

**U.S. HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT II
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2009**

I. The Labor Movement

Factories first appeared in the United States during the late 1700s and early 1800s. The owners of these factories required people to work long hours at low pay. Buildings were poorly lighted and heated. Many jobs were dirty, monotonous, and dangerous. But if a worker complained, he was quickly replaced by one of the many persons looking for a job.

As time went on, some workers decided to join together and make demands as a group. It would be harder for the factory owner to replace a group of experienced workers rather than a single worker. Such an organization was called a "labor union." The union wanted higher wages, fewer hours of work, and better working conditions.

A number of weak local unions appeared during the late 1700s and early 1800s. But it was not until after the Civil War that stronger national unions were organized. These included the Knights of Labor, American Federation of Labor, and Congress of Industrial Organizations. The latter two unions eventually merged in 1955 to form the powerful AFL-CIO.



The First National Unions

Read the information on the chart below; then answer the questions which follow.

| Union/Founder/Year | Membership | Comments |
|---|---|--|
| Knights of Labor Uriah S. Stephens 1869 | Open to all workers, both skilled and unskilled. Reached a peak membership of 700,000 in 1885. | Took part in a number of railroad strikes, winning only one of them. Declined in importance after failing to win an 8-hour day, better pay, improved working conditions, and a limit on child labor. |
| American Federation of Labor (AFL) Samuel Gompers 1886 | Included only skilled workers belonging to particular crafts, such as machinists, carpenters, and plumbers. Therefore, the skilled workers in a factory belonged to different national unions. Reached 8 million members by 1955. | Favored settling disputes peacefully in order to avoid long, costly strikes. Objectives: higher pay, shorter hours, better working conditions, end of child labor, and limits on immigration. |
| Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) Led by John L. Lewis 1938 | Included all skilled and unskilled workers in a single industry, such as all automobile workers in the United States. Membership of 6 million in 1955. | Consisted of more than 30 industrial unions, including the automobile, steel, oil-refining, textile, and shipbuilding industries. Wanted higher pay and more fringe benefits for workers. |

Completion

- (1) The first important national labor union was the _____.
- (2) _____ founded the American Federation of Labor in 1886.
- (3) Only machinists, carpenters, plumbers, and skilled workers belonging to certain _____ could join the American Federation of Labor.
- (4) The Congress of Industrial Organizations permitted both skilled and unskilled workers of a particular _____ to belong to the union.
- (5) The American Federation of Labor and the _____ joined together to form the AFL-CIO in 1955.

I. The Labor Movement (continued)

True/False

- (6) _____ The Knights of Labor succeeded in achieving its goals.
- (7) _____ Uriah S. Stephens started the Congress of Industrial Organizations.
- (8) _____ American workers in the late 1800s encouraged immigration to the United States.
- (9) _____ One of the goals of the American labor movement was to gain more money for workers.
- (10) _____ John L. Lewis was an early leader of the CIO.

Labor-Management Relations

Early labor unions had a difficult time achieving their goals of higher pay, shorter hours, and improved working conditions. Factory owners were strongly against the formation of unions. They pressured the government to pass laws which restricted union activities. Federal troops were sometimes used to forcefully end strikes. Courts usually sided with factory owners, and ordered striking employees back to work. Workers at a factory who tried to start a union were regarded as troublemakers, and were often dismissed from their jobs.

Most early unions, including the Knights of Labor, failed to make significant gains and eventually disappeared. But the American Federation of Labor attracted large numbers of workers and made important progress toward its goals.

As unions grew in strength, labor (the workers) and management (the factory owners) used different tactics against each other. Some of the terms in the following sentences refer to measures taken by labor to put pressure on management. Others represent tactics used by management to limit the power and success of unions. Two terms refer to methods used to settle differences between the two sides. Fill in the spaces with the appropriate answers.

