

LIFE ADJUSTMENT BOOKLET

by
DALE YODER

UNION LEADERS

WASHINGTON. — Calls for the power to increase wages and to meet the needs of a country and the requirements will challenge U. S. management, the new Glass-Steagall bill.

The bill, which is the work of the Senate Finance Committee, will give the Federal Reserve Board the power to increase wages and to meet the needs of a country and the requirements will challenge U. S. management, the new Glass-Steagall bill.

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WORKERS THE
NEW YORK CITY—A new wage
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85,000 ...
The union announced that ...
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basis would receive an incre
... of 6 1/2 per
Their present wages ...
per hour for a ...
... who ...

of Labor Maurice J. Lubin told the speeded-up pace of work by workers in the coming year.

"The problems involved in meeting the increased power needs of the electric power industry are substantial as they are more complex than those which would be encountered were they limited to enter-

groomed, the Bureau of the reported last week.

The figure was based on final reports from the 1948 census of personal services establishments and shops, beauty shops and stores. A total of \$1,495,119,000 was spent in these establishments.

FREE PRESS FREEDOM

Over 800 officers of 125 Chicago area newspapers and news agencies are expected to be in the city last Sunday for the Hotel Chicago. The hotel is the headquarters of the National Press Conference. The hotel is the headquarters of the National Press Conference. The hotel is the headquarters of the National Press Conference.

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WASHINGTON—U. S. Department of labor hints asked ... ss ... ore the minimum ... system by broadening it to cover more workers, by setting minimum ... nationwide ... and by changes to protect workers who move from one state to another. Improvement of state to state ... dealing with sections of the law dealing with ... and casual catin ... Labor ... duration of 26 weeks or more ... but 7 states provide a maximum of 20 weeks or more. Only ... New York, provides 26 weeks ... all sur ...

House Group C
Union Shop

MAY 7 1951

What do you know about unions?

Unions are going to play an important part in your life, whether you become a union member, an employer, a professional person, or a housewife.

You probably hear about unions all the time—over the radio, through the newspapers, and from people you know. You hear good things and bad things—that unions are wrecking our country, and that they are the only solution to the problems of the working man.

Many of the things you hear are opinion, not fact. Because unions will affect you, it's necessary to know the facts—why unions grew, what their aims are, the methods they use to achieve those aims, how they are organized, and how the American public feels about them. This booklet will help give you those facts.

You and unions

by

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SCIENCE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.

57 W. Grand Ave., Chicago 10, Illinois

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Unions and your life

WHAT HAVE unions got to do with me?

If you're still in school, you may not feel that they have much of anything to do with you. Your homework, the basketball team, the school orchestra, your after-school job, and your social life leave you little time to think about labor unions.

But some day, maybe soon, the chemistry and history and English assignments will be over, the school band will have to do without your inspired slide tromboning, the senior prom will be just a memory. Chances are that sooner or later you'll join the over 60 million Americans who work for a living.

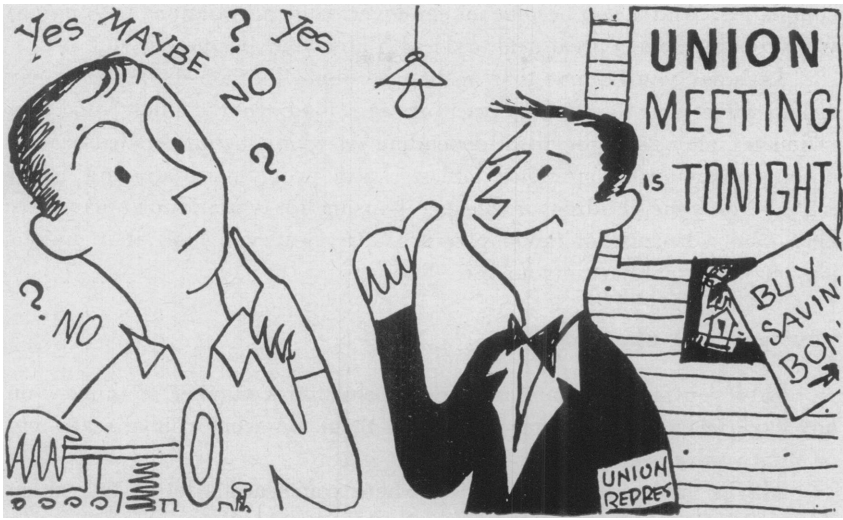
You may already have left school and joined the labor force. In any case, whether you are or will become a professional man, a housewife, a factory employee, a clerk, or a salesman, unions are going to be a part of your life. And an important part.

On the job

Suppose that you've landed your first real job—in a busy office, a huge factory, or a bustling department store. At first, you'll probably be too busy and too excited to notice much besides the new sights and sounds. But like millions of other employees, you'll soon start thinking seriously about your job: *If I work hard, will I be promoted? Am I getting paid enough? How soon can I get a raise in pay?* You'll be concerned with some of the other conditions surrounding your job: *Do I have enough time for lunch? Do I work too many hours each day?*

How unions will affect you

On the job, your fellow employee—the man at the next desk, the woman operating the machine to your right, the girl selling blouses at the



What will your reactions be if some day you are asked to join a labor union?

same counter—is concerned with the same problems that interest you. If you are working in a clerical, sales, manufacturing, or service job, the men and women in your industry may have already formed “unions.” In that case, the union shop steward or representative will probably approach you about joining. For unions feel that “in numbers there is strength.” How will you react when you are invited to your first union meeting? Will you give an immediate *yes* or *no*? Will you go, but wait to make your decision about joining? Sooner or later you will have to decide. In fact, in some cases you may be *required* to join a union in order to keep your job.

“But wait a minute,” you say. “Suppose I go into a non-union industry. I won’t have to decide about joining a union then!”

You can’t be sure. Unions have doubled in membership just in the last fifteen years. No one can be sure that a non-union industry will always *remain* non-union. So you may face the decision after all.

Unions will affect you and your job even if you don’t become a member. Your own working conditions may be changed for better—or worse—by the “bargaining” going on in unionized industries. A strike in another industry may tie up materials essential to your job and you may be laid off until the strike is over. Or unions may help put through a minimum-wage law that boosts pay in all industries, including yours.

Suppose some day you’re a supervisor. Then you’ll represent an employer. You won’t be eligible to join a union, but you’ll be dealing with union representatives, negotiating labor contracts and settling employee

complaints. And if you become an employer, your negotiations with unions will probably have a great deal to do with how your business is run.

Let's say you become that unsung heroine—the housewife. How can unions affect you then? The price of your food, your clothes, your television set, may go up or down depending on what's being decided around union-management conference tables. Laws providing more and better schools for your children or cheaper housing for your family may have been passed because of union pressure. Any way you look at it, unions play an important part in your life.

How you feel about unions

How you feel about unions now depends on a number of things—on any experience you may have had with them, on what you've read, and on what you've heard.

Maybe you've worked on a job where you heard a lot of talk about the "union." You may even have joined and paid dues, attended union meetings and received union publications. In that case you probably learned a lot about them.

Even if you have never had any direct contact with unions, they have probably been part of the dinner conversation at your house many times. *More than fifteen million people belong to unions.* So the chances are you've heard a good deal of discussion about these organizations from your family and their friends. You've probably heard many radio commentators hold forth on union activities and have read countless magazine and newspaper articles on the subject.

What did you read and hear? That unions are un-American, that they keep earnest job-seekers from getting work, that union leaders are dictators and racketeers? Or that unions really represent the little fellow, that they are democratic, that all they want is a fair day's wage for a fair day's work? That unions are good? That unions are bad?

Out of all this confusion of opinion—praise and blame—it's hard to know what to think. When it comes to deciding "for" or "against" unions, your decision will reflect feelings that have been built up over a period of years. You will be "for" or "against," depending on the people you have known, the kind of job you have, and the newspapers you and your family read.

But on an important matter like unions—a matter that may have a great effect on your life—you'll want to take *more* than opinions or feelings into consideration. When you ask yourself: "How should I act about unions?" you'll want to answer this question with *facts*, not just *feelings*. You'll want *factual answers* to a hundred different questions.



Get facts—not just opinions—before making up *your* mind about unions.

The big questions

Here are some of the most important questions you'll want answered:

1. *How did unions first start?* Why were they started?
2. *What do unions aim for?* What are they out to get? After all, what unions want may or may not be what *I* want.
3. *How do unions go about getting what they want?* Even if I approve of union aims, the question still remains: Will I approve of their methods?
4. *How democratic are unions?* Suppose there's something I don't like about union aims or methods. Will I, as a citizen or a union member, be able to influence union policy in any way? Or do the labor leaders dictate what unions will and will not do?
5. *What do my fellow citizens, the American people, think of unions?* Suppose I like the way unions do things, will I be a good citizen if I support them? Or if I join a union?

This booklet presents some of the facts you'll need for answering these questions. But remember: Unions differ just as people differ. Some are stronger than others. Some are more concerned with the welfare of their members than others. The facts about your particular union, if you join one, will be special facts. You must discover them for yourself.

The following chapters will give you a *general* picture of unions and the part they play in American life.

II

Unions — how and why they grew

HOW DID unions first start? *Why* were they started?

To understand what unions are like today, we have to go back to their early beginnings. Unions are not ancient institutions with roots that run far back into the past. They are fairly new and still something of an experiment. Unions, like the modern industrial system—with land and sea and air transportation, giant factories and large work-teams of “free” employees—are novelties in the long history of mankind. Like the factories and offices and production lines that make them important, unions are a modern, “our times” creation.

Today we accept them as part of our modern world, just as we do jet planes, the atom bomb, and huge skyscrapers. But think back to the past, to the days of medieval farms, turreted castles, and slow-moving ox carts. Unions were unheard of in that long-ago era.

What happened between then and now to explain their growth? By looking back at the slow rise of unions, you’ll see that they grew up to meet *special modern needs*. Understanding these needs will help you understand more about unions.

Primitive times—unions not needed

Let’s hop into our time machine and shoot back ten thousand years into the past. If you were born in that period you’d be a valuable member of a large family or clan, with your job in life set from the day you were born. If you were a woman you’d perform the homemaking tasks—raising the children and gathering food and fuel. If you were a man, you’d hunt and fish, and fight when necessary. There would be no employers or employees. All workers would have one aim—to preserve their small society.

Later, in the *pastoral* stage, your clan might have taken on the added responsibility of maintaining herds of cattle and sheep. Still later, in the



Thousands of years ago, in primitive times, every man was his own boss.

beginning of the *agricultural* stage, they would have begun primitive cultivation of crops. But still there wouldn't be any division, as we now think of it, between employer and employee.

