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The American Labor Movement: A Socio-Historical Approach

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THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT:

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Dedicated with deepest affection
to Dolores Malta whose moral and
financial support is exceeded only
by her motherly devotion.

Acknowledgement to all Women in Labor:

In this paper you will notice the deletion of the important and passionate part that women have played in the history of the labor movement in America. The lack of their mention must not be seen as an inference that their contribution was small or ineffective, but instead that the subject matter is so intensely important that it cannot be dealt with in the limited scope of the paper. Research in this area can be done successfully with the help of such authors as Philip Foner, Women And The American Labor Movement; Alice Henry, Women And The Labor Movement"; Theresa Wolfson, "The Woman Worker And The Trade Union"; Barbara Mayer Wertheimer, We Were There: The Story of Working Women in America, which runs from Colonial time to 1912. ...The Arthur and Elizabeth Sclesinger Library of the History of Women in America, formerly the Women's Archives at Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA; the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, Northampton, MA; the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress and the National Archives in Washington, D.C.; the Taminent Institute Library at New York University.

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Chapter I

History of Labor In The United States: An Emerging Need for Unionization

Until the end of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, workers in the United States in general tended to act individually rather than collectively when dealing with employers. The labor force was divided into two distinct groups: the skilled (usually craft workers) and unskilled common laborers. In the history of the labor movement in the United States, until almost the end of the nineteenth century, the frontier was an important factor in determining the economic status of the labor force: internal migrations were frequent and the change of residence was usually permanent. Because of this freedom to move from place to place and because of the opportunity for individual advancement, it was relatively easy for an individual to pass from one class to another, changing his social and economic status; for this reason, class conflict doctrines failed to take substantial and permanent root with the American people. Of particular importance in the early development of the labor movement in the United States were the long predominance of an agricultural economy, the self-reliant individualism of a people constantly on the move, and the delayed urban growth and industrialization. Other forces that affected the growth of organized labor were slavery, in those regions or sections where it existed, alien immigration which tended to create differences

and conflicts between wage earners, the division of state and federal authority, and the conservatism of the courts which conditioned what labor legislation was enacted.

For many years organized labor was weak and usually only local in character, and protective labor legislation on both the state and the federal level failed of enactment or was tardy in development. This is not to say that as the country grew there was no progress in labor's status. There were gradual gains in pay, in productivity, and in working and living standards, but it was progress made--frequently against bitter opposition. Though individual plants did not require many workers and though the relations between employers and employees were usually cordial and friendly, the psychological relationship that existed between the two was that of master and servant. The acceptance of this attitude was a definite obstacle to organization of workers in America. Labor as an organized economic and political force did not become important until mass production came to be a significant characteristic of American industrial economy and the new demands for large output came to require the gathering of many employees under one roof.

Michael Harrington has been associate editor of The Catholic Worker, organizational secretary and member of the board of directors of the Workers Defense League, consultant to the Fund for the Republic, editor of the New America, organizer of the marches on the Democratic and Republican national conventions in the 1960's, chairman of the board of the League for Industrial Democracy,

member of the national executive committee of the Socialist Party from 1960 to 1972, national chairman of the International Union of Socialist Youth, delegate to the Congress of the Socialist International, member of the board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union, and the A. Philip Randolph Institute. He is the author of The Other America, The Retail Clerks, The Accidental Century, Toward a Democratic Left, and Socialism. The Other America has been credited with influencing President Kennedy to initiate the War on Poverty.

In an interview, when asked, "Has the working class forever lost its revolutionary and even reformist momentum?" Harrington replied:

> "It's not clear the working class ever had revolutionary momentum in the United States. The American labor movement is unique because it was formed out of the coming together of diverse and often antagonistic immigrant groups. The American working class had a heterogeneity that no other working class had in its formative period. The result was that the national, ethnic, and religious differences among American workers inhibited the development of a consciousness of class and of a class politics. The revolutionary tradition among American workers was confined to somewhat isolated groups and to minority groups. I'm thinking of the Industrial Workers of the World, The Western Federation of Miners, and so on. These revolutionary workers tended to be migrant workers, loggers, metal miners, even migrant agricultural workers. They did not create any kind of lasting movements for themselves. Second, in terms of reform of the American labor movement, the A.F.L. was one of the first and most effective organized bodies pushing for reform. Since that time, the movement has continued its reformist impulse--though certainly less dramatically."[1]

This work is based on that very question. The research and

the socio-historical analysis of the findings will address that very question. Was there ever a revolutionary momentum in the American labor movement? This work examines two methodological theories. One theory is that of the historian, the great man theory; the other is that used more often by the sociologist which relates the rise and fall of the labor movement phenomena to fluctuation in employment and cyclical patterns.

The following is a brief summary of the two theories:

Theories of Labor Movements

One widely described theory of labor movements is that popularized by John R. Commons: a theory which related the rise and fall of these phenomena to fluctuation in employment. According to this theory, labor movements emerge in periods of widespread unemployment. When most or all labor markets are glutted with labor supplies far in excess of demands, potential employees become dissatisfied and they eagerly listen to suggestions for change. Their idleness and the destruction of habitual patterns of behavior increase their susceptibility to suggestion. When cyclical changes reverse the pattern so that labor markets are characterized by excesses of demands over available supplies, employees rapidly lose interest to proposed reforms. Moreover, their attention is restricted by their work so that they tend to be less readily mobilized for precipitate action.[2]

Another hypothesis, the so-called "great man" theory of such movements, emphasizes leadership rather than the circumstances surrounding employees as the major factor in such movements.

Those who hold to this hypothesis insist that the definitive factor is the discovery of a guiding genius, a Karl Marx, Ferdinand Lassalle, or Georges Sorel. The movement, they hold, is essentially a reflection of the inspiration and leadership of such a man.[3]

Whatever theory of labor movements is accepted, it is evident that leadership plays an important part. Moreover, types of leadership required by labor movements show distinctive differences in the various phases of such movements. In the early planning stages of a movement, leaders are usually intellectuals who seek to explain its objectives and convert others to their point of view. Generally, they describe a long term point of view regarding the movement as a reform or revolution whose objectives are obtainable only in the far-distant future. They seek to enlist as many followers as possible and to convince them of the necessity for participation in the movement. Numerous examples of such leaders might be cited, but Marx, Lassalle, Louis Blanc, Terence V. Powderly, and Pierre J. Proudhon are illustrative of leaders of this type.

Once such a movement gets under way and begins to encounter opposition, there is an obvious tendency to change leadership. In this stage, the movement takes on a militant air and leadership is likely to be of a military type. It is in this stage that arbitrary control is imposed upon members--that those who are half-hearted in their participation may be scorned or ostracized. The leader can brook no opposition and is, therefore,

intolerant and arbitrary.

When the movement is more or less successful, has accomplished many of its objectives, and is established as an acceptable and permanent institution, leadership changes to what may be described as a statesman or executive type. In this stage, typified by the major labor organizations in the United States, the majority of the problems are largely those of day-to-day operations. Leadership must be competent to meet these problems and to carry forward the programs of the organization. For the most part, minor differences among members and minor criticisms of the leadership can be tolerated. Samuel Gompers was actively effective throughout most of the labor movement.[4]

As has been noted, labor movements have held a variety of objectives and have taken many forms. Their members have frequently joined with other reformist or revolutionary groups, so that objectives have been complicated, if not, indeed, conflicting. There is no single shape, pattern, or model. All, however, have in common their general objective of advancing the social and economic status of employees, and all represent a type of social and economic collaboration and cooperation that is distinctive and highly significant in the dynamic progress of modern societies.[5]

In accordance with the "great man" theory, if one man were to be chosen as that "great man" in the history of the American Labor Movement, it would surely be Samuel Gompers. His long career as leader of the movement and President of the American

Federation of Labor is evident in even the most scant overview of the history of labor in America. Without his leadership, it is possible that the labor movement in America would have taken an altogether different path.[6]

Chapter II

History of Labor in The United States: A Chronicle

The Colonial skilled craftsman frequently combined within his person the functions of merchant, master and journeyman. He made his product in his own shop to the order of his customers. Before long, as the growth of cities expanded his market, the master workman began to employ journeymen, workers with a handicraft or trade. He also began to stock "shop work" for a more generalized retail trade. The merchant-master functions became one and the journeyman function spun off. One result was the formation of employer and workers organizations. The masters, apparently, were first to become cognoscente of the change. The associations of masters usually preceded the organization of journeymen's associations or trade unions. The master-merchants organized to eliminate "unfair" competition and cutthroat prices.

The first American unions were guided by the Colonial organizations of master workmen and craftsmen, who were inspired by the example of the English guilds, although the guild system, as such, was not transplanted successfully to Colonial soil. The Massachusetts General Court, in 1644, placed shipbuilding under the supervision of a chartered company, patterned after "contemporaneous" English guilds. Shoemakers and coopers were granted similar rights four years later. However, these charters

were not renewed and the guild system failed to take root in America. Organization among the crafts continued and by the American Revolution master silversmiths, coppers, wigmakers, and others were organized by crafts. Intercraft organizations for economic and philanthropic ends also existed.[7]

One of the first "strikes" in America took place in New York City in 1741 when bakers combined their efforts and refused to 'bake bread under certain conditions." In the History of Labor in The United States, edited by John R. Commons, "this 'strike' is sometimes seen as a revolt of master merchants against regulation of prices by public authorities rather than a strike of journeymen to maintain wages against employers." Still earlier, in 1677, the licensed cartmen of New York engaged in a similar action when they "combined to refuse full compliance when ordered to remove the dirt from the streets for threepence a load." Both the cartmen and the bakers rebelled against a price that was insufficient to cover both their operating expenses and their wages. When the cartmen refused to haul and the bakers to bake, they "acted in the dual capacity of merchants and laborers" and clouded their claim as the first workmen to strike in America.[8]

The first genuine labor strike did not occur in America until 1786, when the Philadelphia printers "turned out" for a minimum wage of six dollars a week. The Carpenters Company of Philadelphia was organized in 1724 to establish a "book of prices"; the master cordwainers of the same city banded together

in 1789 "to consult together for the general good of the trade and determine upon the most eligible means to prevent irregularities in the same."

