

Chapter 1 : Labor unions in the United States - Wikipedia

Before There Were Unions, Workers Lived Desperate, Dangerous, Impoverished Lives June - Every now and then, to fully appreciate where we are, what we have accomplished, and where we are headed, it is useful to take a look back at where we have been.

Andrew Cuomo, California Gov. Jerry Brown and New Jersey Gov. The new laws, passed in a handful of staunchly liberal states in early , generally fall into a few similar categories: The Supreme Court ultimately ruled in late June in *Janus v. AFSCME* that dissenting employees cannot be forced under the First Amendment to pay any dues to public-sector unions, even to support collective bargaining and other shared benefits. The decision handed down June 27 was both avidly watched and widely expected. Andrew Cuomo signed, a law in April that permits unions to meet with employees during work time, requires employers to share employee contact information with unions, and allows unions not to provide certain benefits, such as professional development or some counseling and training programs, to non-members. The money and power public-sector unions derive from their large memberships and captive dues revenue have been a boon to the political successes of Democrats across the country. Many progressives believe the real goal of the *Janus* case was not lofty First Amendment considerations, but an effort by big-moneyed conservative donors to rein in that political clout. In education, some reformers have seen teachers unions as both an ally in helping boost school spending and an impediment to implementing policies that could benefit children, like expanded charter schools or tenure reform. CAP and The 74 also share some contributors. Conservatives have blasted the state-level laws as enacting unfair hurdles for dissenting employees who want to leave the union. The foundation represented *Janus*. Many of those new laws are sure to face challenges in the wake of the *Janus* ruling, particularly after the court also ruled that employees must affirmatively choose to join unions, rather than requiring dissenters to opt out, which is how it works now in several states. Several of the state laws have clauses that would allow the rest of the legislation to stand if one portion is ultimately overturned. Lawsuits are already percolating through the courts based on the Supreme Court ruling: That group of California educators is led by Rebecca Friedrichs, the plaintiff in a similar lawsuit in that ended in a draw after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. To be sure, there have also been anti-union bills proposed and passed during the same time period in several states. Unions have vowed to fight those efforts. The legislature passed, and Gov.

Chapter 2 : A History of Labor Unions from Colonial Times to | Mises Institute

Before There Were Unions Labor, s-Present. The beginnings of the American labor movement. Recognition of the needs of the American laborer began in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Mexico[edit] Before the s, unions in Mexico had been historically part of a state institutional system. From until the s, worldwide spread of neo-liberalism through the Washington Consensus , the Mexican unions did not operate independently, but instead as part of a state institutional system, largely controlled by the ruling party. This economic policy, which peaked in the s and 60s with the so-called " Mexican Miracle ", saw rising incomes and improved standards of living but the primary beneficiaries were the wealthy. The new owners had an antagonistic attitude towards unions, which, accustomed to comfortable relationships with the state, were not prepared to fight back. A movement of new unions began to emerge under a more independent model, while the former institutionalized unions had become very corrupt, violent, and led by gangsters. It controls school curriculums, and all teacher appointments. One of the aims of IF Metall is to transform jobs into "good jobs", also called "developing jobs". In , the percentage of workers belonging to a union labour union density was The considerably raised membership fees of Swedish union unemployment funds implemented by the new center-right government in January caused large drops in membership in both unemployment funds and trade unions. From to , union density declined by six percentage points: Trade unions in the United Kingdom and History of trade unions in the United Kingdom Public sector workers in Leeds striking over pension changes by the government in November Moderate New Model Unions dominated the union movement from the midth century and where trade unionism was stronger than the political labour movement until the formation and growth of the Labour Party in the early years of the 20th century. By this stage, some 12., workers in the United Kingdom were trade union members. The level of trade union membership also fell sharply in the s, and continued falling for most of the s. Trade union density was Labor unions in the United States and Labor history of the United States Labour unions are legally recognized as representatives of workers in many industries in the United States. In the United States, trade unions were formed based on power with the people, not over the people like the government at the time. Larger unions also typically engage in lobbying activities and supporting endorsed candidates at the state and federal level. Most unions in America are aligned with one of two larger umbrella organizations: Both advocate policies and legislation on behalf of workers in the United States and Canada, and take an active role in politics. Child labourers in an Indiana glass works. Trade unions have an objective interest in combating child labour. In , the percentage of workers belonging to a union in the United States or total labour union "density" was Unions allege that employer-incited opposition has contributed to this decline in membership. The most prominent unions are among public sector employees such as teachers, police and other non-managerial or non-executive federal, state, county and municipal employees. Members of unions are disproportionately older, male and residents of the Northeast, the Midwest, and California. The economist Joseph Stiglitz has asserted that, "Strong unions have helped to reduce inequality, whereas weaker unions have made it easier for CEOs , sometimes working with market forces that they have helped shape, to increase it. These unions are often divided into " locals ", and united in national federations. These federations themselves will affiliate with Internationals , such as the International Trade Union Confederation. However, in Japan, union organization is slightly different due to the presence of enterprise unions, i. These enterprise unions, however, join industry-wide federations which in turn are members of Rengo , the Japanese national trade union confederation. In Western Europe , professional associations often carry out the functions of a trade union. In these cases, they may be negotiating for white-collar or professional workers, such as physicians, engineers or teachers. Typically such trade unions refrain from politics or pursue a more liberal politics than their blue-collar counterparts. A union may acquire the status of a " juristic person " an artificial legal entity , with a mandate to negotiate with employers for the workers it represents. In such cases, unions have certain legal rights, most importantly the right to engage in collective bargaining with the employer or employers over wages, working hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. The inability of the parties to reach an

agreement may lead to industrial action , culminating in either strike action or management lockout , or binding arbitration. In extreme cases, violent or illegal activities may develop around these events. The Great Southwest Railroad Strike of 1904 was a trade union strike involving more than 100,000 workers [61] In other circumstances, unions may not have the legal right to represent workers, or the right may be in question. This lack of status can range from non-recognition of a union to political or criminal prosecution of union activists and members, with many cases of violence and deaths having been recorded historically. Social Unionism encompasses many unions that use their organizational strength to advocate for social policies and legislation favourable to their members or to workers in general. As well, unions in some countries are closely aligned with political parties. Unions are also delineated by the service model and the organizing model. The service model union focuses more on maintaining worker rights, providing services, and resolving disputes. Alternately, the organizing model typically involves full-time union organizers , who work by building up confidence, strong networks, and leaders within the workforce; and confrontational campaigns involving large numbers of union members. Many unions are a blend of these two philosophies, and the definitions of the models themselves are still debated. In Britain, the perceived left-leaning nature of trade unions has resulted in the formation of a reactionary right-wing trade union called Solidarity which is supported by the far-right BNP. In Denmark, there are some newer apolitical "discount" unions who offer a very basic level of services, as opposed to the dominating Danish pattern of extensive services and organizing. Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Switzerland , religious unions have existed for decades.