Serfs and landowners—unions not possible

Later in the agricultural stage groups of men were employed—for the first time—as teams, in both the cultivation of crops and in war. These teams worked for a ruler or landowner who corresponded to today's employer. But there was a difference. Team members were slaves or serfs. They received only their “keep” or the right to till a patch of ground and live in a cottage on it. In return they owed their allegiance and service to the landowner. They were in no position to form unions, to “bargain” with the lord of the manor for higher pay. They were his subjects.

Artisans and guilds—the personal touch

However, during this agricultural stage, in twelfth-century Britain and medieval Europe, a new class arose. These were the free *artisans* or *craftsmen*—specialists in weaving, shoemaking, metal-working, and other crafts. Unlike the serfs, these men worked for wages. But the wages were set by government and church authorities. There wasn't much opportunity to “bargain” for higher pay.

At first artisans worked individually, but they soon discovered the advantages of working in small teams. An ambitious artisan would hire

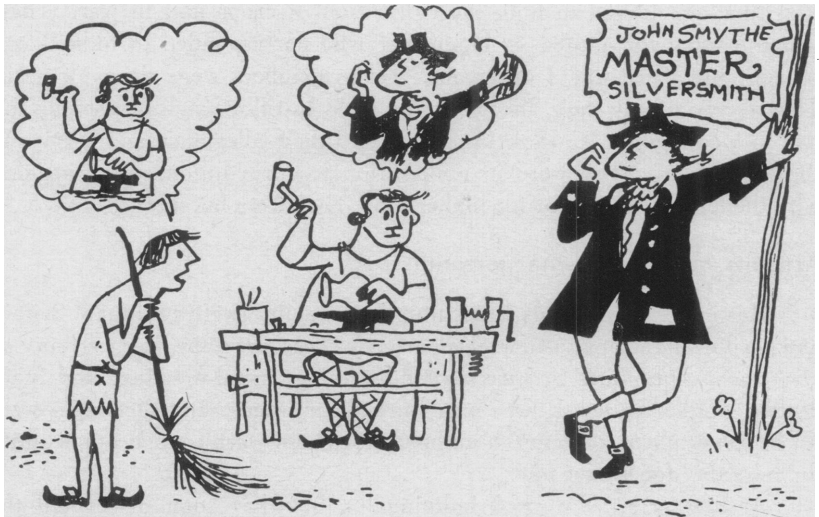
other people to work for him. He would also bring into his shop younger trainees or *apprentices*, to learn the craft over a period of years. This new work arrangement was called the *domestic* or *handicraft system*.

As the system developed, associations or *guilds* were formed, which included artisans, their paid helpers, and their apprentices. The guilds set prices and quality standards for their products, and made sure that apprentices received the proper training. They provided many benefits—similar to present-day life and health insurance—for their members. The guild was a kind of *fraternity* that protected both customers and members. *Merchant guilds*, similar to the craft guilds, were organizations of the small-town shopkeepers and their helpers.

Master artisans were the “top men” of the fraternities; they were the “employers” who knew the business. They hired skilled labor and trained the apprentices. But the employer-employee relationships within the guilds were very different from those in our large modern mines, factories, railroads, and other “big business” today.

To understand this difference, just imagine yourself an apprentice in those days. Let’s say that for years you had shown your artistic talent by scribbling designs on everything within reach. In the interests of your career (and to protect his property from further scribbling) your father “apprentices” you to a silversmith, a master artisan. You probably go to live in the master’s household, and perhaps your father pays him a small sum for your training and keep.

A new life begins for you. Gradually, by doing the most menial jobs



Apprentice to journeyman to master artisan was the usual rule in the guilds.

in the workshop, you learn the trade. You look up to the *journeymen* or paid helpers, who were once apprentices like you. Now, after several years of training, they have learned the craft and are almost as skilled as the master himself. The journeymen are paid for their work by the day, and will become masters themselves when they have saved enough money to open their own shops. You know that some day you will become a journeyman too. You will be independent, moving from town to town, working in the shops of different master silversmiths, and saving your wages so that you can become a master artisan.

Though your master may be very strict, you feel he has your interests at heart, and your relationship is a close one. For he is initiating you into a fraternity. He is helping you to become a master artisan just like himself. Even after you become a journeyman and leave his shop, you probably will return often to visit your former tutor. You may even marry his daughter and become a member of the family!

There were no "employee" unions in these early guilds. For why should apprentices and journeymen join together to ask for higher wages or shorter hours? They were going through a long initiation period, after which they would become full-fledged members of the fraternity. Every apprentice and journeyman looked forward to the time when *he* would be a master and an employer.

Discoveries, inventions, and a changed world

The guild system continued in this fashion for several hundred years. But then things began happening that were to upset the close-knit ties between apprentices, journeymen, and masters.

With new scientific discoveries and new inventions came the age of exploration by land and sea. America was discovered and the route to the East Indies was opened. People all over Europe felt new interest in a wider variety of products. As inland transportation improved, the master artisan gained customers in far-off towns. His goods were carried to distant places by traders who circulated among the villages, buying and selling. To fill all his new orders the master artisan needed more raw materials and more helpers. So the small workshops became larger and larger, less like a family household and more like the small factory of today.

At the same time new tools were being invented that were driven by water power and later by steam power. This meant that more goods could be produced more cheaply and more quickly than ever before. One large shop could now take the place of many small ones.

The new equipment was very expensive. Masters who couldn't afford it were at a great disadvantage. And even the more fortunate ones faced

new financial problems. An artisan was paid when a trader came to buy his goods. But there was often a long period of time between traders' visits. During this time the master found it hard to pay wages and buy raw materials. So traders began to supply the artisans with raw materials and "make deals" with them for the finished products. The master was now being paid for producing his goods, and he was under obligation to the trader. He was no longer his own boss.

Journeyman vs. masters

These changing conditions began to make life difficult for the journeyman. How could he save enough to set up a shop of his own with these expensive new machines? The masters tried to keep costs and wage rates as low as possible and were doing everything they could to prevent the opening of new shops and more competition. For the first time masters and journeymen found themselves at cross purposes. They became more like rivals than fraternity brothers. With larger shops, the close "personal touch" between master and helper was disappearing. Now the journeyman was likely to remain a wage earner for many years, probably for the rest of his life. He could no longer think of himself as a future master. The masters had become "employers" and the journeymen, "employees."

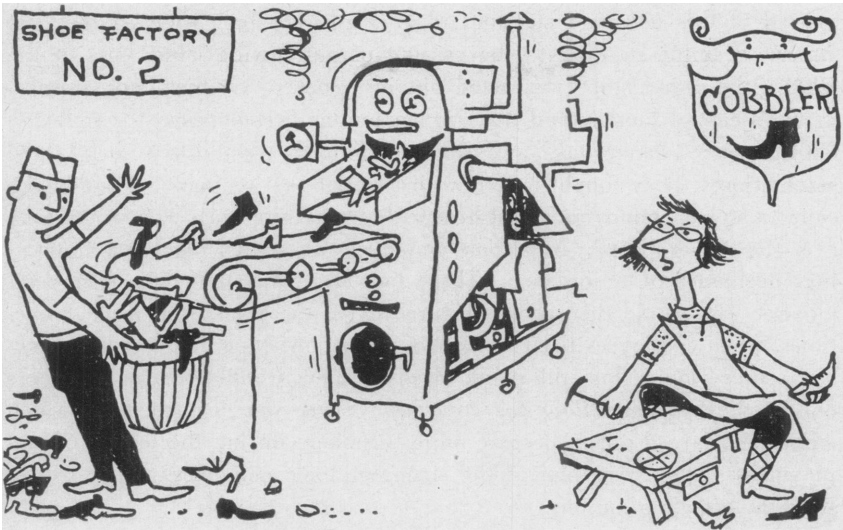
As a result, organizations that protected the interests of the journeymen began to spring up. These were the *journeymen* or *yeomanry* guilds, which represented only "employees"—the master craftsmen were not included. These new fraternities tried to get a better deal for their members from the masters and political officials. They were the real ancestors of modern unions.

The Industrial Revolution—factories and unions

Water Power, Steam Power, and Industry—these three strangers were introduced to each other in the 1700's. The important inventions of that period marked the high point of the Industrial Revolution, which had its beginning when our agricultural society changed to an industrial society. Factories multiplied. Larger and larger plants were made possible as power-driven machinery was perfected.

Soon craftsmen—journeymen and former masters—were little more valuable than unskilled laborers. It didn't take much know-how to pull a lever, push a button, or step on a foot-pedal. Even women and children could do it. And they did. Whole families moved to be near a factory. Little factory towns were overrun with these newcomers, and living conditions were often crowded and unhealthy.

Fewer skilled employees meant lower wage rates. Even when father,



Large factories and power-driven machinery put the artisan out of business.

mother, and children were working, families had a difficult struggle. Many employees, like the journeymen, could not afford to own expensive factory machines. Their working tools were owned by someone else—the employer. They had to accept the wages he offered or not work at all. And each employer had to meet competition from other large factories. He had to cut costs, including wages. And the earlier close relationship between master and apprentices no longer existed. The employer now hired great numbers of employees, most of whom he couldn't possibly know as individuals. The “personal touch” had disappeared. The wage earners were not being groomed to become full-fledged members of a fraternity. Most of them would never become employers. And their immediate interests seemed directly opposed to those of their employers.

“But this seems like an impossible situation,” you say. “How did people ever get out of it?”

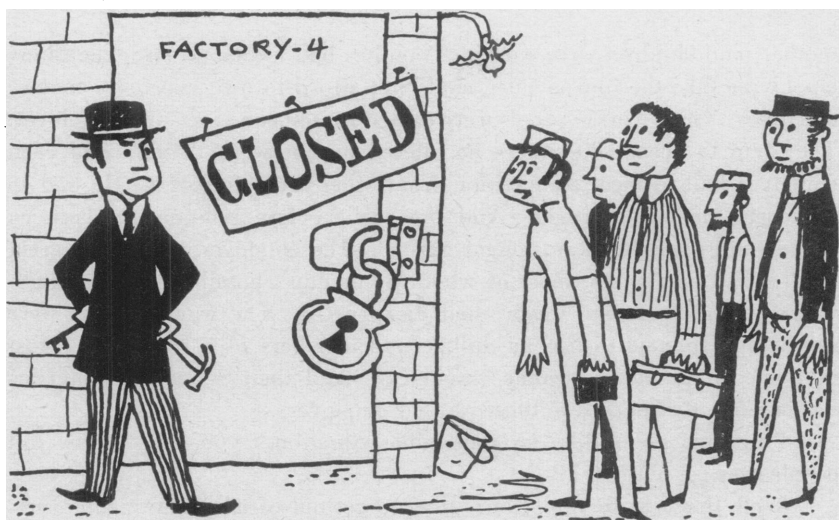
Well, that was the question: How to get out of it! Many people suggested that the government pass new laws to set higher wage rates or to prevent child-labor. Others, the early labor leaders, urged employees to unite, to follow in the footsteps of the yeomanry guilds. And soon employees *did* begin to “organize.”

