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In an attempt to predict the outcome of the revolution of students that is now occurring in the U.S., an analogy is drawn between a similar social revolution, the American labor union movement of 1870 to 1940. Both movements began as revolutions designed to gain equality and power for disenfranchised minorities. Although the issues disputed by labor-management differ in many respects from the demands of student rights, basic similarities in the social and political environments surrounding the emergence of both movements include: (1) Lack of support from the established political parties, (2) presence of some support from the intellectual community, and (3) generally hostile public reactions to the movements. The labor movement eventually achieved the right to bargain collectively as equals in return for their pledge to support the established American political and economic system. The analogy suggests that resolution of the student revolt will require both a recognition of equality among the participants and a communication process similar to collective bargaining. (JH)



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## THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE STUDENT REVOLT: AN ATTEMPT AT HISTORICAL ANALOGY

*by*

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## I INTRODUCTION

One characteristic common to all "revolutionary" periods, or periods of rapid social change, is that they are very confusing to the contemporary observer. The causes of this confusion are obvious. First, a social revolution has many of the aspects of an epidemic; it spreads quickly and widely and produces a bewildering collection of local variations. Second, a period of rapid and violent social change puts a premium on high visibility, on the ability to attract attention in spite of the surrounding confusion. This premium on visibility persuades the emerging leaders of change to differentiate themselves quickly both from their predecessors and from their competitors. For a short while this process of dramatic differentiation assures the new leaders the limelight of front-stage center. But the "while" is often very short indeed, as another crop of even newer leaders, with perhaps even more radical ideas, is waiting off-stage to make their appearance.

To the contemporary observer, this proliferation of new ideas and leaders simply heightens the confusion and darkens the outlook for the "significant outcome." Yet it is this "significant outcome" that provides the primary ethical justification for enduring the turmoil and violence of revolt. The belief that progress entails change, often violent change, is an enduring part of Western intellectual tradition, and particularly of American tradition.

Why is it necessary to know the significant outcome in advance? Can we not simply abide in the darkness, "wait until the dust has settled," and then step into a more glorious tomorrow? The answer is that the good and significant outcome of a social revolt is by no

means inevitable or necessary. In fact, the good that comes from a revolt probably owes its existence to society's recognition of the kernel of truth amidst the surrounding noise and confusion. Therefore, it is more than idle curiosity that prompts a society to predict or "forethink" the next step of social progress. The prediction of social change is an exercise in examining the alternatives of change and ranking these alternatives along some scale of value. In a progressive society, therefore, the future should correspond somewhat to an alternative selected yesterday.

The tools of social prediction are many; they range from intuition to computers. Historical analogy is one of these tools. It should be admitted at the outset that historical analogy is not a generally revered form of social prediction. In fact, it is quite likely that the very worst social, political, and economic predictions are often made in the name of "historical precedence," using a specious sort of parallelism that is tailored to justify the most arrant nonsense.

Yet historical analogy, if it is allied with both breadth of vision and depth of perception, can achieve unique insights that span the ages. Toynbee's work, for instance, owes most of its permanent value to the author's structuring insights, which he achieved through historical analogy. The difference between this profound accomplishment and the many lesser examples of historical analogy lies simply in the quality of thought; and this is a matter of judgment completely subject to the decision of the reader.

The particular historical analogy that is attempted in this paper will be to draw parallels between the rise of the labor union movement in America, a social revolution that occurred primarily between 1870 and 1940, and the multifaceted revolution of students, blacks, and other disenfranchised minorities that is now occurring. Throughout this

paper, constant reference will be made to similarities and dissimilarities of the two revolutions and time periods. Yet before this is done, the primary reason for attempting this particular analogy needs to be stated. It is simply that both revolutions, in spite of the many differences, deal with the attempts of disenfranchised minorities to gain equality and power. It is generally recognized among historians that the quest for an ever broader based notion of equality, for the realization of the "true" democracy, is indeed a continuing thread in our history. Thus, the two revolutions compared here are not merely comparable in a vague and distant sense, but are, in effect, two stages in a single development. They are both aspects of the yet unfulfilled American Dream.

## II THE THESIS

The trade union movement in America, in the beginning, shared the diversity of most revolutionary movements. This diversity extended from methods to ideology and from philosophical origins to future remedies. Anarchists, social reformers, syndicalists, Marxists, all were among the early leaders of trade unions in this country.

Yet, in spite of this diversity of beginning, the "American trade union" as it emerged from 1930 on was a fairly homogeneous product, particularly if one considers the sheer size and numbers of the movement. Gone were most of the syndicalists and anarchists, gone were most of the social reformers who sought to replace capitalism with "cooperatives," and soon even most of the devoted Marxists would depart from the movement. The surviving successful leaders--Samuel Gompers, Matt Woll, William Green, John L. Lewis, and others--fell into a far narrower spectrum of diversity. There were still enough differences among them--ideological, methodological, and personal--to make the history of the American labor union movement a very lively and discussion-heavy affair to this day. Yet, in spite of their differences, they shared a basic pattern.

This narrowing of the spectrum of diversity had many causes. Every revolutionary movement produces in its early stages exotic radical fringes that, from the outset, are designed primarily to call attention to the leaders involved rather than to "succeed" in a realistic sense. Also, much of the special color of the early trade union movement was produced by European immigrants from Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and England, who provided a great proportion of the leadership from 1870 to 1910.



As the melting-pot process continued, these early and distinctly foreign influences began to disappear.

