



WOMEN'S UNION ACTIVITY dates back to 1833 when shoe binders in Lynn, Mass., formed a "Female Society" to protect their wages and backed it up with a strike in 1840 (upper left). Their part in defense work began in the Civil War with them filling cartridges in the Watertown (Mass.) Arsenal (upper right) and continued through World War II when they performed industrial jobs ranging from assembly to inspection (lower left). Legendary women in union history include one known simply as Mother Jones (lower right). She served in the miners' 1914 strike remembered as the "Ludlow Massacre" because Colorado militia machine gunned two men and 11 boys and set fire to strikers' tents suffocating 13 women and children. But of all the many such chapters of employer brutality few were more prolonged or shocking than the treatment endured by seamen in their efforts to achieve a decent living.



LIFE AT SEA was for centuries bleak and hopeless. Often shanghaied into service and branded as mutinous if they struck, seamen were utterly at the mercy of their employers. Their life was aptly described by one of their legendary union leaders, Andrew Furuseth (upper left), when threatened with jail during a strike. "They cannot put me in a smaller room than I have always lived in," he said. "They cannot give me a plainer food than I have always eaten. They cannot make me lonelier than I have always been." Effective organization began in 1878 with formation of the Lake Seamen's Union to be consolidated with other groups into the International Seamen's Union in 1895. Another milestone was the Seamen's Act of 1915, known as the "Magna Charta of the Sea." Among other things, it limited working hours at sea to 56 a week. Seamen were making headway. Steelworkers were not so fortunate.

The Industrial Workers of the World: The Wobblies



THE MESSAGE OF THE WOBBLIES was spread through periodicals, pamphlets, poems and songs like Ralph Chaplin's "Solidarity Forever." Their philosophy and militant, effective strikes at Lawrence, Massachusetts and Paterson, New Jersey, were milestones in the labor movement. Founded in Chicago in 1905, the IWW's main objectives were to organize "one big union" and form a cooperative commonwealth. Involved in historical strikes, trials and fights for freedom of speech were "Big Bill" Haywood (upper left); Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (center); Joe Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti (upper right) and Joe Hill, (left).

The United States Steel Corporation: Unions in Steel



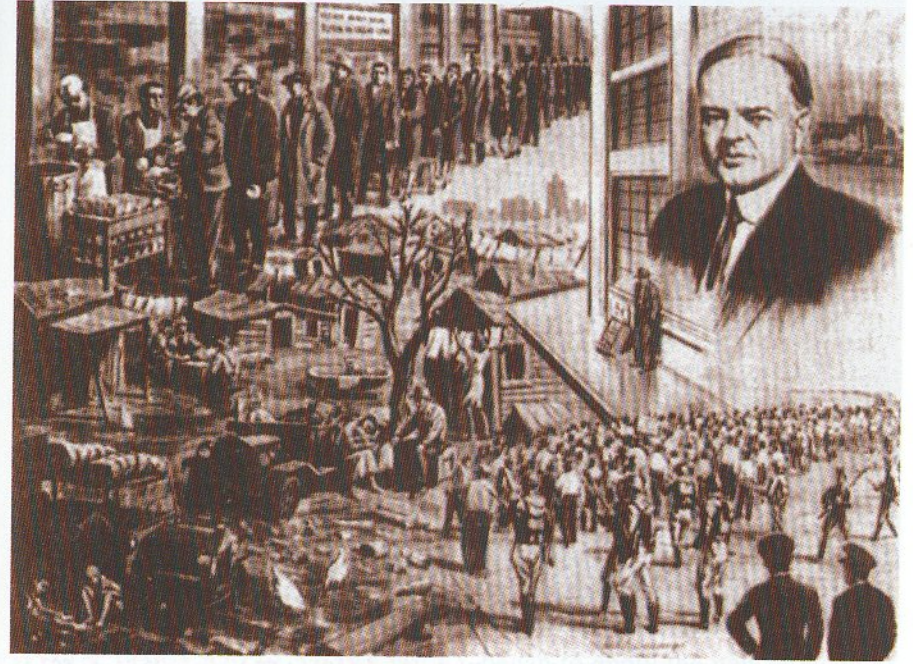
THE COAL AND IRON POLICE, as the Pennsylvania constabulary was known, spread terror through squalid steel towns in the early 1900s. Steelworkers' wages were pitifully low for an average 69-hour work week. But an organizational drive began in 1918 and so bitter were conditions that within a year 100,000 steelworkers joined unions. Demands for collective bargaining were ignored by the industry leader, U.S. Steel Corp. A strike called in nine states was greeted by strike breakers and martial law. In Gary, Ind., 18 workmen were killed. The strike was crushed, but before the men began drifting back to work, the unions asked the Interchurch World Movement, a Protestant organization, to make an inquiry into the strike. Their report said: "The United States Steel Corporation was too big to be beaten by 300,000 workmen." But the workingmen were to find that they did have some liberal friends in the 1920s.

