PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD LABOR, 1928-1937

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by

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Approved by:

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Public attitudes" and "labor," the two terms with which this thesis deals, are such familiar concepts that little in the way of definition is necessary.

To begin with the simpler of the two terms, "labor," as used in this thesis, may be defined as "the laboring class collectively."

By "public attitudes" is meant "public opinion," that is, the state of mind of the public or the people at large on the subject in question.

It must, of course, be recognized that the "public" is not a unit in its attitude toward labor. Self-conscious labor's attitude toward labor and self-conscious management's attitude toward labor are by no means identical. Moreover, neither labor nor management constitutes the whole of the "public," and neither of their distinctive attitudes represents what might be called a typically "public" attitude.

Since ours is a democratic government, and since in a democracy any important policy must, at least in its major aspects, conform (sometimes after a considerable time-lag) to public opinion, it might logically be argued that the attitude of our government, as reflected in its labor legislation, is the "public attitude" toward labor.
Finally, because America is highly middle class conscious and because "probably in no other country does the middle class play the vital role that it enjoys in the United States," it can be stated without fear of contradiction that the attitude of the middle class toward labor is of supreme importance in this study.

In an effort to take all these factors into account, some notice will be taken of labor's own attitude (Chapter III), of the attitude of management toward labor (Chapter IV), and of the attitude and role of government in labor relationships (Chapter V). More extensive study will then be given to the attitude of the middle class (Chapter VI) as most truly indicative of "public attitudes toward labor."

In each of these several approaches special attention will be paid to trends in public attitudes and to the reasons behind these trends, with a view to answering two major questions:

1. What significant development in public attitudes toward labor can be noted during the decade, 1928 to 1937?

2. To what extent was the labor legislation enacted in the early years of the New Deal a crystallization in law of this progressive advance in public attitudes toward labor?

1 Robert Morss Lovett, The Middle Class and Organized Labor, New York City: League for Industrial Democracy Pamphlet Series, 1940; p. 5.
This naturally raises a question about the decade which is the object of special study in this thesis. Its special significance in the history of labor and therefore in the development of public attitudes toward labor is apparent when one recalls that the decade began with labor unions recognized by neither the automobile industry nor the steel industry and ended with major portions of both these industries recognizing and dealing with CIO unions; and when one recalls further that the decade began with the government little concerned about labor legislation and ended with important labor legislation not only on the law books but declared constitutional by the Supreme Court.

In order, however, rightly to understand what took place on the labor front between 1928 and 1937 some little knowledge of the history of the labor movement prior to 1928 is necessary.

It is to this subject that the next chapter is devoted.
CHAPTER II

THE ANTECEDENTS OF OUR DECADE

The year that marked the declaration of American independence marked also the beginning of the labor movement in America. For a spontaneous strike of printers in New York City in 1776 is "the first recorded instance in the United States of workers taking direct and collective action in an attempt to improve their working conditions." 

That was an isolated attempt at joint action on the part of labor for no further evidence of labor acting in concert appears until 1790, when local craft unions began to be formed.

From 1790 to 1928 the labor movement went forward—not without interruption and setback, but with persistent progress despite all difficulties. Several periods or stages in that long development may be noted.

1. The early beginnings of organization, from 1790 to 1840.


2. For a general discussion of this period see:


Herbert Harris, American Labor (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1938), 11-42. (Henceforth cited as Harris.)
The first years of this period (from 1790 to 1826) witnessed the organization of purely craft unions. The Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers is credited with being the first trade union. After the failure of several earlier attempts at organization it was organized on a sound basis in 1794.

The formation of city centrals of local craft unions characterizes the years from 1827 to 1831.

Then, from 1828 to 1832, although efforts to organize unions were not abandoned, the labor movement was largely diverted from trade unionism as such to political parties and political action.

Early attempts at establishing national unions were made from 1833 to 1837 but these attempts were halted by the "long depression" that began in 1837, and the labor movement suffered a slump during the so-called "Era of Lost Causes" that followed.

2. The period of idealistic experiments, from 1840 to 1855.

Various theories of cooperation and socialism attracted the attention of labor during the time of the

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3 See Harris, 11.

4 For a discussion of this period, see Clark and Simon, 44, 45; and Harris, 45ff.
long depression and such experiments as cooperative workshops were tried out. In the long history of labor this was the one bid which wage earners made to set themselves up in business. Although success was attained in some instances, the general effort ended in failure. During the period advance in trade unionism proper was slow.

3. The revival of craft unionism, from 1855 to 1869.5

By 1855 skilled craftmen were turning from idealistic philosophy and experiments to the "bread and butter" unionism that is typical of craft unions. Another depression, this one beginning in 1857, briefly halted the union crusade for better working conditions but by no means eliminated the desire for better conditions.

With this revival of interest in craft unionism and with the greater nationalization of business, workers began to realize the necessity of organizing on a broader basis. Even before the Civil War workers in many trades felt the need of combining local craft unions into national craft unions and, through correspondence, unions in the same trade, located in various parts of the country, took up this matter. In the years between 1850 and 1859 sev-

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5 For a fuller discussion of this period, see Clark and Simon, 45-49; Harris, 57ff.
eral inter-city or "national" craft unions were formed, designed to improve labor standards for the members of that craft only.

This recognition of the necessity of national organization and action is of great importance in the history of labor for it marks the beginning of the modern trade union movement.

The Civil War, of course, temporarily checked union organization. But even before the war was over unions began to grow and the post-Civil War period witnessed a substantial increase in the number of both local and national craft unions.

In 1866 the National Labor Congress (later called the National Labor Union) was organized. This was a politico-reform body, loosely organized and composed of national labor unions, local unions, city centrals, and certain reform groups. Ira Steward, its leading spokesman, sought to get an eight hour day and other reform planks into political platforms. The organization lasted only until 1872.

Even though the National Labor Union had but an ephemeral existence, there were at least thirty-two national craft unions by 1870.

One of the factors with which the labor movement had to reckon at this time—a harbinger of things to
come—was the formation of employers' associations. In 1864 the Employers' General Association of Michigan was formed in Detroit. Similar associations, together with the bitter opposition to labor unions, forced the labor movement underground and gave rise, in 1869, to the Knights of Labor, an interesting labor organization which dominated the history of labor in the eighteen-seventies and the eighties, until it was itself eclipsed by the American Federation of Labor.

4. The Knights of Labor Era, 1869 to 1886.

The Knights of Labor, founded by Uriah Smith Stevens and others, and later led for fourteen years by Terence V. Powderly, has been called "the greatest single spectacular movement of labor prior to the organization of the CIO." By the late eighteen-eighties its membership had reached a height of about 700,000, but then a decline set in and by 1893 the membership had shrunk to 40,000.

"One for all and all for one" was the philosophy of the Knights, many of whose leaders were devout churchmen,

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5 Harris, 74.

7 For a treatment of the Knights of Labor, see Harris, 76-81, 89-95; Clark and Simon, 49-59.

8 See Harris, 79; Clark and Simon, 52.

9 The World Wide Illustrated Encyclopedia, Volume II, 2637; see also Harris, 95.
particularly Roman Catholics. The Knights advocated "the welding of all workers into a single and mighty organization, regardless of trade or sex or race or religion or color or previous condition of servitude." This was an entirely new emphasis in the history of labor.

When the Knights won railroad strikes on the Union Pacific system in 1882 and 1884 and then brought Jay Gould and his roads to terms in 1885, the organization gained great prestige and won large numbers of unskilled workers. But then came the Haymarket Riot in 1886, which discredited labor, including the Knights of Labor. Strikes attempted by the Knights in 1886 and 1887 failed, and membership rapidly declined.

As throwing light on the subsequent history of labor it is important to note the chief reasons why the Knights of Labor collapsed. They are these:

1. Poor leadership.

2. Incompetent conduct of strikes, with a failure to follow a consistent policy in conducting strikes.

3. The use by management of the Pinkerton Detective Agency in its fight against the Knights.

4. Too much autocracy in the organization.

5. Failure to recognize the conditions which existed in industry. The Knights' philosophy, which held that the employing class and the laboring class have all things in common, ignored basal differences of interest between capital and labor and even within the laboring group.

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10 Harris, 77.
6. A surplus of unskilled labor, which made their organization impractical under existing conditions.

7. Lack of practical techniques for carrying out the program of the organization. This lack of realism doomed the Knights to defeat in its battle with the emerging AFL.

And so the curtain falls on the last attempt of American labor to solve its problems through an idealistic organization. Harris calls the victory of the AFL over the Knights "a triumph of leadership over logic." This is an admission that the Knights' underlying idea of "one big union" is fundamentally sound and points the way which labor must follow successfully to cope with capital. But it was not until 1935 that that idea was to reappear—in the form of the Committee for Industrial Organization.

Even before the decline of the Knights of Labor had begun, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada had been formed under the sponsorship of the Amalgamated Labor Union and the Knights of Industry, in 1881.

The new organization indicated a revolt within the Knights of Labor on the part of those who wished narrow trade protection for the skilled trades, a revolt which gained considerable momentum when the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions became the American Federation of Labor in 1886.

11 Harris, 94.
12 Ibid., 92.
For a time the Knights of Labor and the new AFL tried to work out some form of cooperation through a division of the field. But because of the radical differences in the structure and techniques of the two organizations and because of the resultant inevitable rivalry, cooperation was soon displaced by antagonism and then by open warfare. It was not long until the AFL had won the day. Hence the era of the Knights of Labor was followed by the era of the American Federation of Labor.

Although from the 1890's until the 1930's the AFL had no serious rival in the field of organized labor, attention should be called to the fact that in 1905 the leftist Industrial Workers of the World was founded.

This was a radical syndicalist labor movement, in sharp contrast with the very conservative AFL. The IWW believed there was no hope for American labor under the capitalistic system, hence the need of the workers gaining control of the means of production, by violence if necessary. "The abolition of the wage system" was one of the watchwords of the IWW.

The importance of the IWW lies not in the size of its membership, which was never large, but in the fact that it produced a number of forceful leaders, such as William Dudley ("Big Bill") Haywood, who promoted the class struggle and attempted by violence to attain the rights of labor. Furthermore, the IWW supported labor
and did not confine its efforts to the members of the IWW. The AFL took great pains to renounce the IWW and all its works and all its ways.

Another group of labor organizations not affiliated with the AFL are the railroad brotherhoods. But since they are outside the Federation mainly for jurisdictional reasons and since their viewpoint is very close to that of the AFL, no special treatment of them is necessary.

This leads to a consideration of the American Federation of Labor, which dominated the labor scene after the collapse of the Knights of Labor.

5. The American Federation of Labor era, from 1886 to 1928.

The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, organized at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in December, 1881, may properly be thought of as the beginning of the American Federation of Labor, with Samuel Gompers, who became president of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions in 1883 and was also the first president of the American Federation of Labor, as the living connecting link between the two. What happened was this:

Beginning with 1881 the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions—never a strong body—held annual sessions and sought to encourage the formation of trades

The history of the AFL after 1928 is reserved for later chapters. For discussions of the formation of the AFL, see Clark and Simon, Chapter IV; Harris, 92-95.
unions, and to secure legislation favorable to the in-

14 terests of the industrial classes.