Chapter 3 : Your Rights/Forming a Union

The US Supreme Court will hear oral arguments Monday in Janus v. AFSCME, a landmark case that could end the mandatory payments public employees make to unions. For union-dominated New York, this.

Notes Labor unions have been defined as "private combinations of workingmen" that try to increase wages and improve working conditions for members. What means do labor unions use? As Henry George suggests, trade unionists are hardly known for their kindness to strangers and genteel ways. From colonial times, trade unionists found the going difficult in North America. There was no prevailing ideology of "working-class solidarity," and unions were far from respectable; in fact, they had a well-earned reputation for being antisocial, even criminal. Some unions were secret societies with secret oaths, and unionists engaged in intimidation, threats, vandalism, and violence, especially against uncooperative workers denounced as subhuman "scabs" and "blacklegs. Courts of law were not fond of union methods either, and employers, consumers, and workers often resisted "militant" unions. Competition from imported goods made life difficult too. Some workers were intensely anti-union, not just employers. America was an open society, a frontier society, farm-dominated, sprawling, and free, and wages often were double those paid in England because labor was so scarce here. Although no reliable statistics are available, union membership probably remained below one percent of the work force most years from colonial times to the s. If a union declared and lost a strike, it usually collapsed and disappeared. Most unions failed during business downturns as jobs, union membership, and revenue declined. While wage rates fell elsewhere in response to depressed business conditions, unions stubbornly insisted on maintaining wage rates "wage rigidity" , intensifying their own failure. As nonunion labor became less expensive more "affordable" and induced more hiring, production costs fell, thereby reducing unemployment. Such wage-price flexibility shortened business downturns by expanding output and employment, thereby acting as "shock absorbers" in the economy. In the vast sweep of the early American economy, unions were a curiosity rather than a prominent feature, confined largely to skilled trades in big cities and on the railroads. Not until the late s and prosperous s, when political philosophy began to shift toward collectivism and the "progressive era," did national trade unions gain a real foothold.

Colonial Times In the early modern era, the European guild system consisted of tightly regulated local occupational and product monopolies, which never really took hold in North America. Most labor protests, however, were spontaneous actions like that reported in , when, according to the Charleston Gazette, Negro chimney sweeps "had the insolence, by a combination among themselves, to raise the usual prices, and to refuse doing their work. Philadelphia was a city of labor-union firsts: Union Tactics Trade unions in the early Republic sought monopoly control over the local supply of labor with the "closed shop," an arrangement requiring employers to hire union members only. Selective admission to apprenticeships restricted membership, thereby artificially limiting the supply of skilled labor for hire and placing upward pressure on wage rates. As in England, threats and violence accompanied strikes. The typical strike aimed to force employers to pay more than necessary for labor available on the open market. The silent corollary was that everyone "union member or no " must "strike" too, that is, withhold his or her labor, willing or not, and refuse employment at pay less than that demanded by strikers. Alternatively, the employer had to be intimidated and decisively discouraged from hiring replacement workers "strikebreakers". A union warning from the s suggests how unions discouraged interlopers: Local culture and ideology play a large role because the response of local police, courts, and politicians to union aggression is pivotal. By , union tactics were fully formed: But how could threatened collective violence and actual violence by adversarial-style unions square with the right of each person to seek his or her best opportunity, free of interference? To strike a bargain for lawful employment, a right firmly entrenched in custom and law? It could not be. Union coercion is incompatible with individual freedom of contract, an ugly truth ignored by most labor writers. But, as Mises wrote, "Actually labor union violence is tolerated within broad limits the authorities, with the approval of public opinion, condone such acts. According to some legal doctrines, unions were "criminal conspiracies in restraint of trade" and illegal combinations to fix prices for labor services. These issues were tested in the state

courts from through In the famous criminal prosecution of the Philadelphia cordwainers shoemakers , Commonwealth v. Only 18 unionists were convicted on conspiracy charges when this doctrine was at its peak. The courts did not go so far as to authorize threats and violence by unions as legitimate "weapons of labor" during strikes, but, as Mises pointed out, law enforcement was and is lax in many labor disputes. The state thereby fails in its alleged basic purpose, to protect life, property, and individual liberty against private aggression. Some were secret societies with names like the Knights of St. Crispin, the Molly Maguires, and the Knights of Labor. Yet the main adhesive of British and European unions "easily aroused class antagonisms" was absent in America, and Marxist-style sentiments about the plight of the working class never became the dominant mood, contrary to some historical accounts. More often, American public opinion was horrified and disgusted by outbreaks of labor violence and union disruption of production, especially if the outbursts had revolutionary overtones. Eventually, one form of unionism emerged as a survivor in this unfavorable environment. Experiments with political radicalism gave way to so-called "business unionism," the notion that unions must pursue immediate, material gain for members within the free-enterprise system. The underlying idea was to accept the capitalist wage, price, and political system and achieve marginal gains for members within it. Consequently, the ambitions of social visionaries and leftist radicals who saw unions as a vehicle for radical change gradually fell by the wayside. Founded in , it was a federation of national trade unions, each composed of members of a particular craft such as locomotive engineers or carpenters. Union membership in the early s was barely ,, but as the economy expanded after the Panic of unions found more effective methods of organization, and membership hit , in Given the formula for national craft unionism, unions grew to a modest share of the labor force without enormous government intervention, aside from laxity toward union threats and the actual use of violence. Only a dozen unions claimed more than 10, members. The largest union was the Locomotive Engineers with 30, members; the Cigarmakers were second with 28, Samuel Gompers, the most famous president of the AFL, for example, came from the Cigarmakers, which disappeared in a merger with the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union in the s. While unions existed in many trades at the close of the century, they did organize a substantial share of employment in few instances, mainly construction, railroads, printing, and the postal service. Only the railroad and postal unions were direct beneficiaries of pro-union federal legislation. Although 17 state legislatures passed laws during the s and s prohibiting employers from firing employees for belonging to or joining unions, reflecting an emerging pro-union political climate during this period, a prelude to the "Progressive Era. This was the "Progressive Era" of through which fastened a welfare-warfare state on America which has set the mold for the rest of the twentieth century because a unique set of conditions had destroyed the Democrats as a laissez-faire party and left a power vacuum for the triumph of the new ideology of compulsory cartelization through a partnership of big government, business, unions, technocrats, and intellectuals. From onward, unions had the clear legal right to exist, and workers could join such "self-help" organizations, but employers were under no obligation to "bargain" with these unions. The courts also tended ultimately to restrict union tactics such as threats of violence, violence itself, mob action, and interference with voluntary trade. Further, the courts tended to make little distinction between business and union "restraints on competition. Unionists therefore prominently demanded governmental privilege and mounted persistent and intensive campaigns for favorable legislation. In , Congress passed the Clayton Act with provisions to exempt unions from the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, restrict the use of court injunctions in labor disputes and declare picketing and similar union tactics as not unlawful. The "national emergency" of US entry into World War I provided much of the experience and precedent for subsequent intervention on behalf of unionism, as well as for other cartel-like policies. Leuchtenburg, for instance, points out, "The panoply of procedures developed by the War Labor Board and the War Labor Policies Board provided the basis in later years for a series of enactments culminating in the Wagner National Labor Relations Act of Roosevelt who represented the United States Navy on the board, proclaimed governmental support of unions and enforced pro-union measures on industry. The boards, for instance, ordered establishment of "work councils" composed of employee representatives and seized defiant enterprises. The government even created a union, the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, and forced lumbermen to join in its battle against the radical leftist Industrial Workers of the