The Worker's Friends



ORGANIZED LABOR'S FRIENDS in the 1920s and 1930s included Sen. Robert M. LaFollette (upper right), Wisconsin Progressive. His efforts on behalf of liberal legislation earned him labor endorsement when he ran for President in 1924 on an independent ticket. Another stalwart liberal was Sen. George W. Norris (lower right), of Nebraska. A Republican, he was often attacked by his own party for his development of such projects as the Tennessee Valley Authority and the antiinjunction act he co-sponsored in 1932 with Fiorello LaGuardia (lower left), then a Congressman, later New York's Mayor. This law barred federal courts from issuing injunctions indiscriminately and strengthened the workingman's right to complete freedom of association. In this era, membership in the AFL, led by William Green (upper left), rose from 3 million to 8 million. But depression was to stun the nation in the 1930s.

The Depression of the 30's



BREADLINES symbolized the Great Depression which swamped the U. S. economy after the October 1929 stock market crash. By 1933 nearly 14 million working men - one out of three - were unemployed. Industrial production dropped over 50%. Jobless men sold apples on street corners. Millions evicted from their homes lived in clusters of shacks dubbed Hoovervilles after President Herbert Hoover (upper right), whose conservative policies failed to halt the nation's downward skid. World War I veterans formed the Bonus Army and marched on Washington to plead for help, only to be shot at and driven away at bayonet point. By that time nearly 20 million people were on public relief. President Hoover's slogan "prosperity is just around the corner" did not restore confidence. The depression got worse. Then hope for millions of workmen rose with the forming of a great new labor organizationthe Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Organizing the Industrial Workers



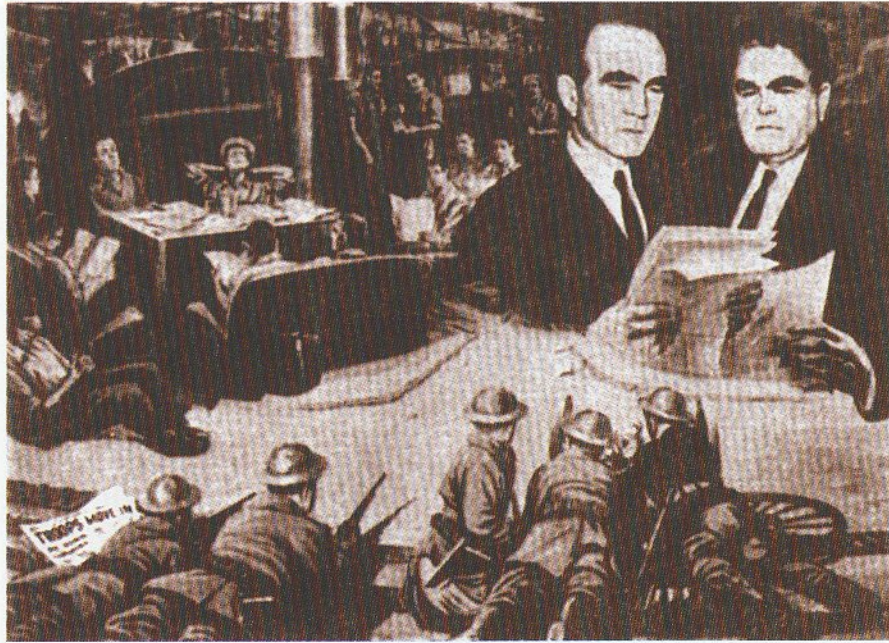
THE CIO WAS FORMED basically because the AFL's organizing efforts were centered on the skilled craftsmen, leaving millions of massproduction workmen unrepresented by unions. An organizational disagreement led eight leaders of international unions in the AFL to set up a Committee for Industrial Organization on Nov. 9, 1935. The AFL expelled them, but within two years CIO membership skyrocketed to nearly 4 million in such industries as steel, autos, rubber and textiles. Among these early CIO leaders were: (top row) Max Zaritsky, hatters' union; Charles P. Howard, typographers; John L. Lewis, coal miners, first CIO president; David Dubinsky, ladies' garment workers; Harvey C. Fremming, oil workers; (bottom row): Sidney Hillman, clothing workers; Thomas F. McMahon, textile workers, and Thomas H. Brown, mine, mill workers. Famed columnist Heywood Broun (lower left) organized the Newspaper Guild.

The Reuther Brothers



WHEN THE LABOR MOVEMENT began to apply the new strategy of industrial unionism in the 1930's, three remarkable brothers came to the fore in unionizing a key American industry. They were Walter P. Reuther, 1907-1970, Roy L. Reuther, 1909-1968, and Victor G. Reuther, born 1911. The five Reuther children were brought up by their parents, Valentine and Anna, in a family atmosphere of unionism and liberal thought. Valentine Reuther, brought to America from Germany as a child, was one of the nation's youngest labor leaders at age 23 in Wheeling, West Virginia. He taught his children that working people have a right to human dignity, security and equality, and that life's greatest satisfaction lies in serving mankind. Imbued with this philosophy, the three Reuther brothers went out to organize auto workers into the UAW and to help them win a better life through the bargaining table and the ballot box. Crucial in the organization of the UAW was the dramatic sitdown strike in General Motors.