But perhaps the most important factor that caused the narrowing of the basic pattern of American trade unionism was the growing recognition among the surviving and successful leaders that the entire movement could succeed, provided that certain basic formative issues were settled in a way that seemed to be consistent with the aspirations, desires, fears, and suspicions of America. In other words, what emerged as the broad pattern of American trade unionism was simply a compromise between the desirable and the permissible. Labor unions in this country became non-revolutionary, non-Marxist, supporters of capitalism and of the two-party system, because this was the way to success.

And the success that the movement achieved was a considerable one, and not only in monetary terms. Labor unions played a primary part in broadening the notion of economic democracy, giving the concept of equality a new and significant dimension. The success of the American labor union movement was largely responsible for lifting the laboring man up to the level of the middle class and for raising job rights almost to the level of property rights.

The general thesis that this pattern of development suggests is that American society permits significant social change to occur, but only at a price. As will be shown later, the price exacted in the case of trade unions was primarily a disavowal of any subversive intent--either in a political or economic arena--a not unreasonable demand on a movement that had revolutionary origins.

Historical analogies are not eternal verities; yet it appears reasonable to suggest that the particular reaction of the American establishment to the emerging trade union movement in the 19th century was indeed a significant pattern that may well be replayed--with

appropriate variations--in the 20th century with respect to other social revolts. There are many points of similarity and difference between the rise of the laboring man in 19th century America and the rise of the black man and the student in 20th century America. Yet one basic similarity--that both revolutions seek the enfranchisement of the disenfranchised--may provide the key to making the analogy valid.

### III AMERICAN TRADE UNIONISM: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The first American trade union--a union of shoemakers in Philadelphia--was established in 1792, and it lasted for a year. This formation of a trade union was no isolated event. There were many such locals founded around that time by various artisans, printers, building tradesmen, and textile workers. The early unions were collective bargaining groups for journeymen. They approached master craftsmen and presented them with demands on wages and working conditions. They called strikes on occasion, and were even successful in some. They apparently always sought a closed-shop arrangement where all journeymen of a given craft in a city would belong to the trade union.

But these early attempts at unionization were lost. Two factors were responsible for this. One, there appeared to be a tendency of the unions to dissolve themselves--or at least to become dormant--once an issue had been decided. This meant that no permanent organizations were established.

The second and far more important factor was the attitude of the employers and the courts. The employers were, of course, generally opposed to the union efforts and sought the help of the courts. Such help was forthcoming in 1806, in the famous Cordwainer case in Philadelphia (cordwainers were bootmakers who worked with cordovan leather). The court ruled, on the basis of common law, that the union members were guilty of a "conspiracy" to raise wages, and each of the eight defendants was fined.

It is ironic to consider that a court could find eight men guilty of doing something in concert that, if done separately, would have been perfectly legal. The reason for this strange ruling was simply that

common law precedents were primarily derived from England, where public opinion--and judges--were convinced that the use of economic power by the concerted action of working men was bad for England's economy and therefore illegal.

It was not until 1842 that a Massachusetts court partly removed this conspiracy barrier to unionization; but since this action came at a state court, it was many years before its influence spread.

In spite of these legal and political difficulties, a large number of new unions were founded during the period of 1820 to 1840; in fact, the first attempts at forming associations of unions took place during this time. This period was one of rapid economic growth and incipient industrialization in America, and again the focus of the organizing activity was in the eastern cities. In New York and Philadelphia the first citywide trade union organizations were formed, and in 1834 a National Trades Union was organized and held several national conventions.

A great deal of time has been spent by scholars in tracing down these early beginnings of the trade union movement in America and discovering why they did not last. The primary reason for the impermanence of these efforts lies in the pattern of economic activity then prevailing. The large scale industrialization of America did not begin until after 1860, and until then the basic pattern of industrialization did not emerge. Trade unions, by their very nature, must be mirror images of the industrial units in which they operate. And this pattern was not formed in America until after the Civil War.

The period of the late sixties and early seventies was a period of rapid economic and union development. During this period, the union movement began to face the first of a long series of formative issues that were to shape the particular characteristics of the American trade union movement that we know today. This first issue was whether the trade

union--basically an association of workers having the same skills and performing the same economic tasks--should be the basic building block of the labor movement or whether "mixed" assemblies, made up of workers of various trades, should be these basic units.

This rather technical distinction had wide ramifications. A trade union, by virtue of its craft homogeneity, was and is a perfect vehicle for promoting the interests of its members in a very direct way, with demands for collective bargaining. This was precisely the reason why proponents of trade unions wanted to keep their union free of outsiders. Yet the trade unionists were not entirely opposed to efforts of creating larger labor organizations, which included members of many trades.

Opposing the proponents of strict trade-unionism were the believers in an association of all working men. While interested in the fate and fortune of their particular trades, they believed that the full aspiration of the entire working class in America could only be achieved by organizations that transcended the narrow confines of crafts.

This strange dichotomy, in which both sides were partially infected by parts of the opposite, led to a rather unusual development called dual unionism. In essence, the development was exactly what the name implied--it prompted members to join both craft unions and trade assemblies. Yet from its occurrence it was difficult to judge how many put greater emphasis on one facet of unionism over the other.

The issue of dual unionism was first evident in the struggle between the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor, which was just starting at that time. The Knights of Labor were, in a way, rather romantic exponents of the notion of solidarity of the working class, and they enjoyed enormous popularity during 1870 to 1890. Yet, from the very beginning, they lacked a concrete program for achieving for their aspirations.

The AFL, on the other hand, stood from its very beginning for what was later to be called "business unionism," the concentrated devotion to self-interest. Yet its very foundation was a testimony that more than individual local craft unions were needed to achieve the objectives of the labor movement.