But in 1885 there were a number of national unions
that were not connected with this Federation and the Fed-
eration decided to send delegates to the conventions of
these unions in an effort to induce them to join it. Then,
in 1886, a call was issued for a conference of twenty-five
independent national and international unions, to be held
in Columbus, Ohio. The Federation was to have met in St.
Louis on December 14, 1886, but when this other conference
was called for December 7 at Columbus, the Federation chang-
ed the time and place of its session to December 7 at
Columbus to enable its delegates to participate "in the
meetings of both, and to bring about, if possible, an
15 amalgamation of the two bodies."

This plan met with success and at Columbus, Ohio,
on December 9, 1886, the Federation of Organized Trades
and Labor Unions gave way to the American Federation of
Labor, which was simply an enlargement and a continuation
of the earlier federation.

The AFL has always been a thoroughly practical,

business-like organization, quite the antithesis of

14 See Report of the First Annual Session of the Federation
of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States
and Canada (reprinted by Pantagraph Printing and Stationery
Co., Bloomington, Ill., 1906), 4.
15 Report of the Sixth Annual Session of the Federation
of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (included in same
volume with the reports of the first to fifth sessions),
p. 8 of Sixth Report.
the idealistic Knights of Labor. In contrast to the highly centralized organization of the Knights, the Federation is a decentralized organization that recognizes the autonomy of the great national craft unions which constitute it. Section 4 of Article II of its constitution reads:

"An American Federation of all National and International Trade Unions, to aid and assist each other; to aid and encourage the sale of union label goods, and to secure legislation in the interest of the working people, and influence public opinion, by peaceful and legal methods, in favor of organized labor." 16

In short, the AFL represents the "bread and butter" unionism so familiar in American industrial relations, the type of unionism that frankly seeks, through pressure tactics and by the economic rather than the political approach, to gain material advantages for its membership.

Under the presidency of Samuel Gompers, who, with the exception of one year, was the organization's president from 1886 until his death in 1924, the AFL grew in power and prestige. The Report of Proceedings of the 62nd Annual Convention of the AFL (held in Toronto, Canada in October, 1942) includes a table of the total paid membership of the organization, based on the actual per capita tax received, and hence not including unemployed members.

The table covers the period from 1897 to 1942 but there is also a graphic chart of AFL membership from 1891 to 1942, from which approximate memberships for the years 1881 to 1897 may be gleaned. From this table and chart the following data on membership, indicative of the growth of the AFL, has been taken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>45,000 (approx.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>125,000 (approx.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>250,000 (approx.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>264,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1,024,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1,538,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>2,020,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1,948,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>2,072,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>2,371,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>2,726,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>3,260,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>4,078,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>3,906,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>3,195,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>2,926,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>2,865,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>2,877,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>2,803,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>2,812,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>2,896,063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures tell a story of slow growth at first, then of rapid expansion, accelerated by favorable conditions for organized labor during World War I, followed in turn by a decline in the strength of organized labor after the war. One of the factors that helps one to understand

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that story is the attitude taken by the government toward labor through the years.

The general attitude of government toward labor from the time of that spontaneous strike of printers in 1776 until the prosperous days of 1928 was marked by aloofness rather than friendliness. The period of the Wilson administration, however, constitutes an exception to this general statement, for while President Wilson was in office, and especially during the first World War, the federal government was on close terms with labor.

This is an important item in the antecedents of the decade 1928 to 1937, for that decade marks a resumption of the recognition of labor's rights and national role.

Here is a brief survey of what happened: In 1916 the Adamson Act was passed, which provided for an eight hour day on the nation's interstate railways. This was a significant beginning in national labor legislation. With the outbreak of the First World War, government, in order to secure the fullest cooperation of labor, set up the National War Labor Board, an agency to which labor is indebted for many gains made by it during the war.

With the end of World War I and the cry, "Back to Normalcy!" the companionate marriage between the government and labor was largely dissolved, labor failed to use its political power in the years immediately following the war,
and the gains made by labor were largely lost. The courts were now quite inclined to grant injunctions to restrain union activity in labor disputes and to enforce yellow dog contracts. There was also the adverse decision of the Supreme Court in the famed Adkins v. Children's Hospital case in 1923. In that case the Supreme Court held that minimum wage laws for women were unconstitutional.

The American Labor Year Book for 1928 sums up the attitude of the courts toward management and labor in these sentences: "The employers and their spokesmen seek the help of the courts to prevent the workers from organizing into trade unions, from striking, or from making their strikes effective. . . . The courts as a rule succeed in finding legal ground for such anti-labor decisions as may be asked from them. A pro-labor ruling by a state or federal judge is the exception."

This is the viewpoint of the Labor Research Department of the Rand School of Social Science and is a fair statement of the situation that prevailed as our decade began.

To this rapid survey of the development of organized labor prior to 1928 and of the attitude of the government

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18 The American Labor Year Book, 1928. Volume IX. (Rand School of Social Science, New York, 1928), 149,150.
toward labor prior to 1928, a word about management's dealings with labor prior to 1928 should be added.

The fact that employers formed associations in order the more effectively to cope with, and if necessary 19 fight with, labor, has already been noted.

With one of these employers' associations, namely, the National Civic Federation, labor at first tried to cooperate. Mark Hanna was the first president, and Samuel Gompers, the first vice-president, of that organization. In the early years of the American Federation of Labor the leaders of the Federation thought the National Civic Federation could aid them greatly in their attempt to win public support and to overcome the resistance of open-shop employers. The National Civic Federation was composed of employers, workers, professional men, and bankers, ostensibly "to prevent strikes and boycotts and to help sell the idea of unionism to open-shop employers." However, the activities of this federation "resulted in restraining the unions more than the employers" and it was not long until a considerable part of the membership of the AFL was denouncing its leaders for their membership in the National Civic Federation. For a number of years the National Civic Federation was found marching alongside the National

19 See page 7.
20 Clark and Simon, 58.
21 Ibid.
Association of Manufacturers and the Chambers of Commerce rather than at the side of organized labor.

Turning to the National Association of Manufacturers, which was organized in 1896, it is to be noted that in its early years it was not interested in labor matters. However, at its convention in 1903 this association turned to labor matters and took the leadership in the nation-wide resistance to unionism. The agitation of this association, led by its president, D. M. Parry, led to the formation, in October, 1903, of the Citizens' Industrial Association--a group which sought to enlist the "good citizenship of the country" along with the employing interests in taking "immediate and effective measures to reaffirm and enforce those fundamental principles of American government guaranteeing free competitive conditions." And so the attack on unionism and on the union shop went on.

After World War I the National Association of Manufacturers formed an Industrial Relations department, designed to help management keep labor "as 'contented' as Carnation Milk cows," but also taking the lead in "going after the unions" without benefit of kid gloves. This systematic campaign of management, along with the collapse of the postwar business boom, does much to account for the sharp decline in the membership of the AFL that began in

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23 Ibid., 134.
24 Harris, 375.
1920 and from which recovery was being made but slowly by 1928.

Prior to 1928, then, these are the outstanding developments that affected American labor:

1. Labor itself, through a kind of trial and error method, at last found, in the AFL, an organization that could effectively advance the interests of workers in the skilled crafts. And labor as a whole made considerable gains up to the first world war, some of which were lost in the postwar period.

2. The "one big union" idea of the idealistic Knights of Labor failed not because the idea itself was unsound but because of inherent defects in the organization and technique of the Knights. The "fulness of the time" had not yet come for industrial unionism. But by 1928 it was clearly demonstrated that the AFL was not meeting the needs of large segments of labor and that something akin to the "one big union" idea of the Knights was still called for.

3. With the exception of the Wilson Administration, government had not been on close terms with labor and pro-labor rulings by the courts were the exception even up to 1928. Yet there was a growing recognition of labor unions and the organized labor movement had become much stronger. Furthermore, the Progressive Period was marked by the most

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25 See chart of AFL membership, p. 14 of this thesis.
progressive labor legislation passed in this country up to that time. The Adamson Act of 1916 and the friendly attitude of the government toward labor during the first World War charted a course that was largely dropped after the war—to be picked up again after 1932.

4. Through national associations formed by or at least dominated by employers, management contested every step in labor's advance and, particularly in times of business recession, was able effectively to halt the growth of union membership.

5. In at least a measure labor unions had learned how to publicize their cause and public opinion, quite apathetic toward labor in the early days of the AFL, was now somewhat alive to the labor issue. Though easily prejudiced against "radical" labor movements, the public was increasingly inclined to support the legitimate aspirations of labor.

As the year 1923 dawned the country was prosperous. Labor and management were at relative peace. This sets the stage for a study of labor's fortunes and misfortunes in that eventful decade that followed 1928.
CHAPTER III

LABOR'S GROWING PAINS

Coolidge prosperity still reigned in the country in 1928. And, by and large, everybody was happy. Capital had every reason to be happy because business was good, profits were good, and government was minding its own business, which meant that Big Business could pretty well run the country. Labor, too, had reason for being at least not too unhappy, for it was profiting from the economic prosperity and employers were courting its favor with welfare plans.

With this condition of affairs the middle class was well content for the "average man" wanted nothing more than to have labor and management at peace. So long as industrial peace prevailed the middle class was content to let sleeping dogs lie.

Three factors, then, stand out as of especial importance to labor as our decade begins:

1. Economic prosperity, under which labor got along pretty well.

2. Relatively cordial relations between management and labor, marked by the introduction of industrial welfare programs on the part of management.

3. A complacency on labor's part, stemming from a feeling that it was doing pretty well and resulting in
a general decline in efforts to organize labor, save for a revived attempt to organize the Southern textile industry.

This decline in the organization work of the AFL can best be shown by examining the number of charters issued by that organization to directly affiliated unions. If the examination includes also a comparison of the amounts spent for organizers, one of the reasons for the growing discontent within labor's ranks with the AFL during our decade will be apparent. Here is a table, compiled by Louis Stanley in the Nation, October 8, 1930:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Charters Issued</th>
<th>Organizers' Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890-99</td>
<td>2,289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-09</td>
<td>4,911</td>
<td>$505,963.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-19</td>
<td>2,949</td>
<td>840,661.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-29</td>
<td>1,532</td>
<td>1,644,063.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures for the first years of our decade are especially significant. In 1920 a total of 770 local unions received charters. That was the highest figure during the war and the immediate postwar period. In 1928

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only 65 locals were chartered; in 1929, 60; and in 1930, 2
only 50.

This same decline in aggressiveness on the part
of the AFL at the beginning of our decade is reflected
in the membership of that body. Membership is reckoned
as of August 31 each year, so that the membership for
1929 would reflect conditions prior to the stock market
crash of 1929. Nevertheless, official AFL reports show
that membership for 1929 (2,933,545) was but a shade
higher than that in 1928 (2,896,063).

But this complacent acceptance on the part of or-
ganized labor of things as they were received a rude jolt
with the depression that began in 1929 and grew steadily
worse. From the complacency and self-satisfaction that
marked labor's reaction to the benefits of Coolidge-Hoover
prosperity, labor's mood during the depression turned to
one of discouragement and defeatism. Here are the figures
of AFL membership during the first five years of the nine-
teen thirties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>2,961,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2,889,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>2,532,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>2,128,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>2,608,011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Ibid.
3 Report of Proceedings of the 62nd Annual Convention of
   the AFL, xxvii.
4 Ibid.
It is safe to conclude that these statistics indicate two discouraging factors so far as labor's status was concerned: 1. Growing lack of interest in the AFL because of its ineffectiveness and highly paid bureaucracy; 2. Growing unemployment, for membership in the AFL is reckoned on the basis of the per capita tax received, so that an increase in unemployment results in a decrease in reported membership.

