A REPORT

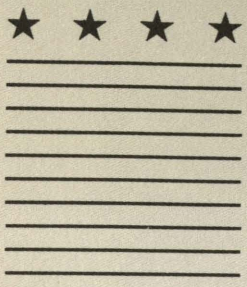
to the

Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions

The Decline of the Labor Movement

and what can be done about it

by SOLOMON BARKIN



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This Report was made in connection with the Center's study of the trade union, which is now drawing to a close. Solomon Barkin has been director of research of the Textile Workers Union of America since 1937. He has held numerous posts and commissions, nationally and internationally, in labor and general economic matters. He is the author, among other works, of *Toward Fairer Labor Standards* and *The Older Worker in Industry*.

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Foreword

The trade union movement in the United States does face a "crisis," or, perhaps better, a series of "crises." It is facing new internal and external challenges to its desired place in society. These crises are a problem for the trade union movement; they are also a problem for American democracy.

Sol Barkin discusses these crises from a very special viewpoint. He has belonged to two worlds: the world of the trade union movement as analyst and advocate for an important national union; and the world of the American intellectual as speaker and author interpreting American social currents. Thus, at the same time, he has been both an "insider" and an "outsider." As a result, his sympathy for the trade union movement has been matched by his sensitivity to its changing relationships to a changing external environment.

This Report is offered as one set of observations about an important American phenomenon—the phenomenon of a great social institution remaining virtually unmoving on a plateau while society all around it keeps on growing and changing. It might be more correct to say that unions have rested on two plateaus—a plateau of membership and a plateau of ideas.

These observations deserve respect, for few have observed more keenly than Sol Barkin. They will not, however, be received without dissent. But to union leaders and members, and managers, and informed members of the general public alike, they should prove interesting and even exciting.

We need a greater national awareness of the problems of meshing the principles of democracy with the practices of industrial society. This essay is a contribution to an examination of the intricacies of this difficult relationship. It is in this spirit that it is presented.

CLARK KERR
President, University of California
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the Center's Study of the Trade Union

Introduction

The anomaly of the day is that the opponents of trade unions are seeking to restrain the economic and political activities of unions at a time when their growth has been halted. Many individual unions are shrinking in size, and the membership of the total movement has declined. The proportion of union members in the total work force has also gone down. Not only are employees not joining unions in the vast numbers they once did but employers are increasingly resisting the spread of union organization and are challenging the mightiest industrial unions in outright economic battle, in several instances forcing unions to withdraw economic demands and in other instances weakening and even destroying the organization.

A certain lassitude has overtaken the trade union movement itself. Little is left of the proselytizing spirit that created the basic organizations in the building and printing trades in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the needle trades organizations in the following two decades, and the industrial unions in the Thirties. The image of unions as the social conscience of the community has been considerably dimmed. Many one-time friends have weakened in their support of unions because of this diminution in aggressive social behavior. Others have become openly critical of union performance, urging renewed emphasis on social vision and criticism of our economic and social system and demanding practical reforms. But the enemies of unions continue to resist and attack them. Having the unions on the defensive, they are seeking further to contain and weaken them.

The new quiescent state of the American unions comes after a period of great growth. They amassed great numbers and influence. Their prestige was high. They significantly conditioned the thought and conduct of leaders in many walks of life. There was widespread interest in and

approval of the values they preached. Their gains were considered vital to American progress.

But many of the earlier impulses that favored union growth have run down. The national attitude that converted a minor movement, struggling for existence, into a powerful agency for social change and dramatic alteration of industrial life has been spent. Employment has contracted in many unionized areas, cutting the potential for union organization; and industries, areas, and occupations that the unions did not reach during the expansive period of the Thirties and early Forties remain relatively untouched.

Union leaders know that an institution that does not grow tends to stagnate and atrophy, and that the trade union movement cannot adequately serve its following if it is not expanding. Restrictions on the area of union organization necessarily circumscribe the movement's economic power and political prestige even in the sectors where it is most powerful. It must constantly seek to capture the leadership of new unorganized groups in order to maintain the buoyancy of social leadership, the role of innovator in working conditions and employee benefits, and the position of social and industrial critic to which it is committed.

The leaders have therefore sought to break out of this malaise. On repeated occasions they have called for new organizing efforts and programs. The merger of the AFL and CIO was heralded as a new opportunity for new growth. When nothing of the sort materialized, the AFL-CIO Department of Organization called a national conference in January 1959 to rouse unions to the task of "organizing the unorganized . . . the never-ending mission of the American labor movement." A special campaign was underwritten for agricultural workers. The AFL-CIO Executive Council in February 1961 appointed a permanent Committee on Organization to "assure a more effective and adequate effort in meeting the challenge of organizing the unorganized." The Industrial Union Department has initiated several multi-union cooperative and coordinated organizing drives. Individual unions have also intensified their efforts at enrollment. But the gains to date have been very modest. Even unions such as the Teamsters, which boast of their successes, have hardly won sufficient accessions to offset their losses.

Most discomforting to union leaders is the lack of response among employees of the newer occupational groups like the white collar personnel, professionals, and technicians; the newer ethnic groups such as the

Negroes, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans; the rising generation of workers in the South; the expanding army of government employees; the vast numbers of working women; and the production workers in the newer manufacturing industries.

In several other nations the tradition of membership in and identification with unionism has almost automatically brought the newer employee groups into the movement. Collective action by employees is an accepted procedure. White collar workers join existing unions or else form separate ones that belong to the general labor federations or cooperate closely with them. Why have employees like these not responded in America? In the past, workers in several ethnic groups have found in trade unions a vehicle for improving their economic status and a leverage for recognition in the community. Why is the movement not serving this purpose at the present time?

Employers have fought unionism in the past with subtle techniques such as benefit programs and employee representation plans or by violent means such as police, blacklists, and dismissals. Why are today's employees not resisting and surmounting these pressures and using the law to overcome employer opposition?

The American people have endorsed collective bargaining. Yet they have accepted many provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act and the Landrum-Griffin Act that hamstring new organization. American diplomats boast of the importance that free collective bargaining occupies in American society. The former chairman of the National Labor Relations Board informed employers that "the trade union movement, the heart of which is the right to workers to bargain collectively," is one of the ingredients of "our system along with private initiative, private ownership of property, the investment of private capital for profit." To attack this element of the American system is to challenge "such success as we have attained." But the spokesmen of the former administration in Washington did little to help overcome the resistance to unionism.

What is sapping the vitality of this essential institution of our democratic society? Is the answer to be found in the success with which employers have been able to liquidate unions; in the contraction of employment in unionized industries; in the increased aggressiveness and frank opposition of employers; in the misbehavior of individual union leaders; in the sullied image of unionism resulting from the propaganda of its opponents and from Congressional hearings; or in the disillusionment of former sup-

porters? Have unions lost their appeal because of anachronistic goals, aspirations, and policies, because of inadequate and unsophisticated performance?

Why are the unorganized workers unreceptive to the call for collective action and loath to fight for its attainment? Must the country wait, as it did in the past, for a new cycle of revulsion against social conditions to usher in a new upsurge in union organization? Is the saturation of our culture and our school instruction with the concepts of frontier individualism so antagonistic to unionism that only profound personal and social disturbances can awaken employees to the needs of collective organization? Must we look to another event like the adoption of the Wagner Labor Relations Act before the legitimacy of unionism is reestablished for the great mass of the white collar workers? Will a new National Labor Relations Board and staff more understanding of the protection needed by employees seeking to organize unions and ready to combat employers' anti-union tactics prove sufficient to change the trends? Do the difficulties lie within the movement, or among the employees, or in the environment, or in all three?

This study begins with an appraisal of the present state of union membership, and then considers the external obstacles to growth. These include employer opposition, the policies and decisions of the National Labor Relations Board, the impact of state right-to-work laws, and the effect of the high-employment economy on the desire of employees for new union organization. The paper then appraises the consequences that have come about from the unions' having lost the active support for new organization among political liberals and the consequences resulting from the unfavorable public image that the opponents of unions and public scandals have created. Next, the paper summarizes the specific obstacles that are encountered in trying to form unions among individual work groups and evaluates the impediments to growth that the unions themselves have created. The final section of the paper outlines some new approaches to organization that the unions might follow.

Contraction of Membership

FEW LOSSES BY ESTABLISHED UNION GROUPS The cessation of union growth is not the result of the collapse of locals under the pressure of overt attacks by employers. These cases are in fact rare. The loyalty of members to the union is well ingrained. They will usually fight desperately to maintain their unions. Whatever compromises may be made to settle strikes on the terms of employment, they are rarely made on the question of the union's survival.

Even where the militant spirit appears lagging among union members, it can be fanned in periods of controversy, awakening the resentment of the rank and file toward management and their dedication to the union. This attitude was evident in the 1946 strikes. Workers responded to the calls to resist the destruction of wartime gains in union strength and economic benefits. They were determined to prevent the devastation of unionism such as followed the open shop crusade of 1921-23. And in 1959 the entire movement was roused to the support of the steel workers when their strike became identified as a "struggle for survival." In the South, where employers have frequently amassed an overwhelming amount of local political and economic resources to defeat the unions, workers have responded with stiff resistance and made considerable sacrifice to assure the continuance of their organizations.

The same determination to maintain unions is displayed in the results of union shop elections conducted by the National Labor Relations Board from 1947 to 1951. Unions worked hard to gain their victories, and the

results proved how successful they were. They won 97 per cent of the 46,146 elections for the right to sign union shop provisions in contracts. They received the support of 80 per cent of the eligible voters and 92 per cent of the votes actually cast.

The same determination to follow unions and their leaders is reflected in the consistent record of approval displayed in the votes on employers' "last-offer" proposals. The results were so consistent that the procedure has been scrapped. Despite the opportunity for deauthorizing union shops provided under the NLRA, few such polls have been sought—usually twenty or less a year, involving fewer than 2,000 employees in all, and primarily in small shops engaged in internecine union battles. Even then, unions maintained their rights in more than one third of these polls. Similarly, the number of decertification elections has been small, averaging in recent times about 143 a year for some 10,500 workers. These efforts also failed in one third of the elections.

None of these procedures has been of any real consequence in determining the course of the American trade union movement, its size, or its problems. They have been insignificant in number and marginal in character. We must look further for an explanation of the present state of unionism and collective bargaining in this country.

SHRINKAGE OF EMPLOYMENT IN BASIC JURISDICTIONS The major cause for attrition in union membership has been the shrinkage of employment in the organized industries. The changing occupational and industrial pattern is unfavorable to employment in the older industries in which unions have their most substantial foothold. As technology, competition of products and services, changing consumer demands, and rising labor productivity take their toll of employment, unions in older economic areas necessarily decline in size. Many have sought to offset the shrinkage by broadening their industrial coverage, but few have been successful in extending their membership.

Among the organized industries that have suffered large losses in employment are the mining industries, where 60 per cent of the production jobs were eliminated from 1947 to 1959 (at the same time that the number of non-production jobs in these industries has remained stable). The attrition in railroad and bus employment, both union strongholds, has been only slightly lower—40 per cent—with further cutbacks impending. The

telegraph industry has cut its jobs by one third. The unionized service industries, such as hotels and most particularly laundries and motion pictures, also suffered major losses. In the manufacturing industries the severest cuts in production jobs in the period from 1947 to 1959 have taken place in textile mill products (30 per cent); lumber and wood products (24 per cent); tobacco manufactures (18 per cent); food and kindred products, and petroleum and coal products (16 per cent); primary metal industries (15 per cent); and rubber products, and leather and leather products (10 per cent). In all but the last group employment of non-production workers actually increased, but employees of this kind are not usually candidates for union organization.

Another disturbing trend has been the shift in industrial location from the East and Middle West, where unions have been strong, to the South and to smaller communities where unions still have limited influence. Bargaining rights do not move with the plant. Unions have to start organizing drives at the sites of the new plants and frequently find their task most difficult because of unfriendly local attitudes. Even where the national employment figure is maintained in a union's jurisdiction the shift to unorganized areas represents a serious setback in immediate membership potential, and in cases where a decline in the size of the industry is combined with a change in its location the impact can be severe, as in the case of the textile unions.

The study of union membership trends from 1951 to 1958, conducted by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, highlights the effect of both employment contraction and geographical movement. The study of 131 national unions shows that forty-nine suffered a net reduction in membership. Sixteen had cuts of 10,000 or more members. The most serious cutbacks occurred among the textile unions, with losses of 164,770 by the Textile Workers Union of America and 44,000 by the United Textile Workers. The Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America reports a decline of 75,363 members because of the curtailment of urban transportation and the invasion of its jurisdiction by other unions. Other losses are reported by the communication and telephone workers, longshoremen, woodworkers, boilermakers, locomotive engineers and firemen, painters, and rubber and shoe workers. A number of unions that suffered sharp cuts in the 1958 recession, such as the automobile, steel, and painters unions, regained some strength when their industries recovered, but these gains have since

been given up and further losses suffered in the recession of 1960-61. Rising productivity and shifting industrial patterns are continuing to squeeze out more jobs.

As for the future of union membership in the currently established jurisdictions, there is little likelihood of any considerable growth as employment among production workers and unionized occupations continues to shrink. The proportion of non-production employees in manufacturing industries rose from 16 to 24 per cent between 1947 and 1959, and actual employment of production workers declined. Employment in the East and Middle West has not increased as rapidly as in the remainder of the country. The established union centers are not growing in strength.

GROWTH IN SOME AREAS While unions have suffered large set-backs in declining industries, they have made some headway in other areas and in new occupational groups. A few industries in which unions are strongly organized are expanding, and here the unions are trying to enroll more workers in order to extend their coverage. Thousands of unionists have migrated to better opportunities in new plants and they provide a significant leverage for organizing units in these places. Another favorable factor promoting growth in certain areas is that many manual workers not only accept unionism but ardently promote it. Trade union organizers report that a strong core of union support can be found in most plants in Northern and Western areas. These people will rally quickly around the organizers.

The growth of jobs in well-organized communities tends to favor the spread of organization. The rise of unionism among Los Angeles production workers from 1953 to 1958 undoubtedly came about first because organizing advances had been so limited before that time, but it is also a fact that unions began to be accepted more and more in this community. Strong pro-union sentiment in Milwaukee and Minneapolis-St. Paul is equally responsible for the rise in the same period in the percentage of union members in these communities. When dissatisfaction mounts among the employees of a plant in such a community, union leaders are readily available and the message of unionism is spread more quickly and accepted more knowingly. The results of a recruitment program are therefore likely to be more favorable.

