arrangement, new workers who are not union members may be hired, but they must join the union within a specified time after starting the job and must remain members throughout their employment. Maintenance of membership, a somewhat weaker form of union security, means that after a collective bargaining agreement has been signed employees who are already union members and those who subsequently join the union must remain members in good standing for the duration of the contract. Under the check-off system—which may be used in conjunction with either of the other security provisions or without any of them—the employer collects union dues by deducting them from an employee's wages at the source. The employer receives a signed statement from the employee authorizing him to make the deduction and the amount is then turned over to the business agent of the union.

The Taft-Hartley Act made the closed shop illegal, and it specifically permits the states to go beyond the restrictions of the federal law. As a result, a number of states have enacted so-called "right-to-work" laws which make any type of union security provision unlawful, and some of them have also imposed a variety of other restrictions on organizing, strikes, picketing, check-off of union dues, etc. The unions view such state laws as a concerted effort to undermine unions and the principle of collective bargaining and they are pressing for elimination of restrictive features of the Taft-Hartley Act and repeal of state antiunion laws. Despite these drawbacks, however, the number of agreements containing union security provisions has increased. A 1954 survey by the U.S. Department of Labor of 1,716 major agreements covering 7.5 million workers showed that 79 percent of the agreements, covering 81 percent of the workers, contained union security provisions, of which 65 percent of the agreements were for some variation of the union shop. A similar survey made by the department for 1949-50 showed 69 percent of the firms studied had union security provisions, with the union shop accounting for 49 percent.

Content of the Contract

The typical labor contract in the United States is generally divided into four essential parts:

1. The preamble, stating the parties to the agreement and defining its scope and aims.
2. The legislative sections, or working rules.
3. A judicial system designed to settle differences which arise over interpretation of the terms of the contract.
4. The contract enforcement arrangements.

While union-management agreements vary widely in content and amount of detail, certain provisions are usually standard. The section on working rules generally includes provisions regarding hourly minimum wage rates, the scale for more highly skilled employees in each category covered, piece and bonus rates with or without minimum guarantees, vacation and holiday periods, regular hours to be worked, overtime rates, shifts, union recognition, union security, conditions of employment, rights of management, duration of the agreement, and seniority rules. Sharing-the-work arrangements may be set forth, so that in slack times more workers may hold their jobs for a longer period. Customarily, provisions for sharing the work are limited to a certain number of hours per week; as a last resort, when job opportunities get too few, employers have recourse to layoffs on the basis of seniority.

The section of the contract dealing with the settlement of disputes usually outlines the all-important grievance procedure, which is primarily designed to settle differences before they lead to strikes or lockouts. The shop steward or grievance committeeman, elected by workers, and his opposite in management usually base the settlement of disputes on the letter and spirit of the law of the labor contract. A provision for arbitration of disputes arising from interpretation of the agreement frequently is also included in the agreement.

Most contracts spell out the procedures for carrying grievances from the level of the shop foreman to top management or an arbitrator. The grievance procedure at a medium-sized steel plant, evolved during seven years of experience, for example, allows for settlement of grievances at any one of five stages. These stages may be summarized this way:¹³

1. The first step is the attempted settlement of an employee's request or complaint by the foreman and a union representative

¹³ *Case Study No. 9, of the Minnequa Plant of Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation*, by George W. Zinke, *NPA Case Studies of the Causes of Industrial Peace Under Collective Bargaining*, Washington, 1951, xvi and 96 pp., \$1.00.

in the presence of the aggrieved worker. A great deal of preventive conciliation is accomplished at this stage, which also serves as the point for filing grievances requiring contract interpretations that must be made on higher levels.

2. The next step involves the superintendent of the department or his designated representative, as well as union representatives. Appeal to Step 2 must be made within five days after a deadlock at Step 1; a ruling at Step 2 must be made within five days, unless an extension of time is mutually agreed upon. In practice, Step 2 tends to be the first formal stage in the grievance procedure.
3. The plant grievance committee and the plant superintendent or his representative take over at this level. Appeal to Step 3 must be made within five days after a deadlock at Step 2; the first meeting at this stage must take place not more than 15 days after the finish of Step 2.
4. Step 4 is the top meeting so far as the company and the union are concerned. The representative of the national union is specifically mentioned as a participant at this stage, although he may and does take part in Step 3 on certain occasions. Actually, Steps 3 and 4 are not rigidly distinguished in practice. Both provide for the taking of minutes assuring full coverage of meetings.
5. The last step is arbitration.

Probably the most important development which has resulted from the application of this thorough grievance procedure is the successful culling out of requests and complaints which can be handled on an informal basis at Step 1. This is regarded as a preventive stage and means that the formal grievance procedure is reserved for real issues of contract interpretation. It is significant that the number of disputes which reached Step 2 or higher declined substantially after the procedure was put into effect.

Enforcement provisions generally provide penalties against either party which violates the contract, and they may prohibit negotiations during strikes or lockouts in violation of an agreement. National unions sometimes revoke the charter of locals which violate their agreements, and employer associations may fine and expel members which do so.

Factors in Good Labor-Management Relations

The NPA analysis of the causes of industrial peace in 30 companies with reasonably harmonious labor relations reveals a number of factors which have been especially important in collective bargaining. In general, industrial peace is one of the signs of good relations

between the company and the union. But an absence of strikes does not necessarily prove good labor-management relations. Nor does an occasional strike necessarily indicate bad relations. The kind of strike is more important than whether or not there is a strike. As trade unionists everywhere will recognize, a nationwide strike does not imply poor relations between workers and employers in every plant in the industry. Certain kinds of work stoppages leave bad feelings on the part of both parties. Other conflicts may soon be forgotten, particularly if they stem from honest differences of opinion and occur within the collective bargaining framework. The memory of the costs of some strikes may cause both management and union to try harder to settle differences without them. National stoppages—or threats of stoppages—in important industries may reflect basic policy disagreements or political maneuvering.

Another test of sound bargaining and good relations from management's standpoint is not merely whether union members and other employees have benefitted from the new contract, but also whether the company's position has been strengthened. Has total output per man hour increased? Has unit cost declined? If so, the consumers could gain through lower prices for the company's product.

The NPA Committee concluded that the reasons for peaceful relations in all of the companies it studied were the attitudes and approaches which the parties themselves consciously adopted or helped to achieve. A favorable combination of environmental factors can make it easier for management and unions to work together harmoniously, but "the parties still have to desire peace and work to achieve it," the Committee stressed. A significant contribution to better understanding between national unions and industry leaders has come about through improved day-to-day relationships between responsible union and company representatives at the shop or departmental level. In the plants studied by NPA, this has been achieved by a careful choice of representatives and through union and management efforts to educate the various officials on ways to carry out their responsibilities for handling grievances, negotiating contracts, administering pension funds, and performing the many other functions involving contact between union and management. A high proportion of grievances settled at the local level has a stabilizing effect on industrial relations which cannot be calculated statistically but is of crucial importance.

Nine basic causes of industrial peace were found by the Committee in every one of the 30 U.S. and English companies studied in such diverse industries as aircraft, chemicals, clothing, electric utilities, electrical goods, food processing, glass, machine tools, mining, pulp and paper, rubber, steel, and textiles. These basic factors are:¹⁴

¹⁴ *Fundamentals of Labor Peace, A Final Report, op. cit.*

1. There is full acceptance by management of the collective bargaining process and of unionism as an institution. The company considers a strong union an asset to management.
2. The union fully accepts private ownership and operation of the industry; it recognizes that the welfare of its members depends upon the successful operation of the business.
3. The union is strong, responsible, and democratic.
4. The company stays out of the union's internal affairs; it does not seek to alienate the workers' allegiance to their union.
5. Mutual trust and confidence exist between the parties. There have been no serious ideological incompatibilities.
6. Neither party to bargaining has adopted a legalistic approach to the solution of problems in the relationship.
7. Negotiations are problem-centered—more time is spent on day-to-day problems than on defining abstract principles.
8. There is widespread union-management consultation and highly developed information sharing.
9. Grievances are settled promptly, in the local plant whenever possible. There is flexibility and informality within the procedure.

The Current Status of Unions

Democracy in the trade union movement, as in all society, must have a dynamic quality. Democracy must be, in the words of Clinton S. Golden, "an ever-expanding and growing process that will meet the needs and provide the opportunities for personal growth and recognition required by free people."¹⁵ The U.S. trade union movement is meeting this test.

Since the 1930's, unions have played a constructive role in this country's constantly improving industrial relations. Though it is impossible to estimate accurately the effect of sound collective bargaining on the achievement of more widespread industrial peace during the past two decades or on other labor and management gains, it stands to reason that the attitudes of most unions and the methods they have followed have had a favorable impact. This does not imply that some industries and unions did not have good relations prior to the 1930's, but that was before great masses of workers were organized. Nor does it imply that labor relations in most plants is now ideal, nor that unions are without fault. On the contrary, the need

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

for improvement and continued advancement to a more enduring, creative relationship is marked. Nevertheless, progress has been made.

This is evident from only a brief summary of the current status of American unions, industrial relations, and national labor policies:

Management recognizes the trade union and for the most part engages in orderly collective bargaining with it, but strikes still occur despite generally improved industrial relations.

Under existing laws and administrative policies, unions have been able to increase their membership and otherwise strengthen their status; but unions still have been relatively unsuccessful in their attempts to organize some groups of workers. Furthermore, they face obstacles in various states and restrictions under the Taft-Hartley Act which in less prosperous times may lead to greater difficulty in labor-management relations.

Certain practices are essential to the continued strength and stability of the union organization. These include regular payment of adequate dues, participation of the local in collective bargaining and policy decisions, and acceptance of technological change with proper safeguards.

The economic thinking and practices of the most advanced management groups are now based on recognition of the advantages of full employment, social security, low unit cost, greater purchasing power, and increased productivity as the foundation for an expanding high-wage economy—which in turn benefits both labor and the entire community. Labor, like the nation as a whole, has abandoned isolationism, and it has joined with other free trade unions in efforts to develop a strong democratic labor movement and international economic cooperation throughout the free world.

Degree of Labor-Management Peace

Nowadays the climate for industrial peace is far better than it used to be. The earlier type of violent strike, involving the use of mounted company police, tear gas, bullets, and sometimes even the National Guard and federal troops, is practically nonexistent. Picket lines are generally regarded as a matter of course. Union meetings are protected. There is still occasional violence, but hardly anywhere today does the community border on civil war during a strike. While strikes are still frequent, they do not engender the bitterness they once did.

In 1955, as a result of work stoppages, the number of man-days idle during the year was less than 25 percent of the 1946 number. Even in 1946, when there were more man-days idle than in any year from 1927 to 1955, more than nine out of every 10 contracts between employers and unions were renegotiated peacefully. The strikes of 1919 following World War I affected a larger percentage of the work

force (21 percent) than did those in 1946 (14.5 percent). Furthermore, by 1946 a far higher percentage of the labor force had been organized into trade unions.

A great deal has been written about the natural antagonism between the boss—whether he be foreman, superintendent, or owner—and the worker. Like so many generalities, this one has been somewhat exaggerated insofar as it applies to organized shops in this country. Visitors from overseas are reported to be amazed at the informal, friendly relations between supervisory staff and employees in many American factories which they visit. Apparently, this atmosphere is very noticeable to industrialists, technicians, and workers who come here from other countries. They are surprised, often, to see a company president or senior executive walk through a plant and hear in response to his “Good morning, Joe,” a laborer say “Good morning, Bill.” This informality is symptomatic of American democracy at work.

In general, the trade union has been accepted as a permanent fixture by management, though some segments of industry still oppose it. The respect of management for labor and of labor for management has been won in many different ways. Occasionally, smart union officials have saved the company from bankruptcy. At times, this has involved the union members’ voluntary acceptance of a reduction in wages. In some cases, the union has suggested methods of improving production which have saved considerable money for the company and have increased wages for the workers. Some unions have even provided capital on a loan basis to companies in need of it—as in the case of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, for example, which loaned money to men’s clothing manufacturers during the depression when commercial banks refused to extend credit needed to avoid shutdowns.

No little credit for the development of this attitude of mutual respect and understanding in various factories and other business establishments must be given to the collective bargaining negotiations which take place year after year all over the country. In these conferences, company and union representatives of all ranks have learned to respect each other in the informal, sometimes brutally frank, discussions in which a contract is hammered out. The experience gained by thousands of union members in these working sessions with management is serving to broaden the base of union leadership able to carry out the members’ wishes without need of open conflict.

