

**A PROFILE OF AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR (AFL)
AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION (CIO)
IN THE 20TH CENTURY**

**Dissertation submitted to
Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the
award of the degree of**

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

R. VENKATA RAMANI



**AMERICAN STUDIES DIVISION
CENTRE FOR AMERICAN AND WEST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI – 110067
INDIA
2001**



CENTRE FOR AMERICAN & WEST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

Centre for American and
West European Studies
School of International Studies

11 July, 2001

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, "*A PROFILE OF AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR(AFL) AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION(CIO) IN THE 20TH CENTURY,*" submitted by R Venkata Ramani in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of this university is to the best of our knowledge, his own work, has not been previously submitted.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before examiners for evaluation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. K. Jain', is written above the name.

Prof. R. K. Jain

(Chair person)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. P. Kaushik', is written above the name.

Prof. R. P. Kaushik

(Supervisor)

DEDICATED TO
MY
DEAR MOM, DAD AND SISTER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am greatly indebted to my guru Prof. R.P.Kaushik for his constant guidance, suggestions and unfailing help in the pursuit of my research.

I acknowledge with a deep sense of gratitude the unbounded encouragement given by my family members in carrying out my research.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the authors on American labor history especially Philip Taft, Jeremy Brecher, and Richard Morris who helped me, though indirectly to understand and write this dissertation.

I express my heart full thanks to the authorities of the Jawaharlal Nehru University library, V. V. Giri National Labor Institute library,NOIDA and American Resource Information Centre, who have helped me to collect necessary data for my research.

I would also like to acknowledge the encouragement given to me by the faculty members of Department of Political Science, Annamali University Prof. S. Bhaskaran, Prof. A.Sunmugam, Dr. Radha Krishnan, Dr. N. Swaminathan, Dr. Lawzorus Samraj, Dr.A.Thanikodi, Mr. B. Krishna Moorthy and Dr. C. Subramanian.

I would be failing in my duty if I fail to acknowledge the help given to me by friends Vikash, Varada Rajan, Mayil, Ramajayam, Raman, Kannan, Venkat Raman, Tritesh, Rajan, A.S.Ramesh, Madeswaran, Sugirtha, Srinivasan, Ramakrishnan, Vinodini, Sumanth, Pari Velan, SFH Prabha, Sridhar, Surendra, Raja Mohan, Sam and Rajeev for rendering all possible assistance which enabled me to complete this dissertation.

This is an opportunity for me to thank the Tamil Nadu Government for rendering State Government scholarship for my research endeavor.

I would also like to thank my grandppa Manickam, Kalakka, Sangeeta, Karpagam Gopalswamy appa and others for encouraging me pursuing my research.

New Delhi

R.Venkataramani
R.Venkata Ramani

PREFACE

This piece of work is an attempt to study the American Trade Unions so as to have an Indian perspective on the labor organizations in the twentieth century. This study will highlight the experiences and try to incorporate it into our own labor organization system in India that will help us in finding the solutions for the problems faced by our trade unions, especially after the introduction of liberalization, privatization and globalization.

Most of the literature available on American labor history are basically look upon American labor movement or American trade unions in general. There are only few studies in India which specifically focus on the American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO). Hence, the purpose of this study is to focus specifically on AFL-CIO in India and trace its profile during 20th century. The objectives of this study is to examine the history of AFL-CIO and to trace the causes for the split and reasons for the unification of AFL-CIO. It will also look into the trends and patterns of leadership change and its policy implications. Further, the methodology adopted in this study is historical and the analytical one. And moreover, the study would rely mostly on the secondary sources.

Here, the study has been divided into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the history of American labor movement in general. It traces the history from 1792 to 1885.

The second chapter of the study will highlight the history of A F of L showing the trend and pattern of changes that took place from 1885 to 1935. It also

concisely stated the A F of L's response to First World War, 'Great Economic Depression,' 'the New Deal' and the causes for the split of A F of L consequently.

The subsequent chapter three, dealt with the history of American labor from 1935 to 1955, which includes labor's response to Second World War. Further, this chapter also deals with the reasons for the unification of the A F of L and CIO.

The penultimate chapter four dealt with the activities and the achievement of AFL-CIO from 1955 to 2001. And moreover, it focuses on AFL-CIO's response to corruption, civil rights, its views on foreign policy, free trade and its role in the American elections.

Conclusion represent the last part of this work. And here the researcher came to the conclusion that to survive in this competitive corporate world the AFL-CIO has to concentrate more on the membership.

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CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Labor organizations in the U.S. began their organized movement during the 1790s. The skilled artisan, shoemaker, the printer and building tradesmen were the first workers to organize. It was commented that changes in the market rather than in technology gave rise to the first combination of workers¹. The early trade unions were concerned regarding elevation of their wages. This was to maintain their standard of life as skilled workers.

In 1792, the Society of Philadelphia Shoemakers was established. This was the first union among workers to have lasted less than a year. It aimed at bargaining collectively for their betterment vis-a-vis the employers. However, it reformed its strategy in 1794. It was known as the Federal Society of Journeymen Carpenters and it had remained active till 1806. This society was found guilty by Philadelphia court of criminal conspiracy, since the union had called a strike to force a wage increase. This judgment had brought an end to this organization. The court gave an adverse judgement. But in 1842, Chief Justice Lemmuel Shaw of the Massachusetts Supreme Court rejected the criminal conspiracy doctrine in the case called as *Commonwealth Vs Hunt case*, which had permanently changed the position of organized labor in law. In his judgement Lemmuel Shaw wrote:

¹ Philip Taft, *Organized Labor in American Labor History*(New York NY : Harper and Row Publishers, 1964), p5.