World IWW, known as the "Wobblies". The Loyal Legion collapsed after the war despite government efforts to keep it alive, while others became so-called company or independent unions, subsequently banned by the Wagner Act. Baruch and Army General Hugh S. But peacetime help was not far off. The first durable help for "private-sector" unionism was the Railway Labor Act of 1934. The labor disputes that erupted periodically on the railroads were highly visible, violent, unpopular, and politically embarrassing. Although the interstate commerce clause of the United States Constitution, as interpreted then, restricted the ability of the national government to intervene in most economic affairs, Congress had the unchallenged power to regulate interstate commerce. A sequence of federal laws beginning in 1917 regulated railway labor matters, and Congress passed the law in almost the identical form agreed on by the major railroads and unions. The act, amended in 1934, essentially dictated collective bargaining for all interstate railroads and set up machinery for governmental intervention in labor disputes. This was an obvious example of monopoly intervention on behalf of an industry. The already unionized railroads found it comfortable to impose compulsory collective bargaining on all interstate railroads, some of which had resisted union pressure better than others. The Interstate Commerce Commission ICC, in turn, fixed freight rates for railroads based on "costs," which were higher because of unions. Thus railroad wage and price determination was transferred from the marketplace to the political arena. If it were otherwise, rather than producing themselves rich, nations could simply declare all good things cheap and all wages high, and thus abolish poverty with pious hopes. This bill passed in 1934 following a sharp decline in construction activity at the beginning of the Great Depression. Competition for contracts and jobs was fierce and mobile contractors using migrant labor entered the market to underbid some local contractors. Many contractors and building trade unions welcomed the law to protect themselves from the competition of what one congressman called "carpetbagging sharpie contractors. The clearly stated intent was to protect local workers and contractors from the competition of outsiders. The ambiguity of prevailing wages gave the United States Department of Labor scope to set minimum wage rates at union wages in about half of its wage determinations. This has cost taxpayers at least a billion dollars per year in higher construction and administrative costs. Since 1934, Congress has extended the prevailing wage provision to include most federally assisted construction, whether state, local, or national government is the direct purchaser. Additional amendments in 1937 added fringe benefits to prevailing wage calculations. Construction workers are among the highest paid in America, earning twice the hourly rate of employees in retail trade. Most states passed "little Davis-Bacon" Acts to further unionize the construction industry and "build expensive. It was the culmination of a year union campaign against "government by injunction. The overriding object of the act was to free organized labor from the constraints that bind businessmen and others, allowing unions more scope to use their aggressive and violent tactics. The number of strikes suddenly doubled between 1934 and 1935, and then continued climbing to a peak of 4, in 1935. This outburst of strikes occurred during a period of deep depression and massive unemployment, while previous business downturns had always diminished strike activity and caused many unions to disappear. As Hayek summed it up, "We have now reached a state where [unions] have become uniquely privileged institutions to which the general rules of law do not apply. The National Industrial Recovery Act was among the many Roosevelt interventions to boost prices and wage rates on the mistaken theory that falling wages and prices were causing the depression rather than being market-driven adjustments to re-coordinate the economy and restore production and employment. The NIRA is the New Deal fascist system of codes to cartelize both industry and labor markets and push up prices throughout the economy" was struck down by the Supreme Court in the famous Schechter Poultry case of 1935 on the grounds that the act delegated virtually unlimited legislative power to the president.

Chapter 4 : Unions have Been Down Before, History shows How They can Come Back - Resilience

Labor unions in the United States are organizations that represent workers in many industries recognized under US labor law. Their activity today centers on collective bargaining over wages, benefits, and working conditions for their membership, and on representing their members in disputes with management over violations of contract provisions.

Facts Civil War Facts: Abraham Lincoln was their President. Jefferson Davis was their President. Populations The population of the Union was 35 million. In the Confederacy, the population was listed as 5 million. In the Border States there were 2 million. Agriculture With the exception of rice and tobacco, the Union had a clear agricultural advantage. The Union led corn production with 100 million bushels compared to the 50 million bushels in the Confederacy and 20 million bushels in the Border States. The Confederacy led tobacco production with 50 million pounds compared to 10 million pounds produced in the Border States and 50 million pounds produced in the Union. The Union led wheat production with 100 million bushels produced in comparison to 35 million bushels in the Confederacy and 20 million bushels in the Border States. The Union was attributed with having 40 million heads of livestock compared to 35 million in the Confederacy and only 10 million in the Border States. Industry The Union had 100,000 factories, while the Confederacy had 21,000, and the Border States had 9,000. The Union had 20,000 miles of railroad compared to 9,000 in the Confederacy and 1,000 in the Border States. Soldier demographics for the Confederate Army are not available due to incomplete and destroyed enlistment records. Civilian Occupations Farmers comprised 48 percent of the civilian occupations in the Union. Others included mechanics, 24 percent; laborers, 16 percent; commercial, 5 percent; miscellaneous, 4 percent; and professional occupations, 3 percent. Farmers comprised 69 percent of the civilian occupations in the Confederacy. Others included laborers, 9 percent; mechanics, 5 percent. Bloodiest Battles The bloodiest battles of the Civil War were:

Chapter 5 : Facts - The Civil War (U.S. National Park Service)

The views expressed by contributors are their own and not the view of The Hill Janus v. AFSCME is one of the most important Supreme Court cases this term and perhaps one of the most important in.