Organization campaigns in specific areas have been responsible for

some gains. Unions have assigned full-time organizers, and they have succeeded despite many difficulties in enrolling members and winning bargaining rights. The gains in the retail trades in Newark, Jersey City, Chicago, Denver, Minneapolis, Portland (Ore.), and San Francisco reflect these efforts. Advances in the public utility industries have also been impressive.

A major target for new organization has been the new ethnic groups in industry. They are principally the Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans who have migrated in large numbers to the big Northern and Western communities. Beginning their upward economic and social climb in a society that generally discriminates against them and in which they are often hopelessly handicapped in securing their deserts, these people, like earlier ethnic immigrant groups, have found trade union organization attractive. In the Forties and early Fifties many of them lacked their own mutual aid organizations or any real leadership of their own. They turned to unions as an obvious path for advancement. Some of the most recent arrivals may hold back for a time from joining unions because of their insecurity and fears or because they have not begun to share the American drive for improving one's standard of living. But as soon as they have become somewhat oriented to the American way of life, lost their earlier timidity, and found out that job mobility is not enough in itself to improve their lot, they have become ready for organization. Many substantial recent union gains have been made among these groups, particularly in the service industries, hospitals, and marginal types of manufacturing plants. They are becoming an ever more important part of the trade union movement.

However, the fact remains that the net gains resulting from all these varied activities have not been impressive. A survey of organizational elections from 1948 through 1956 indicates that unions won 60.5 per cent of them, receiving 78.3 of the valid votes cast. But the 1,500,000 certified workers represented only 22 per cent of the increase in employment during this period.

Forty per cent (600,000) of the newly certified workers were in the metal industries, and 106,000 in the food and kindred products industries. The industries in which 50,000 employees or more were certified to be represented by unions were retail trade, chemicals and allied products, textile mill products, and wholesale trades. The only industries in which new organization gains either equaled or were larger than the net gains in employment for this period were in metal mining, food and kindred products, and furniture and fixtures. In the others the union gains in terms of

newly certified employees hardly kept abreast of the rise in employment except for two of the nine years from 1948 through 1956. The employees certified in new elections were below 15 per cent of the increase in employment for the year.[1]

A second study of organizational elections for alternate fiscal years from 1951 through 1959 attests to the continuing decline in union election victories in 1957 and 1959. The proportion of union successes in terms of both elections and eligible voters was lower than in former years. The size of the units that unions won was smaller.[2] A further analysis of all representation elections for the fiscal years 1960 and 1961 and subsequently suggests that the ratio of successes is still slipping.

LIMITED STRENGTH IN EXPANDING AREAS The result of the trends described above has been an absolute and relative decline in union members in the United States. The AFL-CIO Department of Organization acknowledges a modest drop in the percentage of organized workers from 40 to 39 per cent of the eligible wage and salaried work force from 1953 to 1958. Union membership in 1958 stood at 18,100,000. Both the ratio and absolute number of union members had dropped further by 1961.

The strikingly rapid growth of unionization during the Thirties and early Forties and the stabilization and later decline of union organization in the Fifties left a highly uneven and concentrated pattern of unionization. It is clustered by occupations, industries, regions, size of shops, sex, ethnic groups, and size of community. With the changing patterns in employment and in the character of the labor force, the non-union areas have become more and more significant in the American economic scene.

Only one of the five industrial sectors of the economy that showed a rise in employment of more than 25 per cent between 1947 and 1959 also had a substantial percentage of union membership. While the proportion of eligible employees in the construction industry, according to official union estimates, is about 80 per cent, the ratio for the four other sectors is very low. Five per cent organization prevails in finance, insurance, and real estate industries; 10 per cent in the government and wholesale and retail industries; and 20 per cent in the service and miscellaneous indus-

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All footnotes appear on page 75.

tries. The absence of substantial organization in the service and retail industries is most significant since they include many low-income earners.

The percentage of organization is slightly higher in the three moderately growing sectors where the rise in production-worker employment was between 11 and 15 per cent over the same period. The ratios of organization were 35 per cent for crude petroleum and natural gas production, 55 per cent for communications, and 65 per cent in gas and electric utilities. The highest ratios of organization were, as we have noted, in the declining employment sectors: manufacturing (55 per cent); transportation (70 per cent), and mining (75 per cent).

A similar picture of weakness in the growth regions and strength in the least expansive regions is also apparent on a geographical basis. Union organization is relatively high in the Northeast and East North Central states—over 40 per cent. On the other hand, it has been weak in the several markedly growing regions such as the Central and Southern states. (The exception to this trend is the Pacific area, which has been the fastest growing region and has the highest rate of organized workers.)

The same weaknesses are displayed in the newer occupational groups. While the white collar workers are increasing relatively within the work force so that they now number almost one half of all employed persons, the unions have made little progress among them. About 40 per cent of the unorganized are white collar employees.

There are 3,400,000 women in unions, a small part of the potential of 12,000,000. This fraction tends to decline as the number of employed women rises, and their proportion of the work force is growing.

Another highly expanding group in the work force are the Negroes. They are moving into many industries in which unions are deeply rooted. As a result they represent an increasing proportion of the total union membership. Current estimates place the number of Negro union members at 1,500,000, or slightly less than half of those currently eligible for membership. New growth in organization among them has not kept pace with the rate of expansion in numbers employed.

Unions have been unable to make headway among persons employed in smaller establishments who constitute some 20 per cent of the unorganized. In small towns, unlike large metropolitan cities, employees are not substantially unionized.

Finally, hundreds of thousands of employees in plants and shops where unions are collective bargaining agents are not union members.

Outside Impediments to Expansion

Total union membership is slipping because increases in the expanding segments of the economy have not been sufficient to offset the losses in the contracting areas. The trade union movement has not been successful in pushing itself into areas that would assure continuing expansion. Large union staffs now constantly probe unorganized areas, rally pro-union sentiment, and seek to convert support into actual victories in representation elections, but their success has been limited.

Unions have not been able to count on spontaneous organization campaigns among employees, so important in extending union influence during the Thirties. These outbreaks are now relatively rare, and even when they do occur they meet the same obstacles as the planned campaigns.

Unions face both general and specifically local impediments to their efforts at recruiting. This section considers the general obstacles, including employer opposition, the labor laws and the attitudes of governmental agencies, the economic and social environment, and public attitudes.

THE TACTICS OF EMPLOYERS AGAINST UNIONS One of the most serious obstacles to the growth of unionism in America is the unwillingness of employers to accept unions and collective bargaining as an integral part of the industrial system. Many have given lip service to unionism but have made every effort to "thwart

their employees' efforts to organize even when the union involved is a respectable, decent union." Former Chairman Leedom of the NLRB has declared that "some employers harbor the thought that there is no such thing as a decent union unless it might be one dominated by their own companies."

It is symptomatic of the widespread rejection of collective bargaining as a legitimate procedure for decision-making in American industry on issues affecting employees that no outstanding management spokesman has offered a theory of management that approvingly integrates collective bargaining processes with the organizational scheme of the company. Unions are generally not considered as a part of the business. They are outside institutions with which management is required to deal as it must with suppliers of merchandise and services. At best some employers and employer apologists concede to unions the role of reenforcing the decisions of a unilaterally directed organization. There is open opposition to allowing collective bargaining to extend beyond the local bargaining unit or company to an industry-wide or national level.

This unwillingness of American management is at the heart of current labor-management battles and contrasts sharply with the attitude in countries like Sweden where collaborative action is strongly rooted in the industrial system. The unrelenting drive against unionism and collective bargaining finds few counterparts in other advanced industrialized countries. The reluctance is most prevalent among the smaller and middle-sized employers who cling to the cruder concepts of property rights, but a number of large corporations are also dedicated to resisting, weakening, and ultimately eliminating union influence in their plants. There are others who openly combat unionism in the public arena while they continue to bargain with unions within their own organizations. Trade unionists widely interpreted the steel producers' attitudes in 1959, which helped precipitate the strike, as a major effort to deflate a key American union.

Important segments among employers have also continued to fight liberal legislation on labor relations, have sought restrictive limitations on unions through federal, state, and local legislation, and have worked to develop a theory of personnel and industrial relations through which to build allegiance among employees to their companies and not to their unions.

Employers during the Thirties first fought unions and the Wagner Labor Relations Act through the courts. When that failed, they began the long

campaign of criticism of the Wagner Act and its administration that culminated in the Taft-Hartley Act, the 1959 Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, and state right-to-work and other restrictive union laws. This program of opposition is still continuing unabated with the apparent goal of subjecting unions to the anti-monopolistic restraints prescribed by the anti-trust laws.

Management had also sought to evolve a philosophy of personnel management that would guide it in its efforts to insulate employees against outside union influences. Employers have hoped thereby to weaken unions where they existed and to prevent their extension into non-union areas. The new approach had to replace or build upon earlier systems of personnel policy, which rested on a fervent belief in management's primacy within the enterprise.

This post-war body of beliefs became known as the "human relations" philosophy. It grew from the research of the investigators of the Harvard Business School and associated groups headed by Elton Mayo. It blended the techniques of welfare capitalism of the Twenties with the new psychological approaches developed by the Hawthorne Western Electric studies and later elaborated by the group dynamics investigators and psychological theorists. Through the proper selection of employees and careful policies of employee promotion, demotion, and separation a desirable body of workers can be shaped. With the aid of morale surveys of employees focused on discovering the discontented, personal counseling to help the troubled employee, communications to secure acceptance of management's views and policies, "man-centered" supervision to stimulate maximum productivity, group activity to provide socializing within the plant, management could build a stable plant society. Hostility would be dissipated or diverted from conflict; management's goals would be recognized as superior and dominant and would be accepted. Associations among employees on an occupational or industry basis would be weakened. In the integrated plant community employees would enjoy security, status, and advancement. The result would be a society in which employees would have deep allegiance to the firm and would be estranged from the union.

In unionized plants this personnel philosophy underscores the separateness of the union from the internal plant structure. The employer deals with the union as required by law or necessitated by its economic power, but it has no integral part in the internal organization. It does not appear

on management's administrative chart. No matter how much it might inject itself into the consideration of problems arising within the company and irrespective of the accommodations an individual foreman might make to the reality of the union's existence as a center of authority on the shop floor, the central office makes no concessions. The administration of collectively bargained programs remains with the firm. The management retains its own system of communications to workers both as individuals and as a group and uses it to inform workers of its attitudes and to plead its own cause, often in opposition to the union. These policies have been pursued with varying degrees of intensity by a large number of employers who have to deal with unions. As a result, "true constructive industrial relations" built on continuing consultation and collaboration is uncommon.

The managements of *unorganized* plants have increased their use of anti-union techniques. The "human relations" program has provided them with a sophisticated procedure and a blueprint. It has required improvements in the personal relations of supervision and management with employees, more communication, morale surveys, and often the creation of shop groups to give the employees an "occupational unity." Job applicants are carefully screened to weed out potential troublemakers and union "plants." Personal talks with individuals and groups are conducted to stifle pro-union sentiment. Employee representation plans and "independent unions" are encouraged when necessary to ward off outside unions. The restive independent union that wants gains but is not ready to take the chance of rupture by promoting bona-fide unionism has learned to force concessions from management by having a national union threaten to organize the unit. When an outside union is not actually knocking at the door the independent may even contrive to have one invited to do so. In recent years, however, as the interest of employees in unions has receded, employers have resorted less frequently to the strategem of promoting shop unions.

The Taft-Hartley Act, and the NLRB interpreting it, have provided employers with a springboard for overt counterattacks. Outright anti-union appeals are made both in written form and orally on an individual and mass basis. It is now also common for employers to enlist the help of outside groups such as local chambers of commerce, citizens committees, churches, industrial development agencies, and even government officials. Newspapers, radio, and even television pummel the employees' minds with

employer messages. To insulate the workers in smaller towns every resource is closed to the union, with legal restrictions imposed on the distribution of leaflets and the solicitation of workers including ordinances that require organizers to be licensed and that limit their access to workers.

Current anti-union propaganda typically stresses the dollar costs of union membership and the meagre benefits to be obtained from collective bargaining as compared with existing wage and fringe benefits. Blown-up pictures of mills closed by alleged union action are circulated. The literature stresses the threat and personal cost of strikes; the violence alleged to be instigated or encouraged by unions; union corruption, repression, and bossism; and the avarice of the union leader who seeks only dues and makes unrealistic promises of future benefits. Employers play on local prejudices such as color in the South, religion in Northern communities, and ethnic groupings in the Southwest and in large cities. No holds are barred short of overt coercion, which might run afoul of the law; and in some instances even this restraint is cast aside.[3]

The anti-union battle has increasingly taken on the character of the opposition prevalent before the Wagner Act became law. Where the employer is himself unable or unwilling to lead this program of repression, there are legal, public relations, and opinion-survey experts ready to take over the job.[4]

THE UNFRIENDLY TAFT-HARTLEY ACT AND EISENHOWER BOARD

The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 and the decisions by the National Labor Relations Board since 1952 have given a new freedom to anti-union activities. Prior boards had begun to change established policies in an anti-union direction, but the trend was greatly accelerated after the 1952 election. The 1947 revisions of the National Labor Relations Act were offered to the public as a means to curb union bargaining power, to protect the individual's rights against union pressure, and to secure legal equality between unions and management. But its major consequence has been to hamper the growth of union organization.

The original Wagner Act sought to protect—and the early NLRB and its staff, with due regard to employer rights, encouraged—the efforts of workers to organize and the attempts of unions to secure recognition. Their sympathy and friendliness to unionism contributed considerably to union

organization. But the policies, decisions, and staff of the Board since 1952 reflect a completely different outlook. They start with the assumption that all unions have great power, and that individual employees must be protected from them and employers must be able to counter them. The organization process in the eyes of the Board is a battle between employers and unions in which the former must be allowed "equality," even against a nonexistent union. This view has not significantly changed the balance of power in areas where unions are well entrenched, though it has limited their freedom of action. But it has seriously weakened union positions in marginal areas and removed the protection workers need to establish unions in places where employers are vigorously and openly opposed.

The change in attitude is reflected in the provisions and application of the "free speech" amendment of the Taft-Hartley Act. This amendment revoked most of the limitations placed upon the freedom of employers to oppose unions. The old Board held that individual speeches, actions, or declarations were violations of the act if they were shown to be part of an employer's overall policy of restraint or coercion, even though they were literally inoffensive. Employer speeches in plants during working hours were considered unfair practices, inhibiting the employee's freedom of choice because of the employer's economic superiority. "Captive audience" speeches were grounds for invalidating elections.

The Eisenhower Board set these views aside. It cancelled effective prohibitions against interrogation of individual workers. "Plant-closing prophecies" were ruled to be non-coercive, and employers are now permitted to say that their plants are likely to be closed if a union wins its election. Companies are allowed to spread propaganda libeling unions or union leaders as unsavory characters and associating them with undesirable persons. Employers may with impunity instigate anti-union activity by third persons such as local organizations, broadcasters, and newspapers. The Taft-Hartley Act does not reach these third parties. There are in fact few real limits today on the pressures, short of direct, formal coercion, that may be legally exerted on workers against joining or supporting unions.

