

Industrialization**Lesson 4****The Rise of the Labor Movement****Key Terms and People**

collective bargaining Negotiations between labor and management to win higher wages and shorter workweeks

Samuel Gompers Union leader

American Federation of Labor (AFL) Name of union led by Gompers

Eugene V. Debs Leader of the American Railway Union, an industrial union

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) Union of radicals and socialists nicknamed the Wobblies

Mary Harris Jones Organizer for United Mine Workers

Before You Read

In the last lesson you read about the growth and power of big business. In this lesson you will read about how workers united to improve conditions in growing industries.

As You Read

Use a chart to take notes on the unions, strikes, and government policies.

LABOR UNIONS EMERGE; UNION MOVEMENTS DIVERGE**Why were unions able to help workers?**

Business leaders merged and so did workers. They responded to business consolidation by forming labor unions. Many workers worked long hours under dangerous conditions for low wages. There was no vacation time or sick leave. Women, children, and workers in sweatshops worked under especially harsh conditions. They were paid the lowest wages too.

The National Labor Union (NLU) was an early labor union formed in 1866. Two years later, it persuaded Congress to legalize an eight-hour day

for government workers. The NLU excluded African American workers, who formed the Colored National Labor Union (CNLU). The Knights of Labor also enjoyed success but declined after the failure of a series of strikes.

More and more workers joined unions, which meant unions were able to get some benefits for workers. Union leaders negotiated using **collective bargaining**—negotiations between labor and management to win higher wages and shorter workweeks. If the talks failed, the workers might strike. As unions became more powerful, they began to exert influence over politics. Some politicians tried to pass laws to help labor, and unions raised money for

Lesson 4, *continued*

their favorite candidates.

Two major types of unions made great gains. One was craft unions. **Samuel Gompers** formed the **American Federation of Labor (AFL)** in 1886. Gompers used strikes and collective bargaining. **Eugene V. Debs** believed in industrial unionism—a union of all workers, both skilled and unskilled in a single industry. He formed the American Railway Union (ARU). Debs and other workers turned to socialism. In 1905 a union of radicals and socialists was formed called the **Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)**, or the Wobblies. In the West, Japanese and Mexican farm workers formed a union to improve conditions.

1. How did collective bargaining benefit workers?

STRIKES TURN VIOLENT

What was the effect of strikes on businesses and workers?

Unions used strikes to try to improve conditions. In 1877 workers for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad went out on strike over reduced wages. The Great Strike of 1877 caused most freight and some passenger trains to be stopped for more than a week. The strike was broken up by federal troops.

Later strikes turned violent. The Haymarket Affair took place in 1886. A bomb exploded at a demonstration in Chicago's Haymarket Square in support of striking workers. Several people were killed. Labor leaders were charged with inciting a riot and four were hanged, although no one knows who actually set off the bomb. In 1892 steelworkers were angry when the head of a steel plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania, near

Pittsburgh, said wages were going to be cut. Workers called a strike and fought a battle with Pinkerton Guards that left dead on both sides. This strike was the Homestead Strike. Two years later, a strike over the layoff of thousands of workers and reduced wages was held against the Pullman Company. Led by Eugene Debs and his American Railway Union, the strike turned violent, and federal troops were called out to break the strike.

Women were kept out of most unions; however, they united behind leaders such as **Mary Harris Jones**, known as Mother Jones. She was an organizer for the United Mine Workers, who exposed abuses of working children and helped change child labor laws.

In 1911 a tragedy occurred that made the public aware of the terrible working conditions in factories. The Triangle Shirtwaist factory in New York caught fire. Workers, mostly female, could not escape because the company had locked all but one door. The public was outraged, but factory owners were never punished.

Unions gained greater power, and businesses feared them. They tried to stop workers from joining unions and even hired prison laborers. The government helped management. Courts even used federal law, the Sherman Antitrust Act, against the workers. A business just had to say that a strike would harm interstate trade, and the government would stop the labor action. However, none of these actions kept unions from growing.

2. Why were there so many strikes between the 1870s and the 1890s?

Lesson 4, *continued*

Answer questions about unions, strikes, and government policies.

	What it was	How it aided or harmed workers
1. National Labor Union		
2. Collective bargaining		
3. The Great Strike of 1877		
4. Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire		
5. Sherman Antitrust Act		