Labor's pessimism in these depression years was increased by the failure of the American Federation of Labor's campaign to organize the textile industry in the South. Although the Federation resolved at its conventions both in 1928 and in 1929 to press this campaign and although numerous strikes and walkouts occurred, "the willingness of the Southern mill hands to suffer privation was insufficient to overcome the effects of the deepening depression and to compensate for the decline in fighting spirit as well as resources of the organized labor movement of the country." By the time of the 1930 convention of the AFL the effort "to get a cent a month help organize southern workers was killed."

By the end of President Hoover's administration, then, labor's complacent acceptance of things as they were had changed to defeatist discouragement with things as they

5 Perlman and Taft, History of Labor in the United States, 610.
had become so that the compilers of the first volume of the "Labor Fact Book" (1931), who, since 1927, had been making investigations of social, economic, and political questions as they bear on the labor movement and had been studying labor's own activities, paint a gloomy picture of the industrial horizon in 1931. "Everywhere, except in the Soviet Union, industry is stagnant and tens of millions of industrial workers are without work and hungry. . . . Workers who are still employed are facing aggressive attacks from the employers against such wage and living standards as the working class had won through decades of struggle."

Even amid such extremely discouraging conditions labor gave some evidence of fight and some indication that it did not consider its cause beyond redemption. "As the months of hunger and destitution lengthen into years," to quote again from the Labor Fact Book, "more and more thousands of workers are passing from silent endurance or defensive struggle to a counter-offensive. The workers are forming militant organizations and fighting more vigorously the increasingly reactionary measures of the capitalist class."

One of these militant organizations was the Trade

8 Ibid.
Union Unity League, a leftist group organized in Cleveland in September, 1929, an outgrowth of the Trade Union Educational League that had been organized in 1920. The Trade Union Unity League sought chiefly to organize the unorganized into unions that were independent of the AFL.

Labor's recovery from defeatism received, however, a far greater stimulus from favorable governmental legislation than it did from the activities of small but militant labor organizations. The Norris-La Guardia Anti-injunction Act, passed in 1932 while Hoover was still president, did for labor what the Clayton Act of 1914 had failed utterly to do: that is, it curbed the indiscriminate use of court injunctions to hamstring labor in industrial disputes. This Act also outlawed "yellow dog" contracts, whereby laborers obligated themselves not to join a union while employed by a particular firm.

Even apart from whatever actual protection this Act afforded labor, its psychological value in improving labor's morale and infusing new hope into the labor movement was great.

After Franklin D. Roosevelt became president, labor was soon convinced of the friendliness of the administration. This occasioned new activity on labor's part and put a new

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song in labor's heart. "For the working class as a whole," one survey of the labor movement admits, "the Roosevelt pro-
gram brought about neither increased individual buying power nor satisfactory reemployment." "Nevertheless," continue these writers, "it did a great thing for them. It encour-
age workers to join unions and attempted to protect them 10 in their right to organize."

In Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act, passed in 1933, the right of employes in industry to bargain collectively "through representatives of their own choosing" was first given legislative form. Under this law not a few of the older labor unions experienced a new growth, although company unions grew still more rapidly. The NIRA was declared unconstitutional in May, 1935, but the National Labor Relations Act, passed later in the same year, gave workers greater protection than they had had under the NIRA and was the most advanced recognition of the right of collective bargaining ever incorporated in Congressional legislation. 11

One of the concomitants of this new lease on life which labor gained under the New Deal were the "growing pains" within the labor movement itself. A mounting dissatisfaction with AFL policies and leadership gave rise to rivalries and finally revolt within the ranks of organized labor.

10 Clark and Simon, 146,147.

11 For a discussion of the NIRA and the National Labor Re-
Lations Act, see Clark and Simon, 148.
From its inception the AFL believed in starting from the top in its efforts to improve labor's status. As a consequence of this premise the AFL soon developed a restricted, aristocratic, exclusive type of unionism which, while bettering the condition of a select group of skilled workers, did little for the great mass of workers who were most in need of assistance.

What the AFL did was to organize the elite of labor into "capitalist craft unions." "The basic assumption of the capitalist craft union," one writer explains, "is that labor differs from capital only occupationally and that the personalities in either group are inter-changeable."

With such a philosophy determining its activities, it is little wonder that the AFL could usually "play ball" with capitalists, to the mutual material advantage of both management and the membership of the AFL but often at the expense of labor as such.

On top of all this, our decade witnessed an increasingly reactionary tendency on the part of the AFL, the affiliated unions of which "expelled hundreds of militant workers from the ranks for criticizing the bureaucracy and opposing the Federation's capitalist programs." "Scores

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of charters of militant locals have been revoked for the same reason," continues this survey, and then adds: "A. F. of L. unions have gone to the capitalist courts and secured injunctions against rival left wing unions to prevent picketing and strike activities."

With such reactionary tendencies increasing within the AFL as our decade progressed, it is little wonder that working men both within the AFL and outside of it began critically to scrutinize labor's position and the AFL's program for labor. The old cry, raised in IWW days, that the AFL was "the enemy of unskilled labor" was revived and the stage was set for a revolt from within the AFL comparable to the revolt from within the Knights of Labor that gave rise, in 1886, to the AFL. This time, however, it was not a revolt of those who sought special protection for skilled workers but of those who sought for unskilled workers opportunities comparable to those of skilled workers and who believed that to accomplish that end a change in attitude toward both management and governmental intervention in labor's behalf was necessary.

To be sure, the AFL had, in 1906, drafted a "bill of grievances" which enumerated specific grievances that might be remedied by legislation and outlined the legislation demanded by labor. From time to time additional

14 Ibid.
legislative demands were made by the Federation.

On the other hand, however, the AFL opposed unemployment insurance in 1930 and 1931 (fearing that the government might thereby acquire undue power over labor), endorsing it in 1932 only in response to pressure from within its own local unions and from outside its ranks.

It was this ultra-conservatism of the AFL and its failure to benefit the great mass of workers that led, in November, 1935, to the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization, the avowed object of which was to promote organization of workers in mass production unorganized industries, and to gain acceptance of modern collective bargaining in such industries.

When the AFL, in 1937, expelled the unions that comprised the Committee for Industrial Organization, the Congress of Industrial Organizations came into being (November, 1938). It represented a reorganization of its predecessor and was an agency dedicated to the same objectives as those of the earlier Committee.

Herbert Harris has summed up the philosophy of the CIO in this terse sentence: "Government-aided unionism and government-coded industry alone could attain equilibrium of our economic forces and save capitalism from its most implacable foes."

15 See V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups (Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1942), 84.  
16 Harris, 144.
Both the business recovery that began to blossom modestly in 1934 and the favorable labor legislation of the New Deal spurred the growth of organized labor and gave it a growing sense of power. Even the internal rivalries and the split that occurred when the executive council of the AFL suspended ten CIO unions, representing about one-third of the Federation's membership, on September 5, 1936, furthered rather than hindered the organizing of labor, for two powerful labor groups were now in the field. Membership in the AFL in the last years of our decade tells a story of growth and then of decline, due to the loss of ten CIO unions. The figures follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>2,608,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>3,045,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>3,422,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>2,860,933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1937 the CIO was claiming about 4,000,000 members, "in 32 national and international affiliates and more than 600 local industrial union councils (the latter having a membership of over 225,000)." Granting that this figure is probably padded, writers on the subject concede that by the end of 1937 the CIO had a membership of between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000.

19 See "approximate membership" in 1938 of the 38 national and international unions of the CIO, listed in Labor Fact Book, Vol. IV, 152ff.
With the advent of the CIO, then, a powerful new factor was introduced on the labor scene, one with which even the powerful United States Steel Corporation and a large part of the automotive industry had to come to terms.

Whatever one's opinion of the CIO may be and whatever its future may be, its rise and growth confirm a statement made by a newspaper columnist anent the labor question: "Junior still is suffering from growing pains, all right--but you can't deny he is growing." This writer was referring to labor-management relations rather than to the internal affairs of labor, but the decade, 1928 to 1937, certainly witnessed growing pains and substantial growth on the part of labor as such.

Summing up the findings of this chapter, the following successive phases in the attitude of labor, corresponding to the changing economic picture and to the changing attitude of government toward labor, have been noted:

1. A complacent acceptance of the prosperous conditions and company welfare plans that prevailed up to the beginning of the depression in 1929, marked by a decline in efforts at organization.

2. A defeatist attitude that grew worse as the depression grew worse and that was quite general in labor's

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Kenneth L. Dixon in the Columbus Evening Dispatch, January 15, 1946.
ranks, save for the militancy of such leftist organizations as the Trade Union Unity League.

3. A revival of hope and of organizational activity with the advent of the New Deal and the enactment of favorable labor legislation.

4. A marked division of opinion within labor as to the course the AFL was taking, with a growing tendency on the part of a powerful minority to criticize the reactionary character of the AFL leadership and a growing tendency on the part of that leadership to expel militant workers from the AFL because of their criticisms. At the same time, the AFL was compelled, as a matter of self defense, to intensify efforts to build up its organization.

5. A growing self-consciousness on labor's part, coupled with a growing sense of its power, accentuated by the signal victories of the CIO in contests with the United States Steel Corporation and with a major portion of the automobile industry.
CHAPTER IV

MANAGEMENT WOOS LABOR

It will be recalled that one factor which led to the collapse of the Knights of Labor was the erroneous belief of that idealistic organization that there is a complete identity of interest between management and labor, with no semblance of a class struggle between the two groups. Likewise, Samuel Gompers and other AFL leaders thought that the National Civic Federation could provide a common meeting place for both employer and worker and could advance the interests of both. The event soon proved the fallacy of this fond wish.

But though labor has made such mistakes in its thinking, management never has. This is true despite the fact that the title of this chapter is "Management woos Labor" and that at least part of the chapter will detail some of the ways in which management did woo labor during the decade under consideration.

Fundamentally, management has always realized that there are competing interests between labor and management. As a matter of enlightened self-interest, management has come to see that frequently the best way of dealing with labor is to anticipate labor's demands and satisfy them in management's way before labor insists upon satisfying them in labor's way. But in the plans which so-called "welfare
capitalism" devised to keep labor sweet, management was looking to its own rather than to labor's good. Quite frankly the National Association of Manufacturers stated its fundamental philosophy when, at its 1926 convention, it approved this statement of its employment relations committee: "We, as manufacturers, are interested in profits. . . . Every activity of this association, therefore, and every recommendation of this and other committees, must, in the last analysis, be judged by this one standard—Does it contribute to the immediate or ultimate profit of the association members?"

This is an important key to the understanding of the welfare programs that were quite the vogue when our decade began.