The Workers’ Economic Position

Thanks to the unions and better labor-management relations, substantial gains—partly as a result of higher productivity and greater output—have gone to American labor in the form of more wages,

leisure time, and various types of fringe benefits. Although prices have also risen, in manufacturing the increase in hourly *real* wages—in terms of 1947 to 1949 prices—was from 77 cents an hour in 1929 to about \$1.63 an hour in 1955. During the 35-year period from 1920-55, average weekly hours dropped from over 47 to somewhat less than 41, with time-and-a-half for overtime.

The United States has goods and services undreamed of 50 years ago. The quality of many manufactured articles is better. The material well-being of the people—as typified by such basic items as more healthful foods and better housing facilities—has advanced more rapidly than ever before. In 1955, roughly 52 million passenger cars were registered, and seven out of every 10 families in the United States owned a car.

The standard of living of the whole population has increased as a result of the unions' struggle to secure higher real wages and other benefits for their members. Union wages are paid to all workers in companies with which unions have contracts, regardless of whether workers belong to the union or not. The example of union successes in one organized plant often has stimulated workers in unorganized plants to join a union and secure similar gains for themselves. Increased purchasing power has reflected itself in an ever-widening circle of demand for increased production, more services, better education, and a host of other cultural as well as material advantages for American workers and their families.

The unions' success in securing benefits for workers would have been more difficult to achieve if labor had not persuaded management that higher wages also meant greater production and higher profits.

During most of the last 50 years, productivity in American manufacturing industries has increased, on the average, by a little over 3 percent per year; in the postwar period, this increase has averaged close to 3.5 percent per year. Productivity has also been increasing in all other measurable activities. A wealth of natural resources and the presence of a large number of people within an unrestricted trading area have contributed to this high American output. However, the U.S. industrial system has played a very large part in its achievement. Under the spur of competition and the demand for more and more goods, American industry gradually evolved the mass production system, based on the concept of the production of the largest volume of goods for the largest number of people at the lowest possible cost.

Responsibility for introducing technical improvements rests primarily upon management. Industry has seen the desirability of change in the search for greater profits. These profits in turn have been used in part to further more industrial research and to invest money in new industries. Industrial advance has been encouraged by our large,

relatively well-paid population, educated to buy labor-saving devices and all manner of improved products, and by the demand from abroad for our products.

Trade unions, however, have stimulated increased productivity in a number of different ways. This increase has been accomplished partially by the fact that union demands for higher wages and other benefits have caused employers to seek more efficient production to offset higher costs of labor. But increased productivity also has been encouraged by the fact that labor's traditional reluctance to accept technological change has been gradually overcome as unions have become more aware of its benefits to workers.

In contrast to the earlier resistance to technological change, in certain plants and industries the unions themselves have taken the initiative in urging the adoption of new techniques. They have urged the need for modernization of equipment and methods involving considerable displacement of workers in order to keep the plant going. Some industrial unions no longer question management's right to introduce new work standards without previous union review. However, they preserve the right to submit complaints to the foreman and through the grievance procedure, and the right to strike if that process fails to produce a satisfactory adjustment.

While some unions are still suspicious of time studies and job-evaluation techniques, employers favor them because they establish uniform standards. Less rigid standards and more individual modification have resulted from the attempt to adjust to the psychology of the worker in this situation. Workers gradually have come to realize that the union was organized to protect them against such things as the speed-up, inequities in shift work, and loss of jobs, and to give them at least some of the benefits of increased productivity. Specific job controls have been difficult to establish in mass production industries. What has counted is the availability of another job paying the same or a better wage—not necessarily the same kind of job or one requiring exactly the same skill. Some workers have come to believe that even though changes to increase productivity may do away with the particular jobs at which they have been working, they will be afforded other new job opportunities as a matter of management responsibility. In the case of migration to new plants, the national union is likely to have considerable faith in its ability to organize workers in the new area.

The trend of the mass production unions toward greater uniformity in wage levels has also been a factor in encouraging technological change. The unions have sought to eliminate wage differentials for the same work on the basis of sex, color, locality, or industry, and have sought to raise minimum rates everywhere. While the unions continue to press these wage demands, they leave management free

to achieve lowered costs in whatever ways it can without harm to the workers. This has a tendency to force employers to keep abreast of prevailing technological changes in order to meet rising costs.

Unions in some industries have succeeded in obtaining wage increases based on productivity advances—the so-called “improvement factor.” In many cases, the pressure of labor costs has affected the timing of a management decision in favor of innovations—a new machine, a new process or product, or investment in a new plant. Or an employer may have offset a specific increase in wages or improvement in conditions of employment by introducing technical changes, instituting more efficient methods in the utilization of labor, improving training methods, making better assignments of labor, and providing better supervision of employees’ work.

The presence of the union in the plant may have a significant effect upon productivity in still another way. If the union has a constructive approach and possesses the confidence of the workers, it can have an extremely beneficial effect upon morale. In most instances, it would appear that the union helps to remove restrictions on innovations by giving workers a greater feeling of security. If collective bargaining relations in a plant are good, this improves the workers’ attitudes toward the company and makes for better performance on the job. Once the workers realize that collective bargaining provides for the sharing of benefits secured by new methods, they are more willing to accept further change. The union can, through advance consultation with management and explanation to members, influence the rate at which technological changes are introduced. Through the airing of grievances and their satisfactory adjustment, workers make many suggestions for improving production.

This improvement in attitude toward technological change has been one of the most significant developments of American unions in recent years. The acceptance by many unions of mechanization and changed methods of production and the acceptance by large segments of management of the desirability of distributing widely the increased gains of improved production are new factors which contribute greatly to higher standards of living.

Chapter II.

France

IN FRANCE, the development of the trade union movement has been uneven and uncertain. Spectacular spurts of success marked by enthusiasm and militance have been followed by periods during which the unions have been torn by ideological conflicts. The interest and participation of union members have ranged from high peaks of concerted activity and organization to low valleys of apathy and disinterest.

Today, no reliable figures exist on the number of dues-paying members in French unions. Membership claims do not provide an adequate measure of strength and, therefore, cannot be compared fairly with those of other countries. Rather, they indicate the union leaders' opinions on the number of workers who may respond to the initiative of the particular union or central federation.

Whereas the two major central federations which have recently merged in the United States possessed similar broad objectives, the three major central federations in France are oriented to sharply differing ideologies, as are a number of smaller central groupings. It is this ideological—rather than bread-and-butter—approach which particularly distinguishes the French trade union movement from that in the United States.

Union Growth and Ideologies

In France, some local unions had been organized in the early part of the 19th century, but the real development of the French trade union movement began in the 1870's. Until World War I, the predominant labor philosophy was syndicalism—although some unions were colored by several brands of socialism, or by Marxism or anarchism; and the Catholic unions opposed the revolutionary doctrines of each of these groups.

Syndicalism was a unique philosophy originated by French unionists. The syndicalists sought control by workers over all processes of production. They looked upon the union as a means of eventually becoming a controlling instrument which would eliminate the employer classes as well as the politicians, the government, and the intellectuals. The syndicalist doctrine was not precisely thought out or systematic; rather it was a more or less spontaneous reaction of workers to economic, political, and social conditions. Syndicalism

was linked to Marxism by the concept of class struggle; to anarchism, the link was the "anti" attitude toward employers and government; to non-Marxist socialism, it was the desire to bring about drastic changes in the economic system by increasing the economic control of trade unions.

The strongly syndicalist coloring of French unionism—which can still be seen in many characteristics of the unions—reflected its environment. France, in the early 20th century, was a nation where the state opposed the workers, often violently, and offered none of the social security measures which Germany and England used to alleviate the workers' lot. Employers were largely characterized by an arrogant feudal tradition and an antisocial attitude. They believed they had to assert their authority over their employees at all costs. Living in a society in which rigid caste lines existed and little opportunity could be found for obtaining a greater share of the national wealth, the workers could see no hope for improvement, either from the state or by negotiating with the employers. Thus the syndicalists, and their concept of class struggle, found ready support.

The unions were viewed by the syndicalists as the workers' major weapon in the battle to subdue the employers. The syndicalists reasoned something like this: When the union triumphed—through the use of the general strike and the resultant paralysis of commerce and industry—the state (looked upon as the employers' agent) would disappear. In its place, the triumphant workers would rule through spontaneous groupings in the shops, through city labor centers, and under the loose coordination of the central labor federation. So far as the unions' day-to-day activities were concerned, the syndicalists viewed every strike as a sort of dress rehearsal for the final, climactic general strike. There was strong stress on spontaneity, and it was not considered necessary that workers maintain a regular dues-paying relationship to the union so long as they would respond enthusiastically to strike calls. The syndicalists considered collective bargaining a compromise with the employer-enemy, which merely diluted the workers' militancy. To accomplish the ends which workers' organizations in other countries thought could be obtained through the machinery of the state or negotiations with employers, the syndicalists looked to the union only. They viewed socialists as, at best, middle-class intellectuals; and, at worst, as a group climbing to power on the backs of the workers. They distrusted politicians. Democratic principles were a smoke screen of the ruling class, they believed, intended to delude the workers and maintain their enslavement.

These views predominated in French trade unions in the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) until 1914, when the beginning of World War I caused an abrupt collapse of the unions' beliefs that wars were for the "capitalists." Most CGT leaders, who for many

years had threatened a general strike against war, quickly forgot their philosophy in the upsurge of nationalism and collaborated with the government.

At the end of World War I, CGT—benefiting from the enormous growth of industry and the unrest caused by postwar inflation—grew rapidly. The Russian Revolution became a beacon of hope to many of the workers, and an articulate and well-disciplined communist bloc gained strength in the unions and in CGT. There were violent disagreements between the majority, led generally by more moderate union leaders, and those who wanted to make another French Revolution out of the unrest of the workers. In 1919 and 1920, strikes in the Paris metal-working industry and in the railroads, followed by a general strike called by CGT to back up the rail workers, were unsuccessful. In 1921, the communist groups split from CGT, and there were two French labor movements—one called reformist, the other revolutionary. This lasted until the days of the Popular Front against Fascism when, in 1936, unity was once more achieved. In 1939, after the Nazi-Soviet pact, communist groups were expelled from CGT. But during the German occupation, with the Soviet Union then fighting Germany, communists were taken back into CGT and had a leading role in unionists' underground activities.

The final split in CGT came in 1947, when the noncommunist elements among the CGT leadership, led by Léon Jouhaux, left to form the General Confederation of Labor-Workers Force (CGT-FO). Through all these shifts, questions of foreign policy were of great importance, with the communists capitalizing as much as possible on the issues which served the interests of the Soviet Union and utilizing their position in the union to assist in Communist party objectives.

Because the socialists were plagued by frequent and bitter schisms, these groups had less sustained influence on the workers and their organizations in France than in almost any other nation of Western Europe. Socialism, which reached its peak of influence during the time when Léon Blum was premier under the Popular Front, is most influential in the white-collar and professional groups. It was these workers who were primarily responsible for the break with the communist-dominated CGT, and for the subsequent formation of CGT-FO.

Some Catholic unions were organized during the 19th century, and in 1920, the French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC) was set up. Since 1945, CFTC has shown a relatively marked increase in both general membership and active workers at the plant level. It remains strongly opposed to communism, and will cooperate with CGT only on specific occasions when both are seeking the same economic goals.

By 1947, French trade unions probably had around 7 million members. But in 1955, the membership figure had declined considerably, with estimates ranging from under 2 million to 3 million—probably less than 20 percent of all wage and salaried workers. France has a labor force of about 20 million in a total population of almost 43 million. About three-fourths of the labor force is in nonagricultural pursuits and, of these, about 13 million are wage and salary earners in private and public employment. It has been estimated that 90 percent of the manufacturing establishments employ fewer than 11 employees—a fact which poses significant problems in the efforts of trade unions to represent workers effectively.

Fundamental weaknesses in the French economy inevitably have deterred the growth of trade unions and the gains they could make for members. Those interacting deficiencies include insufficient industrialization, monopolistic business practices, antiquated production methods, periodic unemployment, agricultural inefficiency, regional unbalance, and a weak export structure. Some progress has been made by successive French governments since 1945 in attempts to achieve a healthy economic situation. Unemployment has not been a serious problem for several years. Although there have been increases in minimum wage rates, the average income in France falls short of that of the United Kingdom and of most of the smaller countries of north-western Europe.

Moreover, the unions still have a long way to go in achieving a constructive role in industry—in helping workers to benefit adequately from any gains which may be made in productivity. Wages have remained a focal point of dissatisfaction. Very little genuine bargaining actually takes place between an employer and recognized union representatives. This is caused by several factors. Labor legislation in France affects many more aspects of collective bargaining than in the United States, and this results in limiting the area for direct labor-management bargaining. The unions are still comparatively weak, both organizationally and financially, in relation to employers—whether private or governmental. French workers—more interested in protective measures than in modernization or expansion—are reluctant to shift to new jobs, and training and orientation courses to facilitate occupational changes are few and far between.