Supreme Court on Wednesday was another blow to the labor movement. It creates a financial incentive for public sector union members to leave the union while continuing their job. Ever since the beginning of the s clamp-down on the U. Labor organized strongly and successfully in the period before World War I, so much so that the 1 percent led a fierce push-back in the s that substantially lowered union membership. The s became a period of tremendous union growth, so much so that progressive movements were able to achieve victories almost impossible to imagine in the s. Two ways we can honor unions at this time of trial are to ask others to join union picket lines and to learn from their innovations and successes for whatever campaigns we are committed to today. Labor matches innovative tactics to target in giant victory Americans fell in love with the automobile in the s. Factories in Michigan needed to grow rapidly to meet the demand. The auto industry was a giant in the U. Its influence on governments, both local and national, meant that law enforcement could be used to back up its network of private detectives and spies. Early attempts to unionize failed, since the usual tactic “ workers refusing to go to work and picketing the factory gates to keep out replacement workers ” was broken by arrests and violence. That union had already made great progress in another industry defended by violence: However, automobile manufacturers had a back-up defense against attempts at unionization: The largest of them, General Motors, hired only white workers for skilled jobs. That meant unemployed black workers would be easy to recruit as replacement workers in case of a strike, setting up race against race to divert attention from their common enemy, the economic elite. With both violence and racism on their side, how could the auto manufacturers lose? Meeting in living rooms with the comparatively few black GM workers in Flint, UAW organizers told them the union would oppose Jim Crow, just as the Mineworkers had done in Birmingham, when they organized the steel industry there. To tackle GM as a whole, however, they would be publicly organizing the white workers. While the slow, painstaking work of organizing continued, word arrived in spring about the French trying a different kind of strike. Instead of leaving their jobs and going home, almost 2 million workers were occupying their factories. This reduced the threat of replacement workers, who could simply be locked out by the occupation. Flint workers decided to try it, calling it the sit-downs. Their families and friends mobilized to bring in food and supplies “ no one knew how long the occupations would continue. The GM executives refused to negotiate with the union, asking local political leaders who they controlled to use the police to expel the workers. GM also went to state court to get an injunction on the grounds that the workers were occupying private property. After the workers repelled local police who tried to enter one of the factories, a state court passed an injunction against the sit-downs. They put him in a dilemma: The governor stalled while making a decision. The occupiers understood the dynamics influencing his decision. General Motors, the largest automaker, finally gave in. With racism, strategy means that sequencing matters As in chess, or any game, being strategic includes estimating which move is best to take first, second and so on. Often we choose a smaller target then proceed to a larger, more powerful one. The reality of racism actually suggested the reverse order of sequencing in the auto union struggle, for a couple of reasons. History helps us out here. When the union took on the Ford Motor Company, taking advantage of the momentum from its victory with GM, it met a workforce with more black workers. Ford reinforced the loyalty by making many of the hires through referrals from black ministers, to whose churches Ford gave contributions. Because UAW organizers chose the GM fight first, they gained credibility for tackling the mixed-race situation at Ford. Most Ford workers could see that being a union member would give more protection and a more promising economic future than not having a union. On the other hand, black autoworkers had experienced plenty of white racism and had little reason to expect a union to be any different. When the UAW was formed the United Mine Workers was a consciously anti-racist union that, among other things, developed leadership skills in black workers and gave them leadership spots. Further, UAW knew that Ford would use divide-and-conquer tactics in order to keep the union out, in this case

dividing blacks and whites. Because of their principled anti-racism and understanding that success depended on unity, UAW organizers knew they had to somehow unite workers across racial lines. They developed a two-pronged recruitment strategy. Organizers recruited black members secretly to get some momentum before the issue became an open fight. And they invested in seemingly endless one-on-one encounters to convince white workers that, however strongly they might be prejudiced, they would need to contain it, instead of acting on it, for the sake of unity in the struggle. Ford capitulated, the plants became union and the workers had their first experience of a degree of economic justice. The bottom line was that the UAW was unwilling to let the racism of white workers prevent organizing at Ford. There were ongoing tensions between whites and blacks, some racially tinged physical fights, and initially a lower percentage of blacks than whites joined the union. Nevertheless, the UAW became an interracial union. But despite its flaws, it managed to be an instrument for economic justice for many black workers and also became a progressive force for equality on the national scene for decades after its founding. A lesson for today: The discouraged among us who think we should aim low and resign ourselves to incrementalist steps because racism will prevent large gains are wrong. Instead, we need to learn from what worked for UAW and the mine workers back in the day. They focused on struggling together for a win on justice issues that matter deeply to many people, regardless of race. We have many issues like this today: For at least 50 years, academic race relations studies have found that when people of different races are placed together in equal-status situations affordable housing, a good school, a work team, a military unit, a sports team, or performance group, white people experience prejudice reduction. Here again the strategic question of sequencing comes up: Sometimes both can be done simultaneously, but sometimes we need to make choices, which is what strategy is about. In other words, white people who want people of color to see them as champions of racial equality can earn that trust by demonstrating their chops " by initiating direct action campaigns whose demands will improve the lives of actual people of color who are most hurt by injustice. Another huge lesson from the Flint workers teach us the power that comes from self-discipline. Their choice to leave intact the plants they occupied limited the range of options the powerholders could use against the workers. General Motors wanted the governor to intervene violently and suppress the workers. But GM needed the auto workers to damage property in order to justify that level of force. The workers, by practicing discipline, prevented GM from getting its way.

Chapter 6 : The History Of Unions In The United States

The origin of labor unions dates back to the eighteenth century and the industrial revolution in Europe. Union membership and power peaked around At that time, private sector union membership began a steady decline that continues today.

