

Labor movement - U.S. (1957)

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE
**AMERICAN
LABOR
MOVEMENT**

1957 Revision



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
JAMES P. MITCHELL, Secretary
U.S. **BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS**
EWAN CLAGUE, Commissioner

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Preface

The Brief History of the American Labor Movement introduces readers to the mainstreams of trade unionism in the United States. It presents briefly and in general terms the role of labor organizations in American history and economic life, and is not a substitute for the detailed and basic histories of the American labor movement.

This revision covers the past 25 years, particularly developments since 1950 when this history was first issued. The chronology of important labor highlights has also been brought up to date. The first edition of the history was prepared by John M. Brumm and Theodore W. Reedy. The revision was prepared in the Bureau's Division of Wages and Industrial Relations with the assistance of Witt Bowden, formerly of the Bureau's staff. Nelson M. Bortz directed the work on both the original and revised editions.

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Part of the mural in the lobby of the AFL-CIO building in Washington, D. C.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT

Chapter I.—Early Organization

Unions have a long history in the United States. Even before the Declaration of Independence, 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. Although these early associations had few of the characteristics of present-day labor unions, they did bring workers together to consider problems of mutual concern and to devise ways and means for their solution.

Early Local Craft Unions

Crafts such as those of carpenters, shoemakers, and printers formed separate organizations in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston as early as 1791, largely to resist wage reductions. These unions were confined to local areas and were usually weak because they seldom included all the workers of a craft. Generally, they continued in existence for only a short time. In addition to the welfare activities, these unions frequently sought 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 were first developed in this period. 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.

TRIAL
OF TWENTY-FOUR
JOURNEYMEN TAILORS,

CHARGED WITH A

CONSPIRACY:

BEFORE

THE MAYOR'S COURT

OF THE CITY OF

PHILADELPHIA,

September Sessions, 1827.

REPORTED BY
MARCUS T. C. GOULD,
Stenographer.

PHILADELPHIA:
1827.

The courts came to the defense of early 19th-century employers by charging the new unions with conspiracy in restraint of trade.

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, during which workmen quit 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, although this action was directed more against the local government, which set the price of bread, than against the employers. 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 bootmakers 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 multiemployer strike when they extended strike action against one employer to include several others who had come to his aid.

Employer Opposition

As unions became stronger, the wage question increased in importance and employers formed organizations to resist wage demands. Where circumstances appeared favorable, employers attempted to destroy the effectiveness of a union by hiring nonunion workers and by appealing to the courts to declare the labor organization illegal. The 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 of conspiracy aroused a controversy which lasted throughout most of the nineteenth 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 while unions, as such, became regarded as "lawful," strikes, boycotts, and other attempts of workers to secure their demands were the subject of legal action in the courts for many decades.

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 membership in 1820, however, worker organizations again sprang up in the larger cities among hatters, tailors, weavers, nailers, and cabinetmakers. Organizations of factory workers also appeared for the first time during this period.

Early Efforts of Unions in Politics

Between 1827 and 1832, workers' organizations gradually turned to independent political activity. The factors leading to this development are explained by the historian, Mary Beard, who, in *A Short History of the American Labor Movement*, says:

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 associations 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 among workers seeking to improve their status by political action spread to many leading industrial communities. In Philadelphia a number of craft unions formed the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations in 1827. This citywide 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 also sprang up in many States.

Political programs, supported by 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 assumed the typical forms of American political parties—ward and county committees, and conventions—much of the strictly economic activity of

the trade union movement was discontinued, and the number of organizations along craft lines declined.

For a short time, these labor organizations were successful in electing their candidates to various public offices, but in general, they failed to attain their aims. Nevertheless, they called the attention of the regular political parties and the public at large to the social and economic inequalities experienced by workers and by so doing helped to shape the course of much future legislation. Eventually, State legislatures prohibited imprisonment for debt, enacted the 10-hour day for women and children, 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 the organization of craft or trade unions. By 1836, for example, over 50 local unions were active in 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 to the 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 cordwainers, typographers, comb-makers, carpenters, and hand-loom weavers endeavored to set up countrywide organizations of their separate crafts. These experiments in federation, however, did not withstand the financial panic of 1837 and the period of depression and unemployment which followed during most of the forties.

The Era of "Utopianism"

As the depression of the 1840's took its toll of local as well as national unions, workmen in many places turned their efforts toward 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 tools, like that 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 the 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, also, the "homestead movement" was born. In its simplest term, it was a proposal that the Government give plots of undeveloped public land to persons who wished to settle and cultivate them. This movement, in the words of the labor historian, Selig Perlman, in *A History of Trade Unionism in the United States*, was a demand that the Government "open an escape to the worker from the wage system into self-employment by way of free land," and it dominated American politics during the fifties and sixties.

An Unsettled Decade

By the late 1840's, industry had revived, labor was in great demand, prices were climbing upward, and trade-unions once more showed signs of activity. Workingmen again became interested in establishing rules governing apprenticeship, minimum wages, control over methods of wage 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 important trades showed some degree of organization in the larger cities. Many of these unions collapsed only to be promptly revived and crushed again in 1857 in another downward sweep 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 was marked also by many strikes which, at one time or another, involved almost every known craft and the majority of American cities. Collective bargaining between unions and management, however, was slowly becoming more prevalent in several leading trades.

By 1860, there was a definite trend toward higher wages and shorter hours for workers. Adequate data are lacking to prove that this trend was a direct result of union activity. There are, however, scattered bits of evidence which indicate that the combined efforts of workers were responsible for at least a part of the improvement in working conditions. For example, a letter written by President Martin Van Buren in 1840 to certain political inquirers states that: "The ten-hour system, originally devised by the mechanics and laborers themselves, has by my direction been adopted and uniformly carried out at all public establishments." A report of the Massachusetts Legislature for 1850 also tells that "the mechanics and laboring people * * * have established by mutual arrangement with their employers the 'ten hour system' of labor."

Specifically, the workday, often from sunrise to sunset early in the century, was shortened to 10 hours for most skilled artisans in the large cities by 1850. At this time, factory workers were beginning to work from 11 to 12 hours a day. By 1860, the average workday for nonagricultural employees was estimated at 11 hours, while the building trades averaged about 10 hours. Wages in 1820 which ranged from 75 cents to \$1.25 a day for common labor, depending upon the locality and season, were from \$1 to \$1.25 a day in 1850. Wages of more skilled artisans and mechanics in the cities similarly advanced from \$1.25 and \$1.50 a day in 1820 to between \$1.50 and \$2 or more by 1860.

Emergence of National Unions

The armed conflict between the Northern and Southern States (1861-65) required large quantities of munitions and other factory goods. Prices rose, profits were large, and many new industries were started during this period of civil war. New railroads brought the country closer together. Factory goods from Massachusetts, New York, and other Eastern States were shipped by rail to the West. Other factories were built in the cities emerging along the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi Valley.

Unions sought to organize the skilled workers 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 (local federations) followed soon after the organization of local unions. A short-lived effort toward a countrywide labor federation was made in 1864 when several of these city centrals established the International Industrial Assembly of North America. National and interna-

tional unions¹ developed more slowly but 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, cigar makers, bricklayers and masons) have continued to the present day.

The 15 years following the Civil War was an important formative period for the American labor movement. During 2 cycles of economic recession and revival, the period saw the rise of 14 new national unions. Union membership rose to 300,000 by 1872, and then dropped to 50,000 by 1878. Three unsuccessful attempts were made to unite the various craft organizations into national labor federations. This period also marked the rise of the 8-hour-day movement and the first signs of the long, bitter, and sometimes violent industrial warfare which characterized the struggle of American unionism for recognition and survival.

Establishment of the National Labor Union in Baltimore in 1866 was a response to a growing demand for unification of labor groups throughout the country. Basically a loose federation of city centrals, it included also national and 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 from "pure" trade unionism. After first concentrating on the 8-hour-day movement, it later tried to stimulate 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 capitalism. The example of cooperative production undertaken by Sylvis' own union was followed on a limited scale by others, such as the bakers, shipwrights, machinists, tailors, and printers. Because such cooperative enterprise required capital and credit, the National Labor Union was prompted to support the various politically inclined farm groups in the "Greenback" movement which favored large issues of paper money and easy credit at low interest rates.

The year 1872 saw the end of the National Labor Union after its brief and rapid evolution from trade unionism to a body which sponsored cooperatives and supported political groups. The National Reform and Labor Party, which it sponsored in 1872, failed to survive even one election, and by the end of the seventies few of its cooperatives remained.

¹ Unions first 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.

However, the emphasis which the NLU had placed on State and Federal legislation had borne some fruit. In 1868, Congress established an 8-hour day for Federal employees, although the struggle still continued in industry. A Government bureau of labor, which had been advocated by the NLU, was provided by law in 1884. Originally named the United States Bureau of Labor, this Federal agency evolved into the present Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor.

Industrial Strife

In 1873 and again in 1876, several of the leading craft unions attempted unsuccessfully to revive interest in a federation based 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 cigarmakers, textile workers, ironworkers, coal miners, and others fought bitterly against wage reductions.

In 1877, the railroad strikes, which originated in Pittsburgh but spread throughout the country, brought in their wake riots, martial law, intervention of State and Federal troops, and some fatalities. A notorious secret association, known as the "Molly Maguires," gained control of lodges of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania. The product of the distress and poverty of this period, the "Molly Maguires" used terroristic methods against employers and strikebreakers. This group was finally broken up by State authorities with the arrest and conviction of several ringleaders who were charged with a series of murders.

Despite the failure of workers to win their immediate objectives, this turbulent period brought a growing recognition of the nationwide significance of the labor movement and of the social and economic ills which it was attempting to remedy. Prof. 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 once more 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; 9 others were soon established. By 1885, total union membership again reached the 300,000 level in spite of the economic recession beginning in 1883 which had brought on a wave of strikes against wage reductions.

During the union-employer struggles of this decade, the labor movement itself became the scene of a decisive contest over its future structure. The issue was whether a nationwide organization of labor should 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 or craft unions. The former approach, which had already been tried unsuccessfully several times, was championed by the Knights of Labor, while the latter was favored by the American Federation of Labor after its founding in the 1880's.

Chapter II.—Development of the Modern Labor Movement

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

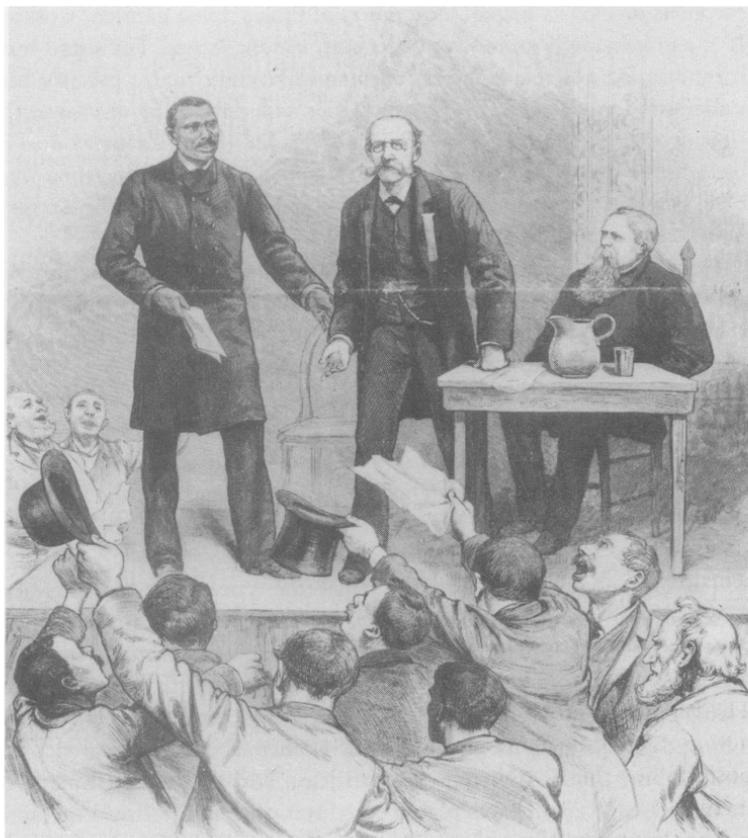
From an estimated membership of 10,000 in 1879, the Knights of Labor grew rapidly until by 1886 it claimed over 700,000 members throughout the country. Structurally, the Knights consisted of a national body or general assembly exercising centralized control over numerous district assemblies, each of 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 Terence V. Powderly.

The Order had a broad aim: the replacement of a competitive society by a cooperative one which would give workers the opportunity to enjoy fully 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 8-hour day, equal pay for equal work by women, abolition of convict and child labor, public ownership of utilities, and the establishment of cooperatives. Reliance was placed on educational and political methods rather than on collective bargaining. Strikes were to be employed only as a last resort.

During the eighties, however, when the "practical trade unionist" forces gained influence, the Knights engaged in a series of strikes for

better wages and made wage agreements with employers. Their most successful struggle, with the powerful Gould railway system in 1885, brought them particular prestige.

An internal conflict led to 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 immedi-



Frank J. Farrell introduces Terence V. Powderly, the "General Master Workman," to the 10th annual convention of the Knights of Labor, held in Richmond, Va.

ate interests of the skilled and unskilled workers whom the Knights attempted to unite were not so easily reconciled. The stronger craft unions resisted affiliation and by 1886 came into open rivalry with the Knights of Labor.

After formation of the American Federation of Labor, the Knights steadily lost ground. In 1890, the Knights reported only 100,000 members. Thereafter, the Order continued to lose members and ceased to be an influential factor in the labor movement, although continuing in existence until 1917.

The American Federation of Labor

By 1881, the nucleus of a new organization had taken shape. 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. Many of these unions developed strong, centralized, national organizations supported by an increasing number of local lodges. Benefit funds were also collected to assist their members or their families during strikes and times of financial stress due to unemployment, injury, or death.

In 1881, six prominent craft unions—those of the printers, iron and steel workers, molders, cigarmakers, carpenters, and glassworkers—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, both of the cigar makers' union. At the start, the Federation had approximately 45,000 members; for 5 years it remained weak and was overshadowed by the Knights of Labor.

When the Knights at their annual convention in 1886 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 1 year (1894-95), until his death in 1924.