The basic barrier to healthy and constructive collective bargaining, however, is the distrust with which the great majority of employers and workers continue to approach each other. French employers generally have followed a pattern of uncompromising conservatism, resistance to technological change, unwillingness to take risks, and feeling that they are complete masters in their own houses. When this attitude was combined with a refusal to permit voluntarily any improvement in the lot of workers, it caused many workers to despair

of ever winning a larger share of the national income except through legislative action or violent upheaval.

There were some signs, however, during late 1955 and 1956, that some of the largest and most progressive establishments were willing to go a little further in collective bargaining with labor than in the past. The first of these was the success of CGT-FO in stimulating the management of the main plant of the nationalized Renault Automobile Manufacturing Company to negotiate a contract which contained a number of innovations. One of these tied future wage increases to future gains in technology and production—a marked change from former agreements. Since this contract was negotiated in September 1955, other important agreements have followed similar lines. Whether these mark the beginning of a real shift to genuine collective bargaining, however, it is still too early to judge.

Union Structure

The French worker in joining a union may seek the same kind of economic and social benefits as the U.S. worker. But his choice of a union is influenced more by the union's attitude toward politics or ideologies than its proved skill in collective bargaining with management. This is understandable since very little collective bargaining as it is known in the United States actually takes place.

French workers are locally courted by rival unions affiliated with several central federations. There is a possibility that as a local member the worker can participate not only in his local's affairs, but also in the meetings of his departmental federation (France is divided geographically into 90 departments and Corsica), his national union, or even his central federation.

French unions have given considerably less attention than those in the United States and some other countries of Western Europe to such activities as workers' education, research, publications, and general community services.

The Central Federations

There are not only three major central federations, but also several smaller ones from among which the French worker may choose. He could belong to any of these:

1. The General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which since the war has been under the control of the communists and faithfully follows the party line. This federation is particularly strong in basic industries like mines, metal fabrication, and transportation.
2. The French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC), which is a continuation of the pre-World War II Catholic union federa-

tion. While it is not officially tied to the Catholic Church, in practice it follows the principles of Christian trade unionism. Neither is it tied in any official way to the Catholic political party. Its greatest strength is in textiles, but it is also fairly strong in metal production.

3. The General Confederation of Labor-Workers Force (CGT-FO), which is anticommunist and mainly oriented to socialist thinking. Much of its strength is drawn from white-collar and public service workers.
4. The General Confederation of Technicians and Supervisory Employees (CGC). This federation, which broke off from CGT at about the same time as CGT-FO, represents its specialized members even in industries where manual workers are organized by other unions.

A number of smaller and less influential federations and autonomous unions, one representing the followers of General de Gaulle, are relatively insignificant in the trade union picture as a whole.

The central federations hold annual or biennial conventions. Although their function is to allow delegates from the locals to express themselves, many observers think that, by contrast with prewar days, these conventions have lost their effectiveness in debating and forming policy. Voting at conventions is based on the number of members represented by the delegates.

A national committee in both the CGT and CGT-FO has full policy-making powers between conventions. The committee is made up of one representative of each national union affiliate, plus one representative of each departmental federation. Most of these are full-time officials. They vote according to the number of members in the union or departmental federation they represent. In CFTC, the policy is made by a national council, composed of 22 members elected by the convention and 22 selected by the largest national unions and departmental or regional federations. The national committee elects and may recall the executive board in CGT and CGT-FO. In CFTC, the national convention chooses the federation's executive board.

The executive boards are made up of eight members in CGT-FO, 13 in CGT, and 36 in CFTC. In CGT-FO and CGT, members of the executive board are full-time officers of the federation and are required to relinquish all posts in their national union or state federation upon election. The presidency of the federation generally has gone, in recent years, to a senior leader, while the actual operating functions are in the office of secretary-general.

While no exact membership figures are known and the federations' membership claims are considered to be somewhat high, it is esti-

mated that in 1955 CGT had about one million members; CFTC about 350,000; CGT-FO about 300,000; CGC about 100,000; and all others something over 50,000.

The National Unions

With the exception of barbers, clerical workers in private industry, jewelry workers, marine officers, and similar types of employees, French national unions (federations) are industrial unions. In some cases, such as railways and the building trades, one industrial union may have national and district councils for particular crafts. Each rival central federation attempts, within its financial and organizing limitations, to recruit workers into categories corresponding to the 40-odd industrial unions which were in CGT before the 1946-47 split.

The chief officer of the national unions is a secretary-general, who heads the executive board. The office of president often does not exist. The better financed national unions—most of them CGT, communist-dominated affiliates—pay their national officers to work full-time for the unions. In the CGT-FO and CFTC affiliates, the union officers frequently must still earn a living in industry. In addition to the executive board, elected at each annual or biennial convention of delegates from the locals, a national committee is elected which generally meets quarterly to oversee the executive board and to decide on questions of broad policy between conventions.

Departmental Federations and City Centrals

Councils of union locals—city centrals—are far less important than departmental federations which are made up of local unions of each central federation. These departmental federations have been accepted by CGT, CFTC, and CGT-FO as basic units of collective action, and in many cases the departmental federations are powerful and quite independent of the national unions' direction. They each elect a representative on the central federation's national committee.

Because of its rigid communist discipline and control over members, CGT has sufficient funds to staff almost all of its departmental federations with full-time officers; the other federations usually find this difficult, and merely pay a worker to take care of several departmental federations in one region. This makes it virtually impossible for the noncommunist bodies to provide proper union services. Since much collective bargaining is with employers' associations, the departmental federations have to take the major responsibility in the absence of adequately financed national unions.

The city and departmental federations to a large extent have taken over the functions and headquarters of the old Bourses du Travail—workers' social, educational, and economic centers which, from the 1890's on, have existed in most industrial communities. The Bourses

generally have had some funds from municipal governments, and some of them still do.

Local Unions and Plant Committees

French workers usually belong to city-wide local unions, but some industrial unions have set up locals in large plants, such as those which negotiated the precedent-breaking 1955 contract at the Renault plant. Sublocals may be set up to cover members working for various employers. Delegates to conventions of the national unions are elected by the locals.

The local union fixes the amount of dues, and the national union and the central federation set the amounts to be paid to them by the local. With a combination of low wages and a tradition of nonpayment by individual members, dues usually are too low to maintain headquarters and full-time union officials or strike benefits, as they do in the United States. Unlike the situation in the United States, in France the local union's functions of collective bargaining and grievance processing are largely determined by laws covering labor-management relations. Within the plant, the government's labor inspectors may check on the terms of compliance with labor-management agreements. These agreements may or may not have been originally drawn up by the affected employers and workers. The agreement may have been extended within the industrial or geographical area by order of the Minister of Labor.

In addition, under French law, the Minister of Labor decides which unions are to represent the workers nationally or in a particular plant. Theoretically, this decision is based on four criteria set forth in the 1950 law on collective agreements: the union's independence, experience, seniority, and patriotic attitude displayed during the German occupation. Often, the CGT, CGT-FO, and CFTC unions all have been judged "most representative." This means that there may be at least three rival locals organizing and claiming to represent the workers in a particular plant.

The processing of grievances is further complicated by the fact that French law requires that shop stewards be elected in shops with more than 10 employees. Each rival union presents a slate of candidates and the shop stewards are elected by all employees of the plant. Thus, an individual worker with a grievance often has the choice of going to a shop steward who belongs to a different union in his part of the plant, or having to find, in another part of the plant, a shop steward who represents the union to which he belongs.

Plant committees (*comités d'entreprise*) are set up, under French law, in all incorporated enterprises employing 50 or more persons. The members of the plant committee are elected from all employees in the plant by a system of proportional representation, with the

“most representative” unions putting up complete slates. The only management representative serves as presiding officer. Quite often, one worker may be an elected local union official, a shop steward, and a member of the plant committee.

Under the law, the committees are assigned social and economic functions, and are given the right to consult on management policy. Their widest powers are in the social field, involving operation of certain welfare activities such as canteens, cooperatives, day nurseries, and supervision of job-training and apprenticeship programs. They may also, as in the case of some U.S. labor-management committees, oversee plant safety and health activities.

In the economic field, the plant committees' powers are entirely advisory. In theory, the employer must consult the committee on problems of organization and operation of the enterprise and, annually, on plans for the coming 12 months. The shop committee must be informed on the company's profits and may suggest how the profits are to be used. In practice, the employers oppose participation by the plant committees in any management functions. As a result of this opposition, plus the fact that workers without previous knowledge of management problems and functions often are elected to the committees, their advisory powers on company operations have been virtually ignored.

Observers of the working of the plant committees since 1946, when they were made mandatory in establishments having 50 or more employees, do not see any marked influence on labor-management relations. Some unionists think that the emphasis on social functions diverts the workers' energies and attention away from more fundamental bread-and-butter activities. Many believe the committees cannot have any real usefulness until and unless the unions become stronger.

Participation in International Bodies

As in other matters, the sharp ideological split among leaders of the rival central federations carries over into their international affiliations. The CGT and a communist-dominated Italian federation are the only important central federations in Western Europe affiliated with the communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). On the other hand, the CGT-FO, which withdrew from the WFTU, because of WFTU's domination by communists, is affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and it has derived help from the latter in its efforts to rival the better entrenched and wealthier CGT. The CFTC has been affiliated with the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU) since 1920. In addition, about 30 of the national federations affiliated with CGT-FO participate in some of the 21

International Trade Secretariats (ITS) which cooperate with the anticommunist ICFTU, and most of the CFTC unions are affiliated with Christian trade secretariats.

Relations to Government

The French Government is the largest single employer of industrial workers, having about one-fourth of all nonagricultural wage and salary earners on its payroll either as civil servants or workers in nationalized or government-operated enterprises. These enterprises include railroads, coal mines, potash mines, aircraft plants, gas and electric industries, banks, insurance companies, and government-owned plants like the Renault and Berliot automobile and truck factories. Thus, the government is important to French unions not only because of their emphasis on making gains for workers through legislation. It is important also as an employer who participates in labor-management negotiations. In its position of employer, the government has an opportunity to act as pace-setter in improving collective bargaining—as it did in the case of the 1955 Renault contract. On the other hand, much of its collective bargaining is affected by questions of national economic policy, such as price policies, the national budget, and by the kind of finance minister holding office at the time negotiations take place.

The government fixes minimum wages for each of the wage zones into which France is divided. Under French law, the minimums are set by the Cabinet after a report from the Minister of Labor and Minister of Economic Affairs. These officers, in turn, must consult with the National Collective Agreements Commission, which is made up of employers and representatives from the major union federations, consumer-defense organizations, and the government. The French worker receives additional income—the amount depending upon family status, number of children, etc.—in the form of social insurance benefits and family allowances. This amounts to as much as one-third of the direct wage income of the average worker.

These factors, plus their concern with ideology, have made French unions extremely dependent on the success of political parties which may promote the economic welfare of the workers. Although there is no organic connection between CGT-FO and the Socialist party (SFIO), both the federation and the party support similar programs and have similar social and political goals. The SFIO depends on CGT-FO members for votes. The CGT-FO, in turn, looks to SFIO as a sponsor of the legislation and appropriations for social benefits which it wants for union members. To a lesser extent, the CGT-FO also relies on the parties of the center—the Radical Socialists (PRS) and the Popular Republicans (MRP).

Similarly, CFTC has no organic connection with any political party. While many of its members find their political home in the MRP, its left-wing members retain an uneasy independence of political ties.

The CGT is the only central federation in France that is completely tied to a political party—the Communist party (CPF)—but according to some recent estimates the number of CGT members is declining. When CGT can make it appear that the Soviet line coincides with the bread-and-butter interests of French workers, CGT has been able to carry along many of its rank-and-file members on political questions. Also, CGT has been able, when it could show a chance of making immediate economic gains, to rely on the support of the vast majority of unorganized workers. But on political matters, the unorganized workers usually swing their support to CGT-FO. The CGT members at present cannot be counted on to participate in purely political strike actions and, in fact, workers will not respond to a CGT strike call unless it is supported by either CGT-FO or CFTC.

Collective Bargaining With Management and Government

Except for plant committees there are few ways in the factories in which unions can obtain information, let alone have a voice in management operations. The majority of French employers, as a matter of principle, will not share any management prerogatives with employees or cooperate in any fundamental manner.

