

Labor movement - U.S. - Study and Teaching  
(1974)

The American Labor Movement

History, Structure, and Institutions :

An informal outline

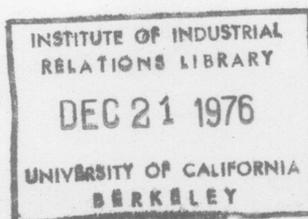
for Labor and Urban Studies 10 [Merritt College, Oakland]

By David F. Selvin

[San Francisco?] c 1974, rev. 1976.

Copyright 1974

(Revised 1976)



Please note:

The materials provided in these pages are copyrighted, 1974 by David F. Selvin. They are provided only for the use of the members of this class and may not be reproduced for any other purpose without my specific consent. Other copyrighted materials used herein may not be used without permission of their copyright owners. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

David F. Selvin

## Unit I. Some Historical Currents

At least four fundamental pressures have operated, over some two hundred years and more, to mold and shape the American union movement. Forces of the moment -- leaders, ideologies, economic and political movements -- cut across these pressures to create the movement at a given time. Action and reaction follow, seldom with clear beginnings or decisive endings, but one thing leading to another and it, in turn, to something else. This is the continuity of history.

These are the fundamental, persistent longtime pressures:

1. The major and immediate concern of the American worker and his unions has been for higher wages, better working conditions, shorter hours, here and now. His unions have grown from -- and have been focused on -- the job.

2. The American worker and his unions, in one way or another, with varying degrees of vigor, have never wandered far from politics. It has sometimes been their major concern; at other times, a lesser interest, but, in one form or another, always present.

3. The American worker and his unions have been faced, from the outset of their history, by an unremitting opposition. Though it centered mainly in the employers, it has at times -- and in differing degrees -- extended to many sections of the community. And though it frequently takes new forms, it has remained as a continuing pressure in shaping the American union movement.

4. American workers, from the moment of the Industrial Revolution

(and perhaps before), have been hounded by a basic, inescapable economic insecurity -- the haunting fear that, one day, this week or next, this month or next, the job will end and that the urgent, even desperate necessity of finding another will have to start again.

At any given moment in history, these long-term, underlying pressures are intersected by some or all of these forces:

1. The state of the economy: its particular stage of development, its health and well-being, its course and its goals.
2. The uses of political action: weak or strong, primary or secondary, wide-ranging, deeply-involved or narrow and limited.
3. The legal conflict: the ceaseless war between unions and employers frequently and often critically centered in the courts.
4. Leadership: the personalities who give direction, shape, substance to the underlying forces.
5. Environment: the thought, belief, creed, myth that dominate and shape the climate of the moment.

You'll want to know:

1. The basic forces that give the American union movement its essential shape and substance.

2. The forces of the moment that give its form and appearance at any given time.

It is not enough to know them in the general terms that I've used in these introductory pages, but to use them as a screen in examining each successive episode in the long history.

Unit II. A Profile of the American Union Movement

Some 20 million workers -20,100,000 in fact- make up the American union movement.

It's a lopsided, badly-skewed cross-section of the American people. No rich. Some of the poor -- the working poor. An over-size chunk of the middle.

It's mostly -- and disproportionately -- male.

It's mostly white -- but not disproportionately.

It's mostly blue-collar (though both women and white-collar workers are increasing).

It's found in wildly, widely varying sectors of the economy. Heaviest where manual workers are still a major part of the work force. Heaviest in railroads, trucking, autos, steel. But it hardly exists at all in many sections of the service industries -- banking, insurance, finance. And in shifting proportions almost everywhere else.

Still: whatever the shape, it's a major center of power in the American society. Many dislike it, object to living with it. Many others would be a great deal worse off without it. The President of the U.S. courts it (though, according to who he is, with varying styles and degrees of ardor).

Leaders of the nation's biggest industries deal with it.

The liberals decry it as too weak, too conservative.

The conservatives complain it's too strong.

The radical calls it narrow, short-sighted. The John Bircher sees it as an extension of an international communist plot.

Its shape and substance emerge from these statistics:

Profile of the American Union Movement

Membership (1)

Total (in 1974):	21,600,000
(including Canadian members)	1,500,000
113 AFL-CIO international unions	16,900,000
64 unaffiliated international unions	4,700,000
21.6% of the civilian labor force	
25.7% of the wage/salary employees in non-farm establishments	
In 1972: 71,409 local unions	
165,133 collective bargaining agreements	

Industrial Distribution (1974) (1)

In manufacturing industries	9,137,000 (42%)
In non-manufacturing industries	9,508,000 (44%)
In government	2,907,000 (14%)
In contract construction (1972)	2,752,000
Transportation	2,358,000
Service Industries	1,649,000
Federal Government	1,369,000
Trade	1,284,000
Electrical machinery, equipment	1,052,000
Transportation equipment	1,032,000

Occupation (2)

White-collar	3,900,000 (23%)
Blue-collar	11,900,000 (69%)
Service	1,400,000 (8%)

Sex (1)

Men	17,000,000 (79%)
Women	4,594,000 (21%)

Race (2)

White	15,100,000 (88%)
Black & other races	2,100,000 (12%)

Work force (wage/salary employees in non-farm establishments) 1970

Participation (2)

ALL	20.4%
White	20%
Black & other races	22%
MALE - ALL	28%
White	28%
Black & other races	29%
FEMALE - ALL	10%
White	10%
Black & other races	14%

Age (2)

Between 16 and 24	14%
26 and 64	84%
65 and over	2%

Earnings (2)

(Median average of non-farm wage salary employees working year-round, full-time)

	<u>Union</u>	<u>Non-Union</u>
All	\$8,609	\$7,452
White-Collar	8,858	8,532
Blue-Collar	8,664	6,690
Service	7,026	4,650
Less than \$5,000	11%	25%
\$5,000 to \$10,000	57%	44%
\$10,000 and over	32%	29%
(Including over \$15,000	5%	11%)

Sources:

- (1) U.S. Department of Labor, Directory of National Unions and Employee Associations, 1971, Bulletin 1750 (1972); 1973 (1974).
- (2) U.S. Department of Labor, Selected Earnings and Demographic Characteristics of Union Members, 1970, Report 417, 1972

You'll want to know:

- The general shape of the union movement in terms of:

industry

occupational class

sex

race

geographical distribution

income

And you'll want to think about:

- The impact of the union movement on the management (the government) of industry; on the right to hire and fire;
- The union movement's place under the law;
- Other, not necessarily friendly, views of the union movement.

Unit III. Union Structure and Jurisdiction

In the beginning came the local union.

Workers organized within the context of their job or their industry, in terms of their own immediate problems and their own employer.