Procedural obstacles in the operation of the NLRB have also multiplied the difficulties of organization and increased the opportunities for weakening, if not destroying, union support. Since the repeal of the pre-hearing election procedure, the attorneys of employers have learned ways to protract Board hearings on a union election petition by raising objections on

definitions of bargaining units and the qualifications of the union itself, so that months elapse before the election is actually held. This interim period—rather than, as in the earlier epoch, the start of a union campaign—is now invariably used for a concerted anti-union drive. This is when employers introduce morale surveys to gauge the level of discontent, to eliminate sources of irritation such as obnoxious superiors, and to hold meetings with individuals and groups of employees to convert some with promises and dissuade others by arousing economic fears. Many an organization drive that looked bright at the time the union filed the petition, and for some time thereafter, has crumbled under the pressure. Workers' confidence weakens, their interest cools, and their courage wanes when an election is postponed and "red tape" or pettifogging is used to drag out a simple procedure.

Pre-hearing elections have been unsuccessfully urged to minimize this opportunity for active pressure on employees.

Some union losses in recent years may be attributed directly to Section 9 (c) (3) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which disenfranchised economic strikers. The employees who replaced the strikers became entitled under this part of the Act to vote in the representation election, while strikers were denied the right. After prolonged strikes, with many new employees hired as scabs, it becomes difficult if not impossible for the union to hold bargaining rights. This defect was modified in the 1959 Act by allowing economic strikers to vote in an election held within twelve months after the beginning of a strike. Unions have also lost out in cases where state and local government officials have supported the strike-breaking activities of employers. The NLRB has revived the use of injunctions against organizational picketing, and the new law prohibits such picketing for more than thirty days where a union has not petitioned for an election. First the Board and later the 1959 Act limited union use of the secondary boycott and the "hot cargo" clause, both important leverages for spreading organization. These traditional techniques for bringing recalcitrant employers into line can be applied now only in very limited areas.

The limitations set by the NLRB on its own jurisdiction have excluded a number of areas from the meagre protection provided by the Act. Moreover, foremen were removed from all coverage by the 1947 law so that their movement for independent unionization was nipped in the bud. The requirement of special unions for guards put a brake on the growth of unions among this class of employees. The separation of bargaining units

for professional persons from other employee units deterred progress there. The floor placed under the size of bargaining units that the Board will deal with also hampered expansion; furthermore, this administrative decision created a "no-man's land" in labor relations administration. While the Supreme Court invalidated blanket exclusions of whole industries, the 1959 labor law affirmed the current criteria for eligibility for the law's protection. Little overall support for union growth can now be expected by the transfer of jurisdiction over these excluded areas to state labor boards or courts.

The trade union movement is very hopeful that the new majority of the National Labor Relations Board will reverse decisions that tended to weaken efforts at organization and that Congress will ultimately revise the Act to limit the powers of employers to discourage workers from joining unions. The new Board has instituted administrative changes which have already shortened the time required to process cases, thereby reducing the discouraging impact of delays.

STATE RIGHT-TO-WORK LAWS

Nineteen states with right-to-work laws bar union shops and prohibit membership in a union as a requirement for employment. Whatever argument there may be about their effect, or lack of effect, on union strength and control in the highly organized, traditional closed shop industries such as construction, printing, trucking, and certain services, the right-to-work laws have weakened the position of unions in organized plants in other economic sectors, particularly those not affected by national collective bargaining agreements or national corporate policy. As a matter of fact, the economic areas in which the laws have had a minimal effect constitute only a small fraction of the total employment in the nineteen states, and the ability of labor to organize new plants in these states has been drastically curtailed, with the ratio of union organization remaining low in all of them.[5]

Most observers agree that the agitation and propaganda that preceded the enactment of the right-to-work laws have contributed to an "anti-union social atmosphere." To secure the adoption of such legislation, the proponents conjured up the worst images of union leadership, magnified abuses in unions, and charged them with being dictatorial and restricting

individual rights. The laws have tended to give legal confirmation to anti-union sentiment.[6] Equally important, they have tended to weaken union positions in presently organized plants, particularly those employing high proportions of semi-skilled workers and having a locally controlled industrial relations policy. In some of these plants unions necessarily become more preoccupied with promoting and processing grievances and cajoling dissident groups in order to maintain their following. In others, where management is willing to continue an informal understanding on maintaining membership, the union leadership has become less militant.

Employers in states with right-to-work laws have in some cases deliberately encouraged the cancellation of check-off cards to wean members away from the union, thereby creating a continuing contest for the allegiance of workers. The task of recruiting non-union workers under such circumstances becomes increasingly difficult. Informal pressures on the unorganized by their fellow-workers become less effective. Union costs and energies devoted to administration necessarily rise, leaving less time and fewer funds for new organizational efforts. Rising tensions in the organized shops throw collective bargaining into disrepute and further blur the positive image of constructive and peaceful relationships.

Some states, including some with right-to-work laws, also place onerous restrictions on picketing and the conduct of strikes. Local ordinances requiring the licensing of union organizers and officers have been declared unconstitutional, but they continue to crop up, particularly in Southern communities, and interfere with organizing activities.[7]

Even though a study of the Texas right-to-work law led an investigator to minimize its direct effect because he found that many companies and unions have learned to adapt themselves to the restrictions through informal understandings and voluntary check-off provisions, he does conclude that "the statute . . . has so changed the climate of organization in some marginal situations that campaigns which would under other conditions have been won have been lost."[8] Actually state and local union officials believe the laws have had a more restrictive effect on organization than this observer concedes, and they have given the highest priority to the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act provision that permits their adoption. This writer's observations in the Southeastern states confirm the view that the laws are a serious impediment to new organizational gains. This conclusion is supported by the relatively lower ratio of union election victories in the right-to-work states.

SATISFACTORY SOCIAL CONDITIONS Unions have arisen and grown in the past on the crest of waves of new enthusiasm for labor organization, inspired by widespread social discontent. These pressures are now absent. If bad external conditions are unlikely to be repeated with the force of earlier years, unions will have to adopt new policies and reformulate older goals in terms more appropriate to the new environment if they expect to grow.

Several prior cycles of union expansion followed periods of long and deep depressions. The privation, the embitterment, the disillusionment with the economy, the sense of injustice, and the lack of faith in the existing political and economic leadership all inspired workers to find correctives through their own efforts. Masses of employees responded to the call of the newly formed agencies of protest. At times they followed political leaders or social reformers who offered them nostrums. In this century left-wing movements such as the IWW and the Communist and other revolutionary parties enrolled many who believed that the social system had to be changed. Others entered political reform groups. Still others joined trade unions, hoping to improve their lot through direct action on the job. Another important factor that favored union growth in the past was governmental endorsement and protection of workers in their efforts to organize unions.

In the Thirties, the success of the New Deal as a political movement stimulated the expansion of the trade union movement. One of the divisive forces in industry previously holding back organization had been the internal conflict among the ethnic, racial, and religious groups in the work force. The deep-seated suspicions among them were subordinated in the political upheaval of 1932. After that the trade union movement could capitalize on this feeling by highlighting their interest in common action in the plant. Union growth in this era was also favored by the large number of men in the movement who were experienced in the arts of leadership. Many had been trained in the mass organizations established among the unemployed and in radical groups. They learned the value of concerted action and the techniques for mass appeal. Many people who later were to become union members had also had experience as participants in these organizations and were ready for collective action. Moreover, some existing unions, particularly those which founded the CIO, provided both funds and leaders.

None of these external circumstances exists at the present time or is likely to come about in the near future. Widespread social discontent is not apt to develop, though high levels of unemployment may prepare the way for disaffection. The increased application of labor-saving devices for white collar jobs may cause widespread displacement and instill a feeling of insecurity in this group, if there is no concurrent expansion of new job opportunities. Long-term unemployment is likely to be concentrated among older people and marginal groups. But there is every likelihood that with the pressures of the existing trade unions, the cold war, and the political consciousness of the people every national administration will be less tolerant of a high level of unemployment and will have to take steps to reduce it. Unless we are catapulted into a real war, it is more than likely that we shall face "creeping" rather than "runaway" inflation, and although the gradual rise in prices will cause discontent, there will probably be no deep surge of dissatisfaction. In addition, labor is committed to full employment and relatively stable prices and is determined to prevent the recurrence of those bad days of the past.

Therefore, the task confronting the trade union leadership today is to find a base other than widespread social discontent for future union growth. It will have to work with other forms of less intense disaffection, related to more specific groups. The development of these issues will take precise and individual consideration of the aspirations and frustrations of the many large unorganized sectors of our economy.

THE SULLIED IMAGE OF UNIONS Trade unionists are aware that the movement's loss of prestige has greatly impeded its ability to reach unorganized employees or groups. Even where unionism is accepted as a part of our industrial structure, there is not necessarily support for introducing it into every phase of our economic society.

The scandals that have engulfed some leaders of organized labor have alienated many one-time friendly elements in society. Widespread skepticism as to the sincerity and purposes of sections of the trade union movement has replaced the almost unqualified enchantment prevalent in the Thirties. Politicians have found it possible to build careers on exposures of union corruption. Middle-class protagonists of social reform tend to shy away from alliances with organized labor, whereas until recently

they regarded such support as essential. Few social thinkers would now look to unions for the leadership needed to revitalize our economic and social system in order to make it better able to deal with the threat from the Communist camp, though many trade unionists are bitter anti-Communists.

This new attitude contrasts strikingly with the bold public support that political liberals once gave to unionism. They supported unions as the means of helping workers "uphold their own end of the labor bargaining [and] to stabilize and standardize wage levels, to cope with the sweat shops and the exploiter and exercise their proper voice in economic affairs." Only through organization, it was argued, could labor protect itself from "the wage depressing tendencies which curtail consumer demand and precipitate business declines and unemployment." Professor (now Senator) Paul Douglas recognized in unions a means of balancing and preventing "the domination of capital which seems to be the economic essence of Fascism." To many, unions represented a counterpoise to the power of capital, a lever for increasing purchasing power and effecting economic recovery, and a means for attaining a true partnership between workers and management in industry. Through unions others hoped to help American society "cope more closely with the problem of administering industry for the purpose of increasing and regularizing production." Unionism was essential to attaining the New Deal objectives of a more secure, free, and equitable society.

This respect for unionism has diminished over the years. People began to speak of "boss-ridden unions" and picture them as monoliths manipulated by the ambitious, tyrannical, and power-hungry leader. Even President Eisenhower grasped at this theme in the heat of a political campaign and spoke of the need of "fumigating" the movement. Other attacks were directed at their economic power. Unions became the scapegoats for inflation. One economist popularized the phrase "the laboristic age," implying that unions pervaded the society and were draining off all the benefits of productivity. Unions were depicted as a threat to American freedom and all economic groups. The image of "Big Unionism" became the public counterpart of "Big Business."

Political liberals who sympathized and supported unions have often joined the ranks of the critics, though their purpose was generally to help redirect the movement toward higher goals and standards. Many urged unions to take a more active role in defense of civil liberties; others underscored more support for protective labor legislation, or stressed the need

for more internal union democracy and protection for the individual member. An underlying theme has been that the movement should take a more prominent role in the fight to eliminate poverty, inequality, discrimination, and restrictions of opportunity. Liberals noted that even where the official policy met with their approval, little was being done to educate the rank and file on public and social issues and to organize them effectively for participation in civic and public affairs. Union representatives on local public bodies took their responsibilities casually. Liberals were also baffled to find that local union leaders at times lined up with the more conservative elements in the community on issues of civil rights and liberties.

As the disillusionment spread among the liberals, unionists made few efforts to reach out and hold them. Individual union officials went about their individual concerns, assuming that all they needed to do was to settle specific grievances and negotiate better contracts. They offered little explanation for their conduct or few ideas on new industrial or social structures, or methods of negotiations that would avoid the current clashes of large-scale economic power.

Today, the hard core of the liberal political movement has continued to support the trade unions from attacks by employers but has been less willing to give them unqualified public approval. This lack of enthusiasm has robbed organized labor of the public endorsement necessary for sustained growth.

While these developments have had the least impact upon those workers, primarily manual, who share a measure of urban sophistication and can identify the condemnations as ammunition in the battle of economic interests, the anti-union publicists have generated a suspicion of and a resistance to unionism in the smaller communities and among non-manual workers whose values are more closely allied to those of the general community. Among these "status seekers" the image of unionism has been tarnished, and they have associated unions primarily with the blue collar worker.

The union movement, slow to react at first, is by now well aware of what has happened. No doubt it was this realization which prompted the AFL-CIO to expel significant international unions such as the Longshoremen, Teamsters, and Bakers, and to adopt a Code of Ethical Practices. To meet criticisms of the violations of civil rights of the rank-and-file member, certain unions have established independent reviewing boards

to hear appeals from members. Unions have at times undertaken to uproot proven cases of misconduct and to halt abuses that have been publicly documented.

The national federation has also been trying to create a positive, sympathetic attitude in the community toward unionism. It has turned to radio and television programs to acquaint the public with the activities of unions and their contributions to society. Some individual unions, such as the Retail Clerks and Communication Workers, have also launched large-scale public relations programs. Many leaders are seeking representation for unions on the boards of community chests, hospitals, welfare and child care agencies, and, indeed, the whole gamut of quasi-private institutions, in order to bring about a greater measure of democratization in these philanthropic groups and to identify the labor movement more closely with positive community action. In actual experience, however, despite growing financial support of welfare undertakings by union sources, trade unionists have rarely been able to influence the points of view of these institutions and have therefore not benefited much from being represented in them. In some instances, as in the case of Blue Cross, trade unionists have had to dissent publicly from rate increases sought by these agencies.

Many difficulties stand in the way of a redefinition of union goals and their implementation. The movement has never formulated its articles of faith in any detail, being composed of autonomous and independent unions which are not bound by any single set of objectives. Past policies have been relatively opportunistic; their desirability has seldom been measured in terms of their impact upon the public image of unionism.

Although this decentralization of the movement is a fact, the public evaluates the institution more or less as a unit. If the leadership of the central body is to develop a clearer definition of what the movement really means as well as bring about conformance with established goals and standards, it will have to convince itself and its affiliates that unity within the movement is truly necessary for its survival.

Obstacles to Growth Among Non-Union Workers

The changes in economic and social conditions, legal and administrative regulations, and public attitudes have all impeded the effectiveness of organizing drives, but the reaction of individuals and groups of unorganized workers must also be taken into account.