The long struggle

Today most of us take for granted the *right* of employees to bargain as a group. But several hundred years ago only a handful of people ap-

proved of this new and startling idea. From the formation of the first American union in 1792 to the passing of nationwide labor laws in the 1900's, the union story was acted out in scenes of conflict and violence.

It's easy to understand that—when unions first appeared—employers felt they were “dangerous,” and did everything they could to “crack” these associations. They fought unions with a variety of weapons. If employees called a strike, employers might hire *scabs*, non-union men who would take over the strikers' jobs. And some employers circulated *blacklists* containing the names of union men. These lists were distributed to other employers, who would then refuse to hire any of the blacklisted men. Sometimes, when employees tried to form a union, owners would arrange *lock-outs*—they would close the plant. Many owners would hire wage earners only if they signed *yellow dog* contracts. These were contracts by which employees agreed not to become union members during the period of employment. They were one of the strongest tools employers could use to stunt the growth of unions.



Employers sometimes used lockouts to prevent workers from forming unions.

When unions first appeared, the courts seemed to be on the side of the employer. They ruled that any association of employees to raise wages created a “conspiracy.” They issued *injunctions*, court orders forbidding many union activities. Almost everywhere, picketing, striking, and parading were forbidden. Even holding meetings was prohibited. Suppose an employee decided to ignore the injunction, to join in a strike or parade

in a picket line. He would be in "contempt of court," and might easily find himself in jail the next day.

Under these conditions, strikes were often violent. Employers would call on courts and police for help. The militia might be sent in. Some employers kept their own police force. Heads were cracked. Unionists met billy clubs with lead pipes.

The ballot brings labor laws

After 1900, public opinion began to change. People from all walks of life started siding with unionists. Wage earners, they felt, had a *right* to ask for an eight-hour day; they had a *right* to join together in bargaining for higher wages. These points of view gradually gained acceptance in our laws. Unions supported candidates who were for labor and tried to defeat those who were not. As union membership grew, legislators *had* to take labor into account. For labor meant *votes*.

Beginning in 1914, a series of important laws was passed. These laws got rid of earlier restrictions on unions. The injunction, the yellow dog contract, blacklisting—these went the way of all extremes. In 1935, the *National Labor Relations Act* or *Wagner Act*, as it was called, was passed, which protected labor's right to bargain through unions.

Numbers count!

"In union there is strength!" For wage earners, the proof of *this* pudding was in the eating. The new laws *had* been passed. A lot of men and women, working and acting as groups, had accomplished something they hadn't been able to accomplish as individuals.

As more members join a union its influence grows. For one thing, the larger the union, the better its position to bargain with employers. Also, it influences more votes, and votes can elect or defeat legislators. So it's not surprising that unions have grown with amazing speed. Today *over 15 million Americans* belong to unions. Fifteen years ago, the number was less than half as large.

Wait a minute. Fifteen million sounds like a lot of people. But there are *over 150 million Americans*! That means union members are only about 10 per cent of the population! Isn't that just a drop in the bucket?

Not when you realize that the bucket is smaller than you think! Actually, only about 45 million Americans are *eligible* to join unions. The rest of the population is not eligible. There are 85 million people—housewives and children, old people and sick people, college and high school students—*none of whom have, or are looking for, regular jobs*.

Let's get back to higher mathematics again. Eighty-five million from 150 million leaves 65 million. The 65 million are our *labor force*, the people who are out working or looking for work. But why are only 45 million eligible to join unions? Have we lost 20 million people in the shuffle?

No. They're still around. They're your doctor, your alderman, your lawyer, the corner grocer, the farmer who brings you fresh eggs from the country every week, and all the people who are in business for themselves. Conditions that led wage earners to form unions do not directly affect these people who own or rent the tools of their trade. And of course employers (and representatives of employers, the managers) do not belong to employee unions. They're on the other side of the conference table.

So we have about 45 million people eligible to join unions. They're the people who work for wages and salaries—the plumber, the department store clerk, the millhand, the truck driver—all the wage earners in clerical, sales, manufacturing, and service occupations. Now remember the more than 15 million union members? *Well, one out of every three "eligibles" belongs to a union!* They're not a drop in the bucket. They're a *third* of it!

Many different unions

Even if you join a union, you're not going to have a nodding acquaintance with 15 million people! The unionized labor force is not crowded into one union organization. You know from reading the papers that there are many different unions. In fact, the 15 million American union members belong to some 200 *national unions*. (These nationals are called *international unions* if they have members in Canada, Mexico, and the Central American nations as well as in the United States.) The national and international unions are made up of member unions (*locals*) to which employees in one locality or in one plant belong.

In other words, the 15 million union members belong to workable units which can bargain in their own industries. Fifteen million people can't *all* talk and act together. But for certain purposes they do join together in larger groups. We'll discuss this later in Chapter 5.

III

Union aims

WHAT DO unions want? Are they working for the things that will benefit *you*—you as a wage earner, homemaker, or businessman?

Our trip back into history showed that unions first started to help employees get *as a group* what they could not get *individually*—higher wages and better working conditions.

Unions have changed considerably since those early days. And so has the world we live in. Life, and unions, have become more and more complex. But the one major aim of union members has always been the same, from the days of the yeomanry guilds to today—to *bargain as a group with employers*.

Collective bargaining—the steppingstone

The right to ask for things as a group is a steppingstone from which union members can get better wages and shorter hours and other benefits. Today we call this steppingstone *collective bargaining*. And unions fight as hard to protect it as early unions fought to win it.

"We" instead of "I"

What were things like in the days before unions? Working conditions in the early factories were poor. But suppose George Smith, a machinist in a tool factory, asked his employer for more pay. If the answer was *no*, there was nothing much George could do about it. After all, he was only one person. He frequently had to take the wages offered or look for another job.

But in a modern unionized factory, employees have *banded together* to ask for higher wages. They have talked it over and asked Harry Jones,

their union representative, to speak to the employer for them. In this case, Harry is a union member, chosen by his fellow employees to represent them. (Sometimes the union representative is a specialist sent from the national union with which the local is associated.) His words mean something because he is speaking for all the union members, not just for himself.

Suppose Harry goes to the employer and tells him the men want a raise of 20 cents an hour. The employer may say: "Twenty cents an hour is too much. How about 10 cents an hour?" Harry may then say: "We'll consider your offer, if you also agree to give us two weeks'

vacation with pay." Harry, as the employee representative, and the employer are bargaining, just as traders bargain over the price of their products. But since Harry speaks for a whole group, a *collection* of men, this is called *collective bargaining*. The *group* is bargaining.

If the employer refuses any wage boost, the threat to quit will now carry real weight. For unless some sort of raise is agreed upon, not one but *all* the men may refuse to work. There's a world of difference between "I'll quit if I don't get a raise," and "We'll quit if we don't get a raise." Group action is the punch behind group bargaining.

Working through representatives

Many questions besides wages are the subject of group bargaining sessions or negotiations. If the heating, lighting, or safety devices in a plant are unsatisfactory, union agents will take them up with the employer or his representatives. If the employer wants to make any changes covered by the agreement, he arranges it with the union representative, not with any one employee. Hours of work, overtime pay, vacations, pensions, transfers—all these conditions and many more are negotiated by union and employer agents.

Employers too may band together for collective bargaining. In the United States these associations are well established in many industries and localities. For example, "association bargaining" is a regular practice



Union members choose a representative to speak to the employer.

in coal mining, elevator manufacturing, and several smaller industries. Altogether more than four million employees work under conditions bargained for through associations of employers.

Collective agreement—showcase for union aims

By now you can picture pretty well a union-management bargaining session. You can hear the proposals and counter-proposals, the suggestions and the objections. You can even hear the papers rustling on the conference table. But what's going to come out of it all? The answer: *a collective agreement* or "union contract." When management and labor, through their representatives, come to an agreement about working conditions, the terms are written down in great detail. This document, signed by both parties, is the collective agreement.

This labor contract is a showcase that displays union aims. Here, in black and white, are the points that the union wanted to take up with the employer and that the employer wanted to take up with the union. Each section or clause of a labor contract covers a subject that someone thought important enough to negotiate. Let's look at some of these clauses.

Union security

As you would guess, the steppingstone we discussed earlier—the right to bargain collectively—is protected in labor contracts. And the union is assured that the employees will not be represented by any other union. Many contracts state that all factory or other employees must be or must become union members. This arrangement, called the *union shop*, means more power for the union. For when a union representative bargains he will be bargaining for every single employee in the unit.

Some contracts also call for *check-off* of dues. This means the employer deducts union dues from the paychecks of union members and pays these dues to the union. A far cry from the early days! Here the employer is not only recognizing the wage earner's union, he is helping it.

The employer's business—management security

Many people feel it doesn't pay to be an employer! "You invest your money and time in a business," they say, "and then your employees can tell you how to run it." But do unions really run the business? Not according to many labor contracts. There's usually a large area all roped off and marked: Private! Employers Only! In this area are all the things management alone can do. Should the firm expand or contract? Should it buy raw materials from a certain source? Should it operate two shifts

instead of one? The contract may reserve these and many other decisions for the employer. And a contract often goes further, leaving to management all decisions not covered by the agreement.

Hitting home—wages and hours

Higher wages and shorter hours. These were the aims of early unions, and they are still an important part of every collective agreement. A wage-and-hour clause may tell each union member exactly how much pay he'll bring home every week for doing his particular job or type of job. And it may describe how his pay will be changed if he shifts jobs. It may tell him that this year he and his fellow union members will all get a raise because the cost of living has gone up. It may tell him how long his work day will be and what he'll be paid for overtime.