From their local unions, they reached out:

- to other local unions of the same kind and from them came national and international unions;

- to other local unions in the same community and from them came central labor bodies, state and local, and on a national scale, national federations or union centers.

At the heart of each local union was its jurisdiction: the job or jobs, craft or combination of crafts, the labor force, in whole or in part, in a single plant or in an entire industry over which it sought some measure of influence or control -- the work territory over which it sought to establish some kind of mutually agreeable government.

Jurisdiction provided a useful means of defining organization, of measuring job or work boundaries, of determining eligibility for membership, of providing a feasible basis for common goals and concerted action.

Jurisdiction may be measured by:

- the work it covers;
- the geographic area over which it extends;
- the specific purpose for which it is being used.
- the level of union (or industrial) government where it is

being applied.

Jurisdiction, as a major component of collective bargaining, gave rise to many other forms (or structures) of organization:

- intermediate organizations
- national organizations
- substructures
- special-purpose organizations (benefit funds, for example)

## JURISDICTION &amp; STRUCTURE\*

I. Jurisdiction.

The job or jobs; the craft, a subdivision of a craft, or a combination of crafts; the labor force, in whole or in part, in a single plant or in an entire industry over which a union seeks to establish its influence and some measure of control -- in short, the work territory over which it seeks to provide some kind of government mutually agreeable (or acceptable) to those who work within that territory.

Your union: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

II. A union establishes its claim to its work territory (jurisdiction) in one or more of the following ways:

- The labor movement (historically through a central federation) grants or concedes a given jurisdiction to a national union and, through the national union, to a local union. The grant may be affected by the decisions of a judicial procedure established by the central federation or by agreement among several unions for resolving jurisdictional disputes.

- The jurisdiction may be, and usually is, confirmed by a government agency, principally the National Labor Relations Board and usually on the basis of some method of showing that the union represents a

majority of the workers within the work territory (in this instance, labeled the bargaining unit).

- An employer may confirm a union's jurisdiction (in whole or in part) by recognizing it as the representative of his employees in a specific unit (or work territory).

In which of these ways was your union's jurisdiction over your job confirmed?

- By grant (or concession) of the central federation.

- By charter from a national union.

- By certification by the National Labor Relations Board (or by some other government agency. If the latter, what agency? \_\_\_\_\_).  
\_\_\_\_\_

- By recognition of your employer.

III. Jurisdiction may be measured in these interrelated and interdependent ways:

- A description of the work territory: in terms of some combination of occupation, worksite, industry, employer, work process, materials, tools, machinery, or other common denominator.

How is the work territory of your union described? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- The geographic area to which the jurisdiction applied. It can, of course, cover any area from a single department in a single plant to the entire work force of an entire industry, from a portion of a city to

the entire nation (and sometimes Canada and Puerto Rico).

What is the geographic area covered by your union? \_\_\_\_\_

\* - The specific purpose for which jurisdiction is being exercised: that is, for collective bargaining, for joint or coordinated bargaining, for consultation, mutual support, or other purposes. Collective bargaining is the major focus of union activity; jurisdiction for that purpose is largely regulated by the Federal labor relations law and by the National Labor Relations Board. Traditional jurisdiction -- the grant of jurisdiction by a central federation, the constitutional claim of a national union, the charter of a local union, the customary demarcation of a craft or industry -- may be (and often is) modified by the NLRB to accommodate the demands of workers for recognition as an "appropriate bargaining unit." At the same time, given unit may be primarily a means of organizing workers and not necessarily a practical bargaining unit. A NLRB unit may be "an election district in which employees vote for or against representation by a labor organization." The "election district" may not be the same thing as the bargaining unit in actual practice.

Do you work in a bargaining unit confirmed by the NLRB? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the NLRB bargaining unit the same as the bargaining unit that actually negotiates your union contract? \_\_\_\_\_

Unions also participate in a variety of other activities (such as mutual consultation, legislative, research, education, etc.). Some of these activities take place among local unions within a particular

national organization, or they may take place among nations from a number of different national unions. And unions may also participate in organizations formed for administrative or other functions, such as health & welfare and pension funds.

Identify other purposes for which your union participates in organizations of broader or different jurisdiction?

Organization:

---

---

---

Purpose:

---

---

---

You'll want to know:

- union jurisdiction and its relation to the structure of local and international unions, to state and local central bodies, to national federations and to the several functions of the union (collective bargaining, benefit programs, political action, etc.)

- the application of these principles to your own local union.

You should be able to see how your own local union relates to your international union and to various kinds of intermediate and sub-local organizations.

Unit IV. The beginnings

In 1805, in the city of Philadelphia, eight cordwainers were charged with the crime of combining and conspiring to raise their wages. Their trial is significant because:

1. It was a major test of workers' rights under the new government. Its outcome was heavily influenced by the political climate and the political attitudes of the parties. It was an important challenge to the carryover into the new nation's laws and practices of British law and British practice.
2. It was, characteristically, focused on the shop, on the immediate issue of wages.
3. It helps us to see how conditions conducive to unions developed.
4. And, finally, it did much to set the tone and direction of newly-developing labor relations in the developing nation.

The Philadelphia union of cordwainers was not the first organized protest of workers against exploitation and abuse. They had, long before the Revolution, acted in concert. Workers in licensed trades combined to seek higher prices. Bound servants refused to work, singly and in groups, or deserted. Boston caulkers (1741) refused to accept "store" orders. New York tailors (1768) refused to work for masters, chose instead to work directly for customers. New York house carpenters (1767) formed a "friendly" society. Mariners (1779) organized to help widows and children of their fellow workers.

The colonial period was dominated by British law, which imposed

severe restrictions on workers, and by other practices aimed at preventing workers from exploiting the unending shortage of labor that persisted through the colonial years. These included wage fixing, outlawing combinations to raise wages, requiring apprentices to finish their terms, use of child labor, pirating workers, regulation of admission to trades, fixing prices or rates for certain classes of public workers (porter, carmen, chimney sweeps, bakers, etc.).

1790 was "the seedtime of American industrialism." Beginnings were made in developing manufacturing industry (cottons, woolens, paper, brick, glass, iron, soft coal). Highways and canals pushed west from the coast.

An industry emerged and markets expanded, first signs of worker organizations are seen:

- Black chimney sweeps "turned out" in 1761; New York and Philadelphia printers called strikes.

- Crude collective bargaining developed: closed shop, control of entry into trade, rules of conduct for members, "tramping committee" to enforce trade rules.

Key to rise of unions (as Commons saw it):

Bespoke work: shoes and boots made to order; prices settled directly between master or journeyman and customer.

Shop work: stocked standards sizes, shapes for casual customers. Required capital (wages, rent, materials) to hold completed goods until sold. Master increasingly retail merchant and, as work expanded, employer.

