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# BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Maurice J. Tobin, *Secretary*

14.3 Bureau of Labor Statistics

Ewan Clague, *Commissioner*

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LABOR RELATIONS

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Labor movement - U.S.

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Bulletin No. 1000

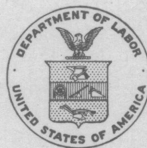
1950 ed.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Maurice J. Tobin, *Secretary*

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Ewan Clague, *Commissioner*



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## Letter of Transmittal

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

*Washington, D. C., November 1, 1950*

### The SECRETARY OF LABOR:

The Brief History of the American Labor Movement was first prepared several years ago for the United States Department of State for use by labor attachés in foreign countries. A brief chronology of labor events has been added to the History, to bring together in a compact form some of the more important happenings in the American labor movement.

The "Brief History" is based upon available published materials and data collected by the Bureau in the course of its regular operations. It was prepared in the Division of Industrial Relations under the supervision of Nelson M. Bortz. The original article was prepared by John M. Brumm, with later revisions by Theodore W. Reedy.

EWAN CLAGUE, *Commissioner.*

HON. MAURICE J. TOBIN,  
*Secretary of Labor*



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# BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT

## Chapter I.—Early Organization

Unions have a long history in the United States. Even before the Declaration of Independence, skilled artisans in handicraft and domestic industry joined together in benevolent societies, primarily in order to provide members and their families with financial assistance in the event of serious illness, debt, or death of the wage earner. Although these early associations had few of the characteristics of present-day labor unions, they did bring workers together to consider problems of mutual concern and to devise ways and means for their solution.

### Early Local Craft Unions

Crafts such as those of carpenters, shoemakers, and printers formed separate organizations in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston as early as 1791, largely to resist wage reductions. These unions were confined to local areas and were usually weak because they seldom included all the workers of a craft. Generally, they continued in existence for only a short time. In addition to the welfare activities, these unions frequently sought higher wages, minimum rates, shorter hours, enforcement of apprenticeship regulations, and establishment of the principle of exclusive union hiring, later known as the "closed shop."

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

TRIAL  
OF TWENTY-FOUR  
JOURNEYMEN TAILORS,  
CHARGED WITH A  
CONSPIRACY:  
BEFORE  
THE MAYOR'S COURT  
OF THE CITY OF  
PHILADELPHIA,

*September Sessions, 1827.*

---

REPORTED BY  
MARCUS T. C. GOULD,  
*Stenographer.*

---

PHILADELPHIA:  
1827.

The courts came to the defense of early 18th century employers by charging the new unions with conspiracy in restraint of trade.

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

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

## Employer Opposition

As unions became stronger the wage question increased in importance and employers formed organizations to resist wage demands. Where circumstances appeared favorable, employers attempted to destroy the effectiveness of a union by hiring nonunion workers and by appealing to the courts to declare the labor organization illegal. The legal fight against unions was carried through the courts in Philadelphia, New York, and Pittsburgh between 1806 and 1814. Unions were prosecuted as "conspiracies in restraint of trade" under an old English common law doctrine that combinations of workmen to raise wages could be regarded as a conspiracy against the public.

The attempt of courts to apply this doctrine of conspiracy aroused a controversy which lasted throughout most of the nineteenth century. Slowly judicial attention was shifted from the question as to whether a mere combination of workmen was a conspiracy to one as to the means they used to gain their ends. Thus while unions, as such, became regarded as "lawful," strikes, boycotts, and other attempts of workers to secure their demands were the subject of legal action in the courts for many decades.

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

## Early Efforts of Unions in Politics

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

In the first place, property qualifications on the right to vote, which had been imposed by the first state constitutions, were abandoned and the ballot put into the hands of practically every workingman. In the second place, the prosecutions of labor unions in the courts of law had driven workingmen to a concerted action which rose above trade and craft lines. In the third place, the industrial revolution brought about by steam power and the factory system was making swift headway in creating great cities. It added rapidly to the number of industrial workers and created closer associations among them. In the fourth place, the idea was being advanced that the hours of labor should be fixed universally at ten per day by legislation rather than by the painful method of strike.

The movement among workers seeking to improve their status by political action spread to many leading industrial communities. In Philadelphia a number of craft unions formed the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations in 1827. This city-wide group soon began to nominate and elect candidates to "represent the interests of the working classes" in the Philadelphia city council and the Pennsylvania State Legislature. Local labor parties organized by workers also sprang up in many States.

Political programs, supported by 50 or more labor papers, included such demands as the following: the 10-hour day, restriction of child labor, abolition of convict labor competition, free and equal public education, abolition of imprisonment for debt, exemption of wages and tools from seizure for debt, the right of mechanics to file liens on property to secure payment of their wages, and the abolition of home and factory sweatshops.

With the rise of political organizations of workingmen, which soon assumed the typical forms of American political parties—ward and county committees, and conventions—much of the strictly economic activity of



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

For a short time, these labor organizations were successful in electing their candidates to various public offices, but in general, they failed to attain their aims. Nevertheless, they called the attention of the regular political parties and the public at large to the social and economic inequalities experienced by workers and by so doing helped to shape the course of much future legislation. Eventually, State legislatures prohibited imprisonment for debt, enacted the 10-hour day for women and children, and laid the foundation of the American free public school system.

## **Formation of City Centrals and National Unions**

In the early 1830's the interest of workers in reform movements and political action declined. To offset the rapidly rising prices between 1835 and 1837, they turned with renewed vigor to the organization of craft or trade-unions. By 1836, for example, over 50 local unions were active in Philadelphia and New York City. Workers also organized craft unions in other cities, such as Newark, Boston, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Louisville. This rapid growth led to the formation of union groups on a city-wide basis. These "city central" organizations, or "trades' unions," as they were called at the time, gave primary attention to the discussion of problems of common interest and to the promotion of union-made goods.

Organization of union groups beyond a single local area was first tried in 1834 when city central bodies from seven cities met in New York to form the National Trades' Union. Later, in 1835 and 1836, the cord-wainers, typographers, comb-makers, carpenters, and hand-loom weavers endeavored to set up country-wide organizations of their separate crafts. These experiments in federation, however, did not withstand the financial panic of 1837 and the period of depression and unemployment which followed during most of the forties.

## **The Era of "Utopianism"**

As the depression took its toll of local as well as national unions, workmen in many places turned their efforts toward forming producers' and consumers' cooperatives. Others were attracted by various schemes for cooperative communities stimulated by the "utopian" ideas spread by the followers of the French Socialist Charles Fourier, by the English reformer Robert Owen, and by many other intellectuals of the period.

Community ownership of land and productive tools, like that tried in the well-known Brook Farm venture in Massachusetts and at the New Harmony colony in Indiana, was urged as the solution to poverty, unemployment, and the other social and economic ills besetting labor. Although widely discussed in labor groups, these schemes received little direct support from workers themselves. They did, however, divert workers' efforts from union activities into disputes over political and economic theories.

In this period, also, the "homestead movement" was born. In its simplest term it was a proposal that the Government give plots of undeveloped public land to persons who wished to settle and cultivate them. This movement, in the words of the labor historian, Selig Perlman, in *A History of Trade Unionism in the United States*, was a demand that the Government "open an escape to the worker from the wage system into self-employment by way of free land," and it dominated American politics during the fifties and sixties.

## An Unsettled Decade

By the late 1840's industry had revived, labor was in great demand, prices were climbing upward, and trade-unions once more showed signs of activity. Workingmen again became interested in establishing rules governing apprenticeship, minimum wages, control over methods of payment, initiation fees, dues, strike benefit funds, union hiring procedures, the closed shop, and the exclusion from membership of all persons not working at the trade. As industries spread, new locals were formed and by 1854 most important trades showed some degree of organization in the larger cities. Many of these unions collapsed only to be promptly revived and crushed again in 1857 in another downward sweep of the business cycle.

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

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

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

## Emergence of National Unions

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

Unions sought to organize the skilled workers employed by these new enterprises. In 1863 there were approximately 80 local unions in 20 Northern States. By 1864 these States had almost 300 local unions. City centrals (local federations) followed soon after the organization of local unions. A short-lived effort toward a country-wide labor federation was made in 1864 when several of these city centrals established the International Industrial Assembly of North America. National and interna-

tional unions<sup>1</sup> developed more slowly but steadily year by year, with 13 appearing between 1861 and 1865. The unions formed in these years became relatively strong and permanent organizations which in a few cases (the plasterers, cigar makers, bricklayers and masons) have continued to the present day.

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

Establishment of the National Labor Union in Baltimore in 1866 was a response to a growing demand for unification of labor groups throughout the country. Basically a loose federation of city centrals, it included also national and local unions and various social reform organizations. Although one of the purposes of its founders had been to encourage industrial peace through the promotion of collective bargaining, the National Labor Union soon veered from "pure" trade-unionism. After first concentrating on the 8-hour-day movement, it later tried to stimulate a revival of labor interest in producers' cooperatives.