The strength of the AFL resided primarily in the unions of carpenters, cigarmakers, 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.

Membership Growth, 1890–1920

In the three decades following 1890, the AFL consolidated 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 increased irregularly to 2 million by the outbreak of World War I. During and immediately following the war years, membership again rose rapidly, reaching more than 4 million in 1920.



The first Labor Day parade, in New York City, on September 5, 1882.

During this entire period, an estimated 70 to 80 percent of all union workers were in the American Federation of Labor. The most important unaffiliated group of unions was the four "railroad brotherhoods" which usually maintained friendly relations with the AFL affiliates. The other nonaffiliated unions were a mixed group. They frequently were rivals of the AFL unions. Some were AFL secessionist groups. Membership among this "independent" or unaffiliated group rose from approximately 200,000 in 1900 to almost a million in 1920, according to estimates Prof. Leo Wolman made for the National Bureau of Economic Research.

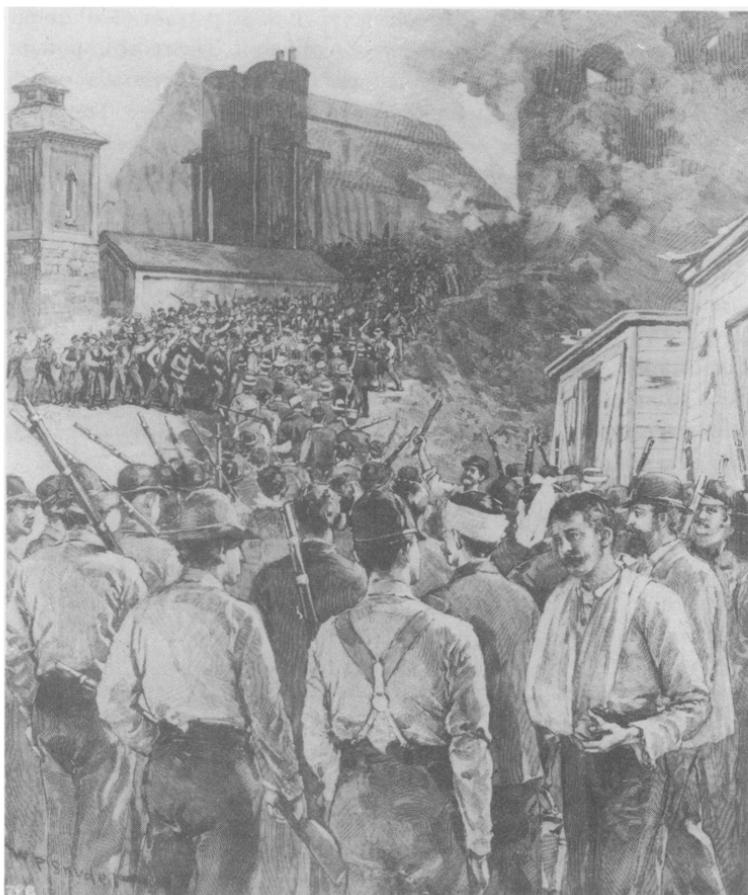
Before World War I, the principal union gains occurred in the coal mining, railroad, and building trades unions. The most important union of coal miners was the United Mine Workers, an industrial union which, after a strike in 1902, established itself as the largest and one of the most completely organized affiliates of the AFL. In other industries, 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 occur without opposition or setbacks. In the 1890's, large corporations which had appeared on the economic scene vigorously fought the efforts to unionize their employees. At times, these clashes resulted in violence, injuries, and even death. For example, the unsuccessful struggle of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers against the Carnegie Steel Co. at Homestead, Pa., in 1892 was climaxed by a pitched battle between company-imported Pinkerton detectives and strikers which resulted in 10 deaths before the intervention of the National Guard restored order.

The strike of the American Railway Union led by Eugene V. Debs against the Pullman Palace Parlor Car Co. at Pullman, Ill., in 1894 provoked sympathetic walkouts on many railroads serving the Chicago area. Federal and State troops were used and court injunctions were obtained against the union. Twenty-five persons were killed and 60 were 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 stiffened and became more highly organized. Prof. Carroll Daugherty,



Pinkerton agents, hired by the Carnegie Steel Co., battling with strikers at the company's Homestead, Pa., plant in July 1892. The strike was broken when the company brought in 2,000 strikebreakers protected by the State militia.

in summarizing this trend in his book *Labor Problems in American Industry*, wrote:

Most of the powerful ones [employers], 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 World War I were characterized by a definitely increasing antiunionism.

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 employer's antiunion 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 number 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 are considered by many authorities as important factors in the success of AFL trade unionism at this period.

Labor's "Nonpartisan" Politics

During the years between 1900 and the beginning of the First World War, unions concentrated on raising wages, establishing the 8-hour workday, and securing other improvements in working conditions through collective bargaining. On the whole, they resisted the efforts of various political forces in the labor movement to obtain union support for partisan programs. The political role of organized labor was debated in various conventions of the AFL at the turn of the century when, according to Lewis Lorwin, "The principle of nonpartisan 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 officially supported 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 regulating the employment of women and children in industry and providing for protection against industrial hazards. Workmen's compensation laws were adopted in most States, and in 1913 the United States Congress created a separate Department of Labor.

Clauses inserted in the Clayton Anti-Trust Act of 1914, at the insistence of the AFL, exempted unions from prosecution on the ground of engaging in restraint of trade and sought to limit the issuance of injunctions

by Federal courts in labor disputes. This law was hailed by Samuel 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 passed the Seamen's Act, regulating many of the conditions of employment for American sailors; the Lloyd-La Follette Act, giving public employees the right of lobbying and affiliating with labor organizations; and, in 1916, enacted the Adamson Act, establishing a basic 8-hour workday for railroad workers engaged in interstate commerce.

Radical Opposition

Although the AFL under Samuel Gompers' leadership was successfully developing along the lines of "pure and simple" unionism, a series of unions, more or less revolutionary in character, rose to challenge it. These unions were committed to the doctrine that labor was engaged in a class struggle, and that a political offensive was the best way to advance the interests of labor. On the other hand, the AFL championed the philosophy that gradual improvement of the economic condition of the worker was the only useful course of action to follow, and that collective bargaining was the chief tool to use. After a long struggle, which continued from the 1890's to the First World War, the philosophy of the AFL clearly emerged as the expressed views of the great majority of the country's organized workers.

Opposition to the strict 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 in 1895 to form a rival body to the AFL—the Socialist Trades 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 then sought, unsuccessfully, to change traditional AFL policies from within the federation.

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) 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



Telephone workers picketing in Washington, D. C., during a strike.

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 a few other scattered areas of industrial tension. The militant tactics used to press its demands, particularly during the First World War, brought the IWW into public disfavor and caused several States to outlaw the organization. Many of its leaders were prosecuted and sentenced to long terms in prison. Once considered a possible contender to the AFL for supremacy in the labor movement, the IWW declined rapidly after 1913.

Labor and the First World War

During World War I, increased industrial activity and labor shortages brought a rapid expansion of unions. A National War Labor Board was created to promote union-management cooperation and to aid in the set-

tlement of serious disputes which might interfere with the effective conduct of the war. For the first time in the history of the country, a Federal labor agency set forth the right of workers to organize in trade unions and encouraged collective bargaining with employers through their chosen representatives.

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

Union membership increased in the mining and shipbuilding industries, and also on the railroads which were operated by the Federal Government during the war. Notable gains were made also in the packinghouse, textile, men's clothing, food and leather, and metal-trades industries. Large groups of semiskilled and unskilled workers were, for the first time, brought within the trade union movement.

As a result of organizing activity in the favorable climate of Federal protection, union membership increased to more than 5 million by 1920.

More important than the numerical gain in union membership were the economic gains made by the workers, particularly during the years of, and immediately following, the First World War. Average hourly earnings in all manufacturing industry, which were about 15 cents in 1890, rose slowly to 22 cents in 1914, then jumped to 48 cents in 1919. In 1923, they were about 52 cents. At the same time, average hours worked per week in all manufacturing declined from more than 60 in 1890 to 49 in 1914. In 1923, the average workweek approximated 46 hours.

Chapter III.—Between Two World Wars

Open Shop Era and Depression

During the year following World War I, a combination of events occurred which led to an increase in the number and severity of industrial disputes. Following a brief downswing in business immediately after the war, there was a quick revival, accompanied by rising prices. By mid-1919, labor was faced with the mounting cost of living. Real wages lagged. At the same time, withdrawal of the Government's limited protection of labor's right to organize and the termination of wartime governmental labor agencies removed restraints which had kept industrial relations running more or less smoothly during the war years. As a result, numerous employers refused to recognize labor unions which had been organized in their plants. So, to protect their recently won gains, many labor leaders called for more aggressive action.

In September 1919, a strike was called in the steel industry by the AFL Iron and Steel Organizing Committee, which was composed of the presidents of the 24 international unions that had jurisdiction in the industry. The strike was called off in January 1920, after most of the strikers had drifted back to work, with the unions failing in their attempts to gain recognition in the industry. A strike by the United Mine Workers in the coal-mining industry began on October 31, 1919, but was called off on November 10 after the court granted the Government a permanent injunction against it. In some localities, the strike continued into December 1919, when the union agreed to the Fuel Administrator's proposal for an immediate 14-percent wage increase and to President Wilson's offer to appoint a tripartite coal commission to pass on further demands.

The economic recession in 1921 and 1922 resulted in many serious work stoppages, such as the railroad shopmen's strike in the summer of 1922. These protests, however, failed to check a general wage reduction movement which also marked the beginning of a decline in union strength. Many unions continued to lose ground despite the rise in business activity, which occurred in the late 1920's. Professors Millis and Montgomery in their book *Organized Labor* advise 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 successes of antiunion employers in many industries (metal, automobile, railroad, etc.) gave this period its popular title—the "open shop era." To weaken or disrupt labor organizations employers in these years introduced a variety of welfare measures, ranging from athletic fields to pension plans, as well as such repressive measures as the use of spies and strikebreakers. Company unions dominated by employers were likewise established. "Yellow dog" contracts, requiring a worker to promise, as a condition of employment, that he would not join a labor union, were also used effectively.

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 5-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 5 million to slightly over 3½ million. It still remained at this lower level (approximately 3,625,000) in 1929, at the height of the country's "prosperity." Of the 105 AFL international and national unions active in 1929, only 44 had held their own or expanded their membership after 1925. Most of these were in the building and printing trades, transportation, Government service, and amusements.

The economic depression and widespread unemployment which followed the 1929 stock market crash further reduced union membership to 3¼ million by 1932. This decline was particularly pronounced in industries where machinery was displacing skilled hand labor and in the "sick" industries of mining and textiles, as well as in other industries which had been artificially stimulated by the war. Many unions were hard pressed to survive and maintain some semblance of effectiveness.

New Labor Laws

Although the decline in union membership was a serious blow to the labor movement, nearly 3 million workers retained their membership during the depth of the depression. These workers provided the vital centers of growth ready to respond to improved economic conditions, especially when many of the obstacles to union growth were removed by changes in public policies.

The Railway Labor Act of 1926, although limited to railroad transportation, was a significant beginning of these new policies. This act was based on the premise that peaceful labor-management relations should be maintained by free collective bargaining between employers and unions. Railroad workers were assured the right to organize and join unions without employer interference. As a measure drafted by representatives of the railroad companies and the unions, the 1926 law has been described as "in effect a collective agreement sanctioned by Congress." Another act indicative of the new trend was the Davis-Bacon Act of 1931. Not so directly related to collective bargaining, this act provided for the determination of prevailing rates of pay for workers engaged in the construction of public works paid from Federal funds.

Next came the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932. It brought to an end what has been called, in the history of labor-management relations, the era of "government by injunction." It drastically limited judicial restrictions on strikes, picketing, and boycotts. The act also forbade the use of the "yellow dog" contract whereby workers, as a condition of employment, would agree not to join a union, and it limited the liability of unions and their officers and members for unlawful acts of individual officers, agents, or members.

A year later, in an effort to revive business and reduce widespread unemployment, the incoming Roosevelt Administration obtained the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act in the spring of 1933. This law included a provision (Section 7 (a)) which guaranteed the right of employees to organize or join unions of their own choosing and to bargain collectively with their employers. The NIRA was invalidated by the Supreme Court in May 1935, but in July of the same year the principle of the labor section was incorporated in the National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act.

The Wagner Act was the most significant labor law thus far enacted in the United States. It guaranteed 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 went beyond a statement of principles; it created the administrative machinery of the National Labor Relations Board. As a Government agency, the Board was given, among other duties, the following functions: (1) To prevent and remedy employers' "unfair labor practices" which discouraged or interfered with the self-organization of employees or with the practice of collective bargaining; and (2) to determine the bargaining unit in cases of controversy and hold secret "representation" elections to decide which union, if any, the employees wanted to represent them for bargaining purposes.

This trend toward a more favorable Government policy was undoubtedly one of the main causes of the success of unions in the organizing work which followed in the midthirties. This Government attitude was also reflected in the enactment of measures other than those for regulating labor-management relations, such as the principle of minimum wage and maximum hours standards of the National Industrial Recovery Act, later reflected in the Fair Labor Standards (Wage-Hour) Act of 1938; the Social Security Act of 1935; the Walsh-Healey Act of 1936 for maintaining basic labor standards for materials or supplies furnished on Federal contracts exceeding \$10,000; and improved State workmen's compensation laws.

Revival of Unionism

Increases in union membership following the enactment of the Norris-LaGuardia Act in 1932 and the National Industrial Recovery Act in the spring of 1933 were most conspicuous in the mass-production industries. New unions in these industries were organized on an industrial rather than a craft basis. No corresponding international unions existed to absorb them, and they were therefore chartered directly by the AFL as federal labor unions. Many of the older national and international unions made large gains in membership during the same period. Growth was slowed down to some extent by the widespread increase in the formation of "employee representation plans" sponsored by employers mainly for the purpose of checking the spread of unions. The Wagner Act, however, established a basic code to encourage free

collective bargaining and virtually put an end to company-dominated unions and employer-controlled employee representation plans.

