



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

---

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

Curriculum Unit 21.01.02, published September 2021  
by Alexander de Arana

### **Rationale**

---

This four-week unit plan is designed for eleventh-grade students in IB History of the Americas classes at William W. Bodine High School for International Affairs. Bodine is a magnet high school in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). Bodine is located in Philadelphia's Northern Liberties neighborhood and serves roughly 600 students. Middle school grades, attendance, disciplinary records, state test scores, and other criteria determine student admission. The SDP operates as a Title I school district; under this policy, all students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Over ninety-five percent of students at Bodine live below the poverty line. Students attend daily class periods of fifty-three minutes each. Bodine offers Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses to its upperclassmen. This unit can be used in AP and IB courses and for ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade students.

This curriculum unit aims to strengthen the Industrial and Imperial Expansionism unit I teach for the Emergence of the Americas in Global Affairs (1880-1929) IB History Depth Study. This unit will be taught during the fourth marking period and will take four weeks to complete. Students will study the Industrial Revolution, Gilded Age, and the beginnings of the Labor Movement by first examining two case studies: the Homestead Strike and the General 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. Additionally, students will study how the economic developments during the Industrial Revolution, Gilded Age, and the Labor Movement impacted the United States' involvement in foreign affairs. 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.

### **IB History**

At Bodine High School, I teach IB History, a two-year course offering that allows students to take the three-part IB History exam at the end of the program. The IB Diploma Program offers teachers flexibility in teaching the course and which topics they teach (see Figure 1). In their junior year, students must enroll in a course

titled IB History of the Americas.

<b>Paper Three Depth Studies: History of the Americas</b>	
<b>Colonial Government in the New World (1500-1880)</b>	
Colonial Rule and Mercantilism	
<b>Independence Movements (1763-1830)</b>	
The American Revolutionary War	The Haitian Revolution
Latin American Independence Movements	
<b>Nation-Building and Challenges (c. 1780-1870)</b>	
Nation Building in the United States	The War of 1812
<b>US Civil War: Causes and Effects (1840-1877)</b>	
Westward Expansion	The US Civil War
Reconstruction	
<b>Emergence of the Americas in Global Affairs (1880-1929)</b>	
Industrial and Imperial Expansionism	World War One

Figure 1: The chart lists the topics that the IB History program at Bodine High School teaches its students in the eleventh-grade course IB History of the Americas. The bold headings are the depth studies listed on the IB History Exam, while the titles beneath each bold heading are the units I teach to fulfill the content of each IB History Depth Study.

As seniors, students can elect to matriculate into Social Science or the second year of IB History by taking the IB 20<sup>th</sup> Century World History course. Regardless of which course they choose to enroll in during their senior year of high school, this curriculum unit will serve as a reference point for students when learning about World War One, the Interwar Period, World War Two, and the politics of the twentieth century.

## Content Objectives

The Labor Movement was born out of a period of tremendous strife between business owners and laborers, brazen political corruption, significant levels of wealth inequality, and financial insecurity. The brutal working conditions business owners subjected their employees to led to the collective organization and advocacy of individual workers in labor unions. The Labor Movement sparked a dramatic increase in the number of workers that became unionized throughout the early and mid-twentieth century. With the social and political clout labor unions had, they wielded significant influence over economic policy, shaping issues such as government regulation, tax reform, and minimum wage. This unit plan seeks to uncover the beginnings of the Labor Movement in order to properly understand how its origins contributed to the achievements of laborers throughout World War One, the Interwar Period, and World War Two.

Students will learn about the Industrial Revolution, Gilded Age, and Labor Movement throughout this curriculum unit. This unit plan contains five sections:

First, students will study the Industrial Revolution and Gilded Age by examining how the manufacturing

sectors of the railroad, steel, and locomotive industries transformed the American economy from a system built off apprenticeship to one more dependent on industrial capitalism.

Second, students will analyze the consequences the transforming economy had on how laborers and labor union leaders saw themselves in a nation that, in their minds, shifted away from the virtues established from the American Revolutionary War.

Third, students will assess how these forces manifested themselves in the relationship between industrial magnates and workers within these sectors by focusing on the Homestead Strike of 1892 between the Carnegie Steel Company and the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers in Homestead, Pennsylvania.

Fourth, students will discuss how the early developments of the Labor Movement spread from manufacturing industries to service-based jobs. To learn this, students will examine the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike of 1910 between the Rapid Transit Company and the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America.

Lastly, students will study how the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike of 1910 led to a citywide general strike. Analyzing this event will assist students in realizing how laborers across industries shared a common identity and worked together to address political corruption, working conditions, and wealth inequality.

## Content Background

---

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution contributed to a tremendous amount of economic growth. The emergence of new technologies resulted in more tension between laborers and industrial magnates in the United States as human workers became more obsolete due to the mechanization of their skills. As the country expanded geographically through imperialistic measures, the emergence of new and larger markets also appeared. Companies grew larger and more influential as they scaled and entered national markets. During this period, the railroad, steel, and locomotive sectors permanently transformed the American economic landscape from a system based on apprenticeship to one that grew more reliant on industrial capitalism.

The Industrial Revolution in the United States quickly made industrial magnates some of the world's wealthiest individuals. The development of the railroad, steel, and locomotive industries provided capitalists such as Andrew Carnegie with lucrative investment opportunities. While the explosion of these industries led to a tremendous amount of individual wealth for investors, the laborers within these industries experienced significant strife with their employers. Workers often suffered from brutal working conditions, low wages, and a lack of government regulation. The Industrial Revolution in the United States quickly pushed the country into the Gilded Age—an era when wealth was concentrated in the hands of the few and corrupt politicians and industrial magnates worked together to preserve this as the status quo. The Labor Movement challenged business practices and governmental policies as laborers nationwide organized into labor unions to collectively leverage their power in negotiations. Laborers and labor union leaders pointed to the structural changes in the American economic landscape as sources of their frustration.

## A Transforming Economy

During the Antebellum Era, the American economy primarily operated as a system of apprenticeship. Workers often labored as shopkeepers, craftsmen, and other artisanal occupations by developing a relationship with a master and learning a skill. The apprenticeship system created cooperation between an apprentice and master, which also influenced attitudes among town residents. Communities relied on harmonious relationships among artisans to create a sustainable local economy. As the American labor historian Richard Oestreicher described:

It was a world of homeowners, workers, and small businessmen who made their livings working with their hands, producing goods or serving those who did, and the social boundaries between classes were indistinct. Personal proprietorships and small enterprises were not beyond the hopes of an industrious artisan. But small firms faced tough competition and fluctuating demand; many failed. Still, failures did not discourage others, and towns like Carbondale and Scranton had many small mines, little metal shops, and tiny factories producing consumer goods like clothing or cigars, or corner groceries and neighborhood saloons that served the working population. Self-employed artisans or former coal miners who ran such businesses worked alongside their employees and lived amidst wage-earning neighbors who were their clientele. Miner and small mine boss patronized the same barber shop, prayed in the same church, and read the same newspaper.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the apprenticeship system fostered a sense of harmony and a feeling of community among residents. In this system, an apprentice and their master developed a relationship in which both parties shared the common goal of nurturing and developing the skill set of the apprentice. While many hoped to achieve individual wealth, the apprenticeship system encouraged laborers to cooperate and assist their fellow community members.

The same cooperative attitudes illustrated how working-class communities behaved. For example, in small towns, both in urban and rural communities, shopkeepers sold their products on credit to their neighbors to ensure they made it through a bad harvest or a period of unemployment.<sup>2</sup> Workers in small and cramped “mill towns” often lived in row houses—an easy-to-build and affordable house on a narrow lot.<sup>3</sup> Irish, Polish, English, and German populations sought work in America, and these neighborhoods often became home to large immigrant populations from northern and eastern Europe.<sup>4</sup> Living in cramped conditions, residents in urban and rural towns built a shared sense of identity among their neighbors. Immigrant populations published newspapers in their native language. Women in rural communities organized political campaigns. Neighbors formed social clubs. Community members shopped at local grocery stores and worshipped at their neighborhood church.<sup>5</sup> The dynamics from an artisanal economic system became closely attributed to American ideals in the fight for independence from the British Empire’s system of imperial and aristocratic rule.

The American Revolutionary War and Protestantism influenced how individuals thought of work. Laborers took pride in their ability to work, and they worked alongside others to improve each other’s lives. Many saw the social dynamics of work during the Antebellum Era and the mid-nineteenth century as symbolic of the American Revolutionary War. Many of America’s working class believed the War of Independence encouraged civic participation and promoted equal opportunity. While not all workers shared the same levels of prosperity in practice, there was a certain level of harmony by those participating in an apprenticeship and among neighborhood residents.