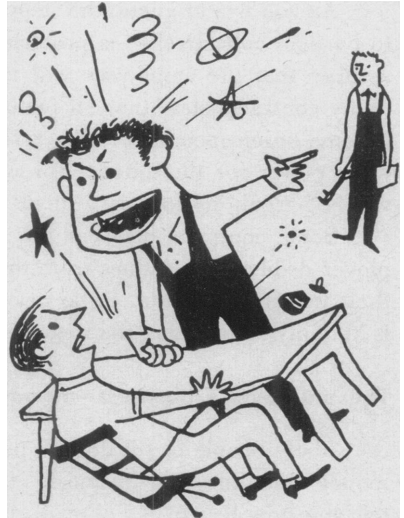
Fringe items

Many other conditions of work affect wages and hours. Can the wage earner have vacations with pay? Will he get sick leave? How much will he be paid for days when work runs out before quitting time? These questions and many others are called *fringe items* and they rate separate clauses in the contract.

Curing gripes—the grievance clause

Mike, a drill-press operator, is mad. He's been in his section longer than anyone else, and then someone from another department gets promoted, right over his head. What can he do about it? He might take a sock at the fellow who was promoted. Or he might rush into the super's office, give him a piece of his mind, and then quit. He might do a lot of things. But they wouldn't accomplish very much.

The grievance clause in a labor contract gives Mike a way to cure his gripes. It sets up machinery for taking his problem to the right people. A solution can then be reached quickly and fairly. In this case, Mike will probably tell the shop steward (his union representative) what happened. The steward then may confer



A grievance clause sets up methods for curing union members' gripes.

with the superintendent or some other management representative. Is management playing favorites? Should Mike really get the job? The answer will come after both sides have discussed the matter and come to an agreement. Problems about overtime work, wages, and many other points are solved in this way.

The employer may send *his* gripes through the same channels. If he feels union members are not living up to their agreements, he can do something about it by using the machinery set up in the grievance clause.

Discipline and discharge—fair treatment for all

Did you ever hear the song about the workman Jim Goff, who got caught in an explosion that went off ahead of schedule?

“When the next pay-day came ’round

Jim Goff a dollar short was found.

When he asked what for, came this reply:

‘You’re docked for the time you wuz in the sky.’ ”

Well, things wouldn’t have happened quite that way if Jim had been working under the terms of a modern labor contract. *Docking*—withholding pay for certain reasons—is a disciplinary action, and most discipline clauses would state that Jim had to be warned before such action was taken. Heavy docking, just like being demoted or fired, is serious disciplinary action. Many labor contracts assure each employee a chance to tell his side of the story before such penalties are imposed. So discipline and discharge clauses are important. They protect the employee from being fired unfairly. They protect him from hasty or unreasonable action on the part of the employer.

The longer the better—seniority

Will you get promoted? Will you be laid off when there’s not enough work at the plant for everyone? How do your wages compare with what other employees are paid? The answers may depend on how long you have been working for the company—your *seniority*. The longer you work for the company the more seniority you have. And most labor contracts in recent years have made this one basis for promotions, layoffs, and transfers. This means a more secure job for the employee who “sticks it out.” Seniority clauses describe how length of service is figured and how it applies to wage increases, layoffs, and so on.

Coverage and duration

Finally, every contract has *coverage* and *duration* clauses that make clear just what employees are bound by the contract and for how long. A

labor contract usually is effective for one year. There are many two-year contracts, however, and some longer-term agreements. Before the time period is over, union and management meet to work out a new contract.

The clauses we have just discussed are the most important ones, and are included in almost all labor contracts. There are many other clauses that deal with special working conditions. There may be a clause providing for wages to be raised or lowered according to the general cost of living. (The General Motors-United Automobile Workers contract of 1949 includes a clause like this.) Or there may be clauses banning strikes during the term of the contract, or providing for apprentice-training.

Labor contracts generally mean smoother sailing. Of course, they can be a source of trouble, too. We'll discuss that later. However, in the United States alone, unions and management now have about 100,000 labor contracts. They negotiate—on the average—more than 1,000 of these agreements per week.

Union aims—political

Many union goals are written into labor contracts. But there are other important ones that are recorded in a different way. They appear in laws that unions have supported. They can be seen in newspaper and magazine articles describing union activities in attacking certain laws or candidates. They are even recorded in stone and plaster—in union-supported, low-cost housing.

Of course, not all unions are politically active. But when labor does enter politics, it's usually to support or defeat laws connected with the basic concerns of its members—wages, hours, and union strength or recognition.

For example, many unions support laws that prevent employers from hiring children. Why? It's true that such laws improve the education and living conditions of members and their families. But there is another reason too. Children in industry would increase the labor supply. They would be cheap labor. What's more, it's possible that there wouldn't be *enough* jobs. For the same reason many unions have worked for laws that restrict immigration. All these laws mean greater job security and higher wage rates.

Unions also back laws that are directly connected with pay, such as minimum-wage laws, which require an employer to pay a certain amount per hour. Unions want laws that assure employees higher pay for overtime work, and income-tax laws that take less from the small wage earner and more from those who have large incomes. In addition, they want laws that make for shorter hours and better working conditions in general.

Naturally, unions support laws that protect their steppingstone—the right to bargain collectively. For instance, they supported the Wagner Act of 1935 which required employers to bargain with unions. And most unions are against the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which outlaws many of the methods unions have used to gain their goals. It outlaws, for example, the *closed shop*, where the employer can hire only union members. Many unions feel this Act threatens their bargaining strength.

The democratic way

The campaign against the Taft-Hartley Act is typical of the way American unions work for their political goals—through the regular channels of democratic government.

“But wait a minute,” you say. “How about all the things you hear—that labor is ‘radical’ and ‘communistic,’ that their leaders are out to ruin our American system of free enterprise?”

It’s true that a few American unions in the past have been “revolutionary,” have wanted to overthrow the nation’s political and economic system for some new order. But they have seldom lasted for very long. Revolution-minded unions have always been only a small minority in the United States. Most American unions are against “radical” aims. And American unionists have shown that they don’t want their unions used to further those aims. In 1949 and 1950, several national unions expelled

Communists from their ranks. Meanwhile, both the AFL and the CIO have tried to get rid of “communist” influence. In 1950, the CIO expelled several national unions that were regarded as “communist-dominated.”



Labor avoids a house divided by not backing any one political party.

Labor avoids a house divided

Not only are most American unions against a one-party government, they don’t seem to want even a *labor party*. They prefer to campaign for candidates who are friends of labor — regardless of the party to which they belong. They also campaign for laws that help labor—no matter what party sponsors them. Unions don’t want to be labeled Re-

publican, Democrat, or anything else. They know that political issues can divide their membership.

Social aims—the human touch

By now you're probably wondering, "Isn't there anything else in life besides wages, hours, and collective bargaining?" Of course there is, and unions know it. They have worked through the years to make life easier and happier for the wage earner and his family. They have fought for free schools, fairer taxes, more democratic government. Some unions have built apartment houses and medical centers for their members.

In many cases the union headquarters itself has become a social center. Members can attend parties and athletic events there, and groups are formed to present plays and musical programs. In smaller localities, union *auxiliaries* (made up of the wives of union members) arrange afternoon card parties and other recreation. In these social programs the individual member can develop his interests and his abilities in many ways. He can serve on any number of committees that discuss problems important to him and to his family—politics, schools, health, housing, and so on. Sometimes groups of unions publish local labor newspapers that report social, political, and other activities of unions and their members.

Unions also provide opportunities for members to get personal recognition and valuable training on various committees and as officers. Many wage earners have made a career of union membership, rising to positions as top union officials.

Unions are not all the same

Some unions take part in political activities more than others, some are more liberal than others. Some want to operate just as local units, while others want nationwide or industry-wide bargaining. So general statements like "unions are radical" or "unions are socialistic" are opinion, not fact. What may be true of only a few unions is not true of *all* unions.

But judging from the union aims we've discussed, we can say this: Unions want to better the lot of their members. They aim for higher wages, better working conditions, and all the other goals set down in labor contracts. They support laws and legislators who help them, and they want pleasant living conditions for the wage earner.

IV

Union tactics

HOW DO unions go about getting what they want? What methods—or tactics—do they use to achieve their goals?

You already know about some of these methods. Strikes have been in the headlines often enough to make them familiar to everyone. And maybe you remember Uncle Fred's story about the union sending four men over to wire his house when the job needed only two men.

People usually have pretty strong opinions on union methods. When a nationwide rail strike ties up transportation, you'll hear indignant cries of: "Unions are getting too big for their shoes" or sympathetic statements such as: "That will show big business!" So before deciding whether the methods unions use to reach their aims are good or bad, justified or unjustified, it's important to know the reasons behind such things as strikes. *Why* does a union call a strike? *Why* does it sometimes send four men to do a job that two men could do as well? *Why* do unions fight among themselves? The answers to these and similar questions are not always simple, but trying to answer them may help us understand a little better why unions act as they do.

Union tactics—ways to reach aims

Union tactics are closely tied in with union aims. Higher wages, improved working conditions, job security, the right to bargain collectively—these are some of the things unions want. To get them, they use various methods.

First of all, there is collective bargaining, which plays a big part in all union activities. In the last chapter we talked about collective bargaining as being one of the major aims of unions. But it is also a *method*, a means by which unions get higher wages and other benefits. So what happens at that union-management conference table is important—it sets

the stage for what is going to happen later.

Around the conference table

In negotiating with the employer, union representatives usually strive for certain specific things that the union members have already agreed on.

The union agent has to find out how members feel on certain issues before he can bring them up at the conference. Joe Member will feel dissatisfied if union leaders put through a clause he doesn't like without consulting him first.

What these representatives do—before, during, and after the bargaining session—may strengthen or weaken the union position for the future. So they must be well prepared for “negotiations.” They have plenty of homework to do because they need *figures* at their fingertips. What are wages, hours, and working conditions in other plants? Has the cost of living gone up—is everyone paying more for food, clothes, rent? If so, how much? Can the employer afford to give a wage increase or meet other demands? These will be important bargaining points. The negotiating committee is often briefed by officers of the national or international parent union who “know the ropes.”

When the actual negotiating begins, union spokesmen must proceed cautiously. Suppose they ask for a 15-cent-an-hour raise. The employer offers 8 cents. Should they continue to say no? Should they agree to a compromise at 10 cents an hour? Should they submit the offer to union members for a vote? Both the union and the employer want to avoid the costly strike that *may* result if agreement isn't reached. Each side wonders: “How much can I gain without causing trouble?”

If both sides fail to reach an agreement, public mediators may be called in to help bring the parties together. This may take a long time, while investigations and recommendations are being made. Long negotiations—especially if they end in a strike—may mean dissatisfied union members. Joe Member may begin to lose confidence in the union and its leaders. Occasionally, in a situation like this, the employer will urge union members to go over the heads of the union negotiating committee and come to a direct agreement with him.