An attempt to encourage cooperation between workers and management in the interest of increasing French productivity has been made as part of the Marshall Plan activities. Under the Moody Amendment to the 1952 Mutual Security Act passed by the U.S. Congress, officials of the U.S. foreign aid program and the French government worked out a program of production assistance to forward-looking French manufacturers who were willing to share the gains of increased productivity through higher wages for workers and lower prices for consumers. Special emphasis was to be placed on close management cooperation with the free trade unions, with a view to strengthening the free labor organizations as against the communist unions. Largely inspired by this program, industry-wide productivity agreements were concluded by management and various free trade unions in the textile, clothing, shoe, and foundry industries. These agreements generally provide for demonstration on pilot projects in line with the productivity program's objectives. So far, the record on accomplishments is mixed. But, in any case, it is still too early to make an evaluation. As a minimum accomplishment, however, the program can certainly point to its stimulation of labor-management consultation on certain economic issues affecting workers' welfare.

Syndicalism does not lend itself to the kind of collective bargaining that results in contractual agreement. The class antagonism and distrust which have permeated French industry also oppose genuine collective bargaining. Furthermore, communist propaganda often fanned the antagonisms which caused failure of genuine attempts at bargaining, first in 1919 and again during the Popular Front period of 1936-8. As a result, most agreements were reached through arbitration. After World War II, a law providing for a high degree of state intervention and regulation of collective bargaining was passed. Inasmuch as wages were frozen and because of the stringency of the law itself, only two major national agreements were signed while this legislation was in force. In February 1950, a new collective bargaining law was passed which decontrolled wages, provided new machinery for reaching agreements, and further outlined conciliation and arbitration procedures.

Under the 1950 law, negotiations can begin on the initiative of the Minister of Labor, unions, or management. Two types of agreements are provided for in the law. The first is a full collective agreement; the other is more limited. The collective agreement covers not only wages but also the rights of unions, hiring and firing, special conditions for women and young workers, vocational training, and apprenticeship. This collective agreement must also include clauses dealing with shop stewards and plant committees and the method of financing the committees' social welfare schemes. Other sections must cover paid vacations, procedures for conciliating disputes arising under the agreement, and means of revising and terminating the contract. The law also lists matters which may be contained but are not required in the collective agreement—including overtime pay rates, rotation of shifts, provisions for night and holiday work, incentive payment systems, bonuses, pensions and other allowances, and procedures for arbitration of disputes.

There is no compulsory arbitration, but there is compulsory conciliation under the 1950 law which provided for formal machinery for arbitration and conciliation. A National Conciliation Commission is composed of spokesmen from the "most representative unions," employers, and members of government. A National Arbitration Court is empowered to pass on appeals from arbitration decisions—but only in rare circumstances to arbitrate disputes. Under this law, the collective agreement can be national, regional, or local and may be extended, by order of the Minister of Labor, to other employers and workers in the area.

In reality, instead of collective agreements, most agreements by French unions and employers have been on a department-wide basis and cover only wages—frequently the legal minimum wage. In most instances, unions have been too weak to obtain agreement from the

powerful employers' associations or individual employers on the range of subjects which are mandatory for a collective agreement. As a result, this fine-sounding law is quite empty in practice.

The fact that negotiations are between the employers and a whole group of bitterly competing unions—CGT, CGT-FO, CFTC, and others—has made it difficult to obtain a common, firm union front in the discussion. The fragmentation on the union side permits employers to play one union against another in collective bargaining. This constitutes one of the basic differences between U.S. and French collective bargaining. French employers, under the leadership of the Conseil National de Patronat Français (CNPFF), have generally refused to bargain on a nationwide basis. Unions have disagreed on questions of the size of the bargaining unit—with CGT wanting city-by-city negotiations and agreements and CGT-FO and CFTC preferring nationwide agreements. And there frequently has been disagreement among rival unions on wage demands to be presented to employers.

In its capacity as employer of a large number of nonagricultural wage earners, the government itself is a party to collective bargaining relations with unions. Although wages generally are set by the government rather than through collective agreements, they are still the result of considerable bargaining. The government's influence over collective bargaining is further enhanced by the minimum wage, family allowance, and social security programs which it administers. It has been traditional in French collective bargaining to have a much greater incidence of governmental intervention in strikes in basic industries than in the United States. This is true not only of the national government, but also of state and local governments. Despite the fact that legislation regulates the collective bargaining relationship in many ways, there is no direct governmental restriction on the right to strike, though the government can use the draft laws to force individual strikers to return to work, and on occasion troops have been used in recent years to operate enterprises of national importance during strikes.

The Current Status of Unions

From the postwar peak of an estimated 7 million members, with 6 million of these in CGT, total French dues-paying union membership has declined to something like 2 to 3 million. Dues of 15¢ a month—about 15 or 20 minutes' work for a semiskilled or skilled worker—are considered high in France. The low dues, plus the fact that most members either do not pay them or pay them irregularly, have made it difficult for the noncommunist unions to carry on effective collective bargaining, to hire and train full-time organizers, to launch wide recruiting drives, and to finance strikes. Also, CGT-FO suffers from

the fact that it had to start virtually without equipment and resources when it broke from CGT in 1947. On the other hand, CGT has at its disposal highly trained organizers under communist discipline, skilled propagandists, and most of the traditional French working-class publications. Even so, the communists cannot count on the response of CGT's rank and file to their calls for political strikes.

Production is above prewar levels in France, and output per man hour is increasing—some 7 percent in both 1954 and 1955 over corresponding periods of the previous years. Even so, France's National Productivity Committee in early 1955 estimated that French productivity was only about one-third of the U.S. level. Despite increased output, the French worker, on the average, is not getting a much greater share of the national income than he did before the war, and he is working longer hours. Although a standard work week of 40 hours in most establishments has been set by law, most French workers count on overtime to supplement their regular pay. In manufacturing, for example, the average number of hours worked per week was almost 45.

Successive increases since the end of the war in legal minimum wages have been of major importance to French workers. However, they have been keyed to the many small and marginal enterprises in France and have served to increase the wages of unskilled workers far more than those of skilled workers. Furthermore, from the end of the war to 1952, price rises wiped out most of the wage gains. Subsequently, as prices have become more stable, there have been real wage gains. Nevertheless, incomes of French workers are still relatively low compared to those of Great Britain and the United States. In 1955, the French Finance Minister estimated that half of all employed French workers were then earning less than \$1,000 a year. Faring considerably better than the average, however, were those workers who received allowances for dependent children—about one-fifth of the total.

Less hope and faith in the results of effective unionism now exist than in prewar or immediate postwar days. Control of the largest labor federation by communists is a basic problem. Employers' associations are as strong as ever. In this unbalance between labor and management can be found an important cause of France's social and economic instability.

Chapter III.

Italy

OF ALL THE COUNTRIES covered in this survey, Italy is the least industrialized and the most poverty-stricken. Technological progress in both industry and agriculture has lagged throughout Italy, but particularly under the barren and feudal conditions in the southern regions. And there are a great number of marginal enterprises. Adding to its other problems is the fact that the country suffers from serious overpopulation. Despite developmental programs instituted by the government since World War II, Italy's unemployment and underemployment problems are more serious than that of any other West European country.

The aims and methods of the organized labor movement in Italy, from the start, have been strongly colored by the Italian environment —by traditional cultural and social factors, by Italy's geographical differences, and by its economic difficulties, but most particularly by the political setting. The trade union movement continuously has been plagued by internal factionalism and strife which can be traced to sharp political differences, not only among the major parties but among splinter groups within the parties as well.

Over the years, starts have been made in attracting Italian workers into a unified trade union movement, but these usually have been halted by splits caused by the political orientation of union leaders or members. The alternative to bargaining with employers from a position of organizational and economic strength has been to seek legislative gains for workers. This has served to increase the unions' reliance on political alignments. A quarter of a century of Fascism also has left its mark on the union movement, both in the way the government intervenes in matters affecting job security and basic income and in some of the patterns of labor-management negotiations.

The influence of political parties and their ideologies is reflected in the policies and day-to-day activities of all the unions, although it is greatest in the largest federation, which is a direct and important instrument of the Communist party. There are differing opinions as to whether the noncommunist unions which hold varied political views will, in the foreseeable future, be able to work together in a unified labor movement. There is clear evidence, however, that the two largest noncommunist federations recently have been gaining strength and that they are tending, at least informally, to join forces in efforts to dissipate communist strength.

Current negotiations between the left-wing Socialist party (PSI), which is led by Pietro Nenni, and the Social Democrats (PSDI) adds to the complexity and fluidity of the Italian labor movement. The outcome of these negotiations at the political level to a great extent will influence the relationship between the two noncommunist unions. There is a possibility that successful PSI-PSDI negotiations could bring about the creation of a new socialist-oriented union which would serve as the PSI-PSDI labor arm. In this event, the unions would be aligned with communist, socialist, and Catholic groups.

Union Growth and Ideologies

The workers' political and labor movements in Italy, from the late 19th century until the Fascists gained power in the early 1920's, were dominated by the thinking of extremely different personalities and political concepts. Also differing violently on union methods and philosophy, adherents to these movements were likely to be strongly opinionated workers who looked on their unions as a means for winning power for their ideas—rather than as bread-and-butter organizations.

The main pre-Mussolini groupings were influenced by the philosophy and methods of the Catholics, Giuseppe Mazzini, or Filippo Turati, Mikhail Bakunin, or Karl Marx. Mazzini, who died in 1872, fought the Marxists and the Catholics, outlining a program of social betterment for the Italian masses to be achieved through nonviolent means. The Catholics, also advocating peaceful means, believed in class collaboration in unions of spontaneous groupings with recognition coming from the state and with the power to speak for all workers within a trade or occupation—whether they were union members or not. Marx, who commanded a following of Italian working-class leaders, ridiculed the evolutionary approach and—unlike Mazzini—called for a class struggle in the materialist tradition. Bakunin led the Italian anarchists, who were then greatly influenced by the powerful French syndicalist movement. Toward the end of the 19th century, trade union leaders began to show an interest in political action through formation of, first, a Labor party and then a Socialist party. From about 1890 until his death in 1932, Turati—whose approach was similar to that of Mazzini—led the Socialists.

During all this period, there was a steady growth of trade unions in some form or other in Italy. At first, most were local organizations, some of which were loosely associated in federations. But between the early part of the 20th century and the advent of the Fascist regime, four national federations were formed. The first and largest one was the General Confederation of Labor (CGL), started in 1906, which by

1920 had over 2 million members. Although it was officially independent of the Socialist party, CGL was usually dominated by one or another socialist faction and adhered to the general tenets of their philosophy. The Catholic labor movement had been growing steadily since 1891, and in 1918 the Italian Confederation of Workers (CIL) brought these unionists together. The second largest pre-Mussolini federation, CIL claimed 1.5 million members in 1921. A left-wing group in CGL, followers of Bakunin, split off and in 1912 formed the Italian Syndical Union (USI) which reached its peak in 1919 with a claimed membership of 500,000. In 1918 the Italian Labor Union (UIL) was formed by right-wing nationalists who had been expelled from USI. This ultra-nationalist and antidemocratic federation represented the main stream of Fascist thought in the pre-Mussolini labor movement.

The Fascists paid lip service to trade unionism, drawing on theories of both the syndicalists and the Catholics. But unions had little actual power to make gains for their members. Under Fascism, one union and one employers' association were recognized by the government to negotiate agreements that applied to all workers in a particular locality, industry, or trade. If the union and management negotiators failed to reach agreement and if conciliation did not result in a settlement, through various possible processes an agreement was imposed upon the negotiators. Although officials in the government-recognized unions were supposed to be elected by popular vote, they were in fact selected by the Fascist party, and only one candidate ran for an office. Neither strikes nor lockouts were permitted. Instead of fostering the workers' loyalty to unions, or even to the employers, the Fascist labor policies served to increase the dependence of labor upon government. In order to overcome low wages, the workers looked to the government for gains in family allowances, pensions, unemployment insurance, vacations, and job security.

Prior to the Italian armistice with the Allies, under the Badoglio government, a theoretically unified and independent labor federation was organized. Following efforts of anti-Fascist labor leaders, the Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL) was formed in January 1945. To begin with, CGIL had three co-secretaries representing the views of the Christian Democrats, Socialists, and Communists. This tripartite structure was duplicated in each of the national unions and in provincial labor chambers. Additional political groupings were represented by another co-secretary in some areas where other political parties carried weight. The Communists at that time were collaborating with the other anti-Fascist groups, and the facade of a united labor movement thus was possible.

The unity and independence did not last long. The Communists steadily gained strength in CGIL, and by the time the Communist

party left the coalition government in 1947, its greater resources were used to take over control of CGIL. With the help of the left-wing PSI, the Communists have retained control of the federation.