The driving personality behind the NLU was William H. Sylvis, of the molders' union, who believed in cooperation as a means of freeing workers from the "control" of capitalism. The example of cooperative production undertaken by Sylvis' own union was followed on a limited scale by others, such as the bakers, shipwrights, machinists, tailors, and printers. Because such cooperative enterprise required capital and credit, the National Labor Union was prompted to support the various politically inclined farm groups in the "Greenback" movement which favored large issues of paper money and easy credit at low interest rates.

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

<sup>1</sup> Unions first called themselves "internationals" when some of the affiliated locals were outside the United States, usually in Canada. Today, the terms "national unions" and "international unions" are used interchangeably.

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

## Industrial Strife

In 1873 and again in 1876 several of the leading craft unions attempted unsuccessfully to revive interest in a federation based on a strictly trade-union program. Trade-union membership, meanwhile, was being seriously reduced by a new economic depression. Industrial workers were involved in a series of violent strikes and lock-outs which their organizations were financially too weak to endure. The cigar makers, textile workers, iron-workers, coal miners, and others fought bitterly against wage reductions.

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

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

Improvement in economic conditions was accompanied once more by the appearance of new locals of skilled workers and the formation of



new city centrals, few of the old having survived the depression. Some 18 national unions had survived; 9 others were soon established. By 1885, total union membership again reached the 300,000 level in spite of the economic recession beginning in 1883 which had brought on a wave of strikes against wage reductions.

During the union-employer struggles of this decade the labor movement itself became the scene of a decisive contest over its future structure. The issue was whether a Nation-wide organization of labor should be based upon the direct affiliation of local unions and city centrals cutting across trade lines, or whether a national federation should be based primarily on existing national trade or craft unions. The former approach, which had already been tried unsuccessfully several times, was championed by the Knights of Labor, while the latter was favored by the American Federation of Labor after its founding in the 1880's.

## Chapter II.—Development of the Modern Labor Movement

### The Knights of Labor

The Noble Order of the Knights of Labor was founded by Uriah S. Stephens in 1869 as a small local union of Philadelphia garment workers. It expanded slowly as various other craft unions joined. For some years it functioned as a secret society with an elaborate ritual, a practice best understood in the light of the difficulties experienced by unions at the time when, as one contemporary labor leader wrote, "a great deal of bitterness was evinced against trade-union organizations, and men were blacklisted to an extent hardly ever equaled." Most of the secrecy, however, was abandoned by 1881.

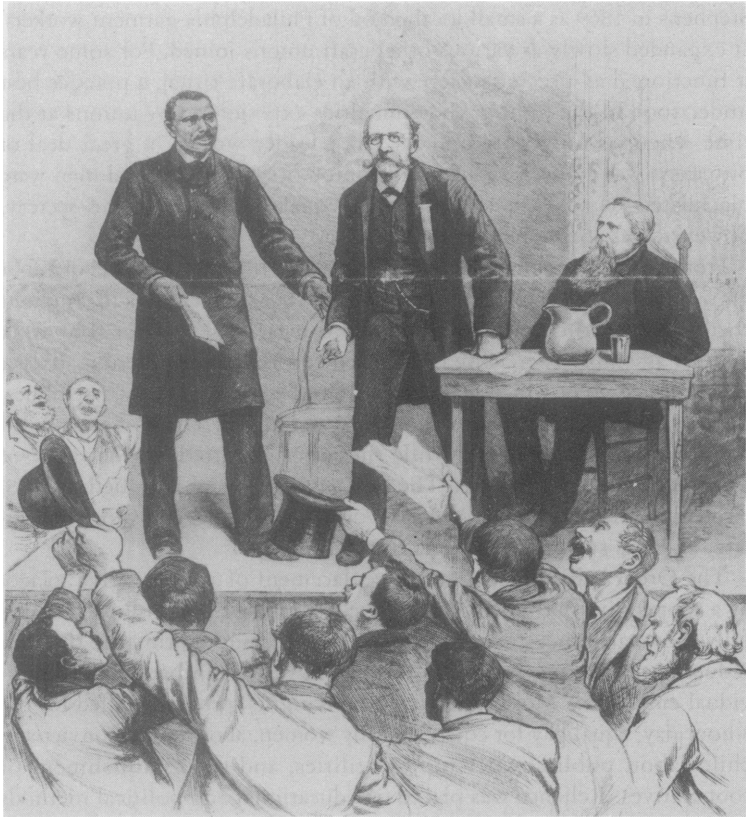
From an estimated membership of 10,000 in 1879 the Knights of Labor grew rapidly until by 1886 it claimed over 700,000 members throughout the country. Structurally, the Knights consisted of a national body or general assembly exercising centralized control over numerous district assemblies, each of which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

The Order had a broad aim: the replacement of a competitive society by a cooperative one which would give workers the opportunity to enjoy fully the wealth they created. This was to be achieved primarily through reducing the "money power" of banks, not through battles with individual employers. More concretely, the Knights' program called for the 8-hour day, equal pay for equal work by women, abolition of convict and child labor, public ownership of utilities, and the establishment of cooperatives. Reliance was placed on educational and political methods rather than on collective bargaining. Strikes were to be employed only as a last resort.

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

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

An internal conflict led to the decline of the Knights of Labor. Leaders who favored processes of collective bargaining clashed with those committed to political means and basic social change. Moreover, the immedi-



**Frank J. Farrell, a Negro delegate, introduces Terence V. Powderly, the "General Master Workman," to the tenth annual convention of the Knights of Labor, held in Richmond, Va.**

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

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

## The American Federation of Labor

By 1881 the nucleus of a new organization had taken shape. Devoted to "pure and simple unionism," its goals were higher wages and improved working conditions. The craft unions surviving the depression of 1873 were almost exclusively absorbed in problems of their respective trades. Many of these unions developed strong, centralized, national organizations supported by an increasing number of local lodges. Benefit funds were also collected to assist their members or their families during strikes and times of financial stress due to unemployment, injury, or death.

In 1881, six prominent craft unions—those of the printers, iron and steelworkers, molders, cigar makers, carpenters, and glassworkers—and a variety of other labor groups met in Pittsburgh and established the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. Its leaders were Samuel Gompers and Adolph Strasser, both of the cigar makers' union. At the start the Federation had approximately 45,000 members; for 5 years it remained weak and was overshadowed by the Knights of Labor.

When the Knights at their annual convention in 1886 refused to agree to respect the jurisdiction of the large craft unions, several of the latter met at Columbus, Ohio, and founded the American Federation of Labor. The F.O.T.L.U., also in convention at Columbus, amalgamated with the new group. Gompers was elected first president of the new Federation, a position he held, with the exception of 1 year (1894–95), until his death in 1924.

The strength of the AFL resided primarily in the unions of carpenters, cigar makers, printers, iron and steelworkers, and iron molders. It began with a membership of about 138,000 in 1886 and slowly doubled that number during the next 12 years.

## Membership Growth, 1890–1920

In the three decades following 1890 the AFL consolidated its position as the principal federation of American unions. The first decade of growth was slow, but from 1900 to 1904 membership rose rapidly, from half a million to a million and a half, and then increased irregularly to 2 million by the outbreak of World War I. During and immediately following the war years, membership again rose rapidly, reaching more than 4 million in 1920.



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



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

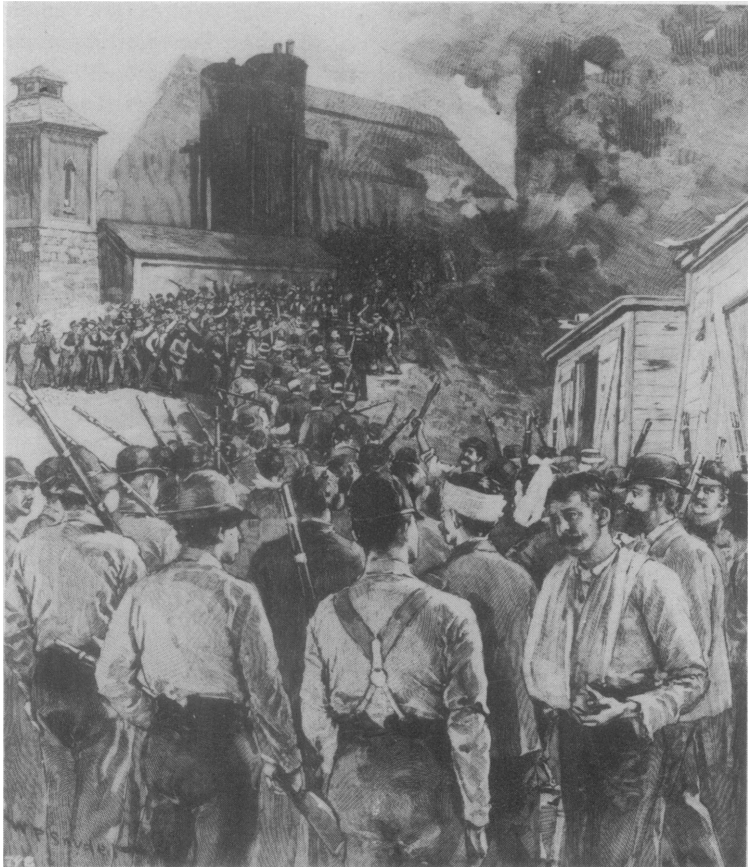
Before World War I the principal union gains occurred in the coal mining, railroad, and building-trades unions. The most important union of coal miners was the United Mine Workers, an industrial union which, after a strike in 1902, established itself as the largest and one of the most completely organized affiliates of the AFL. In other industries, organizations of crafts or amalgamated crafts still largely prevailed.