Supposing the object of the association [the union] to be laudable and lawful, or at least not unlawful, are these means criminal? The case supposes that these persons are not bound by contract, but free to work for whom they please, or not to work, if they so, prefer . In this state of things, we can not perceive that it is criminal for men to agree together to exercise their own acknowledged rights, in such a manner as best to subserve their own interests.²

Among printers, till 1795, the organizational efforts were temporary. They were organized for a single purpose and when they had achieved it, they disintegrated as an organization. In 1799, the Franklin Typographical Society of Journeymen Printers of New York was formed. This society framed a wage scale, which was adopted by the printers of New York City. It was commented that, many of the programs adopted by this society resembled many of those believed to have had aroused later³. It had demanded for its members an exclusive “working card”, and a system that closely resembled a union hiring hall.

The early unions were primarily concerned with wages and working conditions. Further, they also had engaged in collective bargaining. Before employers established their counter organizations, the union representatives had visited each master separately with the price of wage list, which had been accepted at the meeting of the union journeymen. From the beginning the labor

² Jonathan Hughes and Louis P.Cain, *American Economic History*(New York NY : Addison – Wesley, 1998),p.413.

³ *ibid*, p.6.

organizations were concerned about the hiring of men by employers who had not served the full apprenticeship. This debased the trade as well as increased the labor supply. The Typographical Society appointed a committee to consider this problem. The committee reported that it was desirable to confer with the employers so as to devise a set of prices, which might help employers to give preference to members of the society or at least to men who had served a regular apprenticeship⁴. From the custom of setting up a price list and asking each employer for his agreement, it was only a step toward group bargaining. In 1799, there were negotiations between Philadelphia journeymen cordwainers and their employers. This was the first recorded collective bargaining. This negotiation remained unsuccessful, because employers refused to withdraw wage cuts.

The important characteristic feature of the early trade unions was its instability. The reasons were, the opposition from employers, the opposition from government and the lack of interest amid union members. In the late 1820s and through 1830s there was an improvement in economic conditions, which was aptly used by skilled workers organize themselves. During this period, the first formal co-operation among organizations of labor took place. The revival of

⁴ Taft,p.6.

interest in trade unionism was shared by a number of trades. The shoemakers, bakers and cabinetmakers were organized into a union in 1821 at New York.

In 1827, in Philadelphia, the journeymen carpenters made an unsuccessful attempt to gain a ten-hour workday⁵. In a resolution, signed by William Louck, chairman and Charles Ferris, secretary, the journeymen carpenters had demanded a ten-hour workday. This demand was submitted to master carpenters. The master carpenters rejected the demand. The carpenters attempt to gain a ten-hour day, stimulated a movement for union within labor and a call was issued for the setting up of a central labor organization. This was to mobilize support in an emergency for each trade. The central labor organization was formed in 1827 and called as Mechanic's Union of Trade Association. This was formed under the leadership of William English. At the outset, it excluded political action in achieving its objectives. Later on, they decided that, to achieve their objectives, political participation was necessary. So in 1828, they had started the Workingmen's party. It was the first labor party in the United States⁶. It did not perform well in 1828 and 1831 elections and departed from the scene. Though, the Working men's party had failed, some of its statements were interesting which did not receive any support at that time. They were equal opportunities for education, an end to monopolies and banks,

⁵ Philip Taft , *Organized Labor in American History* (NewYork : Harper and Row Publishers, 1964) ,p.14.

⁶ *ibid*, p.65.

abolition of imprisonment for debt, and also it decried compulsory military system. Moreover, the Mechanic's Union of Trade Association also remained unsuccessful. It was commented that, it remained unsuccessful because of its involvement in politics⁷.

Like in Philadelphia, in New York also the demand for shorter hour led to the formation of political party by labor, entitled New York Workingmen's Party. In Philadelphia, the shorter-hour movement involved only mechanics. But in New York, mechanics as well as other tradesmen were involved. In Philadelphia, the demand for shorter hours was directed towards specific group of employers, who regularly employed the members of the union. The rejection of the demand was followed by the strike. From the beginning the New York movement was a political one, and it was directed against all, rather than any particular employers. Here Thomas Skidmore, played an active role. He was a machinist, teacher and self-taught intellectual. He believed in fundamental reorganization of society, which would give every human being an equal amount of property at the age of maturity, as well as food, clothing and instruction at the public expense⁸. The unions in New York City supported his plan in 1829. The New York Workingmen's party was successful in getting substantial portion of the popular vote in that year election. The advantages gained by the New York

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Arthur D. Butler, *Labor Economics and Institutions* (New Delhi: Amerind Publishing Co.Pvt.Ltd, 1961), p.42.

Workingmen's party were almost immediately scattered by factionalism between the radical intellectuals, amidst whom were Robert Dale Owen advocating universal compulsory education in free boarding schools and Frances Wright advocating women's rights and easy divorce laws⁹. These utopian programs remained unsuccessful, because the middle class had failed to approve this and they were pro-private property rights. Further, the workers also revolted against the radical leadership of Thomas Skidmore. Moreover, supporting utopias proved costly to unions and received public wrath. All these were responsible for failure of New York Workingmen party as well as shorter hour movement in New York.

Interest in labor organizations revived in 1830. It was found that between 1830 and 1836, thirteen local unions of printers had been established and eleven more joined them during next four years¹⁰. In this period, attempts were made to form national organizations.

In 1834, the General Trade Union of New York City was formed and it remained in existence till 1837. This was organized for the purpose of developing close cooperation among trade societies of the city. The cause for the formation of this union was the conflict over wage increase between carpenters and their employers. The purpose of this union was primarily concerned with supporting its affiliates both morally and financially. The printer's organization,

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Taft, p.1.

which was actively supported the demand of the carpenters, voted on June 22, 1833 to call a meeting of the different societies of mechanics to suggest that a trades association be established. Subsequently, the meeting was organized in the next year by the printer's organization, which was attended by nine unions, viz., carpenters, printers, bookbinders, leather dressers, coopers, carvers and gliders, bakers, cabinet makers and shoemakers. In this meeting the General Trade's Union of New York City was formed. Ely Moore, a printer, became its first president. The General Trade's Union of New York City first formulated the principle of exclusive jurisdiction. It survived only for a short duration and departed from the scene in 1837. The reasons for its failure were, the opposition from employers, and less community acceptance. The New York Journal of Commerce, in its issue of June 1, 1835, on commenting upon the rise of labor activity, suggested that, "the turnouts (strikes) which are taking place among the different classes of mechanics in all our large cities are the legitimate fruits, and no doubt the concerted results of trade unionism."¹¹