Beginning shortly before the first World War, reaching a height during that war, and continuing into the post-war period, management, smugly content with the way things were going, began to give increasing attention to the human factor in industrial life. "Scientific management... called attention to the high cost of labor turnover, and to the importance of winning the workers' good will in order to maintain the maximum results... Many anti-union employers introduced various kinds of welfare work so as to win the good will of their workers and counteract the

humanitarian appeal of social reformers and unions.\textsuperscript{2}

This trend toward paternalism surged forward with the re-election of President Coolidge, when "American capitalism was triumphant not only politically and materially but also spiritually." \textsuperscript{3} "The labor policy of Welfare Capitalism, operating as personnel management, and buttressed by psychological researches of both the laboratory and the 'what's on the worker's mind' varieties, attempted to treat the worker as a human being and to approach his problems from his own point of view."

When, now, one turns to the friendly gestures toward labor which mark the course of management's coy wooing, the first one that attracts attention (probably because its underlying purpose is so obvious) is the company union.

Before World War I only a very few plants of any size had inaugurated company unions. The gains made by labor during the war stimulated the formation of company unions, 225 of which, including 400,000 workers, were listed by the National Industrial Conference Board in 1919.

\textsuperscript{2} Labor and the Government, 58,59.
\textsuperscript{3} Perlman and Taft, History of Labor in the U.S., 580.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{5} For a discussion of company unions, see Labor Fact Book, Vol. 1, 144,145; Labor and the Government, pp. 65ff.
And by 1928 "this number had grown to about 870 councils, involving 400 companies and their 1,550,000 employees."

That the company union is a poor substitute for genuine trade unionism--so far as labor's position is concerned--is quite apparent. Not only does the company largely control such unions despite the "employee representatives" which the workers have, but the company union gets no support or cooperation from other unions and possesses "absolutely no economic strength or bargaining power." Needless to add, company unions have always been opposed by organized labor.

Apart from the company unions, management was using a number of other welfare devices with which to woo labor in 1928 and in the years immediately thereafter. The Labor Fact Book (Volume I), published in 1931, lists employe stock ownership, company pensions, group insurance, employe magazines, and general personnel and welfare schemes as the leading items--in addition to company unions--in the "newer tactics" for fighting trade unions.

Employe stock ownership was not so extensive, for the Industrial Relations Section of Princeton University discovered that even "among 20 important companies that had

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7 Ibid., 145.
8 See ibid., pages 145-150.
vigorously promoted wide diffusion of stock ownership. ... only a little over 4% of the stock of the companies was owned by employees of all grades including foremen, superintendents, and even the high-salaried managers."

The Labor Research Association that published the Labor Fact Book found that about 450 company pension plans were in operation and that the companies which had these plans employed some 4,000,000 workers. Nevertheless, "not more than 90,000 aged workers are now (1931) receiving company pensions."

Total value of group insurance, arranged by companies for their workers in an effort to stave off governmental social insurance plans, was about $10,000,000,000, covering some 6,000,000 employees.

Upwards of 500 magazines were being published by separate companies in 1931 to help the employer "sell industrial peace" and "to combat socialism."

The general personnel and welfare schemes studied by the Labor Research Association included everything from company gardens to Christmas treats, with the study revealing that the entire "welfare" method of wooing labor cost the average company only about 1% of its total payroll.

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9 Ibid., 146.
10 Ibid., 147.
11 Ibid., 150.
In a careful study of industrial welfare programs made in 1932 by Abraham Epstein, a recognized authority on the subject, it was revealed that during a recent year (namely, a year shortly prior to 1932) 514 corporations, employing over three million workers, had expended only $52,408,384.13, or an average of $17.04 a worker on all their welfare work, a figure which tallies with the 1% cost cited in the Labor Fact Book. Concluding his article, Mr. Epstein writes: "The history of welfare plans is already strewn with the wrecked anticipations and prospects of workers. And the future, I fear, will witness only more shattered hopes."

Industrial welfare programs, then, were inaugurated primarily for the ultimate benefit of management and as a means of avoiding the recognition of bona fide trade unions. "Upon the discovery that these beneficial boons (such as reducing the labor turn-over and frustrating unionization and strikes) did not materialize, many corporations promptly and unceremoniously abandoned their labor programs."

That management, by and large, was fundamentally averse to recognizing genuine labor unions in 1928 is indicated by the importance attached to those exceptional

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13 Ibid., 342.
14 Ibid., 336.
employers who voluntarily tried out the possibilities of "good unions." Take, for example, the case of George W. Mead, president of the Consolidated Water Power and Paper Company in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. In 1918, after a union membership campaign began in his plant, he called a lockout, but then reconsidered the matter, began to investigate independently the possibilities of "good unions," and called in union leaders in the plant for conversations.

After inquiry came a year's trial with the union and the signing of a joint labor agreement with representatives of three unions. In each of the eight springs since 1919 new contracts were signed by both parties, based on the experience of the previous year.

Mr. Mead told his story in the February, 1928 issue of the magazine, "Factory and Industrial Management," a journal obviously published for employers and managers. In that article he admitted that before the unionization of their mill he and his associates had been fair and generous to their employees but in a "paternalistic" way. Paternalism, he concluded, may easily be generous but it is hard for it to be just.

The significant thing about Mr. Mead's article, however, so far as indicating the general attitude of employers is concerned, is not the article itself but
the editorial comment that accompanied it. Said the editor:

"Many a reader of Factory and Industrial Management will take violent exception to Mr. Mead's attitude toward labor unions. This question most employers deny is open to argument. What the author says here is in no sense argumentative; he gives a simple, straightforward explanation of his own experiences with and attitude toward organized labor. Because of its unusual viewpoint, it may help a good many industrial executives to see the other side of a subject generally regarded in management circles as having no other side."15

So Mr. Mead had an "unusual viewpoint" and represented a distinct exception to the general attitude of employers toward organized labor.

When the business depression that began in 1929 deepened over the land, management's underlying hostility to organized labor began to assert itself more openly and one observes a change from the complacency and paternalism that had marked its attitude in 1928 to one of growing resistance to labor and to labor's demands.

To be sure, the weapons that management now began to employ in its fight against labor were not in the main new weapons—any more than the weapons which labor used against management were new weapons. But employers began to use more vigorously some time-honored methods of "cracking" labor.

There was the spy system—whereby management spied

om union activity and used information gained through paid spies to discredit the union and hinder its efforts at unionization. So notorious did the spy system of many large industries become during this period of growing hostility to organized labor on management's part that a congressional investigation of the labor spy system was conducted in 1936—and revealed some startling conditions.

Another favorite device of management was one which tried to use the public and public opinion to plow its field. This was the so-called "citizens' committee," also known as a "law and order league" or "citizens' alliance." Such a committee would include many of the responsible and influential citizens in the community, who were cleverly lined up by management in a form of vigilante activity that was used to quell strikes or labor trouble.

Whether management actually enlisted public sympathy and support by this device is quite doubtful. An American Institute of Public Opinion poll, conducted in August, 1937, asked the question: "Do you approve of citizen groups, called vigilantes, which have sprung up recently in strike areas?" To this question 76 per cent of those interviewed answered, No.

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16 For a discussion of citizens' committees, see Perlman and Taft, 130,131; Harris, 123; Clark and Simon, 92-94.
Again, management's resistance to organized labor showed itself in an almost frantic crusade to increase the number of company unions—particularly after the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act with its Section 7(a) in 1933. "According to replies received by the National Industrial Conference Board from 3,314 manufacturing and mining companies which employed 2,585,740, or about 27 per cent, of the estimated number of workers in these fields, out of 653 companies with plans in November 1933, 400, or 61.3 per cent, were established after the NIRA and 12, or 1.8 per cent, partly before and partly after its enactment. Only 223, or 34.1 per cent, of the plans were introduced before the NIRA, while no date was given by 18, or 2.8 per cent, of the companies." By October 1934 it was estimated that about 2,500,000 workers were organized in company unions, which was about 1,700,000 fewer than the estimated number in trade unions.

That this campaign on the part of employers to organize company unions was effective in combatting the benefits accruing to organized labor from the NIRA is clear from the fact that between 1933, when the NIRA was passed, until May, 1935, when it was declared unconstitutional, company unions grew more rapidly than did true labor unions.

18 Labor and the Government, 73.
19 Ibid., 79, 80.
When the National Labor Relations Act was passed later in the year 1935 and the National Labor Relations Board set up to enforce it, management's attitude of resistance and its attempts at evasion of the true purpose of this labor legislation continued. High priced lawyers were engaged by employers to aid them in fighting the operations of the National Labor Relations Act and to challenge its constitutionality.

For example, the American Newspaper Publishers Association employed Elisha Hanson as its chief counsel in its war against the rising American Newspaper Guild. The Associated Press later retained Mr. Hanson "to war simultaneously against the Guild's objectives and the constitutionality of the National Labor Relations Act." Mr. Hanson cleverly tried to ride on the white horse of "freedom of the press" in his fight against the Guild, assuring interviewers that "affiliation of newspaper reporters or editorial writers with an organization which can demand or command... support of any particular program affecting broad public interest...cannot be countenanced by a publisher who wishes to preserve the integrity of his news columns."

By the end of our decade, however, management had been forced to reckon with labor's fait accompli in organ-

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20 Harris, 179.

21 Ibid., 179,180.
izing many hitherto unorganized workers and to give grudging acceptance to some of the new ideas that were now current on the labor front.

Take the case of the United States Steel Corporation as a striking case in point. When the NIRA was passed this corporation blandly continued to prevent its employees from joining unions, despite the provisions of Section 7(a). But the National Labor Relations Act gave labor much greater protection than it had under the NIRA and on April 12, 1937 the Supreme Court declared the National Labor Relations Act constitutional.

Even before this favorable decision of the Court, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee of the CIO succeeded, on March 2, 1937, in getting a one year agreement signed by the United States Steel Corporation. Later the agreement, covering hours, wages, working conditions, seniority, and the like, was signed by five of the corporation's subsidiaries. In February, 1938 the agreement, with only slight modifications that did not affect the basic principles, was renewed.

Hence the CIO won important concessions from "Big Steel," although management's stubborn resistance to unionization was still carried on by "Little Steel," that is, by the smaller independent steel companies.

\[22\] Clark and Simon, 148.

Again, in the automobile industry the CIO gained outstanding victories after launching an aggressive campaign in that industry in the autumn of 1936. The famous sitdown strike of the United Automobile Workers in 1936, coupled with help from CIO officials and from the governor of Michigan, finally won for the union a written agreement with the General Motors Corporation in February, 1937. Soon afterwards the same union gained better wages and improved working conditions in the plants of the Chrysler Corporation, so that by October, 1937, only the Ford plants had successfully held the line against the unions.

This survey of management's dealings with labor has revealed the following shifting of attitudes toward labor during our decade:

1. A smug contentment on the part of management with conditions as they existed during the Coolidge-Hoover prosperity era, marked by extensive use of industrial welfare plans.

2. A growing resistance to organized labor, shown in the intensified use of the spy system and citizens' committees, in the effort to offset the effects of the NIRA through increasing the number of company unions, and in the opposition to the National Labor Relations Act.

3. A reluctant acceptance of some of the advances
made on the labor front, signalized by granting at least limited recognition to the unions in the plants of the United States Steel Corporation and in those of General Motors and the Chrysler Corporation.
CHAPTER V

WILL GOVERNMENT STEAL THE SHOW?