The first split took place in 1948, when the Christian Democratic trade unionists broke away from CGIL and formed their own federation, known as the Free Italian General Confederation of Workers (LCGIL). The break came after the Communist leadership of CGIL called a general strike when an attempt was made to assassinate Palmiro Togliatti, Communist party leader. The strike call was opposed by the Christian Democratic unionists, who viewed it as an attempt to embarrass the De Gasperi government.

The next split, in 1949, came when labor leaders representing the Republicans and the Social Democrats found collaboration with the Communists intolerable and left. This group, after considering the desirability of joining LCGIL, formed a new federation, the Italian Labor Federation (FIL). By 1950, largely driven by their financial and organizational weaknesses as separate organizations—as contrasted with the well-oiled Communist machinery—union leaders merged FIL and LCGIL to form the Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions (CISL). A dissident group of Republican and Socialist unionists in FIL, however, refused to go along with the CISL merger. This group then formed the nucleus of a third labor federation, the Italian Workers Union (UIL).

There are also a few other federations which are not recognized by the three major federations as bona fide labor organizations. Aligned with neo-Fascist and Monarchist political groups, these have had relatively little political or economic influence to date. The largest—which claims a much greater membership than a probable total of not more than 200,000—is the Italian Confederation of National Workers' Unions (CISNAL).

At present, CISL and UIL are operating under a signed agreement to collaborate on questions of economic policy and union activity, to pursue a common course in the fight against communism at home and abroad, and to refrain from raiding each other. Both seem to be gaining in strength—not only through added support from workers who are dissatisfied with CGIL, but through increased political influence. Furthermore, there are hopeful signs that the passage of time is helping unionists of opposing views on methods and ideologies—which caused antagonism and bitterness among old-time unionists—to achieve a more flexible approach to a solution of workers' problems.

Union Structure

The U.S. observer of Italian union activities is struck by the small role of local unions. This apparently results from the fact that much

of the collective bargaining is conducted on a national or industry-wide basis, and from the small amount of dues required from union members. The dues are low even in relation to Italian wages. It has been estimated that dues of about 16¢ (100 lira) a year are required for membership cards (tesseri), of which only one-third goes to the central federation and the remaining two-thirds to the provincial and national craft or industry unions (called "category" unions in Italy). Union dues vary by province, craft, and worker classification, and it is estimated that, at best, less than 50 percent of the membership pays its dues. The check-off is rare.

The Central Federations and National Unions

As in France, it is difficult to make an estimate of dues-paying union membership in Italy. Although the federations claim considerably more members, it is possible that the figure in 1955 may have been about 3.5 million for CGIL; about 1.2 million for CISL; and about 250,000 for UIL. This compares with approximately 7.2 million in CGIL when it represented all groupings in the labor movement just after the end of World War II.

Each of the three major central federations is composed of national industrial unions. All three have competing nationals in most industries, but the nationals vary widely, not only in size but also in strength in particular geographical areas. However, the biggest national industrial unions are CGIL affiliates—agricultural, chemical, construction, railway, and textile workers. The CISL is strong in textiles and civil service and its strength is growing among metal workers. The UIL strength is greatest in chemicals.

The central federations are organized along similar lines. All three have, in addition to the national industrial unions, city or provincial labor chambers. All are governed by their conventions, which are held triennially. These conventions in theory determine basic policy. However, the most important problems of relationships with the government and with rival federations remain in the hands of a national board, an executive committee, and a secretariat.

Despite the appearance of democratic control by the conventions, CGIL policy is directly tied to the Communist party. Top positions in CGIL and its affiliated nationals are held by tried and true Communist party members. The Nenni Socialists (PSI), who adhere to the union, are courted by CGIL, but they have less important posts than the Communists, and never hold the controlling positions. When internal conflicts in CGIL occur—and there have been growing signs of such conflicts in the metal workers national, the textile workers national, and other important segments—Communist party leaders have the final word on which officials shall hold the power in the union.

Each of the federations publishes bulletins for distribution among members: CISL has one weekly and three monthly publications; UIL has two; and CGIL has one weekly and two monthly publications. Extensive leadership training is conducted by CGIL and CISL.

City and Provincial Unions

The city or provincial labor chambers of CGIL are more widely organized than those of CISL and UIL, but all three federations vary greatly in the extent of their activity. Even so, the labor chambers are the centers for whatever local activity may take place. Their physical facilities are the only ones available to unions outside of the national headquarters of the industrial unions—many of which are located in Rome. These city and provincial unions serve as centers for propaganda and recruitment, and the responsiveness of rank-and-file workers to strike calls or union elections usually depends upon the ability of the chambers to mobilize support. To a limited degree, they also act as employment centers, and some publish newspapers and magazines. Shop stewards, who are elected annually, work directly with national and provincial officials in these offices.

Participation in International Bodies

All three central federations are members of international trade union centers. The communist-dominated CGIL is in the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). Both CISL and UIL are members of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and some 31 nationals affiliated with CISL and 15 affiliated with UIL are members of International Trade Secretariats.

Relations to Government

The political parties' domination of Italian unions grows out of not only the ideological orientation of Italian workers, but also the fact that they can offer financial aid to the unions in the form of jobs for union officers and the possibility that they can make gains for the unions through their influence in national and local governments. Many union officials serve as members of the Italian Parliament—and their numbers are growing. Most are from CGIL, but CISL has some, and UIL has one. Union officials also serve in other governmental capacities, and still others have helped to draft labor laws and legislation beneficial to workers.

The Italian Constitution of 1948 established a republican form of government and laid down a series of guiding principles on the basis of which Parliament was expected to create laws. The Constitution recognizes the right to organize unions and the right to strike. It

implies that the state may not intervene in the formation of a union or in its activities except to the extent that ordinary law applies to voluntary associations generally. A union, however, may apply for registration to acquire legal personality in private, not public, law. If the union applies for registration, it will be accepted so long as its rules provide for a democratic internal structure, and so long as it complies with any ordinary legislation stipulating objective conditions for registration. The legislation implementing these and other constitutional provisions having to do with the rights and responsibilities of workers has not been passed.

For example, one section of the Constitution authorizes passage of legislation setting up a national economic and labor council. Its purpose would be to advise Parliament and the government and to initiate legislation in the economic and social field. The Constitution provides that this council will include representatives of all groups involved in production, but the enabling legislation has not yet been enacted.

The Constitution goes into detail in the matter of the Italian Republic's responsibility for maintaining minimum working standards and the security of workers. The government is given the responsibility for vocational training, for fixing maximum daily hours of work and age minimums, and for protecting young workers. The Constitution specifically recognizes the worker's right to "remuneration in proportion to the quantity and quality of his work, in every case sufficient to enable him and his family to live a free and decent life." In addition, the government is supposed to regulate the conditions of women workers; to insure a weekly rest and annual paid vacations for all workers; to secure the workers' right to "means sufficient for their vital needs in the case of accident, sickness, disablement, old-age, and involuntary unemployment."

It will probably take many years and a much stronger central government and labor movement to carry out the responsibilities outlined in the Constitution. In the meantime, a number of practices which grew out of earlier statutes makes it extremely important that the unions exert as much influence as possible on the government. As in France, the worker's wage is only part of his income. In addition, the worker receives a number of small supplements—including family allowances, cost-of-living allowances, special seniority payments, and Christmas bonuses. Also, the government requires severance pay, sick-leave provisions, and paid vacations for both manual and white-collar workers—with particularly liberal arrangements for the latter. Italy's social security legislation gives very wide coverage for old-age, disability, and survivors' insurance; for health and tuberculosis insurance; for unemployment insurance; and for workmen's compensation. The actual benefits, however, are still extremely low.

It should be emphasized that a great disparity exists between what the Italian worker actually receives and what the Constitution sets up as objectives as well as the legislation now in effect. He still endures the lowest standard of living and receives the least economic protection of any worker in the democratic countries of Western Europe.

Collective Bargaining With Management

Most union negotiations with employers in Italy are on a national industry-wide basis. As in France, it is not unusual for collective bargaining on one national agreement to be undertaken simultaneously by the representatives of the employers' association and those of the major federations and their competing national unions in the industry involved. However, unlike France, the competing unions are likely to have about the same demands—on wages, working conditions, and fringe benefits—and they are likely to sign the same agreements.

The national collective agreement usually covers wage rates, hours, overtime, seniority, methods of adjusting cost-of-living allowances to changes in the price level, and similar issues. Provincial and local agreements are made to supplement the collective agreement on questions of job classification or matters peculiar to the local situation. The national agreement applies only to those employers signing it—although the Constitution indicates that legislation should be adopted to expand such agreements to cover the whole industry.

Most of the Italian unions' important negotiations are with Confindustria (the General Federation of Italian Industry), founded in 1919, which represents employers of about 85 percent of the industrial workers. This employers' association is extremely wealthy, well staffed by contrast with the unions, powerfully united, and, on the whole, indifferent to the needs of the workers. Like the unions, however, it encourages legislation which reinforces the collective agreements. This is done as a means of assuring that the many small establishments which are outside the association and whose workers are not effectively organized do not have undue advantage over those who deal with organized labor. In addition to Confindustria, there are agricultural and commercial employer organizations, but they are far less powerful than the industrial association.

In 1944, a law was passed which gave employees a great degree of participation in management through labor-management councils. By the time of the liberation, some of these councils had been formed, and in many areas they actually took over and operated plants—though these emergency actions rarely were successful. The question of continuing the councils was bitterly argued, and a compromise viewpoint was incorporated into the Italian Constitution which read:

“For the purpose of raising the economic and social level of labor and subject to the requirements of production, the Republic recognizes the right of workers to collaborate in the management of business enterprises in the ways and within the limits established by law.” The provision has not been implemented.

Local labor-management relations usually are centered in shop steward committees, elected from workers in the plant, which act as liaison between the unions and the workers. They see that the collective agreements are observed, negotiate local applications of the collective agreements, try to mediate individual grievances, and—in the absence of a national or area collective agreement—attempt to obtain an agreement in direct negotiations with the individual employer. Issues in dispute, if the shop steward committees cannot obtain agreement, are carried to the higher union and employer organizations. The final attempt at conciliation is undertaken by government labor officials. If the dispute involves the collective agreement, final recourse may be had to the courts.

In the absence of legislation which really implements the pertinent articles of the Constitution, there is very limited governmental control over the actual collective bargaining process in Italy. This does not mean, however, that collective bargaining between management and labor is effective and harmonious. A basic problem hampering the achievement of good relations lies in the attitudes of workers and employers. Employers still view the relationship as a master-servant one; labor continues to think of itself as an exploited victim. This antagonism—coupled with the economic and social conditions which have permitted communism to flourish—throws up a formidable barrier to the achievement of productive relationships.

Strikes have been fairly frequent in Italy since the war. At first, many were political strikes—some called “noncollaboration strikes” during which the workers stayed on the job but refused to do anything more than the minimum required of them. Most economic and political strikes have been of short duration—since strike benefits are not customarily paid—and were designed to show dissatisfaction rather than to cripple a plant or industry. Another factor which probably has affected the nature and duration of strikes is the continuation of a high rate of unemployment. There is the further fact that over 30 percent of the industrial labor force is employed in establishments with less than 11 workers. The fact that approximately 90 percent of all establishments in Italy employ less than 11 workers poses a particularly difficult job of organizing workers and of maintaining union discipline for those who become members. Political strikes have been condemned by leaders in both CISL and UIL and, at present, it is difficult for CGIL to get workers to take part in purely political strikes.

The Current Status of Unions

The extremely low dues, and the difficulty of collecting them when there are competing unions in the field and when no special benefits attach to being a dues-paying member, have been both a cause and a symptom of weaknesses of the Italian unions.

Because of their financial weakness, Italian unions of all persuasions have had to seek outside assistance in the form of equipment and money. This assistance is seldom provided without the demand for some sort of concession in return. The Communists, the only group that maintained its apparatus during the Fascist regime, started off with trained organizers and propagandists. The democratic unions, not being so fortunate, started with only a few trained organizers and have had to develop new organizers and leaders. Their unequal contest with CGIL is made even harder by the fact that the Communists, with their rigid discipline over members and their fertile sources of funds, are much wealthier and better equipped.

Recently, there have been some encouraging signs that both democratic federations are making progress in relation to CGIL. Policies followed in the placement of U.S. off-shore procurement orders in plants where the noncommunist unions are strongest have had some part in improving this situation.