The economic changes brought by the Industrial Revolution threatened these ideals. The new economic era introduced new waves of technology that mechanized many forms of labor. Machines replaced skilled workers such as craftsmen, and the introduction of the wage-based system left the previous apprenticeship system behind. Therefore, the economic system became less dependent on the skillset of craftsmen and more dependent on capital. As the country grew in size, new markets emerged, as did more capital into the American economy. Companies grew from locally or state-based businesses to national conglomerates. Entering these new markets was not accessible to everyone. To make money, one had to invest large amounts of capital to purchase the natural resources, machinery, and labor required to build a business. The country's wealthiest industrialists quickly distanced themselves from the median laborer. With the introduction of industrial capitalism, the lines that divided each social class became emboldened.

### **Artisanal Republicanism**

With the developing system of industrial capitalism, the American economy had undergone a period of booms and busts throughout the nineteenth century. Each depression was worse than the previous one. Wealth inequality grew dramatically, while each economic downturn exacerbated financial and job security. As rigidity increased between social classes, laborers began to organize in America's industrial sectors. Local unions appeared in cities across the United States, but they were not powerful enough to withstand the forces and capital of national conglomerates.

With access to credit and large amounts of capital, companies quickly scaled to national levels to reap the rewards of a growing market. As companies grew, they began to exert their power in more than just one town or city. Therefore, labor unions had to match this by organizing at larger levels. Labor unions went from being just secret societies or local unions to nationally-based labor organizations. Initially, labor unions appeared in the form of craft unions, serving particular workers within an industrial sector, such as coal miners. Over time, labor unions organized to represent all workers—skilled or unskilled—in a particular industry, such as the railroad sector. As the Labor Movement grew in its early stages, industrial labor unions welcomed workers from various producing groups. Founded in 1879, one of the most influential national labor unions, the Knights of Labor, used this strategy in fighting for workers' rights.

In 1869, a group of nine Philadelphia tailors founded the Knights of Labor.<sup>6</sup> The newly assembled labor union formed as a response to the growing frustrations among artisanal republicans, including "the consequences of the railroad and canal booms, the beginnings of a modern banking system, the reorganization of industries, and the emergence of the national market."<sup>7</sup> Initially created as a secret society, the Knights of Labor chose Terrance Powderly as their Grand Master Workman in 1879 to lead the labor union on a national scale within the country's railroad industry. The Knights of Labor created an agenda focused on fighting against the new economic changes to restore America's spirit of republicanism. Among these changes, the Knights of Labor wished to achieve the proximate goals for an eight-hour workday, wage increases, and the ambitious long-term goal of a worker cooperative.<sup>8</sup>

Powderly and the Knights of Labor quickly became known for their fights against the wage-based system after a national financial panic in 1873. When the economy crashed, businesses laid workers off and cut the wages of the laborers that retained their employment. The economic landscape and custom business practices resulted in tremendous growth among the Knights of Labor's membership.<sup>9</sup> Using the momentum from the increase in the union's membership, Powderly led the Knights of Labor to fight against the wage-based system.

Most notably in Chicago during the Haymarket Square Affair, campaigns to establish an eight-hour workday led to workers in the railroad industry going on strike. Laborers across the railroad, steel, and locomotive industries organized in support of the workers going on strike by organizing a sympathy walk out of their own. The protests became violent when radical anarchists threw dynamite at the police, killing seven police officers and four civilians. A jury convicted eight anarchists of criminal conspiracy, and a judge sentenced seven of them to death.<sup>10</sup> Industrialists and politicians capitalized on the events of Haymarket Square by associating the Labor Movement with lawlessness, disorder, and the promotion of socialism, creating the country's first Red Scare.<sup>11</sup>

Powderly was often reluctant to support a strike—a stance that was unfathomable among laborers who saw no other way out of negotiations with their employer. Oestreicher explained Powderly's reluctance when he wrote, "This opinion was not far out of step with most other labor leaders of his generation, and it was consistent with republican morality, which shunned social strife and activities that would polarize classes. Only [anarchists and socialists], who believed that strikes educated workers about the brutalities of capitalism, unequivocally encouraged strikes."<sup>12</sup> Powderly's unwillingness to support those who participated in the Haymarket Square strike cost the Knights of Labor, as the labor union's membership dwindled in the years that followed.

There is little doubt that the events at Haymarket Square damaged the reputation of Powderly and other moderate Labor Movement leaders. Nonetheless, it also provided valuable insight into how the Knights of Labor and Powderly's leadership affected the Labor Movement in the years that followed. First, Powderly's labor union incorporated a platform of artisanal republican values that became the basis for other labor leaders to use. Second, the Knights of Labor showed that the Labor Movement was able to organize on a national level in the fight for an eight-hour workday, thus incorporating the values of artisanal republicanism into the mainstream political landscape. Finally, the events at Haymarket Square proved that workers across the United States saw their class-based identities align with laborers across different industrial sectors, ethnic backgrounds, and geographical landscapes. The artisanal republican ideology and the scaling of national labor unions continued to show future strife moments between industrialists and laborers, perhaps most notably during the Homestead Strike.

## **The Homestead Strike**

While the Haymarket Square Affair damaged the national Labor Movement, the ideals envisioned by leaders such as Powderly had not gone away. Other national unions emerged as strong forces in the country's railroad industry, such as the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers. Like the Knights of Labor before it, the Amalgamated Association fought for shorter shifts, higher wages, and a general sense of worker ownership over the means of production. In fact, many of the workers at the Homestead Strike left the Knights of Labor to join the Amalgamated Association.<sup>13</sup> The labor union's large membership and presence in the town of Homestead resulted in strong support for the steelworkers against the Carnegie Steel Company.

The unionization of the steelworkers created a sense of community and comradeship among Homestead laborers and residents. The workers and the town alike viewed themselves as partial owners, at least symbolically, of the means of production at the steel mill. The steel mill's employment of so many of the town's residents perhaps reinforced this mindset among members of the Amalgamated Association.<sup>14</sup> Public support of the labor union helped the Amalgamated Association achieve higher wages compared to most other mills in the country. Additionally, the labor union agreed to an eight-hour workday schedule with the Carnegie Steel Company.<sup>15</sup> However, tensions rose shortly after the labor union's successful negotiations



between the Amalgamated Association and Andrew Carnegie's steel company. The Amalgamated Association's goals for an improved contract, combined with Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick's disdain of labor unions, led to the Homestead Strike.

While Carnegie vacationed in Scotland, he put Henry Clay Frick in charge of breaking the power of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* described Frick as the following:

Twenty years ago this man had less money than any one of a hundred people who work in his mills. He was born in Westmoreland County near a place now called Bradford, in the heart of the famous Connellsville coke region. He knows what it is to work for a living. Many a sack of grain has he carried from a wagon into his grandfather's grist mill. He began to make coke in a few years about 1871. He was shrewd and far-seeing, a better business-man some say than his partner, Andrew Carnegie. He prospered, and in a few years was the coke king of the Connellsville region. In 1882, realizing how much coke meant to the manufacture of iron, Andrew Carnegie bought an interest in Mr. Frick's business, and about five years ago Mr. Frick became Chairman of Carnegie Bros. & Co., and is today in control of the vast Carnegie interests. His net profits it is admitted are \$2,000,000 per year, and \$3,000,000 are probably nearer correct.<sup>16</sup>

Frick's strong anti-union attitude was well-known to the Amalgamated Association and its membership. However, Carnegie's appointment of Frick as Chairman of the Carnegie Steel Company marked a change in Carnegie's attitude towards labor unions and the Amalgamated Association.

Just three years before the Homestead Strike and before Henry Clay Frick took over as chairman, the Amalgamated Association negotiated with the Carnegie Steel Company to create an equitable sliding scale. It worked as follows:

When the prices of billets went up, wages were to go up correspondingly, and when the prices of billets went down, wages were to be correspondingly lowered. \$25 a ton was agreed upon as the minimum. If billets were quoted below, there was to be no further depression of wages. In other words, the men and the firm were practically in partnership, increased profits to the latter meaning increased earning to the former, unless the bottom fell out of the market, in which case it became the duty of the stronger partner to protect the weaker.<sup>17</sup>

The sliding scale resembled the values of artisanal republicanism—a partnership between business owners and their laborers, emphasizing the former protecting the latter. Although the relationship between the Carnegie Steel Company and the Amalgamated Association had not always been peaceful, Andrew Carnegie had publicly claimed to be against the use of force when negotiating with the Amalgamated Association. Moreover, he stated that the right for laborers to bargain collectively is no less “sacred” than the right for businesses to arbitrate with the labor union.<sup>18</sup> It was clear that Carnegie's stance on the Amalgamated Association and labor unions writ large shifted dramatically with Henry Clay Frick's appointment as chairman.

