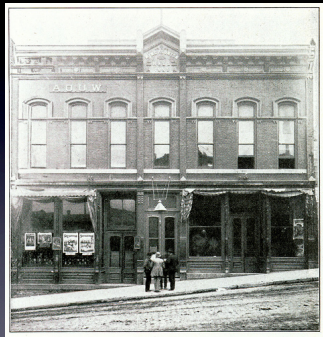


THE HOUSE OF LABOR



Butte Miners Union Hall, 1900

The Fall of the House of Labor 1900 - 1922



Butte Miners' Union Hall, 1914

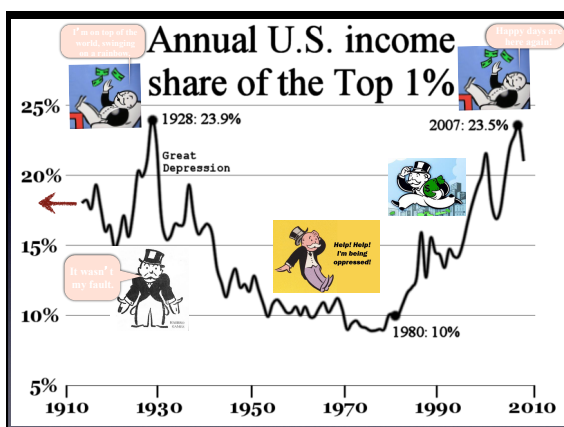
% American Laborers in Labor Unions





Explain how new inventions, technological advances and improvements in scientific management revolutionized productivity and the nature of work in the 1920's.

- How did Frederick W. Taylor's evaluation of shop organization, task analysis, industrial engineering, and worker motivation contribute to increased efficiency and productivity in the 1920's? How did it change the nature of work?
- What was the state of labor relations and labor unions in the U.S. from 1900-1922?
- Why was Henry Ford the symbol of the new industrial order in the 1920's?
- In what respects was automobile manufacturing the characteristic industry of the 1920's?
- What was the "new paternalism" in the American business corporation? How did "welfare capitalism" operate as an industrial strategy?
- Why did union membership decline so significantly in the 1920's?
- What major changes affected the lives and prosperity of workers in the 1920's?





War in the Coal Fields

1892 - 1930



John L. Lewis
1880 - 1969
President, UMW
1920 - 1960

[Westmoreland County Coal Strike](#)
1910-1911




The Paint Creek Mine War
1912




The Colorado Coal Strike & The Ludlow Massacre,
1913-1914



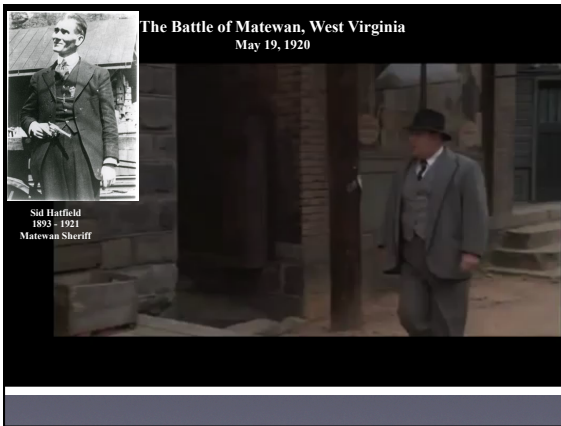
The Battles of Muttawun and Blair Mountain
1921



John L. Lewis



A Taste of John L. Lewis
On the condition of West Virginia coal miners



Expansion of the American Federation of Labor
1898 - 1920

1898: 278,000 members — 1905: 1.5 Million

- 1. New Semi-Industrial Unions organized previously unorganized workers**
(United Mine Workers, International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Amalgamated Clothing Workers).
- 2. Traditional AFL Unions (IAM) organized growing numbers of skilled workers.**
- 3. New Technologies (electricity, steel building materials) created new classes of workers who were organized into new unions, such as the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the Bridge and Structural Iron-Workers Union.**
- 4. The boom in urban building increased membership in the building trades (bricklayers, masons, carpenters)**

Samuel Gompers, 1905

This new organizational strength gave rise to a new wave of labor militancy and union discipline and an increase in the rate of union strike success.