AREAS OF EMPLOYER RESISTANCE Several clusters of employees have remained impervious to the union movement because the resistance of employers and strongly unfavorable local circumstances have stopped unionism in its tracks. Prime illustrations of this resistance may be found in the Southern textile industry, among farm workers, and in government.

Unions have made repeated efforts to establish themselves in the Southern textile areas. Organizing drives awakened region-wide worker protests in 1928-30 and 1934, and an interest in unionism in 1937-38, but progress toward systematic collective bargaining has been slow. During World War II, with the aid of the National War Labor Board, textile unions made their last important gains. Since the end of the war, CIO's "Operation Dixie" had achieved little. Union growth has hardly kept abreast of the expansion in employment. The losses through plant closings, lost strikes, decertification, and decline of interest have eroded former gains.

Behind this dismal record stands a feudal textile society dominated by employers who control or influence the economic, social, and political

organization of the region, with the power to stamp out opposition within the mills and communities. Where unions have gained a substantial following, the local tradesmen, business and professional groups, the church, and the newspapers have frequently coalesced to save the community from unionism, keep it free for new industrial enterprise, and "protect" the workers from the "devil," the union. The opposition has used race and religion as issues. Where unions have been established, employers have sought systematically to destroy them by provoking strikes and then beating the union with strikebreakers, state police, and if necessary the National Guard. The local court system has harshly treated union leaders and members in cases involving pro-union action.

While Southern textile workers have repeatedly demonstrated their interest in unionism, they have not generally withstood these pressures. Even where individuals have joined up, their support has often weakened later to the point of rejecting the union at the ballot box. Reared in a repressive society which has demanded continuing acquiescence to the mill owner, the textile worker has learned that protest may be dangerous to himself and his kinfolk. Emigration has been the safest outlet for discontent, but older workers saddled with family responsibilities, women as a group, and those who stayed in the community out of economic fear tend to yield when anti-union pressures reach their height. The price of resistance—personal sacrifice—appears too high a penalty to pay, particularly since the terms of employment have been slowly improving anyway under the mere threat of unionism, and alternative employment is hard to find. The long record of futile organizing campaigns, the lost strikes, mill closings, and the contracting textile economy all contribute to this spirit of submission.

The image of the union as a functioning agency is still vague and weak in the Southern textile area despite the long history of efforts at organization and the constructive record of bargaining in the automobile, steel, rubber, and printing industries. The textile worker's isolation, his unfamiliarity with the use of collective power, and the absence of indigenous formal social organizations other than the church have left him unprepared for independent action, and without the experience to develop native leadership. At the same time he is restless, disgruntled, and disaffected from management.

Unions have survived in the South primarily in localities where they took root in the Thirties and early Forties, and here they are highly prized

by textile workers as symbols of their ability to create their own independent institutions. But the battles for social and political equality in the community have been fought only in scattered places and then only with the most modest success. Unionism has not preached a broad enough philosophy of human rights to a wide enough area of organized workers to create a crusading movement for a more advanced society. The color issue has complicated the use of this approach. The unions have been preoccupied with the problems of collective bargaining or sheer existence and have not had the resources or leadership for a more profound challenge to the local society. Lacking the assistance of a liberal, intellectual middle class, unions have had practically no support from regional non-labor groups.

Unlike their performance in other regions unions in the South have not been the foremost spokesmen of industrial expansion, and they have thereby deprived themselves of the chance to identify with regional growth, to offset the fear of loss of jobs, or to help shape the pattern of the economy. They have been unable to offset the complete control of industrial development by management and its allies, who convert it into an anti-union weapon.[9]

Efforts at organizing the 2,500,000 farm workers on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts and in the Cotton Delta region have a history equally as long as the efforts to organize the Southern textile workers. The results have been equally slim and unimpressive, except for some limited advances among the industrial vegetable and fruit farms on the two coasts, large citrus operations in Florida, and the dairy farms near large cities.

The problems of organizing farm workers are diverse. On the two coasts, pools of migrant workers consisting of heterogeneous ethnic groups are hired in large numbers for short seasonal peaks. With the end of their term of hire, these migrants move on. On the Atlantic coastline, a labor contractor in recent years has supplied the migrant workers and has transported them up and down the coast with the changes in crops. These crews have been at his mercy. Several states have begun to regulate the contractors in order to mitigate extreme exploitation and irresponsibility. In the Cotton Delta region of the Gulf states the fields are worked by sharecroppers who move back and forth between day work and farming their own plots.

Farm laborers employed on large-scale operations could be likely

recruits for union organization, but, like the textile workers in the South, they too face strong opposition from employers, who have resisted unions with brutal force and political power. Their antipathy is inspired by fear of harvest strikes, desire for low labor costs, and insistence upon bossing their employees without interference. On the Atlantic coast the labor contractors reenforce the employers in rooting out thoughts of unionism.

The labor crews recruited from the Caribbean and Mexico reduce the bargaining power of native labor and help employers to freeze or even reduce wages. Their competition discourages organization. There are no federal laws or local governments ready to support voices of protest.

Farm laborers on the Coast and Gulf areas are drawn from ethnic or color minority groups which are insecure, ill-educated, and live on the marginal fringe of our economy and society. Among the Western farm hands there are also "wetbacks" who have entered illegally and therefore are particularly fearful of protesting their lot. Farm workers are scattered among many farms and isolated from one another. They have little or no knowledge or experience with union organization. Being employed only at peak periods, they cannot sink deep roots into any particular area.

A recent promising move has been made to unionize the *bracero,* the imported Mexican seasonal worker. The Mexican unions are to organize them in cooperation with American trade unions. The hope is that farm labor standards in the United States will thereby be improved for both the imported and the native workers. The AFL-CIO Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee made systematic efforts for a short period at enrolling agricultural workers in the San Joaquin Valley in California.

For quite different reasons, unions are also difficult to establish among workers in the corn belt, dairy country, and Western ranches. By and large the hired hands in these areas are rural people or persons recruited for seasonal-peak periods from the local urban labor surplus. They share the farmers' general value systems, and they look on their jobs as temporary, expecting some day to own their own farms or to move on to jobs in the large urban areas. The seasonal city people, of course, are not interested in permanent union organization. With such apathy among workers, the resistance of employers to unionism has not been sharpened, although it could be easily aroused.

Far-reaching attempts to improve the political security, economic position, health, housing, and education of farm workers are necessary to any movement that could expect to awaken an interest in unionism among

workers on large-scale farm operations. The best prospects for organizing agricultural workers exist on farms near urban centers, but only the most limited amount of attention has been devoted to this group.

The third group of workers affected by the resistance of their employers to unionization is government employees. Union organization among these people has had, and continues to have, strong resistance from administrators, elected officials, and "employee associations." Even though considerable progress has been made, the most optimistic recent AFL-CIO estimate places the number of organized government workers at 850,000 or 10 per cent of the total, a rise of 7 per cent from a 1956 estimate by the same source. Some state and local governments have flatly forbidden and others have fought or discouraged union organization. Local ordinances have prohibited union membership, particularly among firemen and policemen. There is no recourse against these orders, since all units of government are exempt from federal and state labor relations acts. Moreover, the courts have generally sustained the refusal of local bodies to bargain, though an ultimate constitutional test is still to be made. Public employees are also prohibited by statute and court decision from striking to express their views or to enforce their demands. The resistance of governmental agencies to union organization has been at least as vigorous and discriminatory as that found in private industry.

Civil service employee associations have scorned unionism. Dominated by supervisors or employees allied with them, or even by politicians, they rely upon lobbying and representation techniques, and upon the grievance procedures prescribed by governments, rather than genuine bargaining. The supervisors, they have urged, are interested in raising standards and protecting the individual employees. In some cases, including teachers and policemen, the opposition emphasizes the professional character of the employment which, it is argued, would be downgraded by union organization. Numerous "employee associations" have built up insurance or benefit programs and valuable educational facilities to attract a greater following.

Considerable union strength was achieved in early days among federal postal workers, who were primarily responsible for the passage of the Lloyd-La Follette Act in 1912, and among civilian employees at arsenals and navy yards. These still make up nearly half of the currently organized government workers. The highest rate of organization in other areas is

enjoyed by the Firefighters. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees has grown in the last few years to a membership of some 200,000 with about 70 per cent of its membership in blue collar, 20 per cent in white collar, and 10 per cent in professional jobs. Other unions such as the Teamsters and Building Service Employees have organized local groups in this field.

Little progress has been made in unionizing the white collar government employee. That there is discontent with salaries, benefits, and autocratic supervisory attitudes is indicated by the intermittent strikes and the difficulties in recruiting personnel adequate in either numbers or quality. The prestige of public employment is not high. Moreover, concern at its deficiencies has reached such critical proportions in some areas, such as teaching, that the public has intervened to force improvements in salaries with little or no help from the teaching staff itself.

But the administrators continue to resist unionization and conspire with other anti-union groups to discourage its appearance. In the early Fifties, federal departments flirted for a time with the idea of recognizing unions and integrating them into the formal systems of consultation. But the opposition won out. Even in communities where the principle of collective bargaining has been accepted for public employees, administrators of individual departments and agencies invariably seek loopholes to avoid putting the principle into practice. Administrators at all levels of government are improving personnel and grievance practices, hoping thereby to forestall unionization.

Some advances in organization are being made as local governments and administrators are converted or compelled. Twelve states now authorize some or all public employees to organize, or provide mediation procedures in which unions may participate. The recent acceptance of the principle of freedom to organize by the cities of Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and New York is encouraging the spread of this policy. The form of recognition varies considerably among the communities, ranging from mere acceptance of the right to present grievances to formal, signed agreements granting unions exclusive representation rights and in some instances the check-off. These employees continue to be limited in their right to strike.

Further union growth in the area of government will depend in large part upon persuading administrators to accept the right of workers to join unions, either through conversion, public and political pressure, or

forceful action by employees. Only then will we witness a really large-scale organization movement among the vast army of white collar and professional employees. Effective unionization might well help to improve benefits and working conditions, as well as force new administrative developments that would raise the prestige and performance of public employees.

UNION APATHY AND STRUCTURAL DIFFICULTIES In addition to the handicap of employer opposition, the apathy of unions themselves to new organization constitutes a barrier to expansion in some economic sectors. This is particularly true of the craft unions.

The building trades unions, for example, have traditionally been negligent of the residential construction branch of the industry. They were discouraged by the lower wage rates in this division, which could lead to a two-level wage scale. Similarly, jurisdictional rules might also have had to be relaxed for the construction of small homes. Rather than adapt to these realities, most local unions turned their backs on the whole field. Some individual locals have organized these workers and reluctantly allowed for a rate differential, but they have been few in number. Most residential construction jobs are small and of short duration, performed by builders who are not permanently attached to the industry. Union locals have generally preferred to seek employment for their regular membership in the basic construction industry without opening their rolls to new recruits with whom work would later have to be shared. Even where union workers have been employed temporarily on residential jobs they have not brought their union with them.

This line of demarcation between the two divisions of construction has been somewhat blurred in the post-war years. The small-home construction industry has undertaken large development projects and has needed a stable work force. As a result, it has become more accessible to unionization, and the rate of organization has increased. But while the overall rate of unionization in construction is 80 per cent it is still well below two thirds in the residential division.

The same sort of union apathy has been apparent in small towns and communities. In the Thirties union expansion took place primarily in the

metropolitan areas and industrial centers. Small-town workers were the last to respond to the wave of pro-union sentiment sweeping the country. By the time unions sought to organize them in the late Thirties and early Forties employers had regained the initiative and resisted union efforts with broad community support. This opposition was of course least effective in states and regions where unions were otherwise well established. Union organization in smaller communities took place primarily among branch plants of national corporations.

The movement has responded slowly to the specific needs of workers in smaller communities. Because the employing units are generally small, national unions have been reluctant to divert their limited funds to isolated targets. Organizational drives have been economically feasible when strong union sentiment arose and could be crystallized in a short time, but the number of such cases has diminished.

The movement lacks precedents for an experience with multi-union organizational efforts in local areas. The individual unions broadly observe their respective jurisdictions and have seldom joined together in common ventures. Rarely has one union organized on behalf of a group of unions. A general union that includes a diversity of industries, such as is found in England, is lacking in this country and is sorely needed for small communities. Recently the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO began multi-union organization projects in Philadelphia and Spartanburg, S. C., but this procedure has yet to be applied in small communities.

Not only is an adequate instrument for organizational drives in small communities lacking, but existing unions in these places tend to be neglected by their internationals because they are isolated and small. The inexperience of local officers and committee members makes for poor administration and creates dissatisfaction which is ultimately reflected in the indifference of the membership to union principles and activities. This attitude among unionists, of course, sets the tone for non-union people in the area.

Small towns are playing an increasingly important part in our industrial system as plants and services are decentralized, either to the suburbs or to new marketing, producing, or population centers. If the trade union movement is to expand here, it must develop techniques and structural forms suitable to these areas. While industrial and occupational groupings are desirable in contract negotiations, the emphasis in new organization and administration should be upon regional areas.

The organizational structure and procedures of the movement as a whole also generally hinder penetration of the very small shops in large cities, except for workers of skilled crafts and in specialized services. The production workers in such shops tend to have a marginal employment status and are less aggressive. Having personal relations with the employer, they are more easily persuaded to follow his lead and respond to his appeal. Workers are abused in such shops, but they are not usually vigorous enough to speak up for themselves. Being on the lower rungs of the wage ladder and dependent upon their earnings they are less given to taking risks. They need help to raise their status, but it is the union that must take the initiative for organization.

Because the units are so small the cost of organization is extremely high. Therefore, unions have used short-cut techniques such as organizational picketing, secondary boycotts, or the "hot cargo" provisions of collective agreements. Legal restrictions have increasingly limited the usefulness of these devices.

Successful organization and effective bargaining for such shops usually depend upon unionizing an entire industry. This is a challenging and expensive undertaking, requiring a large staff, unless the shops are highly concentrated and there is an intimate relationship among the workers of competing employers and a willingness on their part to act in unison.

The trade union movement has still to develop effective methods for reaching workers in small shops. Moreover, to be truly successful it must gain the support or at least the tolerance of the community for the large-scale effort that would be required.

APATHY OF WORKERS Beyond such deterrents as the opposition of employers and the structural deficiencies or disinterest on the part of the unions themselves, there are whole areas in the American economy where the apathy of employees to unionism is the primary obstacle—areas where workers have not responded in large numbers despite many efforts to arouse their interest and recruit them. Five groups are representative of these problems—employees of large corporations in which company and independent unionism has prevailed, as in the chemical and petroleum industries; women in manufacturing industries; non-manual workers; Negro workers; and low-wage service employees.