## Renewed Industrial Conflict

The emergence of the labor movement as an influential national economic group did not occur without opposition or set-backs. In the 1890's, large corporations which had appeared on the economic scene vigorously fought the efforts to unionize their employees. At times these clashes resulted in violence, injuries, and even death. For example, the unsuccessful struggle of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers against the Carnegie Steel Co. at Homestead, Pa., in 1892 was climaxed by a pitched battle between company-imported Pinkerton detectives and strikers which resulted in 10 deaths before the intervention of the National Guard restored order.

The strike of the American Railway Union led by Eugene V. Debs against the Pullman Palace Parlor Car Co. at Pullman, Ill., in 1894 provoked sympathetic walk-outs on many railroads serving the Chicago area. Federal and State troops were used and court injunctions were obtained against the union. Twenty-five persons were killed and 60 were injured during this controversy. Elsewhere in the country industrial disputes sporadically flared into open violence.

After 1902, following a period of rapid union growth, employer opposition stiffened and became more highly organized. Prof. Carroll Daugherty,



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

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

Most of the powerful ones [employers], believing that unionism was growing too strong and fearing further encroachments on their control of industry, decided to break off relations, and the years from 1902 to World War I were characterized by a definitely increasing anti-unionism.

Daugherty then adds:

Scientific management and "efficiency" systems were introduced in many plants, much to the discomfiture of many skilled craft unions. A variety of union-smashing tactics were adopted by employers. Vigilante groups and citizens' committees were fostered to resist unionization activities. Court decisions upheld as a rule most of the employers' anti-union practices. In the face of these new difficulties the membership of the AFL at first fell off a little and then resumed growth at a much slower rate than before 1902.

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

### Labor's "Nonpartisan" Politics

During the years between 1900 and the beginning of the First World War, unions concentrated on raising wages, establishing the 8-hour workday, and securing other improvements in working conditions through collective bargaining. On the whole, they resisted the efforts of various political forces in the labor movement to obtain union support for partisan programs. The political role of organized labor was debated in various conventions of the AFL at the turn of the century when, according to Lewis Lorwin, "The principle of non-partisan politics, summed up in the dictum 'to defeat labor's enemies and to reward its friends,' received official sanction." In practice this principle meant that the AFL opposed any "independent labor party" but officially supported measures and candidates and even the programs of regular political parties favorable to the interests of labor.

As a consequence, labor was frequently successful in obtaining legislative reforms. The first years of the century, for example, saw the passage of several State laws regulating the employment of women and children in industry and providing for protection against industrial hazards. Workmen's compensation laws were adopted in most States, and in 1913 the United States Congress created a separate Department of Labor.

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

by Federal courts in labor disputes. This law was hailed by Samuel Gompers and others as the "Magna Carta" of labor. Enthusiasm over the Clayton Act was short-lived, however, since subsequent court interpretations virtually nullified labor's anticipated gains. In 1915, Congress passed the Seamen's Act, regulating many of the conditions of employment for American sailors; the Lloyd-La Follette Act, giving public employees the right of lobbying and affiliating with labor organizations; and, in 1916, enacted the Adamson Act, establishing a basic 8-hour workday for railroad workers engaged in interstate commerce.

## Radical Opposition

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

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

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was formed in 1905 by several dissident union and political groups. It was pledged to the "abolition of the wage system" and to the organization of the great mass of unskilled factory workers and of migratory or "casual" laborers. The



**15,000 Iowa trade-unionists hold 1-day holiday in Des Moines, protesting a State bill outlawing the closed shop.**

IWW organized workers primarily on an industrial basis and was partly successful for a limited period in some areas throughout the country, notably in the wheat fields, mines, and lumber camps of the West as well as in a few other scattered areas of industrial tension. The militant tactics used to press its demands, particularly during the First World War, brought the IWW into public disfavor and caused several States to outlaw the organization. Many of its leaders were prosecuted and sentenced to long terms in prison. Once considered a possible contender to the AFL for supremacy in the labor movement, the IWW declined rapidly after 1913.

### **Labor and the First World War**

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Chapter III.—Between Two World Wars

### Open Shop Era and Depression

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

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

The economic recession in 1921 and 1922 resulted in many serious work stoppages, such as the railroad shopmen's strike in the summer of 1922. These protests, however, failed to check a general wage reduction movement which also marked the beginning of a decline in union strength. Many unions continued to lose ground despite the rise in business activity, which occurred in the late 1920's. Professors Millis and Montgomery in their book *Organized Labor* advise that the 1920's were years which should "according to historical precedents, have witnessed

labor militancy, aggressiveness in conquering unorganized areas and in entrenching more strongly job control already obtained." Instead, this period "found old and established unions experiencing difficulty in maintaining past gains and something akin to inertia, pacifism or disillusionment pervading the movement as a whole."

The successes of antiunion employers in many industries (metal, automobile, railroad, etc.) gave this period its popular title—the "open shop era." To weaken or disrupt labor organizations employers in these years introduced a variety of welfare measures, ranging from athletic fields to pension plans, as well as such repressive measures as the use of spies and strikebreakers. Company unions dominated by employers were likewise established. "Yellow dog" contracts, requiring a worker to promise, as a condition of employment, that he would not join a labor union, were also used effectively.

The varied effects of this period on the union movement are described by Lewis Lorwin:

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

From 1920 to 1923 total union membership fell from about 5 million to slightly over 3½ million. It still remained at this lower level (approximately 3,625,000) in 1929, at the height of the country's "prosperity." Of the 105 AFL international and national unions active in 1929, only 44 had held their own or expanded their membership after 1925. Most of these were in the building and printing trades, transportation, Government service, and amusements.

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

## Recovery and Expansion

It was not until after the enactment, in the spring of 1933, of the National Industrial Recovery Act, including section 7 (a) which guaranteed the right of employees to organize into unions of their own choosing and to bargain collectively with employers, that trade-unionism in the United States began to revive. This revival brought a tremendous influx of new members from the mass-production industries into the ranks of unions. Another contributing factor was the enactment, in 1932, of the Norris-La Guardia Act, which limited the use of court injunctions in labor disputes.

Workers in the automobile, rubber, cement, and aluminum industries were rapidly organized on an industrial basis. These new unions were chartered directly by the AFL as Federal labor unions, since no corresponding international unions existed to absorb them.

Many of the national and international unions which were affiliated with the American Federation of Labor also registered substantial gains in membership between 1933 and 1935. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union increased its membership from 40,000 to over 150,000. The roster of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America rose from 94,000 to 130,000. Membership in the International Association of Machinists expanded from 75,000 to 90,000. Other unions reported smaller but nonetheless significant increases.

Further growth was slowed down temporarily by court invalidation of the National Industrial Recovery Act in May 1935 and by the rapid growth of employee representation plans established primarily for the purpose of checking the spread of unionism.

The National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act), passed July 5, 1935, guaranteed the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively with their employers. It also prohibited employer-dominated or -financed, company unions.

After the Supreme Court upheld this act in April 1937, organized labor made even greater advances than under the NIRA. By the end of 1937, the teamsters' union reported a membership of 210,000, or three times its 1933 membership; the International Association of Machinists had 138,000 members; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers nearly doubled its membership, rising to 171,000; and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union expanded from about 25,000 members in 1933 to 107,000 in 1937.

The Fair Labor Standards Act was a major example of national labor legislation designed to help the worker in the solution of his economic problems. This law, in effect since 1938, sets minimum wage, overtime, and child labor standards which apply to employees engaged in interstate



**Building owned by the AFL International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in Washington, D. C.**

commerce or in the production of goods for interstate commerce. The act received particular support from unions in the textile and apparel industries, both of which contained large low-wage segments, generally in the Southern States, and from the mass-production industries. The 40-cent minimum hourly wage provided by the original act was raised to 75 cents in January 1950.

## Division in the Labor Movement

Progress in membership was accomplished in spite of—or perhaps because of—an internal struggle which developed in the American Federation of Labor, primarily over the industrial versus craft unionism issue. The San Francisco (1934) convention of the American Federation of Labor adopted by unanimous vote a report of its resolutions committee which declared that in the mass-production industries new methods had been developed for organizing workers whom it had been “most difficult or impossible to organize into craft unions.” The report continued:

To meet this new condition the Executive Council is directed to issue charters to national and international unions in the automotive, cement, aluminum and such other mass-production and miscellaneous industries as in the judgment of the Executive Council may be necessary to meet the situation.