But the idea of dual unionism required more than the mere adherence to the two sets of labor organizations. It concerned itself also with the nature and the existence of a labor organization that was larger than a trade union local, whose sole purpose was collective bargaining. The larger organization made unionists aware of the possibility of action on other fronts. It suggested that the collective bargaining route might not be the only way or the best way of attaining labor objectives.

While the problem of dual unionism was to remain a live issue for many years, the Knights of Labor themselves did not long survive this initial encounter. By the turn of the century they had ceased to be a strong force in the labor movement.

The AFL, from its beginning in 1887, assumed a position of deference to the individual unions, never attempting to control or even interfere in the affairs of local or international unions. The result was that the AFL has never projected an image of strength or cohesion. However, the very looseness of the organization provided it with endurance.

The period from 1890 to 1920 was perhaps the most formative in the history of the labor movement. Through most of this period there was considerable growth in membership. More important, though, it was during this period that the labor movement faced--and apparently resolved--such issues as its attitudes toward capitalism, socialism, political activity, and violence. An in-depth analysis of these issues and their resolutions is presented in the next chapter. What is intended here is to sketch the historical background against which these issues arose.

Marxian Socialism was brought to America by the huge waves of immigrants that landed here during the second half of the 19th century. As early as the 1850s, a German immigrant by the name of Joseph Weydemayer attempted to organize workers in a Marxian trade union; and for the next 20 years a number of socialist leagues, clubs, and associations were formed. These finally culminated, in 1877, in the formation of the Socialist Labor Party of North America.

While the formation of this party represented a unity of different factions with the Socialist movement in America, this unity did not last very long. Friction soon developed again among the socialists, and the right wing of the party broke off to form its own party.

However, all socialist factions were unified in their opposition to the AFL and its policies. All socialists preached political and economic action, and the ultimate goal of the political action was the establishment of a socialist commonwealth. To achieve this socialist "reorientation" of the labor movement, members of the Socialist Labor Party began to infiltrate trade unions affiliated with the AFL and sought to capture these unions from within. Most of these efforts were unsuccessful and were followed by the establishment of dual, socialist-oriented labor unions.

The most famous of these dual unions was the IWW, the Industrial Workers of the World. The original ideological orientation of this union was left-wing socialist, with strong anarchist overtones. After its foundation, much of the doctrinaire, Marxist position disappeared, but the anarchist and radical orientation remained. The IWW also had, from the beginning, a very strong Western flavor which is traceable to the role that the Western Federation of Miners played in the formation of the IWW. Around the turn of the century, the WFM had been engaged in a number of violent strikes, most of which were eventually lost by the

union. In reaction to these losses, union leaders sought support from a broader labor organization, which would include workers in other areas and trades. The IWW was, in part, an answer to these aspirations.

In terms of numbers, or even influence, the IWW cannot be regarded as having been a major force in American labor union history. Yet it was significant, because it helped to bring into sharp, if not extreme, focus a number of formative issues that faced the union movement. These included the issues of capitalism versus socialism and the issue of violence in confrontation, as well as the issues of loyalty and subversion. On each of these issues the IWW took a position opposite that of the establishment. And, in accordance with the temperaments of its leaders, the position that the union generally took was opposite in the extreme.

The reaction of America to the IWW was also extreme. Threats of violence and subversion were met with severe repression. IWW members were harassed, jailed, accused, and tried on numerous charges, all of which had the avowed purpose of driving the IWW from the scene. This campaign of repression reached a climax during World War I, when almost the entire leadership of the IWW was accused and convicted of conspiracy against the war effort.

While World War I saw the virtual demise of the IWW, it also witnessed a very rapid growth of other labor unions. The war itself had given an enormous impetus to the growth of industry, particularly heavy industry such as steel, coal mining, and railroads. This boom lasted through the war and some three years beyond, and during this period the number of industrial workers and union members grew very rapidly. During the war the federal government took an active part in preserving industrial peace, and this active participation by the federal government in labor and management relations helped the cause of the unions.



This period of union growth came to a quick end by 1922, because of three major factors. First, a sharp recession occurred that caused a great increase in unemployment. Second, and more significant, the new Republican administration either remained neutral or sided with employer interests in all labor relations matters. This encouraged employers to organize a very successful anti-union campaign--called the "American Plan"--under which employers simply refused to bargain with unions. Finally, the basic weakness of the AFL craft unions in organizing factory and mill workers became more apparent than ever during this period. Members of craft unions were generally more interested in maintaining the advantages of their crafts than seeking complete unionization of a plant.

The combination of these adverse factors led to a dark decade for labor unions from 1922 to 1932. In a series of disastrous encounters with management, unions lost most of their war and early post-war gains, and actual union membership declined by nearly one-third during this period. But this decline in the labor movement's strength was temporary, and with the New Deal there came the full recognition of the labor movement in the economic life of America.

The past 35 years have been filled with a flood of occurrences that were important to the labor union movement in America. Of all these, two stand out as having the greatest significance. The first was passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, which established, unequivocally, employees' rights to self-organization, collective bargaining, and "engage in concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection" (language of the Act itself). Together with the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932, which prohibited the injunctions against union activities, the NLR Act not only revolutionized the balance between management and labor but created an era of "relations"

between management and labor as had heretofore never been imagined. Subsequent legislation--the Taft-Hartley Act, and the Landrum-Griffith Act--modified the NLR Act but did not really reduce its impact.

The second event of great significance to the union movement was the creation of the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations). The 1920s had clearly revealed the shortcomings of the AFL in organizing workers on an industrial basis in factories, mines, or mills. The creation of this new labor organization paved the way for the organization of workers in the automobile industry, steel industry, chemical industry, and so forth. But perhaps more important, it made union leaders aware that union organization must follow changes in the economic structure of the country. That this lesson has finally penetrated can be seen in the massive organization drives that are now being conducted among white collar and professional workers, which are now among the largest groups of employees.