Unions represent about one third of the total work force in the large chemical and petroleum companies, but more than 40 per cent of this number are in independent plant or company unions. Within the chemical division the largest aggregate of company unions is in the du Pont Corporation, which embraces some 40,000 of the 70,000 employees in independent unions. In petroleum about 100,000 workers belong to individual locals or federations of independent unions.

The three major national chemical unions, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, the International Chemical Workers Union, and District 50 of the United Mine Workers Union, as well as the other unions with more specialized interests such as the Textile Workers Union of America in synthetic yarn and plastic plants, have tried to penetrate the unorganized areas and capture the local independent unions. They have carried on continual educational efforts to reach the employees and underscore the deficiencies of the independent unions. These efforts have succeeded from time to time. Some isolated gains have also been made in organization; production workers in five du Pont plants and craft workers in four more have been unionized and the OCAW was victorious at the Bayton, Texas, refinery of the Humble Oil and Refining Company, a Standard Oil Company of New Jersey subsidiary. But there has been no wholesale shift of independents to national unions such as occurred during the Thirties in the steel industry.

Organization of the workers in the giant corporations of these industries has been beset by many difficulties. The plants are generally small in number of employees, and they are isolated and scattered, thus depriving the workers of a close industrial identity. Moreover, many major companies have consistently fought unionism, even where they have acquiesced or have been forced to recognize unions. With few exceptions they have insisted upon individual plant bargaining units, resisting attempts at company-wide contracts. In the late Thirties several large companies, particularly in petroleum, encouraged employee representation plans which later became independent unions. They have not become serious challenges to employers because efforts to coordinate them into federations on a company or industry-wide basis have had little success. Recently these companies have bided their time even in promoting plant unions in new locations, believing this should be avoided as long as possible.

Resistance to unionism is strengthened by the selective hiring policies of the larger corporations, which tend to weed out potential union supporters. Long service, and in many instances continued recruitment of new employees from the families of current employees or on their recommendations, build up a separate company identity which reenforces earlier rejection of unionism. Superior working conditions and benefits weaken the lure of unions. The management generally devotes much attention and spends considerable funds on communications and other personnel and human relations procedures to strengthen the company image. Supervisors are trained to contain dissatisfaction. Individuals with union leanings are systematically eliminated. Wherever signs of union activity arise, the personnel departments try to correct the causes of discontent, discourage union support, and get rid of the sympathizers.

The independent unions have discouraged interest in genuine unions. While a substantial proportion of the workers realize they are company tools, they recognize and quite cynically admit that these "independents," either through their own power or through the threat of outside unionism, are able to bring them benefits approximately equal to those achieved by the national unions, without exposing them to the risks of strikes, outside direction, higher dues, and—most important of all—the active enmity of management. The differences in benefits or status have not seemed sufficiently large to persuade the majority to swing over to an outside union. Where there have been such movements, managements have invariably activated local community and corporate resources to dissuade workers, and generally they have succeeded.

The multiplicity of national unions has also weakened their individual ability to appeal to independents and to achieve adequate bargaining power with the large multi-plant companies. Two unions, the International Chemical Workers Union and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, have established joint company-wide councils which have promoted uniform standards on insurance and pension benefits. But these advances have not yet persuaded the independents to join them.

Among Women Employees

The weakness in organizing women workers stemmed originally from the prejudices of union members against recruiting women. As the number of women in industry multiplied, unions adopted liberalized admission

policies and organization campaigns sought to enroll them. But before the Thirties measurable success was attained only in the needle trades. Later, in the upsurge of industrial unionism, thousands were embraced by the organization of entire plants. Union membership among women spread primarily in industrial establishments. Much progress was made in electrical goods manufacturing, textile products, retailing, and communications. But only the most limited advances were made in industries and occupations that employ women predominantly.

The challenge of organizing women is one shared with trade unions of other countries. In cultures where women have short-time employment expectations, their outlook tends to discourage easy recruitment. Unions in other countries have made special efforts at organizing and identifying women with the organization. Women representatives are chosen, and there are specific divisions to arrange activities for women workers. Only a few American unions make similar efforts.

The basic hurdle to easy acceptance of unionism by women in this country is their deep-seated disinclination to consider themselves permanent members of the work force, though some evidence exists that this attitude is changing. The individual woman seldom looks upon employment as her life-long destiny, even though women as a class constitute 32 per cent of the nation's labor force and many return to work after once leaving. Her principal preoccupations are courting, home-making, raising children, and the support of herself or her family. This emphasis on immediate personal concerns subordinates any interest in collective action. Personal discontent on the job is secondary. On the whole, she does not regard herself as the prime mover in the family's economic advance, even when she is. Personally ambitious women are likely to emphasize self-reliance as the best way to get ahead. Collective action is considered a channel of expression for men.

To overcome this image, unions appeal not only to immediate self-interest but also to the benefits of unionism for the family. Unions often send women organizers to contact women employees and arrange special educational activities for them. The accent in organizing shifts to the issues of equality of pay, rest periods, liberal sick leaves, and stricter rules for internal plant sanitation. Community support is sought to reenforce individual union appeals. The employers' call for personal loyalty has to be countered with an emphasis on independence and the rights of personal initiative.

Women who have become active trade unionists can be counted among its most ardent and devoted supporters, militant and vigorous. Many have achieved critically important positions in the leadership of strikes and other economic contests. Their group loyalties are most sharply projected on the work floor and in unions that tend to make them cohesive and important political units. While many are not interested in the routine work of local union administration, they are often very active in the social activities. Though not inclined to be joiners as are middle-class women, working women and workers' wives have been attracted to many union activities.

The conversion of women employees to unionism continues to be a major challenge. With the growing number of women workers, the job demands real attention.

Among Non-Manual Employees

The greatest weakness in the structure of the labor union movement is its slim representation in the predominantly non-manual industries and occupations. Its hold in the retail, wholesale, government, financial, insurance, real estate, and service employment sectors is narrow and tenuous. The ratio of union membership to total employment is well below 20 per cent, and in many types of jobs and in certain geographical areas unionism is practically non-existent. This is true despite the absolute and relative growth of employment in these sectors. From 39 per cent of the non-agricultural employment in 1919, the proportion of all non-manual employees rose to 48 per cent in 1930, 51 per cent in 1950, and 55 per cent in 1959.

The unionization of this vast body of American employees is essential to maintaining the strength of the trade union movement. As the numbers and the economic and political leverage provided by the older occupational and industrial sectors diminish, they need to be reenforced by expansion in the newer ones. No group except the white collar employees can adequately serve this end since their numbers are growing and already exceed the blue collar personnel. Moreover, they are now setting the pace for and coloring the outlook of the entire working population. Even automation and mechanization of clerical and selling functions will not stop these trends.

As industry is further automated, the mere maintenance of union bar-

gaining strength will depend upon organizing non-manual personnel even in industries now considered predominantly organized. The ratio of non-production workers in manufacturing industry as a whole has already reached 25 per cent; and in some specific divisions such as ordnance it is 48 per cent; in others, like the more advanced chemical plants, it is even higher. The statistics revealed their practical application during recent public utilities strikes, when supervisors, technicians, and professional workers successfully maintained operation of the equipment. The bargaining strength of blue collar unions will be further limited unless they enlist the cooperation of the non-production workers.

Leaders of the American trade union movement have become aware of the challenge. They realize that the most optimistic figure of current union enrollment in white collar jobs is no more than 2,500,000, or less than 15 per cent of the total, with the organized highly concentrated in older employment areas. Organizational progress in newer fields has been sporadic, local, and slow. To wrestle with this problem the so-called white collar unions and the industrial unions in industries employing large numbers of clerical, technical, and professional employees are seeking new approaches. The achievements of European unions in organizing and bargaining for these employees provide an encouraging, if sometimes irritating, example.

The Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO called a meeting in 1957 to promote the need for action. This was followed up in 1959 with the formation of an inter-union Professional and Technical Workers Committee to help the affiliates analyze their difficulties, exchange ideas and experience, and learn from each other the methods that proved successful in promoting organizing drives. Seminars have been held since. One task is to substitute for the present relatively unfavorable image of unions among the unorganized a positive concept that suggests broader economic and social benefits, satisfaction of needs, and a desirable, practical alternative to the present anarchistic system of individual pursuit of immediate self-interest. Widespread acceptance will require a painstaking, persistent, and highly concentrated program of education designed to win over specific groups. These beachheads would then in all likelihood provide a practical demonstration of the value of unionism for all.

"Business unionism" will not in itself be able to break down the prejudices and distrust that permeate white collar attitudes toward unions. The individual clerk, draftsman, or accountant must come to realize that union

membership means more than a mechanism for getting more money from the employer. A broader vision is essential to win over the white collar employee, just as it was to gain the support of the manual worker.

Clerical and kindred employees are found throughout American industry. They number well over 9,500,000, of whom some three quarters are possibly eligible for union membership. But union organization probably accounts for considerably less than 1,000,000 and is highly concentrated in railroads, communication, manufacturing, retail trade, and the federal postal service.

To reach such a diverse group, union appeals must necessarily be varied, but there are many common elements in the attitudes of clerical workers. They have enjoyed a degree of social status, job security, and collateral benefits that has set them apart from manual employees. Moreover, in the last decade the expanded demand for clerical help has generated a faith in their ability to wrest economic gains on the basis of personal merit. They have learned that their skills are highly transferable and that in periods of intense demand they could improve their positions by moving on to other employers. More than two thirds of these employees are women, and they have found that economic advances obtained in this manner or through other market pressures have been sufficient to satisfy their aspirations.

But there are offsetting forces such as the narrowing of wage and benefit differentials between clerical and manual workers. At best the benefits enjoyed by office employees are now often directly tied in with the gains made by the production workers. When the latter establish the pattern and their union signs an agreement, the former receive comparable improvements. The boast of many clerical employees is that their gains have kept abreast of advances in unionized industries. This practice is now sufficiently widespread that the tendency for narrowing the differences has been stopped.

Moreover, both groups of employees are now often huddled together in large organizations, pushed around by the same type of impersonal management, and subject to the whims and personal prejudices, the likes and dislikes, of supervision and the faceless pressures characteristic of large-scale operations. The insecurities induced by fluctuations of business, against which the salary worker was formerly insulated, are now increasingly part of his life. The possibility of displacement through

technological change are at least as real for him as they are for the factory employee.

Despite these vast changes, which have broken down the traditional image of clerical workers as being typically employed in small offices, maintaining close personal contacts with their bosses, and knowing the business intimately, unions have not made substantial progress. The white collar worker who functions in what is, for all practical purposes, a big factory has not yet proved any easier to approach. He has not been persuaded that further gains depend upon collective action. Unionism in his view is still primarily for manual workers. Individual self-reliance still strikes him as the primary channel for personal advancement.

Employers have gone to considerable lengths to harden and widen this antipathy toward unionism. Many have met the workers' economic expectations and provided personnel policies and procedures designed to implant a sense of security, freedom of communications, and individual status that might otherwise be sought through union membership and collective bargaining. Personnel men constantly use the threat of unionism to win management's approval for liberalized practices and policies. Addresses by personnel men at management meetings stress the success achieved in warding off unions by "beating them at their own game."

The greatest union gains among white collar workers have been in the retail and wholesale industries. Membership in this field has doubled in recent years, bringing the total to 10 per cent of the 11,000,000 potential. The latest organizational gains in retail trade have been in the mail order houses. Advances among store employees on a nationwide basis have been slow, but in some cities, such as New York, the penetration has been deep. Particular success has been achieved among units employing large numbers of manual workers with predominantly male employees or units with a favorable geographical location such as near or in unionized metropolitan centers.

However, the great gaps in unionization suggest the task ahead. Difficulties arise from the predominance of women employees and of small, decentralized units, though they may be owned by large corporations. Part-time workers, employed for less than a full week or only for seasonal employment, constitute a vast segment of this work force. They may be permanently associated with the industry but seldom think of their jobs as permanent careers. In larger cities they shift from store to store de-

pending upon opportunities and terms of employment. The young female employees view their occupational careers as of short duration, and are not likely union recruits in any case because they have been indoctrinated against unionism. To older women also employed in large numbers, the job is too essential to be endangered by protest.

Retail managements in recent years have systematically taken steps to head off unions by maintaining earnings and working conditions at better levels. Such steps have been more common in large cities where retail unions have already made some headway. Wage levels remain low in smaller towns and in areas untouched by unions.

The slow but persistent progress of unions in this field speaks forcefully of the inherent need for organization. Workers in many areas are seeking to raise wages and improve employment conditions to bring them up to the levels in unionized industries. Unions are learning to build upon the unrest among key workers and to utilize the core of leaders within the stores. The regular contact of retail and wholesale personnel with union members employed by the same management or by its contractors and suppliers has of course stimulated continued interest. But the gains have come only through diligent, persistent organizing campaigns. Spontaneous self-organization has been rare in recent years. Alliances between the Teamsters and retail unions, vital in many past successes, have disappeared or been strained by inter-union conflicts.

Professional and technical employees—with the exception of actors; airplane pilots, stewards, and stewardesses; musicians; movie-TV-radio writers, and newspaper reporters—have also resisted unionization. Most existing unions in this field arose with the sweep of unionism during the Thirties. Others were formed, but many have disappeared. The remaining nuclei are fragments of the potential for broader organization among such groups as teachers, social workers, scientists, engineers, and technicians.

Despite the expansion and probable continuing growth of these occupations, unions have only a small foothold—probably less than 10 per cent of the 1,000,000 potentially eligible. The collegiate or comparable training required for most professions has molded a keen identity among the occupational group, with specific responsibilities frequently formulated into codes of professional conduct. While these codes were designed primarily to fit the needs of the independent practitioner, they have also

been considered binding on professional employees. This attitude gave greater weight to professional or public obligations than to personal self-interest. To the independent practitioner the client – whether patient, pupil, litigant, audience, or the general public – has highest priority, at least in theory. Economic self-interest must thus be advanced by raising qualifications and instituting systems of certification.

A favorable post-war climate for professional workers has reenforced their individualism. The persistent demand, often exceeding the supply; the employers' fears of unionization; public discussion of the inadequate financial rewards for specific groups such as teachers, and public pressure on educational and other institutions have boosted wage and benefit standards. Individuals have been able to advance by moving from one employer to another. All these factors further discouraged a search for collective action. Interest in unionism tended to subside toward the end of the Fifties. Independent unions have weakened and many finally disintegrated. Several efforts to transfer their organizations to AFL-CIO affiliates failed.