The Amalgamated Association wished to build on its recent successes by increasing the wages of its members when negotiations started again in 1892. However, the results of a new contractual dispute would not end as it did in 1889. Frick's reputation provided insight into how he would treat the labor union, and he publicly defended his stance in newspaper interviews. When speaking about the Carnegie Steel Company's position lowering the wage scale, Frick pointed to changes in the price of steel and investments made by the steel

company to update the machinery and make the mill more efficient as reasons for decreasing wages. Frick argued that lowering wages reflected the market more accurately, but the Amalgamated Association viewed it as the pretext for future reductions in wages.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the new sliding scale, Frick stated that the Carnegie Steel Company would no longer treat its workers as a group and would only communicate with them as individuals—an apparent move to break up the steel mill’s labor union. Refusing to negotiate, Frick issued this list of ultimatums to the Amalgamated Association. Since the union was unable to negotiate with Frick, its members prepared for a strike.

As the relationship between the steel company and union spoiled, Frick constructed a barbed wire fence encompassing the entire property. Additionally, he built twelve platforms, each equipped with spotlights. Frick made these accommodations in preparation for a lockout. He planned on locking the steel mill workforce out of the factory with the help of three hundred agents of the Pinkerton Detective Agency he hired.<sup>20</sup> Frick planned to replace the laborers that belonged to the Amalgamated Association with non-union workers. The labor union treated Frick’s preparations as an act of hostility. At a meeting of the labor union’s membership, a message circulated that two hundred non-union workers disguised as Pinkerton Detectives would arrive in Homestead to continue production at the mill. Enraged by the news, thousands of members of the Amalgamated Association mobilized to prevent the Pinkerton Detectives from arriving at the steel mill.

The conflict at the steel mill turned into an all-out battle. When the Pinkerton Detectives arrived at the steel mill via barge on the river, four thousand steel mill workers and a group of anarchists joined the fight and fired at the hired guns. The labor union’s leadership requested to meet with Frick to avoid further bloodshed, but the chairman of the Carnegie Steel Company refused the request:

The answer to this humane suggestion was characteristic. It was a flat refusal. “Our works are now in the hands of the sheriff,” said Secretary Lovejoy, “and it is his official duty to protect the property from destruction or damage. If it is necessary in his judgment to call out troops, he is the proper authority to do so. Everything is in his hands.”<sup>21</sup>

With the sheriff unwilling to intervene, the hired Pinkerton Detectives were likely to be killed by the angry crowd of four thousand steel mill workers. Frick understood that the Governor of Pennsylvania would have to get involved if the events at Homestead continued to escalate. This only illustrated Frick’s callousness towards the lives of his hired guns, therefore displaying his ruthless tactics against the union. Outnumbered and in danger, the Pinkerton Detectives ultimately surrendered (see Figure 2).





Figure 2: The image shows an illustration of the scenes at Homestead. The illustration depicts the three hundred Pinkerton Detectives surrendering to the steel mill workers and leaving on the barges. The Illustrated Newspaper, an American illustrated newspaper founded by Frank Leslie in 1855, published this image on its front page.

Source: *The Labor Troubles at Homestead, Pennsylvania—Attack of the Strikers and Their Sympathizers on the Surrendered Pinkerton Men*, Library of Congress, July 14, 1892, photomechanical print, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96507002/>.

Frick's predictions that the governor would get involved were correct. The county sheriff appealed to the Governor of Pennsylvania for the state militia to aid the town. Eventually, Governor Pattison sent the state militia to restore order in Homestead. Although the members of the Amalgamated Association had successfully defeated the Pinkerton Detectives, they were no match for the well-equipped National Guard of Pennsylvania—one of the strongest national guards in the country.<sup>22</sup> Tactically superior, the state militia took

control of Homestead without firing a shot. While the Amalgamated Association's leadership hoped that the governor would side with the steelworkers, the state militia protected the Carnegie Steel Company's interests.

The state militia dispersed any remaining picket lines and escorted Carnegie Steel Company officials back into the steel mill. Under the protection of the National Guard of Pennsylvania, the steel mill resumed production with non-union workers. Frick continued his stance on refusing to negotiate with the Amalgamated Association. However, Frick still needed to hire permanent workers to return production levels to normal. The dwindling public support of the Amalgamated Association disappeared when Alexander Berkman, an anarchist from New York, attempted to assassinate Frick. Berkman's attempt on Frick's life dealt a final blow to the union workers at the steel mill.

Frick's crushing defeat of the Amalgamated Association weakened the labor union's position in the public eye. The wages of the steel mill workers fell while the length of work shifts increased, and the Amalgamated Association's membership declined dramatically. The events at Homestead showed laborers and the public the power industrialists wielded with the amounts of capital they possessed and the close relationship they had with government officials.

The Homestead Strike and other major labor defeats damaged the Labor Movement at the national level. Not only did industrialists have tremendous amounts of resources through the capital that they owned, but the politics of the era also supported their vision and business practices. Despite the defeats of the late nineteenth century, groups such as the Knights of Labor and Amalgamated Association instilled the values of artisanal republicanism. They scaled their message to the national level. Moreover, they mobilized their membership and the public to see the country divided into two distinct social classes: owners and workers. While the government's enforcements provided to industrialists damaged the Labor Movement, it also allowed for the sources of tension and strife to remain in place. Because of these factors, the efforts of the Labor Movement continued, slowly recovered, and spread from industrial sectors to service-based jobs.

### **The Philadelphia Streetcar Strike**

Shortly after the Labor Movement's defeat during the Homestead Strike, the country entered an economic recession in 1893. Many of the issues at the center of the movement remained: poor working conditions, corporate monopolies, financial instability, and job insecurity. The high rates of unemployment and the competition among laborers from all backgrounds to find work aggravated social divisions in American society. Attitudes of racism, nativism, xenophobia, and sexism within the Labor Movement made it challenging for laborers across different backgrounds to see themselves collectively during the late 1800s and early 1900s. For example, many labor unions barred women from joining their organizations. Racist attitudes led to discrimination against African American and immigrant workers. While the Knights of Labor welcomed African American workers, it lobbied strongly to support the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, as the labor union saw Chinese immigrant railroad workers as unfair non-union competition.<sup>23</sup> Despite these social divisions along the lines of race, ethnicity, and gender, the Labor Movement gained support as the economy grew during the turn of the twentieth century.

The country's economy bounced back as politicians and business leaders focused on implementing policies that were friendly to big businesses. As large companies grew their market shares, more laborers entered the workforce and joined labor unions. The rise in labor union membership was, in part, attributed to the public's perception of the cozy relationship between the country's corporate leaders and political establishment. As a result, labor union membership soared nationwide. The dramatic increase in labor union membership

occurred in a variety of job sectors, including the railroad, newspaper, agricultural, mining, and pottery industries.<sup>24</sup> Although the Labor Movement suffered setbacks during the late nineteenth century, it was clear that the movement successfully created a national identity of class among laborers. The shared identity among laborers served as a catalyst that allowed the fight for workers' rights to permeate from the industrial sector to the service sector.

Philadelphia illustrated the transition from the Labor Movement into service-based jobs. Made up of dozens of local neighborhoods, each with its form of local governance, Philadelphia formed as one city during the Consolidation of 1854. Shortly after, the city developed an infrastructure plan to efficiently connect the neighborhoods to create a sense of community and improve commerce. The new plan relied on horse-drawn streetcars and steam-powered commuter trains.<sup>25</sup> With the Pennsylvania Railroad and Baldwin Locomotive Works headquartered in Philadelphia, it was not surprising that the city became home to an elaborate streetcar transit system that shifted away from horse-powered cars to new technologies in the form of cable and electric cars. The technological innovations that came shortly after the Consolidation of 1854 emerged during a period of intense competition in Philadelphia's streetcar industry.<sup>26</sup> However, the small companies that contributed to Philadelphia's increasing streetcar ridership and track expansion merged under the control of one monopoly streetcar company: the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company (RTC).

At the turn of the twentieth century, Philadelphia's transit system and local politics were no exception to the tensions between laborers and ownership nationwide. The RTC was not new to dealing with anger from its workers. After all, the RTC dealt with a series of strikes in 1895 and 1909 with its transit workers. Workers were not the only ones growing dissatisfied with the city's public transportation company; riders showed frustration over road maintenance issues, increases in fare prices, and other service and maintenance issues.<sup>27</sup> Much of the public's discontent with the RTC's management of the city's public transportation system originated from the new contract the city's politicians negotiated with the public transportation monopoly.