Right to Organise Not ratified Today most labor unions in the United States are members of one of two larger umbrella organizations: Both organizations advocate policies and legislation favorable to workers in the United States and Canada, and take an active role in politics favoring the Democratic party but not exclusively so. Public sector unions are regulated partly by federal and partly by state laws. In general they have shown robust growth rates, because wages and working conditions are set through negotiations with elected local and state officials. To join a traditional labor union, workers must either be given voluntary recognition from their employer or have a majority of workers in a bargaining unit vote for union representation. Public sector worker unions are governed by labor laws and labor boards in each of the 50 states. In other states, public workers have no right to establish a union as a legal entity. Under the NLRA, employees can also, if there is no majority support, form a minority union which represents the rights of only those members who choose to join. When disputes arise over the contract, most contracts call for the parties to resolve their differences through a grievance process to see if the dispute can be mutually resolved. If the union and the employer still cannot settle the matter, either party can choose to send the dispute to arbitration , where the case is argued before a neutral third party. Worker slogan used during the Wisconsin protests Right-to-work statutes forbid unions from negotiating union shops and agency shops. Thus, while unions do exist in "right-to-work" states, they are typically weaker. Members of labor unions enjoy " Weingarten Rights. Weingarten Rights are named for the first Supreme Court decision to recognize those rights. It protects the right of workers to engage in any "concerted activity" for mutual aid or protection. Thus, no union connection is needed. Concerted activity "in its inception involves only a speaker and a listener, for such activity is an indispensable preliminary step to employee self-organization. Unions report that, under the present system, many employers use the to day period to conduct anti-union campaigns. Some opponents of this legislation fear that removing secret balloting from the process will lead to the intimidation and coercion of workers on behalf of the unions. During the elections, the Employee Free Choice Act had widespread support of many legislators in the House and Senate, and of the President. Since then, support for the "card check" provisions of the EFCA subsided substantially. Union affiliation by U. Most of the recent gains in union membership have been in the service sector while the number of unionized employees in the manufacturing sector has declined. Most of the gains in the service sector have come in West Coast states like California where union membership is now at At the apex of union density in the s, only about 9. For a short period, private sector union membership rebounded, increasing from 7. In there were In , the percentage of workers belonging to a union was The rate for the private sector was 6. Most of the elections 15, were triggered by employee petitions for representation, of which unions won 9, Less common were elections caused by employee petitions for decertification , of which unions won , and employer-filed petitions for either representation or decertification , of which unions won The Harvard Trade Union Program is currently part of a broader initiative at Harvard Law School called the Labor and Worklife Program [51] that deals with a wide variety of labor and employment issues from union pension investment funds to the effects of nanotechnology on labor markets and the workplace. Cornell University is known to be one of the leading centers for labor education in the world, establishing the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations in The school has six academic departments: Jurisdictional strikes occur most frequently in the United States in the construction industry. The Gallup organization has tracked public opinion of unions since , when it found that 72 percent approved of unions. The overwhelming approval declined in the late s, but - except for one poll in in which the unions received a favorable rating by only 48 percent of those interviewed, majorities have always supported labor unions. The latest poll in August gave labor unions a 56 percent approval rating, versus 36 percent who disapproved of unions. In August , 36 percent wanted unions to have more influence, 34 percent less influence, with 26 percent wanting the

influence of labor unions to remain about the same. Over the same period during which union density in the US declined from Australian unionization fell from All the English-speaking countries studied saw union membership decline to some degree. In the United Kingdom, union participation fell from In Ireland the decline was from Canada had one of the smallest declines over the period, going from Most of the countries studied started in with higher participation rates than the US, but France, which in had a union participation rate of The remaining four countries which had gained in union density were Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Belgium. It is not clear if this is a long term trend or a function of a high unemployment rate which historically correlates with lower public approval of labor unions. No longer do a sizable percentage of American workers belong to unions, or have family members who do. Unions no longer carry the "threat effect": Mark Tapscott of the Washington Examiner criticized the poll, accusing it of over-sampling union and public employee households. Women supported the governors much less than men. Democrats were overwhelmingly in support of the unions. Those who said they were following the situation somewhat closely supported the unions over governors by a 52%–41 margin. Those who said that they were following the situation very closely were only slightly more likely to support the unions over the governors, with a margin. A nationwide Gallup poll released on August 31, , revealed the following: A nationwide Gallup poll released on September 1, , revealed the following: The majority of Americans believed labor unions mostly helped members of unions by a 68 to 28 margin. A plurality of Americans believed labor unions mostly helped the companies where workers are unionized by a margin. A plurality of Americans believed labor unions mostly helped state and local governments by a margin. A plurality of Americans believed labor unions mostly hurt the US economy in general by a margin. The majority of Americans believed labor unions mostly hurt workers who are not members of unions by a margin. Institutional environments[edit] A broad range of forces have been identified as potential contributors to the drop in union density across countries. Sano and Williamson outline quantitative studies that assess the relevance of these factors across countries. For example, the presence of a Ghent system where unions are responsible for the distribution of unemployment insurance and of centralized collective bargaining organized at a national or industry level as opposed to local or firm level have both been shown to give unions more bargaining power and to correlate positively to higher rates of union density. Moreover, the fluctuations of business cycles, particularly the rise and fall of unemployment rates and inflation, are also closely linked to changes in union density. It outlawed mass picketing, secondary strikes of neutral employers, sit downs: The second effect of Taft-Hartley was subtler and slower-working. It was to hold up any new organizing at all, even on a quiet, low-key scale. For example, Taft-Hartley ended "card checks. It also allowed and even encouraged employers to threaten workers who want to organize. Employers could hold "captive meetings," bring workers into the office and chew them out for thinking about the Union. And Taft-Hartley led to the "union-busting" that started in the late s and continues today. It started when a new "profession" of labor consultants began to convince employers that they could violate the [pro-labor] Wagner Act, fire workers at will, fire them deliberately for exercising their legal rights, and nothing would happen. The Wagner Act had never had any real sanctions. Well, at first, in the s and s, they tried, and they got riots in the streets: One argument is that political parties play an expected role in determining union strength, with left-wing governments generally promoting greater union density, while others contest this finding by pointing out important counterexamples and explaining the reverse causality inherent in this relationship. Employer strategies[edit] Illegal union firing increased during the Reagan administration and has continued since. Bronfenbrenner notes that changes in the economy, such as increased global competition, capital flight , and the transitions from a manufacturing to a service economy and to a greater reliance on transitory and contingent workers, accounts for only a third of the decline in union density. Richard Freeman also points to the role of repressive employer strategies in reducing unionization, and highlights the way in which a state ideology of anti-unionism tacitly accepted these strategies [60] Goldfield writes that the overall effects of globalization on unionization in the particular case of the United States may be understated in econometric studies on the subject. They are most present in change towards a neoliberal political context that has promoted the deregulation and privatization of some industries and accepted increased employer flexibility in labor markets. Union responses to globalization[edit] Studies done by Kate Bronfenbrenner at Cornell

University show the adverse effects of globalization towards unions due to illegal threats of firing. In both cases, unions expressed strong opposition to the agreements, but to some extent pushed for the incorporation of basic labor standards in the agreement if one were to pass. Mickey Kantor, then U. Transnational labor regulation[edit] Unions have recently been engaged in a developing field of transnational labor regulation embodied in corporate codes of conduct. Braun and Gearhart note that although unions do participate in the structure of a number of these agreements, their original interest in codes of conduct differed from the interests of human rights and other non-governmental activists. Unions believed that codes of conduct would be important first steps in creating written principles that a company would be compelled to comply with in later organizing contracts, but did not foresee the establishment of monitoring systems such as the Fair Labor Association. These authors point out that are motivated by power, want to gain insider status politically and are accountable to a constituency that requires them to provide them with direct benefits. Therefore, the interests of unions are not likely to align well with the interests of those who draft and monitor corporate codes of conduct. Arguing against the idea that high union wages necessarily make manufacturing uncompetitive in a globalized economy is labor lawyer Thomas Geoghegan. Busting unions, in the U. They quickly ended up wrecking their industrial base. Eder observes that transnational organizing is not a new phenomenon but has been facilitated by technological change. He argues that unions in the global North are becoming increasingly depoliticized while those in the South grow politically, and that global differentiation of production processes leads to divergent strategies and interests in different regions of the world. These structural differences tend to hinder effective global solidarity. However, in light of the weakness of international labor, Herod writes that globalization of production need not be met by a globalization of union strategies in order to be contained. Thus, workers need not be connected organizationally to others around the world to effectively influence the behavior of a transnational corporation.