Unfamiliar with unions, the professional employees have accepted the common unfriendly image of unionism propagated in the public prints, in schools, and by employers. At best they have tended to identify it with the needs of manual workers who would otherwise be individually helpless. Unions for professionals, many assumed, would follow policies adopted for other workers–policies that favored mediocrity, submerged the individual, and ruled out individual relations with superiors. Other rigid concepts persist even among some professional students of labor economics, who have rejected union membership for themselves despite the abundant evidence of flexibility demonstrated in the practices of existing professional unions.

The optimism about economic gains among professionals and technicians has of course not been universally justified. Employing agents have moved slowly and have had to be jarred along. Conditions are not generally satisfactory. But the discontent has not festered deeply enough to precipitate independent union organization except in restricted areas.

Professionals are searching for improvement, as witness the high rate of turnover among them. The causes are varied. Low salaries disturb many. Others deplore the narrowing of the differential between manual and professional workers and the dependence of the latter on wage movements among the former. Limited opportunities for advancement cause

discontent. Experienced people in many professions lament that their earnings do not compensate them for their years, for newly hired college graduates are being paid generously in relation to their pay.

Perhaps the most striking example is the experience of young engineers, whose starting salaries since the end of World War II have startled their elders. Many have discovered that these salaries were contemplated for specific and professionally limited tasks with little scope for originality and little opportunity for either professional or financial advancement. Disenchantment has consequently been widespread.

Others fret at the non-professional and impersonal treatment meted out by management and the inclusion of non-professionals in their ranks. They are subjected to the same uniform policies and practices that govern the manual worker. This trend has proved irritating, as most professionals have been brought up to consider themselves as individuals to be dealt with as such and consulted on all matters affecting their performance. When their assignments are restricted and specialized, the use of their abilities is limited and their mobility is reduced. Instead of enjoying job security, they are as subject to the vagaries of the company's economic calculations as the ordinary manual worker. They have been taught that they are part of management and that advancement for many of them is possible only through promotions to administrative jobs. They want professional recognition, but it is often not forthcoming. They want opportunities for professional study, but companies do not always provide them. Advances in income and status are channeled into classifications that are foreign to their own tests of performance.

Some professionals would have liked to see their associations undertake to secure redress for them and fight vigorously for their interest, but most of these groups have avoided the assignment. When the unrest became widespread and the threat of unionization real, several associations began an intensive anti-union battle. The National Society of Professional Engineers pronounced, "Professionalism and unionism are incompatible." A number of associations promulgated minimum employment standards and began providing information on wages and working conditions. Employment codes were adopted. The National Association of Social Workers organized a system of grievance hearings limited to issues involving violation of an agency's personnel policies, hoping that its members, who include supervisors, would be guided by its findings. But basically the professional associations, including as they do employer supervisors and

non-supervisory professionals, are not equipped for adequate processing of complaints and are precluded from entering into collective bargaining arrangements.

In individual plants and companies "sounding board" committees, the counterpart of older employee representation plans, have been set up to provide a substitute for the union's grievance machinery. In addition, the agitation over professional unionism and the ensuing studies and investigations have led to improvements that have placated many professional employees to the point of diverting the drive for unionization. However, economic standards remain inadequate in a number of areas and the supply of personnel in them remains deficient.

Union organizations have been formed in various fields, mostly on a local basis. The American Nurses Association has undertaken collective bargaining on behalf of its members where it can get certification. Unions of engineers, social workers, and others have appeared here and there, but the rate of attrition has been high. Their handicaps include a lack of experienced leadership, insufficient resources, and an unwillingness to become part of the general trade union movement, which could give them both technical and economic assistance. Where there has been a close interrelationship between the production workers and the professionals, they have been able at times to use their joint economic power effectively to secure important gains for the professionals. But commitment to the concept of professionalism has deterred such free association in most cases. The myth persists that there is an essentially different status between other employees as a group and the professional employee.

Nevertheless, existing professional unions have made substantial contributions to the well-being and economic and professional status of their membership. Unions in the performing arts and for writers and newspapermen have made extraordinary advances, especially in dealing with the special economic problems of the professional employee. Their contracts speak eloquently of the flexibility of the collective bargaining process and the ability of each group to evolve programs and policies suited to its particular needs and the peculiar characteristics of the profession. The members of these unions have repeatedly demonstrated publicly their pride in their unions.

The prototypes for the professional union therefore exist. They deliberately try to integrate the promotion of the economic interests of their members and their status as creative individuals with the advancement of

their competence and of public appreciation for the importance of the profession to society. These unions have not been adverse to and have in several instances worked closely with professional associations, either directly or through their overlapping memberships, to promote common professional interests.

But professional employees as a whole have not yet come to understand fully the need for collective action to promote their own interests along with those of their profession as a whole. The trade union movement has not vigorously pursued the task of organizing this key group of employees or sought to profit from successful experience. Nor has it established flexible enough approaches and adequate facilities for experimenting with new forms that could attract this special group and respond to its peculiar needs.

Among Negro Workers

The apathy of workers to unionization also shows up among the Negroes. The growing numbers entering the manual occupations make their organization vital to the maintenance of trade union power within established jurisdictions. As Negro membership has expanded to the current 1,500,000, it has become an increasingly higher proportion of total membership as well as the group with the highest rate of organization, probably close to 50 per cent of those eligible.

The recent accent in some Negro circles on the tardiness of certain unions in removing constitutional and practical bars to Negro membership has done much to dampen the Negroes' acceptance of unions that prevailed during the late Thirties and Forties. The current coolness to unionism is derived in part from impatience with the conduct of individual unions and the reluctance of central labor bodies arbitrarily to impose solutions. Disillusionment among Negroes has spread and has increased the difficulties of appealing for their support.

The trade union movement in this country has been in the vanguard of the protagonists of Negro rights. Its principal leaders have advocated union organization of Negroes and sought to enforce desegregation and equality within the movement. But they have encountered regional prejudices and fears of economic competition, which in turn have led to exclusionary policies in some localities, particularly in craft unions. As a result, the emphasis is now upon eliminating all color lines in seniority, to open

up jobs to colored workers on the railroads and in construction, and to gain broader rights of admittance to craft apprenticeships and to upgrading in all jobs and industries. The battles over these issues are being fought so vigorously and aggressively that the imputations of discrimination often tend to embrace the movement as a whole. Moreover, the debate identifies the unions as a major obstacle to the expansion of economic opportunities for Negroes. While there is no difference in principles and goals among the Negro leaders and the white trade unionists who are fighting discrimination on every front, the manner and content of the battle has done little to enhance the prestige of unionism among Negro workers.

Many unions have made significant contributions to facilitating the employment of Negroes as well as insuring them the fullest opportunities for advancement. Discrimination is being eliminated. Several national union leaders have enforced the principles of equal rights even upon reluctant locals and in difficult situations. Several national unions have supported governmental bodies that demanded the elimination of discriminatory practices by local unions. They have fought for contract clauses that assured equal rights and have been foremost in the battle for fair employment practice laws. The problem confronting the union movement is how to eradicate the last vestiges of prejudice and privilege among entrenched groups within a movement in which local autonomy and established rules limit the action of national officers.

While it is understandable that Negro union and civic leaders should continue to press their claims, the dilemma they face is how to achieve their goal without dampening the ardor for union membership itself among their followers. They are aware that unions are vital in their own battle for civil rights, as evidenced by their support of unions in the fight to defeat state right-to-work laws. But the enthusiasm for the cause of their own brethren has often tended to compromise their allegiance and support for trade unions.

Among Low-Wage Service Workers

No group demands more attention by the trade union movement than the 3,000,000 low-wage personal service employees. They are on the lowest rungs of the urban economic ladder and have standards only slightly better than those of the farm laborer. Conservative estimates place the earnings of at least half of the group at less than $1 per hour. Less

than 10 per cent are currently covered by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. Some employees have their earnings supplemented by public assistance to maintain themselves and their families. Occasional strikes momentarily disclose their dreary plight and shock the public conscience. But the result has been only local union organization or legislation. A national movement for correction of these conditions is necessary. The most significant move in this direction has been the proposal to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to extend its coverage to these workers.

Trade unions have made some progress among employees of hotels, laundries, cleaning and dyeing establishments, and other personal service industries, but the total membership is very low. The problems of organization are a combination of those recited for employees in small shops in large cities, of low-income earners, of minority groups, and of employees in industries in which the employer enjoys small profit margins and in which business turnover is high. Where the economic setting is more stable and profitable, more progress has been made. Community-wide union support is often helpful in organizing these employees. The current efforts of the New York City Central Labor Council to assume part of the responsibility for organizing in these fields may provide a model for the rest of the country. This broad sponsorship will allow the campaign to be directed at the workers and also include educational activities to awaken community understanding and support.

The organizational program must also be broadly conceived to be truly constructive. Besides raising wage standards, it should seek to raise the educational and physical qualifications of the employees. It should also provide technical assistance to employers to enable them to run their businesses more efficiently at the same time they take on higher labor costs.

Internal Impediments

Many difficulties standing in the way of trade union expansion lie within the trade union movement itself. Some are to be found in the national federation. Others result from conflicts among national unions. Still others flow from the inertia and inadequacies of the member unions. Programs and staff are not always sufficient for the demands of the new era. The membership, which played such an important part in earlier expansive movements, hardly participates in current organizational drives.

THE LIMITATIONS OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS The growth of trade union membership in the CIO during the Thirties occurred largely because it (and its predecessor committee) provided funds and manpower for many new organizing drives. The people who made possible the organizing campaigns conducted by steel, textile, and many smaller organizing committees were in large part recruited from established CIO unions. The regional offices of the CIO, unlike the AFL, became the headquarters for many union campaigns. When the original momentum petered out, the CIO manned centralized campaigns to organize Southern workers, white collar workers, and chemical workers. While the results were meagre, the concern was real. The CIO leaders assumed that the merged central federation would

continue to be the major supporter of pioneering organizing efforts in the newer industries and in weakly organized areas.

One vision that inspired the AFL-CIO merger was the coordination of organizing efforts. The formation of an Organization Department with what appeared to be considerable status and support enthused many within the trade union movement. But the promise was short-lived. In its first years the department helped individual unions in current organizing drives. But soon the staff was drastically cut in size and its activities sharply curtailed. The remaining crew of federation organizers has devoted itself primarily to building up organizations to compete with the expelled bakers' and laundry workers' unions and to assist unions in combating Teamsters Union raids. The regional staff of the AFL-CIO is also assigned on an individual basis to specific drives being conducted and led by individual unions. A small-scale farm labor organizing campaign was started in 1959 and concluded in 1961.

The AFL-CIO Organization Department has had no basic rights to initiate drives for organization such as was enjoyed by the headquarters staff of the CIO. The dominant belief in the central body is still basically that of the old AFL – that the responsibility for new organization rests with the individual internationals. The appropriate jurisdictions have been allocated, and each union is expected to be willing and able to face up to its own challenges. While the central federation may occasionally give manpower help, it is not really called on to initiate or sustain organizing drives. Moreover, conflicting jurisdictional claims have snarled up several efforts at large-scale campaigning for new membership.

By its very nature the federation cannot now presume to coordinate, direct, or even actively seek new techniques, investigate new approaches, or examine new assumptions for organizing. The autonomous and independent position of the constituent unions establishes a presumption of their sufficiency and competency. The federation staff can be helpful in proffering advice and instruction on a personal, voluntary basis, but, while some smaller unions might welcome such aid, the staff has not been able to become a reservoir of knowledge or a true headquarters for leadership in new union organization.

A national conference on organization was called early in 1959, but it served only to awaken interest rather than provide detailed materials or guidance. Much of the advice offered by the speakers was not tested or based on careful evaluation.

THE DISINTEREST OF INTERNATIONAL UNIONS At present the future of new organization depends greatly upon the efforts of the individual unions. Among them the time and manpower devoted to expanding organization vary considerably. Generally, the accent is considerably lighter than in former years, although some heightening of interest is currently perceptible.

In the older, well-established unions with a capacity for financing their own efforts, the emphasis has shifted to contract negotiations, administration, and service to the present membership. The union leadership is primarily preoccupied with these matters. A complacency with existing coverage has overcome many of them. In some instances the inclusion of new groups is resisted because their addition would present the problems of establishing different wage levels, as in the case of residential construction workers in the building trades. Others fear that an expanded membership would lessen market control or broaden the base for work-sharing in recessions. Organizational activity is primarily directed in some unions to new competitors or to the completion of unionization in established areas. This is a practical program but no substitute for tackling the main body of non-union people.

In the relatively unorganized trades—which are often the growing areas, occupations, or industries—there are unions eager to undertake new organizing campaigns, but their manpower is limited. Even those with resources have found themselves inadequate as single unions to deal with the varied forms of opposition flowing from the community, the employers, the government, and the law. One significant step to meet this problem was undertaken by the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO at its 1959 convention, when it resolved to help unions to overcome these difficulties. City-wide multi-union campaigns have since been started in Philadelphia and in the South.

THE APATHY OF LOCAL MEMBERS AND OFFICERS Another gap in the supporting structure for new organization efforts has been brought about by the loss of much rank-and-file support. Union members were the principal recruiters in the Thirties and Forties. They proselytized their fellow employees. They gave

many hours to "dedicated time" for no reward but the satisfaction of preaching the gospel to which they were committed. They were the vanguard of professional spokesmen, organizers, and recruiters. Many helped in organizing plants and groups of workers outside of their own industries or areas. Self-organization constituted in this period a significant source of new union growth.

Not only has the number of such self-organized units diminished, but so has the voluntary assistance from union members. The attitude of the rank and file has changed considerably. There is less willingness to give freely of time and energy. Organized workers tend to be absorbed with their own problems. There is little feeling of urgency about extending organization, particularly if there are no local competing shops. While the present-day unionist may help to organize a plant that constitutes an economic threat to his own job, he is much less apt to exert himself to extend unionism as a whole. Leaders have to work hard to persuade local members and often local officers to finance and allocate manpower to general organizing programs.

This attitude is particularly entrenched in areas where the national union has repeatedly emphasized, usually for purposes of raising per capita dues, that a share of the income going to the national union is to be mainly devoted to new organizational efforts. The rank-and-file member, as well as the local officer, working on their regular jobs, tend to be less spontaneous in their devotion to campaigns for new organization. They view the union as an institution in which the full-time official has the responsibility for general union expansion. Few efforts are made to rally the entire membership or the movement as a whole to this task.

INADEQUACIES OF THE ORGANIZING STAFF Today's full-time organizing staff generally consists of different types of people from those recruited in the Thirties. In the earlier period a good proportion was chosen from among the enthusiastic leaders of newly organized groups, leaders of the unemployed, and political radicals. Many came from the ranks of manual workers forced out of opportunities of higher learning or professional life by the depression. A missionary spirit pervaded the men and women who formed most organizational teams. The assignment was given the highest priority by all full-time officials no matter what other responsibilities they

might have. They automatically moved from one place to another as they concluded individual assignments. Jurisdictional lines were not strictly observed since the unionization of all groups was uppermost in everybody's mind. Hours of work and holidays were ignored. Their physical endurance seemed limitless.

