

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT*

U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

(See also U.S. BLS Bulletin 1000 of same title.)

Early Local Craft Unions

Unions have a long history in the United States. Before the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the establishment of the United States of America in 1789, skilled artisans in handicraft and domestic industry joined together in benevolent societies primarily in order to provide members and their families with financial assistance in the event of serious illness, debt, or death of the wage earner. After the American colonies had won their independence from Great Britain an increasing demand arose for goods and services originating in the United States.

As the American market expanded, buying and selling became the specialized function of the "merchant capitalist" whose pressure to buy at lowest possible prices was at first resisted by unions of both journeymen and their employers. The forces of competition, however, slowly separated the employers' interest in producing cheaply and in quantity from the journeymen's concern over maintaining their skill and wages. In the face of wage reductions, crafts such as the carpenters, shoemakers and typographers formed separate organizations in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston as early as 1791.

These early unions of various crafts were confined to a local area. They were usually weak because they seldom included all the workers of a craft. Generally, they continued in existence only for a short time. In addition to the welfare activities which characterized earlier organizations, their aims frequently embraced higher wages, minimum rates, shorter hours, enforcement of apprenticeship regulations and establishment of the principle of exclusive union hiring,

later known as the "closed shop."

Many characteristic union techniques for attaining their ends were first developed in this period. For example, by the opening of the 19th century the principle of collective bargaining was already well understood in labor and employing circles and was frequently applied in disputes. The first recorded meeting of worker and employer representatives for discussion of labor demands occurred between the Philadelphia shoemakers and their employers in 1799. The printing crafts of Philadelphia and New York rapidly followed suit.

Also, a forerunner of the union "business agent" grew out of the need to check on shops to see whether they were adhering to the union wage scale. The early "tramping committees" and unpaid representatives later led to specialized, paid agents known as "walking delegates."

Strikes, or actions of workmen in quitting their employment in a body, paralleled the development of organization and collective bargaining. The New York bakers were said to have stopped work to enforce their demands as early as 1741. The first authenticated strike was called in 1786 by the Philadelphia printers who provided benefits for their striking members. A sympathetic strike of shoe workers in support of fellow boot makers occurred in 1799 in the same city. In 1805 the shoemakers of New York created a permanent strike benefit fund, and in 1809 these same workers participated in what was perhaps the first "general" strike when they extended strike action against one employer to include several others who had come to his aid.

* Based upon published materials and prepared in the Industrial Relations Branch of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, by John M. Brumm, under the supervision of Nelson M. Bortz.

Employer Opposition

As unions became stronger, the wage question increased in importance and employers formed organizations to resist wage demands. Where circumstances appeared favorable, the employers attempted to destroy the effectiveness of a union by hiring non-union workers and by appealing to the courts to declare the labor organization illegal. This legal fight against unions was carried through the courts in Philadelphia, New York, and Pittsburgh between 1806 and 1814. Unions were prosecuted as "conspiracies in restraint of trade" under an old English common law doctrine that combinations of workmen to raise wages could be regarded as a conspiracy against the public. The attempt of courts to apply this doctrine aroused a controversy lasting throughout most of the century. Slowly judicial attention was shifted from the question as to whether a mere combination of workmen was a conspiracy to one as to the means they used to gain their ends. Thus for a long time strikes, boycotts and other attempts of workers to secure their demands were the subject of legal action in the courts.

The early conspiracy cases, combined with a business recession following the Napoleonic wars in Europe, seriously affected the trade unions, many of which passed out of existence. After a low point in 1820, however, worker organizations again sprang up in the larger cities among hatters, tailors, weavers, nailers and cabinet makers. Organizations of factory workers appeared for the first time.

Unions in Politics

During the five years between 1827 and 1832 workers' organizations gradually turned to independent political activity. The factors leading to this development are well explained by the historian, Mary Beard, in her book, "A Short History of the American Labor Movement"; "In the first place, property qualifications on the right to vote, which had been imposed by the first state constitutions, were abandoned and the ballot put into the hands of practically every workingman. In the second place, the prosecutions of labor unions in the courts of law had driven workingmen to a concerted action which rose above trade and craft lines. In the third place, the industrial revolution brought about by steam power and the factory system was making swift headway in creating great cities. It added rapidly to the number of industrial workers

and created closer association among them. In the fourth place, the idea was being advanced that the hours of labor should be fixed universally at ten per day by legislation rather than by the painful method of strike."

The movement of workers seeking to improve their status by political action spread to many leading industrial communities. In Philadelphia in 1827 a number of craft unions formed the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations. This city-wide group soon began to nominate and elect candidates to "represent the interests of the working classes" in the Philadelphia city council and the Pennsylvania state legislature. Local labor parties organized by workers sprang up in many states. Political programs, supported by some 50 or more labor papers, included such demands as the following: the 10-hour day, restriction of child labor, abolition of convict labor competition, free and equal public education, abolition of imprisonment for debt, exemption of wages and tools from seizure for debt, the right of mechanics to file liens on property to secure payment of their wages, and the abolition of home and factory sweatshops.

With the rise of political organizations of workingmen, which soon took on the typical forms of American political parties — ward and county committees, and conventions — much of the strictly economic activity of the trade union movement and the number of organizations along craft lines declined. Although for a short time labor was successful in electing their candidates to various public offices, in general they failed to attain their aims. Nevertheless they had called public attention to the social and economic inequalities suffered by workers and helped shape the course of much future legislation. Eventually state legislatures prohibited imprisonment for debt, recognized the 10-hour day, and laid the foundation of the American free public school system.

Formation of City Centrals and National Unions

In the early 1830's the interest of workers in reform movements and political action declined. To offset the rapidly rising prices between 1835 and 1837 they turned with renewed vigor to organize craft or trade unions. By 1836, for example, over 50 local unions were active in both Philadelphia and New York City. Workers also organized craft unions in other cities such as Newark, Boston, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Louisville. This rapid growth led to the formation of union

groups on a city-wide basis. These "city central" organizations, or "trades' unions" as they were called at the time, gave primary attention to the discussion of problems of common interest and promotion of union-made goods.

Organization of union groups beyond a single local area was first tried in 1834 when city central bodies from seven cities met in New York to form the National Trades' Union. Later, in 1835 and 1836, the cord-wainers, typographers, comb-makers, carpenters and hand-loom weavers endeavored to set up country-wide organizations of their separate crafts. These experiments in federation, however, proved unable to withstand the financial panic of 1837 followed by a long depression and unemployment during the forties which wiped out practically every form of labor organization.