The 2-year expansion of total union membership brought about a rise from less than 3 million in 1933 to 3¾ million in 1935. In the following 2 years (the first 2 years of the Wagner Act), membership almost doubled, advancing to 7¼ million. The largest gains during the latter period were made in the automobile, rubber, and aluminum industries, in which workers were organized on an industrial basis. Many of the older organizations, including such unions as the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the International Association of Machinists, and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers, also registered substantial membership increases. The extent of these gains is even more impressive when it is realized that the total labor force increased only 2 percent between 1935 and 1937, and that nonagricultural employment, the main source of union membership, increased less than 15 percent.

Division in the Labor Movement

Growth in union membership was accomplished even though an internal struggle developed in the American Federation of Labor, primarily over the question of whether unions should be organized to include all workers in an industry, or strictly on a craft or occupational basis. The San Francisco (1934) convention of the American Federation of Labor unanimously adopted a report of its resolutions committee which declared that in the mass-production industries new methods had been developed for organizing workers who were "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 stated that the jurisdictional rights of existing trade unions would be recognized. Craft unions would continue in those industries where skills and work assignments were distinguishable among crafts.

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, however, the AFL Executive Council excluded certain skilled craftsmen and maintenance employees coming under the jurisdiction of other unions.

The industrial or craft organization issue, however, was not to be settled that easily. It rose again at the AFL's 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 the granting of "unrestricted charters" to organizations set up in mass-production industries. Defeat of the minority report by a vote of 18,024 to 10,093, after lengthy debate, left the issue unresolved and led to the schism in the labor movement which lasted until December 1955.

Formation of Committee for Industrial Organization

A few weeks after the 1935 convention, 6 AFL affiliated unions and the officers of 2 other AFL unions formed a "Committee for Industrial Organization." Its stated purpose was to promote the organization of 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.²

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 "dual" unions were suspended later in the year. Efforts at compromise and conciliation failed, and in May 1938 all but one of the unions in the Committee

² The unions active in the formation of the CIO were: United Mine Workers, represented by John L. Lewis, who was chairman of the committee; 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 presidents, 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.

were expelled. The lone exception was the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union which had remained friendly to the Federation and which had attempted to bring the disputing factions together. The ILGWU rejoined the AFL in 1940.



International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, AFL, Health Center in New York City. Founded in 1913 and recently set up in a new building, the New York center was the first of a chain of medical centers established by the union in cities with large memberships.

The CIO held its first constitutional convention in Pittsburgh, Pa., in November 1938. At this convention, the Committee for Industrial Organization was reorganized as a federation of national and international unions under the name "Congress of Industrial Organizations." The new federation included the 9 unions expelled from the AFL and some 32 other groups or "organizing committees" established to recruit workers in various industries.

John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, was elected to lead the CIO. The constitutional structure of the new organization resembled that of the AFL. It provided basically for a loose federation of autonomous national unions governed by an Executive Board composed of a representative from each affiliated union, a board of nine vice presidents, a secretary-treasurer, and a president, all elected at annual conventions of delegates from affiliated unions.

The difficulties between the AFL and the CIO did not prevent the growth of unionism. On the contrary, the rivalry generated by the two large federations stimulated the organizing efforts of the unions in each group. By the end of 1941, union membership had climbed to between 10 and 11 million. This was more than double the membership at the time the Committee for Industrial Organization began its campaigns in the large steel, automobile, and textile industries.

During the first flush of this new growth, enthusiasm and emotions ran at a high pitch. As workers poured into unions, many employers were overwhelmed by the ground swell. When companies resisted, strikes frequently occurred. New tactics were used. Some unions demonstrated their militancy by staging "sitdown" strikes during which striking workers stayed inside the plant but refused to work or permit strikebreakers to enter the buildings. Sitdown strikes, for a short period, dramatized the attempts of auto and rubber workers to organize several large companies. Some employers, on the other hand, sought to use strikebreakers or "scabs" to replace their union employees and stored guns, tear gas, and other weapons in their plants for ready use in combating strikes or organizing efforts. These actions provoked occasional outbursts of violence but seldom on the scale that had been experienced during the formative period of unionism before World War I. As the newer unions gained maturity and employers recognized them as representatives of their workers, relations between labor and management

gradually improved. More and more workers were protected by written agreements setting forth their wages, hours, and working conditions.

Despite these gains, which were real and substantial, the number of strikes remained relatively high. In 1941, as prices moved upward and production and profits rose, stimulated by the war in Europe, stoppages became more frequent. A few of these controversies were provoked by Communist sympathizers who, before Hitler's attack on Russia in June 1941, favored an "isolationist" policy with respect to American aid to Europe. (After the German invasion of the Soviet Union they became full-fledged "interventionists.") Most of the prewar labor-management conflicts, however, revolved around demands for better wages and greater union security.

Chapter IV.—The Second World War and Reconversion

The War Years, 1942–45

The attack on Pearl Harbor brought labor and management together in a common cause.

Shortly after the declaration of war on December 8, 1941, President Roosevelt called a conference of union and industry leaders. At the conclusion of the meetings, the President announced a voluntary pledge from union leaders not to sanction strikes for the duration of the war in return for a pledge by management representatives not to sanction lockouts. These pledges were parts of an agreement leading to establishment of a National War Labor Board to consider all labor-management 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 general public. Regional boards were organized on a similar basis to handle local controversies. As in the earlier National Defense Mediation Board, which functioned from March to November 1941 to adjust disputes affecting the rearmament program, labor representation was equally divided between the AFL and CIO. By October 1942, it had become necessary to put into effect widespread controls over prices and wages, and the War Labor Board also became the agency for the stabilization of wages.

In December 1942, 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. Similar joint committees were appointed in the regions and local areas to assist in the overall program of providing workers for war industries. These committees gave practical advice and suggestions in the training, recruitment, and transfer of workers.

Organized labor also played an active role in many phases of the Government's war production program. It 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 (OPM) in January 1941, Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (CIO), was appointed by President Roosevelt to share authority with the



Two GI's watch construction of Philadelphia's USO-Labor Plaza during World War II. AFL and CIO unions donated their labor to the project.

Director General of OPM, William S. Knudsen, president of the General Motors Corp.

Under the auspices of the War Production Board, a successor agency to the OPM, labor-management committees were established in many plants to stimulate output and reduce absenteeism. In addition, most of the other war agencies established plans whereby the unions participated in various Federal programs.

With the marked rise in employment, and wider union recognition, union membership increased. Assurance that unions would not be undermined by foregoing their right to strike or by wartime shifts in employment found expression in the War Labor Board's "maintenance-of-membership" formula applied in a number of key situations. In lieu of the closed or union shop sought by unions, this provided in general that workers need not join the union in order to retain employment, but once choosing to become members must maintain membership for the duration of the agreement. During the war, union membership steadily increased at the rate of about a million workers a year, with the greatest gains in the steel, shipbuilding, aircraft, automotive, and other war industries. Between 1941 and 1945, many unions in the metal trades doubled and tripled their membership. The United Automobile Workers (CIO) in 1945 reported a total dues-paying membership of 1,052,000, the largest recorded by an American union up to that time.

Wage increases were largely held in check by the Government's stabilization policy, as exemplified by the War Labor Board's "Little

Steel" formula which sought to confine general increases in wage rates to not more than 15 percent above the level on January 1, 1941. Although wages were controlled, workers obtained various so-called "fringe benefits," such as paid vacations and holidays, shift differentials, and insurance and pension plans.

Collective bargaining agreements were negotiated or extended over large sections of industry during the war. Strikes occurred, but union leaders and Government representatives sought their speedy settlement. Some issues were postponed when it was found that they could not be settled within the existing framework of controls, thus building up pressures which erupted after the war.

Extension of union membership to workers without regard to race, creed, or nationality, which had been gradually gaining support, was accelerated during the war. Expanded employment of Negroes, particularly in the mass-production industries, made their acceptance into the unions on an equal basis necessary if standards of wages and working conditions were to be maintained. In many unions, prejudices which had existed through the years gradually broke down as white and Negro workers learned to respect each other as fellow workers on the job. Some unions which had previously refused to admit Negroes to membership relaxed their rules and removed racial restrictions from their constitutions. The Federal Government's Fair Employment Practices Committee aided in eliminating some of the more severe instances of discrimination in industry.

Labor Management Relations, 1945-47

The end of hostilities in 1945 confronted organized labor and employers with a host of new problems. More than 10 million service men and women were demobilized in the 12 months following V-J Day, August 14, 1945. Thousands of factories retooled to meet the demands of a civilian, peacetime economy.

Many factories cut their scheduled hours from wartime levels of 48 or more a week to the prewar level of 40. Some shut down temporarily or permanently. Wage earners, confronted with losses in "take-home" pay, sought to maintain their wartime earnings which had included substantial overtime pay at premium rates. Union demands soon crystallized into requests for wage-rate increases of about 30 percent—



**Headquarters building of the International Association of Machinists
in Washington, D. C.**

the approximate advance workers deemed necessary to preserve their former weekly earnings. Many employers, uncertain of the speed with which reconversion could be accomplished and opposed to the continuation of price and other wartime controls, voiced their inability to meet these wage proposals.

This conflict between labor and management was further aggravated by the partial termination of stabilization restraints which had held the upward movement of the cost of living and of rates of pay within moderate bounds during the war years. Both labor and management wanted to bargain free of these restrictions. These desires were expressed by many representatives of labor and of management as the war neared an end and were reflected in Government policy as hostilities

ceased. On August 16, 1945—less than 48 hours after V-J Day—President Truman announced that the National War Labor Board would be terminated by the end of the year. During the war, the Board had weathered numerous crises, but pressure for revision of its “Little Steel” formula, or for outright abandonment of stabilization controls over wages, rose steadily in 1945. On August 18, the President issued an order permitting wage increases without specific Government approval, provided the increases would not serve as a basis for higher prices or added cost to Federal agencies purchasing goods or services from contractors. Although a successor agency to the National War Labor Board was established to carry on the wage stabilization function, conditions in the postwar period were such that the efforts of the new National Wage Stabilization Board had limited effectiveness. The Board went out of existence in early 1947.

Beginning in the autumn of 1945, a number of strikes occurred in the oil, automobile, steel, and coal industries. The widespread unrest prompted President Truman to call a national labor-management conference in November 1945, with the hope that some formula for indus-



Solidarity House in Detroit, Mich., headquarters of the United Automobile Workers.

trial peace could be reached. The conference produced few tangible results, and controversies continued. Altogether, 42 large strikes, each involving 10,000 or more workers, occurred between V-J Day and July 1946.

Out of these disputes, a wage increase "pattern" of 18½ cents an hour evolved for some major mass-production industries, particularly those producing automobiles, steel, electrical equipment, and rubber tires. In resisting postwar wage increases, many employers pointed to the difficulties of absorbing such increases as long as prices of their products remained subject to Government control. Partly as a result of these protests, the Office of Price Administration (OPA), which had "policed" prices during the war, was permitted to expire on June 30, 1946. Although the OPA was revived a month later on a limited basis, by the end of the year virtually all price controls were ended.

The "second round" of postwar renewal of union contracts began in the autumn of 1946. Production by that time had reached record peacetime levels and business was generally prosperous. For the most part, management and labor came to terms without the costly stoppages which had marked the preceding year's bargaining. Workers in the heavy mass-production industries obtained in many instances "package" increases estimated to be worth 15 cents an hour, including the value of added holidays with pay, health and welfare provisions, or other "fringe benefits."

New Labor Legislation: The Taft-Hartley Act

There were many causes of industrial unrest and work stoppages in 1945 and 1946. Collective bargaining was still comparatively new in many situations; a considerable measure of employer opposition to unions existed; some unions, recently formed or growing rapidly, could not maintain union discipline under the accumulation of wartime grievances, or accustom themselves to the less militant methods of collective bargaining after winning recognition. Neither group adjustment nor individual self-discipline was aided by the wholesale shifting of workers to war industries and new industrial centers and then to other jobs and locations during reconversion. The quick withdrawal of wartime public controls over labor-management relations and also over production, prices, and wages placed additional responsibilities

upon both unions and employers at a time when the cost of living was rising rapidly.

The series of postwar work stoppages symbolized serious industrial unrest in the public mind. Strike idleness as a percentage of total working time (perhaps the best measure for comparison over a period of years) began to rise soon after the war from the unusually low wartime levels. Even in 1937, a prewar year of above average strike activity, strike idleness had been less than 0.05 percent of total working time; in 1946, it was 1.43 percent—the highest ever recorded.

The unsettled labor-management situation after the war revived and greatly strengthened opposition to the Wagner Act. Senator Robert A. Taft, a leader in the demand for change, argued that although the act had been passed to aid unions in maintaining an appropriate "balance" of rights and responsibilities as between workers and employers, it had gone "far beyond" such a balance in its actual administration. He and Congressman Fred A. Hartley sponsored a rewriting of the act. The resulting measure, the Labor Management Relations (Taft-Hartley) Act, 1947, gained such widespread support that despite strong objections by organized labor and a Presidential veto, it became law on June 23, 1947.

Some provisions of collective agreements which many unions had obtained or sought were banned or limited under the revised law. Provision for the so-called "closed shop" can no longer be included in agreements. Other widely adopted provisions of agreements, such as the union shop, checkoff of union dues, welfare funds, and contract termination arrangements, are regulated.

The concept of striking a "balance" between unions and employers led to the inclusion of a list of "unfair labor practices" applying to unions, along with the list applying to employers. Among various other practices, refusal to bargain in good faith, engaging in secondary boycotts, stopping work over a jurisdictional or interunion dispute, and charging excessive initiation fees to keep new members out of a union are considered by the law to be unfair. Employers, as well as workers, are permitted to appeal to the National Labor Relations Board against unions in connection with such practices. Certain practices may be penalized by court action and law suits for damages. Restrictions on the use of injunctions are eased. One section (14b) of the act allows the States to adopt more restrictive legislation against union membership requirements than is provided in the Federal law.