Today the situation is vastly different. In established unions the accent has shifted principally to administrative work, which includes contract negotiations, grievance processes, operation of the local union, maintenance of relations with the community, and implementation of national union policies. Organization tends to be segregated into a specialized activity with an independent staff. In areas where this compartmentalization does not exist, union officials carry on both administrative and organizational duties, but the latter usually become secondary. The officers gravitate to administration because their prestige and political position depend upon satisfying actual rather than potential members.

Organizational assignments also tend to be allocated to younger persons, new recruits, leaders who have lost out in political conflicts, and political appointees. It is the exceptional staff man who has identified organizing as a real profession. Very few have devised and applied carefully tested systems and procedures, constantly adapting or changing them as new tides and times arise. Few have the endurance and unflagging enthusiasm for intensive long-term campaigns such as are needed to win over a placid or fearful work force and to battle with an expertly manned company personnel staff. Very few know how to neutralize a suspicious or anti-union community. Many have to rely on national office professionals to help them in public relations and propaganda activities. Some are unprepared to deal with the younger generation of manual workers, much less the white collar group.

The comparative standing of the organizer within the political structure of the union has also declined because he has shown few positive results. Discouragement and exhaustion have overtaken others. Organizing is a most grueling occupation; many have pursued it long after their physical and moral stamina have begun to run down. Even the good organizer has not found an easy road open to an administrative position as age and the demands of the job have begun to take their toll. This fact has not been helpful to staff morale.

The trade union movement as a whole, and most national unions, have not provided the training programs necessary to bring the experience and

knowledge of the organizers up to date, or to develop and equip new recruits for the work. A "discipline" for organization has not been systematically formulated. At a time when spontaneous self-organization is at a low ebb and expansion depends in no small part upon qualities of leadership and competence, relatively little is being done to improve these capacities and provide the men with the best knowledge on the technical phases of the task. There is not even a general recognition of the necessity for such training.

OBSOLETE ORGANIZING TECHNIQUES Most of the organizing procedures still in use were shaped by the experience of the mid-Thirties and the requirements for certification set by the National Labor Relations Board. In the early years of that era, with favorable sentiment widespread and worker initiative quite common, the organizer, except in unusual circumstances, had little persuasion to do. His duties consisted usually of canvassing the work force, either personally or through committees, and obtaining signatures on cards attesting that the workers wanted to have the union represent them in collective bargaining. Frequently, the union was certified on the basis of the signed cards or merely on the union's affirmation that it represented a majority of the employees. As elections either became more commonplace or the administration of the NLRB and the attitudes of employers dictated elections, the emphasis in campaigns shifted toward the acquisition of sufficient cards to call for an election.

The number of cards depended at first upon the Board's requirements for calling an election. As time went on, however, experience showed that workers were signing cards without necessarily committing themselves to support the union. The usual remedy was for the union to seek a higher proportion of signed cards in relation to the work force. But the basic organizing technique continued to be the collection of signatures. No systematic procedures were developed for training organizers to distinguish between persons who sign a card to dispose of the interviewer and those who will genuinely support the union. There is a third group that signs cards in all sincerity but is later persuaded to vote against the union.

One consequence of this emphasis on card signatures and elections is that organizers focus on election victories rather than on developing un-

derstanding of and devotion to unionism. The prevailing assumption, derived from earlier experience, is that the people already understand and are basically in sympathy with unionism and will ultimately support unions as the solution for their complaints. This conclusion has not been reevaluated for its pertinency today. Where an organizer admits to himself that the workers do not necessarily believe in unionism, he is likely to conclude that the job of conversion is too huge for him to undertake.

Organizing is currently directed to winning bargaining rights rather than building sound local unions. The usual literature and propaganda only superficially seek to indoctrinate people in the principles of unionism and to make really conscious and devoted members of them. An organizing campaign is now likely to be a short-run rather than a long-term project, and when the management announces economic concessions during the course of the campaign, this type of short-run campaign is likely to fall flat. Its emphasis on "practical" issues sidesteps the broader industrial and social problems and leaves the drive completely vulnerable to such employer action, for the workers remain uninformed of the deeper motives for union membership.

The pressure for immediate election victories also tends to leave many newer organizing problems untouched. Even in the case of blue collar jobs there is a high proportion of people in each new plant who have once been union members or have been closely associated with unions. Some have had or have been informed of unfavorable experiences with unions. Still others have resisted unionism and have developed an encrusted nonunion attitude. The gamut of special gripes and plausible-sounding grievances among manual workers raises grave doubts of whether they do indeed understand and accept unionism. These doubts are multiplied when white collar groups are approached. Certainly the assumption that unionism in the broadest sense does not have to be sold is thoroughly baseless here. Winning over white collar workers requires a more candid, serious, and extensive program than a series of individual "contacts" with prospective union card-signers.

The virulent, relentless, and skillful counter-offensive against unions is making older canvassing techniques obsolete. The union staff man has not only to persuade and rally the workers to the union cause but to anticipate and fight off the pressures and countermoves of the employers. The attacks demand highly sophisticated rebuttal. But the trade union movement on the whole continues to rely on the simpler tools of communications and

pounds away on the issues that it thinks interest workers. Actually, employees who have been made suspicious of union spokesmen are not likely to open their minds to free discussion of the values of membership. Nor are they likely to respond to organizers who do not bring a new message and mission.

Some union leaders have become troubled by this gap between the refinement and variety of techniques used by employers and those applied by themselves in organizing campaigns. They have been vexed by the continuing reduction in the ratio of successful elections. In several instances they have produced manuals for organizers that restated existing knowledge and repeated warnings on bad practices. One union has developed a careful reporting system on organizing campaigns and is experimenting with new techniques and methods of supervision. Opinion experts have been brought in to analyze individual campaigns. But these are still isolated and rudimentary efforts. Even a good local campaign cannot easily overcome a general unfavorable image of unionism.

Single nostrums have been offered for overcoming these problems reminding one of the vain efforts during the Twenties to sell unionism to big industry on the premise that the AFL was patriotic and American and that communism was a probable alternative and a greater threat. Current formulas seek to build on the idea that a change in public attitude can be achieved by "effective public service." Unfortunately, many a clean-cut and sincere union leader who has become a respected civic figure in his own community has been "run off" or maligned by anti-union elements when he stepped out of his own bailiwick.

INTER-UNION RIVALRY Any survey of internal union obstacles must make reference to the deleterious effects of union rivalry. In representation contests conflicts arise on claims to unorganized plants, and raids still continue among units organized by other unions. The incentives are, of course, the continuing shrinkage of opportunities within the established jurisdictional areas, the constantly changing technology which creates areas of uncertainty, and the wider diversification of operations by the large business corporations. What is most disturbing about these trials of strength is that they have caused reckless, undignified, and often unwarranted charges by one union against another. In the interest of winning elections, local rep-

resentatives may overlook the normal code of good behavior among fraternal organizations. The reckless attacks of one union against another have not helped unionism as a whole. In some cases unions have paid money to workers to recruit members, degrading the contest into a mere test of financial resources.

The Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO has set up an organizing code to regulate conduct among contending unions, but the misdeeds have not stopped, with continuing ill-effects on the union movement.

Roads to Expansion

THE CRISIS FOR TRADE UNIONISTS "Crisis" is not too strong a word for the cessation of the trade union movement's expansion into new areas and its decline in numerical strength. True, the contraction is proceeding slowly. Unlike previous periods of decline there has not been the wholesale destruction of union organization from entire industries. Losses from direct attacks have been few. The shrinkage is due primarily to attrition of jobs in unionized occupations, a continuing loss that is greater than the minor gains in recruitment.

This change is taking place at a time when the public still thinks of trade unions as Goliaths of power. Employers still portray them as insuperable and unmanageable monoliths with which they cannot successfully cope and which government must restrain in the public interest. Union economic strength is still great in the areas of established organization, so that in economic battle they are often a match for management in the large mass production industries and powerful in negotiations with some local industries. The public remains troubled by the costliness of conflict and concerned with the possibility of arrangements between the two contending groups at the expense of the public interest.

Outside the economic field the support of trade unions often proves valuable to political candidates, both in the financing and conduct of their campaigns and in rallying support among the electorate. (On the other hand, in areas of union weakness such as the South, open union endorse-

ment may be a political handicap.) Union leaders occupy prominent places in the civic life of some communities. Others hold important appointive and elective positions in federal, state, and local governments. But the trend toward the increase in such appointments appears to have lost its earlier momentum.

This still impressive surface and much publicized image of "bigness" is being undermined by shrinking employment in many key industries, the industrial and craft unions bearing the brunt of the decline. The pressures of intensified competition and rising unemployment are limiting union power, and public disapproval of strikes is making trade unions more amenable to the conciliatory processes provided by public intervention and study commissions, thereby diminishing their own bargaining leverage.

The complexion of the American trade union movement is changing as the unions in these weakening industries and situations lose influence in the topmost councils of the AFL-CIO. This change in balance makes it even more essential for leaders of unions in the stable or expanding sectors, including the building industries, to give earnest consideration to ways of making the entire movement more responsive to the new economic environment and to the new types of employees. Parochial concern about their own trade interests is no longer sufficient, for the survival of the total movement is at stake.

This discussion has indicated the serious obstacles that lie ahead in trying to "organize the unorganized." Organizing power does not match bargaining power. The legal machinery has become neutral if not definitely biased against union organization. The economic and intellectual climate has become less favorable to traditional union appeals. The internal union organization has not been reorganized to meet the new challenges. The central overall organization, the AFL-CIO, remains a confederation of essentially autonomous organizations primarily concerned with their own internal and bargaining problems. Little substantial power has been ceded to the central agency. It developed uniform codes for ethical behavior that it cannot really enforce. Its organizational activities have been frustrated by jurisdictional differences among the unions and their coolness or outright disapproval of serious efforts in this field. The capacity to put on concentrated campaigns at specific organizational targets simply does not exist.

Other barriers have also been itemized in this paper. There is often intense employer resistance. Unions have shown little interest in organiz-

ing specific classes of employees. Entire groups of workers are not convinced that collective action is essential to the solution of their economic and public problems. There has been disillusionment among Negro workers, engendered by groups in and out of the labor movement which attack the central bodies and individual unions for not acting fast enough to eliminate discriminatory provisions in their constitutions or to uproot discriminatory practices.

A number of national leaders have discreetly admitted the seriousness of these trends and have revived the call to "organize the unorganized." They hope the slogan can be converted into action. That the latent power of this group is ready and even anxious for an opportunity to move is shown by the responsiveness to the fight against right-to-work laws; the help given to unions in bitter-end strikes; the intensive efforts exerted in political campaigns; and the support extended to individual appeals for help in organization. These people recognize both the internal weaknesses and the rich human potential in the trade union movement. But a change in the tides depends primarily upon the movement itself. It must develop new policies, goals, techniques, and structures and assemble new personnel to resume a new pattern of growth. Many of the current leaders recognize that while the government can remove impediments, restrain the anti-unionists, and reaffirm the right and propriety of organization, the basic remedies must be developed within the movement. Many unionists are seeking both for the road to expansion and more particularly for the leader who will take on the task of pursuing it. There is a sense of urgency about the need for reevaluation to avoid the malaise and discouragement that will come with a faster rate of decline in the membership and therefore the bargaining power of the movement.

THE CRISIS FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY The decline is not only a challenge to the membership and leadership of the unions but also to public leaders concerned with the foundations of American democracy. Political freedom and democracy in the twentieth century, in this country at least, depend upon an effective internal balance of private economic power. Management has accumulated great might in the large corporations; there must be a countervailing force representing employees. The vision of a return to an economy of small units is anachronistic and nostalgic; the

realities demand that the great powers be balanced by other powers. The government cannot undertake this task. It is itself one theatre for the clash of economic interests. Weak and ill-organized groups tend not to receive the full measure of consideration demanded by the superior interest of the nation as a whole. The electorate can mandate the executive or legislature to correct an imbalance in favor of the national interest; but legal and political equality in a free society is best maintained by a balance of power in the private economy.

All power, including that of management in the business enterprise, should be constitutionally restrained if it is not to be destructive. Since restraints are preferably developed and in the last analysis made effective through countervailing power, it is desirable for the opposing groups to form organizations for bargaining. Employees outside of trade unions and not protected by collective bargaining are subject to the whims of the industrial sovereign and the forces of a market that may be wholly or partially under management controls. These conditions of dependence are obsolete. They overlook the human and social costs in the operation of the economy. Workers must be represented through their own private organization in order to deal with organized industry. Trade unions are essential to an effective decentralized, pluralistic, democratic society. If they are weakened, the base for this society is itself weakened.

During the last twenty years, collective agreements in key industries provided the pattern for the economic policy, personnel standards, and human relations attitudes for a substantial part of the remaining industries. Out of fear of the spread of unionism, or out of a desire to follow the pattern of industrial leaders, or to maintain a rational wage and benefit structure in face of abundant monopolistic profits, or as a result of market pressures, non-union employers generally kept their terms of employment abreast of the gains secured through collective bargaining. In this sense the influence of trade unions has been pervasive. Yet, even at best, whole industries and many individual private and public employers lagged behind, creating indefensible disparities in wages and benefits among employees on comparable and related jobs. Should the influence of the collectively bargained models be weakened or lost with the decline in the relative size and scope of the trade union movement, the buoyancy of American society would be undermined and continued participation of Americans in economic progress would become more haphazard.

A strong trade union movement assures employees a share in the

benefits of rising productivity and maintains a democratic structure for decision-making as to employees' benefits and rights. Only as individuals enjoy the fruits of our growing economy can they have the means and time to explore their individual promise and unfold their personal gifts. Personal dignity and self-esteem require that workers participate in the determination of their own terms of employment. Through joint determination, equitable and just work rules can be set for the operation of industry, and the progressive changes in our economy and our society that are needed to maintain a flexible democracy can best be achieved. Unilateral benevolence has seldom satisfied free men. It nurses a despotism—inequitable economic returns and biased work rules—that ultimately will precipitate large-scale social conflict.

The way to safeguard individual freedom, therefore, is through collective, contractual protection of each individual's rights and privileges in his place of work. He must have an agency for effective bargaining with management and for assessing its trusteeship as administrator of the enterprise. Unions provide the crucial balance to the economic power of private enterprise. They are the negotiators of the industrial constitution. They are partners in the government of industrial relations. Our American society is dependent upon the maintenance of a virile and responsive movement bending its efforts to these aims.