The creation of the CIO caused a "split in the House of Labor," as the then current newspaper cliché phrased it. But the negative effect of this original split--or the positive effect of the subsequent reunification--has generally been over-estimated by the public. Today the most significant unit in the labor movement is the national--or international--union and not the larger organization that unites them. In a sense, this is a concrete reminder of the fact that the primary function of a union still is to bargain collectively for its members; and this, today, often means nationwide bargaining by national unions. The wider functions of the AFL-CIO are still secondary to the basic duties and are likely to remain so.

#### IV THE FORMATIVE ISSUES

The trade union movement in America, and its development and growth during the 1860 to 1920 period, was intimately connected with the development of unionism in other countries, particularly Europe. While there was no truly international union organization during this period, the ideas of socialism and of unionism were no respectors of international boundaries or oceans. Furthermore, the great influx of immigrants to America ensured that the ideas of Europe were promptly exported to these shores.

And yet, as already pointed out, trade unionism in America did not develop according to the European pattern, assuming that such ever existed. In some respects, such as the support of capitalism and its refusal to engage in direct political action, American unions in fact developed rather unique characteristics, unlike anything in Europe.

The purpose of this section is to highlight four specific issues that contributed much toward the setting of the American union character and examine the forces that played a part in these decisions. The four issues are (1) capitalism, (2) political action, (3) confrontation and violence, and (4) loyalty and subversion. It is believed that thorough analyses of these four issues will reveal the interplay between union action and environmental reaction and support the thesis advanced here.

##### The Issue of Capitalism

Intellectual opposition to capitalism during the 19th century had two primary sources. The first and earlier one was "Fourierism," and the second was Marxism.

Charles Fourier was a French social thinker who suggested that a more desirable and harmonious social order could be one whose primary social units were cooperative communities of 1,500 to 5,000 individuals. These individuals would own the means of production within their communities, and thus capitalism could be dispensed with. In a sense, Fourier's ideas dealt with more than a changed economic order. There were very strong social, moral, and esthetic elements in his ideas; and it was largely because of these "trans-economic" elements that Fourier's idea exerted such a strong influence within the New England intellectual community of Emerson, Thoreau, Ripley, Fuller, and so forth, and led to the establishment of Brook Farm and other cooperative experiments in this country.

However, Charles Fourier's ideas also spread into the early trade union movement. Many of the early supporters of trade unions were social reformers who, while not workers themselves, took up the cause of the workers. In such issues as hours of work and working conditions, the influence exerted by these social reformers was considerable.

In turn, the idea of cooperatives was also accepted by trade union leaders as a desirable goal. Even as late as the 1880s, long after Fourierism had declined in influence, the Knights of Labor still sought some alternative to "wage slavery," as they called capitalism, and settled on the notion of "cooperation."

The second and more important source of anti-capitalist feeling was socialism, and particularly Marxian socialism. While there were few devoted, all-out Marxists who became important trade union leaders in America during this period, a great many leaders experienced some leaning toward socialism. (Even the very conservative Samuel Gompers confessed that in his youth he was something of a socialist.)

What became of these anti-capitalist elements in the labor movement? As to the cooperative notion, it is fair to say that it disappeared

because of internal weakness rather than external opposition. The problem with cooperatives was that they minimized not only the role of the capitalist but also the role of the entrepreneur. While it was difficult to assemble the necessary capital to form producers' cooperatives, it was often even more difficult to find a substitute for the entrepreneur, the conceiver and organizer of the production process. Many cooperatives failed because of this lack.

Whatever opposition existed to the cooperative movement, it was minimal and limited. Business interests did not view the movement as a threat, since it had no revolutionary ambition. And the labor unions that supported the notion of cooperatives--like the Knights of Labor--declined because of internal shortcomings.

The external reaction to socialism and Marxism within the labor movement was far different. Marxism was viewed as an extreme menace almost from the very beginning, and the opposition to it was quite uncompromising.

It is extraordinarily difficult to prove that one specific aspect of unionism was viewed with more or less suspicion than another; the very fact that a state of open animosity existed most of the time between labor unions and employers made it unlikely that the public statements of either side really meant what they said. Besides, even the most devout adherence to the principles of capitalism did not make a labor union leader and his demands more palatable to the opposing employer.

However, the weight of this issue and its apparent resolution can be judged by (1) determining where present labor unions and their leaders stand on the issue of capitalism and (2) examining whether open opposition to capitalism was ever able to score any substantial successes within the labor movement.

On the first point, the issue is fairly clear. There are no prominent labor leaders in this country today who are avowed Marxists, nor are there any large, established unions that in their programs oppose the capitalist system as such. This is not to say that some labor union leaders and members may not harbor certain Marxist sympathies and leanings. But if such exist, they are undoubtedly aware of the fate that befell Marxist-dominated unions in this country. Both the Socialists during the early 1900s, under the leadership of Daniel DeLeon and Eugene Debs, and the Communists during the 1920s and 1930s, under the leadership of William Foster, sought the creation of Marxist unions. All attempts in this direction failed, whether they involved the takeover of existing unions or the establishment of new socialist unions.

It is often argued that the great material success of American capitalism was primarily responsible for the fact that American workers were not attracted to Marxism. This is a less-than-plausible argument. First, for industrial workers, the America of the late 19th and early 20th century was no paradise, and thus the notion that socialism can be driven away by material success was hardly applicable then. Second, there are examples in Europe, notably in France and Italy, where very substantial gains for workers during the post-war period neither eliminated nor even diminished the very strong Marxist orientation of both union leaders and members.