Figures on income and cost of living in Italy are relatively unreliable. However, recent figures indicate that both per capita income and cost of living have been increasing. Italy's per capita consumption has risen each year since 1950. In that year, valued in dollars at average 1950 European prices, it was \$283; in 1955, it had advanced to \$330. In 1954, the cost of living increased over the previous year by 3 percent; the increase for 1955 over 1954 was also 3 percent. Output per man-hour in industry increased over the previous years by 7 percent in both 1954 and 1955. Although working hours have been shortened to bring more workers into factories, and overtime work—except for special circumstances—was legally forbidden late in 1955, Italy's unemployment problem remains. In 1953 and 1954, 10.4 percent of the total occupied population was unemployed in what is normally the lowest unemployment month of the year, and in 1955, unemployment was down only to 10.3 percent. A further indication of the environment in which the trade unions operate is found in the regional disparities in income. In the poorest southern provinces, for example, the average per capita income is less than 65 percent of the country's average; in the more industrialized North, it is over 150 percent of the country's average.

An important criterion of labor progress and hope is the morale of the workers and their belief in efficacious union action on behalf of their economic and social well-being. In this respect, as in France, the

future of Italian workers is still limited and uncertain. Apathy and cynicism, understandably, characterize a good deal of their attitude, as opposed to the optimistic flush of the postwar liberation from Fascism.

Chapter IV.

West Germany

THE TRADE UNION movement in the Federal Republic of Germany has attained an amazing record of growth and power in the past decade. Union membership is concentrated in the German Trade Union Federation (DGB), which in 1954 had more than 6 million members.

The resurgence of democratic trade unions took place in the few brief years after the defeat of the Nazis had left German industry in ruins. It was achieved despite the fact that many workers had only fleeting memories of the democratic unions which were destroyed soon after Hitler came to power in 1933. And, importantly, the free trade unions of West Germany were able to grow and prosper only a few miles away from the East German unions which are bureaucratically controlled and subordinated to the production goals and political aims of their communist masters.

Union Growth and Ideologies

During the 19th century, the unions and the socialist political movements in Germany grew side by side and in a spirit of cooperation. There were frequent conflicts, however, between those who advocated that the Socialist party use unions primarily as a training and recruiting ground for political action, and those who believed that the party and the unions should operate independently, while cooperating on broad questions of national policy. And up to the advent of Hitler, philosophical and ideological disagreements led to formation of a number of different union groupings and an increasing lack of unity in the labor movement. This disunity had disastrous effects which are by no means forgotten.

Between 1890 and the Nazi period, the largest federation of German unions had close working relations with the Social Democratic party. This was the General Commission of German Trade Unions which, in July 1919, became the General German Federation of Labor. After 1905, the Social Democratic party's majority adhered to the proposition that the unions and the party were equal partners. However, the close ties between the Social Democrats and the socialist unions—known as the “free” trade unions—caused Catholic and Protestant workers of antisocialist views to form separate, rival unions. The General Association of Christian Trade Unions reached its membership peak in the early 1920's, and it worked closely with the Catholic

Center party. A third and smaller group, roughly corresponding to the British Liberal party of the period, was known as the Hirsch-Duncker unions after its founders and leaders. This group—which came together in 1920 in the Federation of Unions of German Workers, Employees and Civil Servants—repudiated the socialist philosophy and favored very close cooperation with employers. Still other organizations were part of the German labor movement preceding the rise of Hitler, including one influenced by the French syndicalists, but these were considerably less important than the free, Christian, and Hirsch-Duncker unions.

Another development during the 40 years preceding Hitler's rise to power was the increasing importance of national unions which comprised the federations. A key to their strength lay in the adoption of regulations that the national union's executive must approve a strike before members could obtain strike benefits. This was done for much the same reason as in the United States. It was not only to permit closer control and supervision of strike action by the parent body, but also to avert, where possible, the great drain on union treasuries caused by strikes and to avoid frequent appeals from one union to another for financial aid. Although the membership in unions rose considerably in this period, the number of national unions became smaller. There was relatively little opposition in Germany to mergers of unions in related industries and crafts. In 1925, the General German Federation of Labor at its convention endorsed the principle of industrial organization but left to the national unions the application of the idea. (The industrial form is generally accepted today—the outstanding exception being the union of white-collar workers, which cuts across industry lines.)

Under the Weimar Republic, the unions were influential in obtaining legal sanction for collective bargaining for the majority of wage and salaried workers, as well as a comprehensive system of social insurance. However, many of the unions' initial gains were lost as a result of pressures caused, first, by several years of inflation following World War I and, later, by unemployment culminating in the depression. The economic difficulties in Germany made it possible for employers to push through drives for reduced wages, increased hours of work, and lowered social insurance benefits, and in other ways to nibble away at the legislative gains which had been made for workers.

When Hitler came to power, the Nazi government seized all property belonging to the unions, arrested many union leaders and officers, and established the German Labor Front as a part of the National Socialist Workers' party. Only the Hirsch-Duncker unions joined the Nazis. Some trade unionists continued to maintain contact in spite of the difficulties involved in doing so, and when the Allied armies came they were ready to work for a free trade union movement.

After the end of World War II, the occupying authorities in all four zones permitted establishment of voluntary trade unions. Although different policies were pursued in the British, French, and U.S. zones—which later made up the West German Republic—all soon resulted in federations of local unions on a zone-wide basis. Later, the German Trade Union Federation (DGB) was formed as the major central federation. With its formation, workers with socialist leanings and Protestant and Catholic workers, for the first time in the German labor movement, were organized in one federation.

Adherents to communism in the German labor movement have been consistent in pursuing a vacillating policy, depending almost entirely on orders from the Third International. They broke from the majority socialists after the Russian Revolution, and again after establishment of the Weimar Republic in Germany. Their changing tactics—either splitting or boring from within—to some extent weakened the unions in the critical years which brought Hitler to power. Today, however, the influence of communists in West Germany is almost entirely local, confined largely to some works councils—rather than union organizations—in a few key industries such as metal and mining.

German unionists have developed in recent years a loyalty-pledge technique which has smoked out most communists and kept them from many elective posts in the unions—although there undoubtedly are some communists who have signed pledges and gone underground. This technique consists, in effect, of drawing up a bill of particulars which states antiunion aspects of the Communist party line—as already expressed in official resolutions or publications or speeches. The union officer is then offered the opportunity of publicly repudiating the communist line and renewing the pledge of loyalty to the union which he signed when he assumed office. Confronted with this clear-cut choice, the individual sometimes has chosen to take his stand with the union and against communism; sometimes he has refused to do this and has been summarily removed from his union position.

On questions of national policy, DGB has taken a formal position of nonalignment with political parties. Its membership includes adherents of all political groupings in West Germany, although most are either Social Democrats (SPD) or Christian Democrats (CDU). The federation works with both of these parties, but follows a course of its own, with policies based on the DGB program adopted at the founding convention and subsequent ones. However, among individual union leaders, many have political ties with the SPD and a number of them are members of the Bundestag (the lower house of Parliament).

To achieve many of the cherished aims of labor, political action has been required. Occupation officials concede that, in the crucial

months when civil government was being restored, the reconstituted unions were the main support of local civil authorities. At the start of the postwar period, unions plunged into the fight for re-establishment of the Weimar Republic's pattern of labor-management legislation, and that pattern has been generally adopted. Unionists had a bitter memory of how most of the employers and their associations, who had financed right-wing parties, had helped Hitler to power and then had maintained Nazism. Above all, they were determined to have a voice in making future industrial policy strong enough to control such antidemocratic use of industrial might. For this and other reasons, the unions favored introduction of the principle of joint management or "co-determination," which has been adopted under two laws. One, which went into effect in December, 1951, provided for co-determination in the operation of coal mines and the iron and steel industry. The second law—in a form most disappointing to the unions—covered other industries and became effective in November 1952.

Union Structure

The great majority of union leaders and members are convinced that the unified labor movement in Germany should be continued, although there still remain some differences of opinion among those with socialist and clerical orientation and among leaders in the various nationals as to the methods and aims of unionism. The unity in union circles can be attributed largely to the resolution of veteran unionists never again to allow their strength to be dissipated by the kind of splitting into rival organizations which characterized the labor movement in pre-Hitler Germany. Along with agreement on the need for democratically achieved unity is the deep conviction that programs of the unions and the workers' role in society in the 1920's and early 1930's were much too narrow in practice. Most of the remaining union leaders from the Weimar period believe that labor achieved political democracy under the Republic, but failed to achieve economic democracy. The old principles of industrial democracy, they feel, need reformulation. These basic convictions are reflected in the power now placed in the central federation and in its program.

The DGB and its national unions are carrying on a more extensive program of workers' education than unions in any other countries covered by this study—including the United States. And DGB supports an excellent research staff. This staff does not operate as a division within the federation, but as a separate related institution—the Institute of Industrial Science (WWI) in Cologne. Educational activities range all the way from educational lectures at almost every

meeting held by local offices of the unions to labor academies which provide one or two years of training at the university level.

In the larger cities, unions offer extensive courses, not only in trade unionism, but also in such varied subjects as economics, history, and science. In the smaller towns, visiting professors and union officials take part in training conferences held occasionally on weekends. Unionists who do well in such local activities can pursue their studies in residence schools. At these schools—some maintained by the DGB and some by national industrial unions—courses lasting from two to three weeks deal with a particular topic, such as accounting, social insurance, or labor legislation. The residence schools are stepping stones for able and interested unionists to one of three labor academies, which are supported in part by the unions. Each of these has a differing program, providing latitude for selection according to the student's special interests, and also permitting the unions to experiment and compare results of the different programs. The academies are pioneering in training and research in labor relations, which is a relatively new, but important, field in Germany.

The Central Federation

In October 1949, DGB was founded by a convention of almost 500 delegates speaking for about 5 million union members. It is made up of 16 industrial unions and serves as the major voice of German labor, both on national and international levels. The membership of national unions affiliated in the German Trade Union Federation in 1954 has been estimated as follows:

National Unions in DGB	1954 Membership	Percent of Total
Metal.....	1,658,298	27.2
Public services and transport.....	828,968	13.6
Mining.....	626,456	10.3
Chemicals, paper, ceramics.....	449,334	7.4
Building, stone, earth.....	441,712	7.2
Railway.....	424,589	7.0
Textiles and clothing.....	405,395	6.6
Food, beverages, restaurants.....	301,072	4.9
Post and telegraph.....	231,000	3.8
Woodworking.....	187,120	3.1
Printing and paper.....	130,042	2.1
Commerce, banking, insurance.....	104,761	1.7
Gardening, agriculture, forestry....	104,129	1.7
Leather.....	98,989	1.6
Education and science.....	73,791	1.2
Arts and professions.....	37,401	0.6
Total DGB Membership.....	6,103,057	100.0

The German Salaried Employees' Union (DAG), an independent white-collar union which claims about 268,000 members, is not affiliated with DGB.

Conventions are held by DGB every two years, where a president, two vice presidents, and six additional full-time officers are elected. The business of DGB is conducted between conventions by an executive committee, composed of the heads of the 16 national industrial unions. When matters concerning a particular district are taken up, the executive committee calls in the chairman of that district to participate. The founding charter of DGB provides for a division of functions between the national unions and the federation. The central federation speaks for the workers on questions of broad policy; the national unions deal primarily with questions of their specific industry.

The DGB is financed by 12 percent of all per capita dues collected by the national unions. Out of this 12 percent, DGB is obliged to maintain a "solidarity fund" in an amount of 10 or 11 million deutschemarks.

The National Unions

The national unions are primarily concerned with collective bargaining and bread-and-butter issues. They control strikes and strike funds; train leaders; handle social security and other problems involving the industry; and, in the coal and steel industries, the respective national unions and DGB speak for the worker under terms of the co-determination legislation. However, it is only since 1949 that these national unions have been able to carry on the function of full-scale collective bargaining. This was made possible by institution of the currency reform, lifting of the wage freeze, and formation of the Republic which brought an end to the separate control policies for unions in the French, British, and U.S. zones.

National unions in Germany follow democratic procedures very similar to those in the United States. Elected delegates from local and regional organizations at regular national conventions choose an executive and paid officers to administer the national's affairs between conventions. Dues, set by the national unions' regional organizations, amount to somewhere between one and one-half and two hours' pay a week. They are collected without the check-off and entitle the member to strike benefits and other benefits, depending on the policies and program of the particular union.

Regional and Local Organizations

Some of DGB's activities are carried out through regional and local offices which are primarily responsible for influencing legislation and

other governmental decisions at all sub-national levels. However, these offices also engage in educational and recreational activities. In addition, each of the 16 national unions has regional and local offices.