The Philadelphia trade's union was started in 1833. Several unions initiated the Philadelphia venture. William C. Doores was chosen as president and William English as secretary of the organizing committee. The function of this union was to grant aid to unions which were on strike. From the beginning,

¹¹ Quoted in Taft, pp.21-22.

the Philadelphia Trade's Union kept politics and religious question away. Article XIX of this union constitution clearly states this: "No party, political or religious questions shall at anytime be agitated in or acted upon by this union."¹² The available records shows that Philadelphia Trade's Union fulfilled its purpose i.e. offering aid to unions on strike. For instance, at a meeting on March 10, 1836, it granted \$1000 to the bookbinders and \$300 to the hatters in support of their strike. The same reasons, which forced the General Trade's Union of New York City to face failure, were responsible for Philadelphia Trade's Union failure. Apart from New York and Philadelphia, the trade's union was set up in other cities as well. In Baltimore, it was set up in 1833 and in Washington D.C., trade's union was formed in 1836. Again, all these trade societies were established for mutual assistance.

When different trade societies succeeded in establishing a trade's union at particular place, the trade's union of each city, decided to form a union at national level. This was culminated in 1834 as the National Trade's Union. The National Trade's Union was formed in New York. Ely Moore, a printer was elected as President and William English, a Philadelphia shoemaker, became its recording Secretary in its first convention at New York. It had its last convention in 1836 at Philadelphia. This union was the first national trade's union in the U.S.A. The objectives of the union, according to its constitution were, firstly, to promote the establishment of trade's union in every section of the U.S. and

¹² Quoted in Taft, p.23.

secondly, to publish and disseminate information which was useful to the mechanics and workingmen and finally, to unite the efforts of all the productive classes¹³. The National Trade's Union held three conventions, the first two in New York and last one in Philadelphia. The concentrated issues at its convention were, shorter hours, protection from wage reduction, keeping politics away, establishment of trade's societies wherever it was not present, prison labor and female labor.

The National Trade's Union by bringing leaders of trade organizations from different communities together was the indirect promoter of the first national organization of trades. Thus, five national organizations were established in the 1830s. The first national organization was amidst the cordwainers. Cordwainer Union of New York and Newark took the initiative. On March 1, 1836, they convened a convention to establish a national organisation of cordwainers, in New York City. This convention concentrated on the issues like cooperation amid various societies of cordwainers, standard bill of wages, limiting apprenticeship, importation of foreign boots and shoes, use of prison labor in the manufacture of boots and shoes and rules for the support of strikes of affiliated locals.

Among carpenters, the national organization was started in 1836, in a national convention convened by the Philadelphia Journeymen House Carpenters. The objectives of this convention were to secure ten-hour system

¹³ Everett Johnson Burt, *Labor in the American Economy*(NewYork: St.Martin's Press, 1979), p.136.

and other regulations, which were conducive to the interests of the journeymen house carpenters of the U.S. The convention also resolved to have uniformity in prices all over the U.S., and to establish societies wherever it was not existing.

In 1836, the National Typographical Society was formed. This was established in a national convention convened by the Franklin Typographical Society of Cincinnati at Washington. This national organization had held two conventions, in 1836, and 1837 respectively and the third one was scheduled but not held. The first convention worked out a constitution and a rate of contributions to the national organization and it called on local unions to adopt uniform rules on apprenticeship. Further, the local unions were authorized to establish the list of prices suitable to their sections of the country.

The 1837 panic wiped out many labor organizations. The major focus of trade unions of 1830s were emphasis upon improvement in wages, shorter hours and control of the trade. The establishment of national unions by local organization showed the changes in economy and the growth of pure trade consciousness. This was significant in demonstrating the permanence of trade union attitude, which has been called as business unionism¹⁴.

Due to the impact of 1837 economic panic, workers in the 1840s turned away from economic activities and concentrated on other programs like homestead movement and cooperative movement. The homestead movement

¹⁴Taft, p.35.

remained till 1860s. This movement involved a demand by labor from government to provide an escape from the factory and wage system through self-employment on free land. The goal of the cooperative movement was the worker owned producer and consumer establishment. This movement aimed at eliminating the profit of an entrepreneur. Though the labor movement declined after the 1837 economic panic, this period witnessed labor reforms. In 1840 President Van Buren proclaimed ten-hour day on all public works conducted by the national government and in the states also ten – hour day had received official support and become universal during the civil war. Further, other labor demands like abolition of imprisonment for debt and mechanics' lien laws were also enacted.

The late 1840s witnessed the improvement in economic conditions. This helped workers to organize for bargaining purposes. In the 1840s, again the national unions came into existence. The reasons for this were, the development of the corporate form of business ownership, improvement in transport and communication, and finally the realization from the locals that they alone cannot fight out the ever-growing power of the firms.

Beginning with the national union formed by the printers in 1850, several national unions were set up during the 1850s, including those of the typographers, molders, stonecutters, hat finishers, machinists and locomotive

engineers. The Typographer's National Organization was formed in 1852¹⁵. This was the first national body to have a continuous existence till today. Other national organizations, which are existing today from their origin, are those of the carpenters, bricklayers, locomotive engineers, locomotive fireman and engine man and painters.

The national unions, which were formed in the 1850s, had to face the ensuing civil war. This period witnessed a hectic industrial activity as well as the tendency for the price level to rise more steeply than wages during the war. Local unions were also growing rapidly during this period. For instance in 1863, there were about eighty local unions in the twenty northern States. By 1864, local's union become hundred and thirty in the some states.