The first continuous organization of wage earners in America was that of the Philadelphia journeyman shoemakers, organized in 1792, reconstituted in 1794 and continued until 1806. This body went so far as to institute what later came to be known as the closed shop. This compelled employers to hire only association members. Shipwrights, railors, hatters, cordwainers and other similar groups tended to band together as associations or unions.[9]

The labor movement at first was a rebellion against a rising industrialism. Those drawn to it were the middle class and transcendentalists reformers largely based in New England. This was a period of utopianism, communal experiments, agitation for land reform and free public education. This was still a time when life was largely rural, with only three percent of the population living in six towns. The 1790 census, the first in America, showed 3,900,000 population, of whom some 750,000 were slaves. Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Charlestown, Baltimore and Salem accounted for most of the population. Communication was still poor, but improving. Short on capital, short on skilled labor and short on machinery, manufacturing consisted largely of the village sawmill or gristmill on the edge of a convenient stream.[10]

Alexander Hamilton, in vigorous pursuit of his policy of

promoting American manufacturing, recorded in 1791, some 70 paper mills, a cotton-yarn mill operating with American made spinning frames, a woolen mill, glass works, brick kilns, and a growing number of forges and thriving blast furnaces. The outbreak of war between Great Britain and Napoleonic France in 1793 accelerated American interest in coastal and river commerce. This was, in Richard Hofstadter's phrase, the "seed-time of American industrialism."[11]

Philadelphia, being the largest city of the colonies, was the seat of numerous early attempts at "unionization." The Philadelphia shoemakers founded a worker's organization in 1792 which lasted less than a year, but it was reconstituted in 1794 and continued until 1806. This body even went so far as to institute what later came to be known as the closed shop compelling employers to hire only association members. Ship-wrights, cordwainers, tailors, hatters, and other similar groups also tended to band together as associations or unions. The first union of printers is reported to have been organized in New York City in 1794. The tailors of Baltimore, among the first to organize, conducted one of the earliest strikes in American history. Ten years later, in 1805, the Philadelphia cordwainers went on strike for a new wage scale and other de-mands, but the leaders of the strike were arrested and tried for "conspiracy...to raise their wages" and were convicted, and an important precedent was thus set for the criminal prosecution of labor union activities. Four years later, cordwainers in

New York City struck for higher wages, and they were found guilty of conspiracy and fined. It was not until thirty years later that a Massachusetts court, in the famous Commonwealth vs. Hunt (1842) decision, stated that a strike of workers to improve their conditions was lawful and not a criminal conspiracy.[12]

By 1820 numerous local unions had sprung up in various cities, but these associations were purely local in character and in structure. A number of them were only temporary organizations which disappeared at the end of a strike. Sometimes they embraced both workers and master employers. In addition to being concerned with improving wages, hours, and working conditions, these organizations were concerned with health and funeral benefits and social activities. But the generally unfavorable attitude of the courts hindered the growth of unionism and dissuaded workers from attempting to improve their status by engaging in strikes. Furthermore, the emergence of unions was paralleled by the formation of employer's associations which sought and employed non-union labor and frequently resorted to the courts in opposition to worker organizations.[13]

The effects of the Industrial Revolution began to be felt in the United States in the 1820's. Immigration was increasing and employers were able to obtain all the labor they required. In such a market the pay was small, the hours were long, and working and living conditions were poor. During this period when industry was being established, the employment of women

and children was becoming prevalent and the terms of their employment were particularly harsh. Nevertheless, while conditions in labor were poor, the 1820's and most of the 1830's were prosperous years in the United States and labor organization was stimulated. In 1827, the first trade association was founded in Philadelphia as the Mechanics Union of Trade Association. This city-wide union, which came to include fifteen different trade unions, is considered to represent the founding of the American labor-union movement. The Mechanics Union, which inspired other cities to form similar associations, became active in politics, but unsuccessfully so, and by 1831 it had gone out of existence. Labor was interested in the period not only in the demand for ten-hour working days, higher wages, and the general improvement of working conditions, but also in political and social reforms, such as public education. The years from 1834 to 1837 were marked by numerous strikes, but the panic of 1837, with its resulting business failures and widespread unemployment, brought a halt to unionization and to any attempts at reform in labor, wages and working conditions.[14]

The period from 1837-1865 was primarily a period of inactivity on the labor front. Some gains were made, however, the most important being the legislation of unions as a result of the Commonwealth vs. Hunt decision in 1842. Federal civil employees were granted the ten-hour day; the movement for an eight-hour day had been started, and railroad employees had, for the first time, set up a brotherhood.[15]

During the 1840's, reform and utopianism--only slightly concerned with workingman as a laborer--were the prime concern of labor. As the prosperity of the country increased, interest in these movements waned and many workers found less need for labor unions, but this attitude was not manifest in the large urban centers where the rising cost of living and the competition of European immigrants made it more difficult for native workers to hold their jobs. There was thus a revival of labor-union activity, but none of the efforts of the 1850's and early 1860's to form national unions had much success.[16]

During and after the Civil War, interest in labor organization was renewed as a direct result of the transition that the American economy was experiencing. Small plants were being replaced by large organizations, and the consolidation of industry was beginning, reducing labor to a more or less minor place. The power of capital was growing and the opportunities for advancing one's economic status were diminishing. The ten-hour work day was the exception rather than the rule; working conditions were of the poorest; the employment of women and children was increasing with the mechanization of industry, thus keeping wages low, and immigration was fostered. The largest and most influential labor organization that emerged in the immediate postbellum years was the National Labor Union, founded in Baltimore in 1866 by representatives of various trade assemblies, city centrals, budding national unions, and others. By 1868 the union included more than 600,000 members, but it

was more concerned with social and political reforms than with strictly labor-union problems. The union entered politics actively and in 1872 supported the Greenback Party, but with a preoccupation with politics it lost many of its members. Unsuccessful strikes and cooperative experiments were additional causes for its loss in national influence and it shortly disappeared from the national scene.[17]

In 1863, the first "Big Four" of the railroad unions was formed--the Locomotive Engineers Union. The conductors organized the Railroad Conductors Brotherhood in 1868, and the Locootive Firemen and Enginemen and the Railway Trainmen Brotherhood came into being in 1873 and 1883, respectively. These four organizations were destined to play an important role in the history of labor in the United States. Since railroading was a hazardous occupation, the railroad organizers, unlike those of typical labor unions, were "more interested in creating mutual insurance or benefit societies than in starting labor unions." As a consequence, these new unions organized their own accident and life insurance companies; benefits were emphasized in the brotherhoods' programs. This is not to say that wages and hours were overlooked, but, throughout the life of the brotherhoods, the railroadmen have remained aloof from other labor organizations, turning down all requests to join their forces with other unions in national organizations.[18]

Around that same time, the Knights of Labor, officially the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor, was formed. Still

clinging to the idea of a reformist type of union, it was set up in Philadelphia as a small local of cloth cutters. By 1878 it had expanded sufficiently to justify the formation of a national union. It was, originally a secret organization and came up against much opposition because of that characteristic, until finally the secrecy was abandoned. Terence V. Powderly was elected to head the organization and served in the capacity as General Master Workman until 1893. The Knights of Labor slowly increased in membership to more than a million members, but unsuccessful participation in the Midwestern railroad strikes of the 1880's plus the violence that accompanied some of the strike in Chicago, turned public opinion and labor in general against the union. The disastrous violence of a meeting in Haymarket Square in Chicago on May 4, 1886, which had been harangued by a number of alleged anarchists, marked an important change in the relations of employers and employees, and in the attitudes of the public toward unions. This resulted in strong anti-union feeling for many years in all circles. In part, at least, as a consequence of this change of public opinion, the membership and income of the Knights of Labor decreased rapidly, financial difficulties compelled the sale of its Philadelphia headquarters, and the organization became a shadow of its former self. Meanwhile, the unemployement and destitution resulting from the depression of the 1870's had given impetus to the militant secret organization called the Molly Moguies in the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania, and rise

to the bitter and destructive railroad strikes of 1877 on Eastern lines--particularly in Pennsylvania and New York.[19]

The AFL, through its affiliated Amalgamated Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers Union, organized in 1890, and struck for higher pay in the Homestead Mill of the Carnegie Steel Company in Pittsburgh in 1892. This strike is particularly memorable for the conflict between the Pinkerton detectives and guards employed by the steel company to protect the mill and the strikers. It ended unsuccessfully for the strikers after troops from the Pennsylvania National Guard had been called in. The labor strikers were virtually destroyed and Henry C. Frick, the steel plant manager, cabled Andrew Carnegie, who was in Europe at the time: "Our victory is now complete...do not think we will ever have any serious labor trouble again." Two years later a strike of Pullman employees set precedents for the use of the injunction and Federal troops that had an important bearing on future labor relations and developments.[20]

One of the first large scale attempts to set up an industrial union came at the time of the Pullman strike. Eugene Debs, in the latter half of 1893, organized the American Railway Union. When the Pullman Company, which operated parlor and sleeping cars on the railroads of the country, announced a wage reduction because of business declines, many of its employees joined the Debs union and a demand was made for the restoration of the pay cuts. This was refused, the union petitions were discharged, and the result was a strike which spread through-

out the country as employees of the various railroads refused to handle Pullman cars. There was a general halting of traffic, particularly in and out of Chicago where the strike effort was concentrated. An appeal was made by the Pullman Company to United States Attorney General Richard Olney for aid and assistance and, in spite of bitter resistance, an injunction was granted on the grounds that the strikers were interfering with the movement of mails. To enforce the injunction, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890, which made combinations in the restraints of interstate or foreign commerce illegal, was invoked for the first time against organizations of workers. A pattern of procedure that was to endure for nearly twenty years was thus established. A conspiracy charge could be made against unions on strikes, violence or no violence. The injunction, based on the Sherman Act, was used as a weapon of industrial strife, and where resistance was offered Federal troops were employed, with or without state approval, to enforce the law.[21]

The twentieth century opened an era of labor-union organization and growth that was to have profound and far-reaching consequences in the years to come. On June 3, 1900, delegates from seven garment workers' unions, representing some 2,000 workers, met in New York City and formed the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (I.L.G.W.U.), which soon afterwards received a charter from the AFL. The new union had an uphill battle in its fight against the sweatshop rules of the industry, but as a consequence of strikes in November 1909, in

July 1910, and in January 1913, and as a by-product of the agitation growing out of the investigation of the disastrous fire in the Triangle Waist Company's plant in New York City on March 25, 1911, the I.L.G.W.U. firmly established itself as a constructive force in the needle trades. During the same year (1913) a strike was conducted by men's garment workers in the Chicago plant of Hart, Schaffner & Marx Company, the result of which was the formation, on December 26, 1914, of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers with Sidney Hilman as president. The Amalgamated's course was not an easy one for the union was a constant conflict with the United Garment Workers, the older and more conservative union organized in 1891, as well as with their employers. However, in the next twenty years, the I.L.G.W.U. and the Amalgamated came to dominate the needle trades.[22]

As the labor organization movement grew, industry reacted violently through recourse to the courts and the use of the injunction to break up or prevent the movement from spreading and becoming powerful. The Danbury Hatters' Case (Loewe vs. Lawlor, 1903), was the first of a series of Supreme Court decisions that fixed the pattern for the use of injunction. This case involved a boycott by a union attempting to organize the employees of the Loewe Company, a hat-making concern of Danbury, Connecticut. The Company resisted; a strike was called, and a boycott by the union followed. Loewe invoked Section 7 of the Sherman Act and brought suit against the individual striking members of the union.