- (1) _____ Names of union activists are put on a **blacklist** and given to employers, who refuse to hire them.
- (2) _____ During a **lockout**, the factory is closed in order to force workers to give up their demands.
- (3) _____ People walking a **picket line** outside of a factory carry signs calling attention to a labor dispute. They discourage others from entering the plant.
- (4) _____ A worker signs a "**yellow-dog**" contract, in which he agrees not to join a union.
- (5) _____ Representatives of labor and management discuss the terms of a new contract during a **collective bargaining** session.
- (6) _____ Only union members may be hired at a **closed shop**.
- (7) _____ At a **union shop**, the factory owner can hire nonunion workers only if they agree to join the union within a certain period of time.
- (8) _____ Factory owners can hire nonunion workers as well as union members at an **open shop**.
- (9) _____ Employees refuse to work during a **strike**, because their demands have not been met.
- (10) _____ A fair-minded third party, through the process of **arbitration**, hears both labor and management in a dispute, then recommends an agreement.
- (11) _____ A court order, called an **injunction**, can be used to prohibit a strike or to order strikers back to work.
- (12) _____ During a **boycott**, consumers are urged not to buy goods from a company involved in a labor dispute.
- (13) _____ **Scabs** were hired to replace employees who went on strike.

II. Jacob Riis and New York Tenements

Jacob Riis learned about the slums of New York City while working as a newspaper reporter there during the late 1800s. His photographs and writings about living conditions among the poor helped bring about social reform. The primary source account which follows describes the rundown tenement district of the city. Similar conditions were found in other urban centers across the United States.

In the July nights, when the tenements are like fiery furnaces, men and women lie restless in sweltering rooms, panting for air and sleep. Then every truck in the street, every crowded fire-escape, becomes a bedroom, preferable to any the house affords. A cooling shower on such a night is hailed as a heaven-sent blessing.

Life in the tenements in July and August spells death to an army of little ones whom the doctor's skill is powerless to save. Sleepless mothers walk the streets in the gray of the early dawn trying to stir a cooling breeze to fan the brow of the sick baby. Fifty "summer doctors," especially trained to this work, are then sent into the tenements by the Board of Health, with free advice and medicine for the poor. Devoted women follow in their track with care and nursing for the sick. Fresh-air excursions run daily out of New York on land and water; but despite all efforts the gravediggers work overtime, and the little coffins are stacked mountain high on the deck of the Charity Commissioners' boat when it makes its semi-weekly trips to the city cemetery.

Under the most favorable circumstances, an epidemic, which the well-to-do can afford to make light of as a thing to be got over or avoided by reasonable care, is excessively fatal among the children of the poor, by reason of the practical impossibility of isolating the patient in a tenement. An epidemic of the measles ravaged three crowded blocks in Elizabeth Street on the heels of the grippe last winter, and when it had spent its fury, the death-maps in the Bureau of Vital Statistics looked as if a black hand had been laid across those blocks. There were houses in which as many as eight little children had died in five months.

I am satisfied from my own observation that hundreds of men, women, and children are every day slowly starving to death. Within a single week I have had this year three cases of insanity, provoked directly by poverty and want. One was that of a mother who in the middle of the night got up to murder her child, who was crying for food; another was the case of an Elizabeth Street truck-driver. With a family to provide for, he had been unable to work for many months. There was neither food, nor a scrap of anything upon which money could be raised left in the house; his mind gave way under the combined physical and mental suffering. In the third case I was just in time with the police to prevent a madman from murdering his whole family. He had the sharpened hatchet in his pocket when we seized him. He was an Irish laborer, and had been working in the sewers until the poisonous gases destroyed his health. Then he was laid off, and scarcely anything had been coming in all winter but the oldest child's earnings as cash-girl in a store, \$2.50 a week.

Writing Assignment: Describe those conditions which were the most unbearable for residents living in the slums of New York City in the late 1800s. (50-75 words)

III. U.S. History and Government Reading

You are responsible for Chapter 10 in *U.S. History and Government* (pages 267-292). Make sure you have read. If you do not have a book, let me know at your earliest convenience.