During the civil war period, the rate of employment was very high. This resulted in the centralized labor activity. In 1861, the American Miners Association (AMA) was established at West Belleville, Illinois. Thomas Lloyd and Daniel Weaver became the elected President and Secretary respectively. AMA spread through coal producing areas of the U.S.A. This was the first national organization in the mines. It survived only for a shorter period and by the end of the 1860s this organization had come to an end. The reason for its failure was its own internal dissension.

The new inventions increased and revolutionized the production, at the same time created the problem of technological displacement. This made Daniel

¹⁵<http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/curricul.htm>

Weaver in the year 1867 at Milwaukee, Wisconsin to establish Knights of St. Crispin. This was a craft union. Eventually it also remained unsuccessful, because, the new techniques can be used in non-union areas and it was forced to involve itself in more strikes, which finished Knights of St. Crispin itself, in the 1870s.

In 1866, the National Labor Union (NLU) was formed, and it remained in existence till 1872. This was the first serious attempt to organize all sorts of labor on a national basis. The NLU was initiated and led by William H. Sylvis of the Molder's union. It favored co-operation and direct political action and also it opposed more aggressive types of organization such as strikes. Since NLU favored direct political action, it was instrumental in launching the National Reform and Labor Party in 1872. However, this party failed to perform in the subsequent election. This ended NLU itself. The NLU proposed "green backism". This plan talk about giving loans to poor men at a lower interest rate¹⁶. Further NLU proposed many utopian schemes like aid to women employees, co-operative stores and workshops, and workingmen's lyceums and reading rooms. This lack of realism and too much reliance on utopianism as well as approaching the economic problems in a political way, all contributed to its failure.

¹⁶ Chester A. Morgan, *Labor Economics* (Austin, Texas: Business Publications, Inc., 1970), p.345.

During this period, in the coal mining areas in Pennsylvania, Molly Maguires was established. It was a secret society. The first formal organization of this society was held in 1843 at Pennsylvania coal districts. It was a secret organization developed by Irish miners to fight the coal operators through terrorist methods. The Molly Maguires was finally overcome with the deployment of the Pinkerton detective agency¹⁷.

The Knight of Labor (KOL) was the result of another amalgamation attempt. Uriah S. Stephens formed the KOL in the year 1869 and in 1878, Terence V. Powderly succeeded him. It operated as a secret society till 1881. The reason for this were the fear of employer and government opposition and oppression. The objectives of KOL were to replace competitive society with the cooperative society¹⁸. The means used by the KOL in achieving their objectives were, education, persuasion and co-operation, i.e. educating the general public, persuading the employer and cooperation within labor's ranks via producers and consumer cooperatives. It rejected the violent types of union actions like strike and boycott. The KOL favored political approach in lieu of collective bargaining. It was a reform-oriented organization. The reforms advocated by the KOL were, the direct legislation by way of the initiative and the referendum, the labor bureau to promote the welfare of the masses, healthy and safety laws,

¹⁷ Jeremy Brecher, *Strike* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1997), p.22.

¹⁸ Florence Peterson, *American Labor Unions: What They Are and How They Work* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963), p.11.

accident insurance, weekly payment of wages in money, the prohibition of child labor under age fifteen, compulsory public education and free text books, the graduated income tax and government ownership of railroad, telephone and telegraph. By 1892, KOL was extinct, however, it continued to function in a weak manner till 1917. The reasons for the failure of KOL were, poor organizational structure, vacillating leadership of Terence V. Powderly, increase in aggressive employers opposition after 1885, which had resulted in a series of lost strikes, heterogeneous membership, emergence of the American Federation of Labor (A F of L), the Haymarket riot in the year 1886 at Chicago and feud between local and central administration.

Another important amalgamation was the National Colored Labor Union, formed in 1869, by the National Organization of Negro Workers, because they were not satisfied with the policies of the NLU. This organization concentrated on resolving the problems of discrimination. It looked at cooperative negro workshops as one solution for discrimination problems. The membership of the KOL included all the skilled, semi-skilled as well as unskilled workers. Skilled craftsmen did not like this, and this resulted in the formation of Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the U.S. and Canada in 1881 at Pittsburgh by six prominent crafts unions namely, the printers, iron and steelworkers, molders, cigarmakers, carpenters and glass workers. The general principles advocated by the Federation of Organized Trade and Labor Unions of the U.S. and Canada were, each trade union should, manage its own affairs with

authority concentrated in the hands of the national offices, maintain a large strike fund by charging dues and finance a benefit system, including payment to the aged and widows, as a techniques for securing membership legally¹⁹. In 1886, the federation was reorganized as American Federation of Labor (A F of L) under the leadership of Samuel Gompers.

¹⁹ Butler, p.46.

CHAPTER -II
A F of L : FROM BIRTH TO
SPLIT

A F of L : FROM BIRTH TO SPLIT

American Federation of Labor (A F of L) was formed in the year 1886 as a rallying center for the national trade unions. A F of L was evolved from the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the U.S. and Canada. In the 1886 Columbus convention, A F of L elected Samuel Gompers as President, Peter J. McGuire as Secretary, Gabriel Edmonston as treasurer and George Harris and J.W.Smith as Vice-Presidents¹. A F of L was to promote and defend the interests of the national trade unions. Each national trade union was independent in developing its own policies. The goals of the A F of L were an eight - hour day, six day work week, higher wages, shorter hours, safer and more sanitary working conditions, greater security of job tenure and the elimination of child labor.

A F of L held its annual conventions. The control of the A F of L was resided in the annual conventions. Each of the state federations of labor and the city centrals irrespective of the size of its membership had one vote. The national unions were represented by one vote for every 1000 members. By this, the largest national unions controlled the election of officers. In an annual conventions, a President, two Vice-Presidents, a secretary and a treasurer were to be elected for one-year term and they in turn formed an executive council that carried out the wishes of the convention.

¹ Taft, p.115.