Because the union was not incorporated, each individual was found liable for a pro rata assessment of the fine imposed by the lower courts--a judgment which was upheld by the Supreme Court. This case was also important because it brought the secondary boycott under the ban of the Sherman Act and because the implications of the Supreme Court's decision seemed to be the effect that trade unions were illegal combinations in restraint of trade. The case dragged on until final settlement in 1917.

While the Danbury Hatters' case was still in the courts, the AFL became involved in another case which was to have even wider effects. In 1906 the metal polishers at the Bucks Stove and Range Company of St. Louis struck for a nine-hour day and applied to the parent union organization for aid. The AFL put the Stove Company on its unfair list, whereupon the company obtained a sweeping injunction forbidding a boycott. Samuel Gompers and others refused to heed the court's order. They were arrested, tried, and sentenced to jail, but they were never imprisoned. The case was retried and finally dismissed. This use of the injunction to prevent labor union organization and operation caused labor leaders to feel that they were being forced to renew their fight for the basic right to organize and strike for redress of grievances. The Courts seemed to have accepted the employer view that it was in the public interest to ban all union activities as being in restraint of trade. This situation continued until 1914 when the use of the in-

junction was limited, at least temporarily, by a clause in the Clayton Act stating that "the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce." Consequently, the antitrust laws could not be construed to forbid the existence and operation of labor unions or their legitimate activities.[23]

Unionization of the Coal Miners had come in the 1870's. There had been periodic strikes in the coal fields, but it was not until the United Mine Workers (U.M.W.) was organized in 1890 that a united front of consequences could be presented against the operators, many of whom, violently opposed to union recognition in any form or degree, were associated in a virtual trust under railroad domination.[24]

A strike call in the anthracite area was issued in 1900, and many miners, union and nonunion, laid down their tools. Under the influence of Senator Mark Hanna of Ohio, himself a large coal operator, and because the pending presidential campaign was to be waged with a prosperity slogan of the "full dinner pail," the demands were compromised and partially met by a ten percent wage increase. However, this proved to be an appeasement to gain the miners' vote. In May 1902, the miners, under the leadership of their president John Mitchell, again struck for higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, and recognition of the union. This time the coal operators bluntly refused to consider any demands or to have any dealings with the union leaders, although the latter offered to arbitrate their demands.

The strike continued through the summer with the operators still unwilling to meet the miners' representatives. President Theodore Roosevelt attempted to intercede, unsuccessfully, through the appointment of a commission of which former President Grover Cleveland was to be chosen chairman. The President finally let it be known to the operators privately that he would send in regular troops prepared, if necessary, to take over and operate the mines. After a stormy conference, the operators agreed at a commission of arbitration. The miners returned to work and, in March 1903, the commission announced an award of a ten percent (10%) increase in wages. The particular significance of this strike was its emphasis on the fact that in struggles between management and labor, the interests of a third party, the public, are paramount. Furthermore, for the first time in American history, a strategic industry had been brought to a virtual standstill by a labor dispute and the strike, instead of arousing the severe criticism and condemnation of the public, enlisted much public sympathy, for the public considered the coal operators a dangerous monopoly.

Throughout the following years the coal miners were not as fortunate in the efforts to improve their working conditions or wages. Late in the fall of 1913, the miners again struck and, again, recognition was the important issue. The company, controlled by the Rockefeller interests, refused any concessions. State officers did nothing to help the strikers or protect them from the ruthlessness and murder of women and children that took

place in the mining camps. Rockefeller's influence was so great that the governor asked for Federal Troops to help put the strike down. That help was granted. Strike breakers were allowed to be brought in under National Guard protection. Troops were engaged to work and guard the mines. Merciless raids against unarmed miners and their families were made. National guardsmen allowed no food, water or weapons to be brought into the striking miners' camp. The camp was riddled with machine guns operated by American troops, made up of men from the working class, and the camp was set on fire. Women and children who had been hiding in cellars beneath the tents were burned alive. Union leaders were captured and found shot to death with as many as fifty-four bullets in their bodies. As word spread of the massacre, a public outcry for investigation was heard. The House Committee on Mines and Mining questioned John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who claimed to be in Europe at the time, and also claimed to be unaware of the "trouble at the mine." The New York Times covered the strike and the hearings which drew national attention to Ludlow. Commission researchers compiled evidence to prove that Rockefeller followed the strike on an almost hourly basis and instructed his managers to continue to struggle to retain arbitrary power, and to prevent the machinery for collective bargaining, by which major abuses might automatically be corrected, and that they try to prevent unionism at "all costs." Although the remaining miners returned to work under some improved conditions, Rockefeller was uncompromising in his opposi-

tion to union organization and was generally sustained by the court in their policy of making nonmembership in a union a condition of employment. This strike and its results have led the historian to list it not as the miners' strike of 1913, but as the "Ludlow Massacre."[25]

The Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) was in 1905 a new national labor organization. Organized by the Western Federation of Miners, which had withdrawn from the AFL in 1897, and had formed the American Labor Party in conjunction with the Socialist Labor Party, believed in industrial unionism and the advancement of labor by direct political and economical action through revolutionary changes in the capital system. Both business and government fought against the I.W.W. in hopes that the system would remain the same. On January 12, 1912, a reduction of wages for some 30,000 workers in the Lawrence, Massachusetts textile mills brought on a historic strike. Although some of the strikers were members of the I.W.W., also known as the Wobblies, some belonged to the United Textile Workers of the AFL and still others were unorganized. The leaders of the strike were arrested falsely, on a murder charge, in hopes that without leadership the strike would fail. William D. (Big Bill) Haywood assumed leadership and by March 12 had won the strike. A wage increase and other benefits were forced from the employers.[26]

Encouraged by its unexpected triumph at Lawrence, the I.W.W. undertook the leadership of a strike in the Patterson, N. J.

silk mills in the spring of 1913. The Paterson authorities viewed the I.W.W. and its leadership as a revolutionary menace, and the strike was long and bitter. The Industrial Workers of the World had come up against its biggest test. Unlike happenings at Ludlow, the strikers were able to send their children and pregnant women to relatives or "friendly hosts" in the surrounding areas. Often children and mothers were arrested and jailed as they got off the arriving trains. Again public attention was of the upmost importance. The children's exodus was a dramatic move. At hearings set up for the investigation of the textile industry, Mrs. William Howard Taft, the President's wife, was in attendance. The textile industry had been protected by tariffs preventing foreign competition and enabling them a very high profit. The cut in wage was more than public opinion could take. The strikers were able to obtain their original wages but, considering the length of the strike and the hardships endured by the strikers and their families, the system remained the same. Although often portrayed as other radical organizations that have been romanticized and mythologized, so it was with the Wobblies. Wobblies did not carry guns and bombs nor burn harvest fields, nor destroy timber, nor depend on violence. Instead, they tried to educate the worker to the nature and dynamics of capitalist societies. They relied on knowledge and revolutionary action to develop a better system for the organization and function of the American economy. They organized along industrial lines, not crafts or

trade lines. They accepted as their members blacks, women, foreigners from any country, both skilled and unskilled members of the industry. This type of organization was unlike most union organizations and was not favored by most American workers because of the constant attempt by business, through government, to cling tightly to the capital system.[27]

Chapter III

Samuel Gompers (1850-1924) - His Personal History

The American labor leader, Samuel Gompers, was born in a London tenement on January 27, 1850. He was one of nine children of a Dutch immigrant of the Jewish faith. Samuel Gompers was an apprentice cigar maker at the age of ten. In 1863, at the age of thirteen, he came to the United States and settled in New York City's East Side. While still living with his parents in New York, he became a journeyman cigar maker. In 1864, he joined the Cigarmaker's Union because "I...accepted as a matter of course that every wage earner should belong to the union of his trade." It appears that at this time he did not have a conscious appreciation of the labor movement.[28]

This appreciation seems to have developed in many ways. It was common in those days for a one man owned shop to take on three, four, five, or even six other cigarmakers. The craftsmanship of the cigar maker was shown in his ability to utilize wrappers to the best advantage, to shave off the unusable to a "hairsbreadth," to roll so as to cover holes in the leaf and to use both hands so as to make a perfectly shaped and rolled product. These things a good cigar maker learned to do more or less mechanically, which left free time to think, talk, listen, or even sing. Gompers loved the freedom of that work, the freedom that accompanied a

skilled craftsman. He was eager to learn from the discussion and reading or to pour out his feeling in a song. They would sometimes chose someone to read to the group and in payment the rest would give the reader sufficient cigars so he would not be the loser. The readings were usually followed by discussion. These discussions allowed the shop members to get to know one another very well. They soon learned who could take a joke in good spirits, who could organize his thoughts in an orderly manner, and who could distinguish clever sophisticy from sound reasoning. The "fellowship that grew between congenial shopmates was something that lasted a lifetime."[29]

During this time, Gompers saw men who worked in factories. During working hours the men were not allowed to talk to each other, though working closely together. Men were hired to watch the men and patrol the shops. Men caught talking could be instantly discharged.

The unrest among his fellow workers caused Gompers to seek a deeper appreciation for the situation. He went to lectures at Cooper Union, read, discussed and debated with other cigar makers, and especially with his close friend, Ferdinard Laurell. Onetime leader of the Marxian-Socialist organization in the Scandinavian, Laurell taught Gompers about what he called the "true Marx," the Marx of trade unionism and labor struggle for better economic conditions. It was Laurell who introduced him to other refugee European Socialists. It was also Laurell who advised Gompers "...to learn all they (the Socialists) had to give...but

don't join." From discussions with this group, Gompers later recorded, "...came the purpose and initiative that finally resulted in the present American Labor Movement....We did not create the American trade union...but we did create the technique and formulate the fundamentals that guided trade unions to constructive policies and achievements."

Gompers' career as a labor leader began in 1875 when he became president of the Cigarmakers' largest affiliate, Local 144 in New York City. Two years later he led his local, in a desperate condition as a result of four years of depression, through a prolonged and unsuccessful strike against the poorly paid home-work system. Mothers, children too young to work outside the home, and the elderly engaged in piece work at very low rates.