Special rules were written into the Taft-Hartley Act for handling controversies or strikes which, in the judgment of the President, create or threaten emergencies by imperiling the national health or safety. In any such dispute or strike, the President is authorized to appoint a "board of inquiry" to investigate the facts. Thereafter, a court injunction can be obtained forbidding the occurrence or continuance of a stoppage for a period of 80 days. During that "cooling off" or "waiting" period, further efforts are to be made to settle the dispute. If no voluntary agreement can be arranged within 60 days, the employees are to be polled by secret ballot as to whether they will accept the "final offer" of the employer. After all these steps are taken, however, the injunction must be dissolved whether or not the dispute is settled. This procedure has been used sparingly, especially in recent years.

The Taft-Hartley Act also removed the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service from the Department of Labor and established it as a separate agency of the Government. This Service offers assistance to labor and management in arriving at peaceful settlement of labor disputes, particularly if they threaten substantial interruption of interstate commerce. Possessing no law enforcement authority, the Service operates through mediators who rely wholly on the persuasive techniques of mediation and conciliation to perform their duties.

It is important to emphasize the fact that with the exception of Federal Government employees, workers are not prohibited from striking by any Federal law. Some State and local governments place restrictions on the right of public employees as well as employees of certain public utilities to strike.

Union opposition to the Taft-Hartley Act was intense in the first few years after its passage. The act was denounced as a "slave labor" law and its repeal became a major goal of the labor movement. Many proposals were made for changes in the new law by its critics and also by its sponsors—changes which, for the most part, would ease the restrictions on unions. Revision proved to be difficult, partly because of the problem of reconciling the views of those who were fearful of going too far in modifying the law with the views of those who felt that any obtainable amendments would not satisfy their objections. By 1951, practical circumstances had brought about general agreement to repeal the requirement that elections be held to validate union-shop agreements. Experience had shown that large majorities of workers in

nearly all cases voted for the union shop. Accordingly, the law was amended to eliminate this requirement.

Unions, in the meantime, directed renewed attention to restrictive legislation in the States. Against union opposition, laws in some of the States, particularly in the South, went beyond Taft-Hartley Act restrictions by prohibiting not only closed-shop contracts but also union-shop agreements, maintenance-of-membership agreements, or related forms of union security. This State action was permissible under Section 14 (b) of the Taft-Hartley Act. Measures of this type were described by proponents as "right to work" laws; union officials called them "right to wreck" laws. At mid-1957, these laws were in effect in 18 States, not including Louisiana which repealed its law in 1956 but retained union security restrictions for agricultural laborers and certain farm processing workers.

Chapter V.—Meeting Postwar Problems

Conditions Confronting Unions in 1947

The problems that confronted labor and management at the end of the war were in some ways intensified in 1947 by the upsurge of criticism of unions. Among the various causes was the public fear of Communism. Although actual communist domination was confined to a few unions, it was nevertheless disruptive. Jurisdictional disputes, aggravated by rapid industrial and occupational changes and by continued division in the labor movement also constituted a serious problem. Declines in real earnings and the rapid shifts in jobs and places of residence caused by demobilization and reconversion brought about a widespread and at the same time widely misunderstood unrest among workers. Unions were confronted under those conditions by difficulties of maintaining membership and effective union activity at a time when they were required to adapt themselves to the new and more restrictive Federal and State labor laws. Compliance with these laws required intensive and continuous attention. Union officials reported that recruitment of new members was in many cases made more difficult by the Taft-Hartley Act, because it permitted management to offer more active opposition to union organization efforts than had previously been possible under the Wagner Act. Employers, however, expressed the opinion that a more equitable balance of power had been restored.

CIO's Expulsion of Communist-Controlled Unions

The American labor movement has often been criticized by Communists for its nonrevolutionary goals. Unions have been advocates of change but, with minor exceptions, by "due process" in the sense of dependence on legal, constitutional, and democratic methods. Communists, therefore, in their efforts to make use of unions, usually disguised their real motives. Organized Communist activity in the labor movement went back to 1920, when the Trade Union Education League was founded. The TUEL at first rejected dual or competing unionism and adopted a policy of "boring from within" established unions. Its efforts failed.

The Trade Union Unity League, formed in 1929 as the successor to the TUEL, for a time gave up the idea of "boring from within" and undertook to organize industrial unions outside of the AFL. That effort to split the labor movement also failed. After the CIO was formed, the Communists shifted their attention mainly to that organization because its rapid growth provided opportunities for infiltration. Some of them became organizers and union officials. It gradually became apparent, however, that they were less interested in union activities than in support of the "party line." Their espousal of Soviet Russia became increasingly obvious and at the same time increasingly distasteful to CIO leaders and members.

In 1949 and 1950, 11 unions charged with Communist domination were expelled from the CIO. During the following years, the majority of the members of the expelled unions not in sympathy with their leaders formed or joined other unions affiliated with the AFL or the CIO. As a noteworthy instance, the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers was chartered as a CIO union to take the place of the ousted United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers. Only 4 of the 11 unions forced out of the CIO survived as unaffiliated unions by 1957—the United Electrical Workers; the Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union; the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers; and the American Communications Association.³ The combined membership of the ousted unions, including membership outside continental United States, had dropped from around 875,000 to less than a third of that number.

Intensified Political and Public Relations Activities

Historically, the role of unions in politics has been mainly that of keeping their members informed as to the views, voting records, and public activities of officials; members have always actually voted, of course, as they saw fit. To the unions, the Taft-Hartley Act and new State laws called for renewed emphasis on political and public relations activities directed toward obtaining more favorable legislation.

³ The other seven unions expelled by the CIO were the Fur and Leather Workers; the Office and Professional Workers; the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers; the United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers; the Fishermen and Allied Workers; the Public Workers; and the Marine Cooks and Stewards. All of these unions have merged with other unions or have disbanded.



Union workers notify members by mail and phone that they must register to be eligible to vote in the elections.

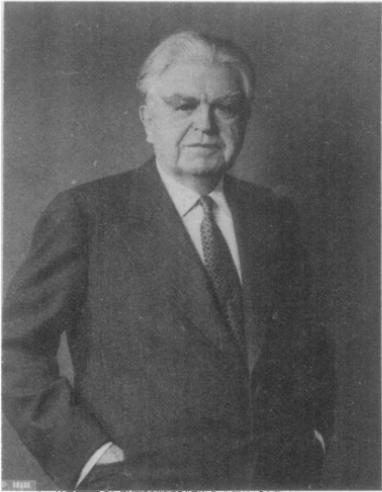
The CIO Political Action Committee, formed in 1943, was revitalized after the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act. At the first AFL convention after the act was passed, the Federation established Labor's League for Political Education to meet the "need for political education and effective political action by organized labor." Some of the larger unaffiliated unions formed similar groups. These as well as the AFL and CIO



Samuel Gompers.



William Green.



John L. Lewis.



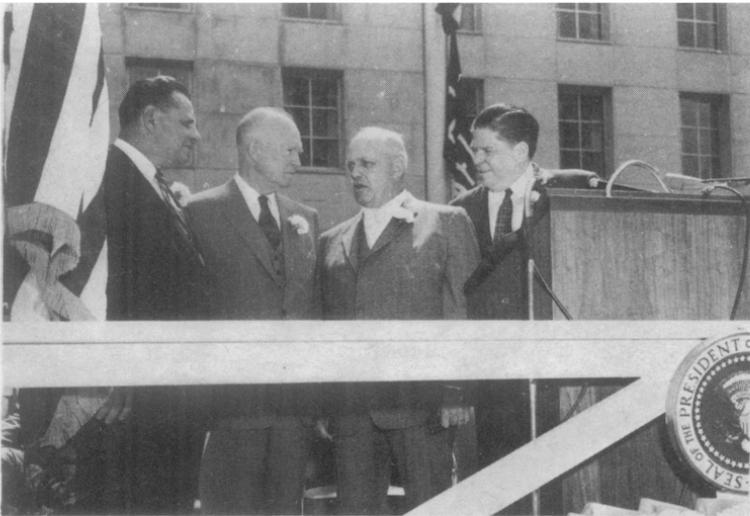
Phillip Murray.



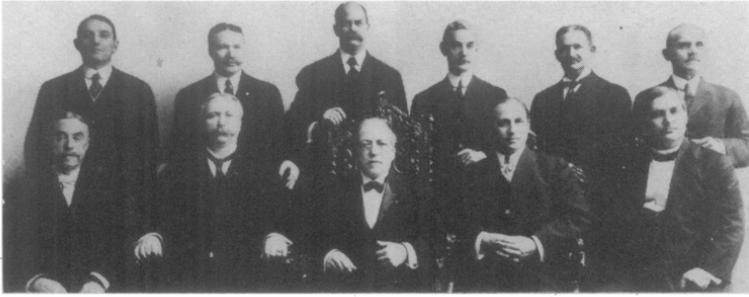
George Meany.



Walter P. Reuther.



Dedication of the AFL-CIO building, Washington, D. C. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell joined with AFL-CIO President George Meany and Secretary-Treasurer William Schnitzler in the ceremonies.



AFL executive council in 1909: *front*—John B. Lennon, Tailors; James Duncan, Granite Cutters; President Samuel Gompers; John Mitchell, Mine Workers; Secretary-Treasurer Frank Morrison; *rear*—Denis A. Hayes, Glass Bottle Blowers; John R. Alpine, Plumbers; William D. Huber, Carpenters; James O'Connell, Machinists; Max Morris, Clerks; and Joseph F. Valentine, Molders.



A union-management collective bargaining session.



A training class for union workers.



Union summer school sessions are an important part of worker training.

agencies were financed by voluntary contributions of members and friends of the unions. Increased efforts were made to present labor's point of view to legislators and also to the general public as well as to union members. The methods used included lobbying, the use of radio and television programs, research bulletins, periodicals, and news services. Indirectly, a more extensive participation by unions in community charity campaigns and a wide variety of community activities helped to acquaint more and more persons with the civic spirit of labor organizations.

Some Legislative Gains by Labor

The Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 was viewed by unions as retarding rather than aiding labor's advance. In other fields of legislation, however, many measures supported by labor were passed by Congress and State legislative bodies.

Amendments to the Social Security Act of 1935, adopted in 1950, 1954, and 1956, greatly expanded the coverage, increased the compensation, and liberalized provisions relating to women and disabled workers, under the old-age and survivors and disability insurance systems. Retirement provisions were liberalized, by changes in other laws, for railroad workers and employees of the Federal Government. Low-cost life insurance was also provided for Federal workers. Unemployment compensation coverage was extended and liberalized. The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1943, originally designed to aid disabled veterans, was from time to time revised, greatly expanded in scope, and in part correlated with State facilities administering workmen's compensation laws. These laws underwent extensive amendment to provide expanded coverage, larger benefits, and in some cases a simplified administrative procedure of qualifying for benefits. Mississippi, the last of the States to pass a workmen's compensation law, did so in 1948.

Amendments were made in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. That law sets up minimum standards relating to wages, overtime, and child labor. These standards apply directly to employees engaged in interstate commerce or in the production of goods for interstate commerce; indirectly, the standards thus established influence working conditions in other employments not covered by the Federal law. The act was strongly supported by unions in the textile and apparel industries,

both of which contained large low-wage segments, generally in the Southern States, as well as by unions in other mass-production industries. The 25-cent minimum hourly wage of the original act was raised to 40 cents by the early 1940's, to 75 cents in January 1950, and to \$1 an hour in March 1956.

Labor also strongly supported the Employment Act of 1946. That law is primarily significant for its recognition of Government responsibility, with private cooperation, for maintaining high levels of employment and conditions favorable for an expanding national economy.

Collective Bargaining: Wages

While postwar readjustments were being made and the political controversies centered around revision of labor law, collective bargaining held its ground as the major function of the trade union movement. The tight labor market, rising productivity, and experience in dealing with unions inclined employers toward more conciliatory attitudes.

The trend of work stoppages conformed broadly to past experience. In both world wars, strike activity decreased; rapid upturns immediately followed both wars; and in succeeding years, after each war, the ups and downs of strike activity remained at moderate levels. Some strikes, notably in printing, coal, and maritime employment, were influenced by union opposition to the Taft-Hartley Act. In general, however, the trend of work stoppages appears to have been determined mainly by economic influences rather than any other reason.

In the midst of a great diversity in practices among unions and employers, certain trends of bargaining emerged or remained apparent. The first and second postwar "rounds" of wage increases, already mentioned, were followed by others. The third "round" also brought widespread increases. About a million nonoperating railroad workers had their workweek reduced from 48 to 40 hours a week in 1949 without reduction in take-home pay. A particularly noteworthy agreement was the 1948 agreement between the United Automobile Workers (CIO) and the General Motors Corp. An "improvement factor" provided for annual wage increases in recognition of the rising productivity of the economy, and an "escalator" clause related wages to changes in consumer prices as officially measured by the U. S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Flexible wage provisions, together with optional arrangements for reopening contracts to discuss wage matters, tended to lengthen the period of time between contract negotiations from 1 year to 2 or 3, and in some instances, 5 years. The rise in the prevalence of long-term contracts has been described as reflecting an increasing maturity of bargaining, a stronger sense of mutuality of interest between management and labor, and an underlying confidence in the national economy.

Bargaining for "Fringe Benefits"

Few recent features of collective bargaining agreements have been so prominent as the inclusion of "fringe benefits" supplementing wage rates. The price and wage stabilization policies of World War II gave impetus to the trend. Another influence was the prevailing view of workers and unions as to the inadequacy of benefits under public measures, particularly the Social Security Act and workmen's compensation laws. Increasing productivity of the economy supported the interest of the unions in providing additional leisure, security, and income to workers. In large and increasing numbers, workers covered by collective bargaining agreements obtained retirement pay (supplementing Federal old-age and survivors insurance) and health and welfare benefits (generally life insurance, sickness, hospitalization, and a variety of less widely adopted benefits) paid for in part or wholly by the employer. Paid vacations and holidays became almost universal. Various other benefits, such as paid time for washup, cleanup, and clothes change, reporting and call-back pay, and paid funeral leave on death in family, found their way into agreements. The 1955 agreements negotiated by the United Automobile Workers in the automobile industry initiated supplemental unemployment benefits—unemployment compensation to supplement that available from the public unemployment compensation systems.

Fringe benefits have become a significant part of total labor income. In addition, vacations and holidays with pay provide new opportunities for recreation and travel. Retirement benefits and health and welfare programs provide a measure of security for workers. The group nature of most of these plans tends to give workers a sense of "belonging" and of taking part in vital programs affecting not only their welfare but that of their families.