Unions make use of a variety of tactics to achieve their goals.

Suppose an agreement is finally reached. Both sides have signed the contract and now both sides must *administer* it. They must make sure that everyone keeps his word. If the employer fails to follow some term of the contract, the union must persuade him to do so. And it has to watch Joe Member too, for if he violates the contract terms, the union may be responsible. Joe must be persuaded to accept the majority decision. Administering the labor contract is a complicated and time-consuming business. Unless it is handled carefully, the union's position will be weaker in future bargaining sessions.

But now let's move out of the conference room. Skill in bargaining for contracts and making them work is just a part of union strategy. What are some of the other tactics that help unions get a better deal for their members?

Strikes—a powerful device

The first thing that probably pops into your head is the word STRIKE! In fact, many people think that strikes are the *only* methods unions use to get what they want. They notice unions only when unions make headlines. And headlines are made when union men go on strike.

Actually, most unions think of a strike as a final resort, to be used only when everything else has failed. For strikes cost everybody money. They cost Joe Member his wages. If a strike is long, the union may have to give financial help to the strikers who are without any other income. This quickly uses up the money in the union treasury, money which has been collected as "dues" over a long period of time. If a strike fails and the men don't get what they want, they may lose confidence in the union. Leaders who managed the strike are likely to be replaced. And a strike that ties up vital industries like steel and shipping may turn public opinion against unions.

So most unions don't strike "at the drop of a hat," or "just to prove the power of union leaders." They weigh things carefully before *walking out*. A strike must usually be voted on by union members. It may have to be approved by national (or international) representatives. Also, union bylaws may state that federal or state conciliators or "referees" shall be called in to try to reach a settlement. All this happens *before* a strike is called!

Why strikes?

There are many reasons for strikes. Unions may strike if they feel their rights to bargain as a group are being threatened. They may strike

for more pay or shorter hours or a pension, if the employer has refused these terms around the conference table. Because strikers usually are after a combination of these aims, the *cause* of any strike may be hard to name. Suppose unionists are asking for a wage raise, a union shop, and a pension plan. If bargaining fails and a strike follows, which of these is the cause?

Union recognition was more important in the strike picture before the Wagner Act of 1935 assured employees of the right to group bargaining. Today wages, hours, and fringe items are the most common issues at stake.

Types of strikes

A strike is “a concerted cessation of work.” In other words, the union members get together and walk out! That’s why strikes are often called *walkouts*. Some strikes, however, are *lockouts*, where the employer stops the work. To strengthen his argument in a disagreement with the union, he may close the plant, leaving the employees temporarily without jobs.

Most strikes are the result of employer-employee disputes. But in *sympathy strikes* employees who have no quarrel with their own employer quit working to help out strikers in other plants or industries. They feel that tie-ups in related industries will force the employer to grant his employees’ demands. *General strikes* are sympathy strikes on a much larger scale, where a number of unions join in helping another union that is striking.

Your parents will remember the *sit-down strikes* of the late 1930’s which caused a lot of excitement and discussion. In sit-down strikes, employees did not leave their jobs, but they refused to work. “Sitdowns” are now illegal, but *slow-down strikes*, in which work is continued but at a much slower pace, are still used.

Another type of strike is the *outlaw strike*. This occurs when some union members stage a *walkout* without a general strike vote by all members, without the permission of the national union, and maybe even in spite of a *no-strike* clause in the labor contract. Naturally an *outlaw strike* puts the union leader in a tight spot. First of all, the union will “lose face” if its members don’t stick to the collective agreement. Secondly, the union may be sued for damages arising from the strike. So the unions must insist that members live up to the contract, and discipline them if they refuse.

There is still another kind of strike in which the employer may be an innocent bystander. This is the *jurisdictional strike*—a strike over the rights to certain jobs. The charter granted each union by its national (which we’ll discuss later) describes all the jobs members of that union



A jurisdictional strike is between unions over rights to certain jobs.

can do. It gives them *jurisdiction* or exclusive rights to these jobs. If new jobs are created for some reason, two unions may fight over who gets to represent the men who will be doing these jobs. For new jobs mean new members, and new members mean more dues and a stronger union. Or in a different case, one union may feel another is “taking over” some of its territory, and a disagreement may follow. For instance, metal workers may dispute with carpenters who are installing metal door and window frames. They feel these jobs should belong to them. Soon the metal workers may be picketing the carpenters’ construction jobs, causing a work stoppage. The employer, who probably has bargained in good faith with

his men, sees his project coming to a standstill. The employer suffers. The public suffers. And the fight is between two unions!

Who wins strikes?

How do strikes turn out? Do unions generally get what they want? There are no simple or completely satisfactory answers to these questions. For one thing, most strike settlements are *compromises*. Each side wins on some points and loses on others. Of course, sometimes the compromise may win for one side all the gains it *really* expected. For instance, a union may strike for a 15-cent-an-hour raise when actually its members have agreed that they will settle for 10 cents. “Ask for more and you’ll get what you want” is often the rule.

What strikes cost

If the strike is a long one, it may seem that union members lose money even if they win a large wage increase. Suppose a strike runs for 10 weeks and results in an increase of 10 cents an hour for Joe Member, who earns \$60 a week. It will take Joe three years just to make up for the wages he lost while the strike was on.

On the other hand, a strike like this may prove to the employer that

the union can and will hold out for a long time. And he'll be more likely to agree to union demands in future bargaining sessions. This may mean later wage increases which will help employees "break even" sooner. It's also possible that some men might have been "laid off" even if there hadn't been a strike. So strike costs are sometimes not as high for each member as they might seem.

"This country could produce twice as much if people would just stick to their jobs and not go on strikes!" You've probably heard this remark. And it *does* seem that men out striking, sometimes for months, would add up to a great waste of man hours.

Actually, in normal years, time lost by employees because of strikes is less than one-half of one per cent of all working time—less than one day per year per employee! In many years it has been less than one-half day.

Tactics that back up strikes—picketing

When union members want to pack an extra punch behind their strike demands, they don't just go home to "sit the whole thing out." They actively support the walkout. They may march in a *picket line* or hire others to picket for them.

We Have to Eat Too! Unfair to Labor! Don't Patronize This Store! These are the messages that often flash at you from pickets' signs as they walk back and forth. What's your reaction when you see this long line of men and women airing their complaints?

Your reaction is important. If you're just Mr. Onlooker J. Public, the strikers want to keep you from buying in the store or from the factory they're picketing. If they can cut down the employer's profits enough, he may be forced to discuss their demands.

If you're a union member who's not completely sold on the strike, pickets will try to discourage you from working. The union's position will be stronger if *nobody* works, if *nothing* is produced or sold.

If you're a member of another union, perhaps a trucker delivering



Strikers generally try to discourage anyone from carrying on business of any kind with the employer.

supplies to the employer, pickets will try persuading *you* not to make the delivery. They don't want the employer to have "business as usual." Many unions have rules forbidding members to cross *any* picket line.

Pickets are always on the watch for *scabs*—employees brought in by the employer to take over strikers' jobs. Pickets often jeer and shout at scabs, as they may do to anyone crossing the line. Sometimes pickets go further. They threaten line-crossers with violence, or they march so closely that their lines can't be broken. They may even stop traffic on public streets. Such tactics are generally illegal, but in some localities unions have enough "pull" to get away with them.

Boycotts also back up strikes

In a long-drawn-out strike, the union may use another technique—the *boycott*. In *boycotting*, the striker makes use of an important fact. He's not only a maker and a seller of goods, he's also a *buyer*. He's the general public who can buy or not buy his employer's product. In a boycott, the striker chooses *not* to buy. He usually also tries to persuade others not to buy. The boycott, like picketing, cuts down on the employer's profits, makes him more anxious to end the strike.

Union labels

Another device (not necessarily connected with strikes) that makes use of the union man's buying power is the *union label*. These labels are attached to products made in unionized plants and are put up in restaurants, hotels, and other places that employ union members. The purpose is to encourage other union members to buy these products and patronize these places. In this way, business is given to unionized firms and kept from non-union firms.

Other tactics—limiting the employer's choice

There are many other devices that advance union aims. Remember the *union shop* clause included in many labor contracts, where all employees must be or become union members? Such an arrangement gives the union more bargaining power, for its representative can say to the boss: "I've got *all* the men behind me." When a company has an *open shop*, the employees are not required to be union members. Unions don't like the *open shop*, because it means some employees may stay out of the union and the union's bargaining power is not as strong.

In past years unions bargained for the *closed shop*, whereby the employer could hire *only* union men. The Taft-Hartley Act and similar state laws now make the closed shop illegal. Sometimes unions have gone further and created *closed unions* to which only a certain number of members could be admitted. In some cases "personal" requirements were used to keep membership down. For example, some coal miners' unions would admit only sons of union members. (A few outsiders got around this rule by marrying miners' daughters!)

When the *closed shop* was combined with the *closed union*, union members were sure of getting whatever jobs were available in their line of work. The employer could hire union members only—and the number of members was limited by the union. If there were more jobs open than there were union members, the union would issue temporary work permits to outsiders. But they could cancel these as soon as jobs became scarce again.

Neither the closed union nor the closed shop are as important as they once were, before the closed shop was outlawed. But there are still many ways in which unions make sure their members get first chance at available jobs.

"Dibs" on this job—jurisdictions

Unions often try to protect the jobs of their members from other unions by setting up *jurisdictions* or areas in which they have authority. Some of these jurisdictions cover the kind of work their members do. They try—by agreement with other unions—to keep other union members from doing these jobs. They may also specify in what localities their members are to have jobs. In this way, unions try to avoid stepping on each other's toes.

Suppose an electricians' union wants job protection. First, union leaders describe all the different kinds of work done by members of their union. Then they begin negotiations with unions in related industries—in this case the building trades. If the other unions agree, then no carpenter, plumber, or plasterer will install any wires or do any other work on electrical circuits. By the same agreement, the electricians promise to avoid doing any carpentry, plumbing, plastering, or other jobs belonging to cooperating unions. Each union now has established a *jurisdiction*—has reserved for itself certain job areas over which it rules supreme.

Jurisdictions may even be set up within an industry. Local 42 of the electricians' union may reserve for its members all wiring jobs in a certain locality. Other locals will agree to this jurisdiction if Local 42 promises to keep hands-off *their* chosen territory.