The disaster of the strike convinced Adolph Strasser, president of the Cigarmakers' International, and Gompers that reform was necessary. Although bitterly opposed by Socialist elements within the organization, some of which ultimately seceded, Strasser and Gompers succeeded in their efforts to create a strong union. They gave the international officers control over local unions; they increased membership dues in order to create a large strike fund; they put control of the fund in the hands of international officers. The structure that they created ultimately became the pattern for most other internationals.[30]

Gompers' next step toward national leadership of the labor movement came in 1881 when he became chairman of the Committee on Constitution at the Pittsburg convention which established the

Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada. Although the organization failed to unite the skilled labor element, it was the period in which the Knights of Labor were the leaders of labor. It gave Gompers, who traveled around the eastern part of the United States on its behalf, a considerable reputation as an advocate of craft unionism.[31]

In 1886, when "The Federation" dissolved and the delegates to its convention joined with representatives from more than a score of internationals to create the American Federation of Labor, Gompers became the new organization's first president. Except for one year, he was re-elected to that position at every convention until his death, making his reign a total of thirty-seven years.

As president of the American Federation of Labor, Gompers was the spokesman for the "American Labor Movement" for nearly four decades. His conduct in office was that of the patriarch of a large Jewish family; guided strongly by tradition, conservative and cautious, righteous, almost tortured by a desire for respectability, he led through kindness and the gift of speech.[32]

Although he never formulated a "labor philosophy," Gompers, as head of the American Federation of Labor, did follow well defined principles, both positive and negative. He was firmly convinced that capitalism was permanent and that trade unions should work with and not against the capitalistic system. In part, his well-known hostility to Socialists and "intellectuals" was based on the fear that they would lead the trade unions

astray. He believed firmly in "craft unionism" for skilled workers and in bread and butter objectives: higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions.

Although Gompers ultimately compromised his principles by supporting the political policy of "rewarding friends and punishing enemies," he was fundamentally opposed to labor's active involvement in politics. His opposition was based on his belief that labor had nothing to gain from political action except immunity from interference by the government while it secured economic gain through collective bargaining, on his fear that political action would destroy the unity of the labor movement, and on his fear that the Socialists might capture any trade union political movement. He was opposed to "industrial unionism" because he could not comprehend an organization of the unskilled, whom he regarded enemies of the skilled. He fought "dual unionism" because it destroyed craft unity and because a "dual union" might furnish employers with strike-breakers in times of industrial conflict.[33]

Without official power, unappreciative of the potential benefits of political action, unperceptive of the developments in industry which made industrial unionism a necessity, Gompers nevertheless guided the American Federation of Labor through many crises: the Homestead and Pullman strikes, the open shop campaign, adverse court decisions, World War I, and beyond.

During his presidency, the wages of skilled laborers increased an average of 250 percent, hours of skilled laborers

declined an average of nine per week, the American Federation of Labor's membership increased from about 150,000 to 2,900,000. Gompers' influence upon the American labor movement continued long after his death on December 13, 1924, at San Antonio, Texas.[34]

Gompers married twice. His first wife, Sophia Julian, whom he married at seventeen, died in 1920. He married Grace Gleaves Neuscheler the following year.

Chapter IV

Samuel Gompers--His Theory and Praxis

Samuel Gompers' main focus and thrust for organization was known as "voluntarism." Voluntarism was slightly more than that narrow set of goals first stated in Gompers' strategy. It decisively reduced the value of politics and the interest in legislation for labor. It also generated an ideology in terms of which American labor came to live for many years. It managed to provide unionists with a larger framework for viewing American society as a whole than could be provided by mere strategy and as such it could exert an influence on men's thinking.

Voluntarism emphasized that industrial capitalism was powerful and nearly infinite in its capacity for survival. Such a powerful system could be counted on to set the conditions of existence into the indefinite future. Moreover, it was held, capitalism preserved certain conditions which were valuable for the survival of liberty despite its evident flaws and injustices. Revolutionary political action aimed at destroying it was, therefore, worse than a waste of time. It was absurd and it risked the possibility of instituting a more imperfect order still. Workers, it proposed, ought to turn instead to the correction of the injustices which had grown under industrial capitalism, especially those which affected them most directly and negatively. Despite the voluntaristic counsel that industrial capitalism should be reformed rather than repudiated, "voluntarists" did not believe that legislation, even "pro-labor" legislation, government, public officials or political parties could effectively

institute the needed reform. Each in its way was regarded to be an extension in the political sphere of the interests of the men who formulated the laws and ran the government and party organizations. None of them had a stake in protecting labor or representing its real interests. Only workingmen could understand and protect their interests. And only labor organizations built by workers could voice their grievances, secure good industrial conditions and labor-employer contracts to perpetuate them. Thus, union-building was the only appropriate form of social action workers could make under capitalist conditions to relieve the pressures and injustices capitalism brought into being.[35]

Many industrialists, economists and government leaders in the nineteenth century justified social action which promoted efficiency in production and exchange as rational, in appropriate conformity with the "nature" or "law" of the market economy. This implied that action which obstructed efficiency out of consideration for expressive human needs was "irrational." A labor leader, especially of Gompers' type, with great ambition for the labor movement, as well as for his own career in leading it, could not take kindly to the idea that "laws" pervade the economic realm which resists control, limitation or direction by the will of people subjected to their functioning, especially by the will of laboring people who had been so ground down in the course of economic development. It doesn't seem irrational to attempt to obstruct such alleged "laws" by limiting their capacity to wreck the lives of the toiling majority of a population. If such "laws"

did exist, they must be controlled. But, since no evidence could satisfy Gompers that they did exist, advice to conform to them must be regarded as a pernicious design to suppress labor. Gompers argued that wages were set on a trial and balance principle, fixing them as low as the workman will stand and not according to any rational, well-formulated theory. That is to say, the distributive share allotted to the wage-earners is the result of human activity...and not of the normal or inevitable result of any law.

It became increasingly apparent that social groups had a perfect right to affirm their will over the economic sphere and force it to serve their human needs. It followed easily enough from this, that such a right belonged to laboring groups as well as to others. Labor could serve to remind the public of this principle when it appeared to have been generally forgotten and, in this, labor even acquired a responsibility for the moral enlightenment of society. Thus, voluntarism was based on an initial assumption that human will must make economic activity submit to human needs--a task labor must take the initiative in carrying out. Yet, the thrust of voluntarism was much more than an elementary humanism in the economic sphere, and this makes the anti-socialist and antiradical ideology so familiar to those who study it.[36]

For Gompers, the labor movement involved the workers in a process of self-definition and self-organization. Workers needed to combat the idea that their labor power was a commodity to be sold at cheap prices advantageous to employers, and had instead

to affirm themselves as a community of human individuals entitled to such a portion of the industrial wealth as would help them improve themselves materially, morally and culturally. Only through strong and well-knit trade union organization could such self-definition proceed.[37]

The nature of capitalist society was never well understood by the workers. They failed to view themselves as a class, which no one but themselves could or would represent. In order to expand both business and profit, the employers needed to decrease labor's portion of the general wealth. This very fact that labor was viewed by the owners as a commodity constituted a "class" of persons who, by the very nature of their relationship to economic enterprise, could not be recognized or accepted as a collective body of human beings or given free participation in the larger society. Industry had a heavy stake in viewing labor as an economic efficiency, thereby denying all social goods to which human beings were entitled. It follows that the interests of labor and management were fundamentally opposed to that of the other and clearly marked by "class struggle."[38]

Gompers makes it clear to his readers that he viewed the workers and the employers as two distinct classes, each with a vested interest in increasing their share of the general product, thereby decreasing the others. There were times (World War I) when the interests were reconciliable, but they were only temporary. Even though the capitalist industrial relations divided men into opposing classes, revolution did not, for Gomper

mean the promise of classless equality for all, but that trade unions needed to pressure the employers for as long as the capitalist system lasted. He further insisted that employers performed very valuable investment and managerial services which sustained and rationalized economic activities for the whole society.

Although more prevalent at the time of the first world war, Gompers held the view that employer and workers should cooperate against "external enemies" to preserve the environment of public liberty that had long been a tradition among Americans. This view enabled Gompers to support the institution of private property for big business, who viewed themselves as being entitled to a greater portion of the general wealth, again for their services in sustaining the system, making it operational and thereby creating employment for an ever growing work force. It was the function of trade unions to be the "watch dogs" of the workers, making sure they got their fair share, but never at the expense of any action that would lead to negative consequences, political or economic, for the institution. The outgrowth of this reasoning was that trade unions needed to become strong but not revolutionary in their goals.[39]

One method for this type of relationship designed and recommended by Gompers was that of collective bargaining. The mode of operation could fix the terms of employment by means of bargaining between an organized body of workers and the employer or association of employers, acting through duly authorized agents. For workers, collective bargaining weighted their side of the nego-

tiations with more power than they could exert as individuals. Various Socialists saw collective bargaining strategy as a training ground for workers in preparation to enlarge these demands upon the employer class. They felt that the workers, in general, should be prodded or inspired to think and act beyond the limits of collective bargaining. Although closely related to voluntarism, collective bargaining is separable from it. Therefore, the changes in collective bargaining cannot be equated with the strengthening or deterioration of voluntaristic attitudes.[40]

Gompers' definition of the values of "voluntary organizations" as the reality carries a society's important value / agents of constructive social reform. This is the essence of voluntarism.

Gompers did not see much value in law and government of the working man. He did, however, come to place some value on two kinds of law. The first bears upon the freedom of men to reform unions and to pursue such tactics as the strike, boycott, and picketing by means of which workers may secure better terms for their labor. The second bears upon the use of the government taxing and regulatory powers as a medium by which workers may secure a distribution of economic benefits and working conditions that were more favorable to themselves. The laws recognizing the right to strike, boycott, etc. had value for Gompers. He saw it as a way of reducing the fear of persecution of non-organized workers for their association with organized workers. It also opened the door that would allow unions to engage in collective bargaining and set terms in private contract for peaceful co-exist-

ence between labor and their employers. Government, in passing such laws, fulfilled its function of recognizing the right of all social groups to legitimately pursue their own interests without having to rely on debilitating government benefits to compensate for deprivation suffered. It was on this very basis that Gompers could give such strong support to the Clayton Act when it was passed in 1914. The second type of law, that which can be viewed as "social legislation," which involved regulating the conditions of work and distribution of economic security was altogether and unalterably opposed by Gompers. He was opposed to legislation of this form...that which regulated the work day or wage minimum, institutional health or welfare insurance, workmen's compensation and, even to a lesser degree, old-age insurance.