The Era of "Utopianism"

When the economic collapse took its toll of local as well as national unions workmen in many places turned their efforts towards forming producers' and consumers' cooperatives. Others were attracted by various schemes for cooperative communities stimulated by the "utopian" ideas spread by the followers of the French socialist Charles Fourier, by the English reformer Robert Owen, and by many other intellectuals of the period. Community ownership of land and productive forces, such as was tried in the well-known Brook Farm venture in Massachusetts and at the New Harmony colony in Indiana was urged as the solution to poverty, unemployment and other social and economic ills besetting labor. Although widely discussed in labor groups these schemes received little direct support from workers themselves. They did, however, divert workers' efforts from union activities into disputes over political and economic theories.

In this period the "homestead movement" also was born. In its simplest terms it was a proposal to give, without cost, the undeveloped public land to persons who wished to settle and cultivate it. This movement, which in the words of the labor historian Selig Perlman was a demand that the Government "open an escape to the worker from the wage system into self-employment by way of free land," dominated American politics during the 50's and 60's.

An Unsettled Decade

In the late forties industry had revived, labor was in great demand, prices rose, and trade unions once more showed signs of vigor. Workingmen again became interested in establishing rules governing apprenticeship, minimum wages, control over methods of payment, initiation fees, dues, strike benefit funds, union hiring procedures, the closed shop and the exclusion from membership of all persons not working at the trade. As industries spread, new locals were formed and by 1854 most trades showed some organization. Many of these unions collapsed only to be promptly revived and crushed again in 1857 in the fluctuating course of the business cycle.

During the 1850's several national unions were founded. The printers' union held a national convention in 1850. By 1859 the stonecutters, hat finishers, molders, machinists and locomotive engineers also had created national organizations. The decade also was marked by the relative frequency and magnitude of strikes in which, at one time or another, almost every known craft and the majority of American cities had been involved. Collective bargaining between unions and management, however, was slowly becoming more common in several leading trades.

Emergence of National Unions

The armed conflict between the Northern and Southern states known as the Civil War (1861-1865) demanded large quantities of munitions and other factory goods. Prices rose, profits were large, and many new businesses were started during this period. New Railroads brought the country closer together than ever before. Factory goods from Massachusetts, New York and other Eastern states were shipped by rail to the West. Other factories were built in the new cities emerging along the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi Valley.

Unions sought to organize the skilled hands employed by these new enterprises. In 1863 there were approximately 80 local unions in 20 northern states. By 1864 these states had almost 300 local unions. City centrals followed immediately the organization of local unions. A short-lived effort at a country-wide labor federation was made in 1864 when several of these city-centrals

established the International Industrial Assembly of North America. National and international unions* developed more slowly but quite steadily year by year, with 13 appearing between 1861 and 1865. The unions formed in these years became relatively strong and permanent organizations which in a few cases (the plasterers, the cigarmakers, and the bricklayers and masons), have continued to the present day.

The decade and a half following the Civil War was an important formative period for the American labor movement. Encompassing two cycles of economic recession and revival, the period saw the rise of 14 new national unions, the expansion of total union membership to 300,000 by 1872, followed by a contraction to 50,000 by 1878, and three attempts to unite the various craft organizations into national labor federations. It also saw the rise of the eight-hour day movement and the first signs of the long, bitter, and frequently violent industrial warfare which characterized the struggle of American unionism for recognition and survival.

The National Labor Union

The establishment of the National Labor Union in Baltimore in 1866 was a response to a growing demand for unification of labor groups on a national scale. Basically a loose federation of city centrals, it also included national unions, local unions, and various social reform organizations. Although one of the purposes of its founders had been to encourage industrial peace through the promotion of collective bargaining, the National Labor Union soon veered away from "pure" trade unionism, concentrating first upon the eight-hour movement and later upon a revival of labor interest in producers' cooperatives. The driving personality behind the NLU was William H. Sylvis of the Molders' union who believed in cooperation as a means of freeing workers from the control of "capitalist" groups. The example of cooperation production undertaken by Sylvis' own union was followed on a limited scale by other trades, such as the

bakers, shipwrights, machinists, tailors and printers. Because such cooperative enterprise required capital and credit, the National Labor Union was also prompted to support the various farm groups in the "Greenback" movement which favored large issues of paper money and easy credit at low interest rates.

The National Labor Union passed from the scene in 1872 after its brief and rapid evolution away from trade-unionism to cooperation and political action. A National Reform and Labor Party which it sponsored in 1872 failed to survive even one election, and by the end of the '70's few cooperatives remained. However, the emphasis which the NLU had placed on state and federal legislation had borne some fruit. In 1868, Congress established an eight-hour day for federal employees, although the struggle still continued on the industrial front. A government bureau of labor, demanded by the NLU was provided by law in 1884.

Industrial Strife

In 1873 and again in 1876 several of the leading craft unions attempted unsuccessfully to revive interest in federation on a strictly trade union program. Trade union membership, meanwhile, was being seriously reduced by a new economic depression. Industrial workers were involved in a series of violent strikes and lockouts which their organizations were financially too weak to endure. The cigar makers, textile workers, ironworkers, coal miners and others fought bitterly against wage reduction. In 1877 the railroad strikes, which centered in Pittsburgh but spread throughout the country, brought in their wake riots, martial law, intervention of state and federal troops, and killings. A notorious secret association, known as the "Molly Maguires", gained control of lodges of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania. A product of the distress and poverty of this period, the "Molly Maguires" used terroristic methods against employees and strike breakers. This group was finally

* *Unions called themselves "internationals" when some of the affiliated locals were outside the United States, usually in Canada. Today the terms "national unions" and "international unions" are used interchangeably to designate the larger organizations to which local unions in a craft or industry are affiliated.*

broken up by state authorities with the arrest and conviction of several ring leaders in connection with a series of murders they were charged with having committed.

Despite the failure of workers to win their immediate objectives, this turbulent period brought a growing recognition of the nation-wide significance of the labor movement and of the social and economic ills which it was attempting to remedy. Professor Selig Perlman observed that the experience of these years "nationalized" the labor movement, developing within it a consciousness of solidarity and common purpose. For the first time, also, unskilled workers — on the railroads, in the mines, in the textile mills — played a significant role in industrial conflict and the organized labor movement was no longer identified exclusively with the skilled groups.

Improvement in economic conditions was accompanied by the appearance of new locals of skilled workers and the formation of new city centrals, few of the old having survived the depression. Some 18 national unions had survived; nine others were soon established. By 1885 total union membership again reached the 300,000 level of 1872, in spite of the economic recession beginning in 1883 which had brought on a wave of strikes against wage reductions and a wide defensive use of the boycott.

During the union-employer struggles of this decade the labor movement itself became the scene of decisive contest over its own future structure. The issue was whether a nation-wide organization of labor could be based upon the direct affiliation of local unions and city centrals cutting across trade lines or whether a national federation should be based primarily on existing national trade unions. The former approach, which had already been tried unsuccessfully several times, was championed by the Knights of Labor, while the latter course was espoused by the American Federation of Labor.