The RTC and city administrators agreed to a new contract in 1907, which included a payment made by the RTC to the city in exchange for relief from road repair and snow removal. The contract also stated that the RTC would have a monopoly on all future railway projects until 1957. Not only did service worsen as a result, but Mayor John E. Reyburn—a member of the city's corrupt Republican Party—incurred a significant amount of financial responsibility for the city.<sup>28</sup> In addition to negotiating the new transit contract, the city's Republican Party leadership attempted to sway public opinion about the Labor Movement by bringing Billy Sunday, a Christian evangelical preacher, to Philadelphia.

Members of the Sunday Campaign Committee met to invite Billy Sunday to "regenerate Philadelphia" through his Christian sermons.<sup>29</sup> The committee included forty-four business leaders, including "such names as Bonsall, McQuilken, Drexel Biddle, Stotesbury, John Wanamaker, Ball," and others.<sup>30</sup> These names described Philadelphia's elite commercial and political leadership class, representing bankers, lawyers, businessmen, the Union League Club, the University of Pennsylvania, Girard College, Temple University, and the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>31</sup> Together, these leaders wished to address Philadelphia's "materialistic reforms" through Christianity, defeat unionization efforts, and help elect the Republican Party.<sup>32</sup> Like other religious leaders at the time, Sunday pointed to urban saloons, working-class neighborhood conditions, and crime as reasons for a moral awakening. However, the city's business and political leadership did not make these claims about the high-end clubs where they drank privately.<sup>33</sup> The city's commercial and political leadership saw these issues as a moral problem, while the working class viewed them as an economic issue.

As tensions between the elites of the Republican Party and the city's workers grew, disputes between streetcar workers and the RTC intensified. The local labor union, the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America, aimed to establish an eight-hour workday, raise wages, and provide the Amalgamated Association with the exclusive right to negotiate with the RTC.<sup>34</sup> In response to an escalation in negotiations with the Amalgamated Association, the RTC laid off one hundred seventy-three workers who had unionized under the transit system's labor union. The layoffs were intentional, as the RTC and the local Republican Party hoped to win the municipal elections by delaying a strike.<sup>35</sup> After learning about the layoffs, the streetcar union called for a strike.

Local union leaders understood that they needed the public's support. The nature of operating trolley cars in Philadelphia allowed transit workers to spread the word to Philadelphia residents. In the public's eyes, the local Republican Party already built a reputation of being corrupt. The frustration over issues of hikes in fare prices and road maintenance provided no remedy to everyday Philadelphians. Mayor Reyburn publicly stated that the city's police force would act as strikebreakers to support the RTC, so the Amalgamated Association understood the strike would likely turn violent. Although the streetcar union's leadership understood that they likely had the public's support, the Amalgamated Association told radical groups such as the anarchists and socialists—which had grown in popularity but splintered the Labor Movement's cohesiveness—to stay away from the strike. Ultimately, the labor union's leadership was unable to prevent the participation of anarchists, but it would have been quite challenging to avoid violence as attitudes intensified in Philadelphia.

Strikers damaged streetcars and depots with the use of physical force and dynamite (see Figure 3).<sup>36</sup> Depots became a target of union workers on strike as this was where the transit company brought in non-union workers to keep operations functioning. The RTC fed and housed the non-union workers, which only aggravated strikers more.<sup>37</sup> As tensions escalated during the strike, the city's police force quickly met the strikers with bullets and brute force.



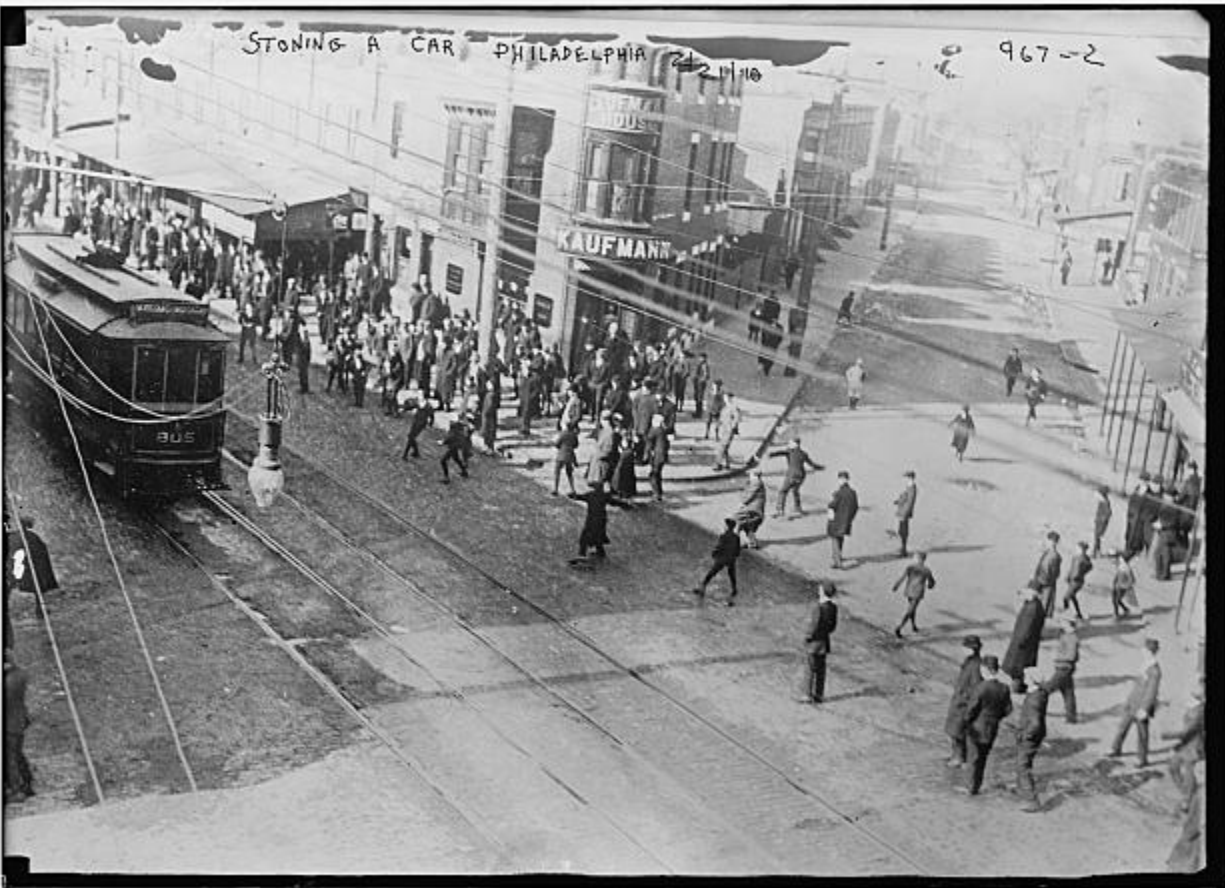


Figure 3: The photograph shows strikers on Kensington Avenue throwing rocks at a Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company streetcar. The rioters targeted equipment and property during the strike.

Source: *Rioters Charging a Car, Kensington Avenue, Philadelphia—The Car Was Wrecked*, Library of Congress, February 21, 1910, photographic print, <https://www.loc.gov/item/97504553/>.

The violence between the two sides quickly made its way into the national debate of the Labor Movement. Politicians, newspaper journalists, labor union leaders, anarchists, socialists, and the public weighed in on the debate. For example, President Kruger of the American Federation of Labor claimed the streetcar union chose “anarchy over arbitration.”<sup>38</sup> His statements echoed the ideology put forth by Powderly just a few decades earlier. Kruger continued speaking of the streetcar strike when he stated, “There was no necessity at all for the loss of a life or the mutilation of a limb in the situation that existed between the streetcar men and their employers in Philadelphia.”<sup>39</sup> To the dismay of the Amalgamated Association, anarchists participated in the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike. In addition to worrying about the criticism from national labor union leaders and the participation of anarchist groups, union leadership in Philadelphia also drew attention from the socialists. Eugene V. Debs, while calling the strike a “magnificent body of fighting industrialists,” criticized the leadership of the Amalgamated Association. Debs wrote:

The weakness of the strike—the essential weakness of every craft union strike—lay in the fact that it was concerned wholly with securing nominal concessions under the wage system, instead of being also directed against the system itself. Any strike which lacks the conscious aim to overthrow the wage system, however bravely it may be fought, or however favorable may seem

the outcome, is certain in the long run to prove more or less barren of substantial results.