That the government's role in labor relations is one of the outstanding features in the history of the labor movement between 1928 and 1937 needs hardly be stated. This was especially true, of course, of the New Deal administration and most of this chapter will be devoted to what happened after 1932. Before turning to New Deal labor policies and legislation, however, one should get some idea of the attitude of the Hoover administration on labor and labor's needs.

In his annual message to Congress on December 8, 1931, President Hoover included a section on "Unemployment" that briefly summarizes his philosophy of the labor question. As one would expect, President Hoover emphasizes the "American way." Here is the gist of what he reported to the Congress:

As an aid to unemployment the Federal Government is engaged in the greatest program of public-building ... in all history....We must avoid burdens upon the government which will create more unemployment in private industry than can be gained by further expansion of employment by the Federal Government. We can now stimulate employment and agriculture more effectively and speedily through the voluntary measures in progress, through the thawing out of credit, through the building up of stability abroad, through the home loan adjustment banks, through an emergency finance corporation and the rehabilitation of the railways and other such drives....Our people are providing
against distress from unemployment in true American fashion by a magnificent response to public appeal and by action of the local governments."  

This, of course, is quite typical of Mr. Hoover's intelligent nineteenth century individualism and of his underlying conviction that there should be as little governmental interference with the economic order as possible. During his administration a "hands off" policy was followed by the government so far as regulation and control of industry were concerned. And yet, somewhat inconsistently, President Hoover helped build up trade associations and thus provided the means for a further consolidation of business and industry. In short, his policy was weighted in favor of big business. Public reaction to that policy was expressed eloquently in the election of 1932.

One significant piece of labor legislation was passed before the Hoover administration went out of power—the Norris-La Guardia Act of 1932. This Act, usually referred to as an anti-injunction act, "prohibited employers from exercising restraint and coercion against workers in their activities for collective bargaining." It also provided that so-called "yellow-dog" contracts were not enforceable in the federal courts and it limited the power of those courts to issue injunctions in labor disputes—a body blow at a

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1 Congressional Digest, Volume XI (1932), p. 8.
2 Labor and the Government, 133.
weapon that had been used against labor ever since the famous Pullman strike in 1894.

Then came the New Deal era which, as has been noted, ushered in one of the two epochs in American history in which the federal government was on intimate terms with labor.

Such New Deal legislation as the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, the Social Security Act of 1935, the Guffey Coal Bill (declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court but later re-enacted in 1937), the Walsh-Healey Act of 1936 (which provided wages and hours standards for all companies securing government contracts in value of $10,000 or more), the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937 (which set up a housing authority that could make loans and grants to local housing commissions for building low-rent housing projects), and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (which aimed at establishing adequate minimum wages and maximum hours) did much to further labor's cause, improve labor's status, and strengthen the power of organized labor.

This being the case, was there likelihood that government would steal the show? Or, since this study concerns itself primarily with public attitudes, did the public, during the early years of the New Deal, believe that the government was trying to steal the show by going
beyond the proper bounds of government in intervening in labor's behalf and in seeking (contrary to the protests of such employers' associations as the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States) to regulate the relationships between management and labor? In still other words, was the labor legislation enacted by the New Deal the logical outgrowth of an evolving public opinion on this subject or was it a radical departure from American traditions?

By way of answer it is important to look at the economic aims of the New Deal and to try to see if these aims were in the main stream of our historic development as a nation.

When President Roosevelt was campaigning for election in September, 1932, he delivered what is now a famous campaign address on "Progressive Government" at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. A study of this speech discloses the fact that it enlarges upon a theme to which President Roosevelt returned time and again during his administrations, namely, the importance of recognizing the "new terms of the old social contract," and fulfilling them through a modern economic bill of rights.

This economic bill of rights or "second bill of rights" as President Roosevelt sometimes called it, was

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3 See Labor and the Government, pp. 61-63.

set forth in the President's 1944 message to the Congress. Here is a summary of what he listed that has special reference to labor:

The right to a useful and remunerative job.

The right to earn enough to provide adequate good, clothing, and recreation.

The right of every family to a decent home.

The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment.  

Since it is the province of this thesis to evaluate attitudes rather than accomplishments one need not pause to discuss the measure of success which the New Deal obtained in realizing its economic aims. It is pertinent, however, to remark that President Roosevelt himself was firmly convinced that these aims were directly in the stream of American attitudes and practices.

To cite but one expression of that conviction, take President Roosevelt's special message to the Congress on April 29, 1938, in which he outlines a rather comprehensive program for controlling the "blind economic forces" and "blindly selfish men" that plague our economic life. At the end of that message he makes this observation: "No man of good faith will misinterpret these proposals. They derive from the oldest American traditions."

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5 See President Roosevelt's Annual Message to the Congress, January 11, 1944. (Reprinted in the Columbus Evening Dispatch for January 11, 1944.)

6 The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1938 volume, p. 314.
Before examining public reaction to this claim of Mr. Roosevelt that the economic policy of the New Deal, which centered so largely in labor's status and rights, was rooted deeply in our American tradition, a brief examination of this claim in the light of our national history is in order.

Critics of Mr. Roosevelt often refer to him as the exact antithesis of Jefferson and call for a return of Jeffersonianism. What such critics forget is that while Jefferson did urge that the federal government be kept relatively weak, he did this not as an end in itself but as a means to attaining an equality of rights and privileges for the people. So if Jefferson were living today he would doubtless countenance the use of some Hamiltonian methods--some New Deal methods--provided they were truly designed to effect the equality that was so dear to his heart.

Especially two factors in our nation's history from the days of Jefferson to those of the New Deal must be kept in mind if one is to judge fairly on the Americanism of New Deal attitudes and actions. On the one hand, there was the gradual building up of aggregations of capital, which, as Jefferson had realized, constituted a threat to individual freedom and to the pursuit of happiness. On the other hand, there was, during the decades following the
Civil War in which this economic development was most pronounced, a reluctance on the part of both the major political parties to come to real grips with national social and economic issues.

The New Deal had to contend with both these factors for, as previously indicated, big business was riding high and mighty in the years following the first World War, and the Republican administrations of that period followed in the main a "hands off" policy in the matter of regulation and control of business and industry. Quite evidently, therefore, the administration that would step in and try to bring the "social contract" between the government and the common people up to date would be in for much criticism from certain sources.

This is not to say that between Jefferson and Roosevelt there had been no movement toward social democracy and no growing public opinion in favor of such social democracy. There had.

Andrew Jackson had kept that "social contract" tradition of Jefferson alive. So had the agrarian movements that began with the Granger movement in the 1870's. So had the People's Party of America, which held its first annual convention in July, 1892. So had that great exponent of Populism, William Jennings Bryan. So had the New Nationalism of Theodore Roosevelt (who, characteristic-
ally, first renounced Populism and all its works and then went all-out for it.) So had the New Freedom of Woodrow Wilson. So had the Progressivism that is incarnated in the La Follettes.

Our interest, however, is especially in the development of public attitudes. When one remembers that Andrew Jackson had the preponderate weight of public opinion behind his type of social democracy and that the agrarian movements had large followings, one begins to appreciate that a public attitude which favored keeping the government's social contract with the people up to date was being developed throughout our history. Then came the years between 1901 and 1917 which constitute the "Progressive Era," in which the principles of Populism were put into effect, and once more it is public attitudes that made possible the realization of the political reforms which were effectuated not as an end in themselves but as a means to give the people power to achieve economic and social reforms. Furthermore, although the political reforms of the Progressive Era were at first accomplished on a municipal and state level, certain Progressive thinkers and writers saw with increasing clearness that these reforms had to be consummated on a national level if anything substantial was to be accomplished in the way of economic reform.

Summing it up, convincing historic evidence may be adduced to substantiate President Roosevelt's claim that the
New Deal is typically American in its stress on social democracy.

This same evidence reveals a growing public attitude in support of the long hard fight for social democracy. One would therefore be inclined to conclude that by the time of the New Deal there was sufficient public sentiment in favor of keeping the government's social contract with the people up to date to enable the New Deal to write into law the new terms of the old social contract which changing conditions had made necessary.

A good check on this conclusion is found in the public reaction to the passage of the Norris-La Guardia Anti-injunction Act, which, although not New Deal legislation, set the stage for, and was quite typical of, the labor laws passed after the New Deal came into power.

A *Literary Digest* article entitled, "Labor's Anti-injunction Victory," published in the March 26, 1932 issue of that periodical, summarizes public reaction to the Norris-La Guardia Act, which the Senate approved by a vote of 75 to 5 and the House by a vote of 363 to 13. The article shows that the small minority in the Congress which opposed the bill branded it as "a long march in the direction of Moscow," and as something that would give the labor unions "a throttling hold on the government," but

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7 *Labor's Anti-injunction Victory, Literary Digest, March 26, 1932; Vol. 112, p. 13.*
75 Senators and 363 Representatives thought otherwise and voted in favor of the bill. And although some newspapers took a reactionary stand against it, the majority of the newspapers praised the bill as one which the 48 states should follow.

Typical of the opposition in the press was this comment of the Washington Post: The bill "goes far beyond protection of the rights of the working man... and in some cases would provide a cloak of legal sanction for violence, and in others would hinder the courts in defending human life and property rights."

On the other hand, most papers took a position comparable to that expressed by the Baltimore Sun in these words: "What the bill does, essentially, is to read the Federal Bill of Rights into the law governing injunctions, where it has been conspicuously lacking."

Two years later, as the NRA began its second year, magazine articles deal with the struggle for power and domination between capital and labor and prove that the public is interested primarily in labor peace and is quite willing that the government play an important role in effecting such peace. In an article on "Labor's Fight for Power" that was published in the August, 1934 Atlantic Monthly, great emphasis is placed on the arrogance of

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
the leadership of the AFL and asserting that "organized labor now seeks to dominate industry through the NIRA." This article does not criticize New Deal legislation but objects to "the exclusive role of the AFL as the spokesman of labor," and finds a solution of the problem not in repealing legislation but in developing the "vertical labor union," which, it is averred, "is the only union system which conforms with the current organization of mechanized industry." Here is a public demand for the CIO type of union, made before the CIO came into being.

By 1935 public opinion surveys were being made and from them important light on public reaction to New Deal labor policy can be gleaned.

To the July, 1938 issue of *The Public Opinion Quarterly* George Gallup, the director, and Claude Robinson, the associate director of the American Institute of Public Opinion, contribute a revealing article, "American Institute of Public Opinion--Surveys, 1935-38." From that article the following pertinent data has been gathered.

In January, 1935 a poll was taken on the question, "Are you in favor of government old-age pensions for needy

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11 Ibid., 141.
persons?" Interest attaches to this poll because it deals with one of the key planks in the New Deal economic bill of rights. Of those interviewed, 89 per cent favored such pensions. Similarly, in January, 1938, 73 per cent of those interviewed approved of the Social Security tax on wages.

It was in his message to Congress on May 24, 1937 that President Roosevelt advocated a fair labor standards act to insure "to all our able-bodied working men and women a fair day's pay for a fair day's work" through the establishment of minimum wage and maximum hour standards and the elimination of child labor. In June 1938 such legislation was passed by the Congress, in spite of strong reactionary opposition. Was the Congress ahead of the rank and file of the people in this matter? In June, 1937, a year before the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed, this was the public vote on the issues involved in that act:

Should Congress set a limit on the hours employees should work in each business and industry? Yes, 58 per cent.