1881 - 1910: strikes called by the union were 70% successful; spontaneous strikes were 30% successful



Evolutionary Socialists

- Urban workers, immigrants & skilled workers in the American Federation of Labor
- Advocated **political action**: passing legislation and changing common law to directly benefit workers.
- Promoted "Municipal Socialism" (a.k.a. "Sewer Socialism")
- Favored collective bargaining and negotiation rather than strikes.
- Change the AFL by "boring from within."

Revolutionary Socialists

- Coalition of unskilled workers, tenant farmers, journalists
- Held to the **Producer Ideology** and the labor theory of value.
- Advocated **direct action** (the general strike and sabotage) to end the exploitative capitalist wage system.

International Workers of the World

of the World

The IWW was founded in in Chicago in June 1905 at a convention of two hundred socialists, anarchists and radical trade unionists from all over the United States (mainly the Western Federation of Miners) who were opposed to the policies of the American Federation of Labor.

At its peak in 1923, the organization claimed some 100,000 members in good standing and could marshal the support of perhaps 300,000 workers.


The I.W.W., advocated direct action in the form of strikes, propaganda, boycotts and sabotage, as more likely to accomplish sustainable gains for working people; they were opposed to arbitration and to political affiliation.

The IWW argued that all workers should be united as a class in "One Big Union" and that the wage system should be abolished.

They invented the "Wobbly Shop" model of workplace democracy in which workers elect their managers and other forms of industrial self management

The Milwaukee Model of Municipal Socialism

- Sought **honest and efficient city government** - important in an era marked by machine politics, official corruption, ineptitude and indifference.
- Sought to institute **public ownership of city utilities**, such as power, sewer, and water.
- Sought to create a **municipal fuel yard** which would sell coal and wood to consumers at cost.
- Sought to enforce **municipal sanitation and health standards**, many of which were on the books but unenforced.
- Sought to create **public hospitals** to provide free or low-cost health services based on income.
- Promised to improve the **quality of life** for the working class by building public parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities and "comfort stations."



"House-Cleaning Time"
Aronson Standard, April 8, 1911

"House-Cleaning Time"


Louis Duncan
Butte's Socialist Mayor
1911 - 1915

- Concentrated in the oil, chemical, rubber, and steel industries - fastest growing sector of non-farm employment, 1890 - 1910, but also in the meat packing, textile and garment trades.
- Unskilled day labor
- Wages set at hourly rates or by piecework.
- Work was sporadic and conducted under despotic rule of often cruel foremen.
- Quitting was the only form of protest possible.

There was a crowd of about 200 men waiting there for a job. They looked hungry and kept watching the door. At last a special policeman came out and began pointing to men, one by one. Each one jumped forward. Twenty-three were taken. Then they all went inside, and all the others turned their faces away and looked tired. I remember one boy sat down and cried, just next to me, on a pile of boards. Some policemen waved their clubs and we walked on.

Antanas Kaztauskis

Immigrant Workers



Immigrant Day Laborers on the Way Home from Work.



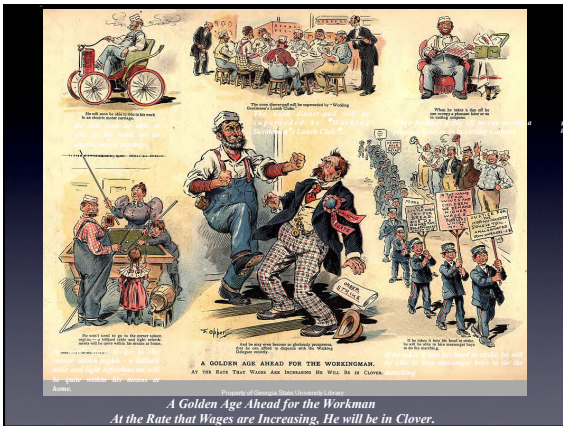




The Great Migration

1910 - 1930



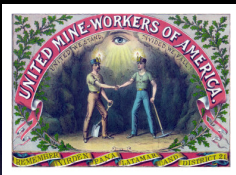



The New Unionism

- United Mine Workers (UMWA), International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, The International Workers of the World (I.W.W.)