The Knights of Labor

The Noble Order of the Knights of Labor was founded by Uriah S. Stephens in 1869 as a small local union of Philadelphia garment workers and expanded slowly as various other craft unions joined. For some years it functioned as a secret society with an elaborate ritual, a practice best understood in the light of the difficulties experienced by unions at the time when, as one contem-

porary labor leader wrote, "a great deal of bitterness was evinced against trade union organizations, and men were blacklisted to an extent hardly ever equalled." Most of the secrecy, however, was abandoned by 1881.

From an estimated membership of 10,000 in 1879 the Knights grew rapidly until by 1886 it claimed over 700,000 members throughout the country. Structurally, the Knights consisted of a national body or General Assembly exercising centralized control over numerous district assemblies, each of which was composed of five or more local assemblies. Local assemblies were of two kinds, trade and mixed. The former included members of only one craft while the latter admitted a wide range of occupations and professions. The first General Assembly, called in 1878, elected Stephens as Grand Master Workman. He resigned shortly thereafter and was succeeded by Terrence V. Powderly.

The Order had a broad aim: the replacement of a competitive society by a cooperative one which would give workers the opportunity fully to enjoy the wealth they created. This was to be achieved primarily through reducing the "money power" of banks, not through battles with individual employers. More concretely, the Knights' program called for the eight-hour day, equal pay for equal work of women, abolition of convict and child labor, public ownership of utilities, and the establishment of cooperatives. Reliance was put in educational and political methods rather than in collective bargaining. Strikes were to be employed only as a last resort.

During the 80's however, when the "practical trade unionist" forces gained some influence, the Knights were engaged in a series of strikes for better wages and made wage agreements with employers. Their most successful, albeit severe, struggle in 1885 with the powerful Gould railway system brought them particular prestige.

An internal conflict spelled the decline of the Knights of Labor. Leaders who favored processes of collective bargaining clashed with those committed to political means and basic social change. Moreover, the immediate interests of the skilled and unskilled workers whom the Knights attempted to unite were not easily reconciled. The stronger craft unions resisted affiliation and by 1886 came into open rivalry with the Knights of Labor.

The American Federation of Labor

By this time a new organization had

arisen. Devoted to "pure and simple unionism," its goals were higher wages and improved working conditions. The craft unions surviving the depression of 1873 were almost exclusively absorbed in problems of their respective trades. They had developed a strong centralized national organization by subordinating their local units to the national offices and by collecting benefit funds to assist their members during strikes and times of depression.

In 1881 six prominent craft unions — the printers, iron and steel workers, molders, cigar makers, carpenters and glass workers — and a variety of other labor groups met in Pittsburgh and established the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. Its leaders were Samuel Gompers and Adolph Strasser of the cigar makers' union. At the start it had approximately 45,000 members and for five years it remained weak and overshadowed by the Knights of Labor. However, when the Knights in 1886 at their annual convention refused to agree to respect the jurisdiction of the large craft unions, several of the latter met at Columbus, Ohio, and founded the American Federation of Labor. The F.O.T.L.U., also in convention at Columbus, amalgamated with the new group. Gompers was elected first president of the new Federation, a position he held, with the exception of one year (1894-95), until his death in 1924.

The strength of the AFL resided primarily in the unions of carpenters, cigar makers, printers, iron and steel workers, and iron molders. It began with a membership of about 138,000 in 1886 and slowly doubled that number during the next 12 years. Up until 1890 rivalry with the Knights of Labor continued and frequent efforts to effect working agreements failed to allay the constant strife. Steadily losing ground to the new organization, the Knights reported only 100,000 members in 1890, after which date it continued to lose membership and ceased to be an influential factor in the labor movement, although continuing in existence until 1917.

Membership Growth, 1890-1920

In the three decades following 1890 the AFL continued to grow, consolidating its position as the principal federation of American unions. The first decade of growth was slow, but from 1900 to 1904 membership rose rapidly from half a million to a million and a half, and then irregularly to a two million figure by the outbreak of World War I. During the war years membership again rose rapidly, reaching more than four million in 1920.

During this entire period some 70 to 80 percent of all union workers were in the American Federation of Labor. The most important unaffiliated group of unions were the four "railroad brotherhoods" which usually maintained friendly relations with the AFL affiliates. Other non-affiliated unions were a variable group. They frequently were rivals of AFL unions. Others were AFL secessionist groups. Membership among this "independent" or unaffiliated group, according to estimates of Professor Wolman (*Ebb and Flow in Trade Unionism*), rose from approximately 200,000 in 1900 to almost one million in 1920.

Prior to World War I the principal union gains occurred in coal mining, railroad and building trade unions. Coal mining was dominated by the United Mine Workers, an industrial union which after a strike in 1902 established itself as the largest and most completely organized affiliate of the AFL. Elsewhere organizations of crafts or amalgamated crafts still largely prevailed.

Renewed Industrial Conflict

The emergence of the labor movement as an influential national economic group did not take place without opposition or temporary setbacks. In the 1890's new large corporations which had appeared on the economic scene vigorously fought efforts at unionizing their employees. At times these clashes resulted in deaths, injuries and other violence. For example, the unsuccessful struggle of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers against the Carnegie Steel Company at Homestead, Pennsylvania, in 1892 was climaxed by a pitched battle between company-imported Pinkerton detectives and strikers which resulted in 10 deaths and the intervention of the National Guard. The strike of the American Railway Union led by Eugene V. Debs against the Pullman Palace Parlor Car Company at Pullman, Illinois, in 1894 provoked sympathetic walkouts on many railroads serving the Chicago area. Federal and State troops were used and court injunctions obtained against the union. Twenty-five persons were killed and 60 injured during this controversy. Elsewhere in the country industrial disputes sporadically flared into open violence.

After 1902, following a period of rapid union growth, employer opposition appeared to stiffen and take on a more organized character. The more powerful employers, writes Professor Carrol Daugherty in summarizing this trend, in his volume "Labor

Problems in American Industry", "believing that unionism was growing too strong and fearing further encroachments on their control of industry, decided to break off relations, and the years from 1902 to the War were characterized by a definitely increasing anti-unionism." Daugherty then adds: "Scientific management and 'efficiency' systems were introduced in many plants, much to the discomfiture of many skilled craft unions. A variety of union-smashing tactics were adopted by employers. Vigilante groups and citizens' committees were fostered to resist unionization activities. Court decisions upheld as a rule most of the employers' anti-union practices. In the face of these new difficulties the membership of the AFL at first fell off a little and then resumed growth at a much slower rate than before 1902."

Despite general employer opposition to unions, however, an increasing body of "trade" or collective bargaining agreements were resulting from direct negotiations between unions and employers. The stabilization of industrial relations and the attainment of job security is considered by many authorities as an important factor in the success at this period of the "pure and simple" trade unionism of the unions in the AFL fold.