Featherbedding—spreading the work

When hard times or other factors make jobs scarce, many unions insist that extra employees be hired for whatever jobs there are. This is known as *featherbedding*. For instance, the use of “canned music” on many radio shows cut down the number of jobs open for orchestra and band members. To meet this threat, the musicians’ union insisted that radio stations hire a specific number of musicians—whether their services were needed or not. So featherbedding is designed to protect union members from unemployment and reduced earnings.



A bricklayer may be allowed to lay only a certain number of bricks.

Restriction of output

Another device unions may use to keep their members employed is to set limits on the amount of work each member can do, or to limit the equipment used. A bricklayer may be told to lay only a certain number of bricks, a painter to use a two-inch brush on certain jobs, and so on. Unions often claim these measures are used to insure quality. But their main purpose is to create and maintain more jobs.

Many people get annoyed at these “spread-the-work” tactics, just as your Uncle Fred did when the union sent four men instead of two to wire his house. Any waste of our

resources—human or material—means that the public suffers as a result. On the other hand, you can understand why unions try these techniques when business is bad and jobs are scarce.

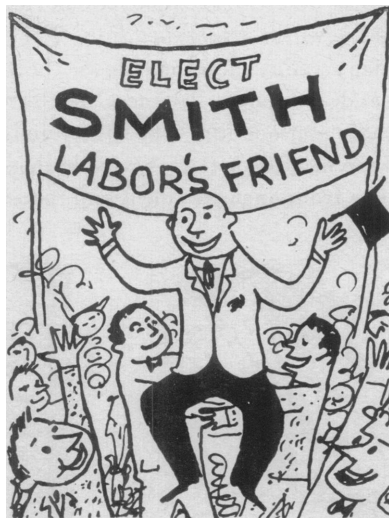
Unions and political tactics

Unions try to win their political goals by backing individual men and individual laws, without regard to political party. “He is pro-union” recommends a candidate much more strongly than “He is a Democrat” or “He is a Republican.” Many unions keep careful records of the way congressmen and other politicians have voted on issues important to labor. Then they publish these voting records for their members.

Many unions endorse candidates who have appeared before their political committees and promised to vote pro-union if elected. To get a pro-labor candidate into office, unions may back his campaign with money as well as words. And they may spend union funds to defeat unfriendly politicians. To get a campaign message across, unions buy newspaper space and hire radio time. They help stage parades and public demonstrations. They even ring doorbells and provide transportation to “get out the vote” for their candidate.

At the same time individual labor leaders are free to be out-and-out Democrat or Republican. Labor leaders have served on both Democratic and Republican national committees.

Despite all their active campaigning, unions have been more successful in pushing through union-backed laws than in electing their candidates to office. Many reforms supported by labor have now become the law of the land. But most of the time, unions can't really “deliver” the labor vote for their candidates. It seems that most union members won't vote for a man just because he's *for* labor. Apparently Joe Member is not just a union man. He's the American public, too.



Many unions actively campaign for candidates who are friends of labor.

The union and Joe Member—at times, cross purposes

Sometimes unions may have interests of their own—in addition to those of their members. Unions, like other organizations, want to grow and to be secure. They try to get contract terms that will protect this growth. But their bargaining may not always be to the best immediate advantage of the union members. For example, a union may engage in a long dispute with an employer in order to get certain benefits that will increase its strength. The union members, however, may be willing to settle for more immediate benefits that the employer is willing to give. So occasionally a union and its members are not in complete agreement.

Jurisdictional strikes, which we discussed earlier, may also cause a rift between union leaders and union members. For Joe Member loses wages and may not get anything in return but a new union representative.

The union and the public—at times, cross purposes

Are unions monopolies, as many people charge? And if so, should they be checked by the same anti-trust laws that control business monopolies?

First, what is a monopoly? Well, suppose the X Furniture Manufacturing Company controlled all the furniture that was made in this country. The X Company could charge any prices it wished, no matter how high. And you would have to pay these prices if you wanted to buy furniture, because you couldn't get it from any competitor. Or suppose a lot of furniture manufacturers got together and agreed to charge the same prices. Again, you wouldn't have any choice. If they had to *compete* with each other for your business, prices would also be competitive. So a monopoly means exclusive control of some product or service.

Because the public suffers from this sort of thing, we have laws controlling monopolies. Now how about unions? A railroad strike can leave whole sections of the population stranded. A nationwide strike in the mining industry can mean shivering citizens who lack fuel for their homes. If steelworkers everywhere refuse to work until they have negotiated a contract, this may cause scarcities that affect almost everyone. Nationwide strikes can harm the public just as much as the practices of unregulated big business. Why then haven't unions been controlled as strictly?

For one thing, unions are different from business in an important way. The manufacturer sells products. The railroad sells services. But the union members *sell their own labor*. Most of us feel that an employee has more right to withhold his own labor than business has to withhold products. For this reason, we have not placed unions under the anti-monopoly rules that govern big business. But as unions have become larger and stronger, they have tended to act more and more like business monopolies. Just as the public fears *big business*, it fears *big unions*.

There are many suggestions for controlling unions. But just what should be done to prevent uncontrolled big unions from acting like uncontrolled big business is still one of the most important unsettled questions in America today.

V

Union organization and government

WHO RUNS our unions? *How* are they run? Do the big bosses at the top decide union policy? How does local Joe Member fit into the picture? Does he have any say? To answer these questions let's look at how unions are organized. They're something like a giant jigsaw puzzle with many pieces—all different sizes and shapes.

There are several types of unions. And they are related to each other in many different ways. Let's take the jigsaw puzzle apart and look at each piece.

Local unions—first level

Local unions are the foundation of the whole union structure. They're the first "level" in the union picture. A local may be very large or very small. It may be a *craft union*—one whose members work at a single craft or trade, like stonecutters or carpenters. (Actually, most craft unions today include several related occupations. The carpenters' union, for instance, includes members in sawmills and in millwork factories.) Or the local may be an *industrial union*—one which is made up of employees in many occupations in one industry, not just those who perform one particular type of job. The steelworkers', automobile workers', and coal miners' unions are examples.

The local union is often *the* union as far as Joe Member is concerned. It's the local that gives him a feeling of belonging. It admits him to membership, gives him his card, collects his dues and fees, and sees that he gets his health, unemployment, and other benefits. It is also the connecting link between him and the larger city or state associations or the national organizations to which the local belongs. There are about 70,000 local unions to which the Joe Members of America belong.

National and international unions—second level

Most of the 70,000 locals are members of the 200 *national* or *international organizations*, which have the authority to *charter* the local unions. The charter is a sort of contract between the national and the local. It says, officially, that this local is a member of the national organization and is subject to its rules.



A national or international union is composed of hundreds of local unions.

There are both advantages and obligations that go along with membership in national or international organizations. The local union, for instance, benefits by the actions and advice of the parent union. It has the advantage of any health-accident or life insurance or other benefit programs that the national may operate. Most important, the charter granted by the national usually gives the local union authority over certain kinds of work to be done by its members only. The local is the only representative of the national in the area described by the charter.

The nationals lay down policies for locals to follow. They direct the locals in everything from collective bargaining to handling their finances. They decide what campaigns will be started for organizing locals and what activities local unions should carry on. They have the power to give charters and to take them back. They also have the power to discipline local unions.

The national or international union sets many of the policies Joe must abide by. The national (through the charter) says whether or not

Joe is eligible to belong to the union. It may say what dues, fees, and fines he must pay. The national may also set down rules on who may call a strike and who may sign an agreement with employers.

But Joe Member isn't left out. He elects the national officials and votes on policies. so when the national sets down rules, it does so as Joe's representative.

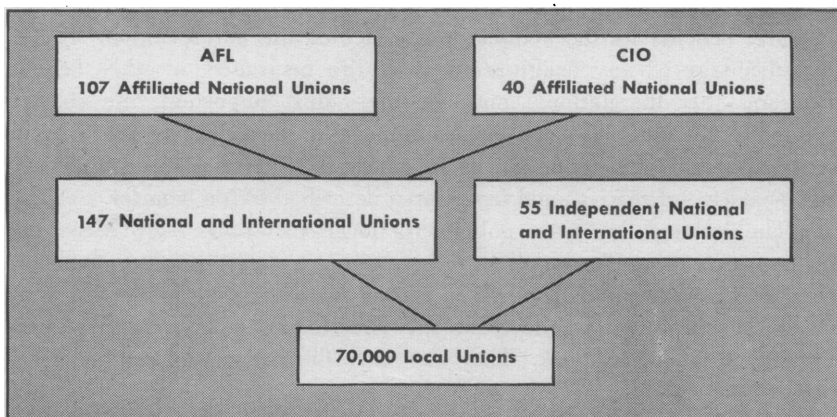
AFL and CIO—top level

As you probably know, the initials AFL and CIO stand for the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations—the two most prominent union associations. They're the top "level" of union organizations. Each of these associations was formed by national unions.

Not all national unions belong to these groups. Many of them, including some very large ones—such as the railroad brotherhoods and coal miners' unions—are *independents*.

The AFL and the CIO are purely *voluntary* organizations. Nationals may join them or leave them when they wish. Or they may be *asked* to leave. For example, the CIO expelled a number of national unions because it felt they were run by Communists. But expelling them is about all the control the AFL and the CIO have over the nationals. They can do little to end a strike, or throw out local union leaders, or make union members return to work. They don't have the authority over member nationals that the nationals have over their locals. The AFL and the CIO do not charter the nationals, either.

Three Levels of American Unions



This chart shows how the AFL and CIO, national, and local unions are related.

City and state associations

In addition to the three main levels of union organizations, there are other organizations that unions have formed. To band together to promote laws that will benefit employees and to give each other mutual aid, the AFL locals in every state form *state federations of labor*, and the CIO locals form *state industrial union councils*. And in large cities both the AFL and CIO form similar associations.

State organizations help locals in many ways. They may help Joe Member by pushing legislation he favors and by campaigning for or against certain candidates for the state legislature. They appear before legislative committees to fight laws Joe doesn't want. They may help him get his workmen's compensation for an accident.

AFL and CIO departments

There's still another piece in our jigsaw puzzle of union organization—the *departments* that both the AFL and CIO have formed to help unions that have similar interests and lines of work. They help locals get together to discuss mutual problems and to iron out conflicts, such as jurisdictional disputes.

How does it all work?

With such a complicated jigsaw puzzle as this, where does Joe Member fit in? With all these locals, nationals, and federations, does the "little guy" have any voice at all in a union? The answer is *yes!* There are exceptions, of course, but in general unions are democratically run. If you join a union, you will vote on many union policies directly, by secret ballot. And in matters where you don't have a chance to vote, you can make your voice heard by electing the men who *will* make the decisions.