Chapter 7 : SBCTC - Before There Were Unions, Workers Lived Desperate, Dangerous, Impoverished Live

Life before unions There was a time during your grandparents' lifetime that life was much harder. What we take for granted now was not so back then. A work.

Share Labor unions have existed in one form or another in the United States since the birth of the country. They were created in an effort to protect the working population from abuses such as sweatshops and unsafe working conditions. On the other hand, they have also been accused of crippling industries and consorting with organized crime over the decades. But in one way or another, labor unions have been woven into the political, economic and cultural fabric of America, and their influence has played a colorful role in its development. A few were organized in scattered fashion, but many of those simply disbanded after they had achieved their goals, such as when the printers briefly unionized in New York City in 1806. The first successful strike in building trades took place in 1806 when Philadelphia carpenters campaigned for a ten-hour workday. The need for both skilled and unskilled labor mushroomed during the Industrial Revolution and the Civil War and the subsequent discontinuation of slavery helped to illustrate the right of workers to receive a fair wage for their labor. Protecting Worker Rights The National Labor Union was created in 1869 to convince Congress to limit the workday for federal employees to eight hours, but the private sector was much harder for unions to penetrate. The continual flood of immigrants coming into the country further diluted the workforce, and the price of labor declined as a result. Poor pay and working conditions in the 1880s led the Pullman Railroad workers and United Mine workers to lay down their tools in protest, but both strikes were broken up by the government. Congress became more sympathetic toward the labor force as time passed, which led to the creation of the Department of Labor. The Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 allowed employees to strike and boycott their employers and was followed by the Public Contract and the Fair Labor Standards Acts, which mandated a minimum wage, extra pay for overtime work and basic child labor laws. The Impact of Wartime Labor unions grew in power and number from the Civil War through World War I, as the need for factory workers and other laborers continued to increase. Union membership grew exponentially as the depression wore on and workers sought employment and protection through their local trade unions. The power of the labor unions was somewhat curtailed during World War II, however, as some unions, such as those in the defense industry, were forbidden by the government to strike due to the impediment that it would present to wartime production. But the end of the war saw a wave of strikes in many industries and it was at this point that union power and membership reached its zenith. Decreasing Power But the strength of the unions during this era led many union leaders into corruption and complacency, and the power of the unions began to decline in subsequent decades. As additional laws were passed outlawing child labor and mandating equal pay for equal work regardless of race or gender, unions became less important to workers who were able to rely on federal laws to protect them. The Bottom Line Despite the erosion in their power and influence, labor unions continue to prove their importance, as they were instrumental in getting President Obama elected in 2008 and reelected in 2012. Union membership ended up decreasing during this time, which many say led members to switch their support to Trump in the election. Trading Center Want to learn how to invest? Get a free 10 week email series that will teach you how to start investing. Delivered twice a week, straight to your inbox.

Chapter 8 : NY unions scrambling to lock up members before the Supremes give them choice

The first organization acting as a federation to encompass American unions was the National Labor Union which truly came into force after the Civil War but was reasonably short-lived.

The toll increased during the initial years of the Depression. Union membership in the state declined, but it is hard to tell how much since unions were disinclined to publicize their weakness. Strikes became rare between and The Washington State Labor News mentioned only a few small and short walkouts. The AFL unions turned to politics, seeking legislation to protect wage levels and union jobs. The Seattle Central Labor Council spent the early months of campaigning for a charter amendment that would have made the five-day week mandatory for city employees, thus spreading out scarce work. But voters, worried either about taxes or about funds to feed the unemployed, rejected it. A few months later, the labor movement rejoiced when conservative mayor Frank Edwards lost a recall election and still more when the City Council named former labor leader Robert Harlin as temporary replacement. But Harlin proceeded to lose favor with voters by appearing to care more about union wage rates than about the thousands of desperate unemployed. He lost his bid for a full term in spring While union leaders had become cautious and ineffective, a new labor movement was taking shape among the unemployed. In , socialists living in West Seattle launched the Unemployed Citizens League to demand jobs and services. The organization quickly spread and within months claimed upwards of 20, members in dozens of neighborhood UCL clubs spread throughout Seattle and other Puget Sound cities. And it was the UCL radicals and a smaller cadre of Communists who would set the stage for the revival of union organizing. Harradin and other strikebreakers were removed under a flag of truce as police stood back. Port of Seattle photo. Workers would have, for the first time, the right to join unions. Armed with that slogan, activists set out to rebuild old unions and create new ones. Across the nation, saw huge organizing campaigns followed by major strikes. In Washington, campaigns began in many industries, most importantly on the waterfront and among truck drivers. The single most important strike of the decade began on May 9, when longshoremen in Washington joined their counterparts in Oregon and California in a walkout that would shut down ports from Bellingham to San Diego for eighty-three days, freezing trade along the coast while creating a supply crisis for Alaska and Hawaii. Before it was over, San Francisco would endure a general strike while Seattle witnessed pitched battles between strikers and police and at least one union death. The waterfront strike inspired a wave of organizing and strikes: For more information on this paper, click the title above. One key achievement was the Seattle newspaper strike of Journalists were white-collar workers, thus not usually union material. When Hearst refused to negotiate, the writers walked out and quickly won the support of all the unions in Seattle, including the now powerful Teamsters. That year at the convention of the American Federation of Labor the revived labor movement began to split apart. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, called for a new strategy. Unions should be organized on the basis of industry rather than on the basis of craft, which allowed for the more inclusive organization of nonwhite workers, women workers, and the unskilled. When the proposal was voted down, the UMW and three other unions went ahead on their own, launching what would become in the Congress of Industrial Organizations CIO , a second labor federation dedicated to industrial organizing. The aircraft workers building planes for the Boeing Company became one of the prizes in this contest. In Boeing landed a contract for an innovative bomber that would become the work horse of World War II-- the B The company quickly expanded facilities and with equal dispatch signed a contract with the International Association of Machinists, an AFL union. The CIO won its big prize in the woods. Timber and sawmill workers who had organized in with a dramatic strike centered in Tacoma were initially affiliated with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, an AFL union. The CIO faulted the AFL unions for excluding nonwhites and sometimes women and for their modest, if not actually conservative goals. Most of the CIO unions practiced "social movement unionism," advocating an array of social justice programs that included expansive economic rights and also equal political and social rights for minorities. Civil rights was one of the important commitments of the CIO. The AFL charged that the CIO unions were dominated by Reds, were too interested in radical ideas, and that the rival federation weakened what should