SAMUEL GOMPERS

Samuel Gompers was the founder of the A F of L and he leads for thirty-seven years and defined its mission as “business unionism” or the attainment of better wages and working conditions through collective bargaining by individual unions with individual firms. He believed in the strong national trade unions and was for an increased power of national officers over the local unions. This was to prevent ill-conceived strikes, which may weaken the union’s prestige as well as its financial resources. Samuel Gompers had advocated higher dues and an extensive benefit system for members. He believed in the organization of skilled workers because they have a stable interest in controlling their jobs and maintaining job standards, which might help them in giving support to unions made up of fellow workers in their own trade and also believed in labor organization based on trade, not on industrial structure.²

Samuel Gompers rejected the idea of abolishing the wage system into cooperation, self-employment or socialism. At the beginning, he had supported the socialistic ideas, but later on, he changed his views over socialism and said that, socialism would bring down on workers the full force of the economic and political power of society, due to this there could be more loss for workers than the gain. According to him, the wage earners should act in their own interests and shouldn’t yield to those who try to abolish wage system. That is, the union

² Burt, n.12, p.141.

members should concentrate on immediate economic gains through collective bargaining, which was called as the “Pure and simple” unionism³.

One of the Samuel Gompers’ basic principles was “voluntarism”. Voluntarism meant the right of national unions to be independent in determining their policies without interference from the government, employers, other unions, or even the federation itself. In presenting their point of views on issues like trade versus industrial unionism or on political issue, the federation leaders could only persuade the member unions, their point of view. The other role for federation was, acting as a voice of labor in public forums, supporting legislative programs desired by its members, helping national unions in times of strike and solving the jurisdictional disputes.

Each national union had its own constitution, by laws, policies and jurisdiction. Each national union in A F of L, operated on the principle of autonomy and according to Samuel Gompers, A F of L was a “rope of sand”⁴. On membership issue of the national unions, the federation insisted upon “exclusive jurisdiction”, i.e., the right of only one union to organize a given class of workers. This was to avert inter-union rivalry, which could be destructive of the unions themselves. The federation leaders like Samuel Gompers were extremely against inter-union rivalry or overlapping jurisdiction, which was termed as “dualism”. If there was any jurisdictional dispute amid

³ibid, p.141.

⁴ibid.

members, the federation used to resolve this dispute by mediation and a final decision was made by an executive council with the approval of convention. If any of the national unions failed to accept the decision of the federation, then it could be suspended and expelled. The joint negotiated trade agreement with employers was the objective of the national unions. The joint trade agreement would govern the terms and conditions of the employment. In 1890, one of the first trade agreements were negotiated. This was in the stove industry. This was between the National Union of Iron Molders and the Stove Founders Defense Association. From this time, the collective bargaining had spread widely and at the beginning of the twentieth century, it became norm in industry like construction, printing, pottery and machine shops.

After 1886, the membership in the trade unions were on the upswing and during the 1890s' depression, the membership didn't fall. Based on this, the A F of L leadership claimed that this was because of the federations' principle. A F of L's membership had expanded from 1897 to 1904 and again during the First World War.⁵ During this period, the coalfield witnessed a successful union organization. United Mine Workers (UMW) conducted a successful campaign of organizing miners in 1898 in bituminous coal fields. The intention of coal operators to stabilize wages to stop the period of ruinous cutting price, was the reason for the success of UMW's campaign. In 1898, there was a conference

⁵Butler, p.49.

among bituminous coal operators in Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois called the Central Competitive Field (CCF). This conference resulted in an agreement among bituminous coal operators which had recognized the union and the workers obtained the eight-hour day, uniform tonnage rates, and a uniform wage scale for day men⁶. This was a great victory to the UMW, which had become the largest union within A F of L. John Mitchell led the UMW from 1898 to 1908 and later on by John L. Lewis, who became the President of UMW in 1919. Both these leaders were highly respected in public as well as in labor circles.

Though the miners in bituminous coal fields had a success in organizing, this was not the case with the anthracite coal miners. The anthracite coal fields were largely concentrated in five counties in eastern Pennsylvania. The organizing efforts in these fields was failed because the operators of these mines were not interested in stabilizing their labor costs and resisted attempts of union organization. Further, the unionism was failed in steel industry as well. In 1901, the United States Steel Corporation closed its door to unionism and also it influenced other related industries like structural iron-erection industry and the carrying trade of the Great Lakes, to close the door to unionism.

During the First World War time, there was an enormous spread of trade unions into new occupational groups and into firms, which were reluctant to unionism earlier. Till the First World War, the collective bargaining had only a

⁶Taft, p.171.

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limited success, but during the First World War it had a total success. The reasons for the enormous growth of trade unions during the First World War were, the war time boom and the rising prices, the friendly administration, the war time spirit of co-operation prevailed amid employers, the appointment of labor representatives in government emergency boards and the recognition by the National War Labor Board (NWLB), the workers and employers right to organize and bargain collectively.⁷ Some of the new fields which were entered by unions were meatpacking, shipbuilding and the occupations of non-operating railroad workers.

After the First World War, the situation was completely changed. The reason for this was the absence of governmental intervention in labor cause and the failure of joint industrial conference called by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919. This conference was to provide a basis for voluntary cooperation between labor and management in peacetime. Another defeat for unionism had occurred in 1919 in steel industry and unions once again had to depend on their own resources to force employers to recognize them.

SOCIALIST CRITICISM OF A F of L POLICIES

Other labor leaders challenged the "Pure and Simple" unionism concept of the A F of L. Among them, the most prominent were the socialists. The socialists had agreed with A F of L that the strong trade unions could be helpful

⁷Peterson, p.16.

in fighting employers to get immediate economic gains for the members but disagreed with the A F of L on three major issues viz., industrial unionism, political action and long-run objectives⁸. With industrial unionism, the socialists demanded membership in unions for both skilled as well as unskilled workers. But A F of L was not ready to accept unskilled workers as members in its fold. This conflict of industrial versus craft unionism restricted the benefits of unionism to only few and after few years led to the formation of Congress of Industrial Organization(CIO). The second major issue in which the socialist disagreed with A F of L was the political activity of this labor organization. It was least interested in political activities but the socialists had believed in political action to supplement the economic action, so that the state, which then supported the employers, could be brought under labor's control. Further, the socialist's long-term objective was the ownership of means of production and abolition of the wage system by means of worker control.