"If unions are democratic," you ask, "then why all the crooks, labor bosses, and dictators?" It is true that union "dictators" have taken over some local and national organizations. It is also true that some "crooked" union leaders have used their jobs to "shake down" or to "sell out" to employers. Other union racketeers have joined equally dishonest employers in forcing the public to pay unreasonable prices for certain products. Communists have sometimes gotten a strangle hold on local and even national unions. But all these cases have been the exceptions—not the rule. They are front-page news partly because they are rare.

Any democratically run organization can fall into the hands of poor leaders if the members become careless about attending meetings and exer-

cising their right to vote, or if members don't know how to run an organization and its meetings. And by threats, force, or other illegal means, racketeers can get a "hold" on an organization.

You and the local

Let's say you've just joined a union. You've paid your initiation fee (probably \$25) and you've paid your month's dues (probably about \$2). These fees and dues will help pay the officers' salaries, office expenses, and perhaps permit some reserves for old age pensions and strike benefits. Now you're a member in good standing and your vote counts as much as anyone else's. There are union elections coming up and you'll have to decide for whom you're going to cast your vote for president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. You may even be asked to vote for a business agent and a union organizer. The men elected will probably serve one-year terms.

Later on there will be other elections when you'll elect members to different committees. You may also be asked to vote for a representative to bargain with your employer.

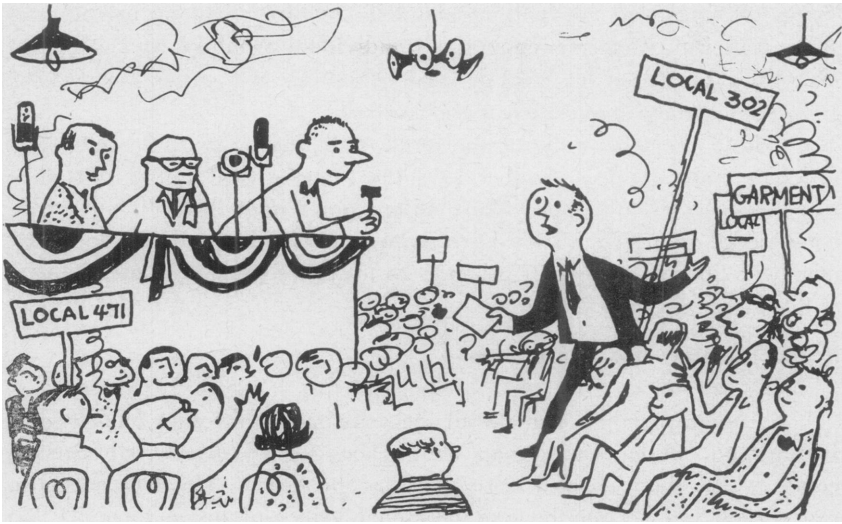
As a member, you'll be expected to attend the regular meetings of the local, which usually take place once a month. You may even be fined if you *don't* go. This is to make sure that all members show up so that no small group or gang can take over control of the union when it comes to deciding important policies. There are cases where a local's membership is so large that only a small per cent of the members can actually get together. This makes it easy for a small group to take over, because all members can't be present at meetings.

What else happens at the local's meetings? Your officers will report on what they've been doing. Perhaps they'll tell you how discussions with your employer are working out about hours and wages. An official of the CIO or the AFL may be there to tell you about a political candidate the federation is backing.

You and the national

You can also participate in the activities of the national union. You help elect delegates to the national's convention, and you and your fellow members usually tell these delegates what matters you want them to bring up before the convention. You tell them how you want them to vote on important issues. In this way, you help influence the policies of the national to which your local belongs.

At the national convention, the delegates that you've elected from your



Elected delegates represent the local union at the national convention.

local elect national officers and also the executive committee which manages the affairs of the national union between conventions.

“Unions are run by the bosses at the top!” You’ve probably heard charges like this. One of the reasons for these charges is the fact that many national unions reelect the same officers year after year. Officers are elected by popular vote, so just as in the case of our state and national politics, candidates can build up political machines in the union to get the votes and keep them in office.

The AFL and CIO also hold conventions to which member national unions send delegates. At these conventions a president and a secretary-treasurer are elected and future action is decided upon. The AFL also elects its thirteen-member executive council at this time, and the CIO elects its nine vice-presidents.

Democracy and the union

Can Joe Member really speak his mind in his union? Some people say *no*, that a union won’t put up with members who dare to criticize it or its officers. What about the coal miner who called John L. Lewis names and then couldn’t get a job? What about union members who have been expelled for demanding that union financial accounts be checked, or for publicly criticizing some union official? If you join a union, will you be fined or otherwise mistreated if you criticize union officials?

For most unions, the answer is definitely *no*. Anyone who has attended

union meetings and conventions can tell you this. Hot arguments and sharp criticism of officers, committees, individual members, and of almost everything the union has said or done—these are all part of the picture. Discussion, debate, and criticism are expected.

Within the four walls of the union hall this is all fine. But it's a different matter if Joe Member says the same critical things *outside*—to newspapers or to a jury. Many unions don't want their "family problems" aired in public. They have bylaws that forbid public attacks by members, and they give stiff penalties to members who take part in them.

If Joe Member has complaints

So union members can do all the criticizing they want at meetings. In addition, union constitutions and bylaws set up special tribunals or courts where these general criticisms may be heard. The tribunals also can review and act on the more personal gripes of union men. If Joe Member feels he hasn't had a fair deal from local or national officers, he can bring it to the union's court. Has he been refused work he should have had? Has he been unfairly fined? He is expected to bring these matters before the tribunal. If, instead, he "tries" the case in the newspapers or goes into a public court, he may be suspended or expelled or prevented from working.

Is this procedure fair? Many people think not. If Joe has complaints against union officials, these officials may be able to influence a union tribunal and prevent a fair hearing. In such a case the democratic procedure would be to review the matter before a neutral third party. Unions that refuse such a privilege to their members are lending support to charges that unions are run by the bosses. Some states have passed laws requiring a public review of charges that members have been unfairly treated.

With a few exceptions, however, unions in this country are democratic. They go as the majority goes. All members can take part in deciding such questions as: "What should unions stand for? What laws, what candidates shall we support this year? What tactics shall we use?"

Some unions have at one time or another fallen under the control of petty political leaders, cliques, and even gangsters. Some have surrendered to dictatorship by a single individual. Too often some have acted high-handedly in disciplining their members, refusing them trial before an impartial court.

These are serious faults. But they can be corrected because most American unions are democratic. No one individual controls American labor. Joe Member rules his own roost.

VI

Unions and public opinion

HOW DO the American people feel about unions? The answer to this question is important to you. If you join a union, you'll want to know what your friends and neighbors think of your action. Even though we want to make our own decisions, we like to know our friends approve. Suppose you vote for a union-supported candidate. Will many people be voting the same way? Are most Americans "for" or "against" unions?

How should *you*—as an American citizen—regard unions, their activities, their leaders and their members? You'll want to know: "Can I be a good union member—or union backer—and a good citizen at the same time? Or do unions really work against the public interest?"

How we used to feel about unions

Today these questions can't be dodged. Unions are too prominent and too numerous. When they were small and included only a few hundred or a few thousand members, what unions did made little difference to anyone except their members. If unions called a strike, that was their business—let the union and the individual employer work it out.

Unions were thought of as small fraternal groups. Employees didn't have to join. If they did, and then got into a fight with an employer, that was a personal matter. Most citizens were not particularly bothered, either, if an employer refused to recognize or deal with a union. If he wouldn't hire union men, if he fired employees who had joined the union, that was his business. Union-employer fights were *private* fights.

Union-employer affairs become everybody's business

All these attitudes seemed reasonable enough when unions were small. But as unions grew and became strong, employers formed their own asso-

ciations to meet this new “threat.” Individual fights became group fights. Strikes lasted longer because each side, with more backing, could hold out longer. Strikes might tie up a whole industry—a vital industry like steel or rubber or railroading. Boycotts might be nationwide. Union-employer fights had become everybody’s concern.

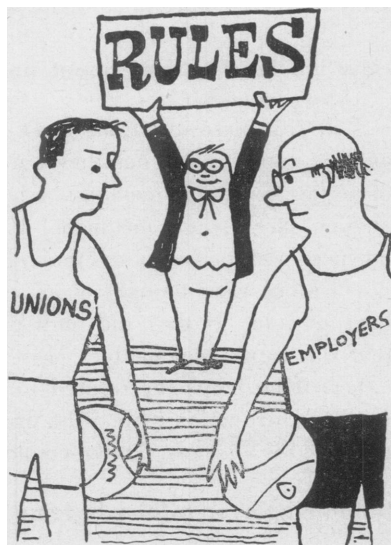
Meanwhile labor entered politics. The CIO and AFL, with their state federations and councils, began backing pro-labor candidates. They spent large sums campaigning for and against certain laws. And they had large sums to spend. National unions and even some locals owned valuable property—union office buildings, homes for retired members, and even coal mines. They could collect and spend millions of dollars each year. Now unions were influencing the passage of certain laws and the election of certain candidates. This obviously increased the public’s concern over them.

At the same time the employers’ associations were growing in strength. They became industry-wide or nationwide groups. Some of these associations were created to bargain with unions. Others were formed to prevent or interfere with union organizing activities. Some associations supplied *scabs* to take the place of strikers, and private “detectives” or “spies” to discover union members among employees. Sometimes associations provided armed guards or police to protect property against strikers and pickets. Clashes between these company police and unionists often led to bloodshed. Such affairs were far too serious to be regarded as private matters.

Rules of the game were needed

Two basketball teams may battle each other, but they play by the rules of the game. If they don’t, fouls are called and penalties are given. In this way, the players can’t damage each other too much, or risk harming the spectators.

When the clashes between unions and employers began to get out of bounds, citizens everywhere felt that rules were necessary—rules to protect the union members, the employers, and the public. They felt that labor and management should play



Rules of the game have been set up to guide both unions and employers.

according to the rules of the game. And these rules should be approved by *all the citizens* as a group.

So local, state, and federal governments have tried to do something about this situation. They have developed rules to guide unions and rules to guide employers' associations. They try to outline "public policy"—the rules of the game—on union-employer relationships.

But the rules of the game we have now are not permanent. They will probably continue to change with the changing labor picture.

Nowadays we try to give both teams an equal chance, whereas in the early days all the penalties were called on one side. In those days we didn't have nationwide rules stating what unions could or could not do. The courts decided on these questions. And they considered unions to be illegal associations that might do "irreparable damage" to employers' property.