The resolution also indicated that the jurisdictional rights of existing trade-unions would be recognized. Organizations along craft lines would be retained in those industries where the lines of demarcation between crafts were distinguishable.

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

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

## Formation of Committee for Industrial Organization

A few weeks after the 1935 convention, six AFL affiliated unions and the officers of two other AFL unions formed a "Committee for Industrial Organization," with the stated purpose to promote organization of the workers in mass-production and unorganized industries and to encourage their affiliation with the American Federation of Labor. The committee was later joined by four additional AFL unions.<sup>2</sup>

The executive council of the American Federation of Labor characterized the activities of the Committee for Industrial Organization as "dual" to the AFL and in January 1936 requested the Committee to disband immediately. The CIO rejected the request. The 10 international unions officially participating in the work of the CIO were suspended from the AFL by the executive council in September 1936 and this action was upheld by the convention in November of the same year.

The CIO held its first constitutional convention in November 1938. At this convention the Committee for Industrial Organization was re-organized as a federation of national and international unions under the name "Congress of Industrial Organizations." The new federation included 9 of the 10 unions suspended from the AFL and some 32 other groups or "organizing committees" established to recruit workers in various industries. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union did not affiliate with the CIO and returned to the AFL in 1940.

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

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<sup>2</sup> The unions active in the formation of the CIO were: United Mine Workers, represented by John L. Lewis, who was chairman of the organization; Amalgamated Clothing Workers; International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; United Textile Workers; International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers; and International Association of Oil Field, Gas Well, and Refinery Workers. Two union officials, Charles P. Howard of the International Typographical Union who became secretary of the committee and Max Zaritsky of the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers, participated as individuals without committing their organizations to the movement. The following four unions joined shortly after the formation of the committee: International Union of United Automobile Workers, United Rubber Workers, Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, and Federation of Flat Glass Workers.

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

With the increased recognition of unions, relations between labor and management gradually improved. The "sit down" strikes which had occurred during the first flush of unionization in some of the mass-production industries subsided. Many unions had won "recognition" and more and more workers were protected by written agreements setting forth their wages, hours, and working conditions.

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



## Chapter IV.—The Second World War and After

### The War Years, 1942–45

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

Shortly after the declaration of war on December 8, 1941, President Roosevelt called a conference of union and industry leaders, at the conclusion of which he announced a voluntary pledge from labor not to sanction strikes for the duration of the war in return for a pledge by management representatives not to permit lock-outs. These pledges were parts of an agreement establishing a National War Labor Board to consider all labor-management disputes affecting the war effort, and to provide procedures for their peaceful settlement. This Board, set up in January 1942, was composed of representatives from labor, management, and the public at large. Regional boards were organized on a similar basis, to handle controversies of local importance. As in the earlier National Defense Mediation Board, which had sought to adjust disputes affecting the rearmament program, labor representation was equally divided between the AFL and CIO.

In December 1942, representatives from three major labor groups (AFL, CIO, and Railway Brotherhoods) were appointed to the Management-Labor Policy Committee, a consulting body for the War Manpower Commission. Similar joint committees were appointed in the regions and local areas to assist in the over-all program of providing workers for war industries. These committees gave practical advice and suggestions in the training, recruitment, and transfer of workers.

Organized labor also played an active role in many phases of the war production program. It was represented on the first defense agency, the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, established in May 1940. With the creation of the Office of Production Management in January 1941, Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (CIO), was appointed by President Roosevelt to share authority with the Director General, William S. Knudsen, president of General Motors.

Under the auspices of the War Production Board, labor-management committees were established in many plants for the purpose of stimulating output and reducing employee absenteeism. In addition, most of the other war agencies established plans whereby the unions participated in the various Federal programs.

With the marked rise in employment, and the participation of representatives of organized labor in the wartime activities of the Government, union membership increased. Assurance that unions would not be undermined by foregoing their right to strike, or by wartime shifts in employment, found expression in the War Labor Board's "maintenance-of-membership" formula. This provided in general that workers should become and continue to be members of the union as a condition of employment. Although wages were held in check by the Government's stabilization policy, workers obtained various so-called "fringe" benefits, such as improved vacation and holiday provisions, shift differentials, and welfare and pension plans. Finally, leaders of the AFL and CIO agreed to suspend rival organizing campaigns where these might interfere with the war effort.

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

During the war, few national unions came into existence, although certain unaffiliated unions, such as the National Federation of Telephone Workers and the Foreman's Association of America, gained new prominence. Collective-bargaining agreements were extended over large sections of industry. Strikes occurred but union leaders and Government representatives sought their speedy settlement. Some issues were postponed when it was found that they could not be settled within the existing framework of control.

Extension of union membership to workers without regard to race, creed, or nationality, which had been gradually increasing over the years, was greatly accelerated during the war. Expanded employment of Negroes, particularly in the mass-production industries, made their



**Officers of the AFL Office Workers Union meet with officials of the U. S. Pipe and Foundry Co. in Chattanooga, Tenn. to sign collective bargaining agreement.**

acceptance into the unions on an equal basis imperative if wage and working condition standards were to be maintained. Prejudices which had existed through the years gradually broke down as white and Negro workers learned to respect each other as fellow workers on the job. Most unions which had previously refused to admit Negroes to membership relaxed their rules and removed racial restrictions from their constitutions.

In the West and Southwest particularly, the National Farm Labor Union, chartered by the AFL in 1946, sought to protect and improve working standards threatened by Mexican laborers and migrant farm workers, who accepted wages below those necessary to maintain adequate living standards.

To carry out its program, the NFLU conducted a two-pronged campaign with the assistance of the AFL. Legislation was sought, on both a National and State level, to improve the working standards and living conditions of migrant workers, and to prevent the further importation of

farm labor. At the same time, organizing drives were conducted to bring more workers into the union in order to make true collective bargaining possible.

## Postwar Conflict and Readjustment

The end of hostilities in 1945 confronted organized labor and employers with a host of new problems. More than 10,000,000 service men and women were demobilized in the 12 months following VJ-day, August 14, 1945. Thousands of factories retooled to meet the demands of a civilian, peacetime economy.

Many factories cut their scheduled hours from wartime levels of 48 or more a week to 40 and less. Others shut down temporarily or permanently. Wage earners, confronted with serious losses in "take-home" pay, sought to maintain their wartime earnings. Accordingly, union demands soon crystallized into requests for wage-rate increases of about 30 percent—the approximate advance workers deemed necessary to preserve their former earnings. Many employers, uncertain of the speed with which reconversion could be accomplished, and opposed to the continuation of price and other wartime controls, voiced their inability to meet the wage proposals of organized labor.

This conflict between labor and management was further aggravated by the partial termination of stabilization restraints, which had held the upward movement of the cost of living and of rates of pay within moderate bounds during the war years. The War Labor Board's "Little Steel" formula, which sought to confine increases in wage rates to a level not more than 15 percent above January 1941, had prevented the abnormally high rates of pay which characterized some industries in World War I.

Both labor and management wanted to be free to bargain across the conference table and, if necessary, to test their economic strength. These desires were expressed by many representatives of labor and of management and were reflected in Government policy as hostilities ceased. On August 16, 1945—less than 48 hours after VJ-day—President Truman announced that the National War Labor Board would be terminated. During the war the Board had weathered numerous crises, but pressure for revision of its "Little Steel" formula, or for outright abandonment of stabilization controls over wages, rose steadily in 1945. On August 18, President Truman issued an order permitting wage increases without specific Government approval, provided the increases would not serve



**Samuel Gompers.**



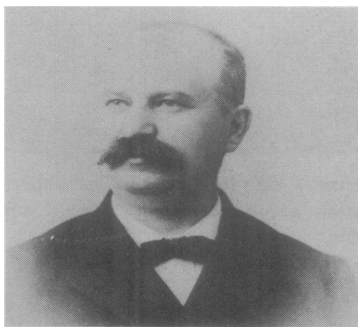
**William Green.**



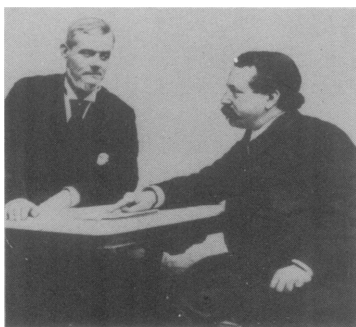
**John L. Lewis.**



**Phillip Murray.**



**Adolph Strasser, president 1877–91. AFL International Cigar Makers Union.**



**Samuel Gompers (*right*) greets British labor leader David Holmes, a delegate to the 1894 AFL convention in Denver, Colo.**