There were a number of socialist organisations opposed to the A F of L. Among them, the prominent one was the Socialist Labor Party. This was the oldest Socialist Party in U.S.A. This party was founded in 1876. In 1889, the Socialist Labor Party came under the leadership of Daniel De Leon. Under his leadership, this party had tried to capture the leadership of American labor movement and lead the movement, in accordance with "pure" Marxist principles in two ways. Firstly, adopting the strategy of "boring from within" in existed

⁸Johnson, p.143.

unions, so that to convert the membership and leaders to socialism. The second way was to set up the rival socialist organisations to attract workers from their existed affiliations (“dualism”). In 1895, Daniel De Leon set up the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance and assemblies of knights to make the workers to rally behind him but he remained unsuccessful in his attempt⁹. The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance attracted only a few unions and in 1898, it was estimated that its membership was between 15,000 and 30,000.

Next to Daniel De Leon, the prominent person who was related with the social activities was Eugene V. Debs. In his early days he was not a socialist. He was an advocate of industrial unionism and had gained national prominence in 1894. He was the leader of American Railway Union (ARU) and involved it in a strike which had supported Pullman Palace Car Company employees at Chicago. In this strike, the ARU refused to handle the Pullman cars unless the company agreed for arbitration. This stand of ARU was resulted in the issuance of federal injunction and further, the federal troops were also used to crush the strike on the order of President Grover Cleveland. The strike was collapsed and Eugene V. Debs was arrested on grounds of contempt of court for violation of injunction.¹⁰ Subsequently, Eugene V. Debs had turned to socialism and formed Socialist party in 1901. Unlike Daniel De Leon, who was dogmatic, theoretical and doctrinaire, Eugene V. Debs believed in humanitarian version of socialist

⁹Butler, p.51.

¹⁰Brecher, pp.98-110.

policies. But draw back of him was he lacked systematic plan for remaking the labor movement of the United States.

Another left-wing opposition to AFL came in 1905, under the banner of Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), popularly known as the “wobblies.”¹¹ The IWW drew its strength from the Western Federation of miners led by William D. Haywood. Both Eugene V. Debs and Daniel De Leon also participated in its formation. Later on, when Eugene V. Debs, Daniel De Leon and WFM withdrew from IWW, the IWW had primarily represented the migratory workers of the west. These workers had no attachment to home, property or permanent employment. These migratory workers such as harvest hands and lumberjacks believed that entire world was organized against them and advocated “direct action”.

The preamble to the IWW constitution began as:

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common... Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the Earth and the machinery of production and abolish the wage system.

The IWW was a direct-action movement, had opposed the signing of collective bargaining agreement with employers¹². Although, the IWW’s longtime program was the substitution for the existing government, a society in which the

¹¹ [http:// www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/curricul.htm](http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/curricul.htm).

¹² Semmour Martin Lipset ed., *Unions in Transition* (San Francisco, California: ICS Press), 1986.

unions would own and operate all industry, its immediate efforts were directed towards improving conditions on the job. Very soon, the IWW had faced a fatal end, due to its opposition to the U.S. entry into the First World War.

Next to the IWW, a threat to the A F of L came from the Communist Party, which was formed in 1920. The Communist Party supported Russian Revolution and tried to establish a base for itself in American labor movement. This Party had followed the tactic of “boring from within” with Trade Union Education League under William Z. Foster. In 1929, the communists turned to strategy of dualism. To give a practical shape to this strategy communist established the Trade Union Unity League and organized several national unions on an industrial basis in coal, textiles and the needle trades. These programs of communist had made no substantial gains in communist unions, except in the garment and fur industries.

POLITICAL ACTION

A F of L under the leadership of Samuel Gompers was not interested in involving itself in politics. He had felt that unlike England, labor should not form its own political party. But at the sametime, A F of L and Samuel Gompers believed in bargaining with the existing political parties to secure a legislative support for the labor’s cause. The slogan was “reward your friends and punish your enemies”, and the power of labor was in the voting booth¹³.

¹³Johnson, p.146.

In 1906, a bill of grievances, which had passed in the national meeting of union leaders, was submitted to all members of Congress. The two items of primary importance of bill of grievances were, the control of the labor injunction and exemption from the anti-trust laws. In 1908 Presidential election, the A F of L found that the Democratic Party had supported its demand. With coming of Democratic President Woodrow Wilson into the Presidency after the 1912 Presidential election and the Democratic Congress, the A F of L had got the opportunity to which it was waiting for a long. It had secured the passage of Clayton Act of 1914, the La Follette Seamen Act of 1915 as well as the creation of U.S. Department of Labor in 1913. The Clayton Act of 1914 was hailed as a labor Magna Carta because it limited the use of the injunction and anti-trust laws in labor cases. The importance of the La Follette Seamen Act of 1915 was it wiped out the involuntary servitude in the merchant marine.

Until 1924, A F of L had not endorsed any presidential candidate. The reason for this was, the endorsement, could mean supporting all candidates belonging to a single political party, irrespective of their stand on labor issues. But in 1924 Presidential election, A F of L had endorsed Robert M. La Follette and Burton K. Wheeler, the candidates of the Conference for Progressive Political Action, for the President and Vice-President, respectively. This had

happened because A F of L found that neither Republicans nor the Democrats gave support to labor goals¹⁴.

In December 1924, Samuel Gompers was no more and William Green became the President of A F of L. William Green continued the policy of Samuel Gompers. Both Samuel Gompers and William Green had fought for workers right to organize and the collective bargaining. Further, they had favored government action to end an unfair competition from convict and child labor. The A F of L had opposed the government determination of terms and conditions of work and minimum wage laws, on the ground that what had government could give, it could take away. It had believed in their own effort and struggle to sustain the fruits of their struggle for a long time.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES

The failure of industrial conference organized by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919 had made employers to start a movement to destroy unionism. The employer's association like boards of trade, chambers of commerce, builder's associations, banker's associations and even a farmer's organization - the National Orange were united under a program known as "American plan"¹⁵. By this plan, almost in every industrial center of the country, the open-shop organisations were established. These organisations had helped employers in

¹⁴ *ibid*, pp.146-47.