Labor's "Non-partisan" Politics

Concentrating on raising wages, establishing the eight-hour day and other improvements in working conditions through extension of the area of collective bargaining agreements, these unions on the whole resisted the efforts of various political forces in the labor movement to gain union support for partisan programs. This issue was debated in various conventions of the AFL at the turn of the century when, according to Lewis Lorwin in his book "The American Federation of Labor", "The principle of non-partisan politics, summed up in the dictum 'to defeat labor's enemies and to reward its friends,' received official sanction." In practice this principle meant that the AFL opposed any "independent labor party" but would officially support measures and candidates and even the programs of regular political parties favorable to the interests of labor.

As a consequence, labor was frequently successful in obtaining legislative reforms. The first years of the century, for example,

saw the passage of several State laws protecting women and children in industry and reducing industrial hazards. Workmen's compensations laws were adopted in most States. Congress created a separate Department of Labor in 1913. Clauses inserted in the Clayton Anti-Trust Act of 1914 at the insistence of the AFL exempted unions from prosecution in restraint of trade and sought to limit the issuance of injunctions by federal courts in labor disputes. This law was hailed by Gompers and others as the "Magna Carta" of labor. Enthusiasm over the Clayton Act was short-lived, however, since subsequent court interpretations virtually nullified labor's anticipated gains. In 1915 Congress also passed the Seamen's Act regulating many of the conditions of employment for American sailors and, in 1916, enacted a basic eight-hour day covering railroad workers engaged in interstate commerce.

Radical Opposition

Opposition to the "pure trade union" policies of the AFL unions came from the Socialist Labor Party, the Socialist Party, and the Industrial Workers of the World. The Socialist Labor Party, founded in 1874, was a product of the American section of Marx and Engel's International Workingman's Association or First International formed in 1864. This group attempted to form, in 1895, a rival body to the AFL — the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. Those within the SLP who believed in winning workers to socialist philosophy without resort to "dual unionism" broke away in 1901 and formed the Socialist Party whose members opposed traditional AFL policies from within the Federation.

The Industrial Workers of the World was formed in 1905 by several dissident union and political groups. It was pledged to the "abolition of the wage system" and to the organization of the great mass of unskilled factory workers and of migratory or "casual" laborers. The IWW organized workers primarily on an industrial basis and was partly successful for a limited period in some areas throughout the country, notably in the wheat fields, mines, and lumber camps of the West as well as in other scattered areas of industrial tension. Once considered as a possible contender to the AFL for supremacy in the labor movement, the IWW declined rapidly after 1913 although it still continues a nominal existence in a few localities.

Labor and the First World War

During World War I, increased industrial activity and labor shortages brought a rapid expansion of unions. A War Labor Board was created to promote union-management cooperation and to aid in settlement of potentially serious disputes. For the first time in the history of the country a Federal labor agency specifically spelled out the right of workers to organize in trade unions and to bargain collectively with employers through their chosen representatives. Union membership increased in the mining and shipbuilding industries and on the railroads which were operated by the Federal Government. Notable gains also were made in the packing-house, textile, men's clothing, food and leather, and metal trades industries. Unions, almost for the first time, seriously concerned themselves with organizing semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

In addition to serving on the War Labor Board, representatives from organized labor participated on other government boards and committees dealing with specialized war problems. Their close cooperation with government, on a scale heretofore unprecedented, secured for labor a hearing on specific complaints about industrial conditions as well as a voice on broad national issues.

Open Shop Era and Depression

Economic recession in 1921 and 1922 brought about a wave of strikes. These protests, however, failed to check a general wage reduction movement which marked the beginning of a rapid decline in union strength. The decline continued even after industry began to experience a rapid expansion, unprecedented in American history. Professors Millis and Montgomery (Organized Labor) found that the 1920's were years which should "according to historical precedents, have witnessed labor militancy, aggressiveness in conquering unorganized areas and in entrenching more strongly job control already obtained." Instead, this period "found old and established unions experiencing difficulty in maintaining past gains and something akin to inertia, pacifism or disillusionment pervading the movement as a whole."

The success of large-scale attacks by anti-union employers against organized labor in many industries (metals, autos, railroads, etc.) gave this period its popular title —

the "open shop era." Techniques followed by employers in these years included a variety of welfare measures, ranging from athletic fields and pension plans to such repressive measures as widespread use of spies and strikebreakers.

The varied effects of this period on the union movement are described by Lewis Lorwin: "A considerable part of the membership was able to obtain higher wage rates, increased earnings, and shorter hours. The 40-hour week in unionized plants was widely accepted, while about half a million union members obtained the five-day week. This was notable in the building trades, in some branches of the transportation industry, in the printing trades, in government employment, and in some of the professions, such as teaching and acting. But where unions were unable to meet the new conditions they suffered a decline in membership, a loss of income, and a weakening of their benefit systems; and they could enforce their standards over smaller areas."

From 1920 to 1923 total union membership fell from about five million to slightly over three and a half million. In 1929, at the height of the country's "prosperity", union membership still remained at this low level. Of the 105 AFL international and national unions in 1929 only 44 had held their own or expanded after 1925. Most of these were in the building and printing trades, transportation, government service and the amusement business. The economic depression and widespread unemployment which followed the 1929 stock market crash further reduced union membership to three and a quarter millions by 1932. This decline was particularly noticeable in industries where machinery was displacing skilled hand labor and in the "sick" industries of mining and textiles, as well as in other industries artificially stimulated by the war.

Recovery and Expansion

It was not until after the enactment in the spring of 1933, of the National Industrial Recovery Act, including section 7(a) which guaranteed the right of employees to organize into unions of their own choosing and to bargain collectively with employers, that trade-unionism in the United States began to revive. This revival brought a tremendous influx of new members from the mass-production industries into the ranks of unions.

Workers in the automobile, rubber, cement

and aluminum industries were rapidly organized on an undustrial basis. These new unions were chartered directly by the AFL as federal labor unions since there existed no corresponding international unions to absorb them.

In the two-year period 1933-34, many national and international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor also registered substantial gains in membership. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union increased its membership from 40,000 to over 150,000. The roster of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America rose from 94,000 to 130,000. The membership of the International Association of Machinists expanded from 75,000 to 90,000. The United Mine Workers' membership increased from 300,000 to almost 500,000. Other unions reported smaller increases.

Further gains, however, were halted temporarily by court invalidation of the National Industry Recovery Act in May 1935, by the rapid growth of employee representation plans established primarily for the purpose of combating the spread of unionism, and by the hostility of employers to the new National Labor Relations Act which in effect had incorporated the provisions of Section 7(a) of the NIRA.

The National Labor Relations Act guaranteed to employees "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." The Act created a National Labor Relations Board with two major functions: (1) to prevent and remedy "unfair labor practices" by employers which discourage or interfere with self-organization of employees or the practice of collective bargaining; and (2) to designate the bargaining representatives in the event of controversy over the union which should represent employees or over the size and composition of the unit to be certified for bargaining purposes.