Do you think the Federal government ought to set the lowest wages employees should receive in each business and industry? Yes, 61 per cent.

Furthermore, by January, 1938 sentiment for minimum wage and maximum hour laws had grown, 69 per cent answering

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13 Ibid., 382.
15 Gallup and Robinson, loc. cit., 381.
yes to this question: "Should Congress pass a law to provide for minimum wages and maximum hours?"

Perhaps the prize question, so far as the specific quest of this thesis is concerned, was one asked in September, 1937—at the end of our decade. Here it is:

Do you think the attitude of the Roosevelt administration toward union labor is too friendly or not friendly enough?

Answers:

Too friendly . . . . . . . . 45 per cent
Not friendly enough . . . . 14 per cent
About right . . . . . . . . 41 per cent

If one adds the last two rubrics it is apparent that 55 per cent of a cross section of American people thought the New Deal attitude toward labor was either all right or not even friendly enough, while 45 per cent thought it was unduly friendly. It is doubtless fair to conclude that at least 55 per cent of the people interviewed thought the New Deal attitude quite in consonance with our American principles or not even living up to the full implications of those principles. Even among the 45 per cent who thought the New Deal too friendly to union labor, there were undoubtedly some who did not accuse it of being un-American in this regard.

That the federal government was itself interested in public attitudes toward governmental labor policies

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16 Ibid., 382.
17 Ibid., 381.
in our decade is evident from the circumstance that, beginning with 1934, annual national conferences on labor legislation were sponsored by the United States Department of Labor. Speaking at the fourth such conference, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, reviewing the course of events since the first conference, said:

"I think we can say definitely and affirmatively that we have made great progress in public education in support of labor legislation in the States. And I cannot but believe that the contacts here of one labor commissioner from one State with another commissioner from another State, and the contacts of representatives of organized labor from one State with representatives of organized labor and commissioners from other States, have stimulated plans for getting public support in each of these States for sound and vigorous programs of labor legislation."

Summing up the findings of this chapter, it has been found that, by and large, the public did not believe that the government was trying to steal the show by going beyond its proper bounds in intervening in labor's behalf and in seeking to regulate the relationships between management and labor. By 1937 a working majority of the American people believed:

1. That conditions which had led to a depressed

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class of industrial workers were not justified, according to the American conception of life.

2. That both federal and state government had an obligation to try to secure for this depressed class the benefits of an economic bill of rights.

3. That the legislation passed and the measures taken by the New Deal toward that end were quite American in spirit and quite justified in the premises.
CHAPTER VI

THE MIDDLE CLASS HOLDS THE KEY

If there is a case for the existing basic order, then the case ought to be tried out in the open. The people are both the judges and the jury. . . . Every great question today has to be settled by propaganda. There is no other way of reaching one hundred and twenty million people. There should be no other way in a nation that desires, for better or for worse, to govern itself."

So wrote Samuel Crowther in 1934.

In essence what he said was that the rank and file of the people hold the key on such great public issues as the labor question. And since it is the so-called middle class that constitutes the rank and file of the people in our nation, it follows that this middle class holds the key to what may be done by and for labor in the United States. If it can be determined what the middle class thinks should be done about labor that, in a preeminent sense, is the public attitude toward labor.

This determinative role of middle class opinion is recognized on every hand. As noted at the end of the preceding chapter, the government recognizes it and has

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made efforts to get public support for its labor legis-
lation.

Management, too, recognizes the decisive influ-
ence of public attitudes, as witness the repeated use of
"Citizens' committees," and the increasing use of the radio
and of paid advertisements in the public press to present
management's side.

Organized labor, too, has come to recognize the
important role of public opinion. In the UAW sitdown
strike in Flint, Michigan, in December, 1935 well planned
publicity, which informed the public by radio and newspaper
of the struggle of the strikers and the reasons for it,
helped the strikers' cause.

Government, management, labor—all realize that
the middle class holds the key on the labor question.
What, then, was the middle class attitude toward labor
in the decade that began with 1928 and ended with 1937?

That the decade witnessed a trend in popular
friendliness toward labor is indicated in the presidential
elections. The election of Mr. Hoover in 1928 was an
indication that public opinion still inclined toward the
laissez-faire economy of which Mr. Hoover was an exponent.
Things were prosperous: why disturb the old order—that

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2 See Bruce Minton and John Stuart, *Men Who Lead Labor*
was about the middle class attitude. By and large, the public was apathetic toward the fundamental issues that underlie the labor problem and was content with the palliatives which welfare capitalism was advocating through industrial welfare programs.

But the depression that began in 1929 aroused the public to a conviction that mere palliatives could not cope with our basal social ills—and by 1932 this conviction expressed itself in a decided vote against the administration that stood for little more than palliatives. By 1936 the re-election of Mr. Roosevelt may well be regarded as a reflection of general support for labor's cause on the part of the people, as well as a strong sentiment in favor of the regulation of corporations to protect the public interest.

As organized labor, encouraged by friendly legislation and by friendly public sentiment, grew in power, public attention began to be focussed on labor's own abuse of power and though the people were still sympathetic toward labor they began to clamor for governmental regulation of organized labor. "If the public felt that big businessmen were getting away with murder in 1929 and after, by 1937 it began to feel that labor unions were getting away with murder. And the same thing will likely happen to labor as happened to business--government regulation."

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This, in outline, is the picture of middle class attitude toward labor in our decade. To bring out the details of the picture more clearly one may turn first to a study of the decisions of the courts on labor questions. In the long run these court decisions reflect middle class opinion.

It has often been remarked that in its quest for justice labor has had to contend not only with management but also with government, as represented in the courts.

"Constitutional law in the United States from the beginning has narrowly restricted the field for positive legislation in the interest of labor."  

Under such circumstances any change in the attitude of the courts would prove a change in middle class opinion, which the courts, usually after the lapse of considerable time, must ultimately reflect.

Now what happened in the courts between 1928 and 1937?

In 1923 the Supreme Court, in the famed Adkins v. Children's Hospital case (261 U.S. 525), had ruled minimum wage laws for women unconstitutional. This decision was reaffirmed in Juge, 1936 in the case of Morehead v. New York (298 U. S. 587). But on March 29, 1937, in West Coast Hotel v. Parrish (300 U. S. 379), "the Supreme Court

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upheld by a vote of 5-4 the Washington minimum wage law for women."

When the National Industrial Recovery Act, passed in June, 1933, came before the Supreme Court in the famous case of Schechter Corp. v. United States (295 U.S. 495), the unanimous decision of the court, given on May 27, 1935, was that the act was unconstitutional. The court contended that in empowering the federal government to determine wages and hours of employment in the internal commerce of a state, Congress had overstepped the powers granted it by the commerce clause of the Constitution.

But time marches on. Later in 1935 the National Labor Relations Act was passed and when the case of National Labor Relations Board v. Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp. (301 U.S. 1) came before the Supreme Court, the validity of the Wagner Act was upheld in a majority decision, rendered on April 12, 1937. This decision involved the whole NLRA and "extended Congressional power under the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution to the regulation of labor relations."

This decision in the Jones & Laughlin case reversed the position which the Supreme Court had taken in May, 1936 when it invalidated the labor provisions of the Bituminous

7 Labor Fact Book, Vol. IV, 64.
Coal Conservation Act of 1935 (Carter v. Carter Coal Co., 298 U. S. 238) and declared that collective bargaining regarding working conditions is an aspect of "production, not of trade," and "in all producing occupations is purely local in character." Now, in the Jones & Laughlin decision, the Supreme Court defined the company's manufacturing activities as part of a "stream" or "flow" of commerce and not as a merely local matter. It also held that Congress had "constitutional authority" to safeguard the "fundamental right" of workers to organize and freely select representatives of their own choosing.

By 1937 then the Supreme Court had done a pretty complete job of about facing on progressive social legislation that aimed at the betterment of labor's status. This showed clearly which way the wind of public attitude on labor was blowing.

The churches are admittedly typically middle class organizations. It is therefore of particular importance to examine the attitude of the churches on labor.

Regarding the churches and their attitude two general observations are first in order. For one thing, it was in connection with the labor question that the churches first got into the field of modern social action.

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8 See Labor Fact Book, Vol. IV, 64.
As early as 1887 the Protestant Episcopal Church established a "Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor." The Congregational Churches followed in 1901 with a committee to deal with the labor problem. In 1903 the Presbyterian Church established a Department of Church and Labor under its Board of Home Missions.

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, which stemmed from a nation-wide conference in 1905 to which all the evangelical denominations were asked to send delegates, was formally organized in 1908 and advocated labor reform, including the right of collective bargaining, from the outset.

The first labor pronouncement of the Methodist Episcopal Church was made in 1908. At the time of the first World War the Roman Catholic Church in America organized the National Catholic War Council (1917), which became the National Catholic Welfare Council in 1919—an organization that has been increasingly active and effective ever since.

By 1928, then, with the exception of the Lutherans (who swung into action later), the major church bodies in America had all made some official provision for the study of the labor question and even the church bodies that had no special board or commission to study the question

and make pronouncements on it were giving some thought to it in one way or another. The "Labor Sunday Messages" of the Federal Council of Churches, issued annually, were often utilized in the church press and sermons on the Sunday before Labor Day were frequently devoted to the subject of the church and labor.

The second general observation has to do with the nature of these church statements and messages. Do they represent the typical thinking of the rank and file membership of the churches? That question is not easy to answer but two comments on it are pertinent:

1. Church pronouncements (including papal encyclicals) certainly represent what responsible leaders in the several churches would like to have their constituencies think on the subject of labor and often represent the subject matter for conferences, study groups, and the like on this subject.

2. In the words of James Myers, Industrial Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches, and a recognized authority on the attitude of the churches toward labor, these statements and messages "are written from a liberal point of view and not from the public opinion point of view."

Mr. Myers' comment was made with special reference

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11 Quoted from a personal letter to the author, dated February 8, 1946.
to the annual Labor Sunday Messages of the Federal Council, but in the very nature of the case it applies, at least in some measure, to the pronouncements of any Protestant social action commission because it is churchmen of at least mildly liberal tendencies who gravitate to membership on such commissions.

Specifically, then, what was the attitude of the churches toward labor during the decade under study?