The New Unions:

- Combined Craft and Industrial Unionism by organizing workers throughout an entire industry whether they were native-born or immigrant, skilled or unskilled, male or female.
- Tended to be progressive, even radical, in their politics and, therefore, willing to aggressively confront employers with their demands.
- More politically active than the A.F.L.: sought state intervention in the economy on behalf of workers' welfare: minimum wage laws, eight-hour work day, workers' compensation laws, Clayton Anti-Trust Act, etc.
- As result of the New Unionism, the labor union movement grew from 2 million members in 1905 to 5 million in 1920

The Merger Movement 1895 - 1905

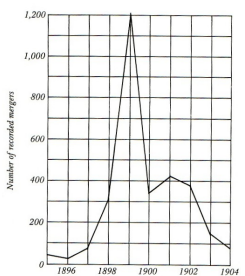
Cause: The U.S. Supreme Court in the *E.C. Knight* case (1895) eviscerated the Sherman Anti-Trust Act by ruling that manufacturing was a local activity not subject to congressional regulation of interstate commerce.

Created Oligopolies: By 1905, as result of the merger movement, 1800 smaller firms were absorbed into larger ones, resulting in 328 large corporations owning two-fifths of the \$20 billion of industrial wealth. Of those 328 large firms, 156 were large enough to have some monopoly control in their particular industry.

Products of the Mergers: U.S. Steel, General Electric, Dupont, International Paper

The companies that merged were mass producers of homogeneous goods that could exploit the efficiencies of large volume production. In addition, many of these mergers were capital-intensive. Due to high fixed costs, when demand fell, these newly-merged companies had an incentive to maintain output and reduce prices, including cutting wages.

Figure 5.4
Mergers in Manufacturing and Mining in the United States, 1895-1904



SOURCE: Based on data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States*, *Celestial Times* to 1970, pt. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 914.


Frederick W. Taylor & Scientific Management

F.W. Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*

- Study complex industrial tasks (the work of skilled craftsmen) using time and motion studies, break the task into its smaller component parts and determine the most efficient and fastest way of completing the task.

"The first step of industrial reform is the deliberate gathering in on the part of those on management's side of all the great mass of traditional knowledge, which in the past has been in the heads of the workmen, and in the physical skill and knack of the workman, which he has acquired through years of experience ... and the best way of gathering the craftsmen's knowledge into the engineer's head is time and motion study ... which is the basis of all modern management."

- Link the smaller component tasks into one continuous process such as an assembly line, assigning each task to unskilled laborer who completes the task over and over again.
- Provide the unskilled worker detailed instruction and close supervision by foremen and gang leaders.
- Design and apply systems of payment, such as incentive pay or piece work, to motivate the worker to do what he/she was told and to work as hard as they can.




Frederick W. Taylor
1859 - 1915

The "Dilution" of Skilled Trades into Specialized Machine Tenders

By 1923, in the automobile and other metal-fabricating industries an estimated:

- 9% of workers were in skilled trades
- 9% were common laborers
- 18% worked on assembly lines
- 47% were machine tenders
- 15% were supervisors



"The ability to meet and maintain a constant pace, to be able to eliminate all waste and false motions; to follow without wavering printed instructions emanating from an unseen source lodged in some far off planning department - these constitute the requirements of a successful machine tender."

F. W. Taylor

Welfare Capitalism and The Personnel Management Movement


Arose from employer's concern over labor turn-over, strike activity, and lack of loyalty that workers felt toward their employers, problems which had reached crisis proportions by the 1910's.

Welfare Capitalism strategies included:


- On-the-job improvements: lunchrooms, showers, more work breaks.
- After hours recreation: company baseball teams, company picnics
- Company towns and houses
- English language classes. "I hear whistle. I must hurry."
- Pension and profit-sharing plans
- Company "sociological departments" to inspect and supervise workers' homes, home lives and personal habits.

The **personnel management movement** developed trained executives whose mission it was to cope with grievances arising at work and to stabilize and pacify the daily operations of the firm.

Personnel managers also assumed the task of "Americanizing" immigrant workers, promote their cultural transformation by promoting attitudes of "thrift, sobriety, adaptability and initiative" that would allow employers to assign them easily to industrial work.



John R. Commons
1862 - 1945




John D. Rockefeller Jr.
1874 - 1960

Fordism =
Applied Taylorism + Personnel Management
+ Welfare Capitalism

Fordism is a manufacturing system designed to spew out standardized, low-cost goods, using special purpose machinery and unskilled labor and provide its workers decent enough wages to buy them.