After the Supreme Court validated the National Labor Relations Act in April 1937, organized labor made even more phenomenal advances than under the NIRA. By the end of 1937, the teamsters' union reported a membership of 210,000, or three times its 1933 membership. The International Association of Machinists had 138,000 members, or twice as many as in 1933. The Brotherhood of Electrical Workers nearly doubled its mem-

bership to 171,000, and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union expanded rapidly from about 25,000 members in 1933 to 107,000 in 1937.

Division in the Labor Movement

This progress in collective bargaining and increase in membership was accomplished in spite of an internal struggle which developed in the American Federation of Labor over the issue of industrial versus craft unionism. The San Francisco (1934) convention of the American Federation of Labor adopted by unanimous vote a report of its resolutions committee which declared that in the mass-production industries new methods had been developed for organizing workers whom it had been "most difficult or impossible to organize into craft unions." The report continued: "To meet this new condition the Executive Council is directed to issue charters to national and international unions in the automotive, cement, aluminum and such other mass-production and miscellaneous industries as in the judgment of the Executive Council may be necessary to meet the situation." The resolution also indicated that the jurisdictional rights of existing trade unions would be recognized and that organization along craft lines would be retained in those industries where the lines of demarcation between crafts were distinguishable.

During the following year the American Federation of Labor granted charters to organizations of workers in the automobile and rubber industries. In defining the jurisdiction of these unions the AFL Executive Council specifically excluded, however, certain skilled craftsmen and maintenance employees coming under the jurisdiction of other unions.

The issue of industrial versus craft organization was again brought before the American Federation of Labor at its Atlantic City (1935) convention. A minority report of the resolutions committee protested the Executive Council's interpretation of the San Francisco declaration on industrial unionism and called for "unrestricted charters" to organizations set up in mass-production industries. Defeat of the minority report by a vote of 18,024 to 10,093 left the issue unresolved and paved the way for the schism in the labor movement which followed.

*Formation of Committee
for Industrial Organization*
A few weeks after the 1935 convention,

six AFL affiliated unions and the officers of two other AFL unions formed a "Committee for Industrial Organization," with the stated purpose to promote organization of the workers in mass-production and unorganized industries and to encourage their affiliation with the American Federation of Labor. The committee was later joined by four additional AFL unions.* The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor characterized the activities of the Committee for Industrial Organization as dual to the AFL and in January 1936 requested the Committee to disband immediately. The CIO rejected the request. The ten international unions participating in the work of the CIO were suspended from the AFL by the Executive Council and its action was upheld by the 1936 convention.

Formal Organization of the CIO

The rift in the labor movement was further accentuated when the CIO held its first constitutional convention in November 1938 to organize a separate labor federation. At this convention the Committee for Industrial Organizations was reorganized as a federation of national and international unions under the name of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The new federation (the CIO) comprised the ten unions suspended from the AFL and some 32 other units or "organizing committees" established to organize workers in various industries. John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, was elected first president. The constitutional structure of the new organization resembled the AFL in providing basically for a loose federation of autonomous national unions governed by an executive board and officials elected at annual convention of delegates from affiliated unions.

* *The unions active in the formation of the CIO were: United Mine Workers, represented by John L. Lewis, who was chairman of the organization; Amalgamated Clothing Workers; International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; United Textile Workers; International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers; and International Association of Oil Field, Gas Well, and Refinery Workers. Two union officials, Charles P. Howard of the International Typographical Union who became Secretary of the committee and Max Zaritsky of the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers, participated as individuals without committing their organizations to the movement. The following four unions joined shortly after the formation of the committee: International Union of United Automobile Workers, United Rubber Workers, Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, and Federation of Flat Glass Workers.*

Status of Organized Labor Prior to World War II

Despite and to a large extent also because of the rivalry and bitterness which had been created by the AFL-CIO rift, organized labor in the United States continued to register substantial gains in union membership, in the number of collective bargaining agreements negotiated, and in the number of workers in industries covered by these agreements. By the end of 1941, total union membership was between 10 and 11 million. These organized workers comprised approximately one-third of all the wage earners and salaried employees in the country.

Unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor represented a dues-paying membership of over 4,500,000. The Congress of Industrial Organizations claimed a total membership of around 5,000,000. In addition, it was estimated that more than 900,000 workers belonged to other bona fide labor organizations not affiliated with either the AFL or the CIO.

The War Years, 1942-45

The war provided organized labor with perhaps the greatest opportunity in its history to extend union organization and influence. On the average during the period, total union membership steadily increased at a rate of almost a million workers per year. Shipbuilding, aircraft, automotive and other war industries showed the greatest gains. Between 1941 and 1945 many unions in the metal trades doubled and tripled their memberships. The United Automobile Workers (CIO) in 1945 reported a total dues-paying membership of 1,052,000, the largest ever recorded by an American

union. It was a period of consolidation for unions and extension of collective bargaining agreements over large sections of industry. Few new national unions came into existence, although certain unaffiliated unions, such as the National Federation of Telephone Workers and the Foremen's Association of America, came into prominence.

During the years immediately prior to the war as well as the war years there were several formal exchanges of letters between the AFL and CIO, and two brief conferences ended in failure to agree on possible bases for either joint collaboration or ultimate unification of the two federations. Consequently both organizations represented labor on the various advisory and administrative boards set up by the Government in connection with prosecution of the war.

Organized labor in general played an active role in many phases of the war production program and was represented on the first defense agency, the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, established in May 1940. With the creation of the Office of Production Management in January 1941, the president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (CIO), Sidney Hillman, was appointed by President Roosevelt to share authority with the Director General, William S. Knudson, President of the General Motors Corporation. In a later reorganization a labor representative served in the dual capacity of vice-chairman of both the War Production Board and the War Manpower Commission. In December 1942, top representatives from three major labor groups (AFL, CIO and Railway Brotherhoods) were appointed to the Management-Labor Policy Committee, a consulting body for the War Manpower Commission, and similar joint committees were appointed in the regions and local areas to assist in the overall program of providing manpower for war industries.

Under the auspices of the War Production Board labor-management committees were established in many plants for the purpose of stimulating output and reducing employee absenteeism. In addition, most of the other war agencies worked out procedures for utilizing the cooperation of unions in their different programs.

Organized labor likewise participated directly in government administration established to adjust industrial disputes.

Labor representation on the "tripartite" National Defense Mediation Board, created by the President in March 1941 to

help in settling disputes in defense industries, was equally divided between the AFL and CIO. Immediately after the declaration of war in December 1941, President Roosevelt called a conference of union and industry leaders at the conclusion of which he announced a voluntary pledge from labor not to sanction strikes for the duration of the war in return for a pledge by management representatives not to permit lock-outs. These pledges were integral elements in the agreement establishing a National War Labor Board to adjudicate all industrial disputes affecting the war effort and to provide procedures for their peaceful settlement. This Board, set up in January 1942, was composed of representatives from labor, management, and the "public," and several subordinate regional boards were organized on a similar basis. As in the case of the earlier National Defense Mediation Board, labor representation was equally divided between the AFL and CIO.