His reasoning was as follows:

1) Government regulation of compensation for work and conditions of work would tend to set a minimum necessary standard from which no employer could be made to depart, thus making a struggle for maximum compensation and better conditions more difficult, if not impossible.
2) Any amount of government regulation, however minimal or designed for specific situations only, could become a precedent to extend governmental power over the whole society, something which could result in a more severe repression of labor than already existed and generate the spread of a more general tyranny. These reasons were strenuously underscored by labor's experience with legis-

> lation passed ostensibly for its protection, but which, after passage, was used against labor unions. It was for this reason that Gompers mistrusted most legislation.[41]

The Interstate Commerce Act could be used to bring complaints against labor unions and courts could issue injunctions based on its provisions. The Sherman Act offered additional weapons against labor, although it was originally thought it would be properly applied against the trust. Although the right to sue was still in the government's hands, private parties could also bring suit by charging a conspiracy to interfere with interstate commerce, which is what happened. Persons sustaining injuries as a result of actions declared unlawful could sue those committing the acts for triple damages. If a union could be proved guilty of a "contract, combination, or conspiracy in restraint of trade or commerce," the "injured" employer could deplete the union's treasury by a suit and even collect from individual union members. Labor vigorously launched a campaign to secure immunity from the antitrust laws and to secure changes in equity procedures. The Clayton Act was thought to be the legislation necessary for that task. It stated the labor of human beings is not a commodity or article of commerce. Further, it stated that nothing contained in the antitrust laws shall be construed to forbid the existence and operation of labor, agricultural, or horticultural organizations instituted for the purpose of mutual help and not having capital stock or conducted for profit, or to forbid or restrain individual members thereof, be held or construed to be illegal

combinations or conspiracies in restraint of trade under the anti-trust laws.

Section 20 also forbade injunctions between employer and employee, between employees and themselves, between employees and those seeking employment. Moreover, if a court felt an injunction possible or justified on some ground, reference had to be made first to a listing of some ten labor activities Congress regarded as "peaceful" or "lawful" so that no union could be implicated on illegitimate grounds. After many unsuccessful experiences, Gompers was convinced that the courts would make even the most benign piece of legislation a weapon against labor.[42]

Samuel Gompers strategy for the American Labor Movement was two-fold. Serious negotiations between labor and management to improve the industrial conditions in the form of binding contracts, was his first and major concern. With almost a single-minded dedication, he sought to build up the union strength so that employers resistance to workers' demands might be worn down. Second, he urged workers to avoid dependency on government or legislative enactments in exchange for labor's support. He felt that the union movement should become self-reliant and stay independent of divided political loyalties. Although every kind of political orientation was at one time present in the American Labor Movement, it came to work for limited economic goals and to avoid government, public officials, and political parties under the leadership of Samuel Gompers.

Gompers elaborated on his simple strategy until it was seen as a set of beliefs for how workers should conduct themselves under industrial capitalism, how parts of an industrial capitalistic society functioned and ought to function in relation to each other.[43]

Although it is true that Gompers went so far as to support laws limiting child labor, the use of prison labor and the influx of migrants into the country, he also supported movements and trade unions in regard to women workers. But Gompers' main concern for these issues was not altogether altruistic. Gompers mainly sought to limit the number of competitors for available jobs so as to make it possible for the existing labor force to demand better payment for services and he felt that such limitation could not be secured by extra legal means. It was thought that legislation not specifically designed to make unionism legitimate was regarded as having little or nothing to offer workers. Not only would the courts pervert its letter and spirit, but laws would be framed so as to permit such perversions; also laws themselves would not change men, their morals, their commitments, their acts. Then, as always, legislation cannot rectify a social problem. Gompers, in his disillusionment, wrote:

> "Whither are we drifting?... The...people are hugging the delusion that law is a panacea. Whatever the ill or the wrong of the ideal, immediately follows the suggestion--enact a law. If there is no market for cotton, those interested demand a law. If there is a financial crisis, a law is demanded to protect special interests. If the desire for physical strength and beauty is aroused, laws for eugenic

> marriages are demanded. If men and women speak ill-considered or unwise words, laws that forbid their speaking in that manner are proposed. If morals are bad, a law is demanded. If wages are low, a law or commission is the remedy proposed. Whether as a result of laziness or incompetency, there is a steadily growing disposition to shift responsibility for personal progress and welfare to outside agencies. What can be the result of this tendency but the softening of the moral fiber of the people? When there is unwillingness to accept responsibility for one's life and for making the most of it, there is also a loss of strong, red-blooded, rugged independence and will power to grapple with the wrong of the world and to establish justice through the volition of those concerned. Many of the things for which many are now deludedly demanding legislative regulation should and must be worked out by those concerned." [44]

It only follows that for Gomper legislation was impotent as a moral force and excessive reliance upon it can only render a population dependent of such. For even the passage of acceptable legislation, such as that sanctioning trade unionism, would not relieve unions of the responsibility of self-assertion and self-protection. Gompers is insightful when he writes:

> "What is legislation but class legislation or the formulation by one group... what they deem ... in their interest? Few laws are passed by unanimous consent. It follows, then, that tariff legislation is class legislation in the interests of consumers; that our laws protecting property are class legislation handed down from the middle ages when the property holding classes controlled the government, made the laws, and directed their administration." [45]

Legislation is an extension of class interest or power and the legislative power, government, is rarely something other than an aggregate of powerful and organized men capable

of imbuing it with their own perspective, so that it cannot impartially serve the public. Gompers did not view the state as an agency through which the people obtain results or that it exists for their service. He viewed the state as a power made up of individual human beings with special interest groups to be served. These individual actors would have to come from the members of the labor special interest group. Members of labor or friends of labor would have to organize to seek public office.

> "We want legislation executed by labor men; we want trade unionists in Congress and more... in the State legislatures, in our municipal courts and executive offices.. on the madesterial bench..[46]

The AFL supported candidates for public office, brought pressure to bear on politicians, and even displayed a weak but constant tendency on the part of its members to vote for Democratic Party candidates. Because of the misuse of legislation, as viewed by Gompers, the AFL gave only minimal worth to laws. Political action was not given the highest priority. Instead most of the efforts went to building unions and to their efforts in actions that would further their struggle against the employers. The thought was to strengthen unionism to the point where employers would have to deal with labor on an equal basis.[47]

In a debate between Gompers and socialist Morris Hillquit, before the Commission on Industrial Relations in 1914, Gompers dealt the final blow to the relationship between socialism and

the labor movement in America. Until that time the relationship between labor and the socialist had been strained on occasion. But socialism always supported labor, whereas labor did not always support socialism. The debate was over the "ends" to which labor should come. Hillquit stated that the "ends" should be to obtain social justice for labormen, their wives, and for their children. Gompers debated that there were no "ends", that labor would continue until the end of time to progress toward a better life for its workers through the means of a larger economical share of the worth of industry. It was then that labor turned away from political pursuits and focused its attentions on what has become to be known as "bread and butter issues." He was successful at guiding the AFL to a negative attitude toward government and legislation on the premise that these constituted obstructions to the achievement of a healthy "balance of power" in the industrial sphere. These feelings have remained constant among the laborers in America.[48]

For the American labor force, Socialism held appeal for the workers from the Northern European origins who were attracted to Socialism as a result of their own protection against the erosion of traditional crafts by industrial capitalism. Blacks nor immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe perceived the Socialists as representative of their interests. At the turn of the century, the Socialist Party inherited an important segment of the old populist tradition

that had not been integrated into the Democratic Party. The large Socialist support from Texas and Oklahoma reflected farmers' interest in "the cooperative commonwealth" program and elected many Socialist mayors and other officeholders. In fact, the great centers of popular Socialist strength were not found in the large cities where, with the exception of German, Jewish, and some Irish workers, the party had only scattered appeal among recent immigrants. Among trade unionists in the machinist and mining unions, Socialist influence derived from the populist demand for democracy as much as from the demand for revolutionary reconstruction of society. Socialism in its heyday was largely a rural movement with its real influence of any importance among skilled workers, small farmers, and laborers and miners.[49]

Unlike socialism, which posited worker control of industry as the proper "end" of labor action, voluntarism posed no "ends" at all. For Gompers "ends" meant limits. It was perhaps this simple difference in the concept of the word "end" that kept the labor movement from taking a different path.

Chapter V

History of Labor in The United States

Diverging Forces

Immigration

John R. Commons' theory, which related labor movements to the rise and fall of available employment, is a simple one. He uses a Weberian sociological approach in his methodology to examine a complex issue in a simple and manageable manner. But establishing a concrete theory about how and why labor movements have occurred is not a simple nor easily manageable task. This paper does not offer a new theory, but only addresses a dozen or more other phenomena other than the rise and fall of employment availability. Most of these diverging forces call for more research on each individual force: first, to understand the sociological and historical interdependence they have on one another and second, to show the influence and casuality they can and did have on the development of the labor force in America.

In order to understand a movement, the participants of that movement must be investigated. Their ideological beliefs, their customs, their habits, their traditions, and their culture must be viewed. Culture is a set of patterns, customary way of doing things, usually transmitted from generation to generation. The culture of the members of the labor movement was not unified. The "Melting Pot" assimilation was always largely fictional. To

the extend to which such a culture existed, it did indeed constitute an autochronous United States of America development. It was merely a less specific derived culture of lower-class, exploited individuals, generally. As they differentiated, with increasing diversification of exploitation, the overall derived culture was replaced by more specific ones. The culture of the society during the time of the American labor movement was that of a very pluralistic one. Although the participants worked closely on their jobs, they were never unified as a movement. But a close examination of the culture can show the causality of the lack of unification.

The American culture is perceived as one overall culture with many subcultures. At the time of the labor movement in America, between the years of 1890-1920, there were many subcultures in American society. A look at the years prior to the American labor movement can provide a better understanding of the society during the movement.

Two of the main diverging forces that plagued the development of labor in America were government doctrine and changing societal structure. Government doctrines based on certain basic freedoms were misunderstood, misused, and disregarded. Members of the American society did not view others as equals. They very often did not even view certain others as human beings. The history of black slavery is an often told story, but the history of white slavery in America is the one often forgotten. Yet, it is the members of that class who labored in America to build the industries that caused the need for more laborers that

started the steady flow of laborers from Europe, prior to and during the labor movement in America. These slave-like workers were indentured servants.

There were three main classes of indentured servants. One class entered into a contract with an agent, often a shipmaster, to be sold by the shipmaster at time of arrival in exchange for the ship's passage. The second class included "redemptioners" or "freewillers." They signed no contract, but were to make payment for their passage a few days after their arrival, usually by selling themselves into servitude. The third class consisted of those forced into servitude, such as convicts, felons, dissolute persons and kidnap victims.

England used the colonies as a convenient dumping ground by granting royal pardons to convicts on the condition of being transported. As many servants bought their freedom, the endless supply of cheap labor forced many of them into tenant farming.

As economic conditions in England improved, there was a greater demand to supply food and raw materials to the home country. More settlers were needed to develop the economic resources of the colonies and to provide an adequate supply of labor. Land grants of about a hundred and fifty acres were awarded to anyone willing to immigrate. To induce laborers to immigrate, a similar allotment was promised to those willing to serve a term as an indentured servant.