The thesis advanced here, that the American political and economic establishment, through repression and enticement, persuaded the labor movement to accept capitalism and reject its alternatives, would appear to be far more realistic. The struggle to establish the American trade union movement on an accepted basis was long and bitter; yet somehow the promise of eventual success was always there; and this promise helped to persuade union leaders to make those concessions that would ensure eventual victory. Basic support of capitalism was one of the necessary concessions.

## The Issue of Political Action

American trade unions today appear to have a wide variety of attitudes toward politics and political action. These attitudes range from almost complete identification with the Democratic party, strong lobbying at Congress and at state capitols, and rather extensive programs of political education by some industrial unions (e.g., United Automobile Workers, International Ladies Garment Workers), to almost political apathy (the Carpenters Union). Yet this apparent range is still relatively narrow, if compared to potential political attitudes that trade unions could have. They could, for instance, seek the establishment of a national labor party; they could seek to elect labor union representatives to political positions at the state or local level or take other direct action in apparent opposition to the two-party system.

Trade unions do not take such positions today. Despite the wide diversity of interest in politics per se, all labor unions are firm supporters of the two-party system and seek to achieve their ends within the framework of the system.

Again, as in the case of economic ideology, there was greater variety in the beginning. At one end of the spectrum was the position of the early AFL, which disparaged any political action or even interest in politics. Action on the economic front, collective bargaining, strikes, and so forth, were thought to be the proper spheres for trade unions. At the other end of the spectrum, the dual unions established by socialists represented the very opposite in trade union philosophy. To the socialists, who were seeking both political and economic revolutions, or at least substantial reforms, politics and economics were the twin arenas of action. Furthermore, political action often meant separate political action and not participation through the established parties.

The early AFL doctrine of little or no political action was clearly unrealistic. Much of what labor wanted and needed had to be sought and won in the political arena. This included not only social legislation on maximum hours, minimum wages, workmen's compensation, and so forth, but political restraints on interference with the collective bargaining process. Thus, even the most conservative union leaders were slowly but inevitably pulled into the political scene.

At the other end, attempts to develop political activity by trade unions outside of the two-party system also failed. Whatever limited and temporary success Socialist and Communist parties had in this country, such success was invariably founded on strength outside of rather than inside of the labor union movement.

From time to time, there have been rumors and suggestions that labor unions might spearhead the establishment of a British-style labor party. (Walter Reuther, the head of the United Automobile Workers, was some years ago associated with one of these rumors.) But nothing has ever come of this.

From these extremes has emerged the now prevailing pattern of political action--that of working within the framework of the two-party system.

The two-party system plays a role in the American politics that is almost analogous to the role that capitalism plays in the American economic system. While representative government and democracy can and do exist in forms that are different from the two-party pattern, there is a tendency to believe that the continuation of one requires the viability of the other. And in support of this, both the Democratic and the Republican parties have traditionally represented themselves as national parties, encompassing all factions, groups, and classes.



In this light, the establishment of a political party that is associated with only one social and economic class can easily be seen as vaguely anti-American, particularly by leaders of the party that would stand to lose the most by the establishment of a labor party. Accordingly, the Democratic party since the New Deal has been a major force in dissuading the labor movement from seeking an independent political course.

Thus, again the promise of success, provided the wishes of the political establishment are obeyed, was a powerful force in persuading American unions to adopt this middle road in political activity.

### The Issue of Confrontation and Violence

The history of the American labor union movement is filled with violence. Some of the violence--as occurred in western mining camps--was an extension or reflection of the environment itself. But most of the violence had a more fundamental origin. The basic reason for violence accompanying the growth period of the labor union movement is simply that confrontation--a state of potential violence--constitutes the very heart of a union's business.

To understand fully the significance of confrontations--picketing, strikes, and so forth--to labor unions, one must start at the beginning of a union. A union begins generally as a protest movement, with the leaders seeking to exploit a latent or acute feeling of discontent. The union leaders expect, quite realistically, that their organizing attempts will be met with opposition, and sooner or later the first confrontation will occur, usually in the form of a picket line.

Picketing is practiced by unions for a variety of purposes. There are informational picket lines, which are primarily designed to gain public support for labor disputes, in addition to picket lines for enforcing a strike, and for seeking support from workers.

Irrespective of the variety of picket lines, all union picketing is essentially a procedure for communicating with three separate audiences. The first message is to the members, and it says: "Take heart; we are strong," The second message is to the employers, and it says: "We are stronger than you, and we will win." The third message is to the public at large and it says: "Our cause is just; support us." To win, a union must succeed on all three fronts. In the life of a union, therefore, a picket line is not just a symbolic gesture. It is quite often an all-or-nothing test of a union's viability; and in all cases it is "the confrontation" with the employer, the adversary. The violence that has marred labor relations over the past century is in a large part related to the basic importance of confrontation, the procedure that makes violence a very real possibility.

There are no reliable indicators of violence in labor relations; yet even a cursory review and comparison of labor strife in the 1880s and the 1960s reveals that progress has been made in reducing violence. And one of the major factors has been the progressive development of an acceptable code of conduct to be followed in union-management confrontations.

Much of this development has occurred as a result of court decisions, including a large number of Supreme Court decisions. Yet it would be wrong to assume that this progressive definition of conduct on the picket lines was imposed on all participants from up above. In this matter, the courts seemed to follow public opinion as much as lead it: the process that led to the present definition of conduct on the picket lines is not unlike the process that shaped the unions' position on politics and economics.