Postwar Developments

Despite industrial readjustments accompanying the close of the military phases of the war and the shift from wartime to peacetime production, the labor movement on the whole has maintained its organizational strength. Although unions in the wartime industries, such as aircraft and shipbuilding, lost membership, they regained some of it in other branches, while most unions continued to report slow but steady advances among unorganized plants. In the spring of 1946 both major groups announced special organizational drives among the trades and industries located in the states in the Southeastern and South Central sections of the country where unionization was not as extensive as in other areas.

The labor movement has remained split into two major organizations. Toward the end of 1946, however, a new interchange of correspondence was opened between AFL President William Green and CIO President Philip Murray with a view toward exploring possible areas of cooperation between the two organizations or even organic unity. Committees of representatives from both groups held a meeting in Washington on May 1 and 2, 1947, following which they issued a joint statement expressing the "unanimous opinion.... that organic unity should be established within the American labor movement" and indicating an intention to continue discussions on the question.

Composition of Present Labor Movement

The organized labor movement of the United States as it exists today is made up of autonomous national and international unions which, in turn, are composed of local organizations of workers in various crafts, trades, professions and industries. Most of these national or international unions are affiliated with either the American Federation of Labor or the Congress of Industrial Organizations. A number of railroad and government workers' unions as well as a few others, mostly small and restricted to certain geographical areas, have never belonged to these federated bodies. Several other unions have at various times belonged to either the AFL or CIO but have withdrawn or been expelled. These unaffiliated unions are commonly known as "independents."

As of the beginning of 1947 the total membership of American unions was estimated on the basis of union claims at approximately 15,000,000. The AFL with 105 national unions reported its dues-paying membership at 7,505,446, while the CIO claimed 6,000,000 for its 40 national union affiliates. Among the more important independents the four train and engine railroad brotherhoods together had around 450,000 members. The International Association of Machinists reported 600,000, and the National Federation of Federal Employees 88,000. The National Federation of Telephone Workers, reorganized as the Communications Workers of America in July 1947 claimed approximately 180,000 members. The 40 to 50 remaining national independent unions have a total over-all membership of about half a million.

Over-all policies of both the AFL and CIO are determined at the annual conventions by delegates elected to represent constituent unions. Between conventions, authority is vested in elected officers and an executive body selected from affiliated unions. Affiliation with either the AFL or CIO is formalized by both organizations through issuance of "charters" which define for each affiliated union its respective jurisdiction, that is, the kinds of workers or industrial establishments from which a union is authorized to recruit membership.

Locally, there are city centrals with which the AFL local unions within a city are affiliated, and city industrial councils to which the CIO locals belong. At the state level, there are AFL state federations and CIO state industrial councils which consider state-wide problems affecting their res-

pective groups or organized labor in general.

In addition to locals which are chartered by their respective internationals, there are some directly affiliated with the AFL (known as "federal labor unions") or with the CIO (known as "local industrial unions"). These directly affiliated locals are usually confined to trades and industries for which the Federation has no appropriate internationals (the aluminum industry, for example) although when a sufficient number is organized within an industry, an international may be chartered.

The international unions and their subordinate organizations (locals and joint boards and district councils of several locals in an area) are primarily concerned with protecting and improving the working conditions of members within their particular trades or industries. By contrast, the state and city groups devote themselves chiefly to legislative and educational matters of over-all interest to labor.

Unions are frequently classified as *craft* or *industrial* unions. Yet very few American unions now fall clearly within either of these two types. Many unions are better described as *amalgamated* or *multi-craft* because they include two or more skilled or semi-skilled groups. Other unions are better described as *semi-industrial* because, although they may include all production workers within an industry, they frequently exclude certain maintenance, technical or clerical groups. Generally speaking, most AFL unions tend towards the craft or multi-craft type (e.g., the International Plate Printers, Die Stammers and Engravers' Union, and the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers) while most CIO unions are more readily classified as industrial or semi-industrial (e.g., the United Steelworkers, the United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers, and the Transport Workers Union).

In order to provide organizational machinery for coordinating the common interests of many crafts, the AFL constitution provides for the creation of "departments" composed of those international unions having jurisdiction over the various crafts in a broad industry. There are now four such departments: the Building and Construction Trades Department, with 19 affiliated international unions; the Metal Trades Department, with 14 affiliated unions; the Railway Employees' Department with six affiliated unions; and the Maritime Trades Department (established in 1946), with five affiliated unions. Each of these departments.

holds conventions and functions through subordinate bodies organized on a local, state, district or, in the case of the railway shop-crafts, on a "system" basis. Dissimilar in function to the other departments is the AFL Union Label Trades Department, composed of affiliated AFL unions having union labels or insignia. It is designed to promote union organization and union standards of workmanship through appeal to consumers to buy union made goods or services.

Scope of Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is now a firmly established institution of industrial relations in the United States. It has become a recognized orderly procedure whereby representatives of workers as a group meet with representatives of employers to agree upon the practices which are to govern their normal relations. The basic aim of unions in collective bargaining is to secure a written agreement which will specify the terms of employment and conditions of work, provide guarantees against arbitrary discharge, and maintain machinery for cooperation in applying the agreement and meeting the problems arising out of the agreement.

Accurate statistics on the number of union agreements are unavailable. It has been estimated, however, that the number currently in effect greatly exceeds 50,000. These agreements do not follow a common pattern for all industries or even within a single industry. They differ with respect to the manner in which they are negotiated, the variety of subjects covered, and their contents.

A large majority of agreements currently in effect are negotiated by individual employers and individual unions on behalf either of all plant employees or of particular groups (e.g. crafts) within a plant. Other agreements, however, frequently covering many thousands of employees may be negotiated between several unions (usually craft or multi-craft unions) and an individual employer, between several unions and several employers, or between a single union and several employers. An increasing number of contracts in mass production industries cover many or all of the scattered plants of a large corporation, but only a few agreements cover an entire industry or trade.

In 1946, out of 31,200,000 wage and salary workers "eligible" to be covered by collective agreements, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated 14,800,000 or 48 per-

cent were so covered. These figures refer to all workers in a bargaining unit for which an agreement is in existence, and thus include some non-members as well as the members of unions. In manufacturing industries, slightly over 69 percent of the production wage earners work under the terms of union agreements, compared with about 35 percent in non-manufacturing industries. Several industries, such as building construction, coal mining, basic steel, clothing glass, and others, were almost entirely organized by unions in contrast with the very small degree of organization found in agriculture, retail and wholesale trade, dairy products, or beauty shops.

Although union-employer contracts vary in content and detail they usually include provisions dealing to some degree with the following major items: union status or recognition; wages, hours and methods of payment; vacations, holidays and leaves; seniority rules governing lay-offs, reemployment and promotions; health and safety; general working conditions; and grievance and arbitration procedures.