The rapid rise in supplementary benefits also created new and complicated problems. The great increase in pension and welfare funds placed unfamiliar technical and financial responsibilities upon both unions and employers. Abuses cropped out, as congressional investigating committees revealed, and these were in part the basis of the action set in motion by the first AFL-CIO convention in December 1955 to combat "all corrupt influences" and protect the financial soundness of the accumulated funds. Revelations of mismanagement and dishonesty on the part of a few union officials, particularly during further congressional investigations in 1957, also led to demands for additional laws to help protect union treasuries and other funds held in trust for workers.

The total membership of both affiliated and unaffiliated unions at the time of the AFL-CIO merger in December 1955 was about 18 million, including approximately a million workers outside the continental United States. This figure may be compared with the depression low of somewhat less than 3 million in 1933 and with the nearly 15 million in 1945. Account must be taken, of course, of the rise in the number of persons at work in nonagricultural establishments from which most union members are recruited. In the early 1930's, the ratio of union members to persons at work in nonagricultural establishments was about 1 to 8; by 1945, this ratio was about 1 to 3 and has remained comparatively stable since that time.

Chapter VI.—Merger Achieved

A new era in American labor history opened on December 5, 1955, in New York City with the formation of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations—the "AFL-CIO." The merger of the 2 federations, rivals since 1935, brought into 1 organization unions representing approximately 16 million workers, including Canadian members, or between 85 and 90 percent of the membership claimed by all unions in the United States.

The first convention of the AFL-CIO adopted a constitution, elected officers, and conducted its carefully planned business with a unanimity which was openly recognized as an expression of unity rather than as an indication that all disputes were settled and all problems solved. The merger was a combination of top structures and a reconciliation of broad outlook and policies. Consolidation of unity down the line, as all the delegates knew, was yet to come. Optimism that this too could be accomplished appeared high on this eventful occasion.

The drive for amalgamation of the 2 federations, thwarted many times since 1935 by unyielding attitudes and problems, was set on course 3 years—almost to the day—before its fulfillment. On November 25, 1952, George Meany was elected president of the AFL by the Executive Council to succeed the late William Green. On the same day, the council took unanimous action to reactivate a committee authorized to seek the road to unity with the CIO. Less than 2 weeks later, the 14th CIO convention elected Walter P. Reuther to the presidency vacated by the death of Philip Murray and likewise authorized its officers to explore the path of unity. Past failures, notably the dissolution in August 1951 of the United Labor Policy Committee, formed by the AFL, CIO, and railroad unions in December 1950 during the Korean hostilities to present labor's views to the Government on national problems, were submerged in the hope that the new leadership would be able to make a fresh start.

The foundation for unity was laid with the negotiation of the no-raiding agreement in June 1953 and its approval by both federation conventions in the fall of that year. This agreement declared that a union affiliated with one organization would not try to recruit members and organize a plant or shop where bargaining relations already existed with an affiliate of the other organization. It became effective on June 9, 1954, for the 65 AFL and 29 CIO affiliates which, up to that time, had



Headquarters building of the AFL-CIO in Washington, D. C.

approved its terms. The 1954 AFL and CIO conventions hailed this accomplishment as a constructive step in ending wasteful interunion jurisdictional conflicts and set their sights for the creation of a single trade union organization through the process of merger.

The "Agreement for the Merger," setting forth the procedure by which merger would be effected and establishing the framework for a new constitution, was adopted by a Joint Unity Committee composed of key AFL-CIO leaders on February 9, 1955. It was ratified by the executive groups of the two federations shortly thereafter. The drafting of the proposed constitution continued through 1955; the final version was approved by the AFL's Executive Council and the CIO's Executive Board on the eve of the final conventions of each of the federations. The problem of naming the merged federations so that both participants would feel equally honored was resolved in midyear in the tradi-

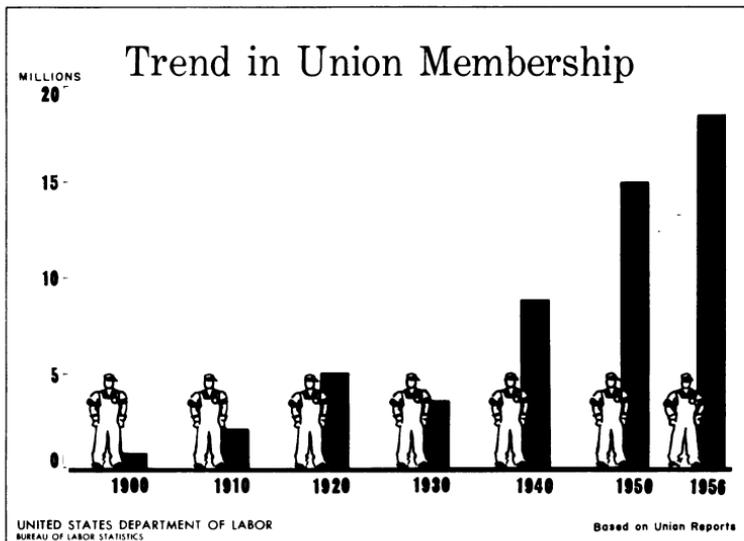
tion associated with newspaper mergers, namely, the continuation of both official names.

The December 1955 founding convention of the AFL-CIO established a policy and administrative structure generally similar to that which existed in the two former federations. The convention of delegates representing the affiliated unions continues to be the policy formulating body. Conventions, however, are to be scheduled at 2-year intervals, instead of annually. The governing body between conventions is an Executive Council composed of the president, secretary-treasurer, and 27 vice presidents. A small official body—an Executive Committee—was created to “advise and consult with the president and the secretary-treasurer.” The Executive Committee, composed of 6 vice presidents (initially 3 from the AFL and 3 from the CIO) meets bi-monthly; the larger Executive Council meets at least 3 times a year. Finally, a General Board, consisting of the 29 members of the Executive Council and a principal officer of each of the affiliated unions and departments, was created. This larger group meets at least once a year. Its function is to consider policy matters referred to it by the Executive Council and the executive officers.

George Meany, former AFL president, and William F. Schnitzler, former AFL secretary-treasurer, were elected president and secretary-treasurer, respectively, of the combined federation. Walter P. Reuther, former CIO president, became head of a newly created Industrial Union Department and a vice president of the AFL-CIO.

Structurally, other changes also occurred. An Industrial Union Department was formed to promote the interests and deal with the problems of the unions having membership organized on an industrial basis. This department took its place alongside the existing former AFL departments—building and construction trades, metal trades, union label and service trades, maritime trades, and railroad employees. Staff departments, such as those for political education, international affairs, publicity, economic research, and education were consolidated. Former State and local bodies of the 2 federations were required to merge within a period of 2 years.

With respect to the merger of international union affiliates of the new federation, the constitution encouraged but did not require such amalgamations. Existing concepts of “autonomy” were preserved. Conflicts between unions competing in the same industry, craft, or area



were to be adjusted voluntarily, with the assistance of the president and the Executive Council. The no-raiding agreement and the AFL and CIO arrangements for resolving internal disputes among former affiliates were continued for all those unions which had become signatories to these separate pacts.

The Federation's constitution takes a strong stand against "Communists, Fascists, and other totalitarians" and denies affiliation to any union "officered, controlled, or dominated" by them. Workers are to share equally in the full benefits of union organization "without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, or ancestry." The Federation further promises to protect the labor movement from corrupt influences. A Committee on Ethical Practices, also provided for in the constitution, is charged with the responsibility of assisting the Executive Council in keeping the federation free from any taint of corruption or Communism. This committee is empowered to recommend suspension or expulsion of any union in which undesirable influences gain control. The Ethical Practices Committee as well as a special congressional committee set up in 1957 (the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field) were active in uncovering malpractices and recommending corrective action in certain unions, among which were the Allied Industrial Workers, the Distillery Workers, the

Laundry Workers, the Bakery Workers, the United Textile Workers, and the Teamsters.

The December 1957 biennial convention of the AFL-CIO expelled the Teamsters, Bakers, and Laundry Workers for failing to accept and carry through the recommendations of the Executive Council. The Distillery Workers remained on probation and the United Textile Workers were restored to good standing. The Allied Industrial Workers had complied with Executive Council orders prior to the convention.

As part of its function, this Committee in 1956 and 1957 drafted 6 codes which were approved by the AFL-CIO Executive Committee. Designed to guide member unions in the conduct of union affairs, these codes relate to local union charters; health and welfare funds; racketeers, crooks, Communists and Fascists; conflicts of interest in the investments and business activities of union officials; financial practices of unions; and union democratic processes. These codes were formally approved by the 1957 convention.

At the end of 1956, the American labor movement was composed of some 189 national and international unions, negotiating agreements with different employers in more than one State, with membership of 18.5 million. Mergers and dissolutions reduced this number to 186 by the time of the 1957 AFL-CIO convention. Of these, 136 remained as members of the AFL-CIO after the expulsion of the Teamsters, Bakery Workers, and Laundry Workers unions. Outside the AFL-CIO were 50 unaffiliated unions, with a total membership of 2.9 million (including the 3 unions expelled by the AFL-CIO). Also prominent among the unaffiliated national unions were two major railroad brotherhoods (engineers and conductors), the coal miners, longshoremens, and some groups of public employees. In addition, there were a large number of unaffiliated local or single-firm unions with at least 500,000 members. Four traditionally independent railroad unions joined the new Federation: The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, in 1956, and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, the American Train Dispatchers Association, and the American Railway Supervisors Association in 1957.

Chapter VII.—Some Outstanding Features of the Labor Movement

General Outlook and Aims

The American labor movement as it has grown and evolved has been fashioned by the character, spirit, and aspirations common to the workers of the United States. The class consciousness reflected in many unions in other countries never became a major motivating force for unionization in the United States. American unions have rarely expressed either utopian or revolutionary aims. They have usually been animated by the same philosophy that guided Samuel Gompers, leader of the AFL until his death in 1924. Gompers sought to have unions recognized by employers as representatives of their employees; and he constantly tried to convince the public at large that unions should be accepted as "an integral social element" seeking labor's advancement in a manner consistent with general reform and progress and with "a better life for all."

These concepts and aims are likewise emphasized in the AFL-CIO constitution. The first aim set forth is the securing of "improved wages, hours, and working conditions." The Federation should encourage unorganized workers to form "unions of their own choosing." All workers, "without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, or ancestry," should "share equally in the benefits of union organization." Participation in the Nation's political affairs is strongly favored, but unions should not come under the control of any political party. Workers are encouraged "to exercise their full rights and responsibilities of citizenship." International interests are recognized in the constitution's commitment to promote "the cause of peace and freedom" and "to aid, assist, and cooperate with free and democratic labor movements throughout the world." Finally, the constitution declared the Federation's intent to seek the fulfillment of the hopes and aspirations of workers "through democratic processes within the framework of our constitutional government and consistent with our institutions and traditions."

Unions have won acceptance, both nationally and in most local communities. This recognition is evident in the day-to-day relationships between workers, their local union officials, and employers. It is at this basic level of job relations where the democratic processes of col-

lective bargaining and union-management joint action to settle disputes and work together are best demonstrated. At the local and community level, many unions have formed special committees or groups to participate in community activities. Increasing numbers of union members are elected or appointed to local government organizations, such as school boards, city councils, and libraries, as well as to many other civic enterprises.

Unions have always encouraged labor's participation in national affairs and have sought to strengthen labor's influence on national policy. Historically, they took an active part in bringing about the establishment of the Department of Labor in 1913. They strongly supported changes in public policy for dealing with economic crises and modern industrial and social needs. During World War I and especially during World War II and the preceding period of defense preparation, many union officials served on public agencies. More recently, unions and their leaders have participated on various government boards or commissions studying such problems as expansion of public schools and educational opportunities and foreign trade. Trade union representatives serve on advisory committees to various agencies of Federal and State Governments. Some are elected to public office. Others are appointed to posts of responsibility.

Main Union Function: Collective Bargaining

The mainstream or lifeblood of union activity has always been to represent its members in negotiating with employers. This process of collective bargaining usually is carried on by each union, sometimes by the local union representing the workers of an individual employer or group of employers, sometimes by a group of local unions and a group of employers in a city or area, and sometimes by the parent national union with a single large employer, a group of employers, or even with all or substantial portions of an entire industry. With the large number of unions and employers that exist in the United States, obviously many thousands of labor-management agreements are constantly being negotiated. No accurate count of these agreements is available, but it is estimated that in 1956 upwards of 125,000 collective bargaining agreements were in force between unions and employers. One large union, the International Association of Machinists, with nearly 900,000 members, reports more than 14,000 contracts in effect. Some unions, on the

other hand, have few agreements but negotiate regional or nationwide contracts covering large numbers of workers.

The collective bargaining process includes not only the negotiating of terms of agreement with the employer but also the interpretation and administration of the contract's provisions. A collective agreement may deal with such subjects as: (1) wages; (2) benefits supplemental to wages—holidays, vacations, pensions, and health and welfare provisions; (3) working conditions, safety, and related subjects; (4) work schedules, hours, shifts, overtime arrangements; (5) layoff procedures, seniority, promotions, transfers, etc.; and (6) operative provisions, such as duration, method of renewal, prevention of strikes and lockouts, grievance procedures, and arbitration.

Collateral Union Activities

Next in importance to the collective bargaining function of unions is the constant desire to organize the unorganized workers within their jurisdiction. Historically, of course, this was the principal and most chal-



Walter Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers, and John Bugas, Ford vice president and chief negotiator, sign the historic agreement with the Ford Motor Co. establishing the principle of compensatory pay for laid-off workers.

lenging union objective. It was in this area that many hard-fought struggles occurred. Decades ago, unions and employers became locked in bitter and occasionally bloody disputes, as, for example, the railroad uprisings of 1877; the Homestead steel strike of 1892; and the conflicts in the anthracite and bituminous coal fields in the early 1900's. In later years, widespread conflicts were avoided, the most serious occurring during the organizing campaigns of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee in 1937 when a number of workers lost their lives and many others were injured.