Fordism is based on three basic principles that were applied to other industries after 1910:


- 1) The *standardization* of the product. Nothing is hand-made. Everything is made through machines, molds and dies, but not by skilled craftsmanship.
- 2) The use of *special-purpose tools* and/or equipment designed to make assembly lines possible: tools are designed to permit workers with low skill levels to operate on "assembly lines" - where each worker does one task over and over and over again.
- 3) Workers are paid higher "*living*" wages, so they can afford to purchase the products they make. Ford's "five dollar, eight-hour day."




Henry Ford
(1863 - 1947)

Ford's assembly line was revolutionary, but it was in no way original. The assembly line had already been around before Ford, but he developed it into a high degree of effectiveness and efficiency.

Fordism:
De-Skilling Production



Ford Model T Assembly Line,
circa 1922



Buyout Footage.com
Historical Footage in True HD

00:00:00:00

A Ballet of Production and Consumption

Now we object to being reduced to a scientific formula, and we do not want to have the world run on that kind of basis at all. We would a great deal rather have the world run on the basis that everybody should enjoy some of the good things in it, and if the people of the United States do not want to spend all of their time working, they have a right to say so, even though the scientific engineers claim that they can do five times as much as they are doing now. If they don't want to do it, why should they be compelled to do it?

Nels Ahlfas, 1915
Machinist, Davenport Iowa

Modern Times (1936)

Strike Trends in the U.S.
1911 - 1923



Year	# Strikes & Lockouts	# Workers Involved	Strikers as % of all workers
1911	511	112,000	5.8%
1912	575	138,000	7.0%
1913	567	337,000	24.4%
1914	1,204	-	-
1915	1,593	640,000	3.7%
1916	3,789	1,600,000	9.2%
1917	4,450	1,227,000	6.9%
1918	3,353	1,240,000	6.8%
1919	3,619	4,160,000	22.5%
1920	3,411	1,463,000	7.8%
1921	2,385	1,099,000	5.7%
1922	1,112	1,613,000	8.3%
1923	1,553	757,000	3.8%
1924	1,249	655,000	3.3%
1925	1,301	428,000	2.1%

The Strike Decade

The Open Shop Movement

New York Shirtwaist Strike of 1909

The New York shirtwaist strike of 1909, also known as the Uprising of the 20,000, was a labor [strike](#) primarily involving Jewish [women](#) working in New York [shirtwaist](#) factories. [Led by Clara Lemlich](#) and supported by the [National Women's Trade Union League of America \(NWTUL\)](#), the strike began in November 1909. In February 1910, the NWTUL settled with the factory owners, gaining improved wages, working conditions, and hours.






Clara Lemlich
1886-1982




Striking Women Shirtwaist Workers





Frannie Coralie Perkins




"I remember that, the accident happened on a Saturday, I happened to have been visiting a friend on the other side of the park and we heard the engines and we heard the screams and rushed out and rushed over where we could see what the trouble was. We could see this building from Washington Square and the women workers had just begun to jump when we got there. They had been holding until that time, standing in the windowsills, being crowded by others behind them, the fire pressing closer and closer, the smoke closer and closer. Finally the firemen were trying to get the net that the firemen carry with them, a net to catch people if they do jump. The firemen were trying to get the net out but the women couldn't wait any longer. They began to jump. The window was too crowded and they would jump and they hit the sidewalk. Some landed in the net but it broke because they fell a terrible distance and the weight of the bodies was so great and the speed at which they were traveling so great that they broke through the net. Every one of them was killed, everybody who jumped was killed. It was a horrifying spectacle.

Lawrence Strike
(1912)

Also known as the Bread and Roses Strike, it was the first major, successful strikes of immigrant workers in a mass production industry. From January through March 1912, textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts struck against the American Woolen Company to protest a pay cut. The strikers' use of mass picketing, their ethnic diversity and working class unity, and the ability of workers to strike together across skill lines, make the Lawrence Strike a model of the New Unionism.

The I.W.W. sent organizers to lead the strike. The strike became a public cause célèbre when I.W.W. organizers Ettor and Giovannitti were arrested on false murder charges (They were replaced by Big Bill Haywood and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.) Then the police made a mistake of arresting a group of women and children.