A body of blind strikers, blind as to the ultimate aim of what they are striking for, never really won a victory, even though victory be conceded. A body of class-conscious strikers who fight for temporary advantages only as a means of strengthening their position in the struggle for freedom never encounter a defeat, even if their strike is lost.<sup>40</sup>

The divisions within the Labor Movement illustrated the early challenges the movement had. In addition to the opposition the Amalgamated Association faced from Mayor Reyburn and the RTC, the streetcar union also faced backlash from leaders that were, in principle, supposed to be supportive. Despite these obstacles, labor union leaders in Philadelphia successfully harnessed the energy of the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike to build a class-conscious effort that led to sympathy strikes locally and nationally.

In many ways, the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike mirrored the Homestead Strike on the other side of the state just eighteen years prior. Both labor unions encompassed workers from an entire sector, not just workers that held a particular skillset. The steel union and the streetcar union each worked to address wages, working conditions, and work shifts—goals that previous Labor Movement leaders such as Powderly argued to instill the values of artisanal republicanism. It was clear that the beginnings of the Labor Movement at Homestead affected the actions taken by labor union leadership in Philadelphia. The class-conscious identity that the Labor Movement successfully created in the decades before the events in Philadelphia overflowed from the industrial sector to service-based jobs. The Philadelphia Streetcar Strike proved its force when sympathy strikes across other job sectors occurred locally in Philadelphia.

### **The General Strike of 1910**

The partnership between the RTC and the city's leadership angered the Amalgamated Association and frustrated city residents and other workers. As the early beginnings of the Labor Movement demonstrated, laborers began to see how they shared a class-based identity with workers outside of their factories and industries altogether. The case was no different in Philadelphia, where the streetcar union called for sympathy strikes to show solidarity among the city's working-class.

Locally, the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike prompted laborers across the city to walk out of their jobs through sympathy strikes. These groups included textile factory workers, bricklayers, dairy wagon drivers, cab drivers, and others.<sup>41</sup> The Amalgamated Association's pressure on city leadership and the RTC also triggered votes for transit workers state- and nationwide to vote on a sympathy strike. Laborers in cities such as Reading and Wilkes-Barre considered striking in Pennsylvania, while the manufacturing cities of Trenton and Detroit considered it nationally.<sup>42</sup> The unity among the city's working-class demonstrated the class-consciousness the Labor Movement achieved and the discontent among everyday residents with the political leadership at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

The employees of Baldwin Locomotive Works illustrated one of the most interesting effects of the strike. The locomotive company was known for breaking up unions. John Reed, an American journalist and a member of the Communist Party, wrote:

In Baldwin's they use the infamous piece-work contract system, by which a man with a family sometimes makes \$13 a week; laborers work ten hours for \$1,50 a day; there is compulsory Sick Benefit Association, which does away with damage suits for injury or death. The plant is congested and so few are the safeguards that the Garretson Hospital is kept busy with the great



number of injured workers that are constantly taken there from the Baldwin Works. Strike after strike, broken with private detectives, armed guards, the black list, testify to the workers' hopeless fight for the right to organize. I heard the tragic story of 1910, when the city police stood in the middle of the street and shot into the factory windows. The strikers won; pledges were solemnly given by the Baldwin Locomotive Company, and most of the other large plants around the city, that the men should be allowed to form unions in the shops, that they should deal with their employees collectively through elected committees, and that no one should be discharged because he belonged to a union.<sup>43</sup>

As a response to the sympathy strike held by employees of the locomotive company, Baldwin Locomotive Works ultimately laid thousands of union workers off and moved their headquarters from Philadelphia's Center City location to a less populated neighborhood on the city's outskirts. The company also hired younger workers in place of the unionized workers they dismissed, assuming that young workers would be less likely to unionize.<sup>44</sup> The ripple effects of the streetcar strike were apparent—the streetcar labor union's leadership built support from the public and among Philadelphia's working class. This support led to a general strike involving cities to the north and west of Philadelphia.

As tensions between streetcar workers and police intensified, the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike gained national recognition. For example, union members of the Central Labor Union. *The Atlanta Constitution* reported on the events when the Georgia-based paper wrote:

Between 30,000 and 75,000 union workers on strike, 100 different branches on industry affected and a renewal of rioting, in which two men were shot is the situation which confronts Philadelphia tonight. The sympathetic strike which was called by the Central Labor Union and the Allied Building Trades' Council in an effort to force the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company to arbitrate the differences with its striking employees, is in full swing. The labor leaders claim it will gather force.<sup>45</sup>

The newspaper coverage *The Atlanta Constitution* offered was not alone. Prominent newspapers in industrial cities such as *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The New York Times*, and *The Baltimore Sun* also covered the strife in Philadelphia. The sympathy strikes turned into a general strike which effectively shut down the city. The general strike cost the RTC a potential gain of hundreds of thousands of dollars in gross income and thousands of dollars in ridership from fares.<sup>46</sup> After multiple weeks of profit loss and violence, the streetcar union successfully negotiated a new deal with the RTC.

The Philadelphia Streetcar Strike lasted from January 18 to April 19.<sup>47</sup> The new contract reached with the RTC included freezing trolley fares and rehiring previously dismissed union workers.<sup>48</sup> The early beginnings of the Labor Movement began in the country's railroad, steel, and locomotive industries but ultimately spilled into other job sectors, including service-based jobs. Despite early obstacles and challenges, labor unions successfully incorporated values of artisanal republicanism into a national social movement. The strides made during the early stages of the Labor Movement provided a foundation for the movement's future success throughout the middle of the twentieth century.

### **Questions for the Immediate Future**

“Ordinary middle-class Americans built America.” – Joseph R. Biden

The beginnings of the Labor Movement led to the defeat of labor unions at key junctions during the Haymarket Square Affair, Homestead Strike, and Pullman Strike. Despite these well-known defeats, the movement for workers' rights showed its ability to organize and provide a foundation for future generations of workers to build upon during the World Wars. The final years of the twentieth century showed a stark contrast to the Labor Movement's most successful era. When the country entered World War One, it sparked rapid economic expansion as the wartime economic boom required a strong, sustainable, and efficient manufacturing sector. In turn, America's dependence on its manufacturing sector required disputes between ownership and laborers to be kept to a minimum.<sup>49</sup> Because of this, labor unions advanced their agenda and gained several vital policies. The victories during World War One spearheaded the Labor Movement's success throughout the Roaring Twenties. Although the Great Depression brought large waves of unemployment for America's workforce, World War Two brought another production boom to the United States. The Roosevelt Administration's New Deal program further strengthened the Labor Movement, as the White House and Congress worked together to pass legislation to protect workers and create public works agencies.<sup>50</sup> Labor union membership reached record highs in the years following World War Two and illustrated the achievements of the Labor Movement. However, the country's changing political landscape brought with it uncertainty for America's workforce.

The economic policies of Keynesianism washed away with the emergence of the economic recessions of the 1970s. Although the decline of wealth inequality and the rise of labor union membership correlates almost precisely, a new Neoliberalism ideology and the economic forces of automation and outsourcing weakened the political strength of unions (see Figure 4). As a result, the Labor Movement weakened, and labor union membership fell in droves.