But price still settled mainly by direct negotiation between master and customer.

Market work: master is now full-fledged employer; provides capital to employ workers and to maintain stock of goods. Competes in open market, his prices directly determined by competition (of which wage cost an important item). Now the interests of the employer and journeyman diverge: employer interested in cheapest possible labor costs; journeyman interested in maintaining wages. Competition set conditions for the rivalry. At this point, Cemmous said, "the conflict of capital and labor begins."

As market expanded, as competition more and more set prices, journeymen found it increasingly necessary to join together to protect wages and conditions against market pressures. Individual bargaining gave way to a form of collective bargaining.

This was the economic setting in which the Philadelphia cordwainers chose to form a union of their own. Their union led a rocky existence, culminating in the conspiracy charges in 1805.

In 1805, eight cordwainers were indicted on charges of combining and conspiring to raise their wages. It is significant because:

- It wasn't the first strike but it was a major test of workers' rights under the new government.
- It was, characteristically, focused on the shop on immediate questions of wages.
- It was typical of the early response to the beginning of industrialization.

- It was heavily influenced by the political climate and the political attitudes of the parties. The goals of the American Revolution were still fresh in many minds.

- And it was a challenge to the carryover of British law and practices in employer-employee relations.

The prosecution argued that the combination to set wages interferes with the rights of others and makes itself superior to the laws of the state, forces loss and imposes its will on the employer. The individual is free to set his own prices; the evil is in the combination. The crime is against other workers, employers, customers. It interferes with the workings of the "natural" law of supply and demand. It was a crime under the English common law.

The defense countered: if one man is free to set his own wage, resist exploitation, why not a group? The purpose in either case is equally innocent. English common law does not apply to post-Revolution Pennsylvania. Employers are free to set prices; why should workers be denied the same right? Association of workers to better their conditions is an exercise of the freedom that had been won in the Revolution.

The eight cordwainers were found guilty. To allow such combinations, said Recorder Levy, would leave the public's pockets free to be picked. No group can set up laws which are contrary to laws of the country.

The finding of a conspiracy in the Cordwainers case spread to other states. Would-be unionists were held to be "criminals" in 19

cases in five states. Many unions faded; many turned to politics.

The country's first central labor union was formed in Philadelphia in 1827, the result of an attempt by carpenters to win a 10-hour day.

In the same year, a Workingmen's party was formed. It was unsuccessful but it began the agitation that ultimately won free public education, abolition of imprisonment for debt, right to vote. Workingmen's political reform groups formed in New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, others parts of New England.

The Philadelphia Trades Union led to formation of the National Trades Union in 1834, bringing together delegates from Boston, Philadelphia, Newark, Brooklyn, New York in the first effort to form a national center.

New England textile mills demonstrated the problems that grew from the factory system. In the mid-1850's, immigration began to pour into the country.

In Massachusetts, Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, in a case involving the conspiracy doctrine, held that neither the intended purpose of the combination or the means used by its members was unlawful. The way was opened again to union organization but now with the final say left with the courts. Unions were lawful only to the degree that judges found their purposes and their tactics lawful. It laid the basis for what came to be called "government by injunction" which later raised great difficulties for the union movement. It erased in part the taint of conspiracy.

Still a national union movement had not yet formed. Too many

Americans remained close to the land, to the tools of their trade, to their own workshops. They held on to a good measure of independence and mobility, if not wealth. By mid-century, the developing industrial society was taking on solid shape; it began in growing numbers to separate craftsmen from their tools and workshops. It drew farmers and farm workers from the land to the growing cities. It was creating a new and distinct class of people who lived by wages. An industrial economy, a national market, and a growing working class, provided the soil in which the national union movement could take root.

You'll want to know:

- the conditions and tone of employer-employee relations prior to the Revolution and what shaped them.
- the kinds, purposes and methods of employee response.
- the economic developments that created the conditions in which unions were the natural response.
- the key arguments and significance of the prosecution of the Philadelphia cordwainers.
- the goals of workingmen's political parties.
- the shape of the emerging factory system.
- the arguments and significance of Justice Shaw's ruling in Commonwealth v. Hunt.

Unit V. Rise of the National Unions

By 1850 the conditions for a national industrial economy -- and a union movement -- had clearly emerged. The nation's 23 million people (19-1/2 million white, free; 3-1/2 million "non-white," most of them black and slave) occupied virtually the same continental space the nation occupies today. It was still a predominantly agricultural society but changes were in the making.

More than a third of the workforce made their livelihood in non-farm occupations. (It had been 28 per cent in 1820; by the 1880's the non-farm workforce would surpass the farm.) The use of energy (primarily mineral fuels) had multiplied nearly 25 times since 1820. Some nine thousand miles of railroad track had been built since 1820. Manufacturing establishments employed nearly a million workers; their wages added up to \$237,000,000 -- about \$250 per year per worker or \$5 a week. (See background statistics)

A national market was developing. Through-freight could be shipped from the Eastern seaboard to the Mississippi Valley. In any major market, now, products from several different localities competed with each other. A highly mobile work force flowed from one area to another. The development of factory systems, crude assembly lines, and power tools opened the way to "greenhands" (off the farm and by rising immigration), to the utilization of lesser skills, the division of labor, the employment of women and children.

Workers began to sense the impact of broader markets, more

intense price (and labor) competition, the spreading introduction of machinery.

They saw the conditions around them: Horace Greeley estimated that two-thirds of New York's population who lived by simple labor earned scarcely one dollar a week for each person who relied on it for his subsistence. Journeyman printers worked for less than \$6 a week; day laborers earned a dollar a day or, perhaps, about \$200 a year. English and Irish laborers flooded the seaboard cities; farmers' boys invaded the cities.

The poor lived in unbelievable conditions of congestion and filth: cellars used as living quarters; large numbers of families living underground. The labor press complained that the condition of workers was deteriorating, they were increasingly dependent on capital, their resources were being curtailed, that "a new uncertainty had entered his life as to wages and employment."

Unions revived and the slow, difficult process of foregoing a national union movement began. Hatters organized. In 1852 the National Typographical Union was organized. Other national unions formed in the 1850's included the molders, blacksmiths and machinists, locomotive engineers.

The movement had barely begun when it was disrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War. Many workers feared abolition of slavery would release a flood of competition for jobs; abolitionists were slow to voice their objections to "wage slavery and the use of slaves in direct competition to "free" labor were even more recognizable menaces. In

the church, free workers opposed slavery and supported its abolition. When war came, whole shops and entire unions volunteered for Mr. Lincoln's armies. After the inevitable confusion, prices began to mount, living came higher and once again unions began to form -- many of them during the war years.