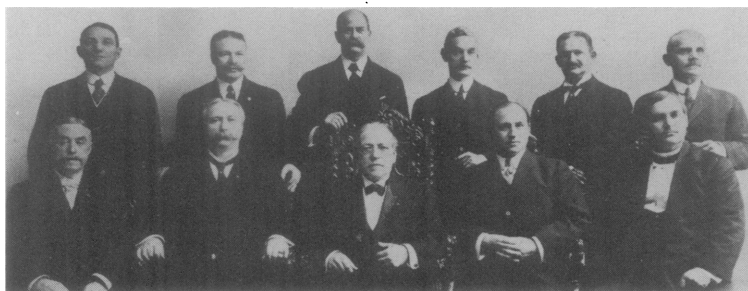
**AFL-CIO Permanent Unity Committee explore possibilities for labor unity: AFL Vice President Charles J. MacGowan, President William Green, and Vice Presidents Daniel J. Tobin and Dan W. Tracy; CIO Vice Presidents Emil Rieve, Walter Reuther, Allan S. Haywood, Frank Rosenblum, and Joseph Curran, and Secretary-Treasurer James B. Carey.**



**Summer class of AFL Hotel & Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union at the University of Wisconsin's School for Workers.**



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



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



**Local 507, International Hod Carriers, Building & Common Laborers Union, AFL, donates station wagon to the Long Beach, Calif., chapter of the American Red Cross.**



**Executive board meeting of the International Association of Machinists. President Al J. Hayes sits at the head of the table, in front of a bust of Tom Talbot, the union's founder and first president.**



**AFL union chiefs calling at the White House in 1932 to give President Hoover a petition urging the passage of the Costigan Bill for direct relief to the unemployed.**



as a basis for higher prices or added cost to Federal agencies purchasing goods or services from contractors. The stage was thus set for a return to "free" collective bargaining within the framework of existing price levels.

Wage adjustments were not made easily in many large industries. Beginning in the autumn of 1945, a wave of strikes engulfed the oil, automobile, steel, and coal industries. This unrest in the labor movement prompted President Truman to call a national labor-management conference in November 1945, with the hope that some formula for industrial peace could be reached. The conference produced few tangible results, and controversies continued. Altogether, 42 large strikes, each involving 10,000 or more workers, occurred from VJ-day to the end of June 1946.

Out of these disputes a wage increase "pattern" of 18½ cents an hour evolved for some major mass-production industries, particularly those producing automobiles, steel, electrical equipment, and rubber tires. Hundreds of thousands of other workers also obtained substantial increases. The average increase was approximately 14½ cents for all workers receiving "first round" postwar increases.

In resisting postwar wage increases, many employers pointed to the difficulties of absorbing such increases so long as prices of their products remained subject to Government control. Largely as a result of these protests, the Office of Price Administration, which had "policed" prices during the war, was permitted to expire on June 30. Although the "OPA" was revived a month later on a limited basis, by the end of 1946 virtually all price controls were ended.

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

Yet as prices continued to rise, workers found themselves worse off than when the war ended. By December 1947, the cost of living for the city worker averaged about 30 percent higher than on VJ-day.

Contract negotiations proceeded more slowly during 1948. It was late in May 1948 before general industrial resistance to wage increases was



**Members of Local 100, CIO Transport Workers Union, in New York City, receive down payments on a retroactive pay raise from their local president, Matthew Guinan.**

overcome by the unions. At that time General Motors signed a 2-year agreement with the United Automobile Workers (CIO) for an 11-cent hourly increase. This agreement provided also for subsequent automatic adjustments in wages based upon changes in the consumers' price index of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Other settlements soon followed. In June, the United Mine Workers negotiated a \$1-a-day increase in wages and a boost from 10 to 20 cents in the payment, per ton of coal mined, to their welfare and retirement fund, which had first been established in a contract between the union and the Government in 1946. Several weeks later, the steel industry agreed to wage increases averaging 13 cents an hour.

During 1949, emphasis in negotiations shifted from wages to pensions and other supplementary benefits intended to protect the health and welfare of workers and their families. This was particularly true after the United States Supreme Court, by declining to review a lower court decision in the *Inland Steel* case, ruled in effect that the problems of health and welfare, and old-age pensions were proper subjects for collective bargaining.

Particularly significant as a pattern were the pension and health benefits negotiated by the United Steelworkers of America (CIO) with all major steel producers, and by the United Automobile Workers (CIO) with the Ford Motor Co. The steel agreements were negotiated in the autumn of 1949 (after a strike that lasted more than a month) following rejection by the companies of pension and social insurance proposals suggested by a Presidential fact-finding board. The steel plans generally provided pensions of \$100 a month, including payments under the prevailing social security laws, for employees retiring at age 65 after 25 years of service. Health and welfare benefits for both workers and their families were also included in these agreements.

Where wage increases were negotiated, they averaged between 5 and 10 cents an hour. Perhaps the most notable gain was made by 16 non-operating railroad unions. These unions secured hourly wage increases of 7 cents, and a reduction in their basic workweek from 48 to 40 hours with no reduction in pay. Outstanding among the protracted negotiations during 1949 was the United Mine Workers' dispute with the bituminous-coal operators, which extended over 9 months and involved a series of industry-wide strikes and 3-day workweeks. The agreement, as finally signed in March 1950, included a wage increase of 70 cents a day and an increase in operator's payments to the welfare and retirement fund from 20 to 30 cents per ton.

## Recent Labor Legislation

For over a century, trade-unions developed in the United States without specific Federal legislation to aid in their activities. Prior to 1926, the attitude of the courts in administration of the law as it related to labor had been primarily restrictive, with injunctions, damage suits, and criminal prosecutions in frequent use.

The Railway Labor Act of 1926 was a significant reversal of the trend of legal opposition to union activity. This legislation, proposed by both management and the unions, was based on the premise that peaceful labor relations can be attained through free collective bargaining between employers and unions. This act was sustained by the United States Supreme Court in 1930.

The Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932 brought to an end what has often been called the era of "government by injunction" in the history of labor-management relations. It eliminated major judicial restrictions on strikes,

picketing, and boycotts. The act also eliminated the use of the "yellow dog" contract, and limited the liability of unions and their officers and members for unlawful acts of individual officers, agents, or members.

With the passage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (Wagner Act), the Congress enacted its first law dealing specifically and entirely with problems of trade-union organization and activities outside of the railroad industry. This law guaranteed to employees "the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection" (Section 7, NLRA).

The act created a National Labor Relations Board with two major functions: (1) to prevent and remedy "unfair labor practices" by employers which discourage or interfere with self-organization of employees or the practice of collective bargaining; and (2) to designate the bargaining representatives in the event of controversy over which union should represent employees or over the size and composition of the unit to be certified for bargaining purposes. As to the bargaining unit, the Board might decide as "appropriate" a unit composed of only skilled craftsmen, or all production workers in a factory or, in some instances, a number of different factories or employers depending upon the facts of the case.

The growth of union membership from less than 4 million in 1935 to over 15 million in 1947 reflected the encouragement to collective bargaining expressed in the Wagner Act. A shift in legislative policy occurred with the passage of the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 (Taft-Hartley Act). It was enacted in June 1947 in spite of strong objections by organized labor and a Presidential veto.

Certain agreement provisions, such as the closed shop, were banned under the revised law, while others, such as the union shop, check-off, welfare funds, grievance procedure, and contract termination provisions, were restricted or regulated. A list of "unfair labor practices"—actions which the unions might not undertake without violating the law—was added to counterbalance, according to its advocates, the unfair labor practices prohibited employers under the Wagner Act.

The Labor Management Relations Act also imposed certain limitations on strikes and lock-outs. Secondary boycotts, for example, became "unfair labor practices" and stoppages over such issues might be penalized by court action and law suits for damages.

Special rules were written into the law governing controversies or

strikes which imperil the national health or safety. In any such dispute or strike, the President of the United States may appoint a "board of inquiry" to investigate the facts. Thereafter, an injunction forbidding the occurrence or continuance of a stoppage for a period of 80 days can be obtained. During this "cooling off" or "waiting" period, further efforts are made to settle the dispute. If no voluntary agreement is reached within 60 days, the employees are given the opportunity to vote by secret ballot as to whether they accept the "final offer" of their employer. After all these steps are taken, however, the law requires that the injunction be dissolved.

It is important to emphasize that under the law workers in the United States are not prohibited from quitting their jobs in attempts to improve their wages or working conditions. The "right to strike" is considered by organized labor as a part of the guarantee in the United States Constitution which forbids "involuntary servitude."

In addition to legislation regulating labor-management relations, other important acts dealing with wages and hours, social security, employment security, job training, and workman's compensation have been enacted during the last 25 years for the benefit of the working man. Probably the most important of the Federal laws, from the standpoint of number of workers covered, are the Fair Labor Standards Act, which sets minimum wage and hour standards for workers manufacturing goods for, or engaged in, interstate commerce, and the Social Security Act, which provides old age and survivors insurance, unemployment insurance, and other benefits.