The majority of agreements run for fixed periods, usually one year, after which they may be automatically renewed by mutual consent or renegotiated by the parties. Some agreements contain provisions for special renegotiation of the wage clause during the life of the over-all agreement.

Union Functions and Activities

Unions perform a multitude of different functions for their members. In the case of the larger unions a fairly extensive staff consisting of organizers and office personnel including auditors, lawyers, economists, etc. is required. Union functions may be classified roughly as follows: administration of internal union matters; negotiation and administration of collective agreements; educational and beneficial activities; and participating in community and national affairs.

Administration of internal affairs usually involves the holding of conventions and meetings of the executive board, direction of organizing activities, and general supervision over local union practices in admitting new members, collecting dues and handling finances. Apprenticeship regulations, intra-union grievances or disputes, and strike action also fall within the scope of international union administration. The degree to which "headquarters" exercises control or supervision over these matters varies with

the union. Some unions are highly centralized while others grant their locals a large degree of self-government and autonomy.

Negotiation of the terms of the collective agreements with employers is another important area of union functions in which there is considerable variation in the relative degree of responsibility assumed by the international office and local union. After agreements are negotiated, unions have the problem of making them work smoothly. This problem is normally handled through informal as well as formal union-employer conferences. Conferences are held to clarify the meaning of contract clauses and to deal with other current problems of mutual interest such as operation of seniority provisions, supervision of grievance procedures, participation in joint labor-management committees as well as in joint time, rate and work load studies. In large unions most of these problems usually became the immediate responsibility of local unions but the international offices frequently provide necessary technical assistance and advice. For these purposes many international unions have established within their international office distinct departments, organized functionally (e.g. legal, research and statistics, engineering, etc.), or organized according to branch of industry or trade (e.g. woolen and worsted, cotton-rayon, and carpet branches of the textile industry).

In politics both the AFL and CIO, as well as most of the independent unions, officially continue to adhere to the old slogan of "reward labor's friends and defeat labor's enemies." Unions have been very active in political campaigns in recent years and have frequently been important factors in local and national elections. Their positions, however, have usually been determined by the issues and the candidates of each particular election. Labor groups also maintain representatives in Washington for

the purpose of indicating their attitudes on legislative proposals before Congress and to press for action which they consider desirable.

Educational facilities are provided by many unions. Certain craft unions, in particular, support trade schools to help members learn new or improve their industrial skills. Other educational programs conducted as part of regular union meetings or in special classes or "institutes" have a more general purpose. Lectures, discussions, moving pictures are the techniques commonly used. Some union educational effort may be specifically aimed at training union officials in handling routine union problems. For example, unions frequently provide special instruction in accounting methods for local union treasurers or in techniques of handling shop grievances for shop stewards. Other instruction may also be made available for those interested in learning parliamentary law, studying public speaking, or improving their ability to speak English.

As an important supplement to regular activities, most unions publish newspapers or journals. There are probably more than 400 weekly and monthly publications which are official organs of local and national unions as well as of the central CIO and AFL organizations. Unions also publish a wide variety of pamphlets and special reports in connection with their educational, political, and organizational programs.

Other union enterprises include life insurance and health benefit and pension programs, recreational activities, cooperatives, labor banks, credit unions, radio programs, and housing projects. In recent years the organized labor movement in the United States, in addition to its continued concern in traditional "bread and butter" unionism, has manifested an increasing interest in social and political problems, both local and national in scope, and in international affairs.

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APPENDIX

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Membership of Labor Unions in the United States

The membership series presented in the accompanying table is based upon reports and statements issued by the trade union organizations in their official journals, reports, or convention proceedings, since there are no official Government statistics covering trade union membership for the United States. "Union membership" is defined differently by various unions and the data are, therefore, not strictly comparable. The trend series, however, reasonably reflects year-to-year changes within each major union group.¹

Figures for the American Federation of Labor are those reported annually by the Federation's secretary-treasurer (e.g., see Report of the Proceedings of the 65th Convention of the American Federation of Labor, 1946, p. 43.) These membership data are defined by the AFL as the "total paid membership of the affiliated national and international organizations and the directly chartered trade and federal labor unions" based "on the actual per capita tax" remitted by affiliated unions.

The Congress of Industrial Organizations was formally organized in 1938. It existed as a Committee for Industrial Organization from November 1935 to November 1938. The CIO has never made public a consecutive membership series. The figures shown, therefore, are based upon reports or statements of CIO officials as to total membership or reported gains over a specified period as indicated in the separate footnotes.

The third broad category of union membership includes labor organizations which

are not affiliated with either the AFL or the CIO. In general, this group of "independent" or "unaffiliated" unions includes all bona-fide national labor organizations and excludes those which are either purely local in character or whose jurisdiction does not extend beyond the employees of a single employer. In addition to the long-established four train and engine service railroad brotherhoods, this group includes a relatively large but fluctuating number of small labor organizations. In recent years changes in affiliation of certain large labor organizations, such as the United Mine Workers of America and the International Association of Machinists, have also influenced the membership totals of the different groups.

For the period 1897 through 1934, membership figures for the independent or unaffiliated group of labor organizations are those compiled in Wolman's *Ebb and Flow in Trade Unionism*.² For the period 1929-34 these data have been adjusted to include membership figures, also compiled by Wolman, covering unions affiliated with the Trade Union Unity League. Data for some unaffiliated unions for the years since 1934 are fragmentary and the totals presented are estimates of the Bureau of Labor Statistics based upon available sources.

In conjunction with membership statistics the number of affiliated unions of the AFL and CIO as compiled from official union sources are also given for each year. Similar data for independent unions are not available.

¹ Many unions whose headquarters are in the United States also have locals outside the continental United States, primarily in Canada. Separate breakdowns of membership, by countries, are not, however, available and the data therefore include a union's total membership irrespective of where located. The THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT ON LABOR ORGANIZATIONS IN CANADA, published by the Canadian Department of Labor and covering the calendar year 1944, reported 468,013 Canadian workers as members of international unions whose principal offices were in the United States.

