THE ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT

Objectives

• Assess the problems that workers faced in the late 1800s
• Compare the goals and strategies of different labor organizations
• Analyze the causes and effects of strikes

Key Terms

• Sweatshop—a small, hot, dark, and dirty workplace where people were forced to work long hours
• Child Labor—when children worked in factories
  o 1 in 5 kids between ages 10 and 16 worked in factories
• Company Towns—isolated communities near workplace owned by companies where workers lived.
  o Basically had to live there
  o Wage slavery—workers basically make no money because they end up giving it all back to employers for rent, food, etc.
• Collective Bargaining—when a group of workers negotiates for higher wages and better working conditions.
• Socialism—an economic and political philosophy that favors a public, instead of a private, control of property and income. Socialists thought that
  o Capitalism vs. Socialism
    ▪ Capitalist economies (like the United States) emphasize individual freedom
    ▪ Socialist economies emphasize social equality
• Knights of Labor—labor union founded in 1869
• Terrance V. Powderly—founder of the Knights of Labor
• American Federation of Labor—skilled workers labor union
• Samuel Gompers—founder of the American Federation of Labor
• Anarchist—radicals that are opposed to all government
• Eugene Debs—socialist leader of the labor movement/unions

Teacher Note: These key terms are generally the bold words in your textbook. It’s always important to know the key terms and people that are highlighted in your textbook.

Problems that Faced Workers

• Long hours
• Bad safety regulations
• Poor air quality
• Poorly lit
• Overheated
• Lack of proper training
• Treated unfairly
• Dangerous workplaces
• There were always more workers than there were jobs, so they could always replace you. Therefore, no one could fight for better conditions, etc.

**Goals and Strategies of Different Labor Organizations**

• Different labor organizations had different methods, but all of them wanted to improve life for workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who could join?</th>
<th>Knights of Labor</th>
<th>American Federation of Labor (AFL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Any laborer could join –skilled or unskilled workers</td>
<td>• Skilled laborers—it was a craft union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Men, women, and minorities such as African Americans</td>
<td>• Men could join—no women. Technically African Americans could join, but they were often kept out.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many people were in the union?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knights of Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 700,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Federation of Labor (AFL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Made up of about 100 local unions from around the country</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What were their goals?</th>
<th>Knights of Labor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wanted broad social reform</td>
<td>• Focused on specific workers issues like wages, working hours, and working conditions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Wanted to replace capitalism with a system more friendly to workers</td>
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Teacher Note: It’s important to be able to compare and contrast things like we did with these two different labor unions.

**Labor Strikes Across America**

**Major Strikes of the late 1800s**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strike</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Railroad strikes, 1877</td>
<td>Workers were upset because their wages were cut</td>
<td>• Set the scene for violent strikes to come</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haymarket Square, 1886</td>
<td>Workers wanted an 8-hour workday</td>
<td>• Americans weren’t sure how they felt about unions—they were wary of unions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Knights of Labor were blamed for the riot and the organization ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestead Strike, 1892</td>
<td>The economy was in a depression so steelworkers’</td>
<td>• Steelworkers lost the strike and ended up losing power throughout the country</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Workers living in a company town in Homestead, Pennsylvania had their wages cut but the cost of living (rent) in the company town stayed the same. Employers use courts to limit the influence of unions. Eugene Debs led the strike. He ends up going to prison and becoming a socialist.

**Effects of Strikes on the Labor Movement**
- Because of the Pullman Strike, employers started to get court orders against unions.
- They used legislation like the Sherman Antitrust Act against unions (even though it was passed to stop monopolies and big business from getting too powerful).
- The federal government sided with big business.
  - Denied unions legal recognition—no legal protection.
- For decades to come unions would continue to come into conflict with government, big business, etc.
- Pullman Strike caused a split in the labor movement.
  - Some parts of movement really into socialism.
  - Eugene Debs becomes a socialist, runs for president in 1900.
    - Also forms Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) Union.
    - Unskilled workers, led violent strikes in 1900s.

*Teacher Note: Making tables like the one about strikes (above) helps if you’re trying to remember chronology (the order things happened).*

**General Vocabulary**
- Ridicule—to make fun of
- Discrimination—judged unfairly
- Minority—a group that makes up less than 50% of the population, for instance immigrants
- Ventilated—poor air circulation
- Legislation—the legislative branch passed legislation. Legislation = laws.
- Advocate—someone who argues for a particular group
- Consume—take in or use
- Philosophy—what someone believes
- Manifesto—document (strong)
- Aggregated—building up
- Radical—someone with an extreme viewpoint