The UAW Struggle



THE SITDOWN STRIKE was the dramatic method used by the UAW to obtain recognition from the auto industry's leading firm, General Motors Corp. When workmen sat down in 17 GM plants in December 1936 and January 1937, what could have been a bloody episode in American history was averted by Michigan's humanitarian Gov. Frank Murphy (upper right with CIO's John L. Lewis). Instead of ordering the National Guard to drive the strikers out at gunpoint, Gov. Murphy used the troops to maintain peace. GM's recognition of the UAW Feb. 11, 1937 spurred auto workers to join the union. Membership mushroomed from 30,000 in the spring of 1936 to 10 times that within 15 months. Eventually it went over 1 million, and the UAW was to become a collective bargaining forerunner, pioneering in pensions, cost-of-living increases and supplemental unemployment benefits. But before these came, death still stalked unions.

F.D.R. Signs Battle of the Overpass



UAW's drive to organize Ford workers reached its "moment of truth" on May 26, 1937, when the naked brutality of a company, determined to preserve the open shop and to rule its workers by terror, was revealed to the whole world. On that day the infamous "Battle of the Overpass" occurred. Fifty trade unionists, led by Walter Reuther, were attempting to distribute handbills to Ford workers at an overpass outside the huge Dearborn, Michigan Ford River Rouge plant. They were suddenly and savagely set upon by a band of armed Ford Company "Service" men. When the carnage had cleared, one unionist suffered a broken back; one sustained a skull fracture and nearly all had bloodied noses. This bloody episode pointed up the sacrifices made by Ford workers to achieve such benefits as grievance procedure, seniority rights, paid vacation, supplemental unemployment benefits, pension payments upon retirement – and the promise of more gains to come.

Memorial Day – 1937



A MASSACRE – 10 dead and more than 100 wounded from shots in the back – horrified the nation Memorial Day 1937. The gunmen were police. The victims were steel workmen and their wives and children peacefully picketing Republic Steel's South Chicago, Ill. plant where the CIO Steel Workers Organizing Committee led by Philip Murray (later CIO president) was trying to get union recognition from the company. Other steel firms had signed SWOC contracts, but a group of smaller companies, including Republic, called "Little Steel," refused to sign. Republic further defied the National Labor Relations Board by firing union sympathizers. The workmen struck for recognition and Republic collected an arsenal of machine guns, rifles, shotguns and tear gas. Testimony later revealed the police had planned the shooting. Fortunately, newsreel cameras filmed the entire massacre. Shocked public opinion led to a Senate investigation.

F.D.R. Signs Labor's Magna Charta



A SENATE COMMITTEE led by Sen. Robert M. LaFollette Jr., of Wisconsin (lower left) investigated the Memorial Day Massacre and other violations of workmen's civil liberties in 1936 and 1937. Their report shocked the nation. It revealed that thousands of respected corporations had hired labor spies to thwart union organization. A group of firms including General Motors were found to have spent over \$9 million for firearms, spies and strike-breakers. This showed employers' callous indifference to the National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt two years before (upper right). The Wagner Act, sponsored by Sen. Robert F. Wagner, of New York, and often called "Labor's Magna Charta," provided, among other things, secret ballot elections (upper left) for workmen choosing their union. Industrial relations remained relatively stable through World War II and the post-war years. Workers made many gains.

Pathway to Community Progress



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING – Recognition of the UAW meant recognition of the worker as a person and citizen. It gave him a voice, a face on and off the job. Before, he had been on the receiving end of management decisions, a passive victim of economic forces. Now he was at the bargaining table, with the leverage to lift himself and his family into a better, fuller life. His gains in income, security and dignity spurred gains by other workers everywhere. The picket signs tell only the partial story of the gains made by UAW members in their long struggle for social and economic justice. Arbitration, survivor benefits, bereavement pay, tuition refunds are examples of these historic gains. The UAW has successfully tied the bargaining table with the ballot box as in negotiating pensions and supplemental unemployment benefits. But beyond all these comes the self-respect and human dignity which collective bargaining assures to UAW members. Collective bargaining brought benefits to the whole community.

Bread, Freedom and Peace



TODAY'S CHILDREN - tomorrow's working men and women – will face a brighter future if we can realize the ideals originally set forth in the ICFTU slogan, "Bread, Freedom and Peace." The UAW, in furtherance of its efforts to forge new strength for democratic ideals, continues to encourage cultural, educational and worker to worker contact in all sections of the world. The UAW emphasizes a strategy for peace, for construction rather than destruction, for disarmament rather than armament. Of most significance to American labor is the International Metalworkers Federation, with 2.5 million metal workers from 100 countries. IMF's Automotive Department has organized World Councils in the automotive and agricultural implement industries to coordinate and harmonize workers' goals in these mult-national enterprises. Through the IMF, workers can better struggle for fair labor standards, a decent standard of living and the principle of international labor solidarity which can restore balance to collective bargaining with multinational corporations.