Fortunately, this subject was aired in a Literary Digest symposium at the beginning of our decade. In the July 13, 1929 issue of that journal there was an article, 12 "What Labor Thinks of the Church," in which it was pointed out that many labor leaders had little faith in the Church and were caustically critical of the Church so far as actually doing anything to better labor's cause is concerned. The Digest editors summarized the opinion of labor leaders in these sentences:

"The Carpenter of Nazareth counts among His followers many of His own and other trades, but there are handlers of the saw, of brick, and of machinery, who, while they champion Him and reflect His message in lives of service and sacrifice, savagely criticize the Church for failure to help in redressing the wrongs of organized labor. To

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them the Church is the sanctuary of the sleek and well-kept, of those who can listen to the story of the Good Shepherd without bothering about His lambs, of those who have no fear that penury will nip them in their old age. So they have no arder for the Church."13

To ascertain what churchmen thought of these strictures, the Literary Digest asked the editors of several Protestant church papers, among them The Herald of Gospel Liberty (Christian Church), The Baptist, The Presbyterian Advance, The Churchman (Episcopal), Zion's Herald, (Methodist), and The Christian Register (Unitarian), to write their reactions. These reactions were then summarized in an article, "Churchmen's Reply to Labor's Criticism," that was published in the Literary Digest for August 24, 1929. 14

Summarizing the replies the Digest editors pointed out that the churchmen had acknowledged some remissness on the part of the church, that some of the editors agreed that the Church has not always remembered that Christ was a carpenter, but that several of the editors found labor's vision to be too "blurred by class-consciousness, the shine of the dollar, and the desire for easier hours to visualize the brotherhood of man as the supreme end of Christian society, and to acknowledge what the Church has attempted

13 Ibid., 22.
and achieved toward that end."

Looking to the specific replies of the religious editors, the frankest admission is made by Rev. Guy Em- 
ery Shipler, editor of The Churchman, who is sharply crit- 
icial of the Church. "What, until pitifully recent years," he asks, "has the Church ever done to help the workers toward organization and collective bargaining? Labor has won its advances without the cooperation of the church."

It is to be noted, however, that even Editor Shipler implies that in recent years the Church has concern- ed itself more actively in labor's behalf.

F. G. Coffin, editor of The Herald of Gospel Liberty, admits that the Church "has had the shortcomings and in-
efficiencies of all humanness," but looking at labor's criticisms says that "gross ingratitude is registered for the victories of justice for labor which have already been achieved largely through education and agitation by adher-
ents of the Church." "Most the legislation favorable to labor," he continues, "has been passed by those who were members of some Church or were educated to its principles through the ministration of the Church or its teachers. The Church, by a large percentage, if favorable to and aids every righteous cause of labor."

This same note is sounded even more clearly by

15 Ibid., 23.
16 Ibid., 24.
17 Ibid., 23.
Dr. Albert C. Dieffenbach, editor of The Christian Register, who writes: "Not one minister in a thousand is unfriendly to labor; not one message in a thousand but is desirous of the overdue right of those who do the hard work of the world."

And James R. Joy, editor of the New York Christian Advocate, voices a Methodist Amen to what Unitarian Dieffenbach writes. Declares Editor Joy: "In so far as the Methodist Episcopal Church and the other larger Protestant denominations are concerned, the evidence, we think, would support the opinion that their sympathy is with the worker in his problems. The ministry of these churches is chiefly recruited from families which by no stretch of the term could be called 'capitalists.' Their sympathies are with the poor. A rich man is the exception in their membership. The labor leader who thinks otherwise is swayed by ignorance or prejudice. We make bold to say that the Christian Church is the most powerful friend of all the beneficent aims of labor. The teachings of the Church have laid the groundwork for every item of humane legislation which the labor leaders have ever promoted."

In short, these two Literary Digest articles indicate that in 1929 church people, in common with the middle class generally, were inclined to be somewhat apathetic

18 Ibid., 24.
19 Ibid., 24.
toward labor's underlying needs, but at the same time
were in the main quite sympathetic toward "every righteous
cause of labor" and were contributing, at least indirectly,
to the passage of social legislation that promoted
labor's welfare. Furthermore, the trend in the attitude
of church people toward labor in 1929 was toward greater
friendliness and more active support. To examine this
trend more closely it is necessary to turn to some of the
pronouncements of the churches that were made as our de-
cade progressed.

For the Roman Catholic attitude nothing is more
authoritative than a papal encyclical. On May 15, 1931
Pope Pius XI promulgated an encyclical, Quadragesimo Anno
(After Forty Years), that deals with "Restoring the Chris-
tian Social Order," and contains much on capital and labor.

This encyclical was written in the year that marked
the fortieth anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's celebrated ency-
clical, Rerum Novarum, that likewise deals with the mat-
ter of a Christian social order. Pius XI reviews and rat-
ifies the earlier thesis and then brings papal pronounce-
ments on this subject up to date. The efforts of the Ro-
man Catholic Church during our decade and since then to

20 For the text of this encyclical and interesting annota-
tions on it, see Social Wellsprings, Vol. II (Eighteen
Encyclicals of Social Reconstruction by Pope Pius XI. Pre-
faces and arranged by Joseph Husslein.) Bruce Publishing
Co., Milwaukee, 1942.
gain the support of labor and to influence public attitude in this country on the labor question have stemmed from these two encyclicals, from later encyclicals of Pope Pius XII, and from a program for social reconstruction which the American bishops instituted in 1919. Before examining more closely the Roman plan for changing the industrial order in America, a few highlights from this important encyclical, Quadragesimo Anno, of 1931, will serve as an introduction to official Roman thinking on the subject.

To begin with, one finds in this document statements which would give the Roman Church backing for its modern claim that it is the "friend of the working man." Referring to Leo XIII's earlier encyclical, Pius XI declared that in it Leo "boldly took in his own hands the cause of the workingmen, 'surrendered, isolated and defenseless, to the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition.'" And Pius XI closes his own encyclical "with special affection of Our heart to artisans and other workingmen engaged in manual labor, by divine providence committed to Us in a particular manner. . . ."

The Roman plan for reconstituting the social order centers, as will be presented noted in greater detail, in

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Social Wellsprings, 180.

Ibid., 234.
a kind of corporative society, the key to which is the "ordo"—a corporative "order," a modern revival of the medieval guilds. This corporative society would be something between individualism and capitalism, as pointed out in these words: "If the social and public aspect of ownership be denied or minimized, one falls or comes near to falling into Individualism, as it is called; on the other hand, the rejection or diminution of its private and individual character leads to some form of Collectivism, or something approaching it."

As to abuses in the present economic order, the encyclical finds grave fault in "a wealthy class who, as it were carefree in their possessions, deem it a just state of things that they should receive everything and the laborer nothing." It also finds fault with "a property-less wage-earning class who demand for themselves all the fruits of production, as being the work of their hands."

The pope sees the demand and supply of labor sharply dividing men on the labor market into two contending classes (management and labor), with the contention between these parties transforming "this labor market into an area where the two armies are engaged in fierce combat." As a

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23 Ibid., 193.
24 Ibid., 199.
25 Ibid., 200.
26 Ibid., 209.
remedy for that, he advocates the doing away of this opposition through "Orders," in which "men are knit together not according to the position they occupy in the labor market, but according to the diverse functions which they exercise in society." On this important part of the papal plan the editor of "Social Wellsprings" has this illuminating annotation:

"The present economic regime discloses two classes with opposing interests, engaged in a permanent struggle, until some dictator arrives to enslave them both and chain them to his triumphant cart of totalitarianism, communist or otherwise. The obvious solution is the substitution of corporative Orders for the different trades or industries, in each of which Orders both classes are embraced, capital and labor, employer and employee, cooperating in common council and common efforts for the good of the common trade or industry, and at the same time keeping in view the good of the entire people in which their own is involved. Class lines are here abolished and all the men and women of an industry, from the highest to the lowest, are bound together by common functional interests. Justice and charity must, of course, play a leading role, and religion is necessary."

Turning now from this important encyclical to the use which is being made of it by the Roman Church in America

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27 Ibid., 209.
28 Ibid., 209.
in an effort to influence public attitudes, we find that subject ably discussed by Harold E. Fey in an article, "Catholicism and the Worker" in the *Christian Century*. Fey's article, published in 1944, shows how Bishop Francis J. Haas, former head of the Fair Employment Practices Committee and more recently bishop of Grand Rapids, outlined the Roman plan for a modern industrial society at a "Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems" held in Chicago. Bishop Haas credited the encyclical, "Quadragesimo Anno," with containing all the points he outlined and the following excerpt from his outline shows the validity of this claim. To quote:

"... Under this system all employers, workers, professional persons—all—would be organized. They would elect representatives from their respective industry or profession to deal for them, and these representatives with government representatives guiding them but not dictating to them would in actual practice operate the industry or profession. Thus the direction of the system would be tripartite. The representatives would be chosen from each of three categories—management, workers and government."

That there are points both of strength and of weakness in this plan is clear, but apart from any appraisal of the plan it is to be noted that the Roman Catholic Church is well organized to bring that plan to the attention

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of the public generally. The social action department of
the National Catholic Welfare Conference is geared for ef-
fective action. It carries out the policies of the Roman
hierarchy for American industrial life through conferences
on industrial problems which have been called "traveling
universities." These conferences, begun in 1922 and held
throughout our decade, take place in important industrial
cities and bring together "teachers in the seminaries,
labor leaders, employers, professors of economics, govern-
ment experts and the best brains which the church possess-
es." Moreover, each such conference "is a strong stim-
ulus throughout the region in which it is held for recon-
sideration of the social teachings of the church." Through
diocesan councils of men and women, through youth organiza-
tions, and through other groups, a frank effort is made "to
penetrate the whole Catholic body. The chief aim in all
the work with the laity is to train soldiers of Christ who
in all their work, their unions, employers' organizations,
farmers' associations, professional bodies, as also their
life as citizens, will be apostles, as Pius XI terms them."

Hence during our decade the Roman Catholic Church
had a well articulated attitude toward, and program for,
labor. And it had well organized machinery for dissemin-
ating its views and seeking to "penetrate the whole Catholic body" with them. How well it has succeeded is another question. But certainly its efforts must be known and reckoned with in any attempt to determine middle-class attitudes toward labor.

As already indicated in connection with our survey of the two Literary Digest articles on the Church and labor, Protestant churches (in common with Roman Catholic churches) are not only predominately middle class in constituency but typically middle class in their psychology. At the beginning of our decade their leaders admitted that to quite an extent the Protestant churches had been remiss in trying to understand, to say nothing of trying to assist, labor in its struggle for better things. But these leaders also maintained that Protestant churches have been paying more and more attention to the labor question and, through various agencies, have been seeking to educate their own membership and to influence public opinion on this subject.

As most representative of collective Protestant thought on the subject of labor one would doubtless turn to the Federal Council of Churches. At the close of our decade one finds this frank admission in the Labor Sunday Message of that organization for 1937: "Many church members see the world from a point of view quite different from
the point of view of the laboring masses. As a result of belonging to a class that is relatively secure, many of us tend to fear the very social changes which we should welcome because of the ethical demands of our Christian faith."

That is substantially an echo of the criticisms of labor leaders and the acknowledgment of church paper editors that were voiced in 1929. But in that same Labor Sunday message we read that "church bodies have for thirty years officially declared for the right of employes as well as employers to organize. Back of these declarations has lain a conviction of the sacredness of human personality and of the dignity of the common man, which is born of the teaching of Jesus that all men are children of God. Such a belief issues in a demand for democracy, both in political and industrial relations."

While there is no recommendation of a corporative "Ordo," as advocated by the popes, to bring about industrial democracy, this message does urge cooperation between employers, labor, consumers, and the government, pleads for "personal consecration of individuals to the religious life," and avows that religion is the "social cement" that will hold society together in the bonds of peace.