One of them was the national union of soldiers. And in that union a major figure was William H. Sylvis, as he came to be, too, in the formation of the National Labor Union.

In the molders, Sylvis as president introduced many of the practices and policies that began the process of centralizing authority in the national union (strike funds, strike aid, nationally-uniform dues, national union clearance for transfers, national membership). Under his leadership, the molders tried both trade agreements (or work rules) and cooperative foundries to meet continuing antagonism from the employers.

Sylvis joined with other union leaders and "labor reformers" in bringing together the National Labor Union. It lacked any kind of a homogeneous base; it could never agree on any basic purpose or program; it lacked everything that could give it stability. It explored (without reaching any conclusion) the issues of the black worker in the union movement, of women workers, of cooperatives, political action, and of the shorter workday. After Sylvis's death, it split and then faded away.

Contemporary with the NLU, the first post Civil-war black organizations of workers appeared. Isaac Meyers, a Baltimore caulker, heading

a state labor union of black workers, was a delegate at the 1869 NLU convention. In the same year the National Colored Labor Convention met in Washington. Though the black delegates found some common ground in terms of mutual economic interests, they strongly opposed any suggestion of independent political action. On that rock, the efforts for unity, limited though they were, foundered.

Background Statistics

	Gainful Workers			
	(Farm)	(Non-Farm)	(Percent)	(Total)
1820	2,069,000	812,000	(28)	2,881
1850	4,902,000	2,795,000	(36)	7,697
1880	8,585,000	8,807,000	(51)	17,392
1900	10,912,000	18,161,000	(62)	29,073

Energy Consumption  
(In trillions of BTUs of mineral fuels)

1820	9
1850	219
1880	2,150
1900	7,322

Railroads -- Miles Operated

1820	23
1850	9,021
1880	93,262
1900	258,784
(1930)	429,883)

US Foreign Trade  
(in millions of dollars)

Bituminous coal (Production in tons)		(Exports)	(Imports)	Pig iron (Shipments in tons)		
1820	330,000	1820	65	63	1820	22,000
1850	4,029,000	1850	152	178	1850	631,000
1880	50,757,000	1880	853	761	1880	4,295,000
1900	212,316,000	1900	\$1,499	\$930	1900	15,444,000

US Manufactures

	<u>1849</u>	<u>1879</u>	<u>1899</u>
No. of establishments	123,025	253,852	509,940
Production & related workers	957,000	2,733,000	5,098,000
Wages (\$1,000)	\$ 237,000	\$ 948,000	\$ 2,207,000
Value added (\$1,000)	\$ 464,000	\$ 1,973,000	\$ 5,475,000

Source: Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957, Bureau of the Census, 1960.

You'll want to know:

- The general shape and structure of economic development in mid-19th Century.

- Something about the beginnings of national unions and how their structures and authority were shaped by local union needs -- as in the case of the molders.

- The attitude of free workers toward slavery and the Civil War.

- The hopes for -- and problems with -- cooperation as a solution to workers' problems.

- The development of the National Labor Union and its importance in the long view of the union movement.

Unit VI. Powderly and the Knights

Sometime in the 1870's the non-farm work force equalled, then passed farm employment -- a reflection of the explosive economic growth that was changing the face of the American society.

The enormous expansion in the use of energy, building railroads, the doubling of the number of manufacturing workers were all measures of that expansion. (See background statistics, V-5).

Still, livin' was by no means easy. A variety of estimates put average earnings in the years between 1880 and 1900 at something like \$400 to \$600 a year. Manufacturing workers earned on the average \$439 a year in 1880, \$435 in 1900. It seems likely that the average worker worked only some 36 weeks of the year, was unemployed nearly 16.

Among the forces that battered the workers, their efforts to organize, their efforts to earn a living were:

1. The beginnings of a vast immigration that, in the next half-century, would bring millions of newcomers to these shores -- from Western Europe, from Southern and Eastern Europe, Russia and Poland, and the beginnings of Asiatic and Latin American immigration. They were, at the same time, competitors for jobs and a market for the goods others produced.

2. Technological developments, only hinted at in mid-century, exploded dramatically in its last decades. New industries, new techniques destroyed old industries and old skills, put competitive pressure on the

survivors. They were a constant threat to worker and union.

3. Markets expanded rapidly, a development that was reflected in the growth of the union movement. The trade union, says Commons, is "the institutional reflex of expanding markets." Goods moved into new markets from every direction, competing with local products and with each other; workers were forced to defend themselves from the rising competitive pressures.

4. The structure of industry underwent massive changes, too: in the number and diversity of industry but also in its scale. It became a time of aggregation of capital, of building bigger industries by combining smaller ones, of trusts and attempted monopolies. The distance between the average worker and his employer stretched into vast empty spaces; the day of the absentee boss was here.

Under these pressures, the first major national organization to emerge was The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor. Formed by a secretive garment cutter, Uriah Stephens, it progressed only slowly until Terence V. Powderly became its Chief Grand Workman and until it ended its secrecy and its closeness. Under the spur of a series of strikes (both won and lost), the Knights' membership exploded reaching more than 729,000 by 1886; it might have been more had not Powderly closed the books for several weeks.

The Knights of Labor was tested on these counts:

- Goals: cooperation; the right of all toilers to combine; to extend organization into every segment of industry, a "proper share of wealth," weekly paydays, mechanics liens, "arbitration" instead of

strikes, equal pay for equal work, eight-hour day.

- Strikes: Powderly was an outspoken opponent of strikes but participated in hundreds and had a hand in settling many of them. The Knights was never able to make up its mind for long about its attitude toward strikes or a defense fund. Nevertheless, a long series of strikes -- on the Union Pacific, the glass workers, the Missouri Pacific and the Wabash, the Texas & Pacific and the Southwest system, the meatpackers, telegraphers -- helped to spread the Knights' fame and recruit members.

- Structure: The Knights' basic unit was the local assembly: it could be a mixed assembly (made up of workers from a variety of trades and businesses) or a trade assembly (made up of workers from a given trade or industry). In turn, the local assemblies (especially the trade assemblies) formed national district assemblies, the equivalent of national trade unions-- and so laid the foundation for the feud with the national trade unions.

The basic structure, however, rested in open admission: all workers (except bankers, lawyers, doctors, liquor-sellers) were admitted. And so, too, were black workers. While rejecting any idea of "social equality," Powderly defended the right of black workers in the Knights (though he sometimes thought they would have been better off in their own assemblies).

- Eight-hour campaign: Powderly refused any measure of cooperation with the movement for the eight-hour day, launched by the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions in 1884 and set for May 1, 1886. The Knights repudiated, though it did not expressly forbid, participation

by local assemblies. The partial, though still substantial, victories in the eight-hour campaign, despite being cut short by the Haymarket bomb, left the Knights in disrepute.