The enormous demand for white servants came when economic

conditions had created a large supply. Justices, who were landowners, had the power to fix maximum wages for farm laborers. Setting them very low increased the profits of the tenant farmer, making his ability to pay higher rents demanded by the landowners. Wages remained the same during most of the next hundred years (1500-1600) while the price of wheat multiplied four times over in the same period, but so did the rents. Because of fixed maximum wages and laws forbading laborers from withdrawing from agricultural pursuits, the farm laborer had no chance to better himself.

Velasco, the Spanish minister in England, wrote in 1611, "Their principal reason for colonizing these parts is to give an outlet to so many idle, wretched people as they have in England, and thus prevent the dangers that might be feared of them."

In a period between 1635 to 1775, it is recorded in the diaries of ship captains and historical documents kept for the regulation of traffic by King Charles I and Parliament, as well as in the minutes of the Council of the General Court of Virginia, that more than 50,000 persons, mostly felons and "lewd" women, as well as "those who walked the streets at night, were transported to the colonies." In the Life of Samuel Johnson, by Boswell (ed. by Hill), Dr. Johnson is quoted to have said in 1769 regarding the colonies "...they are a race of convicts and ought to be content with anything we may allow them short of hanging."

Benjamin Franklin, in reply to the arguments of British

authorities that it was necessary to get rid of convicts, asked whether Americans for the same reason would be justified in sending their rattlesnakes to England.

Although many were against the continued transportation of convicts, the committee of trade for New York petitioned the authorities, 1693, to send them all the prisoners who were to be induced to Newgate.

During the eighteenth century agents traveled the Rhine Valley persuading peasants to sell their belongings and migrate to the colonies. But the voyage to the promised land of milk and honey almost always exceeded the savings and upon arrival they, too, had to sell themselves into servitude. Most were unskilled laborers, but many were tradesmen--blacksmiths, shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, bricklayers, painters, watchmakers, glaizers, silversmiths, weavers, jewelers and many others.

Irishmen and Frenchmen faced the same plight in the late 1700's.

White slavery was not the only source of cheap labor. Both in the northern and southern colonies black slaves built empires for their white masters. The first black slaves were brought to the United States by Dutch sea merchants at Jamestown in August 1619. Keeping both white and black slaves caused some "perplexing moral problems." Intermarriage between slaves and an increase of illegitimate mulatto children and low moral standards among slaves was of deep concern among the Virginians, so in the preamble of the Virginia Act of 1691 was inacted "for

the prevention of that abominable and spurious mixture which, hereafter, may increase in this dominion as well, by negroes inter-marrying with English or other white women, as by their unlawful intercourse with one another. A Maryland act provided that the children of a servant woman resulting from intermarriage with a Negro slave should be slaves to the master for life.

It is obvious that the economic significance of the white servant was very important. Benjamin Franklin said in 1759, "The labor of the plantations is performed chiefly by indentured servants brought from Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany, because the high price it bears cannot be performed in any other way." Free labor on a wage system was impossible because of both high wages and scarcity of labor. Few would work for hire when land could be had for almost nothing. The certainty of supply, the power of control, its economy, and the large profits resulting made the system superior to other forms until the Negro slave was imported on a large scale.

John Pory, Secretary of Virginia, wrote, "Our principal wealth consisteth of servants."

The plight of the white servant was much better than that of black slaves. Many white servants became respectable and desirable citizens, successful planters--Charles Thompson became the Secretary of the Continental Congress and George Taylor and Matthew Thornton are signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Many were given land to settle in the west, giving them freedom while taming the West for future ventures by investors and railroaders in the East. The institution of indentured servitude was abolished in 1831.

The blacks, however, remained slaves until the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, declaring 3,000,000 slaves free forever. Then, on December 18, 1865, slavery was abolished by adoption of the 12th Amendment to the United States Constitution. But in the 205 years that followed the adoption of the Declaration of Independence stating:

> "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness,"

the immigrants, making up much of the labor force of sweat shops, coal mines, railroad construction, share croppers, migrant workers and guest workers, have fought a long and seemingly endless battle.[50]

The flow of immigrants to America continued steadily. In the decade 1880-90, there were inaugurated drastic changes in the opportunities for immigrants in America as well as most important changes in the European sources. In America, the agricultural opportunities were rapidly becoming exhausted and the importance of industries and manufacturers was realized. Manufacturing and mining, encouraged by our protective tariff policy, were rapidly being developed to supply the growing wants among our increasing native population. A labor supply among

the immigrants was believed to be unexhaustible. But the Teutonic and Celtic immigrants had taken up land in the west and had populated the wilderness or were already a permanent fixture in established pursuits. Furthermore, the sources of the first sources of cheap labor had been pretty well drained; the economic and political changes in northwestern Europe had made them more contented, and moral restraint had been practiced sufficiently to make the population more nearly equal to the means of subsistence. The United Kingdom and Germany had, furthermore, made efforts to check the outward flow by increasing their domestic interests and by developing a hostile public opinion toward emigration.

As a resulting consequence, new sources of immigration had to be tapped and the untouched reservoirs of population in the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea seemed the most promising. Steamship lines were extended to Mediterranean ports and in the early eighties the United States received, for the first time, large numbers of immigrants from Italy, Austria-Hungary and Russia. These sources primed in the early eighties were to render forth to the American Republic in the twenty-five years following 1890, the most voluminous flow of immigration the world had ever known; more than fifteen million emigrated to the United States.

The change in composition of immigrants was of equal importance to the change from farm laborers seeking land and a permanent home and those in search of wages through temporary

industrial employment, both of which were an important variable to the geographical distribution of the foreign-born within the United States.

The abundance of land at a low price in the American West and the privileges rendered under the Homestead Bill of 1862, were inducements for easterners in the United States to go west. Prior to the panic of 1893, the existence of this situation had the effect of forcing out into the west that portion of the population of the eastern cities which was effected in their employment by financial and industrial disturbance. Such numbers included immigrant operatives to whom the opportunity to secure land at such low prices, to be free from rental ties, or high eastern prices, was a greater inducement when out of work than that of returning to the adverse conditions in Europe from which they had migrated. No longer was there an abundance of unoccupied land in the west, upon which the excess population, thrown out of employment, could settle. The unprecedented immigration in the eighties choked the streams of labor that had been pouring into industrial pursuits.

The panic almost instantly checked immigration and the American industrial fabric was shaken to its very foundation. For the first time the country experienced idle farm hands in large numbers, tramping the country in search of work. For the first time the country saw large numbers of unemployed operatives thronging the streets of factory towns, laborers abandoning the industrial districts and pouring into the cities--all

demanding work or food. It was the time when soup houses were located throughout the country to feed the unemployed. The panic which was accredited to the tariffs, and the monetary system certainly was enhanced by the industrial situation, the land shortage in America, and the unprecedented immigration of the preceding decade. It emphasized over again the fact that the equalizing influences of the pioneer period had passed, and that no longer are there any unoccupied public lands that could be cultivated by the small farmer. What land still remained in the west, available for settlement, had increased in price beyond the means of the immigrant.

The result was that a different geographical distribution of our foreign-born had proceeded along lines of economic opportunity. The increased industrial operations and the demand for labor in these industries had, since 1890, been the goal of the aspiring immigrant. The states which contained the industries, or were favorably situated for new industries, were the ones that were to gain by the newly opened up sources of immigration that poured millions to our shores.

From the census reports it is found that of all the states, only six showed an increase of more than 50,000 in 1900, as compared with the number in 1890. In 1900 the states that increased were New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, New Jersey, and Connecticut. These six contributed all 152,000 of the total increase of 1,092,000. The Middle Atlantic division, comprising the three manufacturing states of New York, New Jersey and

Pennsylvania, has always been the most important, no other geographical section having had, at any time, as many foreign born.

The Jewish people have the greatest affinity for city life of any of the immigrant races. Only 6,000 of nearly three million Jewish immigrants, or only a fraction of 1%, make their way to the agricultural sections of the country. This is due to the urban tendency of the Jewish people that had been followed for centuries, and the fact that their different religion influenced them to assemble in numbers where they could worship together.

In the needle and clothing and millinery supplies trades, the Jewish people were most numerous. From 1902-13 the percentage entering these trades was 22.1%.[51]

Each ethnic group was separated by language barriers, religion, customs and culture in general. With this much difference in members of the labor force in America, the common thread being only that fact that they were laborers, their division was a diverging force on the movement.

According to Durkheim, class conflict is not intrinsic to socialism and the principal factor influencing the conditions of the working class is that its productive activity is not harnessed to the needs of society as a whole, but to the interests of the capitalist class. They do not agree that the only way to overcome the exploitative character of capitalist society is through the abolition of classes altogether. But class conflict is simply the historical medium through which more

basic goals are attained. The improvement of the workers' lot is a consequence that the attachment of economic activities to the managing agents of society must produce.[52]

Max Weber takes up the issue of the day-laborers as a replacement for the bonded worker. The bonded workers were not merely tied to their employers by an economic relationship, but were enmeshed in a whole set of ties of rights and obligations, whereas the day-laborers were hired on the basis of a wage-contract. He contends that the day-laborers are completely bound up with securing the highest wage possible and thus produce an accentuation of economic conflict between the workers and the employers.[53]

Chapter VI

History of Labor in The United States

Diverging Forces

Politics

It is difficult to separate the political and economical force in this issue of labor. For business, labor was a commodity that was calculated just as any other overhead expense. That relationship was politically maintained through a constant vigilance of the prevailing capitalist system which prevented any reconstruction or distribution of the commonwealth or, for that matter, the concept of commonwealth. (Note: what's good for General Motors, the American worker has come to learn, is not necessarily good for America...not even if the trickle-down theory is imposed. In fact, the American worker has found that what can be conceived as good for General Motors might very well be conceived as harmful or pathological to the worker and society at large.)

What follows is a brief discussion on the influence of politics, the class struggle in America, the conflict and how it was manifested in that struggle, and some reasons for the lack of unity of the American labor movement.

The American labor movement, as with most labor movements in various industrial nations, has followed a number of divergent political paths. In the movements earliest times, it rebelled against the prevailing capitalist system and sought a radical reconstruction of economic relationships by revolutionary means. At times the movement seems to accept the prevailing economic framework, but actively sought to promote labor's influence in political life by forming a distinct labor party, or by establishing an alliance between the labor movement and a political party with a broad constituency. At times the movement sought to minimize political involvement of any type and focus labor's attention on strike action and collective bargaining for the purpose of improving the economic situation of the working class. At one time or another, each of these paths were taken by one segment of the movement or another. But at no time in the history of the movement did enough workers band together in the same effort to bring about the revolutionary changes that were first hoped for by the working class in America.