FIGURE B

## As union membership declines, income inequality rises

Union membership and share of income going to the top 10%, 1917–2017

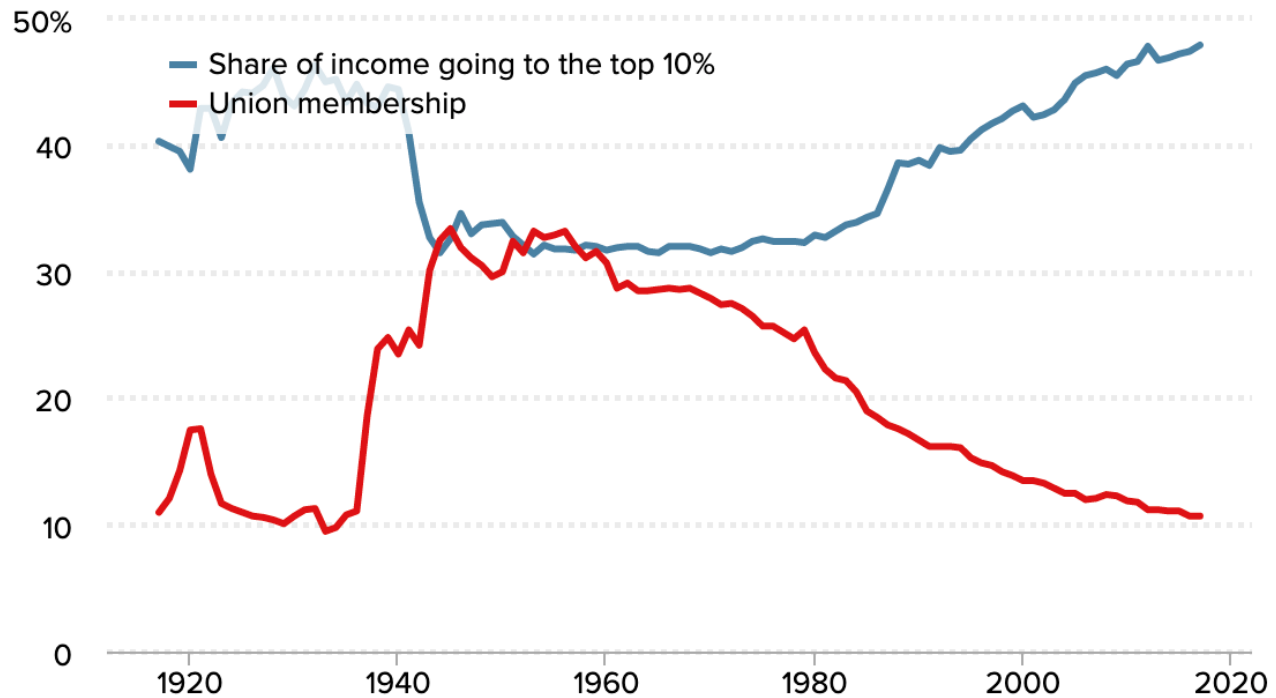


Chart Data

**Sources:** Data on union density follows the composite series found in Historical Statistics of the United States; updated to 2017 from unionstats.com. Income inequality (share of income to top 10%) data are from Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez, “Income Inequality in the United States, 1913–1998,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 118, no. 1 (2003), and updated data from the Top Income Database, updated March 2019.

**Economic Policy Institute**

Figure 4: Published by the *Economic Policy Institute*, economist Heidi Shierholz reviews the data of the rise and fall of labor union membership in the United States. The authors show how wealth inequality has a closely correlated relationship with labor union membership. Today’s high wealth inequality rates are higher than the levels of wealth inequality during the Gilded Age.

Source: Shierholz, Heidi. “Working People Have Been Thwarted in Their Efforts to Bargain for Better Wages by Attacks on Unions.” *Economic Policy Institute*. August 27, 2019. <https://www.epi.org/publication/labor-day-2019-collective-bargaining/>.

Since the late 1970s, wealth inequality has risen to levels higher than that of the Gilded Age. A recent series of financial crises, a rise in business-friendly legislation, and stagnant wages have pushed economic issues to the forefront of political debate. While the politics of labor is undoubtedly a well-known issue, politicians such

as Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren that embrace the idea of a worker-based national identity have often fallen short of achieving their party's nomination compared to their more moderate counterparts like Joe Biden.

Speaking to the audience in July 2019 during the Democratic presidential debate, then-presidential candidate Joe Biden juxtaposed his view of American economic history with Donald Trump, the Republican incumbent. When clarifying comments Joe Biden made regarding receiving campaign contributions from wealthy donors, Biden asserted that laborers he grew up with in Scranton, Pennsylvania created the American economy. The soon-to-be Democratic nominee depicted President Donald J. Trump believing the economy was not built by the working class but by those on Wall Street.<sup>51</sup> The sentiment of this claim was visible in Biden's economic policy proposals on the campaign trail as each candidate attempted to tackle issues of wealth inequality, tax reform, and financial insecurity. Ultimately, Biden succeeded in unseating incumbent President Trump, as much of the contentious debate between the candidates centered on the COVID-19 Pandemic and the ensuing economic recession.

Of course, economic policy has long been a critical aspect of the debate in the American political forum, and politicians have proposed various types of economic plans to mobilize voters. For example, in the 2016 General Election, the national media paid close attention to the white working-class voting bloc in Kenosha, Wisconsin and Erie, Pennsylvania. Many wondered why swing-state voters supported protectionist economic policies that Trump campaigned on in 2016. However, it was clear that Trump's "Make America Great Again" campaign slogan appealed to laborers that suffered from the consequences of the automation and outsourcing of much of the country's manufacturing sector. Thus, many pundits focused on Biden's ability to peel off voters from Trump to build the "Blue Wall"—Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania—in the 2020 General Election. Focusing on why President Trump's campaign platform appealed to so many voters—particularly among lifelong Democrats—illustrates the importance of learning about the Labor Movement's history and development of the nation's working- and middle-classes.

The foundations of the early beginnings of the Labor Movement remain apparent today. Many artisanal republican values show in how Americans and politicians view work and the working class. In the same speech Joe Biden gave during a presidential debate, Biden said, "My Dad used to have an expression. He said, "Joe, a job is about a lot more than just a paycheck. It's about your dignity. It's about respect. It's being able to look your kid in the eye and say it's going to be okay."<sup>52</sup> Biden continued to reference the spirit of the Labor Movement after assuming office as President of the United States. Amid an effort among Amazon warehouse workers in Alabama to unionize, Joe Biden issued a statement on Twitter defending and promoting the workers' actions. He pointed to the legality of Amazon in interfering with laborers holding a vote to unionize.<sup>53</sup> Although the Amazon workers' efforts failed, Biden's public statement suggests that the White House's agenda on workers' rights favors the working- and middle-class more than the country's wealthiest individuals. It is difficult to predict how economic policy will look in the coming years, but the lessons learned from the Labor Movement provide insight into examining the human condition of laborers in moments of strife.

Not only do the comments Biden made regarding those responsible for building the American economy highlight the importance of understanding the tension and strife between business owners and laborers, but they are also crucial to understand how economic policy affects the nation's political landscape. Without understanding the impact of the Industrial Revolution, Gilded Age, and Labor Movement, it can be challenging to grasp contemporary political issues such as the Financial Crisis of 2008, Tea Party Movement, and COVID-19 Pandemic. While these watershed moments have often been chronicled in how they affect social

groups, they affect individual lives. Ultimately, it is important to understand history and economics, not as a pile of textbooks and a series of graphs and charts, but as methods of analyzing the human condition.

## Teaching Strategies

---

The following teaching strategies are listed and described below to ensure students correctly understand the unit's concepts. This is not an exhaustive list for this curriculum unit.

### Analyzing Film and Text

Students will rely on notes from lectures and document studies to learn about the intricacies of the Labor Movement. Students will primarily rely on modified primary sources and notes from lectures. These sources are more accessible for students to comprehend than the difficult (and often lengthy) literature written on the Industrial Revolution, Gilded Age, and Labor Movement. Nonetheless, these sources will be paired with excerpts from more challenging readings from various authors to enhance student understanding. For example, students will read primary source documents from laborers in Philadelphia while watching episodes from *The History Channel's "Men Who Built America"* TV series. Documents such as these are crucial for students to understand how working conditions impacted the lives of individual workers. Students will analyze the argument that each source is making, as many of these sources glorify or villainize the role of industrial magnates.

### Class Discussions and Debates

To demonstrate their understanding, students will engage in class discussions and debates. After they understand the events that led to the Labor Movement, students can assign blame or responsibility for each party: industrial magnates, the federal government, individual laborers, immigrants, labor unions, and others. Students will read sources that assign blame differently. Students will then engage in a class debate or discussion to explain whom they believe most contributed to the economic growth of the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. After this, students can grade the government's role in regulating the economy throughout the Industrial Revolution. Students will be able to choose more than just one responsible party to demonstrate how they understand the complexity of the Labor Movement altogether.

### Multimillionaire Manifesto

Lastly, students will compose a manifesto. As part of the activity, students must read an excerpt from Andrew Carnegie's *Gospel of Wealth*. Students will then consider the examples of the present-day "Barons of Industry" by comparing Carnegie's philosophy to the choices and practices of modern-day figures like Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, Tim Cook, or Sundar Pichai. Afterward, students will reflect on the unit by writing their own manifesto to manage their future millions. Students must answer the following questions in their two-paragraph response: How would/should you treat your workers? What responsibility (if any) do you have to your community? Country? Planet? Student responses may include but are not limited to the following topics: minimum wage, workers' benefits, labor unions, workers' compensation, OSHA, health/safety for workers, philanthropy, technology and innovation, vertical and horizontal integration, environmental issues, and others.

## Classroom Activities

---

The following classroom activities are listed and described below to ensure that students understand the unit's concepts properly. This is not an exhaustive list for this curriculum unit. (Note: SWBAT = Students will be able to; IOT= in order to).

### Barons of Industry Political Cartoon Analyzation

#### Objective:

SWBAT analyze political cartoons IOT recognize the economic inequality and political corruption of the Gilded Age.

#### Materials:

- *The Trust Giant's Point of View. "What a Funny Little Government."* Library of Congress. Photo. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96507002/>.

#### Procedure:

Students will analyze the political cartoon. They will then answer questions to identify who the cartoonist believes controls the government, what symbols the illustrator includes, and if industrial magnates such as John D. Rockefeller are captains of industry or robber barons.