As the trade unions began to search for some kind of national center -- and as district trade assemblies began to develop, the inevitable clash occurred. Efforts, crude and undiplomatic, to resolve the differences failed. In the end the trade unions, not the Knights, survived.

The factors, then, that led to the deterioration of the Knights were these:

- Lost strikes: the Gould railroad and meatpacking strikes, were major instances.

- Lost face: its role in refusing to back the eight-hour campaign won it no friends.

- Trade union conflict: the trade unions were tightly-organized, sharply job-focused, more aggressive. The Knights were confused and uncertain.

Confused goals: The Knights could never make up its mind about viable policies dealing with strikes and defense funds, political action, or, for that matter, with a basic, functional union structure. Its mixed assemblies and mixed policies dissipated its strength and clouded its purpose.

You'll want to know:

- developments in the shape, size, and direction of the national economy.

- the goals, structure, and tactics of the Knights of Labor.

- the Knights' strengths and weakness in practice: in strikes, in organizing, in relations with the trade unions.

- the basic reasons why the Knights failed to survive and why the trade unions were able to make it.

Unit VII. Gompers and the AFL

The unions formed in the closing decades of the 18th Century in the shadow of -- and in response to -- a continuing and mushrooming expansion of the American economy. By every conceivable yardstick -- work force, energy, railroads in operation, foreign trade, manufacturing -- the economy surged upward. It was a time of giants, too: of Carnegie, Gould, Morgan, Rockefeller, of trusts and monopolies.

From the national unions, and from the Knights, too, came a major effort to form a national center: the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. It failed to survive but it left two legacies: one, the eight-hour campaign of 1886; the other, the American Federation of Labor. Sam Gompers was party to both. In the AFL he became a major, perhaps the dominant force in shaping its character and direction.

Gompers came to this country when he was 13 in the midst of the Civil War. He worked as a cigarmaker -- both in the tenements and in the factories. He learned about unions at the grass roots -- in the shops and in the streets. He saw, even more clearly than Sylvis and others, that a union needed the strength and stamina to survive: through industrial depression and employer warfare. And he helped to shape the Cigarmakers in that image. And he built on those beliefs, too, in shaping the policies and programs of the American Federation of Labor. Slowly, in bits and pieces, over decades, the policies of the AFL took shape -- the product of pressure and counter-pressure, of

outside forces and economic developments pressing in on the unions and their members and generating its response.

In time, the principle characteristics of the AFL included these:

- The conception of the trade union as an economic instrument, its main concern higher wages, shorter hours, better conditions, now.

- Its central strength and its cohesiveness grew from its craft skills, though the notion of craft was not as tightly held as it later came to be. Gompers and the AFL made room for the semi-skilled worker -- the factory operative, the worker who lacked the fine precision, the training, the experience, of a journeyman's trade, the worker who substituted a shared experience, a common employer, a common grievance for the cohesiveness of craft.

- It was operated on a business basis, with little room for ideology of a future society. It was pragmatic, down-to-earth, day-to-day.

- It was partisan on behalf of its principles, but for no political party. Its political action was characteristically short-run and sharply-focused.

At the same time, these pressures pushed in on the AFL and its unions, shaping and molding them:

- Continuing economic development: expansion both in gross size and in scale of operation, extension of markets, developments of new industries, increasing technological innovation, new and extended application of energy.

- The tides of immigration continued to mount. Millions of newcomers crowded through the ports of entry. They were ready targets of employer exploitation. They also constituted a market for industry's goods. Many were ignorant; they were ill, under-nourished, untrained, unskilled. But many carried with them the skills, political and union and educational, of the old world.

- Employers increasingly organized not merely to stave off union organization by their employees, but to defeat or extinguish it wherever it cropped up. It fought back with efforts to curtail labor rights and labor tactics. It mobilized money and resources and opinion to fight unions.

- By the end of the 18th Century, the Jim Crow pattern, fixed on the South following the end of Reconstruction, had penetrated deep into the American society. The Supreme Court decision that separate could be equal gave official recognition and place to segregation -- and to the discrimination in jobs, education, housing, etc. that flowed from it.

The response of the AFL and the union movement took these directions:

- The policy of exclusive jurisdiction: a process of drawing the craft lines tighter as a tougher, less penetrable defense against employer and community antagonism.

- The policy of Jim Crow unions: only occasionally did the unions of the AFL challenge the Jim Crow pattern, though it paid extensive lip service both to mutual interest between black workers and white and to

the equality of separateness.

- The policy of non-partisan politics. The AFL embarked finally on the tactic of supporting or opposing individual candidates on the basis of their records or of their stand on labor issues.

- The policy of day-to-day, pragmatic unionism that gave up any dream it may have had of organizing those workers who described themselves as "labor" as opposed to those who were trade unionists, craftsmen, skilled workers.

You'll want to know:

- What the AFL stood for -- in its approach to relations with employers, with each other, with the society generally.

- The forces that pressed in on the AFL, helping to mold its response.

- And the ways in which the Federation responded both to its internal necessities and external pressures.

Unit VIII. Pressure from the left

The response to industrialization was not limited to that of the AFL and Sam Gompers. It extended to the Socialists, in and out of the AFL, to Debs and the American Railway Union, to Haywood and the Industrial Workers of the World, to the Communists and their revolutionary unions.

- The Socialists fought battles within the AFL to gain admission for party representatives, to impose a "political program" on the Federation, in general opposition. They lost.

- Eugene Debs learned his unionism from a top post in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. But craft organization, he became convinced, was inadequate, ineffective. He tried to overcome it by forming a joint council of railway crafts; it failed. He then undertook organization of the American Railway Union. At first an overwhelming success, its participation in the Pullman strike brought railroad management the government, the courts, and the U.S. Army down on its head. It didn't survive. Debs did, of course. He went on to become a major and respected figure in the Socialist Party and a four-time presidential candidate.

- Big Bill Haywood learned his unionism in the mines of the Rockies. He was part of the outward thrust by the Western Federation of Miners that led to the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World. In time, the IWW -- the Wobblies -- undertook organization among the neglected and forgotten workers at the very bottom of the nation's economic pile.

It led a series of dramatic and significant free speech fights and equally dramatic strikes. It finally fell victim to its own failure to put down roots and to vicious, anti-red, anti-foreigner drive of the Federal government.

- Divisions in the Socialist Party brought on by the Russian Revolution in 1917 led to the formation of what became the Communist Party. It was, at various times, committed to "boring from within" -- the tactic of seeking to capture leadership in established unions -- and to its own revolutionary unions. It fought several battles during the 1920's to capture leadership in the Ladies Garment Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and other unions; it also led in the early thirties in an effort to create new, revolutionary unions. And to a variety of results in the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

You'll want to know:

- the differences in philosophy and tactics between the AFL and the unions of the left -- the Socialists, the ARU, the IWW, the Communists.