The legal history that preceded this definition of correct behavior on the picket lines is quite complex. In the early part of the 19th

century, courts had in many cases prevented the organization and activities of unions through the use of the doctrine of criminal conspiracy. Under this doctrine--which is still valid today--certain acts that are perfectly lawful if committed by unrelated individuals, become a criminal conspiracy if committed by several individuals in concert and for the purpose of supposedly subverting a law, an institution, or a business. (The conspiracy conviction of Dr. Spock and his codefendants illustrates this principle.) By 1870, however, the conspiracy doctrine had been abandoned by the courts as a basis of action against labor union activities, to be succeeded by an even harsher anti-union measure, the injunction.

There are two legal concepts that combined to make the injunction a very powerful anti-union weapon. The first was the common-law notion of tort and tort liability, which covered not only illegal acts but also other acts that in themselves are legal, but which in the opinion of the court caused economic damage and loss to the plaintiff. Thus, workers were found guilty and liable for the payment of damages to an employer against whom they had struck, even though striking, per se, was not an illegal act.

The second element was the injunction itself, which is a legal device to protect a person or property against certain types of irreparable harm. The device originated in equity courts designed for certain types of property cases, where the remedy of the law would not be adequate. These courts, which operated without jury, usually "issued" restraining orders, injunctions, and so forth, to perform acts of preventive justice. Sometime around 1880, an equity judge issued an injunction to a labor union, prohibiting a strike against a railroad that was in receivership; the receiver claimed that the strike would do irreparable harm to him in his duties as a receiver.

Other courts picked up this injunction device, and by 1890 their use against unions was quite general and their effect quite devastating. By combining the notion of tort liability with the injunction, almost any overt union action could be prohibited before it began.

The fight by unions against the injunction was long and bitter. In 1914, with the passage of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act, it first appeared that Congress had stopped the use of injunctions; but subsequent court decisions--which legal scholars now agree were extremely tortured in their reasoning--negated this apparent victory. It was not until the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932 that the use of injunctions in labor disputes was largely stopped.

Concurrent with these attempts to curb the use of injunctions in labor cases, unions also fought to establish picketing as a legal process. Up until about 1920, picketing was held to be illegal by courts on the above-mentioned theory of tort liability. This meant that while there were no laws against picketing, such activity was thought to be harmful to employers, according to the court decisions, and therefore illegal. After 1920, some modification of this doctrine occurred when courts began to make distinctions between picketing by strangers, which was still regarded as illegal, and picketing by workers, which was thought to be legal.

It was not until the late thirties and early forties that the issue of peaceful picketing was finally resolved by the Supreme Court. In a series of landmark decisions, the Court ruled, first, that labor union members, too, enjoy the privileges of the first amendment to the Constitution and that picketing can be regarded as a form of speech or communication. Furthermore, the Court ruled that the combining of workers to form picket lines is no more illegal than the combining of employers to seek their desired economic ends. Since these basic decisions in favor of peaceful picketing, there have been some minor modifications; but by and large the doctrine of peaceful picketing has been established for good.

The above legal history cannot be fully understood if divorced from the factual background in which it occurred. The early labor union history was filled with violence, as pointed out earlier, and this aura of violence had a strong impact on the community, public opinion, and the judiciary. Added to this fear of labor strife was probably a considerable bias by judges who often took the side of the employer. But while such bias undoubtedly existed, it could not have accounted entirely for the hostile attitude that unions encountered in the courts or for the change that subsequently took place.

The element that colored both public and legal sentiment against union activity was largely the fear of violence. It was this fear that prompted judges to use injunctions with abandon, even in relation to activities--such as peaceful picketing--that were later recognized to be perfectly legal forms of expression of free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment.

It took sometime for legal opinion to change; but in that time, the labor unions were able to rid themselves of many traces of violence and convince the public that there was justice in their cause.

In a symbolic way, therefore, the compromise on peaceful picketing achieved by legal means is fully parallel to the compromises on politics. The fact that "peaceful picketing" was always legal and should never have been denied may appear to run counter to the notion of a compromise. Yet the realities of political life are that rights are withheld and liberties ignored when the public is filled with fear.

#### The Issue of Loyalty

Until the 1920s, when Communists tried to infiltrate some labor union locals, the political issue of loyalty was never specifically raised with respect to the labor union movement. The Communist threat to the

labor union movement received some publicity during the McCarthy era, but in retrospect it was hardly a significant problem.

In a much larger sense, the issue of loyalty has always been a problem to the labor union movement. In the three issues previously discussed, loyalty was really an unseen part of the visible problems. Whether the stated issue was politics, economics, or violence, the unstated issue was that those who demanded change might, in fact, be seeking to subvert the entire system.

The fear of subversion has always been uttered by some in American society. The era of McCarthyism had its ideological forerunners in the KKK movement, which was politically powerful during the early part of the 20th century, and in the Know-Nothing Party, which flourished during the 19th century. But in addition to those who stated their fears openly, there probably were many more who had hidden suspicions and doubts. And these secret doubts were hardly assuaged by the noisy and often violent behavior of the radical elements within the labor movement.

There are undoubtedly many factors that have contributed to this fear of subversion. The basic diversity of cultural backgrounds within the American scene; the enormous numbers of immigrants during the second half of the 19th century, whose relative magnitude still staggers the imagination; the fact that most revolutionary ideas of the period had foreign origins, all shared in making the fear of foreign-inspired subversion real and present.

But perhaps the greatest contributing factor is one that has received scant notice. It is often observed that America suffers far more from the conspiracy and subversion syndrome than most western European countries whose social and political makeup is most closely akin to ours. But one crucial difference between America in the period from 1860-1910 and western Europe during this period was the rate of social, economic, and political

change. From the end of the Civil War to the beginning of World War I, America was literally a cauldron of change. The country grew in all directions and at an enormous rate, in terms of population, geography, and industrial development. In addition, the country's population structure suddenly began to change, with a large influx of non-English speaking people from central and southern Europe.