### Perspectives on Striking Document Stations

#### Objective:

SWBAT read a series of primary sources IOT understand the attitudes of industrialists, politicians, and laborers regarding calling a strike during the Labor Movement.

#### Materials:

- "Against the Union Men: HC Frick Is Fighting the Amalgamated Association." *Chicago Daily Tribune*. Chicago, IL. July 3, 1892.
- "Anarchy Chosen, Says Gompers: Labor Leader Discusses Philadelphia Strike." *The Atlanta Constitution*. Atlanta, GA. March 6, 1910.
- Reed, John. "Back of Billy Sunday." *Metropolitan Magazine*. April 1915.
- "Philadelphia in Grip of Sympathetic Strike; Thousands of Men Out: Labor Leaders Estimate that 75,000 Workmen Are Resting from Their Labors." *The Atlanta Constitution*. Atlanta, GA. March 5, 1910.
- "Philadelphia Rapid Transit: Earnings Show the Effect of the Strike of Last Spring." *Wall Street Journal*. New York, NY. September 22, 1910.

#### Procedure:

Students will read a series of excerpts from primary sources. The compilation of documents includes perspectives from labor union leaders, industrialists, socialists, communists, and laborers. After determining the values and limitations of each document's origin, purpose, and content, students will be asked to write a



free response analyzing how participants of the Labor Movement felt about using a strike.

## **Multimillionaire Manifesto**

### **Objective:**

SWBAT read an excerpt from Andrew Carnegie's *The Gospel of Wealth* IOT compare the philanthropic views and business practices of the most prominent business owners of the Gilded Age and today's world.

### **Materials:**

- Carnegie, Andrew. "The Gospel of Wealth." Last modified July 22, 2021.  
<https://www.carnegie.org/about/our-history/gospelofwealth/>

### **Procedure:**

First, students will read an excerpt from Carnegie's views on philanthropy. Then, students will select two billionaires from a predetermined list. For each billionaire, students must explain the business owner's views on philanthropy and their business practices. After completing this section, students will draft their manifesto, which details how they believe they would conduct their company and make philanthropic contributions if they were a multimillionaire. Students will be asked to draw references to the Labor Movement while speaking about labor unions, tax reform, minimum wage, working conditions, and more.

## **Resources**

---

This unit plan required several resources, and they are listed below by category: for teachers, students, classroom use, and resources specific to Pennsylvania and Philadelphia.

### **Annotated Bibliography for Teachers**

Clark, Christopher, et al. "Community and Conflict: Working People Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1877-1893" in *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History 1877 to the Present*. New York: Worth Publishers, 2000. Clark details how industrial capitalism affected daily life among America's urban and rural working-class.

Clark, Christopher, et al. "The Producing Classes and the Money Power - A Decade of Hard Times, Struggle, and Defeat 1893-1904" in *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History 1877 to the Present*. New York: Worth Publishers, 2000. In this chapter, Clark explains the major defeats of the Labor Movement during the late nineteenth century..

Helgeson, Jeffrey. "American Labor and Working-Class History, 1900-1945." Last modified July 22, 2021.  
<https://oxfordre.com/americanhistorical/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-330>. Helgeson provides a detailed overview of the Labor Movement ranging from its beginnings to the years following World War Two.

Ostreicher, Richard. "Terence V. Powderly, the Knights of Labor, and Artisanal Republicanism" in *Labor*

*Leaders in America*. Edited by Melvin Dubofsky and Warren Van Time. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987. Ostreicher writes a biography that goes into depth of Powderly and the Knights of Labor's rise and fall during the Industrial Revolution in the United States' railroad industry.

### **Student Reading List**

"Against the Union Men: HC Frick Is Fighting the Amalgamated Association." *Chicago Daily Tribune*. Chicago, IL. July 3, 1892. This newspaper article captures the tensions between Henry Clay Frick and the Amalgamated Association during the Homestead Strike.

"Anarchy Chosen, Says Gompers: Labor Leader Discusses Philadelphia Strike." *The Atlanta Constitution*. Atlanta, GA. March 6, 1910. *The Atlanta Constitution* covers the thoughts prominent labor leaders had on the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike.

Carnegie, Andrew. "The Gospel of Wealth." Last modified July 22, 2021. <https://www.carnegie.org/about/our-history/gospelofwealth/>. This website provides the text of Andrew Carnegie's view on philanthropy.

"Philadelphia in Grip of Sympathetic Strike; Thousands of Men Out: Labor Leaders Estimate that 75,000 Workmen Are Resting from Their Labors." *The Atlanta Constitution*. Atlanta, GA. March 5, 1910. This article discusses how workers across various job sectors participated in sympathy strikes.

"Philadelphia Rapid Transit: Earnings Show the Effect of the Strike of Last Spring." *Wall Street Journal*. New York, NY. September 22, 1910. *The Wall Street Journal* shows the economic consequences the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike had on the Rapid Transit Company.

Reed, John. "Back of Billy Sunday." *Metropolitan Magazine*. April 1915. Reed, an American Journalist and a member of the Communist Party, records his interviews about how Philadelphia leaders raised funds for Billy Sunday to deliver sermons throughout the city.

### **List of Materials for Classroom Use**

Biden, Joseph R. "Workers in Alabama—and all across America—are voting on whether to organize a union in their workplace. It's a vitally important choice—one that should be made without intimidation or threats by employers. Every worker should have a free and fair choice to join a union." Twitter. February 28, 2021. <https://twitter.com/potus/status/1366191901196>. President Biden delivers an address via Twitter that endorses the right of Amazon warehouse workers to unionize.

Counsman, Randy, writer, et al. *The Men Who Build America*. Directed by Patrick Reams and Ruán Magan, featuring David Donahoe, Matt Boliek, Adam Jonas Segaller, Cary Donaldson, John C. Bailey, Eric Rolland, Justin Morck. Aired 2012, in broadcast syndication. The History Channel, 2012, TV. This series documents the contributions individual magnates had during the Gilded Age.

Joe Biden: "Ordinary Middle-Class Americans Built America." *Politico*. June 27, 2019, video. 1:28. <https://www.politico.com/video/2019/06/27/biden-2020-debate-068402>. Biden compared his vision of American economic history to that of incumbent President Donald Trump as a candidate.

Shierholz, Heidi. "Working People Have Been Thwarted in Their Efforts to Bargain for Better Wages by Attacks on Unions." *Economic Policy Institute*. August 27, 2019.

<https://www.epi.org/publication/labor-day-2019-collective-bargaining/>. This economist provides a graph that visualizes the correlation between labor union membership and wealth inequality in the United States.

Piketty, Thomas and Emmanuel Saez. "Top Incomes and the Great Recession: Recent Evolutions and Policy Implications." *IMF Economic Review* 61, no. 3 (2003): 463. Economists Piketty and Saez present information regarding wealth inequality following the Financial Crisis of 2008.

*The Trust Giant's Point of View. "What a Funny Little Government."* Library of Congress. 1900. Photo. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96507002/>. This political cartoon criticizes the political influence industrialists such as John D. Rockefeller had during the Gilded Age.

### **Resources Specific to Pennsylvania and Philadelphia**

AFL-CIO. "1892 Homestead Strike." Last modified July 22, 2021.

<https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-events/1892-homestead-strike>. This webpage provides a brief overview of the Homestead Strike.

"All Philadelphia Unions Vote to Strike: Plan for Sympathetic Walkout Involving 125,000 Workers." *San Francisco Chronicle*. San Francisco, CA. February 28, 1910. *The San Francisco Chronicle* explains the developments of sympathy strikes during the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike.

Burgoyne, Andrew G. *Homestead: A Complete History of the Struggle of July, 1892, between the Carnegie Steel Company, Limited, and the Amalgamated Association of Iron Workers*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1893. Burgoyne provides an exhaustive and detailed account of the events of the Homestead Strike.

Casper, Amanda. "Row Houses." Last modified July 22, 2021.

<https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/row-houses/>. Casper explains the development and use of row houses in Philadelphia.

"Company Accepts Philadelphia Car Strike Agreement: Men Are Expected to Return to Work Tomorrow Following Accession to Compromise at Session Today." *The Christian Science Memoir*. Boston, MA. June 4, 1909. A journalist in Boston covers the agreements between the Rapid Transit Company and the streetcar union after weeks of strikes and riots.

Conway, Jr., Thomas. "Street Railways in Philadelphia Since 1900." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. September 1904. Conway provides a brief history of Philadelphia's public transportation system.

"Day of Disorder in Philadelphia: Riots in Very Heart of City." *New York Tribune*. New York, NY. March 1910. *The New York Tribune* recounts the riots that took place during the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike.