Unit IX. Accommodation and Survival

The road the American Federation of Labor traveled was neither easy nor smooth. The response of American workers to industrialization was opposed, smothered, fought -- often violently yet by the end of World War I, the union movement -- principally the AFL -- reached a peak membership of over five million, its strength and prestige never higher. Here are some memorable stretches on that road.

- A number of crucial strikes tested the new union movement and helped to circumscribe and define its boundaries. These included: Homestead, 1892, which began the process of ousting unions from the nations steel mills; the Pullman strike, 1894, which saw the government, the courts, and railroad management combine to defeat the workers; coal, 1901; steel, 1901, 1909, and 1919: the establishment and confirmation of the anti-union open shop.

- A number of court battles drew heavily on union resources and littered its road with new barriers: The use of the injunction in the 1894 Pullman strike and the extension of court rule in labor relations; the court rulings in the Danbury Hatters and Bucks Stove cases and in the Hitchman Coal case.

- The employer offensive: the Citizens Industrial Association, the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Anti-Boycott Association gave formal organization and purpose to the employers' anti-union campaign.

- Labor developed new approaches to politics (it always seems to

have been a question of not whether, but how):

The initial position was not clear; the AFL supported the "use of the ballot," accompanied by demands on candidates to take positions on labor-supported measures.

In convention battles with the Socialists, the direct support or affiliation of political parties was definitely rejected.

Local labor groups continued to seek a variety of protective laws: eight-hour laws, safety regulations, eventually workmen's compensation, etc.

The spreading use of court injunctions and the refusal of Congress to hear labor on a number of issues led in 1906 to the Bill of Grievances, its presentation to Administration and Congressional leaders. It led to the decision to launch a campaign to defeat Republican Charles E. Littlefield, Maine -- a major turn in labor's political tactics. It also led to the submission of labor's political concerns to both political parties' platform committees. And it contributed to bringing the AFL leaders to support Woodrow Wilson for the presidency in 1912.

The passage of the Clayton Act, the LaFollette Seamen's Act, the creation of the Department of Labor were among the political victories counted by the AFL. And it led to a favorable consideration of labor by the Wilson Administration when the nation geared to fight World War I.

- Labor had traditionally opposed war, but when World War I threatened to wash up on American shores, its position declared that war preparations did not stop the struggle for "industrial rights," that labor must oppose exploitation at home and abroad, that justice among men is

a necessary element in national defense.

Gompers was appointed to Wilson's Council of National Defense Advisory Committee and made chairman of its committee on welfare of workers. Under his leadership, the unions gained recognition for union wages and conditions in the defense building program (camps, cantonments, ship-building, etc.). The railroads were put under national control and the unions recognized; in coal, too. The National War Labor Board established the principle recognizing unions and the representatives of workers, adopted prevailing wage principle, and established the idea of the "living wage" for all workers. (In its principles were some of the major ideas embodied later in New Deal legislation.)

Note these comparisons between 1900 and 1920

Union membership	791,000	5,034,000
as per cent of civilian labor force	3%	12%
Average annual earnings (non- farm)	\$435	\$1,358
Cost of living index (1913-100)	68	204
Real average annual earnings	\$640	\$665

You'll want to know:

- The issues and outcome of some of the major battles that were fought between 1886 and World War I -- steel, coal, railroads.
- The rulings of the nation's courts in applying the law to labor rights: the Debs case, Danbury Hatters, Bucks Stove, Hitchman, etc.
- The development of labor's political tactics.
- The significance of the Clayton Act, the LaFollette Seamen's Act, creation of the Labor Department, etc.
- The historical effect of labor's role in World War I.

In short, you'll want to know something about the compromises, the settlements, the accommodations that were made by labor on its road to survival.

Unit X. Turning Point - 1

The membership and prestige of the American Federation of Labor never stood higher than it did when World War I came to an end. Gompers had led the unionists to a place of recognition and status in the conduct of the war; he was an important figure in the postwar peace conferences, presiding over the formation of the International Labor Organization. Membership topped the five-million mark, representing 12 per cent of the civilian labor force -- up from 5.6 per cent in 1910, 3 per cent in 1900. But its stay at the peak was short-lived. For the next dozen years it was to know only retreat, much of its membership drifting or driven away.

For a moment in 1919 it seemed as if the entrenched open shop in the nation's steel mills would be conquered. But the promise was overwhelmed by superior forces: by money and violence, by influence with the press, the makers of opinion, some help from the courts and the indifference of the government, by dividing and conquering the bold effort. The defeat foreshadowed the coming open-shop attack and the so-called American Plan.

A short, sharp depression in 1920-21 speeded the attack on its way. The longshoremen had lost their union in postwar strikes. The seamen's unions were driven from the merchant marine. The building trades in major cities throughout the country were handcuffed by the American Plan. Prohibition rubbed out the hotel and restaurant workers' union. Internal strife racked the Ladies Garment Workers. And efforts to

organize autos and the South never got off the ground.

On another flank employers countered unionism of the AFL brand with a variety of employee representation plans, works councils, welfare programs, and paternal gestures. Hundreds of thousands of workers were kept from the ranks of organized labor by the spread of these devices -- and with special effectiveness in large companies.

By 1933 the union had lost nearly half of their peak strength. What hadn't been lost to the open-shop campaigns and "corporate welfareism" were being lost increasingly to the inroads of depression.

The depression was "unique," according to Professor Irving Bernstein, the only one we call "great." It was unique for sheer size -- never before had so many been unemployed for so long. It caught the nation totally unprepared for economic catastrophe of such scope and depth. And it manifested itself chiefly in unemployment in contrast to the characteristics of previous depressions. Estimates put unemployment at 3,250,000 to 4 million in 1930, climbing steadily until it hit some 15 or 16 million by 1933. For a time wages held but then they fell, too, under the pressures of the depression. Those who held on to jobs came to know two, three, and even four wage cuts before the tide turned again. Average hourly earnings in manufacturing dropped from 57 cents in 1929 to 44 cents in 1933; weekly earnings from \$25.03 to \$16.73.

The nation's leaders -- economic, financial, industrial, political -- had few remedies to offer. Nor was the AFL any more creative. It called for a thirty-hour week and for increased public works to create jobs. It was 1932 before it finally gave up its stubborn stand

1933 was a time of profound despair and discouragement. The nation's banking system was collapsing, a fourth -- at least -- of the nation's work force was jobless; suffering, deprivation, and want -- and outright starvation -- were close at hand. This was the climate on March 4, 1933 when Franklin Delano Roosevelt took the oath of office as President of the United States.