¹⁵ Peterson, p.20.

organizing open-shop campaigns by providing them the blacklists of union members, financial aid, spies and strike breakers.

Due to this employer's anti-union drive, unions after unions had lost their war and post-war gains. In 1921, the packaging industries declared that they could no longer bound by the union agreement and became open shop. However, open-shop was not the case with all the industries, the attempts to establish open-shop in industries like book and job printing and New York men and women clothing industry had failed.

Nevertheless, this was the case with only a few industries and in most of the industries employer's had succeeded in establishing an open shop. Due to this, the union membership had dropped from five million in 1920 to three and half million in 1924. The 1920s marked the peak of welfare activities. Some of the welfare activities were, employee's pension plans, group life insurance and medical services. These were offered by employers as security against the unavoidable hazards of life, the professional managers were engaged to handle the grievances and problems arising on the job and to provide recreation the firms baseball teams, glee clubs and dances were established. Further employers by providing stock ownership to employees had made employees as partners.

DEPRESSION PERIOD

American economy had faced a depression from 1929-1935. This was country's one of the worst depression. Though it had affected economy, it

provided boom for unionism. The depression created employee's grievances like wage cuts, reduction in hours, unemployment and the fears of an uncertain insecure future. In 1932 Presidential election, Franklin D. Roosevelt had emerged victorious and in 1933 he had announced his New Deal programs with its three R's – Relief, Recovery and Reform¹⁶. The flood of legislation initiated by Franklin Roosevelt administration was known as New Deal. The depression period was a boom period for unionism because this period had witnessed a series of pro-labor legislation enacted by the Congress. In 1932, Congress had passed the Norris-La Guardia Act. This act had forbade the use of yellow-dog contract and limited the use of injunctions in labor disputes. Moreover, the biggest gain for labor was Section 7(a) of National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). The Section 7(a) provides the employees the right to form unions of their own choosing, free from employer control or direction. When Supreme Court held NIRA unconstitutional, the Section 7(a) was incorporated in the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) of 1935¹⁷. The NLRA was also called as Wagner Act of 1935 after its sponsor, Senator Robert Wagner of New York. The important contribution by the Wagner Act of 1935 to the labor cause was, it had guaranteed the workers right to organize and bargain collectively with the employers. It had also made company unions illegal. The Wagner Act had also established the National labor Relations Board (NLRB). The function of NLRB

¹⁶Johnson, p.147.

¹⁷ Lipset, p.54.

was to determine whether the majority of workers desired to be represented by a particular union and enforce the legislative requirement that bargaining be carried on in good faith.

All these positive developments in favor of labor had resulted into two things. Firstly, it increased the membership of the existing unions and secondly, the unions appeared in firms, where neither organizer nor organization had existed. That meant, workers organized themselves and requested A F of L for a charter. A F of L enrolled them in labor organizations, which were directly under the control of Executive Council of the federation. Later on, they were either transferred to the existing nationals that would claim them or new nationals were formed to represent new jurisdictions.

NEW DEAL

The growth of unions during the New Deal period had its own characteristics. Firstly, compared to craft unions, the industrial unions like International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), and the textile workers and the miners expanded rapidly¹⁸. Secondly, there was an enormous enthusiasm for an industrial union among workers in the newly organized industries. For instance, the workers in rubber plants, had not shown any interest in identifying themselves with specific craft unions which claimed jurisdiction over their jobs.

¹⁸Johnson, p.148.

Finally, the craft unions associated with the AFL showed a lack of interest in organizing campaigns in the mass-production industries, either within the limits of their own jurisdictions, or through new industrial national unions.

Till 1930s though labor movement had taken many efforts it did not make any substantial gains in its membership as well as in influencing the decision of the government, because it concentrated mainly on the skilled workers. But the vents of 1930s had changed the structure of labor movement dramatically which was called by scholars as “the second American labor movement.”¹⁹ In the post 1930s labor movement built on both the craft as well as the industrial unions in response to the increasing strength of corporations.

FORMATION OF THE CIO

In 1934, San Francisco convention, the conflict within the federation over industrial versus craft unions openly broke out. The arguments of the leaders of the industrial unions within the federation were, the A F of L’s only skilled worker approach would not work in the mass-production industries, and it was a good opportunity for the federation to organize these industries. On the other hand, the opponents to industrial union complained the invasion of existing jurisdictions and had warned the violation of the constitutional basis of the federation. Finally, both the factions agreed for a compromise resolution, which was called as the San Francisco Declaration. In this declaration, two things were

¹⁹ Harold G. Vatter and John F. Walker ed., *History of the U.S. Economy since World War II*(New York, NY : M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 1996),p.178.

made clear. One was, the union jurisdictions must be protected and another was, in many industries “a new condition exists requiring organization upon a different basis to be effective.”

However, the San Francisco Declaration had failed to solve the craft versus industrial union conflict. The Executive Council of A F of L comprised a majority from metal and the building trades departments. The persons from these industries were advocates of craft unionism and demanded for an exclusion of industrial unions, which were existed within their jurisdictions.

In October 1935, the A F of L held its convention in Atlantic City. In this convention, the reports of the resolution committee became the center of clash between industrial and craft union advocates. John P. Frey of the Metal Trades Department presented the majority report. This report upheld the historic rights of craft unions²⁰. John L. Lewis spoke for the minority report. The minority report interpreted the San Francisco Declaration to mean that all workers in an industry were to be enrolled in one union. The minority report was defeated in a convention by a vote of 18,024 to 10,933. Sixty of the A F of L’s national and international unions had voted against the resolution. Twenty-one of the A F of L’s national and international unions had supported it; two splits and eleven

²⁰ *ibid*, p.149.

abstained. A majority of the state federations, the city centrals, and the federal labor unions voted in favor of the minority report.