"Few New Developments in Strike Situation as Peace Movement Marks Time." *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia, PA. March 17, 1910. *The Inquirer* records the daily events the strike in Philadelphia had on everyday life.

Hepp, John. "Public Transportation." Last modified July 22, 2021.

<https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/public-transportation/>. Hepp writes about the history of Philadelphia's public transportation system.

“Industrial Unionism and the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike” in *New York Call*, vol. 3, no. 158. June 7, 1910. Eugene V. Debs criticizes the union leadership during the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike.

Kornacki, Julianne. “General Strike of 1910.” Last modified July 22, 2021. <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/general-strike-of-1910/>. This webpage provides a summary of the transit strike in Philadelphia.

*The Labor Troubles at Homestead, Pennsylvania—Attack of the Strikers and Their Sympathizers on the Surrendered Pinkerton Men*, Library of Congress, July 14, 1892, photomechanical print, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96507002/>. The cover of this illustrated newspaper depicts the surrender of the Pinkerton Detective Agency during the Homestead Strike.

Lewis, Edwin O. “Philadelphia’s Relation to Rapid Transit Company.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Lewis describes the contract the Rapid Transit Company negotiated with the City of Philadelphia in 1907.

*Rioters Charging a Car, Kensington Avenue, Philadelphia—The Car Was Wrecked*. Library of Congress. February 21, 1910. Photographic print. <https://www.loc.gov/item/97504553/>. Rioters are shown stoning a streetcar on Kensington Avenue in this photo.

## Appendix on Implementing District Standards

---

Below is a list of standards from the social studies section of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Department of Education. These standards will be used as a guideline to allow students to think critically about the Labor Movement.

### **Civics and Government**

Standard - 5.2.U.B: Analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in society and government. Students will closely examine the tension between industrialists and laborers to examine the strife during the Labor Movement.

### **Economics**

Standard - 6.2.U.E: Analyze the impact of the business cycle on individual and group behavior over time. Analyze the characteristics of economic expansion, recession, and depression. Students will study the economic transformation of the United States that influenced labor relations.

### **History**

Standard - 8.1.U.B: Evaluate the interpretation of historical events and sources, considering the use of fact versus opinion, multiple perspectives, and cause and effect relationships. Students will assess primary and secondary sources in order to draw their conclusions about the Labor Movement.

Standard - 8.2.U.D: Evaluate how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations in Pennsylvania have influenced the growth and development of the US.

- Ethnicity and race
- Working conditions
- Immigration
- Military conflict
- Economic stability

Students will analyze how the Labor Movement appealed to and affected different demographical groups.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard Ostreicher, "Terence V. Powderly, the Knights of Labor, and Artisanal Republicanism," in *Labor Leaders in America*, ed. Melvin Dubofsky and Warren Van Time, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 30-61.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Clark, et al, "Community and Conflict: Working People Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1877—1893," in *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History 1877 to the Present*, (New York: Worth Publishers, 2000), 79.

<sup>3</sup> Amanda Casper, "Row Houses," last modified July 22, 2021, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/row-houses/>.

<sup>4</sup> Amanda Casper, "Row Houses," last modified July 22, 2021, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/row-houses/>.

<sup>5</sup> Clark, et al, "Community and Conflict," in *Who Built America?*, 76.

<sup>6</sup> Clark, et al, "Community and Conflict," in *Who Built America?*, 91.

<sup>7</sup> Ostreicher, "Terence V. Powderly, the Knights of Labor, and Artisanal Republicanism," in *Labor Leaders in America*, 36.

<sup>8</sup> Ostreicher, 44.

<sup>9</sup> Clark, et al, "Community and Conflict," in *Who Built America?*, 92.

<sup>10</sup> Clark, et al, 100.

<sup>11</sup> Clark, et al, 101.

<sup>12</sup> Ostreicher, "Terence V. Powderly, the Knights of Labor, and Artisanal Republicanism," in *Labor Leaders in America*, 52.

<sup>13</sup> "Against the Union Men: HC Frick Is Fighting the Amalgamated Association," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), July 3, 1892.

<sup>14</sup> Clark, et al, "Community and Conflict," in *Who Built America?*, 112.

<sup>15</sup> AFL-CIO, "1892 Homestead Strike," last modified July 22, 2021, <https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-events/1892-homestead-strike>.

<sup>16</sup> "Against the Union Men," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 3, 1892.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew G. Burgoyne, *Homestead: A Complete History of the Struggle of July, 1892, between the Carnegie Steel Company, Limited, and the Amalgamated Association of Iron Workers*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1893), 17-18.

<sup>18</sup> Burgoyne, *Homestead*, 19-20.

<sup>19</sup> Burgoyne, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Burgoyne, 21-22.

<sup>21</sup> Burgoyne, 63.

<sup>22</sup> Burgoyne, 112.

<sup>23</sup> Clark, et al, 101.

<sup>24</sup> Christopher Clark, et al, "The Producing Classes and the Money Power - A Decade of Hard Times, Struggle, and Defeat 1893-1904," in *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History 1877 to the Present*, (New York: Worth Publishers, 2000), 158.

<sup>25</sup> John Hepp, "Public Transportation," last modified July 22, 2021, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/public-transportation/>.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Conway, Jr., "Street Railways in Philadelphia Since 1900," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September 1904, 70-76.

<sup>27</sup> Julianne Kornacki, "General Strike of 1910," last modified July 22, 2021, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/general-strike-of-1910/>.

<sup>28</sup> Edwin O. Lewis, "Philadelphia's Relation to Rapid Transit Company," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 600-611.

<sup>29</sup> John Reed, "Back of Billy Sunday," *Metropolitan Magazine*, April 1915, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Reed, 9.

<sup>31</sup> Reed, 9.

<sup>32</sup> Reed, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Clark, et al, "Community and Conflict," in *Who Built America?*, 86.



<sup>34</sup> Kornacki, "General Strike of 1910."

<sup>35</sup> Kornacki, "General Strike of 1910."

<sup>36</sup> "All Philadelphia Unions Vote to Strike: Plan for Sympathetic Walkout Involving 125,000 Workers," *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, CA), February 28, 1910.

<sup>37</sup> "Day of Disorder in Philadelphia: Riots in Very Heart of City," *New York Tribune* (New York, NY), March, 1910.

<sup>38</sup> "Anarchy Chosen, Says Gompers: Labor Leader Discusses Philadelphia Strike," *The Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), March 6, 1910.

<sup>39</sup> "Anarchy Chosen, Says Gompers," March 6, 1910."

<sup>40</sup> "Industrial Unionism and the Philadelphia Streetcar Strike," in *New York Call*, vol. 3, no. 158 (June 7, 1910), 1.

<sup>41</sup> "Philadelphia in Grip of Sympathetic Strike; Thousands of Men Out: Labor Leaders Estimate that 75,000 Workmen Are Resting from Their Labors," *The Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA) March 5, 1910.

<sup>42</sup> "Few New Developments in Strike Situation as Peace Movement Marks Time," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, PA) March 17, 1910.

<sup>43</sup> Reed, "Back of Billy Sunday," *Metropolitan Magazine*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Reed, 9.

<sup>45</sup> "Philadelphia in Grip of Sympathetic Strike; Thousands of Men Out: Labor Leaders Estimate that 75,000 Workmen Are Resting from Their Labors," *The Atlanta Constitution*.

<sup>46</sup> "Philadelphia Rapid Transit: Earnings Show the Effect of the Strike of Last Spring," *Wall Street Journal* (New York, NY), September 22, 1910.

<sup>47</sup> Kornacki, "General Strike of 1910."

<sup>48</sup> "Company Accepts Philadelphia Car Strike Agreement: Men Are Expected to Return to Work Tomorrow Following Accession to Compromise at Session Today," *The Christian Science Memoir* (Boston, MA), June 4, 1909.

<sup>49</sup> Jeffrey Helgeson, "American Labor and Working-Class History, 1900-1945," last modified July 22, 2021, <https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-330>.

<sup>50</sup> Helgeson, "American Labor and Working-Class History, 1900-1945."

<sup>51</sup> Joe Biden: "Ordinary Middle-Class Americans Built America", *Politico*, June 27, 2019, video, 1:28 <https://www.politico.com/video/2019/06/27/biden-2020-debate-068402>.

<sup>52</sup> Joe Biden: “Ordinary Middle-Class Americans Built America,” *Politico*.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph R. Biden, “Workers in Alabama—and all across America—are voting on whether to organize a union in their workplace. It’s a vitally important choice—one that should be made without intimidation or threats by employers. Every worker should have a free and fair choice to join a union.” Twitter, February 28, 2021. <https://twitter.com/potus/status/1366191901196644354>.

---

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit [https://teachers.yale.edu/terms\\_of\\_use](https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use)