THE TWENTIES

(1929 = 100)

Civ Labor Force (millions)	Gross National Product (Index)	Productivity Per Man-Hour	Earnings Weekly \$	Ind. Living	Real Wages	Unemploy- ment % (millions)
40	70	78	26.30	101	22.48	4 1.7
	1920			117	84	
	1921	84	22.18	89	21.33	12 5.0
	1922	83	21.51	86	21.74	8 3.2
	1923	88	23.82	95	23.82	3 1.4
	1924	92	23.93	96	23.93	6 2.4
	1925	92	24.37	97	23.66	4 1.8
	1926	94	24.65	98	23.70	2 .9
	1927	96	24.74	99	25.25	4 1.9
	1928	96	24.97	99	24.97	4 2.1
49	100	100	25.03	100	25.03	3 1.6
50	91	98	23.25	93	23.97	9 4.3
59	87	98	20.87	83	28.20	16 8.0
51	73	95	17.05	68	25.83	24 12.0
52	71	94	16.73	67	26.56	25 13.0
	1930			97	96	
	1931			74	112	
	1932			66	103	
	1933			63	106	

You'll want to know:

- What happened to the union movement in the 1920's.
- What happened to workers in the Great Depression.
- The mechanics of "corporate welfarism" and "company unions."

Unit XI. Turning Point - 2

The major item on the Roosevelt agenda was recovery legislation -- programs aimed at turning the depression around, restoring the unemployed to jobs, getting the economy moving. Out of a variety of plans and proposals came the National Industrial Recovery Act -- and the NRA, its administrative agency, symbolized by a brassy Blue Eagle with a shattering thunderbolt in its sharp-taloned claw.

The NIRA authorized self-regulation of industry under codes of fair competition, proposed, often drafted by industry associations, and approved by the NRA. A code allowed an industry to combine forces to maintain prices, regulate production, take other measures to restore prosperity. The code was also required to include a guarantee of the right of employees to organized and to bargain collectively through unions of their own choosing -- famed Section 7(a). They set maximum hours of work, minimum rates of pay, and other working conditions. The program also authorized a \$3.3 billion authorization for public works. AFL President William Green hailed it as labor's "Magna Charta." John L. Lewis compared it to the Emancipation Proclamation.

The NRA, spurred by a freshening of hope, spurred a wave of organizing. Lewis launched an organizing drive that drove the open shop from a major part of the soft coal mines. Ladies garment workers, and clothing workers put massive organizing drives into action. Auto workers, rubber workers, steel workers -- workers in hundreds of industries clamored for organization. Massive strikes broke out -- in San Francisco,

Minneapolis, Toledo. Nearly half a million new members were recruited by the union movement in each of the next two years. And it was only the beginning.

The employers fought back against the tidal wave of unionism. They soon made it clear that Section 7(a) was essentially toothless, a paper tiger. In the flush of the times, though, the principles developed under the National Labor Board (as under its World War I predecessors) were incorporated in the Wagner Act. And a substantial measure of government sanction was added to the law's guarantees. It was promptly passed and signed into law in 1935.

This was the moment -- and the setting -- in which the union movement broke apart. A group of unions, under the leadership of John L. Lewis of the Mine Workers formed the Committee for Industrial Organization. The unions acted, then, after failing to move the AFL itself into an effective organizing campaign among industrial workers -- principally, autos, steel, rubber, as well as the newer manufacturing industries -- radio, electrical, machine. The craft unions, asserting their claim to craftsmen wherever they worked and ignoring the legions of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, suspended, then expelled the CIO unions. Soon after, it abandoned the Committee for the Congress -- and the competition was on in brutal earnest.

The auto strikes -- and particularly the General Motors sitdown -- were followed by Lewis' astonishing coup in negotiating an agreement with U.S. Steel. In a few short months, the two major bastions of anti-union open shop had been taken -- the core of American industry worked

under a union label. They were followed by the extension of unionism in major industries across the country -- not only in autos and steel but in rubber, communications, electrical and radio manufacturing, and many more. Union membership climbed from 2.9 million in 1933 to 4.1 million in 1936, 7.2 million in 1937, and 10 million by the end of the decade. They made up by then 28 per cent of the non-farm work force -- they had been 11.5 per cent in 1933. The upward climb was halted briefly in the Little Steel strikes in 1937 and by a brief recession in 1937-38, then resumed.

It was a time, too, of expansion in labor's political role. It was an active force -- especially Lewis and the CIO -- in FDR's massive sweep in 1936. Its ideas of legislation were received and often enacted by the Congress. Minimum wages, social security, unemployment insurance became living realities in the lives of the nation's workers.

Out of it came a basic decision -- a major turning point in the nation's economic affairs. It was a decision that government can play an affirmative role in determining, shaping, and maintaining the goals and the health of the economy -- that it can pursue policies and programs dedicated to maintaining jobs, improving living conditions, affecting the general welfare of the American people.

You'll want to know:

- Something about the size, the scope, the extent of the Great Depression.

- The issues that divided the AFL and the CIO.

- The significance of the General Motors strike and the U.S. Steel agreement.

- What happened to the union movement under the NRA and the Wagner Act and under the impulse of the mid-thirties.

- What was the fundamental political decision made in the thirties and how does it affect the union movement.

	<u>1933</u>	<u>1935</u>	<u>1937</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1941</u>
<b>Trade Union Members</b>					
millions	2.9	3.7	7.2	9.0	10.5
% of work force	11.5	13.4	22.8	23.9	28.2
<b>Work Stoppages</b>					
Number	1,695	2,014	4,240	2,613	4,288
Workers (000's)	1,170	1,120	1,860	1,170	2,360
Mandays idle (000's)	16,900	15,500	28,400	17,800	23,000
<b>Major Issues</b>					
Wages & Hours	926	760	1,410	699	1,535
Union Organization	533	945	2,728	1,411	2,138
<b>Average Hourly Earnings (\$)</b>	.442	.550	.624	.633	.729
<b>Average Weekly Hours</b>	38.1	36.6	38.6	37.7	40.6
<b>Average Weekly Earning (\$)</b>	16.73	20.13	24.05	23.86	29.58

## XII. From World War II to Merger

The end of World War II was marked by an eruption of strikes -- a wave of walkouts that began almost before the fighting ended and swept to a climax in the eighteen months that followed. 1946 saw 4,985 strikes (an unprecedented number), idling 14,600,000 workers (one in every seven), for a total of 116 million man-days. The record-breaking walkouts cost each striking worker, on the average, 25.2 days off the job and added up to 1.43 per cent of the estimated available working time. Some of the major battles in this industrial war:

Auto Workers v. General Motors. Under Walter Reuther's leadership, the auto workers asked for a 30 per cent pay raise -- an increase that could be paid, the union said, without boosting auto prices and the company books would prove it. GM replied that it would not open its books, that the union was seeking to invade rights reserved to management. Prices and profits, it said, were none of the union's business. A Truman-appointed fact-finding board recommended 19-1/2 cents an hour raise; GM offered only 13 cents. It was finally settled at 18-1/2 cents an hour after steel, oil, UE, coal settled at that figure.