Today, violent clashes of union organizers or strikers and company guards or strikebreakers are almost unknown, although occasionally a tense struggle is precipitated by an obdurate employer or overly militant or undisciplined unionists. Organizing activity, however, is still vital to union health and growth, especially in an expanding or a rapidly changing economy. Unions have found special need for organizing activities when employers or industries are shifting to new localities which have unorganized segments of workers in establishments that are competing with unionized plants with higher wages and labor standards. Organizing techniques developed by some unions, notably the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, have been designed to maintain union strength in "runaway" shops and plants established in areas not strongly organized. One of labor's anticipated advantages flowing from the merger of the AFL and CIO is its ability to give both aid and guidance in organizing work and to take the initiative in unorganized industries, areas, or groups of workers as, for example, white-collar or office employees. The 1955 merger agreement and the new AFL-CIO constitution stressed that role of the Federation.

Among the traditional functions of unions is the maintenance of mutual benefit funds. Public social security programs and the supplemental or "fringe benefit" clauses of collective agreements have reduced the earlier importance of the fraternal benefit functions based on member contributions. Many unions, however, especially among the older craft unions, still provide a program of sickness, death, unemployment, old-age, disability, and other benefits. Recently, more and more unions have developed programs to enrich the lives of their older, retired members. In some instances, these programs have included recreational and cultural facilities and the construction of homes or even planned communities.

Educational facilities for their members are provided by many national unions. Certain craft unions support trade schools to help members develop or improve their skills. Educational programs conducted as part of regular union meetings or in special classes or "institutes" have a more general purpose. Some educational work is aimed at training officials in handling union work; accounting methods, for example, for treasurers; or techniques of handling shop grievances for shop stewards who represent the workers in a particular factory or establishment. Classes are provided also for the study of parliamentary law, public speaking, and American Government and democracy. Some of the larger unions maintain extensive training schools that provide formal teaching and field work for candidates for official union positions. Many universities and colleges now provide special facilities and scholarships, often in cooperation with unions. The number of such programs has increased greatly in recent years, thus attesting to the importance the union movement attaches to educational activities.

Most unions publish newspapers or journals. These range in size from leaflets to full-size magazines containing, in addition to union news, special departments and articles on national and international issues. Unions also publish a wide variety of pamphlets and special reports. These, and their radio and television programs, are often designed to inform the public, as well as members, of union activities and objectives.

Closely associated with union educational and publications programs are the research activities, which have also expanded greatly in the last two decades. Most of the larger unions now have research departments, although some engage independent specialists to prepare economic briefs and other needed data. The AFL-CIO also maintains a research organization. The status of research and educational work in the national and international unions and the State branches was indicated broadly by a study made in 1956. Among the 189 unions reporting to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 96 unions stated that they had research directors and 78 had education directors.

The growth of research and educational facilities reflects the increasing use of factual data on wages, employment, prices, and profits in collective bargaining and in public relations. The increased union testimony and appearances before public agencies, and also the widespread use of arbitration, emphasized the need for accurate data and for clear

analysis for meeting both management scrutiny and public evaluation of economic issues of interest to unions.

Other types of professional employees frequently found on the staffs of national unions include lawyers, accountants, editors, and others. Occasionally, specialists in such fields as public relations and insurance or health programs are employed.

Foreign Affairs

The long-standing union interest in world affairs was intensified by World War II and postwar problems. Unions were particularly active in programs for rehabilitating war-torn countries and for reinforcing resistance, especially among workers, to the inroads of Communism.

The CIO, late in 1945, joined with labor organizations of 54 countries, including the Soviet Union, to form the World Federation of Trade Unions. The AFL refused to join on the ground that the Soviet unions were state-dominated, not free unions. It soon became apparent that the Communist unions were determined to make use of the WFTU as a tool of the Communist governments. In 1949, therefore, the CIO and other non-Communist unions withdrew from the WFTU.

Shortly thereafter, the AFL and the CIO agreed to joint participation in a new organization, and on December 7, 1949, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions was formed by delegates from 51 countries representing unions with nearly 50 million members. By the time of the AFL-CIO merger, unions of 76 countries, with about 54,500,000 members, were represented in the ICFTU. American unions also joined with the labor movement in Latin American countries in the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT) as part of the ICFTU. Steps were taken to support democratic union movements in critical areas such as Southeast Asia. Union opposition to Communism continued unabated.

The American labor movement has taken an active part in the International Labor Organization since 1934, when the United States became a member. Since the merger, the AFL-CIO has continued this activity. The ILO is a worldwide organization—now affiliated with the United Nations—with 78 member states. Each country has tripartite representation in the ILO, sending delegates from government and national organizations of workers and employers to its annual meetings.



A meeting of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions held in the Houses of Parliament in Stockholm, Sweden.

The ILO seeks to raise labor standards and improve working conditions by means of recommendations and conventions subject to ratification by each country; by technical guidance and assistance for increasing productivity, especially in underdeveloped countries; and by the spread of information and mutual understanding on labor-management problems. Established under the Versailles Treaty after World War I, the ILO had Samuel Gompers, then president of the AFL, as one of its founders.

Representatives of the labor movement in the United States also have participated in the conduct of labor affairs in the United States Government's International Cooperation Administration and its predecessor agencies. This agency provides funds and technical assistance to coun-

tries throughout the world that need help to strengthen their economy and their way of life. Individuals from union ranks also serve as labor advisors or attaches to American embassies in a number of countries. In this role, they interpret the labor movement in this country to Government officials and workers abroad as well as acquaint United States officials of significant developments in the country in which they are stationed.

Changes of 70 Years

In 1885, 70 years before the merging of the AFL and the CIO, the labor movement, though small and torn by dissension, was on the eve of formal organization of the AFL. During these 70 years, the status of unions and the conditions of workers have undergone remarkable improvement.

As a rule, workers in 1885 had a work schedule of 10 hours a day. The 6-day week was prevalent except for workers in employment requiring continuous operation. Many such workers had a 7-day schedule. In 1885, premium pay for overtime, paid vacations and holidays, and income upon retirement were almost unknown. In 1955, these supplementary benefits were customary and departures from the prevailing 40-hour, 5-day weekly work schedules found in manufacturing industries were generally in the direction of shorter working time. Even in trade and service industries, in which hours for appreciable proportions of employees exceed 40 a week, the tendency toward shorter working time was apparent.

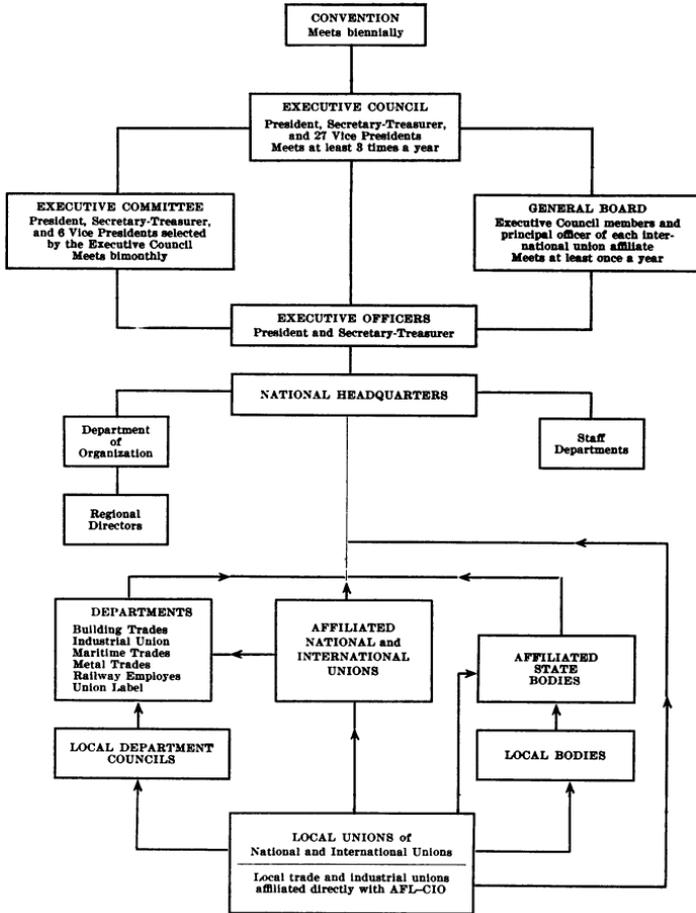
Valid comparisons of wages require consideration of price changes over the years. Although prices have risen substantially, real wages or the purchasing power of the worker's income have increased even more since the mid-1880's. Taking into account the highly complex changes that have occurred in the Nation's economic and social life between 1885 and 1955, the general level of wages in 1955 in terms of buying power was over 3 times as great as in 1885. In addition, "fringe benefits" which are common today were virtually nonexistent when Samuel Gompers first embarked on his efforts to build an enduring labor movement in the United States.

Throughout the period, union members shared the generally prevalent American preference for self-help—individually and by association with their fellow workers. Nevertheless, as bearers of the brunt of competitive wage cutting, sweatshop conditions, depression and unemploy-

ment, they led the way in support of corrective measures which needed the helping hand of government. Policies such as limitations on child labor, protection of women and children as workers, the public regulation of workplaces for maintenance of safety and sanitation, tax reforms, and enforcement of employers' liability for accidents and industrial diseases gradually were adopted by the States or by the National Government. In those early measures, as in the recent adoption of social security, a legal minimum wage, and laws safeguarding the basic rights and collective bargaining privileges, labor's influence and labor's gains have been conspicuous.

For the most part, however, the Government's role in times of peace normally remains supplemental—to establish the basic rules and to set minimum standards in the field of wages and labor-management relations. Workers continue to rely upon their initiative and skills as individuals and upon their group activities and collective strength to resolve their problems and to forge ahead. It is primarily through such efforts that unions have grown and gained acceptance by employers and the public as an integral and important part of the country's economic and social structure.

STRUCTURE OF THE AFL-CIO



Source: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

APPENDIX

Important Events in American Labor History

- 1778** Journeymen printers of New York City combined to demand an increase in wages. After the increase was granted, the organization was abandoned.
- 1786** The earliest authenticated strike of workers in the United States in a single trade occurred when Philadelphia printers gained a minimum wage of \$6 a week.
- 1791** Philadelphia carpenters struck unsuccessfully in May for a 10-hour day and additional pay for overtime. This was the first recorded strike of workers in the building trades.
- 1792** The first local craft union formed for collective bargaining was organized by Philadelphia shoemakers. It disbanded in less than a year.
- 1794** The Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers was formed in Philadelphia by the shoeworkers. It lasted until 1806, when it was tried and fined for conspiracy. (See below.)
The Typographical Society was organized in New York City by the printers. It remained in existence for 10½ years.
- 1805** A Journeymen Cordwainers' union in New York City included a closed shop clause in its constitution.
- 1806** Members of the Philadelphia Journeymen Cordwainers were tried for criminal conspiracy after a strike for higher wages. The charges were (1) combination to raise wages and (2) combination to injure others. The union was found guilty and fined. Bankrupt as a result, the union disbanded. This was the first of several unions to be tried for conspiracy.
- 1825** The United Tailoresses of New York, a trade union organization for women only, was formed in New York City.
- 1827** The Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations, made up of unions of skilled craftsmen in different trades, was formed in Philadelphia. This was the first city central type of organization on record.
- 1828** The Workingmen's Party, including wage earners, craftsmen, and farmers, was organized in Philadelphia in July. It went out of existence in 1832.

- 1834** The National Trades' Union was formed in New York City. This was the first attempt toward a national labor federation in the United States. It failed to survive the financial panic of 1837.
- 1836** The National Cooperative Association of Cordwainers, the first national labor union of a specific craft, was formed in New York City. There is no further record of this organization after 1837. Other trades which formed national organizations within the next few years were the printers, comb makers, carpenters, and hand-loom weavers.
- 1840** An Executive order issued on March 31 by President Van Buren established a 10-hour day for Federal employees on public works without reduction in pay.
- 1842** In the case of *Commonwealth v. Hunt*, the Massachusetts Court held that labor unions, as such, were legal organizations, and that "a conspiracy must be a combination of two or more persons, by some concerted action, to accomplish some criminal or unlawful purpose, or to accomplish some purpose not in itself criminal or unlawful by criminal or unlawful means." The decision also denied that an attempt to establish a closed shop was unlawful or proof of an unlawful aim.
- Massachusetts and Connecticut passed laws prohibiting children from working more than 10 hours a day.
- 1847** The first State law fixing 10 hours as a legal workday was passed in New Hampshire.
- 1848** Pennsylvania passed a State child labor law setting the minimum age for workers in commercial occupations at 12 years. In 1849, the minimum was raised to 13 years.
- 1852** The Typographical Union, the first national organization of workers to endure to the present day, was formed.
- The first law limiting working hours of women to 10 hours a day was passed in Ohio.
- 1859** The Iron Molders' Union, the forerunner of the present Molders and Foundry Workers Union, was organized in Philadelphia.
- 1862** The "Molly Maguires," a secret society of Irish miners in the anthracite fields, first came to public attention. The "Mollies" were charged with acts of terrorism against mine bosses. They went out of existence in 1876, when 14 of their leaders were imprisoned and 10 were executed.

- 1863** The present-day Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was founded.
Laws providing fines and imprisonment for strikers preventing other persons from working were passed in Illinois and Minnesota.
- 1866** The National Labor Union, a national association of unions, was organized. A federation of trades' assemblies rather than of national craft organizations, it included radical and reform groups. Drifting into social rather than trade union endeavors, it lost craftsmen's support and went out of existence in 1872.
- 1867** The Knights of St. Crispin was organized on March 7 to protect journeymen shoemakers against the competition of "green hands" and apprentices in the operation of newly introduced machinery in the shoe industry. The last vestige of the order disappeared in 1878.
- 1868** The first Federal 8-hour day law was passed by Congress. It applied only to laborers, workmen, and mechanics employed by or on behalf of the United States Government.
The first State labor bureau was established in Massachusetts.
- 1869** The Noble Order of the Knights of Labor was organized in Philadelphia. It maintained extreme secrecy until 1878, then began organizing skilled and unskilled workers openly. By winning railroad strikes against the Gould lines, and advancing the program for the 8-hour day, the Knights of Labor gained many followers, claiming over 700,000 members in 1886. It declined rapidly thereafter with the emergence of the AFL.
- 1870** The first written contract between coal miners and operators was signed on July 29. It provided for a sliding scale of pay, based on the price of coal.
- 1873** The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen was organized.
- 1874** The Cigar Makers International Union in San Francisco made first use of the union label.
- 1877** The first recorded instance of the use of Federal troops in a labor dispute during peacetime occurred during a strike of railroad workers against a 10-percent cut in pay. Railroads operating east of the Mississippi River were involved. Marked by violence and property damage, more than 100 were reported killed and 200 injured.