The community can perhaps countenance a temporary flirtation with individual bargaining and employee representation plans at times when trade unions are expanding and gaining in influence. But a lapse in the endorsement of unionism and collective bargaining cannot long persist. If it is converted into outright opposition, as has occurred in some areas of our country, the most basic assumptions of our society are threatened. As this possibility may become a reality if current trends continue, it is more than ever essential that the people reconsider their tolerance for anti-union activities.

The legislators and judiciary have become increasingly responsive to pressures from business interests desirous of undermining union power and its internal strength. They have yielded to demands for laws and interpretations that restrain trade unions. The pendulum has already swung so far as to halt the growth of the labor movement and actually constrict it. The economic balance between management and employee is again being upset. An immediate need is for legal and administrative changes to remove the obstacles to organization, particularly in areas

where the opposition of employers, sanctioned by government, is truly obstructing the freedom to organize. The government should vigorously support workers desiring to form unions. The government also has a responsibility to set a model for private industry by burying its obsolete theories of sovereignty, scrapping its autocratic personnel policies, and frankly accepting unionism and collective bargaining for its own employees. The new federal administration can make a major contribution by publicly endorsing unionization and collective bargaining for federal employees. Non-profit agencies should also reconsider their current antagonism to union organization. Ultimately they must accept the same pattern of employee relations that prevails in American society as a whole.

NEW APPROACHES TO AND BY THE MOVEMENT It must be emphasized that even if the prerequisites outlined above were achieved—even if we could magically be whisked backward in time to the Wagner Act and the zeal of its early administrators—it would not be enough. The nature of our industrial society and of the people who comprise it have been changing too. The old remedies, the old approaches, will not serve the needs of today. The eventual answer must be provided by the trade union movement through a drastic overhaul of spirit and structure.

The transformation must be as radical as that of the Thirties, when the dominance of the old crafts, with their "aristocrats of labor" viewpoint, was swept away in the flood of industrial unionism. The old unions not only survived but in many instances grew great beyond their dreams; however, they would be unrecognizable to their founders. No matter how reluctantly, they adapted themselves to the inevitable, once it became apparent.

The great hope today is that the essential changes can be made without schism—by evolution rather than revolution. This must be the immediate goal of the labor leadership. At this moment the power of trade unions is only slightly below its peak, and their prestige, while more severely eroded, remains relatively high. In the coming decade a new, different, and vastly larger work force will be looking for channels of expression tailored to new conditions. The evidence of their discontent already is dimly evident. Surely it would be preferable for a strong, established

labor movement to adapt itself to these needs now, rather than as an alternative to disaster.

The remainder of this discussion will seek to suggest some guides for that effort:

1. *The image of the movement must transcend that of the constituent unions.* In the United States, unlike most other countries, the national labor center – the AFL-CIO – has little power over the economic or organizational policies of its constituent unions. It has gained a degree of acceptance as a political center and a preceptor of moral conduct, but in other areas it is close to the pattern of the former AFL, whose major attempt at internal discipline was exerted at the wrong time and in the wrong cause and thus split the labor movement for a generation.

The child of this division, the old CIO, departed from the pattern, more in fact than in theory. From the beginning it was led by men of strong personality who assumed they were indeed at the helm. Many of the CIO unions were created by the federation itself or by a group of established affiliates. The CIO's dues structure enabled it to provide substantial financial support to constituent unions when necessary. Most of all, the CIO unions as a whole were united in a common struggle for the principle of industrial unionism, building among them a fellowship that survived long after the struggle had been won.

These circumstances were evident in organizing campaigns. Thousands –perhaps millions–of workers flocked to the banner of the CIO with little concern for the specific union involved. For good or ill, CIO meant something–so much so that the initials are used as a scare-word by employers in rural areas today, years after the merger.

The revival of a comparable spirit should be the labor movement's primary objective today. There must be a feeling of total interdependence –a conviction that the interests of the movement are superior to those of its constituents, no matter how great their weight in the inner councils. This conviction in itself would be a long step forward, as the CIO experience demonstrated. But, to assure permanent effectiveness, conviction must be accompanied by structural reform.

Let us face the problem frankly. Reform would involve giving to the national labor center certain prerogatives that up to now have been exclusively exercised by the constituent unions. This is not to suggest that the separate unions should surrender their independence or lose their

identity; but it does say that if union organization is to expand, as it must, the stress should be placed upon enlisting members and not upon which union claims jurisdiction over them. This involves no self-sacrifice in the long run. In a national work force 90 per cent, or 70 per cent, or even 50 per cent organized, there would be members to spare as against the 30 to 35 per cent the movement now has.

2. *The basic purposes of the movement must be emphatically reasserted.* The inspiration, imagination, and sacrifice that brought unionism into being must be rekindled and kept strong. Unions in a democratic, private capitalistic society represent employee responses to the overwhelming power of property, the inequalities of benefits, and the abuses of authority, as well as the hopes generated by our kind of society with its accent on both individual initiative and collective action for common goals. Trade unions undertook to minimize the human costs of industrial progress, to balance economic power, and to condition management decisions. The goal is to make our private enterprise society function more equitably and humanely, progressing smoothly in a stable pattern of growth, providing employable persons with jobs yielding ever rising economic returns. Unions articulate these goals. They jostle and prod management, and if necessary the community and government, toward these ends. In recent years American unions have also promoted similar ends in other countries to strengthen the free world. The trade union movement is a social critic, an economic leveler, a stimulator to management, and a focal point of social idealism.

The untiring pursuit of these goals remains the continuing responsibility of the trade union movement as a whole. The action of its individual constituent unions must be in harmony with these goals.

3. *The movement must put specific programs into effect.* The American labor movement speaks most clearly and responsibly in terms of specific action programs. Therefore its pragmatic demands should clearly reflect its vision of a better life.

First, the battle against human poverty and exploitation must be carried on until it is won. Efforts at organizing low-paid employees must be joined with a drive for national and state legislative wage floors. Fringe benefits in collective agreements must be correlated with government programs providing minimum benefits for all. Public and community social services

must be supported. Ethnic, color, and religious discrimination within unions must yield before the insistence on equal opportunity for all. Unions must intensify their pressure for economic, social, and political uplift for minorities, with special vigor for our current largest minority, the Negroes.

Second, the national economy must grow at a rapid rate, in the order of 5 per cent a year. The labor movement, with the AFL-CIO playing a commendably vigorous role, has been staunchly committed to this objective, but it will inevitably be judged by the specific programs it advocates. Some unions have urged industrial development councils to convert "sick" industries and those affected by foreign competition into expanding ones. A demand for similar efforts by industry as a whole could help convert the economic structure into a thriving one and help meet the competitive problems of foreign trade both at home and abroad. Unions in the construction industries could do much to verify the sincerity of labor's dedication to an expanding economy by leading the drive against outmoded local building codes.[10]

Third, the free market must operate in the public interest. Here the record of the labor movement is beyond cavil. It has continuously sought to transfer the costs of personal risks to the business society through negotiated fringe benefits and legislation. It has supported legislation to control river pollution, conserve natural resources, and otherwise promote sound, long-range use of nature's bounty for the public good. It has supported the free adjustment of wages and benefits to enable business to attract needed persons to newer occupations, without the need for government intervention. Monopolistic practices and huge business concentrations have been constant objects of criticisms.

Fourth, responsible economic policy must be followed by both management and unions. To the labor movement as a whole this means that management must operate its enterprises efficiently, undertake the research and development projects needed to assure expansion, and reinvest a substantial portion of profits, though relying primarily on outside funds for new growth. Administered prices should not produce very low break-even points or unusual profit targets. The enterprise itself should not be subverted by its management, directors, or creditors.

To insure general observance of these guides, several trade unions have called for industry-wide conferences and public policy declarations to bring price, production, research, and investment policies into harmony

with the national interest. The entire movement should support this position. In such an environment union wage and benefit goals will then be definitely responsible and similarly oriented.

Fifth, the movement must educate the American people on the function of collective economic and social action in achieving national purposes. Collective action, it should be stressed, does not conflict with individual initiative and self-reliance. Rather it is a means of reenforcing these traditional American virtues, as well as an instrument for action in areas where the individual is no longer the adequate unit of policy determination. But neither the nation's school system nor the public delineators of our national values have sought to make clear the interrelation of individual and group action – competitive or cooperative – in our society. While individual action and competition are given the most exalted value, few Americans share a profound belief in the constructive contributions of group or collective action. The acceptance of unionism as an indigenous part of the American social and economic system has been difficult. While this deficiency continues, the union movement in enlightened self-interest and to help Americans understand their own society has an obligation to help clarify these concepts and to get them more widely accepted.

Incidentally, this very process would highlight another important value often submerged in current thinking–that is, the unionist's pride in craft and his insistence on competence and quality. This widespread but little known attitude, if rescued from obscurity, would simplify public acceptance of the professional union, which similarly seeks to insure competence and quality and to advance the standards of the profession.

Sixth, unions must adhere to democratic principles in making their decisions on all issues affecting employees. This concept has now been written into law and has to be fully implemented. The stewards of the movement must be beyond reproach.

Seventh, all benefits of employment under our system should be shared by all employees alike, though the level of rewards may be varied above a reasonable minimum to account for the different values of the jobs.

Eighth, economic gains and free collective bargaining must be recognized as means to a greater end. They not only assure adequate living standards and human dignity within the economic society but also enhance individual freedom in life outside work. Adequate earnings and protection from the caprices of employers enable workers to enjoy opportunities for individual endeavors away from their jobs.

Finally, the functions of the trade union cannot be restricted to the parochial problems of local negotiations with employers or to collective bargaining as such. It must be catholic in its interests and flexible in approach in order to fulfill its mission of creating a better life.

4. *The structure of the labor movement needs revision.* Strengthening the image, attitudes, and approaches of the trade union movement is not a controversial matter within the movement itself. While pockets of complacency still exist, many and perhaps most of the leaders are aware of the crisis that faces them. Unfortunately, too many believe that revisions in the federal labor relations law, coupled with a sympathetic labor board, would solve the problem. They are mistaken. To be truly effective in resuming its growth, the labor movement must make adjustments in its own structure. Specifically, it must rectify the balance of power among the existing structural units.

The true power centers in the present-day labor movement are the national and international unions. Each sets its own economic course. Each conducts its own organizing efforts. Each maintains its own staff, both field and professional. The largest unions have resources that dwarf those of the national center, the AFL-CIO. In theory, the activities of these member unions are correlated to some degree through the AFL-CIO, its trade and industrial departments, and its state and local central bodies. In practice, the correlation has been limited, with very few exceptions, to political and legislative action, and has been less than perfect even there.

This amorphous grouping of heterogeneous units is not adequate to cope with the situation. New groups are gaining ascendancy in the labor force; new structures must be developed to accommodate them. The general local union is probably needed for small communities containing a variety of small industrial units. Special unions for technicians and for professional and other white collar groups may be most appropriate to cope with their special characteristics, such as mobility and high transferability of skill, and to assure such "professional" features as membership standards, which these groups would regard as essential in their organizations. Another growing phenomenon is the multi-industry corporation, operating in many fields under a common policy-making management. A means must be found to exert the full influence of the employees in all units on a united basis, regardless of occupational or product differences.

Actually, technology is obliterating the old lines between industries; once-sharp jurisdictional distinctions among national unions share the same fate. A similar process is under way in the crafts, where specialists give way to all-around mechanics. Trade union structure must adapt itself to these changes.

No precise blueprint can be drawn for this new structure, since the process of change is constant and its momentum is growing. But one fact is evident: The national center, the AFL-CIO, must be given greater powers and must assume greater responsibilities. It must have the primary obligation for evolving the new structures and for developing policy and initiating action in a far wider area than political and legislative programs. Its public policies should be responsibly formulated after active debate and consideration. Its program and standards should be broadly applied and enforced. It must function more nearly like our present federal government than—as it now does—like the separate states under the Articles of Confederation.

5. *There is no area where the shift in power and initiative is more urgent than in the field of organization.* Not only should the national center serve as a source of knowledge and expert advice and as a stimulus to inert unions; it should also have authority to initiate campaigns in those areas and among those groups where it feels no adequate efforts are being made. It must have the right not only to assist the campaigns of member unions but, if necessary, to supersede them. Vested rights of national unions must not be allowed to stand in the way of the transcendent interests of the movement as a whole.

It was noted earlier that in a few places, such as Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Philadelphia, a number of unions have voluntarily joined in cooperative organizing drives. Such cooperation should certainly be encouraged, but it is not enough. The central body should be empowered to direct area-wide campaigns, with its own personnel providing at least the core of the staff. Obviously, this approach would involve a strengthening of state and local central bodies comparable to that of the national center.

This must be accompanied by a rejuvenation of personnel. Organizing must again command the best talent in the movement. Staff should be recruited from among the brighter spirits in the new occupational groups, and from the many socially minded young college graduates who are

actually pleading for an opportunity to serve the cause of a better society. A system of formal staff training should replace the traditional reliance upon informal apprenticeship and field experience. The process of training could also serve to sharpen the perceptions of the teachers. If organizing is emphasized as the No. 1 objective of the movement, and organizers are given status in proportion to the importance of their assignment, we may again see a revival of the messianic spirit of former years.

It is neither necessary nor possible at this time to spell out a precise pattern for organizing activities. But above all else, they should combine practical work with a widespread educational program directed at the schools, the general public, and the present union membership. It is not collective bargaining that needs to be explained as much as the right and, indeed, the duty of employed Americans to band together in their own organizations, both for their own self-interest and in the interests of American society. The necessity of collective action—in good times or bad, with benevolent employers as well as sweatshops—must be made clear to all Americans.

This is the obligation of the labor movement, an obligation it must fulfill for its own survival as an effective force, and one whose fulfillment is essential for the preservation of the democratic process. The movement must begin at once to give this task the priority it deserves and to undertake the structural revisions that will make it possible.

Footnotes

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4. Robert M. McMurray, "War and Peace in Labor Relations," *Harvard Business Review,* v. 33, no. 6, November, 1955, pp. 46-60. The industrial relations research profession has neglected to analyze the activities of the public relations and industrial relations experts in fighting union organization. The operations of Nathan Shefferman were reported in the McClellan Hearings. See Daniel Bell, "Nate Shefferman, Union Buster," *Fortune,* February, 1958, pp. 120-1, 204-9. The activities of Fred Rudge, Labor Consultants Inc., are described in "All Rights Denied. The Effect of the Taft-Hartley Law on the Organizing Efforts of the Employees of the Chatham Manufacturing Company, Elkin, N.C.," TWUA, 99 University Place, New York 3, N. Y., December, 1955, p. 41. Loren Baritz, *The Servants of Power. A History of the Use of Social Science in American Industry,* Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 1960, p. 273.

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