The bad publicity arising from the bogus charges and the arrests caused American Woolen to settle with the strikers with pay raises and a promise not to retaliate against the strike leaders.

World War I & Labor



The War Labor Board

Strike Trends in the U.S.
1911 - 1923

The Strike Decade	Year	# Strikes & Lockouts	# Workers Involved	Strikers as % of all workers
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The American Plan	1921	2,385	1,099,000	5.7%
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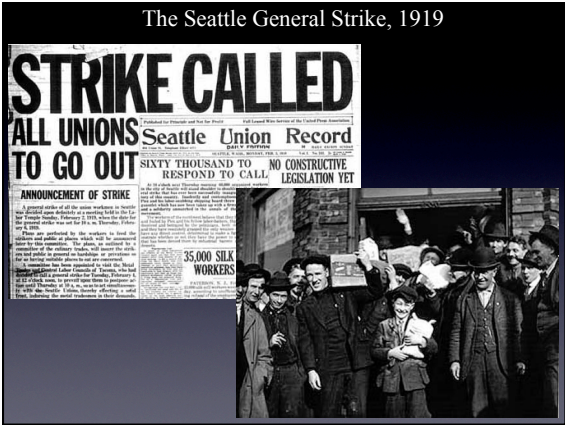
The Steel Strike of 1919



William Z. Foster
1881 - 1961



Striking Steelworkers







The American Plan

• The Open Shop Movement

A campaign on the part of corporations, trade associations, chambers of commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Anti-Boycott Association, and their political supporters to weaken organized labor by requiring employees to work in an open (non-union) shop.

• Employers Pledged not to Sign Union Contracts or Recognize Unions

• Launched a comprehensive Political Program to Break Unions

A comprehensive program of political lobbying and economic pressure to break unions by seeking labor injunctions, lobbying local, state, and federal government to outlaw union practices, black-listing union members, and organizing private guard associations to inflict violence on union members and activities.

• Financed and Organized Local Anti-Union Political Campaigns

Sponsored political tickets at the local level, bought newspaper ads and even newspapers to publish articles and ads to discredit unions as "un-American, and denied credit to and boycotted small firms that held union contracts.



The Fall of the House of Labor in the 1920's

5 Million Union Members in 1920

3.5 Million Union Members in 1923

• Both old and new unions collapsed because of the American Plan and - in part - because of bitter conflicts among right-wing, moderate, and Communist within the unions: United Mine Workers, International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Seamaa's Union, Brewery Workers etc.

• Unions came to be concentrated in a handful of industries; great segments of American industry were devoid of unions.

• The industrial New Unions suffered the most with the result that the conservative craft unions came to dominate the A.F.L., even as craft unions were becoming obsolete as result of mechanization.

• The Merger Movement accelerated during the 1920's, especially in steel, tobacco, glass, automobiles, utilities, and chemicals were bitterly antiunion and a number of others (coal, textiles) moved to the South, which was inhospitable to unions and collective bargaining.

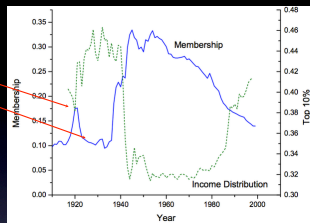
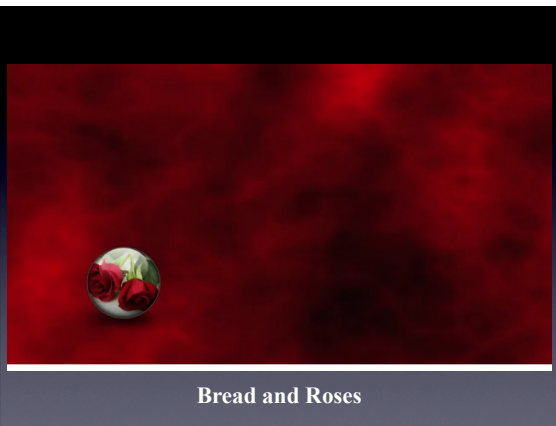
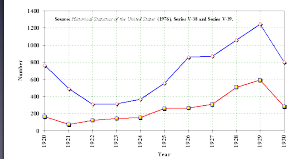


Figure 10: The Number of Mergers, 1920 to 1930



Bread and Roses