Both regional and local offices of the nationals undertake organizational activities to increase union membership. In most of the national unions, negotiation is a major function of regional offices, since the majority of German labor agreements are regional in scope. Most German labor agreements cover more than one employer, but they differ considerably from one industry to another. For example, agreements in the construction industry normally cover only a small area while those in steel and metal-working are regional, and others, as in coal mining, are nationwide. Local offices have the principal responsibility for counseling members who seek information or advice regarding their rights under various laws and for representing a member who takes a claim against his employer to the labor court for settlement.

As a general rule, there is no formal organization for members of a union working in a single plant or for a single company, as in the case of local unions in the United States. The local office holds occasional meetings for union members in its area. In the larger cities, separate meetings may be held for different groups, but normally attendance depends on the area in which the member resides rather than on the employer for whom he works.

In the union hierarchy, the most direct link between the union and the members in a particular plant is that provided by the shop steward system. Usually, some 2 or 3 percent of the union members in a plant are elected or appointed to serve as shop stewards. Their principal function is to enlist new members and collect union dues, but they also are often consulted by union members who have problems or grievances. Local offices hold frequent meetings for shop stewards in their areas, which serve as a channel of communication between union officials in local, regional, and national offices and rank-and-file members.

The Works Council

The representation of employees at the plant and company levels is assigned by German law to works councils rather than to local unions. Works councils, elected by all employees in an establishment regardless of union membership, were set up at the end of World War I. During the Weimar Republic, the councils served a useful purpose in providing unified representation for employees whose union membership was scattered among the socialist, Christian, and liberal unions. At present, with a unified labor movement, there seems to be much less need for such an organization.

Many American observers believe that German unions would be

strengthened if local unions, rather than the independent works councils, represented employees of each plant or company. However, such a change in German legislation probably would not be politically feasible, since it would be opposed by employers, by works council officials, and by many employees, who—lacking day-to-day relations with union officers—feel closer to their works councils than to their national unions.

Because of the importance of the works councils, the unions attempt to maintain a close relationship with council officers. City-wide meetings of works council chairmen are held at frequent intervals by local offices of the national unions and occasionally by local offices of DGB. Since most works council officials are ardent union members, a close working relationship usually exists between them and union officials, but friction has arisen in a number of individual instances.

Works councils, under the general co-determination law, are elected biennially by employees of any place of employment where there are five workers eligible to elect such a council. A worker is eligible to be elected if he is aged 21 or over, has at least one year's plant seniority, and is eligible to vote in elections for the German Parliament. To vote in the council election, an employee must be 18 years old and a citizen in good standing. Under the law, foremen are eligible to vote for works council members, but members of the board of directors or partners and principal officers of the enterprise having the right to hire and fire are not. Elections to the works councils are by secret ballot on a plant-wide basis. In theory, each eligible worker votes for as many candidates as there are places to be filled from his occupational group (manual or white-collar), but in practice less than half of the workers vote a full slate.

The size of the works council is determined by the number of employees, and ranges from one person in plants with from five to 20 workers, to 35 for plants with more than 9,000 workers. If a works council is made up of three or more members, representation is split, with hourly-paid or shift workers electing their own representatives, and salaried employees electing their representatives. The representatives of the numerically smaller group of salaried workers, thus, are usually in the minority. Within both groups, a proportional representation of male and female employees is required.

The works council elects its own chairman and vice-chairman, who serve for two years unless ousted for cause by a labor court. Meetings of the works councils are private, but the union can be invited to participate on the request of one-quarter of the members of the works council. The employer must be notified in advance of the meeting, and he has the right to petition for a meeting of the council at which he and a representative of the employers' association can be present.

The works council is financed by the employer, who must not only pay lost time for council activities but also provide office facilities and, if necessary, secretarial assistance. Since all activities of the works councils usually take place during regular working time in the plant, council members are paid by the employers for the time they put in at such meetings. In many plants, at least one council member is excused entirely from production work to devote full-time to employee representation. This usually is the council chairman but, in the larger plants, there may be several additional council members serving full-time.

Meetings of all employees of the plant are called and conducted by the works council about every three months. These serve primarily as forums for the workers and for the employer and have no power except to petition the council and employer to take action. Union representatives have the privilege of participating in these meetings, but no subject except those related to the plant and its workers can be discussed.

Among the principal functions of the works councils are the handling of employee grievances and the negotiation of supplemental agreements that relate only to the particular plant or company. When an employee has a grievance he usually takes it to a member of the works council, although he may first turn to the union shop steward for advice. If the works council cannot obtain from the management a satisfactory settlement of the grievance, the employee may then go to the labor court, in which case he is usually represented by an employee of the union rather than by the works council. The works council is also entitled to participate in decisions on: daily work schedules, time and place wages are to be paid, vacation schedules, vocational training procedures, administration of those welfare programs which are restricted to the plant or to the enterprise, employee conduct, setting of piece rates, drafting of payment principles, and introduction of new methods of payment. If the council and employer disagree on such matters, the question goes to an arbitration board, whose impartial chairman is chosen by the two sides or by the chairman of the labor court.

Agreements on wages and working conditions are the subject of regular union-employer negotiation, and generally are not in the province of the works council. The council may take up these subjects only if the collective agreement provides for such action—and then only to apply provisions to a particular plant or to negotiate improvements relating to a particular plant. An involved procedure gives the works councils some power to obtain information about filling vacant jobs and to protest the hiring of individuals as permanent workers who may be objectionable to the other employees. Appeals on this subject can be taken to the labor courts. The opinion

of the council must be obtained before an employee is fired; large-scale firings and hirings must be discussed with the council in advance.

Participation in International Bodies

The DGB is the third largest labor federation affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and its affiliates participate in all 21 International Trade Secretariats. It has no relations with East German unions and, in fact, when the East Germans have attempted to send delegations to West German conferences and conventions, they have been barred as being members of undemocratic and state-controlled bodies.

The unions of West Germany have played an important part in the European Coal and Steel Community established to develop a common market and to lower tariff barriers among the six West European nations participating in the so-called Schuman Plan. One of the two German government representatives in the Community's High Authority was designated for the post by the German unions. The labor adviser to Jean Monnet, former president of the High Authority, was a former member of the executive board of DGB. German unions are well represented on the Authority's advisory council. Although the unions first approached their responsibilities in the Coal and Steel Community with marked skepticism, that attitude seems to be diminishing in line with the Community's progress in carrying its work forward, and the unions are participating fully in efforts to demonstrate the Community's value.

Government Relations and Collective Bargaining

German unions live with a set of complicated and sweeping labor laws enacted largely on their own initiative. Both the socialist and the Christian unionists traditionally have advocated worker participation in management decisions through works councils and various forms of industrial democracy—using a mixture of state and collective bargaining machinery.

The situation today can be summed up this way: Unions do not have a decisive voice in the present West German government and, in fact, are distinctly a minority voice. But on several crucial occasions, notably on co-determination in the steel and coal industries, they have won their points. Labor, by law, is given a certain voice in the determination of management policies for industry, but the extent to which this is effective is not yet clear. In the field of collective bargaining, unions set the pace and by law the gains won by the unions can be extended under certain circumstances to unorganized plants in the industry.

Negotiations and Handling of Disputes

Both during the occupation and under the West German Republic, the pattern of collective bargaining first established by the early Weimar Republic which was formed after World War I has been followed. Collective bargaining has legal sanction. There are two types of bargaining in West Germany. First, there are the unions' master agreements covering a region or district which are usually negotiated with an association of employers. Second, there are supplementary agreements reached by the works council and management of an individual enterprise.

The typical master agreement in West Germany covers some of the same ground as a U.S. union-management contract but is not so broad. The Germans leave some of the matters concerning working conditions which are covered in U.S. contracts for negotiation by the works council. Other matters (such as vacations and dismissal) are covered by legislation, and still others (such as union security and seniority) are often omitted.

If the master agreement applies to employers of at least 50 percent of all the wage and salary earners in the industry concerned, and if the public interest demands it, the union or employer may apply to the Minister of Labor to extend the master contract's terms to the whole industry. Thus, the master agreement in effect constructs a wage floor.

Certain industries set the pattern for agreements in other industries. For example, the results of bargaining between the metal workers' union and the several employers' associations have far-reaching effects upon other industries. Settlements in the building industry also set patterns for other groups.

In the postwar years, German unions have showed some reluctance to strike for wage gains. An important reason was the policy of wage restraints which unions voluntarily adopted as a means of rebuilding Germany's economy. Strike action also was limited by the financial and organizational weakness of the reconstituted unions in the first few years, and by the fact that they were pressing a broad legislative program requiring support from nonunion elements of the population. Various other factors tended to keep wage levels down. There was high unemployment and a fear that wage increases might stimulate inflation. The rank-and-file members were eager to replace personal possessions lost or damaged during the war. Strong employers' associations—disbanded by the Nazis—were reconstituted after the war to resume collective bargaining. These associations traditionally have been highly disciplined groups which could cut prices or withhold bank credit or scarce materials in order to keep individual employers in line with association policy. Since 1953, there has been growing

evidence of more aggressive union wage policies and less reluctance to strike.

The system of government arbitration of the 1920's has not been re-established, and there is no federal law making conciliation and arbitration compulsory. The unions are opposed to such laws and those in key industries have negotiated agreements covering procedures for voluntary conciliation and arbitration.

The laws of the Weimar Republic, as reinstated, set up labor courts to settle conflicts arising out of individual worker-employer relationships. In general, these labor courts deal with violations of labor agreements or labor laws. Their most frequent rulings are on payment of back wages and disputes over dismissal without notice or payment. And in these courts, extensive efforts are made to obtain a settlement by agreement of the parties. The federal, regional, and local labor courts are made up of equal numbers of persons nominated by labor and management, plus one or more impartial officers named by the federal or state governments. The unions pay the salaries of experienced advocates who are available to represent their members in presenting a case before such courts.

Co-Determination

Co-determination—a goal hard fought for by DGB and its affiliates—proposes a partnership between labor and management in the operation of industry. In a more limited way, it is described as the union's desire for some voice, even if not an equal one, in the supervision of enterprises. At its founding convention, DGB called for an equal voice in all questions relating to labor and the economy, and expressed the belief that the experience between the end of World War I and the rise of Hitler had demonstrated that political democracy would not survive unless economic democracy existed alongside it. The federation called for union representation on boards of directors of corporations being organized to run industries after the defeat of the Nazis, and demanded that information about the affairs of the key industries be made public. It urged socialization of the coal, iron and steel, chemical, and power industries, and of credit establishments.

Labor's demand for co-determination was supported by both the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats. At the crucial stage in the fight for co-determination in the coal and steel industries, German unions had the support of ICFTU. They were also supported by AFL and CIO officials from the United States, despite the fact that neither U.S. federation had any desire for a similar system in the United States. In May 1950, DGB proposed a bill spelling out the way it wanted co-determination to work—from individual enterprises up through the district, state, and national levels of the economy. The bill never got far, but it was widely discussed.

Near the end of 1950, when plans were being drawn up for termination of Allied control of the steel industry, it became clear to West German unionists that some steps would have to be taken if they were to preserve their right to participate in managerial decisions. This right had been granted by the British occupation authorities when they set up companies to run the Ruhr steel industries in 1946. The unions, therefore, turned from the general proposal for co-determination in order to obtain a co-determination law for coal and steel. Finally a compromise bill, supported by the majority Christian Democrats as well as by the Social Democrats, was passed, and in December 1951 co-determination began in these two industries.

The key feature of the co-determination law for coal and steel is the composition of the supervisory board of each company. This supervisory board represents equally the stockholders and the workers (five for each group), with an 11th, neutral member elected by the other 10 members. Of the five labor members, two are nominated by the works council. Both of them must be workers in the enterprise—one a manual worker and the other a white-collar worker. If the union vetoes the choices of the works council, the Minister of Labor has the final decision. The third and fourth labor members of the supervisory board, nominated by DGB and the national industrial union respectively, need not be employed in the enterprise. The fifth labor member is nominated jointly by DGB and the national union. This member must not be an employee of the enterprise nor anyone who has been associated with a union during the preceding year.

The supervisory board, under the German law controlling stock companies, is primarily a board of control which appoints and removes the actual board of managers. At the time the law was enacted, it was widely expected that on many issues the labor and stockholder representatives would deadlock in their voting, with the decision made by the 11th member. In practice, it has seldom worked out this way. Usually, decision has been reached by consensus, with some compromise being made when necessary to obtain general approval.