have been the united front of labor. In truth the political differences were not as great as they seemed. Both labor bodies supported the Democratic Party and worked together on many political campaigns. Although they fought bitterly over some issues, both pushed for reforms that would strengthen the social safety net including calling for national health insurance. Neither was actually conservative nor actually Communist controlled. Labor Culture Members of the Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union march in the Seattle Labor Day Parade courtesy Fred and Dorothy Cordova and the Filipino American National Historical Society By the last years of the s organized labor--despite its divisions--was stronger and enjoyed more legitimacy than perhaps at any time before or since. On Labor Day in , the unions in Seattle put on dramatic display. As 60, spectators lined the streets, union after union paraded in organized, banner carrying units, marchers in all. The parade carried the message that Seattle was once again a proud union town, as were many other locales. Unions took on new meanings in the s. They represented not just better wages and working conditions but a new measure of democracy. Americans of many backgrounds now believed that the right to vote was not enough, that rights should also extend to the work place. Employers should not have absolute power. Workers too deserved a voice and collective bargaining would provide it. Joining unions thus become the smart, respectable, and democratic thing to do. And not just for blue-collar workers. Teachers were starting unions. Retail clerks at Nordstroms and other stores bargained contracts. Cab drivers had organized and the Culinary Workers Union, representing waiters, waitresses, and bar tenders, had almost 5, members. Two other unions show the new faith in collective bargaining as a democratic right. The Works Progress Administration had been established to provide temporary jobs to unemployed men and women who could not find work in the private sector. The Workers Alliance, a national organization led by Socialists and Communists, announced that it would serve as the union for WPA workers. Nowhere was the Workers Alliance more successful than in Washington State. Demanding that WPA officials agree to collective bargaining, the Washington branch of the Workers Alliance initiated a walkout in January It quickly spread across the state, ultimately involving 5, WPA workers and shutting down 30 different projects. After two weeks, during which other unions made clear their support, WPA administrators agreed to bargain. The Pension Union was dramatically successful. King County officials were the first to recognize the new union, followed by other counties and also by state authorities. The Pension Union went on to become a major force in Washington politics, successfully lobbying for higher benefits and in the s passing ballot measures to insure that the elderly received adequate support. This was the era that changed labor law and put in place expectations about rights and social guarantees that survive today. It was also the era that built the modern labor movement. Communism, Anti-Communism, and Faculty Unionization: Yet the radical and sometimes Communist politics of its members made the union susceptible to federal anti-Communist repression by the s. The Voice of Action: This paper traces its never-official links to the politics of the Communist Party and its commitments to workers and the unemployed.

Chapter 9 : Demeur: Life before unions

The weakest unions formed during the union surge succumb to the post-boom reaction; but if enough unions survive they leave a movement larger and broader than before. Early Labor Unions, Democrats and Socialists.

Codified in statute by the Popular Front government, French unions gained new rights and protections from employer repression. Only then did workers flock into unions. In a few weeks, French unions gained four million members with the fastest growth in the new industries of the second industrial revolution. Unions in metal fabrication and chemicals grew by 1, percent and 4, percent respectively Magraw, Regrouping, employers discharged union activists and attacked the precarious unity of the Popular Front government. Fighting an uphill battle against renewed employer resistance, the Popular Front government fell before it could build a new system of cooperative industrial relations. Contained, French unions were unable to maintain their momentum towards industrial democracy. Membership fell by a third in Rather than vehicles for a democratic revolution, the New Deal sought to integrate organized labor into a reformed capitalism that recognized capitalist hierarchy in the workplace, using unions only to promote macroeconomic stabilization by raising wages and consumer spending Brinkley, As with the KOL, the greatest increase came among the unskilled. Coal miners, southern textile workers, northern apparel workers, Ohio tire makers, Detroit automobile workers, aluminum, lumber and sawmill workers all rushed into unions. For the first time in fifty years, American unions gained a foothold in mass production industries. But once there, the new unionists received little help from aging AFL leaders. Doing little to enforce the promises of Section 7 a , the Federal government left employers free to ignore the law. Some flatly prohibited union organization; others formally honored the law but established anemic employee representation plans while refusing to deal with independent unions Irons, By almost as many industrial establishments had employer-dominated employee- representation plans 27 percent as had unions 30 percent. The greatest number had no labor organization at all 43 percent. It died even before the NIRA was ruled unconstitutional in Failure provoked rebellion within the AFL. Led by John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers, eight national unions launched a campaign for industrial organization as the Committee for Industrial Organization. Including many Communist activists, CIO committees fanned out to organize workers in steel, automobiles, retail trade, journalism and other industries. Building effectively on local rank and file militancy, including sitdown strikes in automobiles, rubber, and other industries, the CIO quickly won contracts from some of the strongest bastions of the open shop, including United States Steel and General Motors Zieger, The Wagner Act Creative strategy and energetic organizing helped. But the CIO owed its lasting success to state support. Shifting labor conflict from strikes to elections and protecting activists from dismissal for their union work, the Act lowered the cost to individual workers of supporting collective action. By the Board had supervised 24, union elections involving some 6,, workers, leading to the unionization of nearly 5,, workers. Jones and Laughlin Steel Company More important than the Wagner Act were crucial union victories over prominent open shop employers in cities like Akron, Ohio, Flint, Michigan, and among Philadelphia-area metal workers. Dedicated rank-and-file militants and effective union leadership were crucial in these victories. As important was the support of pro-New Deal local and state governments. The Roosevelt landslides of and brought to office liberal Democratic governors and mayors who gave crucial support to the early CIO. Placing a right to collective bargaining above private property rights, liberal governors and other elected officials in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and elsewhere refused to send police to evict sit-down strikers who had seized control of factories. This state support allowed the minority of workers who actively supported unionization to use force to overcome the passivity of the majority of workers and the opposition of the employers. The Open Shop of the s was not abandoned; it was overwhelmed by an aggressive, government-backed labor movement Gall, ; Harris, Again, war helped unions both by eliminating unemployment and because state officials supported unions to gain support for the war effort. Established to minimize labor disputes that might disrupt war production, the National War Labor Board instituted a labor truce where unions exchanged a no-strike pledge for employer recognition. Acquiescing to government demands, employers accepted the institutionalization of the American labor