## Chapter V.—The Labor Movement in 1950

As it exists today, organized labor in the United States is made up of more than 200 autonomous national and international unions. Most of these unions are affiliated with either the American Federation of Labor or the Congress of Industrial Organizations. A number of railroad and Government workers' unions, as well as a few others, have never become a part of a federated group. Several other unions have at various times belonged to either the AFL or CIO but have withdrawn or been expelled. All of these unaffiliated unions are commonly known as "independents."

As of September 1950, the Bureau of Labor Statistics had record of 208 national or international unions, of which 107 were affiliated with the AFL, and 30 with the CIO (after expulsion of all Communist-dominated unions), while 71 were independent. The number of local unions chartered by "parent" or national unions is estimated to be more than 70,000. Total membership of these unions is estimated to be between 14 and 16 million, including 675,000 Canadian members.

In relation to the Nation's total labor force about one out of every four workers now belongs to a union. Union members, however, comprise more than 40 percent of that portion of the labor force in which unions have concentrated their organizing efforts. This portion excludes agricultural and domestic workers, the self-employed, and other smaller segments of the labor force which, at least until recently, were not susceptible to trade-union activities.

In addition to the locals which are chartered by their respective parent organizations, some local unions are directly affiliated with the AFL (federal labor unions) or with the CIO (local industrial unions). These directly affiliated locals are usually confined to trades and industries where no appropriate national union exists.

Both the AFL and the CIO maintain city and State organizations with which their affiliated unions within the area are expected to join. At the beginning of 1950, the AFL had 50 State federations of labor, including Alaska and Puerto Rico, and 811 city centrals. The CIO reported 39 State industrial councils and 245 city and county councils.

Over-all policies of both the AFL and CIO are determined at the annual conventions by delegates elected to represent constituent unions. Between conventions, authority is vested in elected officers and an executive body selected from affiliated unions. Affiliation with either the AFL or CIO is formalized by both organizations through issuance of "charters" outlining the affiliated union's jurisdiction, that is, the craft or class of workers, or industries, from which a union may recruit members and represent workers in collective-bargaining negotiations.

Unions are frequently described as *craft* or *industrial* unions, depending upon whether they seek to organize only specified skilled groups or all workers in an industry irrespective of their skills. Few American unions, however, now fall clearly within either of these two types. Many unions are better described as *amalgamated* or *multicraft* because they include two or more skilled or semiskilled groups. Other unions are better classified as *semi-industrial* because, although they may include all production workers within an industry, they frequently exclude certain maintenance, technical, or clerical groups. Generally, most AFL unions tend toward the craft or multicraft type (e. g., the International Plate Printers, Die Stampers and Engravers' Union, and the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers) while most CIO unions are more readily classified as industrial or semi-industrial (e. g., the United Steelworkers, the United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers, and the Transport Workers Union).

To coordinate the common interests of many crafts, the AFL has established four "departments," each composed of a group of international unions with common interests in certain industries. Thus, the Building and Construction Trades Department has 19 affiliated international unions; the Metal Trades Department, 14 unions; the Railway Employees' Department, 6 unions; and the Maritime Trades Department (established in 1946) 5 unions. Several unions are members of more than one of these departments.

Each of the AFL departments holds separate conventions, and functions through subordinate bodies organized on a local, State, district, or, in the case of the railway shopcrafts, on a "system" basis. Unlike other departments, the Union Label Trades Department, the fifth in the AFL, is composed of 56 affiliated AFL unions maintaining union labels or insignia. This department is designed to encourage union organization and higher standards of workmanship through appeal to consumers to buy union-made goods or services. No similar department exists in the

CIO, although matters of common concern are frequently handled through its regular and special committees.

## Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is an orderly procedure whereby representatives of workers meet with representatives of employers to negotiate or "bargain" over the terms of a contract designed to govern their working relations. The results of the bargaining are set forth in a written agreement, signed by representatives of the union and the employer. This agreement specifies the terms of employment and conditions of work, provides guarantees against arbitrary discharge, and sets up machinery for cooperation in applying the terms and meeting the problems arising out of the agreement. It is estimated that over 100,000 such agreements are currently in effect, and that at least 15 million workers are directly covered by them.

Agreements vary widely. Some are narrowly restricted to matters of wages, hours, and working conditions. Others provide for the joint administration of health, welfare, and pension plans; job evaluation and merit rating schemes; production bonus arrangements; and joint efforts to increase production and decrease costs.

With wages stabilized during the Second World War, provisions for paid holidays, paid vacations, health and welfare benefits, and arbitration procedures were written into many agreements for the first time. The postwar period has witnessed a marked growth in the number of contracts with such provisions. Another feature of contracts negotiated within the last 2 years is the liberalization of previously established practices, such as the increase in the number of paid holidays, provision for an extra week of vacation to employees for long service, and extension of the coverage or increase in the benefits under insurance and other welfare plans.

Welfare and retirement plans under union contracts covered at least 3 million workers by mid-1948. In 1949 and early in 1950, there was an increase in welfare and retirement plans under collective bargaining. By mid-1950 over 7½ million workers were covered by such plans. In addition, many AFL international unions and their locals have for many years maintained benefit programs financed entirely by membership dues or assessments. About 70 AFL affiliates disbursed approximately \$67 million



for death, sick, unemployment, old age, disability, and miscellaneous (including strike) benefits in 1949.

The interest in vacations as an objective of collective bargaining is reflected by the rapid increase in the number of agreements providing vacations. In 1940, only about 25 percent of all workers under union agreements were entitled to paid vacations, as compared with 85 percent (11 ½ million workers) in 1944. Currently, virtually every union agreement contains provision for a paid vacation.

The majority of agreements run for fixed periods, usually 1 year, after which they may be automatically renewed by mutual consent or renegotiated by the parties. Some agreements of longer duration contain provisions for special renegotiation of the wage clause during the life of the over-all agreement. Other agreements provide for wage adjustments in the event of increased productivity or cost-of-living changes. Provisions for cost-of-living adjustments tied to the consumers' price index of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics gained special prominence during the latter part of 1950, when prices surged upward because of the Korean war.

## Other Union Functions and Activities

As labor unions grow, their activities and obligations to their members expand. New services are provided. Many unions have established research and education departments to assist the international union officers and local union committeemen in developing facts and statistics for use in collective bargaining. New members have to be informed and kept abreast of developments within the union and the Nation. For this purpose, newspapers were started and educational classes or "institutes" were organized. The expanding role of the union in the community, State, and Nation drew labor representatives into various public agencies and groups to give expression to labor's interest in politics, education, welfare, charitable, and other civic undertakings.

Union functions may now be classified broadly as follows: administration of internal union matters; negotiation and administration of collective agreements; educational and beneficial activities; and participation in community, State, and National affairs.

Administration of internal affairs involves the holding of conventions and meetings of the executive board, direction of organizing activities, and general supervision over local union practices in admitting new

members, collecting dues, and handling finances. Apprenticeship regulations, intraunion grievances or disputes, and strike action also fall within the scope of union administration. The degree to which "headquarters" exercises control or supervision over these matters varies. Some unions are highly centralized with many policies determined and functions carried



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



CIO worker's education classes in Texas.

out by the parent national union. Other unions prefer to leave all except major policy matters to their locals. The extent to which collective bargaining is carried on at the national or local level often is a factor of importance in determining the degree of local union autonomy.

Normally the convention, composed of delegates representing the membership, is the highest policy-making body of the union. Of 208 national and international unions surveyed in 1949, 57 scheduled conventions annually and 72 biennially. Eighteen unions met every 3 years, 28 every 4 years, and 13 at 5-year intervals. A few unions determined their convention dates through referendum votes of their membership. Less than 10 made no specific provision for holding a convention.

Membership drives are usually planned and supervised by the central offices of national unions, although they are of necessity carried out at

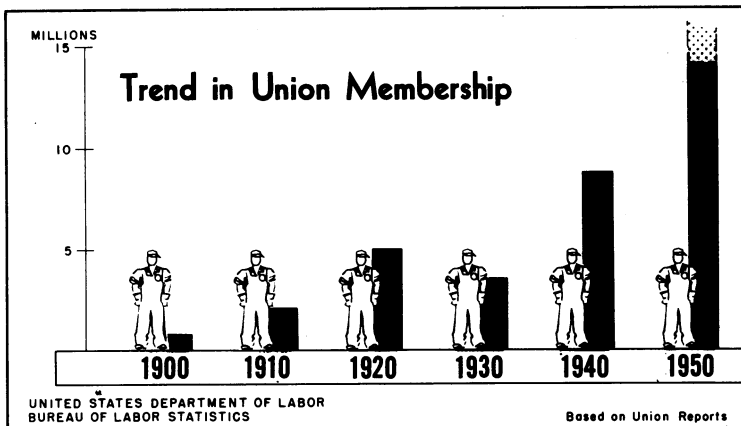
local levels. Most unions launched intensive membership campaigns as wartime pressures subsided. In the spring of 1946, both the AFL and CIO renewed their organizing activity in the South, recognizing that so long as this great area remained relatively unorganized, the strength, if not the existence of unions in other regions, was threatened. This was particularly true of the textile, apparel, and hosiery unions. In the words of Philip Murray, CIO president, "the South had to be organized in order to maintain a healthy national economy." Various unions reported, however, that employer opposition and difficulties in securing a favorable public opinion in the area retarded the recruitment of new union members and dampened the initial success of the drive in the South.