The coal and steel law also provides that one of the three operating heads of the enterprise—the labor director—shall in effect be designated by the labor members of the supervisory board. The labor director shares, with the commercial and production directors, the day-to-day management of the enterprise. It has not been easy to find enough persons who combine a strong labor background with adequate managerial experience for these positions. Some labor directors have been unable to gain any significant influence with their management colleagues, and the general attitudes of some appear to have been influenced by their high salary and new authority. On the other hand, labor directors in many of the companies have successfully won maximum benefits for employees consistent with sound operation

of the enterprise and have performed well the difficult dual role of coordinating interests of the worker and the company.

Co-determination poses a number of still unsettled questions. A crucial one, which observers agree it will take many more years to answer, is whether this more powerful representation for workers in management can prevent German employers from using industry for antisocial, antidemocratic ends. This, in the eyes of German unionists, will be the real test of co-determination. The coal and steel co-determination law was won only after heavy pressure was put on the government, and after the threat of a strike in the entire coal and steel industry. The strength of DGB was not great enough, however, to obtain a general co-determination law of similar scope, despite the fact that several work stoppages for co-determination were called by DGB in the year after the coal and steel law passed.

The general co-determination law, which became effective in November 1952, represented a defeat for the principles advocated by DGB. The federal law superseded some state laws which granted a wider degree of labor participation in management. The unions object most strenuously to the representation principles of the general law. It provides that on the supervisory board—the place where DGB seeks partnership in equality—only one-third of the board members shall be labor representatives. And these are to be elected by employees from nominees chosen by the works council and the employees, with no provision for the national union or DGB to make nominations. If there are only one or two labor places on the supervisory board, these must be filled from workers in the plant. If there is a third place for a labor member—that is, if the board is composed of at least nine members—it may be filled by a union representative not employed at the plant.

Bitter experience with the many ways employers found to avoid giving information about enterprises to their employees, as required under the laws of the Weimar Republic, have led today's union leaders to expect very little progress toward partnership under the general co-determination law.

The Current Status of Unions

Membership in the unions of West Germany today is at a higher point than it ever was in undivided Germany under the Weimar Republic, and it is maintained without the check-off. Dues are higher in proportion to workers' wages than in any of the other union movements studied. On the other hand, German unions have had higher expenditures in some cases. They pay more, proportionately, for their members' education. Substantial strike benefits are paid, although

stringent restrictions on strike benefits have helped the German unions make their amazing financial recovery. At the war's end, unions were faced with the task of recovering their buildings and other assets taken by the Nazis' German Labor Front when Hitler liquidated the unions. This has been largely accomplished. The recruitment of workers in some instances probably has been handicapped, however, by the provision of the law extending wage gains in master agreements to unorganized sectors of industry.

Employment reached a record level in West Germany in 1955. Unemployment, for the first time since 1948, was under one million; and the average number of hours worked per week in manufacturing was 49. Real wages of industrial workers in West Germany have increased considerably since the war's end, especially since the currency reform of mid-1948 and the lifting of wage and price controls. Retail prices have remained almost stable and the consumer price index has increased only slightly in recent years. Weekly wages have risen more than prices—partly because of higher wage rates and partly because of higher average number of work hours per week.

All in all, German workers and German unions have made a phenomenal recovery since the end of the war. Starting virtually from zero, in a remarkably short time the unions have demonstrated that a responsible labor movement can forge an important and effective machine for protection and security of union members.

The crude measure of statistics on strikes shows that relative industrial peace prevails in Germany. However, the possibility of developing a firm foundation for future industrial peace is affected by the attitudes of management and labor, which still color personal relations in face-to-face sessions. Formality, which is as characteristic of German culture as informality is natural to the U.S. resident, makes for a reserved atmosphere in labor-management relations. Many employers still look upon union representatives in collective bargaining sessions as their inferiors. And union leaders, in turn, are still acutely aware of the history of the recent past, when employers lined up with forces that assisted in the rise of Hitlerism. They are equally well aware that a divided trade union movement reduced the ability of unionists to resist the rise of the Nazis.

During the Nazi period, many thousands of union leaders were put to death or endured the agonies of Nazi concentration camps. With this vivid memory still alive, the determination of the present union leaders to build a stronger and more democratic political and economic system can be understood and appreciated. In the last analysis, the outlook for harmonious labor relations in West Germany lies in the extent to which management and the unions can mutually achieve these aims.

Chapter V.

Conclusion

FUNDAMENTAL SIMILARITIES among all the democratic labor organizations appear in the United States, France, Italy, and West Germany. All owe their existence to the ability, real or potential, to improve the well-being of the workers they represent. And each union, to achieve this objective, engages in collective bargaining with employers, in broad organizational activities to influence the management of industry, and in political action for improved social and economic legislation.

In each of the four countries, the formal structure through which union decisions are reached is patterned on the familiar machinery of western democratic processes. Policies are determined by elected delegates who represent the constituent groups. Officers are elected either by the membership directly or by delegates from the membership. Throughout, the basic criteria of democratic unionism are maintained by the opportunity for discussion of policy and by the presence of formal machinery through which officials can be changed and policies revised.

Despite the common goal of improving the workers' well-being, however, marked variations in program and policy may be observed from nation to nation within the union framework. In Western Europe a diversity of historical, social, and economic conditions has led to creation of labor movements which, in terms of functional activities, differ in many ways from those in the United States. Sharp disparities in methods and policies, even among West European unions, are apparent. Similar problems frequently are seen in a different perspective, depending on the particular development of the country and trade union movement concerned.

In France, continuing economic instability and intransigent employers' associations make it difficult to develop adequate labor-management relations. In Italy, the existence of innumerable marginal employers, many of them assisted by government subsidies, has tended to keep wages down and to exploit chronic conditions of unemployment and nationwide poverty. In West Germany, a new trade union movement has arisen since the end of the war which embodies an operational balance between the bread-and-butter approach characteristic of the United States, and the ideological direction of many European organizations. In the United States, the concept of an expanding economy and a rising standard of living has

created a somewhat different climate of labor-management relations in which unions achieve most of their benefits through direct collective bargaining with employers and not through government intervention.

Trade unions, therefore, adopt different means in different countries to achieve the same goals. Different traditions lead to contrasting solutions for the same type of problem. In each of the countries surveyed, varying programs and ideologies have emerged to chart the roads to be followed in gaining social and economic betterment for workers. Even though no fixed pattern of development applies equally to all western democratic trade union movements, it is possible to make some generalizations about the nature of West European movements, on the one side, and those of the United States on the other.

The variations between West European and U.S. labor organizations in the main directly reflect the social and political differences which characterize these countries. Living in a relatively young nation which has unprecedentedly expanded its wealth and resources, the American people have no ancient history of feudalism and no landed aristocracy or peasant class. The stultifying heritage of a caste system could not interpose to deter social and economic growth. A firm belief in the constant possibility of unlimited opportunity is still the hallmark of U.S. society. Relative occupational mobility and class fluidity remain the catalysts which have contributed to the prevailing mass and individual feeling of equality.

The societies of continental Europe, on the other hand, are marked by varying degrees of class consciousness and social and economic rigidity. The concept of the class struggle is a common attribute among workers, regardless of their political or religious orientation. As a result, democratic union movements in Western Europe adhere more to the belief that a fundamental transformation of society is necessary as a preliminary condition to improving the workers' lot. A greater emphasis, therefore, is placed on political methods of achieving power and less on purely bread-and-butter action. In the United States, the primary—although not the exclusive—concern of unions is to improve conditions in the workers' immediate place of employment so that more wages, better working conditions, and greater job security will result. In Western Europe—and Italy and France are outstanding examples—unions are in favor of a changed and, in their view, better society; in the United States, unions stand for better conditions within the existing society.

This fundamental divergence between the two continents is manifested in other ways. Most West European workers believe that capitalism as they have experienced it and political democracy are not necessarily interrelated. Many feel, indeed, that the profit-motive system prevents development of a true democracy. This attitude to

ward private ownership and operation and the long-ingrained class consciousness of the workers makes the problem of developing mutual trust and better day-to-day relations in the plant more difficult than in the United States. West European workers consequently seek other institutional forms which will assure them greater economic opportunities and political expression and which, at the same time, they believe, will avoid both capitalism and the blight of communism. In the United States it is generally assumed that free enterprise and political democracy are not only compatible but interdependent, and that broad social advances must be obtained within the framework of this system. Out of these contrasting attitudes a paradox has ensued. Unions of Western Europe have attempted consciously to change society and—excluding the experience of the stable Scandinavian countries which are not discussed here—have succeeded only on a limited scale. Adhering to the precept of Samuel Gompers to emphasize economic action, U.S. unions have not consciously sought to change society; however, they have materially assisted in achieving fundamental transformations as a by-product of their economic action.

The inevitable concomitant of West European political emphasis—more marked in Italy and France than in West Germany—is the widespread belief that in order to gain broad social and economic objectives for workers, it is necessary for trade unions to obtain greater control over the machinery of the state. Whereas in the United States the negotiated contract is the dominant regulatory instrument between labor and management, there is in Western Europe a much wider body of union opinion which wants labor-management relations increasingly subject to governmental control and legal processes. As a result, West European unions have close ties, either official or unofficial, with specific political parties which share their ideological position. Just as there are Christian or Catholic, Socialist, and Communist political parties, so there are trade union movements which maintain an ideological solidarity with the views of these parties.

In every democratic trade union movement studied, however, there is the firm and deep-rooted conviction that self-governing labor organizations, independent of government control, are necessary for the welfare of the individual workers and the maintenance of democratic institutions. Even though from country to country different opinions may be voiced as to the degree of desirable cooperation between labor and government necessary for greater economic and social justice, there is broad agreement on the premise that the survival of free unions is an indispensable condition for continued existence of free societies.

Wherever the voters elect and form their own governments, it is implicitly recognized that industrial society will continue to demand the growth and development of free labor movements in order that

workers may receive that collective protection which cannot be obtained by any other means. With democratic institutions challenged as never before by totalitarian concepts, organized labor today has a heightened consciousness of its stake and responsibility in maintaining and revitalizing the structure of a free society. And in all the countries surveyed, the free trade union is incontestably a major bulwark of democratic protection and an outstanding vehicle of social and economic progress.

APPENDIX

National Unions in the United States with 100,000 or More Members Listed According to Size of Membership in 1954 or early 1955

National Union	Former Affiliation	No. of Locals	No. of Members
International Union, United Automobile, Aircraft & Agricultural Implement Workers of America.....	CIO	1,250	1,239,000
International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America.....	AFL	907	1,231,000
United Steelworkers of America.....	CIO	2,600	1,194,000
International Association of Machinists.....	AFL	1,957	864,095
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.....	AFL	2,895	804,343
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.....	AFL	1,697	630,000
United Mine Workers of America.....	Ind.	*	600,000**
International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.....	AFL	525	440,650
International Hod Carriers', Building and Common Laborers' Union of America.....	AFL	945	433,125
Hotel & Restaurant Employees and Bar- tenders International Union.....	AFL	615	412,946
Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.	CIO	636	385,000
International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers.....	CIO	393	361,639
Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America.....	AFL	417	335,167
Communications Workers of America.....	CIO	717	300,000
Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees.....	AFL	1,988	293,500***
Textile Workers Union of America.....	CIO	781	292,500
Retail Clerks International Association.....	AFL	500	265,000
American Federation of Musicians.....	AFL	699	248,078
United Association of Journeymen and Ap- prentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada.	AFL	759	240,720
Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America.....	AFL	1,400	220,000
Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Em- ployees.....	AFL	1,437	219,191
Building Service Employees International Union.....	AFL	355	206,692
Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.....	Ind.	1,100	204,397
International Union of Operating Engineers..	AFL	*	200,000
Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America.....	AFL	461	190,000
Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Inter- national Union.....	CIO	605	180,000

(Continued)

National Union	Former Affiliation	No. of Locals	No. of Members
United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America	CIO	334	175,000
Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America . .	AFL	1,100	170,000
Bakery & Confectionery Workers' International Union of America	AFL	340	160,000
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers	AFL	1,000	150,000
International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers	AFL	572	149,942
Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers International Union of America	AFL	927	147,157
Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union	CIO	*	140,000
International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers	AFL	313	139,462
International Union, United Automobile Workers of America	AFL	325	120,000
Alliance of Independent Telephone Unions . .	Ind.	12	110,000
International Woodworkers of America	CIO	275	105,058
National Association of Letter Carriers	AFL	4,000	103,000
National Federation of Post Office Clerks . . .	AFL	5,519	101,576
Laundry Workers International Union	AFL	150	100,000
International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers	Ind.	170	100,000

Source: *Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the United States, 1955, op. cit.*

*—Not given.

**—Figure given in 1952 *Directory*; not given for 1954.

***—From AFL 1954 Convention proceedings.

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