² Wolman, Leo, *EBB AND FLOW IN TRADE UNIONISM*, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1936, New York.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Bureau of Labor Statistics

MEMBERSHIP OF LABOR UNIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1897-1946

(The membership data presented below are obtained from various sources,
primarily official union documents, as indicated in the footnotes.)

| Year | American Federation of Labor | | Congress of Industrial Organizations | | Independent or Unaffiliated Unions | All Unions |
|------|--|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------|
| | Number of Affiliated Unions ¹ | Total Membership ² | Number of Affiliated Unions ³ | Total Membership | Total Membership ⁴ | Total Membership |
| 1946 | 102 | 7,152,000 | 40 | 6,000,000 ⁵ | 1,822,000 | 14,974,000 |
| 1945 | 102 | 6,931,000 | 40 | 6,000,000 ⁶ | 1,865,000 | 14,796,000 |
| 1944 | 100 | 6,807,000 | 41 | 5,935,000 ⁷ | 1,879,000 | 14,621,000 |
| 1943 | 99 | 6,564,000 | 40 | 5,285,000 ⁷ | 1,793,000 | 13,642,000 |
| 1942 | 102 | 5,483,000 | 39 | 4,194,000 ⁷ | 1,084,000 | 10,762,000 |
| 1941 | 106 | 4,569,000 | 41 | 5,000,000 ⁸ | 920,000 | 10,489,000 |
| 1940 | 105 | 4,247,000 | 42 | 3,625,000 ⁹ | 1,072,000 | 8,944,000 |
| 1939 | 104 | 4,006,000 | 45 | 4,000,000 ¹⁰ | 974,000 | 8,980,000 |
| 1938 | 102 | 3,623,000 | 42 | 4,038,000 ¹¹ | 604,000 | 8,265,000 |
| 1937 | 100 | 2,861,000 | 32 | 3,718,000 ¹¹ | 639,000 | 7,218,000 |
| 1936 | 111 | 3,422,000 | | | 742,000 | 4,164,000 |
| 1935 | 109 | 3,045,000 | | | 683,000 | 3,728,000 |
| 1934 | 109 | 2,608,000 | | | 641,000 | 3,249,000 |
| 1933 | 108 | 2,127,000 | | | 730,000 | 2,857,000 |
| 1932 | 106 | 2,532,000 | | | 694,000 | 3,226,000 |
| 1931 | 105 | 2,890,000 | | | 636,000 | 3,526,000 |
| 1930 | 104 | 2,961,000 | | | 671,000 | 3,632,000 |
| 1929 | 105 | 2,934,000 | | | 691,000 | 3,625,000 |
| 1928 | 107 | 2,896,000 | | | 671,000 | 3,567,000 |
| 1927 | 106 | 2,813,000 | | | 787,000 | 3,600,000 |
| 1926 | 107 | 2,804,000 | | | 788,000 | 3,592,000 |

(continued)

LABOR UNION MEMBERSHIP (continued)

| Year | American Federation of Labor | Congress of Industrial Organization* | Independent or Unaffiliated Unions | All Unions |
|------|--|---|--|---------------------|
| | Number of Affiliated Unions ¹ | Total Membership ² | Total Membership ⁴ | Total Membership |
| 1925 | 107 | 2,877,000 | 689,000 | 3,566,000 |
| 1924 | 107 | 2,866,000 | 683,000 | 3,549,000 |
| 1923 | 108 | 2,926,000 | *The Committee for Indus- 703,000 | 3,629,000 |
| 1922 | 112 | 3,196,000 | 754,000 | 3,950,000 |
| 1921 | 110 | 3,907,000 | 815,000 | 4,722,000 |
| 1920 | 110 | 4,079,000 | 955,000 | 5,034,000 |
| 1919 | 111 | 3,260,000 | 786,000 | 4,046,000 |
| 1918 | 111 | 2,726,000 | 1935. It adopted a 642,000 | 3,368,000 |
| 1917 | 111 | 2,371,000 | 605,000 | 2,976,000 |
| 1916 | 111 | 2,073,000 | constitution and its 649,000 | 2,722,000 |
| 1915 | 110 | 1,946,000 | present name, the Congress 614,000 | 2,560,000 |
| 1914 | 110 | 2,021,000 | 626,000 | 2,647,000 |
| 1913 | 111 | 1,996,000 | of Industrial Organ- 665,000 | 2,661,000 |
| 1912 | 112 | 1,770,000 | 635,000 | 2,405,000 |
| 1911 | 115 | 1,762,000 | izations, in 1938. 556,000 | 2,318,000 |
| 1910 | 120 | 1,562,000 | 554,000 | 2,116,000 |
| 1909 | 119 | 1,483,000 | 482,000 | 1,965,000 |
| 1908 | 116 | 1,587,000 | 505,000 | 2,092,000 |
| 1907 | 117 | 1,539,000 | 538,000 | 2,077,000 |
| 1906 | 119 | 1,454,000 | 438,000 | 1,892,000 |
| 1905 | 118 | 1,494,000 | 424,000 | 1,918,000 |
| 1904 | 120 | 1,676,000 | 391,000 | 2,067,000 |
| 1903 | 113 | 1,466,000 | 358,000 | 2,824,000 |
| 1902 | 97 | 1,024,000 | 311,000 | 1,335,000 |
| 1901 | 87 | 788,000 | 270,000 | 1,058,000 |
| 1900 | 82 | 548,000 | 243,000 | 791,000 |
| 1899 | 73 | 349,000 | 201,000 | 550,000 |
| 1898 | 67 | 278,000 | 189,000 | 467,000 |
| 1897 | 58 | 265,000 | 175,000 | 440,000 |

(continued — footnotes)

LABOR UNION MEMBERSHIP (continued)

Footnotes

- ¹Data for 1897, 1898, and 1933-46 were compiled from Proceedings of annual conventions of the AFL for those years; data for other years are from *THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR*, Lewis L. Lorwin, Brookings Institution, 1935, p. 488.
- ²Source: Proceedings 65th Convention of the AFL, 1946, p. 43.
- ³Data are compiled from Proceedings of annual conventions of the CIO.
- ⁴Statistics for period 1897 to 1934 are from *EBB AND FLOW IN TRADE UNIONISM*, Leo Wolman, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1936, New York, pp. 138-139. Figures for 1929-34 are adjusted to include membership of unions in the Trade Union Unity League in Wolman, p. 144. Figures for 1935-46 are estimates of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- ⁵Statement of President Philip Murray to the 1946 Convention of the United Steelworkers of America, CIO. (Proceedings, Third Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America, p. 62).
- ⁶~~Economic Outlook~~, November 1945, CIO Department of Research and Education.
- ⁷CIO membership for 1943 was reported as 5,285,000 (Proceedings, Sixth Constitutional Convention of the CIO, 1943, p. 115). It was also reported that the CIO had gained 1,090,503 members over 1942 (Ibid, p. 47), thus indicating a membership of approximately 4,195,000 for 1942. In 1944 a gain of 650,000 over 1943 was reported (Proceedings, Seventh Constitutional Convention, 1944, p. 56), indicating a 1944 membership total of 5,935,000.
- ⁸Proceedings, Fourth Constitutional Convention, 1941, p. 162.
- ⁹Based upon the number of votes accorded the various CIO affiliates represented at the Third Constitutional Convention, 1940. See Proceedings, pp. 25-30, pp. 113-115. and p. 170.
- ¹⁰Proceedings, Second Constitutional Convention, 1939, p. 80.
- ¹¹Proceedings, First Constitutional Convention, 1938, p. 36.