Educational facilities are provided by many unions. Certain craft unions, in particular, support trade schools to help members develop or improve their industrial skills. Other educational programs conducted as part of regular union meetings or in special classes of "institutes" have a more general purpose. Lectures, discussions, and moving pictures are the methods of instruction commonly used. Some union educational effort is specifically aimed at training officials in handling routine union problems. For example, unions frequently provide special instruction in accounting methods for local treasurers or in techniques of handling shop grievances for shop stewards. Classes are provided also for the study of parliamentary law, public speaking, and American Government and democracy.

Most unions publish newspapers or journals. These range in size from small leaflets designed solely to keep their members aware of the union's activities to full-size magazines with special departments and articles to help the members interpret vital national and international issues. These several hundred weekly and monthly publications are official organs of local and national unions as well as of the central CIO and AFL organizations. Unions publish also a wide variety of pamphlets and special reports in connection with their educational, political, and organizational programs.

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

In politics, both the AFL and CIO, as well as most of the independent



unions, officially continue to adhere to Gompers' slogan of "reward labor's friends and defeat labor's enemies." Unions have been increasingly active in political campaigns in recent years and have frequently been important factors in local and national elections. Their support is usually determined by the issues and the candidates of each particular election rather than by adherence to any political party. Labor groups also maintain representatives in Washington to indicate their attitudes on legislative proposals before Congress and to press for action which they consider desirable. Similar "legislative representatives" are maintained in most States to follow the progress of State legislatures.

Passage of the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 (Taft-Hartley Act) stirred organized labor to renewed efforts in the field of political "education" and activity. The American Federation of Labor at its annual convention in October 1947 established "Labor's League for Political Education" to meet the "need for sound political education and effective political action by organized labor." The league was established as an independent organization, financed by contributions of AFL members and their friends.

The Political Action Committee of the CIO, which was founded in 1943 to present the CIO viewpoint on political matters and encourage worker participation in national and local elections, was also revitalized following the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act. The independent railroad unions also created their own political league. Similar committees were appointed by several of the larger national and international unions. As

with the AFL, these organizations were financed by voluntary contributions from individual workers.

On the international front, labor's wartime interest in foreign affairs found peacetime outlets. Representatives of American unions assisted the United States Military Government to reorganize shattered labor groups in the occupied countries. Food, clothing, and supplies were furnished to help relieve suffering and destitution. Representatives of the AFL and the CIO joined in March 1948 with labor groups from Marshall Plan countries in a significant conference to consider the participation of labor in the rehabilitation of Europe. With the establishment of the Economic Cooperation Administration to handle Marshall Plan aid, a number of AFL and CIO representatives were appointed to assist in the labor phases of ECA. Both the AFL and CIO have international policy committees to guide and coordinate their international activities.

In the autumn of 1945 labor organizations from 54 countries (including the CIO, the British Trades Union Congress, and the Soviet Labor unions) formed the World Federation of Trade Unions. The American Federation of Labor declined to participate in the formation of the WFTU on the ground that the Soviet unions did not constitute a free and democratic trade-union movement. Early in 1949, the CIO together with the British Trades Union Congress and several other national groups withdrew from the WFTU which had become a tool of international communism.

Late in 1949, representatives of the free trade unions joined in forming a new International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The AFL, CIO, and the United Mine Workers cooperated in the formation of this organization, which represents an estimated 51 million workers in about 60 countries outside the Communist sphere of influence. The ICFTU is committed by its constitution to support "the right of all peoples to full national freedom and self-government" and to "champion the cause of human freedom, oppose and combat totalitarianism and aggression in any form."

In January 1948, the AFL, the Railway Labor Executives' Association, and the International Association of Machinists joined with labor movements from a number of Latin-American countries to establish the Inter-American Confederation of Workers which in January 1951 was absorbed by the newly formed Inter-American organization of the ICFTU. This regional organization claims to represent about 20 million. The AFL has

also played a conspicuous role in the International Labor Organization (ILO) since the United States became a member in 1934. This worldwide organization, with a membership from 62 countries, considers measures and carries on programs designed to improve labor standards and working conditions on an international scale. Annual conferences of worker, employer, and government delegates are held and a permanent headquarters is maintained in Geneva, Switzerland.

Organized Communist activity as it exists today in the American labor movement dates from November 1920, when the Trade Union Education League (later, the Trade Union Unity League) was founded. The TUEL at first rejected the theory of dual unionism, and adopted a policy of "boring from within" established unions. Its efforts failed.

With the organization of the TUUL in 1929, the Communists for a time abandoned their previous tactics and sought to establish industrial unions independent of the AFL. This attempt to split the union movement likewise failed.

After the CIO was formed the Communists shifted most of their interests to that organization. Some of them became organizers and national union officers. As time passed it became evident that they were less interested in legitimate union activities than in the advancement of the "party line." Their espousal of Soviet Russia became increasingly distasteful to the CIO leadership and the rank-and-file membership.

Final expulsion of the Communists from positions of control in the CIO was assured when the CIO convention in the fall of 1949 adopted a constitutional amendment barring from office in the national CIO any individual "who is a member of the Communist Party, any fascist organization, or other totalitarian movement" or who "consistently pursues policies and activities" followed by such organizations. Two other constitutional changes empowered the CIO executive board to remove, or refuse to seat, offending officers and to revoke the charters of affiliates found guilty of pursuing policies or engaging in activities prohibited by the CIO's non-Communist amendment. Directly connected with the Communist issue was the expulsion by the convention of two affiliated unions, the United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers, and its third largest affiliate—the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers.

Action by the CIO executive board against the remaining unions charged with Communist activities followed during the early months of 1950. The International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers was expelled February 15, 1950. The Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied

Workers Union of America, the United Office and Professional Workers of America, and the United Public Workers of America were expelled March 1, 1950. The American Communications Association and the International Fur and Leather Workers' Union of United States and Canada were expelled June 15, 1950. Three additional unions, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards, and the International Fishermen and Allied Workers Union of America, were expelled on August 29, 1950. The last-mentioned union, however, merged with the ILWU, effective July 1, 1950.

In taking this series of actions against its left-wing affiliates, the CIO executive board noted six periods during which the expelled unions followed Communist Party policy after the mid-30's. These included (1) the prewar period of collective security; (2) the period between the Soviet-Nazi pact of 1939 and the invasion of Russia by Germany in June 1941; (3) the period between June 1941 and the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 1941; (4) the period between 1942 and June 1944, during which Communists constantly called for opening a second front; (5) the period after the Tehran Conference when the Communists called for complete cooperation with the capitalist class; and (6) the postwar period characterized by increasingly sharp criticism of American foreign policies and labor's espousal of the Marshall Plan.

## Labor Unity

Efforts toward labor unity have been made repeatedly since the late 1930's. At first, the differences stemmed primarily from the views of the AFL and CIO on the industrial organization of mass-production workers. As the years have passed, the importance of this issue has diminished. Later discussions, started during the Second World War, have turned to problems of a procedural nature. For example, the AFL desires "organic" unity, while the CIO favors "programmatic" unity; that is, cooperation on specific issues—whether legislative, political, or international—with organic unity to come at an indefinite future date.

In spite of the appearance of continued disagreement, the two organizations are, in fact, drawing closer together. The expulsion of Communist-dominated unions by the CIO removed one of the principal barriers to unity. The AFL and CIO cooperated during 1949 in the establishment of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. They have



worked together in other ways to combat Communism and to promote democracy and improved living and working conditions in other countries.

In political and legislative activities leaders of the LLPE-AFL and PAC-CIO work together. Joint labor committees have been established in various localities to promote a unified political program. The passage of time and emphasis upon current problems have also tended to reduce the long-standing differences over craft or industrial unionism.

Late in 1950 organized labor's growing concern with the Government's emergency defense program brought the AFL and CIO together in a United Labor Policy Committee. This Committee, which also included the Railway Labor Executives' Association, served as a common spokesman for the affiliated groups. It spoke out strongly in favor of greater representation of labor in the various defense agencies and demonstrated the ability of the several labor groups to join forces and pool their views in a common objective.