The rules changed

The first national law to affect unions strongly was the *Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890*. This act was set up mainly to keep business firms from merging or forming monopolies in order to fix prices and prevent competition. But anti-union employers said the law covered unions as well. And the courts agreed with them, stating that unions were combinations that limited trade and fixed the price of labor.

In 1914, labor hailed the *Clayton Act*, which stated specifically that unions were not to be restricted as business monopolies were. But labor was disappointed, for the courts continued to place the same curbs on unions as they did on business.

However, in 1932 the tide of public opinion began to change, and so did the rules of the game. People had begun to feel that employees *did* have a right to form unions—and to bargain as a group for higher wages. The *Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932* stated that federal courts could issue injunctions only under certain special conditions, and that yellow dog contracts were "contrary to public policy."

In 1935 came what unions call their "bill of rights." The *National Labor Relations Act* (also called the *Wagner Act*) was passed. This act cut down the restrictions on union activities and gave unions more privileges. It declared that public policy *encouraged* collective bargaining and that employees had the right to bargain as a group. It set up a series of *unfair labor practices* that employers were forbidden to engage in. Employers could no longer prevent unions from forming, and they had to bargain in good faith with their employees' unions.

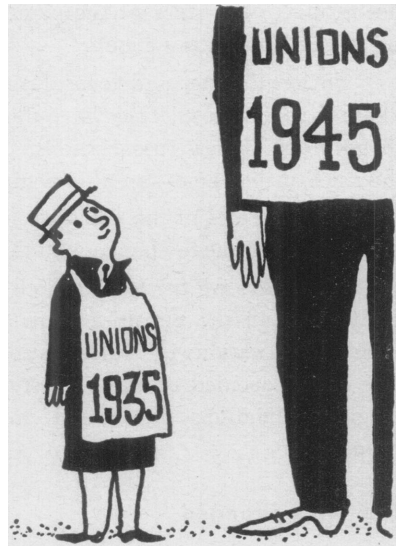
This 1935 act set the rules of the game for the next twelve years. Unions grew by leaps and bounds, increasing their membership greatly in the ten years following the passage of the act.

But during the 1940's many people began wondering if the Wagner Act didn't give unions too many privileges without enough responsibilities. They felt that while the Wagner Act was all right for unions when they were small and weak, new laws were needed for unions that were growing larger and stronger every day. Critics of the Wagner Act claimed, for instance, that unions sometimes refused to bargain with employers. They said unions could "control" an employers' organization

by forcing it to bargain through only one labor association. They also said that collective agreements under this act were one-sided—employers were forced to live up to their contracts, while unions could strike or otherwise refuse to stick to the agreements, and suffer no penalty.

Following this turn in public opinion, the *Labor Management Relations Act of 1947* (the *Taft-Hartley Act*) was passed. This act continued to support collective bargaining and the list of unfair labor practices forbidden to employers. But it added another list of unfair labor practices that applied to *unions*. For instance, it made jurisdictional strikes and widespread boycotts illegal. It outlawed strikes of public employees and required union officers to sign sworn statements that they were not Communists. It forced unions to file regular reports listing their officers and their financial dealings. It tried to make unions more responsible by allowing employers to sue them for damages resulting from their failure to live up to contract agreements. It included many other provisions that meant tighter control over unions.

Unions bitterly attacked the new act. They called it the "slave labor law" and campaigned for its repeal. So further changes are to be expected. Many changes have been suggested—by employers, public officials, and students of labor relations, as well as by unions. Many employer-employee problems are still not covered by the rules, and continue to cause conflict.



Unions grew by leaps and bounds after the Wagner Act was passed.

Today's rules of the game

Let's look at the rules of the game as they now stand. They are the product of much thought and much change; they are rules made by *all* the citizens through their government.

1. *Law and order.* According to the rules, neither unions nor employers' associations can take the law into their own hands—engage in violence, restrict traffic, threaten or injure individuals or groups.

2. *Union membership.* Our society encourages unions and collective bargaining. The rules protect the right of any employee to join a union and to bargain with his employer through this union.

3. *Employers' treatment of unions.* Further, the rules require employers to negotiate and bargain with unions that represent a majority of their employees. The same rules forbid *unfair labor practices*—employers cannot try in any way to prevent or control union organization.

4. *Union treatment of wage earners.* At the same time, the rules say that modern unions are to a certain extent public institutions. So they insist that unions shall be democratic—that they must not treat members in a high-handed manner. Dues and fees must be reasonable. Someone looking for a job must not be kept from getting it because he's non-union. This means that *closed shops* are not approved, although *union shops* are.

5. *Union relationships with employers.* Since unions are protected and encouraged, they are expected to act like responsible organizations. They must live up to contracts they have signed, and they may be sued for damages if they fail to do so. Jurisdictional disputes or boycotts that harm neutral employers or the public are forbidden.

6. *Industry-wide bargaining.* At present, the rules don't set any limits to industry-wide bargaining. John L. Lewis can speak for all soft coal miners, and the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association for all mine owners. But many suggestions have been made to limit the area of bargaining. Many unions and employers are "for" industry-wide bargaining, but with its nationwide tie-ups it is often both inconvenient and dangerous for the public. This is a case where rules of the game may have to be developed further.

7. *Right to strike and picket.* All employees except those of government agencies have the right to strike. In addition, no court will *force* an employee to do work he has contracted for through a labor agreement. This would permit slavery. But if a member *doesn't* live up to the contract, and this results in damages to an employer, the union may be sued.

Picketing is permitted as long as it is peaceful. This means that pickets may be limited in numbers and that they must not threaten anyone. Jostling, "chain-picketing," and obstruction of traffic are forbidden.

We, the public, want to prevent strikes whenever we can and to settle them as soon as possible. Federal, state, and some local governments have special mediation services for this purpose. Some states require unions and employers to delay strikes and lockouts for certain lengths of time—to observe a *cooling-off period*. Federal rules also require a delay before work can be stopped on railroads, airlines, and in industries affecting the public health or safety. Many suggestions have been made that all employers and unions be forced to "talk it over" when strikes threaten public health or welfare. But neither side wants forced arbitration or settlement of their disputes by outsiders. Here again public opinion is not yet definite.

8. *Union political activity.* Another question that hasn't been fully answered yet is: What part should unions play in politics? Although unions have not tried to form a labor party, they do maintain *lobbies* (people in Washington hired to influence congressmen). Also they take an active part in electing certain candidates and defeating others, using union funds for these purposes. Present rules limit gifts of union funds to political campaigns, but there's a great deal of objection to these rules.

Conclusion

Now how about that question, "Can I be a union member and still be a good citizen?" American public opinion and policy have given you the answer. The laws of the land and the court decisions also tell the story.

The American people encourage and protect both unions and collective bargaining. We think of unions as good for our society because they balance the economic power of employers. Yet we recognize the harm unions can do if they don't follow the rules of the game. So we insist that they accept responsibility for their actions.

Responsibility means maturity. Unions have come a long way since the days of the early factories. Free unions and democracy have grown up together, for *it takes a free union to bargain with an employer on an equal footing.*

You may want to join a union or organize one or make union organization your life work. Or you may spend a lot of your time as a supervisor or manager dealing with union representatives. Whatever your future, you'll need to know about unions and the part they play in our world. This booklet has given you a beginning. You go on from here!

For more information . . .

For more detailed information on unions, ask your counselor or librarian about some of the following materials. They are available at your school or public library.

Bossing, N. L., and Martin, R. R. **Youth Faces Its Problems.** New York: Laidlaw Brothers—Publishers, 1950. Unit 11 discusses the important factors leading up to the development of labor unions, reasons for strikes, laws affecting labor and management, and the open shop vs. the closed shop. Various study exercises and projects that will help you understand labor unions better are included.

Faulkner, Harold U., and Starr, Mark. **Labor in America.** New York: Harper & Bros., 1944. This book shows the way different groups have been affected by the problems of labor relations, the history of labor unions, and some of the functions and activities of unions today.

Fincher, E. B., and Fraser, R. E. **Democracy At Work.** Philadelphia: John C. Winston Co., 1941. Chapter 16 discusses how a typical union member—called John Q. Public—works, the part he plays and the way he feels about strikes and lockouts, how he votes, and what his relations with his employer are like.

Gavian, Ruth W., Gray, A. A., and Groves, Ernest R. **Our Changing Social Order.** New York: D. C. Heath & Co., 1944. Chapter 21 will be of particular interest because it discusses labor organizations, collective bargaining, employment of women and children, and unemployment. Many of the terms used in discussing labor problems are defined.

Huberman, Leo. **The Truth About Unions.** New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, Inc., 1946. This pamphlet tells simply and clearly about the structure of unions, why they were organized, and the role they play in the industrial world.

"Labor and Management," Building America, Vol. 9, 1944. Americana Corp. An excellent article, illustrated with many pictures, cartoons, and graphs. It traces the history of labor from its beginnings through recent labor-management relations. A good bibliography is included.

Lazarus, Herman, and Goldberg, Joseph P. **Collective Bargaining.** Report No. 3. New York: Public Affairs Institute, 1949. A detailed analysis of collective bargaining today, with special emphasis on the Wagner and Taft-Hartley Acts.

The American Story of Industrial and Labor Relations. New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Industrial and Labor Relations, 1943. A history and explanation of the development of unions and union-management relations in the U.S.

West, Margaret, and Newstrand, E. R. **Labor in American History.** Minneapolis: Argus Publishing Co., 1948. A booklet that summarizes the high spots in the history of American labor unions, prepared especially for young people.

Wolman, Leo. **Industry-wide Bargaining.** New York: Foundation for Economic Education, 1948. A critical appraisal of the growing strength of labor organizations, and of monopolistic elements in nationwide collective bargaining.

Warren, Edgar L., and Bernstein, Irving. **Collective Bargaining.** Los Angeles: University of California Institute of Industrial Relations, 1949. This pamphlet provides a good introduction to collective bargaining.

Work Without Strife. Civic Education Project. Cambridge, Mass.: Educational Research Corp., 1950. This interesting booklet discusses how strikes damage us all, how they have become less violent, and how they may sometimes be avoided. Chapter 4 describes a panel discussion called, "Why Fight the boss?" composed of employer and union representatives, and a student moderator.

World Book Encyclopedia. Vol. 10, pp. 4216-4219. Chicago: Field Enterprises, Inc., 1950. This volume gives a good description of American labor unions—the various kinds of unions, their growth, and their activities. Included are various related subjects for discussion as well as suggested biographies for further reading.

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