Revolutionary tactics were promoted by the Industrial Workers of the World. They managed to have a certain amount of influence in the very early part of the twentieth century. Communists attempted to mobilize the workers for revolutionary ends and influence in labor circles. The Socialists sought to construct labor parties with the idea that these could acquire the power of government by competing in elections and could consequently acquire an opportunity to revise industrial conditions and relationships

in America. The Working Parties formed in the early nineteenth century were sporadic and the organizations did not last for very long. They tried to press for legislation to prohibit the growth of monopolies to reduce the working hours for hired labor, and for better public education.[54]

It was the American Federation of Labor (AFL) that in 1886 first called for its members to organize for concerted economic action, concentrating on strike activity and bargaining with employers through union representation.

Upon its emergence, the AFL became the most influential labor organization of its time. Although other organizations to a more dramatic path, perhaps causing their own demise, the AFL, through its ability to change direction and/or focus and strategy, was one of the few organizations to survive the turmoil of the early movement. In any conflict, survival is one of the most important issues--if, indeed, not the most important issue. The attainment of a viable domain is, in essence, a political problem. It requires finding and holding a position which can be recognized by all of the necessary "sovereign" organizations as more worthwhile than the other available alternatives. It requires establishing a position in which diverse organizations in diverse situations find overlapping interests. The management of interorganizational relations is most dynamic. It is here that as environments change and propel some elements out of and new elements into a task environment, the importance of survival is of the essence.[55]

Throughout the history of the labor movement, organizations moved toward their objectives through compromise. Complex purposive organizations find compromise inevitable. The problem is to find the optimum point between the realities of interdependence with the environment and the norms of rationality.

When the phrases such as "the organization moved toward," or "the movement seemed to move toward" are used, it is not meant to imply that organizations nor movements have a "will" of their own, or that they are moving independently of its individual members. It is that there are times when it is difficult to decide if outside structural forces are causing a trend in the individual members, causing them to respond in a like collective manner, or if, indeed, the cause for movement in an organization is its leadership--be it collective or individual. There are those times in the history of the American labor movement.

The American workers were divided by race, religion, ethnic origin and even language to a greater degree than other workers in other countries. Not just differences in language were present, but differences in political beliefs and ideologies as well. This disunity among its members caused a lack of cohension in the early movement. Over and over again the same problem is visible. The National Labor Union was formed in 1866 in an attempt to give national scope and cohesion to local labor associations then scattered across the country. The Union promoted a program seeking legislative reforms of industrial conditions. In the 1870's, a number of German immigrants among the membership raised the demand for socialism and angrily left the NLU when

they gave up hope of converting its leadership. In addition to the quarrel over socialism, they fought over the issue of allowing blacks admission to the union. Welsh and Irish immigrants laboring in Pennsylvania's coal fields during this period were at odds with one another, with the Irish acquiring a public reputation for radicalism, violence and generally brutish behavior, and the Welsh for political moderation. Jewish and German workers in the garment and brewery trades respectively, were interested in socialism, especially during the 1870's and 1880's, and were unenthusiastic about other matters of concern at native American workers.[56] During all of its years, the Knights of Labor were torn by dissension over the legitimate role of political action in a labor movement and alienated socialists and "pure and simple" trade unionists. Many of them were Jews and Germans who were suspicious of the many native American middle class professionals who were attracted to the Knights. The native American workers in the steel industry and coal regions greatly resented the Slavic Catholic immigrants. Gompers and the AFL leadership feared the disarray in the American labor movement and persuaded organized labor to disavow political partisanship and action for the sake of promoting a unified labor movement. A discouraging history of inter-racial labor strife always aggravated by periodic immigration waves, finally forced the labor movement to the AFL's prescription for political behavior. One of the commonest observations in the history of the fight of labor against management is labor's fight against labor. The in-fighting was so great

within the Knights of Labor that it helped to lead to its demise in 1892. One of the main failings of the labor movement members was the lack of sufficient homogeneousness to identify themselves as a class. Many workers in the United States showed the influence of a falsely prevailing national belief that America was classless, or at least that all who exerted themselves and "worked hard" could expect to improve their lot on life irrespective of their social backgrounds or origins. The Europeans had fought to secure an elementary education as part of a drive for meaningful citizenship in industrializing society. The early American worker of the 1820's sought this and raised a demand for general free public education. In the United States this interest developed rapidly and early on the part of the American government and the institution of free public education did not have to be an object of prolonged political struggle in America as it was in Europe. It is noted that free and widespread education in the United States served to reduce labor's political intensity. With free public education and the belief that America was indeed classless, there was certain rhetoric that focused on the acquisition of economic goods rather than on increased political power to improve the standing of labor in America. It was a simple task for the AFL, with its emphasis on securing economic benefits, to appeal to workers under this influence. Most of the speeches of the AFL leadership in the early days of the Federation's birth contained some reference to the idea that hard work and long workdays entitled workers to the

same immediate economic fulfillment and social standing that others enjoyed from their labor in the fabled land of opportunity.

The pace of industrial and technological changes was more rapid in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America than it was in many European countries. While this had an initially radicalizing effect on the working class population and its leadership in the United States, it also generated so great a wealth of goods and money that workers clamor for a modicum of economic security and income redistribution could be met long before radical political associations could become deeply rooted in the life of labor. This point, raised by John Laslett, is a corrective to the idea that the ideological character of Amerian labor leádership alone is responsible for the level of political interest and kind of political ideas that were popular among the American workers. In sharp contrast, the slow rate of French economic growth and technological development was conducive to the stabilization of radical labor leadership in France in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The rapid industrial development in the United States encouraged different policies set by the AFL.[57]

All of these factors mitigated against the likelihood of a highly politicized labor force in the United States, much less a class conscious one with revolutionary ambitions. It did, however, provide favorable conditions for the growth and dominance of the AFL, an organization which tried to focus on the achieve-

ment of labor unity by reducing the value and need for political association and action on the part of working men and maximizing the value of union association for economic ends.

The European immigrants were said to be ideological and even utopian with a certain disrespect for realities. With this separation of ideas, the presence of educational "safety valves", the extreme individualistic orientation of the American worker and a general dispersal of the population after rapid industrialization, there was no chance of sustaining labor's interest in political alliances and political organization. Besides, for most of society, the labor movement had contained too many immigrants for the argument from indigenous practicality to be very convincing. In light of these considerations, it is not so difficult to understand the failure of the AFL's predecessors and the successful appeal of its modest strategy, even at a time when labor movements in Europe were exhibiting different tendencies.[58]

Among all capitalist societies, the United States alone has no precapitalist history, for other societies, that is a history of clear-cut class relationships with power graded in terms of class. The United States was born in a nationalist struggle and, understandably, at the time, was seen as a social revolution as well. Nationalist struggles unite people of different classes in pursuit of a common cause which either succeeds or fails. Social revolutions are struggles to alter the pre-existing internal class structure of power. Their

success or failure is thus a matter of degree, depending on the extent to which the class structure is changed.

Although seldom defined as such, the struggle between capital and labor in the United States was and still is a class struggle.

> "American society could also be understood as a class structure without decisive class conflict, a society that had conflict limited to small issues that were not crucial to the existing order, and on which the price of satisfying opposition was relatively modest from the viewpoint of the continuation of the social system. In brief, a static class structure serving class ends might be frozen into American society even if the interests and values served were those of a ruling class." [59]

The power of the ruling class in the United States has come principally from its ownership and control of the nation's productive wealth. The depth and persistence of racial, ethnic, religious and sexual discrimination rivalry and hatred have served to perpetuate the struggle. These divisions have held back the chance of any collective consciousness and strength of the working class in the United States. In a letter written in 1870 by Karl Marx, the same lack of collective consciousness by the workers in England and Irish proletarian can be felt.

> "Every industrial and commercial center in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps--English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the (ordinary) Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life... feels himself a member of the ruling nation, and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against

> Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitudes toward him is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the U.S.A. The Irishmen pay him back with interest in his own money....This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it."[60]

Conflict seems inherent to the system or, as the conflict theorists put it, the ultimate glue holding society together is that coercion by force. Basically, the conflict theorists conclude that conflict is very common in societies, so common that it is not the presence of conflict but the absence which is surprising and abnormal. The presence of conflict is so strong an influence that, at every moment, change is a possibility and every element in society contributed to its changes. The social order rests on the constraints of some individuals and groups by others.

Clearly in this image of society, tension and strife, but not necessarily violence, are part of the normal state of affairs. When groups and individuals have various interests--some of them contradictory--that leads them to push and pull at each others interests. Power relationships always underlie the apparent harmony of the society and must be taken into account in sociological analysis of the subject. This conflict is visible in even a scant view of the American society at the time of the

American labor movement.[61]

Conflict and violence has characterized the American society since the first settlers dealt with the native Americans, the Indians, and by violent and nonviolent means, ultimately deprived them of the land and the means to continue their way of life. The birth of the United States was the result of a colonial rebellion, and the establishment of the American social order involved continual conflict between groups with various economic, religious, ethnic, and ideological interests. Frequently this conflict became violent, as in the Civil War and in the decades of labor violence that preceded the acceptance of labor unions.[62]

The amount and type of conflicts in American have varied considerably over its history. The use of violence to settle conflict was akin to those on both sides of the American labor movement. The number of strikes, as well as the number of workers involved in the strikes, has risen and fallen over the years according to economic conditions and the pattern of contract negotiations. There has been a distinct shift in the type of labor conflict in the United States over the past century. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, management rejected the right of unions to strike, and violent conflict was often part of labor-management disputes. As the movement grew toward reformist and away from revolutionary trends, the violence has been reduced to a legally recognized form of conflict--the strike. Today, even the long-fought-for

right to strike is being voluntarily rescinded by some unions in favor of compulsory arbitration between labor and management.[63]

Although the American society was not fully a system of totally interdependent parts, the elements of society did inter-connect so that an event in one part of society had repercussions in many areas of society. The Industrial Revolution had enormous ramifications for the economic, social, and political life of the American society. However, a social system has a very strong tendency to maintain an equilibrium. A disturbance in society may result in a temporary change, but the system will generally return to its original equilibrium. There is general agreement among actors in a social system on a certain set of social assumptions and values. This consensus on such matters as justice, equality, and the importance of religion is an important glue holding society together. This "glue" held the American society so tightly together that what started as a revolutionary movement by the labor forces in American ended as a reformist movement that was absorbed into the system.[64]

The Populist Movement of the 1890's, which saw unprecedented political cooperation between poor whites and blacks, was the occasion for an intensification of racism. From the mid 1890's on, Jim Crow laws spread and deepened, and lynching became so common that it went unnoticed in the press (there were as many as a thousand a year officially recorded). The prior and continuing oppression of native Americans joined with stepped-up

oppression of black people and a rapid growth of American nationalism, religious bigotry, and attitudes of cultural superiority. Savage developments in the eastern half of the country combined with savage developments in the western half, as Spanish speaking and Asian immigrants were mistreated and killed (the lynching of Chinese was common in San Francisco at the turn of the century) while being exploited in the fields, mines, factories, and railroads.[65]

Violence was always a constant companion of the early labor movement in America. Both management and strikers resorted to violence in the struggle accompanying the industrial revolution. In the bitter railroad strike in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1877, an estimated 16 soldiers and 50 strikers were killed, and locomotives, freight cars and other property were destroyed. The famous Homestead strike of 1892 turned Homestead, Pennsylvania into an open battlefield. The Pullman strike of 1893 in Chicago resulted in 12 deaths and the destruction of a great deal of railroad property. In 1914, Ludlow, Colorado was the scene of the famous Ludlow Massacre in which company guards burned a mining tent city and killed nearly a hundred persons, including women and children. The last great spasm of violence in the history of American labor came in the 1930;s with strikes and plant takeovers (sit-down strikes) which accompanied the successful drive to unionize the automobile, steel, and other mass production industries.[66]

Jane Stembridge, a white student from Virginia, and a

member of the organizers of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee speaking on "committment" and "movement":

> "It is the question of whether we...whether I shall go on living in isolation or whether there shall be a we. The student movement is not a cause...it is a collision between this one person and that one person. It is a 'I am going to sit beside you'...."[67]

Movement: applies to that complicated collection of leaders, organizations, and programs that are directed toward changing American society in fundamental ways. Movements are not easily categorized politically, nor is it defined by politics alone. Some movement people are Socialists; others are anarchists. Some believe in nonviolence; others are willing to use guns and bombs to attack the oppressors and exploiters. Some are committed to a special cause or interest; others are concerned primarily with issues of power and wealth.