1878 The Greenback-Labor Party was organized by a fusion of the Greenback Party and Workingmen's Party.

1881 The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (FOTLU), which later became the American Federation of Labor, was organized in Pittsburgh in November with 107 delegates present. Leaders of 8 national unions attended, including Samuel Gompers, then president of the Cigar Makers International Union.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, later to become one of the largest AFL unions, was organized.

1882 Peter J. McGuire, a New York City carpenter, suggested setting aside 1 day in the year in honor of labor. The first Labor Day celebration was held in New York City during September of the same year.

1883 The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen was organized.

1884 A Bureau of Labor was established in the Department of Interior. It later became independent as a Department of Labor without cabinet rank. It again returned to bureau status in the Department of Commerce and Labor, which was created in 1903, where it remained until the present Department of Labor was established in 1913.

1886 Under the initiative of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, some 340,000 workers participated in a movement for an 8-hour day.

The Chicago Haymarket riot, in which one policeman was killed and several others wounded, aroused public opinion against unionism and radicalism and for several years stopped the movement for the 8-hour day. The meeting in Haymarket Square had been called as a peaceful protest against the killing of four strikers and wounding of others during a strike for the 8-hour day at the McCormick Reaper Works.

The American Federation of Labor was organized at a convention in Columbus, Ohio, in December as successor to the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. Other trade unions and city councils which had failed to gain autonomy within the ranks of the Knights of Labor also joined the AFL.

1888 The first Federal labor relations law was enacted. It applied to railroads and provided for arbitration and Presidential boards of investigation.

The International Association of Machinists was organized in Atlanta, Ga.

1890 The United Mine Workers was organized in Columbus, Ohio.

1892 The Homestead strike by the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers at the Carnegie steel mills in Homestead, Pa., resulted in the death of several strikers and Pinkerton guards. The strike failed and the union was ousted from most mills in the Pittsburgh area.

1894 A strike of the American Railway Union led by Eugene V. Debs against the Pullman Co. was defeated by the use of injunctions and by Federal troops sent into the Chicago area. Debs and several other leaders were imprisoned for violating the injunctions and the union's effectiveness was destroyed.

1898 Congress passed the Erdman Act, providing for mediation and voluntary arbitration on the railroads, and superseding the law of 1888. The act also made it a criminal offense for railroads to dismiss employees or to discriminate against prospective employees because of their union membership or activity. This portion of the act was subsequently declared invalid by the United States Supreme Court.

1900 The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (AFL) was formed.

1901 The International Federation of Trade Unions (then International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centers) was formed on August 21. The AFL affiliated in 1910, disaffiliated in 1921, and reaffiliated in 1937. It remained a member until IFTU was formally dissolved in 1945.

The Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel & Tin Workers (AFL) lost 14 union contracts after a 3-month strike against the United States Steel Corp.

The United Textile Workers of America (AFL) was organized.

1902 The United Mine Workers of America ended a 5-month strike on October 21 against anthracite operators, agreeing to arbitration by a Presidential commission. The Anthracite Coal Strike Commission, appointed on October 16, recommended on March 18, 1903, a 10-percent wage increase and conciliation machinery, but denied union recognition.

- 1903** The Department of Commerce and Labor was created by an act of Congress (Act of Feb. 14, 1903, 32 Stat. 825), and its Secretary was made a member of the Cabinet.
- 1905** The Industrial Workers of the World was organized in Chicago.
The Supreme Court held that a maximum hour law for bakery workers was unconstitutional under the due process clause of the 14th amendment. (*Lochner v. New York.*)
- 1906** The International Typographical Union (AFL) struck successfully in book and job printing establishments for the 8-hour day, paving the way for extension of shorter hours in the printing trades.
- 1908** Section 10 of the Erdman Act applying to railroad employees, whereby the "yellow-dog" contract was outlawed and an employer was forbidden to discharge a worker for union membership, was declared unconstitutional. (*U. S. v. Adair.*)
The boycott by the United Hatters of Danbury, Conn., against D. E. Loewe and Co. was held to be in restraint of trade under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. In January 1915, the individual union members were held responsible for the union's acts and were assessed damages and costs totaling \$252,000. This was the first application of the treble damage provision of the Act to a labor union.
- 1910** The 2-month strike of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (AFL) was settled by providing preferential union hiring, a board of grievances, and a board of arbitration. This laid the foundation for the impartial chairman method of settling labor disputes.
- 1911** The Supreme Court upheld an injunction ordering the AFL to eliminate the Bucks Stove and Range Co. from its unfair list and to cease to promote an unlawful boycott. A contempt charge against union leaders, including AFL President Samuel Gompers, was dismissed on technical grounds. (*Gompers v. Bucks Stove and Range Co.*)
The Triangle Waist Co. fire in New York on March 25, which caused the death of 146 workers, led to establishment of the New York Factory Investigating Commission on June 30, and eventual improvement in factory conditions.

- 1912** Massachusetts adopted the first minimum wage act for women and minors.
The (Walsh) Commission on Industrial Relations was created to investigate industrial unrest. In 1916, it rendered a comprehensive series of reports on the status of labor-management relations.
- 1913** The United States Department of Labor was established by law. It included the Bureau of Labor Statistics (created in 1884 as the Bureau of Labor, see above), the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (created in 1891), and the Children's Bureau (created in 1912). Power was given the Secretary of Labor to "act as mediator and to appoint commissioners of conciliation in labor disputes," and in 1918, the Conciliation Service was established as a separate division of the Department. William B. Wilson, a trade unionist and Member of Congress, became the first Secretary of Labor.
The Newlands Act set up a Board of Mediation and Conciliation to handle railroad disputes.
- 1914** The Clayton Act was approved, limiting the use of injunctions in labor disputes and providing that picketing and other union activities shall not be considered unlawful.
On December 1, the President appointed the Colorado Coal Commission which investigated the Ludlow Massacre and labor conditions in Colorado coal mines following an unsuccessful strike by the United Mine Workers.
The Amalgamated Clothing Workers was formed by a seceding group of the United Garment Workers (AFL).
- 1915** The LaFollette Seamen's Act was approved, on March 4, regulating conditions of employment for maritime workers.
- 1916** A Federal child labor law was enacted (declared unconstitutional on June 3, 1918); followed by act of February 24, 1919 (declared unconstitutional on May 15, 1922); followed by a child labor amendment to the Constitution on June 2, 1924. Thus far, 28 of the necessary 36 States have ratified the amendment.
The Adamson Act, providing a basic 8-hour day on railroads, was enacted to eliminate a threatened nationwide railroad strike.
- 1917** A strike led by the International Workers of the World (IWW) in the copper mines of Bisbee, Ariz., was ended when the sheriff deported 1,200 strikers.

The President appointed a Mediation Commission, headed by the Secretary of Labor, to adjust wartime labor difficulties.

The "yellow-dog" contract was upheld and the union's efforts to organize workers party to such contract were held to be unlawful. (*Hitchman Coal & Coke Co. v. Mitchell.*)

1918 The Federal Government took control of the railroads from December 1917, until March 1, 1920, under the Federal Control Act which provided for Government railroad operation in war-time.

The President named the Secretary of Labor as War Labor Administrator on January 4.

The President created the National War Labor Board on April 8 "to settle by mediation and conciliation controversies * * * in fields of production necessary for the effective conduct of the war." It went out of existence in May 1919.

The minimum wage law of the District of Columbia was approved September 19. (Declared unconstitutional on April 9, 1923.)

1919 Led by President Gompers of the AFL, the Commission, created by the Peace Conference at its second plenary session in January, recommended the inclusion in the Peace Treaty of labor clauses creating an International Labor Organization.

The United Mine Workers of America struck against bituminous-coal operators on November 1. In December, the union agreed to arbitration by a Presidential commission. The Bituminous Coal Commission appointed by the President on December 19 awarded a 27-percent wage increase, but denied the 6-hour day and 5-day week.

1920 The AFL Iron and Steel Organizing Committee ended an unsuccessful 3 ½-month strike in the steel industry on January 8 after most of the strikers had drifted back to work.

The Women's Bureau was established in the Department of Labor by act of Congress.

The Kansas Court of Industrial Relations provided the first experiment in compulsory arbitration in the United States. (Held unconstitutional in part in 1923.)

The Transportation Act provided for a tripartite Railroad Labor Board and terminated Federal control of railroads on March 1.

1921 The Supreme Court held that nothing in the Clayton Act legalized secondary boycotts or protected unions against injunctions brought against them for conspiracy in restraint of trade. (*Duplex Printing Press v. Deering.*)

An act restricting the immigration of aliens into the United States and establishing the national origin quota system was approved.

The International Seamen's Union (AFL) and Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (AFL) lost a 52-day strike against wage reductions.

The President's Conference on Unemployment placed the main responsibility for unemployment relief upon local communities.

The Arizona law forbidding injunctions in labor disputes and permitting picketing was held unconstitutional, under the fourteenth amendment. (*Truax v. Corrigan.*)

1922 The United Mine Workers was held not responsible for local strike action and strike action was held not a conspiracy to restrain commerce within the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Labor unions, however, were held liable for their acts. (*Coronado Coal Co. v. UMWA.*)

A 2½-month unsuccessful nationwide strike of railway shopmen against wage reductions began July 1.

1924 Samuel Gompers, president of the AFL, died on December 13.

1926 The Railway Labor Act, passed on May 20, required employers to bargain collectively and not discriminate against their employees for joining a union. The act also provided for the settlement of railway labor disputes through mediation, voluntary arbitration, and factfinding boards.

1927 The Longshoremen's and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act was enacted.

The Journeymen Stone Cutters' action in trying to prevent purchase of nonunion cut stone was held to be an illegal restraint of interstate commerce. (*Bedford Cut Stone Co. v. Journeymen Stone Cutters' Association, et al.*)

1929 The Hawes-Cooper Act governing the shipment of convict-made goods in interstate commerce was approved.

The Communist-inspired Trade Union Unity League was formed in September. It was dissolved in 1935.

- 1930** The Railway Labor Act's prohibition of employer interference or coercion in the choice of bargaining representatives was upheld by the Supreme Court. (*Texas & N. O. R. Co. v. Brotherhood of Railway Clerks.*)
- 1931** The Davis-Bacon Act provided for the payment of prevailing wage rates to laborers and mechanics employed by contractors and subcontractors on public construction.
- 1932** The Anti-Injunction (Norris-La Guardia) Act prohibited Federal injunctions in labor disputes, except as specified, and outlawed "yellow-dog" contracts.
Wisconsin adopted the first unemployment insurance act in the United States.
- 1933** Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act provided that every NRA code and agreement should guarantee the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively through their representatives without interference, restraint, or coercion by employers. (Title I of act declared unconstitutional in *Schechter v. U. S.* on May 27, 1935.)
The Wagner-Peyser Act created the United States Employment Service in the Department of Labor.
- 1934** The first National Labor Legislation Conference was called by Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins to obtain closer Federal-State cooperation in working out a sound national labor legislation program. Annual conferences have been held regularly since 1934 except in 1953 and 1955.
The United States joined the International Labor Organization.
- 1935** The National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act established the first national labor policy of protecting the right of workers to organize and to elect their representatives for collective bargaining.
The United Automobile Workers Union was founded by the AFL.
The Bituminous Coal Conservation (Guffey) Act was passed to stabilize the industry and to improve labor conditions. (Labor relations provisions declared unconstitutional on May 18, 1936.)
The Federal Social Security Act was approved August 14.
The Committee for Industrial Organization (later the Congress of Industrial Organizations) was formed on November 9

by several AFL international unions and officials to foster industrial unionism.

1936 In the first large "sitdown" strike, the United Rubber Workers (CIO) won recognition at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.

The Anti-Strike Breaking (Byrnes) Act declared it unlawful "to transport or aid in transporting strikebreakers in interstate or foreign commerce."

The Public Contracts (Walsh-Healey) Act established labor standards on Government contracts, including minimum wages, overtime compensation for hours in excess of 8 a day or 40 a week, child and convict labor provisions, and health and safety requirements.

1937 General Motors Corp. agreed to recognize the United Automobile Workers (CIO) as the bargaining agent for its members, to drop injunction proceedings against strikers, not to discriminate against union members, and to establish grievance procedures.

United States Steel Corp. recognized the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee as the bargaining agent for its members. A 10-percent wage increase and an 8-hour day and 40-hour week were negotiated.

The National Labor Relations Act was held constitutional. (*NLRB v. Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp.*)

Ten people were killed and 80 were wounded in a Memorial Day clash between police and the members of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee at the plant of the Republic Steel Co. in South Chicago.

The Railroad Retirement Act of 1937 was approved, followed by the Carriers Taxing Act of 1937. (Similar laws of June 27, 1934, and August 29, 1935, had been declared unconstitutional.)

The 5-week "Little Steel" strike was broken on July 1 when Inland Steel employees returned to work without union recognition or other gains.

1938 The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 was amended to provide a Federal Maritime Labor Board.

The Fair Labor Standards Act provided minimum wages and time and a half for hours over 40 a week. (Amended October 26, 1949, raising the minimum hourly wage to 75 cents effective January 25, 1950.)

The Railroad Unemployment Insurance (Crosser-Wheeler) Act was passed.

1940 A sitdown strike was held not to be an illegal restraint of commerce under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in the absence of intent to impose market controls. (*Apex Hosiery Co. v. Leader.*)

1941 Actions by the carpenters' union in jurisdictional disputes were held to be protected from prosecution under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act by the Clayton Act. These actions were construed in light of Congress' definition of "labor dispute" in the Norris-LaGuardia Act. (*U. S. v. Hutcheson.*)

The UAW (CIO) won recognition at Ford Motor Co. after a 10-day strike. The union and the company signed a union-shop agreement—the first with a major automobile manufacturer.