In steel, the companies refused to budge until assured price increases. On the railroads, Truman called on Congress for drastic powers to use against a railroad strike. He wanted to seize and operate struck plants affecting the public safety and welfare, with authority to draft strikers into the U.S. Army. Even as he addressed Congress, the railroad unions ended their strike. In coal, Lewis signed with Secretary

of the Interior Krug for 18-1/2 cents an hour plus, significantly, 5 cents per ton of coal for a health and welfare fund. The miners walked out later in a dispute over vacation payments in the face of a court order. Lewis and the UMW were both fined for contempt of court. Unions called a one-day general strike in Rochester, New York. Oakland, California unions called a general strike when merchants used strikebreakers to haul merchandise to two struck stores.

The propaganda impact of the strike wave, coupled with a sweeping victory of Republicans in the 1946 elections, opened the way to a large-scale overhaul of labor relations law. Several even more drastic measures had been turned down -- the Case bill during the war, Truman's proposed anti-strike law, and others. But the Congress under GOP leadership finally enacted the Taft-Hartley Act.

T-H, for the first time since 1935, affected the balance between employer and organized workers. Convinced that, under the Wagner Act, favor had weighed too heavily on the unions' side, the Congress now sought to balance it. It created a series of unfair labor practices which were applied for the first time, to unions -- coercion, discrimination, payment for services not performed. Jurisdictional strikes were banned and secondary boycotts outlawed. The closed shop was prohibited; the union shop was allowed only after it had been authorized by a majority of the members of the particular bargaining unit. It allowed 30 per cent of the workers to call for a vote challenging their unions' representation and decertified the union where a majority voted against it. It created the 80-day cooling-off period in so-called "emergency" strikes. It put

restrictions on union and corporation political activities. It removed supervisory employees and certain other groups from the protection of the law. And it required union officers to sign declarations that they were not communists.

The major impact of the law struck against any form of cooperation -- sympathetic strikes, "hot cargo," secondary boycotts, etc. It provided decertification machinery for implementing divisive activities within the unions. It imposed new restrictions on workers attempting to exercise their organizational and bargaining rights. Some were reasonable but others were plainly aimed at weakening the unions.

When the question of fighting the Taft-Hartley Act came up in the 1947 AFL convention (in San Francisco), John L. Lewis led the fight for a boycott of the law; George Meany opposed him. Meany prevailed and Lewis walked out of the convention and the AFL. "Green," he scribbled on a piece of stationery, "We disaffiliate." And signed it bluntly, "Lewis."

Within a month of each other in 1952, William Green and Phillip Murray died. George Meany succeeded Green, Reuther followed Murray. The new leadership moved quickly toward merger. They set up a non-raid agreement. They worked out a means of effecting an early merger by putting off any questions of jurisdiction, the major barrier, to post-merger negotiation, arbitration, and eventual merger of the contesting unions themselves.

You'll want to know:

- The issues (and the context) of the postwar strike wave.
- The issues raised in enacting the Taft-Hartley Act.
- The issues raised by Meany and Lewis in debating AFL's policy under Taft-Hartley.
- The mechanism by which merger was achieved.

XIII. After Merger

Enactment of the Taft-Hartley Act forced union leadership to a reconsideration of political activity. Both the AFL (in Labor's League for Political Education) and the CIO (in its Political Action Committee) intensified their political activities. And in the years just ahead, the AFL would endorse a presidential candidate (Adlai Stevenson) and push its developing political concerns a step farther.

This would be reinforced in the latter half of the Fifties by the McClellan (Select Committee on Improper Activities in Labor-Management Field) hearings and enactment of the Landrum-Griffin Act. The McClellan hearings turned a sharp light on unionists misdeeds both real and imagined. The AFL in 1955 had invoked far-reaching codes of ethics on a voluntary basis in an effort to reach some aggravated cases of criminal conduct. It had ousted the International Longshoremen's Association in an effort to get rid of its corrupt leadership but was unable to establish a replacement union. But its efforts did not save it from the McClellan committee guns. The Committee (with Robert F. Kennedy as Chief Counsel) probed vice in Teamster leadership (Dave Beck, Brewster, others), focused on corrupt leaders in the Bakers, Operating Engineers.

Landrum-Griffin, largely as a result, imposed heavier requirements of financial reporting, prohibited conflict of interest of union officers, limited trusteeships over individual unions, regulated elections, enacted the so-called "bill of rights" for union members, and it opened an outside court of appeals for members claiming their rights were being denied or

union funds misused.

For the most part, unions met Landrum-Griffin with little or no difficulty -- in many cases, with less difficulty than even they had anticipated.

Meantime, new issues were developing at the bargaining table. The coal miners had established a health and welfare fund in their 1946 contract. And in 1948 the miners walked out in an effort to break a deadlock in the trustees of their pension fund. The strike was held to be in contempt of court (and the union and Lewis were fined again) but on the central issue of the walkout -- the refusal of the employer trustee to act on pensions -- the court upheld the miners. The steel companies challenged the right of the union to bargain for pensions. When that right was upheld, both pension and health care moved into the union contract. They were the forerunner of a wide variety of welfare questions that were brought within the scope of the collective agreement.

You'll want to know:

- The nature and extent of labor's political involvement, then and as it has developed since.

- The response of unions to Landrum-Griffin -- to its requirements of financial responsibility, electoral fairness, democratic conduct.

- The development of fringe benefits as a major aspect of collective bargaining.

## Labor Today

Labor faces serious challenges if it is to maintain or extend its influence in the American society. It confronts -- or, surely, soon will face -- these questions:

- A response to discrimination on grounds of race, national origin, and sex. Are unfair employment practices enough? What other steps can labor alone, or in conjunction with other sectors of society, take?
- What is the direction of labor's political concerns? and activities?
- How can unions meet the challenge of organization among those sectors of the work force where organization is weakest -- banks, insurance companies, public employees, etc.?
- How adequate is labor's economic program to cope with problems of inflation and recession?
- What is the direction of the union movement in its posture toward society -- and its place in society? Is it a missionary force in the economy? Or are its concerns primarily tactical and less strategic?
- What part of the union movement -- leadership, tactics, structure, policies, programs -- is adequate, what part inadequate to the problems?