All this must have made the prospect of change both inevitable and somewhat frightening. But this mixture of fear of change and recognition of its inevitability perhaps best explains the reaction of America to the labor movement. There was a great deal of fear and suspicion--enough to pervert otherwise sacred principles of liberty and justice into almost unrecognizable forms.

But mixed with this fear was an apparent conviction that change and progress were inevitable; and it was this conviction that averted total repression and led the way toward an acceptable compromise.

The ingredients of the compromise were deceptively simple. The labor union movement would be accepted as a member of the establishment, provided it would offer an acceptable pledge of loyalty to the American system. There were enough leaders within the trade union movement who were willing to give such a pledge wholeheartedly, both because they wanted to succeed and because they believed in the system. Thus, in the end, the compromise was accepted and American labor joined the establishment.

The above presentation is, of course, symbolic. There are far too many diverse parts to the political establishment of this country or to the labor union movement to imagine that the issues could be solved in a single action. There are still parts of this country where labor unions are looked on as instruments of subversion, and change may not come for many years.

But this in no way disproves the basic notion advanced here; namely, that the fears and suspicions of the American society were slowly allayed by explicit and implicit pledges of allegiance offered by union leaders and members. In return, American labor was granted a place in the sun. Acceptance of this was not instant, and even to this day it is not universal. By and large, though, it has been accomplished.

What is more, it has been an accomplishment of considerable proportions. Labor has gained not only in terms of material benefit, but even more in terms of status and respect. Job rights have received tacit recognition almost on a par with property rights. Perhaps the most significant evidence of that is the fact that union members are now almost in the forefront of the new conservative movements.



V THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT;  
AN ATTEMPT AT HISTORICAL ANALOGY

In the introduction to this paper, it was stated quite candidly that historical analogies are very risky and that literature abounds in poorly conceived analogies. There is no known recipe for constructing a historical analogy that will be valid in the future. However, there are some rules for assuring that the analogy will not be hopelessly misconceived from the very outset; and these will be carefully obeyed.

True parallelism in history requires an essential similarity of the key variables. In other words, before one can suggest that history may repeat itself, even in a limited way, one must establish that the conditions attending the two events that are being compared are really similar. Furthermore, the similarity must extend to those factors that appear to be truly meaningful and important, rather than peripheral.

With all these conditions met, history may repeat itself in some essential respects, but there is certainly no inevitability of it. Also, the repetition is never complete but only partial. Historical events, as events, are always unique, and any similarity to previous occurrences is usually below the surface.

But in spite of these disclaimers, historical analogy, if done aptly, can be a powerful tool in projecting future events. Its great value lies in the fact that it can attempt to project the outcome of a conflict and not merely the future size of an on-going trend. Projection too often has been used only in situations where growth had few enemies and where the only relevant question is how fast a growth. This is true in projecting the economic growth of areas or countries or in forecasting population

growth in underdeveloped countries. Projection of future crime rates, however, is already a different story. Here one must deal not only with natural growth, but also with the probable effectiveness of countermeasures. One must, in other words, project the probable outcome of a conflict.

Will the student revolution follow the example of the labor union revolution and "succeed" in some definable way? If so, what will this success be like?

To answer the first question requires that certain essential similarities between the labor movement, as it existed in the 1860 to 1890 period, and the present student and minority group movement be established. One important similarity has already been commented on; it is that both movements had as their goal the enfranchisement of minorities that had previously been disenfranchised in some important respect. This common element of seeking "enfranchisement" is significant not only because it establishes a similarity between the two; it also legitimizes both movements to some extent, by making them consistent with an established notion of social progress in America. Social progress in America can, with some justice, be viewed as a growing realization of the Declaration of Independence. Thus, the protesters of injustice are not opponents of the American dream; they merely seek its fulfillment.

But similarities between the two revolutionary movements must be established on other points. Three additional areas of comparison appear to be particularly appropriate. These are (1) the issues at dispute, (2) the revolutionary leaders and (3) the political and social environment.

It is difficult to generalize about the basic issues of the labor movement that are at dispute. The number of individual union-management encounters that occurred in the United States during the last 100 years is so large--and the variation of specific issues is so great that no

quick and ready summary can be prepared. But the issues do tend to fall into two broad categories, which might be labeled "relative" and absolute."

The relative category of issues deals primarily with such matters as wages, hours, and fringe benefits. Generally there are no absolute principles involved here, and the issues can generally be settled by a quantitative compromise. This does not mean that strikes and disagreements involving relative issues are therefore easier to settle. (In fact, there have been many long and costly strikes involving "just" wages and hours.) However, the absence of absolute principles has always tended to make eventual solution of the contest apparent, even at the very outset.

The second category of issues might be termed as "absolute," because they concern themselves with matters on which no relative compromises can easily be found. These absolute issues include the worker's right to organize and to be recognized in collective bargaining, the right to strike, the right to peaceful picketing, and finally the right to job security. None of these issues can, in principle, be settled by compromise, because the rights must either be granted or denied. (In practice, however, some compromises were achieved concerning the forms in which these rights were granted. For instance, the right to organize could be and was generally defined to exclude the closed shop; the right to strike was recognized, but at the same time the union can now be held liable for breach of contract in a strike. Thus, after the granting of absolute rights, the issues themselves became relative.)