The use of violence is a very important issue. Who uses violence, when it is used, how it is used, and to what extent are very important questions. As is stated elsewhere in this work, violence is characteristic in the history of the United States. However, the use of violence in the American labor movement is a difficult issue with which to deal. Some violence on the part of both sides of the labor issue was used and accepted. However, there were other times during the movement when the use of violence was totally unacceptable. The issue of commitment is involved.

Commitment: How do you measure commitment? Is it the willing-

ness to take a day out of life and sacrifice it to history, to plunge for one morning or one afternoon into the unknown, to engage in one solitary act of defiance against all the arrayed power of established society? If that is so, then thousands of people have committed themselves to a cause or two by the simple act of joining a demonstration. But commitment is more than just that. It is the willingness to wrench yourself out of your environment and begin anew, almost alone, in a social jungle which the most powerful forces in the nation have not dared to penetrate. Violence is acceptable under a certain set of circumstances. A true commitment to a fight for social change and a commitment to social stability seem to be the two most acceptable to the American society. During the American labor movement both a commitment to change and to stability were present in society. Labor-management contentions around the turn of the century were disorganized and exceedingly bloody, with the police or the Pinkertons "legitimately" intervening on the side of management. Violence, as a form of labor-management conflict resolution, was of course illegal. There was a time when even the talk of strike was seen as "conspiracy" and punishable by jail sentence. Today management, by and large, has accepted the existence of unions, and it normally does not try to repress working-class movements in such a drastic way. Conflict is carried on in a somewhat more civilized form.[68]

The tendency of labor disputes in some industries to degenerate into violence has led students to describe erroneously

the Molly Maguires as a link in the labor movement.[69]

Knights of Labor failed because of ill defined purpose, rather than the attacks of the trade unions failed to meet the needs of its members effectively.

Strike benefits received considerable attention. The Phili printers pledged themselves in 1786 to support all journeymen forced out of work because of their refusal to accept a wage cut. Sums were given to those workers and to their families so that they would stay in line. In some instances, as that involving the New York printers, money was advanced to individual strikers in need and if the loan could not be repaid, it was financed by a tax upon all members. The practice of financing striking workers was copied from that of employers who financed individual masters who were in difficulty. In the early period, only one organization--the New York shoemakers--set up in 1805 a permanent defense fund. In addition to strike benefits, some of the early unions also paid sick and death benefits, these depending upon the amount of surplus funds the union had.[70]

The demise of these early unions was not the result of hostility of the employer or the prosecution of the cordwainers under the law of conspiracy. But, instead, their demise as protective organizations and their frequent transformation into beneficiary societies was resultant in the loss of interest of the journeymen members.

The loss of interest immediately following a successful negotiation of a wage contract seems to have been the experience of the New York Typographical Society. After the new scale went into effect in 1815, the influence of the society as a trade union began to decline. Dissatisfaction appeared after a proprietor member was expelled. This action was followed by the barring of master printers who had joined the society as journeymen and had retained their membership when they became masters. Because of distress among the members, a proposal for granting assistance was made in 1815 and rejected. The society then sought to organize its benevolent society upon a regular and permanent basis. A charter was set up to protect its assets. This charter was legislatively conditional on the clear understanding that the New York Typographical Society cease to interfere with the price of labor. This, of course, defeated their function as a trade union.[71]

The Conspiracy trails of organized workers dating from 1806-1842, only illustrates the hostility with which the organized activity of workers was greeted in some trades, but reveal the character of the early labor organizations. In the case of Commonwealth vs. Pullis, eight Philadelphia cordwainers, members of the Journeymen Boot and Shoemakers of Philadelphia, combined and conspired to "prevent by threats, menaces, and other unlawful means, other artificers, workmen and journeymen in the said art and occupation, but at certain large prices and rates which they then and there fixed." According to the prosecuting counsel,

they were indicted for "undertaking by a combination, to regulate the price of labor of others as well as their own." They took the position that all workers in a particular class or trade, irregardless of age or the quality of work, be paid a standard rate. They also refused to work with journeymen who did not belong to the society. The jury found the defendants guilty of a conspiracy to raise wages, and each defendant was fined by Recorder Levy eight dollars ($8.00) and cost.[72]

In the Journeymen Cordwainers of the City of New York, People vs. Melvin in 1809-1810, twenty-four members were indicted or charged with conspiracy to establish a closed shop so that none would work for less than the agreed upon price for the several grades of boots. The cordwainers were found guilty and fined $1.00 each with costs.

It happened much the same with the journeymen tailors in Philadelphia in 1827, and again with the Boston journeymen shoemakers in 1840. These are mentioned only as examples of the conspiracy charges brought against the early trade unions. Where, when, who and how will not be discussed in detail. They are mentioned only as an example of the sort of obstacles presented to the members of the early trade unions.[73]

Conclusion

History of Labor in The United States

During the past three years, I have attempted to gain a better understanding of business in America. I have learned the accepted business theories, methods and procedures concerning business law, managerial accounting, finance, marketing, personnel, and administration. These areas were sufficiently covered and knowledge and proficiency was gained in accordance with the requirements necessary for the completion of a Bachelor of Science in Administration degree. In pursuit of a Master of Science in Management, I conducted my research from a critical perspective. To fully understand personnel and their environment, an examination of their history is in order. Much of the history must be reinterpreted. The history revisionists have shed new light on issues concerning the activities surrounding the founding of America, the framing of the Constitution, and the development of business in America. An indepth understanding of the history of the members of American society and the labor movement has been conducted in preparation of this culminating project.

In this paper, I have attempted to give some explanation concerning the development of the American labor movement. Chapter One introduced two very distinct theories of labor movements. The "great man" theory and its methodology is often followed by historians, whereas the sociologists prefer to examine the fluctuation in employment in regard to the labor movement in America.

The "great man" theory emphasizes the leadership of movements. In the American labor movement, Samuel Gompers, among others, would be an excellent choice of subject. The other theory and its methodology examining the fluctuation of the employment trends was used in this project. Both theories and methods are helpful, but not nearly enough to understand the reasons for labor's failure to develop the collective consciousness necessary for a successful movement.

The Polish workers union, Solidarity, in 1981 demonstrated to the world the unity necessary to make an impact. The American Air Controller PacCo made their stand, as did Solidarity, and they too, like Solidarity, were crushed. Big business and its government in America are now, and have always been, as supportive of workers in America as governments in Communist Bloc countries.

The American worker throughout history has organized for the betterment of the work place and wage of workers. To examine the labor movement using the two traditional theories is not sufficient. An understanding of the American labor movement can better be understood by examining the American society and its many changes and evolution. The immigration to America plays an important part in understanding the development of American society, the ideas of the time, their origins, and their consequences.

Chapter II is a chronicle of the labor movement. The first guilds were organized as a carry over of England. It is clear to me that the English played an important part in the early development of America and their influence can be seen in the labor movement and the guild system. Craftsmen and master silversmiths, wigmakers, etc.

saw themselves as being much different from the unskilled labor. Although my early education taught me that America was settled by men and women who embraced freedom and equality for all, the documented incidents cited in this project are cited to demonstrate the very fact that freedom and equality were not an essential part of the labor movement. This issue is more important than the "great man" theory or an examination of the fluctuation of employment in America.

I feel that leadership is an essential and important part of any movement and can sway the movement at times. Equally important is the climate of the times, as I suggested in the use of the theory of fluctuating employment, but an understanding of the culture in which both exist is essential.

Chapter II presents, in chronological order, many organizations with self-interests or groups of "like" individuals. As I have suggested, the research reflects a polarized work force from the very concept of organized workers in America. Not only were the workers separated along industrial lines, but skilled and non-skilled workers in the same industries were separated. I drew particular attention to the separation in religion, nationality and race, as it was being projected time after time during my research for this project, as well as my research in other projects.

In a very current study concerning organizational behavior as it differs from formal organizational structure, I found that in modern educational institutions in America, in the twentieth century, racial, religious and national interests can still be seen, as can

the consequences of their actions.

The lack of collective consciousness in the American labor movement is very apparent to me. The lack of this consciousness was supported and magnified by management in a successful attempt to crush the movement at its beginning. One classic example, which is documented in this paper, is the Ludlow Massacre, cited in Chapter II. The national separations were magnified, I feel, by the management, at the direction and leadership of the owner, John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

Although the labor movement can be examined through a look at leadership and a look at the fluctuation of employment trends, a better understanding can be gained by examining the social stratification and lack of class consciousness among Americans.

Michael Harrington stressed the fact that the American labor movement settled into a reformist mode. His reasons, as cited in Chapter I, are: national, ethnic and religious differences among American workers which inhibited the development of a consciousness of class and of a class politics. He refers to the Industrial Workers of the World and The Federation of Miners. I have researched most of the early organizations and have come to the following conclusion.

There were several labor movements in the United States during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Some were revolutionary, most were reformist oriented, but all failed to truly unite the workers. The hopes and dreams of Samuel Gompers were lost in labor's continuous compromise with management, in the pluralism of the society in general, and the specific lack of humanity toward each worker's

co-worker.

The failure to transcend one's own culture has shamed the United States of America as long ago as when the first European met the first native American Indian. The inability to see man's fellow man as another human being seems to be inherent in the history of American society.

NOTES

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