The President on December 24 announced a no-strike pledge by the AFL and CIO for the duration of the war.

1942 The President established the National War Labor Board to determine procedures for settling disputes.

The NWLB laid down the "Little Steel" formula for wartime wage adjustments (i. e., based on a 15-percent rise in living costs from January 1, 1941, to May 1, 1942).

The Stabilization Act authorized the President to stabilize wages and salaries, as far as practicable, based on September 15, 1942, levels.

1943 The President by an Executive order created a Committee on Fair Employment Practices, empowering it to "conduct hearings, make findings of fact, and take appropriate steps to obtain elimination" of "discrimination in the employment of any person in war industries or in Government by reason of race, creed, color, or national origin."

The War Labor Disputes (Smith-Connally) Act, passed over the President's veto, authorized plant seizure if needed to avoid interference with the war effort.

1944 The Railway Labor Act, authorizing a labor union chosen by a majority to represent a craft, was held to require union protection of the minority in that class. Discrimination against certain members on ground of race was held enjoined. (*Steele v. Louisville & Nashville Railroad.*)

1945 The CIO affiliated with the newly formed World Federation of Trade Unions. (It withdrew in 1949.) The AFL held that the

labor organizations of Soviet Russia were not "free or democratic" and did not affiliate with the WFTU.

The President's National Labor-Management Conference convened in Washington, D. C., but produced few tangible results.

1946 The United Steelworkers (CIO) ended a 1-month strike and established a "first round" wage pattern increase of 18 ½ cents an hour.

The Employment Act of 1946 committed the Government to take all practicable measures to promote maximum employment, production, and purchasing power.

The United Automobile Workers (CIO) ended a 3 ½-month strike against General Motors Corp. by negotiating an hourly wage increase of 18 ½ cents, after a Presidential factfinding board had recommended 19 ½ cents.

Locomotive Engineers (Ind.) and Railroad Trainmen (Ind.) ended a national 2-day strike following an injunction and under threat of legislation to draft the workers. They accepted the 18 ½ cent-an-hour increase recommended by the President.

The UMWA bituminous-coal miners won a health and welfare fund from the Federal Government which had seized the mines, the fund to be financed from payments by operators of 5 cents a ton of coal produced.

The President provided for the termination of all wartime wage and salary controls.

1947 The Norris-LaGuardia Act prohibition against issuance of injunctions in labor disputes was held inapplicable to the Government as an employer. (*U. S. v. John L. Lewis.*)

A nationwide telephone strike started on April 7 for industry-wide bargaining. Settlements began April 25 on an individual company basis.

The Portal-to-Portal Act was approved, "to relieve employers and the Government from potential liability * * * in 'portal-to-portal' claims."

The Labor Management Relations (Taft-Hartley) Act was passed (June 23) over the President's veto.

1948 Mississippi became the forty-eighth State to enact workmen's compensation legislation.

The President appointed the Commission on Labor Relations in the Atomic Energy Installations, which, on April 18, 1949,

recommended establishment of a panel to protect free collective bargaining in atomic plants.

The Federal Government's first national conference on industrial safety met in Washington, D. C.

1949 The United States Supreme Court, by denying review of a lower court's action, upheld a decision that the Labor Management Relations Act requires employers to bargain with unions on retirement plans. (*Inland Steel Co. v. United Steelworkers of America* (CIO).)

Settlement of a steel industry-United Steelworkers (CIO) strike on the basis of noncontributory \$100 monthly pensions at age 65, plus death, sickness, and accident benefits, followed a recommendation by a Presidential factfinding board that employers contribute 6 cents an hour toward pensions and 4 cents an hour toward social insurance for each worker.

The CIO anti-Communist drive culminated in expulsion of two unions at its annual convention. Trial and expulsion of 9 other unions followed early in 1950.

The free, democratic trade unions of various countries, including the CIO in the United States, withdrew early in 1949 from the World Federation of Trade Unions which had become Communist dominated.

A new worldwide labor organization—the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)—with the AFL, CIO, and United Mine Workers participating, was formed at a meeting in December at London, England, of labor representatives from 51 countries.

1950 A 5-year contract with no reopening provisions was negotiated by the United Automobile Workers (CIO) and the General Motors Corp. It provided for pensions, automatic cost-of-living wage adjustments, guaranteed annual increases, and a modified union shop. (Revised in 1953.)

The AFL launched a yearlong series of observances commemorating the centennial of Samuel Gompers' birth on January 27, 1850.

A United Labor Policy Committee composed of representatives of the AFL, CIO, and railroad unions was formed in December for the purpose of presenting labor's views to the Government on problems arising from the national emergency. The AFL

withdrew from the Committee in August 1951, thereby dissolving the group formed in December 1950.

The Defense Production Act, authorizing the President to curb inflation and promote defense production, was approved September 8.

1951 The International Association of Machinists reaffiliated with the AFL in January after being independent since 1945 due to jurisdictional disputes. In August, the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, formerly an affiliate of the AFL United Textile Workers, rejoined the AFL as a separate union. During the year, the CIO established the United Department Store Workers Union and the United Railway Workers of America.

The Inter-American Regional Workers Organization (ORIT) of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions was established at a meeting in Mexico City in January. It claims to represent 17 million workers in North, South, and Central America.

Labor representatives withdrew in February from all participation in the Government's mobilization and stabilization program in protest over what they felt was labor's secondary role in its operation. They voted to return in April after being given a stronger voice in policymaking.

The CIO participated with the AFL as part of the United States delegation to the International Labor Conference of the ILO for the first time since 1946.

The first amendment to the Taft-Hartley Act, permitting negotiations of union-shop agreements without previous polls of employees, became law in October. The union shop for workers on the Nation's rail and air lines had previously been approved under the National (Railway) Mediation Act in January.

1952 A Presidential emergency board, in February, recommended agreement on the union shop between the railroads and non-operating railroad unions representing about 1 million workers.

Three unions of railroad operating employees and the carriers reached an agreement on wage increases and working rules in May. Federal operation of the railroads was brought to an end, after being in effect since August 1950.

A strike of nearly 8 weeks' duration ended in July when the

United Steelworkers of America (CIO) signed agreements with basic steel producers employing about 500,000 workers. Following the companies' rejection of Wage Stabilization Board recommendations, the Government seized the steel industry. The strike began after a district court granted an injunction restraining the seizure order, but it was halted at the request of the President pending review of the decision by the United States Supreme Court. The strike was resumed after the Supreme Court held that the President exceeded his constitutional powers when he ordered the seizure.

Wage and price controls were extended until April 30, 1953, by a revised Defense Production Act. The act established a new tripartite Wage Stabilization Board without disputes-settlement authority.

Presidents of the two principal labor federations, Philip Murray of the CIO and William Green of the AFL, died in November. The AFL Executive Council elevated George Meany, former secretary-treasurer of the Federation, to the presidency. Walter P. Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers, was named president of the CIO by the CIO convention.

Martin P. Durkin, president of the Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Union (AFL), was designated by President-elect Eisenhower to be Secretary of Labor in the new Cabinet. Mr. Durkin was the first union president and the fourth unionist to be named Secretary of Labor since the establishment of the Department of Labor in 1913.

1953 President Eisenhower on February 6 ordered the end of Government controls on wages and salaries. At the same time, he ordered prices decontrolled on a considerable list of consumer goods. All remaining price controls were terminated on March 17.

The Supreme Court of the United States upheld the right of the International Typographical Union (AFL) to compel a newspaper to pay for the setting of type not used, and of the American Federation of Musicians (AFL) to demand that a local "standby" orchestra be employed when a traveling orchestra was hired for an engagement. The court said that neither

practice violated the "featherbedding" ban in the Labor Management Relations (Taft-Hartley) Act.

Martin P. Durkin resigned as Secretary of Labor on September 10. On October 8, President Eisenhower appointed James P. Mitchell, who had served as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower, to succeed Mr. Durkin.

The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, meeting in their respective conventions, approved a no-raiding pact to extend for 2 years from January 1, 1954. The agreement is binding only upon those member unions accepting it. Both organizations hailed the pact as the first step towards organic unity.

The convention of the American Federation of Labor on September 22 revoked the 60-year-old charter of the International Longshoremen's Association, charging corruption within the union. A new union was immediately chartered by the AFL. A bitter struggle for representation in the East Coast longshore industry, between the old ILA and the newly chartered AFL union, took place on the docks, in the courts, and in NLRB hearing rooms during the last 3 months of 1953. (Following a representation election in which the AFL union was defeated, the unaffiliated ILA was certified by the NLRB in August 1954 as collective bargaining agent for the dock workers.)

1954 Organic unity between the AFL and CIO moved swiftly toward accomplishment as a result of action taken during the year. A "no-raiding" agreement was activated in June. After a series of meetings, unity committees of the two federations agreed in October upon merger without resolving in advance the jurisdiction of competing AFL and CIO unions. (Unity committees and the executive boards of the AFL and CIO approved the terms of the merger in February 1955.)

Major railroads and the unions of nonoperating railroad workers negotiated an agreement to provide comprehensive health and insurance benefits, to be financed by contributions from employers and workers.⁴ This action raised the total number of workers covered by some type of health, welfare, and

⁴ Employers took over full cost in 1955.

pension plan under collective bargaining to approximately 12 million.

In his message to Congress on January 11, 1954, President Eisenhower recommended that Congress initiate a thorough study of welfare and pension funds with a view to protecting and conserving these funds. Investigations by State and Federal committees, which uncovered instances of fraud and mismanagement on the part of local union officials in the administration of welfare and pension funds, prompted the AFL and CIO to act to end such abuses and to establish standards for fund management and control.

Unions increased their efforts to end, or prevent the passage of, State "right to work" laws, which ban union membership as a qualification for employment. These laws were in effect in 17 States at the end of 1954. Secretary of Labor Mitchell, in an address to the CIO convention, expressed his opposition to such laws.

Proposals for guaranteed annual employment or wage plans were developed by the United Automobile Workers, the Steelworkers, the Electrical Workers, and the Rubber Workers, all CIO unions.

The AFL and CIO resumed active participation in the work of the U. S. Foreign Operations Administration in the revitalized Office of Labor Affairs, with labor missions and advisory posts abroad. American unions also continued to participate actively in international labor affairs through their affiliation with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

1955 The Fair Labor Standards Act was amended to raise the minimum wage for covered workers from 75 cents to \$1 an hour, effective March 1, 1956.

In June, the Ford Motor Co. and the United Auto Workers (then CIO) negotiated a new 3-year agreement which established a supplementary unemployment compensation plan financed by company contributions of 5 cents an hour. Payments under the plan to eligible laid-off workers were to start on June 1, 1956. By the end of 1955, similar plans were negotiated for more than a million workers including the remainder of the auto industry.

The founding of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (the AFL-CIO) on December 5, 1955, brought into one center, unions representing approximately 16 million workers—over 85 percent of the membership claimed by all unions in the United States. The last conventions of the separate organizations, held on December 1 and 2, approved the merger agreement, a new constitution, and an implementation agreement designed to combine the two federations without dissolving either organization. The first convention of the AFL-CIO elected its president (George Meany), secretary-treasurer (William F. Schnitzler), and 27 vice presidents, 17 of whom had been proposed by the AFL and 10 by the CIO. Under the constitution, these 29 officers constitute the Executive Council, the governing body between the biennial conventions.

Mergers among AFL-CIO affiliates, while encouraged, are not to be dictated by the federation; conflicts among unions competing in the same field are likewise to be adjusted voluntarily. Existing State, territorial and local bodies previously established by the CIO and the AFL are required to merge within 2 years. The constitution provided for an industrial union department to promote the interests of unions organized on an industrial basis. It was organized during the convention week with 69 affiliated unions, including 38 former AFL unions.

1956 The AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions began what was expected to be a slow adjustment to the needs of a united labor organization. In the first year of unity, former AFL and CIO State labor organizations merged in 19 States. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen—unaffiliated throughout its 83-year history—joined the AFL-CIO in September. Although several international unions proposed and discussed mergers, only a few were actually carried out. On the other hand, a number of unions signed mutual assistance pacts or no-raiding agreements. No large-scale organizing program was attempted. The Federation's Ethical Practices Committee recommended to the Executive Council, after hearings, that three unions (the Allied Industrial Workers, the Laundry Workers,

and the Distillery Workers) should show cause why they should not be suspended because of domination by "corrupt" influences in the administration of employee welfare funds.

In collective bargaining, renewed interest in plans permitting wages to be adjusted to changes in living costs and deferred wage increases was evident. A trend to long-term agreements, which had been developing in recent years, became more pronounced. Supplementary unemployment benefit plans, introduced in 1955, became more prevalent but were limited to several major industries. Three-year agreements in the steel industry, reached after a 5-week strike in July, provided for an immediate wage increase, annual increases, semiannual wage escalation, the establishment of supplementary unemployment benefit plans, and other benefits.

Amendments to the Federal Social Security Act provided that disabled industrial workers may qualify for disability benefits at age 50, and women may retire at age 62 with reduced benefits. Railroad Retirement Act benefits were increased by 10 percent. Benefits were increased and the waiting period lowered for disabled workers coming under the Longshoremens' and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act. Benefits for Federal employees under the Civil Service Retirement system were increased. Old-age and survivors' insurance benefits were extended to additional self-employed persons and the uniformed services.

The United Mine Workers of America (Ind.) in June dedicated 10 new hospitals to serve miners, their families, and communities in Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky. The cost of the project was financed by the UMWA Retirement and Welfare Fund, to which bituminous-coal operators pay 40 cents for each ton of coal mined under union contract conditions.

1957 The December 1957 biennial convention of the AFL-CIO expelled the Teamsters, Bakery Workers and Laundry Workers, with a combined membership of approximately 1.6 million, on charges of domination by corrupt influences. This action followed upon a refusal on the part of the 3 unions to accept the corrective recommendation of the Executive Council. Of the unions for which corrective action was recommended the Distillery Workers remained on probation and the United Textile

Workers were restored to good standing in the Federation. The Allied Industrial Workers had complied with the Executive Council order prior to the convention.

Three formerly independent railroad unions became affiliated with the AFL-CIO during 1957: The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, the American Train Dispatchers Association, and the American Railway Supervisors Association.

REFERENCES

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