In comparing the issues of the student revolt with those of the labor movement, the first apparent difference is that the number of relative issues is considerably less in the student revolt. While there are a few quantitative issues in the student revolt--greater financial support for underprivileged students, greater social freedoms in dormitories--most of the issues involved in student revolts would have to be

termed absolute. These are the rights of students to participate in the government of a university; the rights of students to determine their own curricula, and most of all, the rights of students to be students without fear of expulsion for engaging in revolutionary activity.

The second major difference lies in the nature of the absolute issues. The absolute demands of the labor movement were and are generally confined to rights of workers and their organizations that are deemed necessary for the workers' own interests. The right to organize, to strike, to picket, and so forth, are all sought for the purpose of improving the wealth and strength of the worker and not for the purpose of usurping the rights of management. (In recent years, American unions have specifically rejected any intention of seeking the right of co-management, something which German unions are even now actively seeking.)

The absolute demands of students do not have the same constriction to self-interest. Students do seek the right to determine their own educational path--a self-interest principle--but they also seek the right to influence educational policy on campus--a nonself-interest principle. In particular, the students' demand for the right to participate in the government of a university, alongside of the administration and the faculty, goes beyond the usual union members' demands.

Aside from these differences, there are some notable similarities in issues between students and union members. Perhaps the most significant of these is the parallel between job rights and student rights. Classical economics did not allow for the concept of job rights--the rights of an incumbent worker to a job under certain conditions. Conditions of employment were considered to be unilaterally fixed by the employer, and a worker unwilling to abide by any of these conditions could be replaced by another, less complaining worker.

The demand of students for recognition of their rights as students and the concurrent removal of the threat of suspension or dismissal as punishment for protest is completely analogous. And so are their demands for the right for peaceful picketing and for pleading the student's cause with the school, the other students, and the public.

The differences in issues between the demands of the students and the traditional demands of workers are important, of course; but they appear less significant if put along side these very profound similarities.

In the second area of comparison--the personalities of the leaders--there are as yet no important student leaders who are the counterparts of the success and compromise-oriented leaders of the labor union movement who finally won the victory. However, this situation may only be temporary.

Revolutionary movements, particularly at the outset, tend to produce leaders at an enormous rate. But the rate of attrition is equally high. The first phase of a revolution--which might be called the demonstrative phase--is characterized by the raising of problems rather than by their resolution. It is unrealistic, therefore, to expect that the success-oriented leaders of the student movement should have arrived on the scene. And even if such leaders already exist potentially, the present time is not designed to make them visible.

On this point, then, the student movement of today bears a resemblance to the labor union movement of 1890 to 1910. The radical anarchist and socialist unions and their leaders were far more visible than their conservative and conciliatory counterparts. But soon thereafter, these unions' importance waned, and the direction of the entire labor movement was put on a far different course.

In the third area of comparison--the political and social environment and its willingness to accommodate the new revolution--the parallel is somewhat difficult to prove in advance. It is the thesis of this paper that the American environment was positive and receptive in its response to the labor union movement. The parallel to this must be established by a similar accommodation of the student revolt.

Yet the advance indications are that the positive and receptive character of the American environment has certainly not worsened since the turn of the century and may, in fact, have improved considerably. The labor union movement, at the turn of the century, had only limited outside support. In terms of political support, neither the Democratic nor the Republican party were wholeheartedly in support of unions. There was some intellectual support--by the so called "Muckrakers"--but the influence exerted by intellectuals at that time was painfully small. Public support of labor unions and their cause was very limited, if any trace of subversion or disloyalty was associated with unions or their leaders. Reminiscent of this is the conspiracy trial against a number of labor leaders (primarily of the Industrial Workers of the World) during World War I, which resulted in complete conviction for all after the most minimum jury deliberation.

There is no doubt that public sentiment today is also strongly against radical student leaders. Yet at the same time there is evidence that moderate student demands at many universities and colleges would get a sympathetic reception from administration and faculty groups. Certainly the much larger intellectual class that exists today is still basically in sympathy with many student demands. On this basis, a conclusion that the political and social environment today is more receptive to a student movement than the American environment of 1890 was toward the labor union movement seems justified.

If the above-mentioned similarities between the labor movement and the student movement make the occurrence of a parallel development a possibility--if not a probability--can one already discern the shape of the resolution to come? In a sense one can. It will consist of the creation of a Black Studies Program here, the granting of amnesty there, and, in some places, even permitting students to participate in the development of new curricula.

But as desirable as these initial resolutions of problems might be, they should not be mistaken for the solution. Again returning to the labor movement analogy, the solution found there involved far more than the ingredients needed to settle a given strike.

Collective bargaining has once been defined as a "process of continuous communications." Even if this definition is somewhat overdrawn, it illustrates the need for a never-ending process to cope with the never-ending task of change. And this is precisely the function for which collective bargaining was developed. In other words, in labor relations, a continuous process of change has become the equilibrium; and collective bargaining has made this equilibrium a fairly stable one.

To perform this function, collective bargaining must be more than just never-ending communication; it must be communication between equals. This notion of equality must be established in fact and in law, before the process itself can achieve any worthwhile results. Without equality, collective bargaining is just a matter of making demands and granting concessions, with all the one-sidedness that these expressions imply. With equality, the process is transformed into one of seeking a continuous adjustment in a complex environment. Viewed in this light, the great social achievement of collective bargaining is not simply that it can settle a given dispute but that it permits to accommodate change on a continuing basis.

The real solution of the student revolt requires a parallel development, and the first step must be a recognition of equality among all stakeholders, from students to trustees. After this, the search can begin for a process analogous to collective bargaining but capable of accommodating not just two sides, as in a labor dispute, but the four and five sides--representing students, faculty, administration, trustees, and the public--that are involved in the student revolt. This will be no easy task, and no one should be surprised if it takes more than a few months.



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