movement, guaranteeing unions a steady flow of dues to fund an expanded bureaucracy, new benefit programs, and even to raise funds for political action. After growing from 3. With millions of members and money in the bank, labor leaders like Sidney Hillman and Phillip Murray had the ear of business leaders and official Washington. Large, established, and respected: American labor had made it, part of a reformed capitalism committed to both property and prosperity. A European civil war, the war divided the continent not only between warring countries but within countries between those, usually on the political right, who favored fascism over liberal parliamentary government and those who defended democracy. Before the war, left and right contended over the appeasement of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy; during the war, many businesses and conservative politicians collaborated with the German occupation against a resistance movement dominated by the left. Throughout Europe, victory over Germany was a triumph for labor that led directly to the entry into government of socialists and Communists. Successes and Failures after World War II Union membership exploded during and after the war, nearly doubling between and By , unions had enrolled a majority of nonagricultural workers in Scandinavia, Australia, and Italy, and over 40 percent in most other European countries see Table 1. Accumulated depression and wartime grievances sparked a post-war strike wave that included over 6 million strikers in France in , 4 million in Italy in and , and 5 million in the United States in In Europe, popular unrest led to a dramatic political shift to the left. The Labor Party government elected in the United Kingdom in established a new National Health Service, and nationalized mining, the railroads, and the Bank of England. A center-left post-war coalition government in France expanded the national pension system and nationalized the Bank of France, Renault, and other companies associated with the wartime Vichy regime. Throughout Europe, the share of national income devoted to social services jumped dramatically, as did the share of income going to the working classes. In these countries, union membership dropped after and unions remained on the defensive for over a decade in a largely adversarial industrial relations system. Elsewhere, notably in countries with weak Communist movements, such as in Scandinavia but also in Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands, labor was able to compel management and state officials to accept strong and centralized labor movements as social partners. In these countries, stable industrial relations allowed cooperation between management and labor to raise productivity and to open new markets for national companies. High-union-density and high-union-centralization allowed Scandinavian and German labor leaders to negotiate incomes policies with governments and employers restraining wage inflation in exchange for stable employment, investment, and wages linked to productivity growth. Such policies could not be instituted in countries with weaker and less centralized labor movements, including France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States because their unions had not been accepted as bargaining partners by management and they lacked the centralized authority to enforce incomes policies and productivity bargains Alvarez, Garrett, and Lange, Working with entrenched socialist and labor political parties, European unions were able to maintain high wages, restrictions on managerial autonomy, and social security. The wave of popular unrest in the late s and early s would carry most European unions to new heights, briefly bringing membership to over 50 percent of the labor force in the United Kingdom and in Italy, and bringing socialists into the government in France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Since , union membership has declined some and there has been some retrenchment in the welfare state. But the essentials of European welfare states and labor relations have remained Western, ; Golden and Pontusson, Unions begin to decline in the US It was after World War II that American Exceptionalism became most valid, when the United States emerged as the advanced, capitalist democracy with the weakest labor movement. The United States was the only advanced capitalist democracy where unions went into prolonged decline right after World War II. At 35 percent, the unionization rate in was the highest in American history, but even then it was lower than in most other advanced capitalist economies. It has been falling since. Instead, it provoked a powerful reaction among employers and others suspicious of growing union power. Then, in , a conservative Republican majority was elected to Congress, dashing hopes for a renewed, post-war New Deal. The Republican Congress amended the Wagner Act, enacting the Taft-Hartley Act in to give employers and state officials new powers against strikers and unions. The law also required union leaders to sign a non-Communist affidavit as a condition for union participation in NLRB-sponsored elections. This loyalty oath divided labor during a time of weakness. With

its roots in radical politics and an alliance of convenience between Lewis and the Communists, the CIO was torn by the new Red Scare. Shorn of its left, the CIO lost its most dynamic and energetic organizers and leaders. Little reason remained for the CIO to remain independent. Some labor leaders, notably James Hoffa of the Teamsters but also local leaders in construction and service trades, abandoned all higher aspirations to use their unions for purely personal financial gain. Allying themselves with organized crime, they used violence to maintain their power over employers and their own rank-and-file membership. Others, including former-CIO leaders, like Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers, continued to push the envelope of legitimate bargaining topics, building challenges to capitalist authority at the workplace. But even the UAW was unable to force major managerial prerogatives onto the bargaining table. Contracts were periodically negotiated providing for the exchange of good wages for cooperative workplace relations. Rules were negotiated providing a system of civil authority at work, with negotiated regulations for promotion and layoffs, and procedures giving workers opportunities to voice grievances before neutral arbitrators. Wages rose steadily, by over 2 percent per year and union workers earned a comfortable 20 percent more than nonunion workers of similar age, experience and education. Wages grew faster in Europe but American wages were higher and growth was rapid enough to narrow the gap between rich and poor, and between management salaries and worker wages. Unions also won a growing list of benefit programs, medical and dental insurance, paid holidays and vacations, supplemental unemployment insurance, and pensions. Competition for workers forced many nonunion employers to match the benefit packages won by unions, but unionized employers provided benefits worth over 60 percent more than were given nonunion workers Freeman and Medoff, ; Hirsch and Addison, Impact of decentralized bargaining in the US In most of Europe, strong labor movements limit the wage and benefit advantages of union membership by forcing governments to extend union gains to all workers in an industry regardless of union status. By compelling nonunion employers to match union gains, this limited the competitive penalty borne by unionized firms. By contrast, decentralized bargaining and weak unions in the United States created large union wage differentials that put unionized firms at a competitive disadvantage, encouraging them to seek out nonunion labor and localities. Others, however, find little productivity gain for unionized workers after account is taken of greater use of machinery and other nonlabor inputs by unionized firms compare Freeman and Medoff, and Hirsch and Addison, Unions and the Civil Rights Movement Post-war unions remained politically active. European unions were closely associated with political parties, Communists in France and Italy, socialists or labor parties elsewhere. Golden age unions have also been at the forefront of campaigns to extend individual rights. The major domestic political issue of the post-war United States, civil rights, was troubling for many unions because of the racist provisions in their own practice. Nonetheless, in the s and s, the AFL-CIO strongly supported the civil rights movement, funded civil rights organizations and lobbied in support of civil rights legislation. Seizing the opportunity created by the civil rights movement, some unions gained members among nonwhites. The feminist movement of the s created new challenges for the masculine and sometimes misogynist labor movement. But, here too, the search for members and a desire to remove sources of division eventually brought organized labor to the forefront. Shift of unions to the public sector In no other country have women and members of racial minorities assumed such prominent positions in the labor movement as they have in the United States. The movement of African-American and women to leadership positions in the late-twentieth century labor movement was accelerated by a shift in the membership structure of the United States union movement. Maintaining their strength in traditional, masculine occupations in manufacturing, construction, mining, and transportation, European unions remained predominantly male. Union decline in these industries combined with growth in heavily female public sector employments in the United States led to the feminization of the American labor movement.