One finds a similar treatment of the labor question

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34 Ibid.
in a pamphlet, "The Christian Attitude Toward Labor" (sub-titled, "A Meditation for the Middle Class") that was written by James Myers, Industrial Secretary of the Federal Council, in 1937. That pamphlet deals with religion as a deterrent to violent revolution, the danger of the middle class cutting itself off from the lives of industrial workers, the relation of religion to organized labor, the Golden Rule in labor relations, "the right to work," and with some "programs of mediatory service" that had been worked out by churches to improve relationships between employer and employe.

The pamphlet, which evidently had a wide circulation and influence, was reprinted in 1945. It frankly seeks to mold middle class Protestant attitude toward labor and demonstrates its advanced position by such statements as these:

"It would be a demonstration of higher ethical judgment if the pulpit and press were more generally to insist upon all employers' granting freely to workers their right of collective bargaining through representatives of their own choosing. And instead of rushing to the defense of a worker's undoubted 'right to work' without joining a union, it would seem equally in order to point out to all workers that it is their moral duty to join unions. For, while no worker should be coerced by force or intimidation by his fellows into joining a union, it is
equally clear that if he is informed and unselfish, he will desire to join."

Again:

"Workers themselves should settle the issue of the closed shop by voluntarily joining a union."

And once again, this time quoting Eugene V. Debs:

"Are we prepared to say, 'So long as there is a lower class I am in it; so long as there is a soul in prison I am not free'? Is not this the Christian attitude toward labor?"

This is probably the most advanced position taken on the labor question by Protestant churches. Yet in a general way the individual Protestant denominations follow much the same pattern in their pronouncements.

Take the Presbyterians, for example. In 1937 the 149th General Assembly affirmed "the principle of collective bargaining which has for many years been accepted as one of the principles of our Church for the more effective solution of labor problems."

Or take the Labor Day Message, issued by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 What the Church Thinks of Labor. Pamphlet issued by American Federation of Teachers, Chicago, 1944.
in 1937. The message calls for "temperate and fair discussions on the part of all concerned--labor, capital, and the public." And then it recognizes the necessity of settling the disputes in American industry even though new instrumentalities set up for that purpose must be employed.

"We as Christians and as American citizens," the message declares, "should endeavor as far as possible to aid in the solution of all industrial misunderstanding without resort to violence, by the use of the processes of law, and by the exercise of the highest measure of intelligence and good will. The time is ripe for the leaders of organized capital and the leaders of organized labor, with the cooperation of the Government, to get together and work out some fair and sane and sensible cooperative program that will put an end to the curse of constant industrial warfare in America."

This last quotation indicates a trend that marks middle class attitude toward the end of our decade, namely, an alarm at the "constant industrial warfare" that existed and concern that the power of labor as well as that of capital be in some way controlled, "with the cooperation of the Government."

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40 Ibid.
Cooperation—in the form of corporative "Orders"—between labor, management, and government: that is the plan for which the Roman Catholic Church is seeking to arouse public sentiment.

Cooperation, worked out voluntarily by management and labor without fundamentally changing the existing economic order and yet with government taking part in the process and with society insisting that labor and management settle their differences even though new instrumentalities must be used to bring this to pass: that is the program for which the Protestant churches are seeking to arouse public sentiment.

Of the attitude of the churches (which represent a very important and substantial part of middle class society in America) toward labor it may therefore be said, in summary:

1. The churches are paying increasing attention to labor.

2. At least in their official pronouncements, the churches are quite friendly to labor and advocate advanced views with regard to labor's rights and status.

3. "Cooperation" is the keynote of the church prescription for industrial peace and welfare, with the Roman Catholics advocating a corporative social order, midway between individualism and collectivism.

4. All plans, organization, and man-made arrange-
ments will come to nought without the social cement of religion and the personal consecration of individuals to the principles of Jesus Christ.

The attitude of the courts and of the churches throws much light on the attitude of the middle class toward labor. But the most direct evidence of what the middle class attitude toward labor is comes from the public opinion surveys. Such surveys were begun in our decade and have continued to our own day. The research agency makes every possible effort to get proportional accuracy with respect to six factors: representation by states; men and women; urban-rural distribution; age; size of income; and political partisanship. One must therefore view the results of such polls with a high measure of respect.

What do the polls on public attitude toward labor in the last part of our decade show?

Turning again to Gallup and Robinson's summary of surveys made from 1935 to 1938, we lift out some questions and answers that reveal public attitudes toward the labor movement.

In February, 1937, this question was posed: "In the current General Motors strike, are your sympathies with the strikers or with the company?" The vote was
close but 56 per cent favored the company.

Much in line with what the Presbyterian Church advocated in the way of using legal processes to settle industrial disputes was this question:

"Should employers and employes be compelled by law to try to settle their differences before strikes can be called?" (July, 1937.) Yes, 89 per cent.

Somewhat in line with this question, but limiting the role of government to action with regard to labor unions was the question (asked in May, 1937):

"Do you think labor unions should be regulated by the government?" Yes, 89 per cent.

Further evidence that, by the end of the decade, the middle class was interested in peace in industry more than in any other single factor, is this question and the vote on it:

"Would you like to see the CIO and AFL labor unions settle their differences and work as one labor organization?" (October, 1937). Yes, 79 per cent.

How "leftist" or "rightist" the middle class is on the labor question is at least suggested in the results of the following question, asked in 1936 and again in 1937:

"Which type of labor union do you favor: craft (AFL)

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
or industrial (CIO)"

August, 1936                July, 1937

AFL  59 per cent  AFL  64 per cent
CIO  41 per cent  CIO  36 per cent

Similarly, in July 1937, 67 per cent of those interviewed said they liked Green better than Lewis as a labor leader.

There was no doubt, however, that the public was in favor of the right of labor to organize, for 76 per cent voted yes in answer to the question, asked in July 1937: "Are you in favor of labor unions?"

A check on these polls is afforded when their results are compared with the results attained in polls conducted by Mr. Elmo Roper, director of the Survey of Public Opinion for Fortune magazine.

A survey conducted by Mr. Roper in 1938 showed that of those who answered the question: "Which of these is most in need of reform: the stock exchanges, the labor unions, the Supreme Court, the public utilities?" 39 per cent believed that the labor unions were (public utilities came next with 14 per cent; 30 per cent were not sure.)

Here is a survey made by Fortune that affords a check with a Gallup poll. In March 1936, Fortune wanted

45 Ibid.
46 "Public Attitudes Toward Labor Unions" in the magazine Labor and Nation, October, 1945. Vol. 1; 33-47.
to know: "Do you believe that all wage earners should belong to a labor union?" Here were the answers:

Yes, all of them ........ 29 per cent
Most of them ............ 8 per cent
Some of them ............ 23 per cent
None of them ............. 25 per cent
Uncertain ............... 15 per cent

It has already been noted that a Gallup poll, conducted in July, 1937, revealed 76 per cent "in favor of labor unions." If one adds the first three rubrics in the answers to the Fortune survey he discovers that 60 per cent of the voters believed that labor unions were good—for at least some of the workers—and that only 25 per cent registered an outright disapproval of unions.

How many of the 15 per cent of voters who were uncertain in the Fortune poll would have voted yes in answer to the simpler Gallup question, "Are you in favor of labor unions?" is hard to say, but the results attained by the two polls prove that from 60 per cent to 75 per cent of the middle class believed that labor unions have a proper place on the American industrial scene.

In his own summary of what the Fortune surveys have revealed, Mr. Roper made this trenchant observation:

"The American public is firmly convinced that unions are a means to an end, and should by no means be done away with. They are committed to the principle of labor unions. But there is a strong feeling that during the past

47 Ibid.
several years, the labor union movement has gotten into bad hands in many instances and that it has in many instances acted against the public good."

This mention of the bad leadership of the unions has reference to a Fortune survey made in 1939, when voters were asked to state which of a number of groups they felt had done the least for the good of the country as a whole during the last ten years. Twenty per cent answered, the labor leaders; while 27 per cent answered, the politicians. A year later the ranking had changed, with labor leaders on top, named by 25 per cent as having done the least for the good of the country, followed by political men, whom 19 per cent considered had made the smallest contribution to the country's good.

Several approaches have been used in this chapter to determine the attitude of the middle class toward labor: presidential elections, the decisions of the courts, the pronouncements of the churches, and the results of public opinion polls. All of these approaches have revealed the same development in public attitude in the decade 1928 to 1937, namely, an apathy prior to the 1929 depression, followed by rather general support for labor's cause as the depression grew worse, and then a continuing sympathy for unionization.

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
and the full right of collective bargaining through representatives of labor's own choosing but a growing alarm at the irresponsible use made by some labor leaders of labor's new power and a growing demand for governmental control to promote industrial peace. In the pithy words of William A. Lydgate: "If the public felt that big businessmen were getting away with murder in 1929 and after, by 1937 it began to feel that labor unions were getting away with murder." And, it should be added, the public was determined to do something about it.

This change that swung gradually from apathy to alarm is something of a general pattern in public attitudes toward labor in the decade, 1928 to 1937, as will be indicated in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Let it be frankly confessed that definite conclusions regarding public attitudes toward labor in the decade 1928 to 1937 are not easy to set down even after the data presented in the preceding chapters is before one. There are no quick or easy answers to the question, What was the public attitude toward labor from 1928 to 1937?

However, from the examination conducted in this thesis on labor's own attitude, on the attitude of management toward labor, on the attitude of government toward labor, and on the attitude of the middle class as such toward labor, a general pattern may be noted, which may be divided chronologically into three periods:

1. The brief period before the depression, 1928-1929.
2. The first years of the depression, 1929 to 1933.
3. The first years of the New Deal, 1933 to 1937.

If each of these periods is to be characterized in a word, so far as public attitudes toward labor are concerned, those words would be: Apathy, activity, alarm.

By way of elaboration, the following is a more detailed summary of the development of attitude:

The scant two years before the depression were marked
by complacency on the part of both labor and management, born of the general business prosperity. This same complacency was reflected in the attitude of the government, which followed in the main a "hands off" policy with regard to business. At the same time, the rank and file of the middle class were inclined to be apathetic toward the labor question—for the simple reason that there seemed little to get excited about.

The depression brought a variety of reactions, all of which stemmed from a conviction that it was high time to awake out of sleep. On the part of labor, the first reaction was one of discouragement if not of defeatism. Management abandoned to quite an extent its program of industrial welfare and turned to stern tactics. The government took action in the form of the Norris-La Guardia Anti-injunction bill. The public, convinced that big business had been getting away with murder, gave widespread support to labor's cause.

The first years of the New Deal and the passage of legislation favorable to labor witnessed new hope and activity on labor's part, growing resistance on management's part to labor's bid for power, and general approval of labor's gains and of the government's new role in labor affairs on the part of the public.

After the NRA had given way to the more effective National Labor Relations Act labor began both to sense its growing power and to experience internal dissension, cul-
minating in the formation of the CIO. Simultaneously management became more belligerent, both in its tactics against organized labor and in its efforts to evade the new labor legislation or have it declared unconstitutional. Management, however, was forced to accept some of the gains which labor had made, notably to recognize the unions in the plants of the United States Steel Corporation and in those of General Motors and Chrysler. The public continued in its general sympathy for the cause of organized labor but began sharply to distinguish between the legitimate objectives of the labor movement and the irresponsible use of power on the part of some labor leaders. In this state of mind the middle class grew increasingly insistent that there be effective controls of labor unions in the interest of the public welfare.
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