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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2021 Volume I: U. S. Social Movements through Biography

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## **Who Built the American Economy? How Labor Unions Shaped the Early Labor Movement**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 21.01.02, published September 2021  
by Alexander de Arana

This unit plan explores the Industrial Revolution, Gilded Age, and the beginnings of the Labor Movement by examining two case studies: the Homestead Strike of 1892 and the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike of 1910. These case studies will allow students to learn about the origins of the Labor Movement and how laborers organized first in industrial sectors and then in service-based jobs. Students will conclude the unit by examining the economic impact of labor unions throughout the twentieth century. Ideally, this curriculum unit will help students see the similarities in wealth inequality during the Gilded Age compared to today's world. The coverage of these topics and the inquiry-based approach towards document analysis will provide students with the opportunity to successfully take the IB History Exam at the end of their twelfth-grade year.

Key Words:

Industrial Revolution, Gilded Age, Labor Movement, industrial capitalism, collective bargaining, industrialists, workers, labor unions, Homestead Strike, Philadelphia Streetcar Strike

(Developed for IB History, grade 11; recommended for History, grades 11-12)

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