# APPENDIX

## Highlights in the American Labor Movement

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

- 1828** The Workingmen's Party, including wage earners, craftsmen, and farmers, was organized in Philadelphia in July. It went out of existence in 1832.
- 1834** The National Trades' Union was formed in New York City. This was the first attempt toward a national labor federation in the United States. It failed to survive the financial panic of 1837.
- 1836** The National Cooperative Association of Cordwainers, the first national labor union of a specific craft, was formed in New York City. There is no further record of this organization after 1837. Other trades which formed national organizations within the next few years were the printers, comb makers, carpenters, and hand-loom weavers.
- 1840** An Executive order issued on March 31 by President Van Buren established a 10-hour day for Federal employees on public works without reduction in pay.
- 1842** In the case of *Commonwealth v. Hunt* the Massachusetts Court held that labor unions, as such, were legal organizations, and that "a conspiracy must be a combination of two or more persons, by some concerted action, to accomplish some criminal or unlawful purpose, or to accomplish some purpose not in itself criminal or unlawful by criminal or unlawful means." The decision also denied that an attempt to establish a closed shop was unlawful or proof of an unlawful aim.
- Massachusetts and Connecticut passed laws prohibiting children from working more than 10 hours a day.
- 1847** The first State law fixing 10 hours as a legal workday was passed in New Hampshire.
- 1848** Pennsylvania passed a State child labor law setting the minimum age for workers in commercial occupations at 12 years. In 1849, the minimum was raised to 13 years.
- 1852** The Typographical Union, the first national organization of workers to endure to the present day, was formed.
- The first law limiting working hours of women to 10 hours a day was passed in Ohio.
- 1859** The Iron Molders' Union, the forerunner of the present Molders and Foundry Workers Union (AFL), was organized in Philadelphia.
- 1862** The "Molly Maguires," a secret society of Irish miners in the anthracite fields, first came to public attention. The "Mollies"

were charged with acts of terrorism against mine bosses. They went out of existence in 1876, when 14 of their leaders were imprisoned and 10 were executed.

- 1863** The present-day Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was founded.

Laws providing fines and imprisonment for strikers preventing other persons from working were passed in Illinois and Minnesota.

- 1866** The National Labor Union, a national association of unions, was organized. A federation of trades' assemblies rather than of national craft organizations, it included radical and reform groups. Drifting into social rather than trade-union endeavors, it lost craftsmen's support and went out of existence in 1872.

- 1867** The Knights of St. Crispin was organized on March 7 to protect journeymen shoemakers against the competition of "green hands" and apprentices in the operation of newly introduced machinery in the shoe industry. The last vestige of the order disappeared in 1878.

- 1868** The first Federal 8-hour day law was passed by Congress. It applied only to laborers, workmen, and mechanics employed by or on behalf of the United States Government.

The first State labor bureau was established in Massachusetts.

- 1869** The Noble Order of the Knights of Labor was organized in Philadelphia. It maintained extreme secrecy until 1878, then began organizing skilled and unskilled workers openly. By winning railroad strikes against the Gould lines, and advancing the program for the 8-hour day, the Knights of Labor gained many followers, claiming over 700,000 members in 1886. It declined rapidly thereafter with the emergence of the AFL.

- 1870** The first written contract between coal miners and operators was signed on July 29. It provided for a sliding scale of pay, based on the price of coal.

- 1874** The Cigar Makers International Union in San Francisco made first use of the union label.

- 1877** The first recorded instance of the use of Federal troops in a labor dispute during peacetime occurred during a strike of railroad workers against a 10-percent cut in pay. Railroads operating east of the Mississippi River were involved. Marked by violence and property damage, more than 100 were reported killed and 200 injured.

- 1878** The Greenback-Labor Party was organized by a fusion of the Greenback Party and Workingmen's Party.
- 1881** The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (FOTLU), which later became the American Federation of Labor, was organized in Pittsburgh in November with 107 delegates present. Leaders of 8 national unions attended, including Samuel Gompers, then president of the Cigar Makers International Union.
- The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, later to become one of the largest AFL unions, was organized.
- 1882** Peter J. McGuire, a New York City carpenter, suggested setting aside 1 day in the year in honor of labor. The first Labor Day celebration was held in New York City during September of the same year.
- 1883** The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen was organized.
- 1884** A Bureau of Labor was established in the Department of Interior. It later became independent as a Department of Labor without cabinet rank. It again returned to bureau status in the Department of Commerce and Labor, which was created in 1903, where it remained until the present Department of Labor was established in 1913.
- 1886** Under the initiative of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, some 340,000 workers participated in a movement for an 8-hour day.
- The Chicago Haymarket riot, in which one policeman was killed and several others wounded, aroused public opinion against unionism and radicalism and for several years stopped the movement for the 8-hour day. The meeting in Haymarket Square had been called as a peaceful protest against the killing of four strikers and wounding of others during a strike for the 8-hour day at the McCormick Reaper Works.
- The American Federation of Labor was organized at a convention in Columbus, Ohio, in December as successor to the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. Other trade unions and city councils which had failed to gain autonomy within the ranks of the Knights of Labor also joined the AFL.
- 1888** The first Federal labor relations law was enacted. It applied to railroads and provided for arbitration and Presidential boards of investigation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

**1919** Led by President Gompers of the AFL, the Commission, created by the Peace Conference at its second plenary session in January, recommended the inclusion in the Peace Treaty of labor clauses creating an International Labor Organization. The ILO held its first session in Washington, D. C., beginning October 29.

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

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

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

The Transportation Act provided for a tripartite Railroad Labor Board and terminated Federal control of railroads on March 1, 1920.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 1930** The Railway Labor Act's prohibition of employer interference or coercion in the choice of bargaining representatives was upheld by the Supreme Court. (*Texas & N. O. R. Co. v. Brotherhood of Railway Clerks.*)

- 1931** The Davis-Bacon Act provided for the payment of prevailing wage rates to laborers and mechanics employed by contractors and subcontractors on public construction.
- 1932** The Anti-Injunction (Norris-La Guardia) Act prohibited Federal injunctions in labor disputes, except as specified, and outlawed "yellow-dog" contracts.  
Wisconsin adopted the first unemployment insurance act in the United States.
- 1933** Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act provided that every NRA code and agreement should guarantee the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively through their representatives without interference, restraint, or coercion by employers. (Title I of act declared unconstitutional in *Schechter v. U. S.* on May 27, 1935.)  
The Wagner-Peyser Act created the United States Employment Service in the Department of Labor.
- 1934** The first National Labor Legislation Conference was called by Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins to obtain closer Federal-State cooperation in working out a sound national labor legislation program. Annual conferences have been held regularly since 1934.  
The United States joined the International Labor Organization.
- 1935** The National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act established the first national labor policy of protecting the right of workers to organize and to elect their representatives for collective bargaining.  
The Bituminous Coal Conservation (Guffey) Act was passed to stabilize the industry and to improve labor conditions. (Labor relations provisions declared unconstitutional on May 18, 1936.)  
The Committee for Industrial Organization was formed on November 9. (See footnote, page 26.)
- 1936** In the first large "sit down" strike, the United Rubber Workers (CIO) won recognition at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.  
The Anti-Strike Breaking (Byrnes) Act declared it unlawful "to transport or aid in transporting strikebreakers in interstate or foreign commerce." (Amended June 29, 1938.)  
The Public Contracts (Walsh-Healey) Act established labor standards on Government contracts, including minimum wages, overtime compensation for hours in excess of 8 a day or 40 a

week, child and convict labor provisions, and health and safety requirements.

- 1937** After a 3-month sit down strike at Flint, Mich., General Motors Corp. agreed to recognize the United Automobile Workers (CIO) as the bargaining agent for its members, to drop injunction proceedings against strikers, not to discriminate against union members, and to establish a procedure for handling grievances.

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

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

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

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

- 1938** United States Steel Corp. recognized the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee as the bargaining agent for its members. A 10-percent-wage increase and an 8-hour day and 40-hour week were negotiated.

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

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

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

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

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

The UAW (CIO) won recognition at Ford Motor Co. after a

10-day strike. The union and the company signed a union-shop agreement—the first with a major automobile manufacturer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 1945** The CIO affiliated with the newly formed World Federation of Trade Unions. (It withdrew in 1949.) The AFL held that the labor organizations of Soviet Russia were not “free or democratic” and did not affiliate with the WFTU.

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

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

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

The United Automobile Workers (CIO) ended a 3 ½-month

strike against General Motors Corp. by negotiating an hourly wage increase of 18½ cents, after a Presidential fact-finding board had recommended 19½ cents.

Locomotive Engineers (Ind.) and Railroad Trainmen (Ind.) ended a national 2-day strike following an injunction and under threat of legislation to draft the workers. They accepted the 18½ cents-an-hour increase recommended by the President.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The President appointed the Commission on Labor Relations in the Atomic Energy Installations, which, on April 18, 1949, recommended establishment of a panel to protect free collective bargaining in atomic plants.

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

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

Settlement of a steel industry-United Steelworkers (CIO) strike on the basis of noncontributory \$100 monthly pensions at age 65, plus death, sickness, and accident benefits, followed a recommendation by a Presidential fact-finding board that employers

contribute 6 cents an hour toward pensions and 4 cents an hour toward social insurance for each worker.

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

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

A new world-wide labor organization—the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)—with the AFL, CIO, and United Mine Workers participating, was formed at a meeting in December at London, England, of labor representatives from 60 countries.

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

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

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

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