Three weeks after the convention, the meeting officers of the eight A F of L unions, met and established the Committee for Industrial Organization(CIO). This committee was to promote the organization of workers in industrial unions in the mass-production industries. This committee was to perform this function, by being within the A F of L. John L. Lewis had resigned from the Vice-President of A F of L, when William Green requested him to disband the committee.

In January 1936, the United Mine Workers (UMW) had withheld its payment of per capita dues to A F of L. When Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) was established by CIO to organize the steel industry, UMW contributed \$ 500,00 and its leaders Philip Murray and John Brophy came forward to head the organizing drive. Further, the automobile workers, rubber workers, flat glass workers, and the radio and electrical workers were also joined the committee.

The A F of L Executive Council had charged the CIO Unions with "dualism". In 1936, A F of L convention at Tampa, the CIO Unions was not represented and the convention formally approved the suspension of CIO unions with a vote of 21,679 to 2,043. In 1937, A F of L had ordered its state and city bodies to expel locals of CIO. In return, CIO had set up its own state and local organization. When the attempts to reunite these two groups had failed, in

November 1938, CIO organized itself as a permanent labor organization and changed its name to Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO). In 1938, there were 34 national and international unions, eight organizing committees, and a number of state and local councils and local industrial unions²¹.

²¹ Johnson, p.148.

CHAPTER -III
A F of L : FROM SPLIT TO
MERGER

A F of L : FROM SPLIT TO MERGER

STRUCTURE OF CIO

CIO was similar to A F of L in terms of structure. The control of CIO was in its annual convention¹. As in the A F of L, each state and the city councils were given one vote for every thousand members. Based on this, the voting strength in CIO was also concentrated in national and international unions. The annual convention elected a President, two Vice-Presidents and a secretary. The first President of CIO was John L. Lewis. Sydney Hillman and Phillip Murray were the first Vice-Presidents and James Carey of the United Electrical Workers was the first Secretary. The executive board of CIO was consisted of one representative from each national union. The executive board had granted power to act between conventions. To provide an executive committee consisted of officers, the constitution of CIO was amended at the later stage.

The reason for the similarity of organizational structure was that the CIO leaders had gained their experience from A F of L. Due to this, the CIO accepted the idea that the national unions should be the foundation of the new federation. To organize the unorganized, the organizing committees were created within different industries such as steel, textiles and utilities. The national CIO had created these organizing committees. The national organization gave staff, funds

¹ *ibid*, p.149.

and initial overall direction to the organizing committees. The CIO national organization did this usually in the form of sponsorships by one of the larger CIO unions. This practice was to strengthen the relationship among CIO unions even after the organizing committee became a national union. Additionally, the primary objective of organizing the mass industries was to submerge the interest of the nationals and weaken their autonomy. This objective was further strengthened by the influences of the important personalities like John L. Lewis, Philip Murray and Sydney Hillman.

POLICIES OF CIO

Unlike A F of L, the CIO leaders were interested in political action and social legislation. The main reason for this was the government programs of relief and social insurance, guarantees of work and wage standards had got more impact on industrial workers whose jobs were less secured and less paid. In order to influence the governmental legislation, in 1936, Labor Non-Partisan League was formed by national unions from the CIO and by some AFL unions. Though it tried to avert becoming a political party it had fielded its candidates in primary elections and this league in New York State formed American Labor party.

In 1943, Congress passed Wartime Labor disputes Act (Smith-Connally Act). This act had banned the political contributions by labor unions². This made CIO to organize a Political Action Committee (PAC). The purpose of this committee was to conduct “a broad and intensive program of education...for effective labor action on the political front.” A F of L formed the similar kind of organization in 1948, which was called as Labor’s League for Political Education (LLPE).

ISSUE OF COMMUNISTS

This issue was also handled differently by both A F of L and CIO. In mid-1930s communists tried to capture the membership and leadership of the existing unions. At the outset, the communists concentrated on the A F of L unions, but later on, when CIO was organizing the unorganized, in its enthusiasm, CIO had recruited some of the known or suspected communist affiliations. The CIO leaders like John Lewis, and Sydney Hillman based on their own experiences kept communists out of their unions. The communist infiltration in CIO had aroused opposition from employers, middle classes and A F of L leaders to CIO³.

² *ibid*, p.151.

³ *ibid*.

CORRUPTION AND RACKETEERING

The CIO accused A F of L of giving protection and shelter to racketeers especially in the craft unions. The union position was used to extort money from employers or attain personal benefits from members' dues. These were found in the less democratic unions and in organizations like building services, longshoring and construction, which were connected with local markets.

MEMBERSHIP

Unlike A F of L, CIO was open to black membership. The objective of the CIO was to enroll every worker in a particular plant to make the collective bargaining. At the outset in 1935-36, the CIO membership was around one million. This was 3,718,000 in 1937 and in 1938, CIO became the largest labor group in the country with membership over four million workers. However, CIO had made no gain in membership during recession in business activity in 1937 to till the America's entry into the Second World War. Further, CIO's membership had reached five million and six million in 1941 and 1945 respectively, due to the expansion of defense industries. With CIO, the A F of L's membership was also on the upswing. In 1939, A F of L had again captured the top position in terms of membership and ended with seven million members at the end of the Second World War. CIO membership reached its boom in 1936 and 1937. During this period, CIO enrolled around three million new workers to

its fold. These new workers were mostly from the mass-production industries of steel, automobiles, electrical equipment and coal.

During the Second World War, both A F of L and CIO had represented labor in governmental boards. To increase the production of war material, both A F of L and CIO co-operated with management in a number of ways. Amid this, the important one was, both unions and employers had entrusted the final resolution of disputes to the National War Labor Board (NWLB). The NWLB comprised representatives from management, labor and the public. Both A F of L and CIO had promised to, not to opt for strike during the war period⁴.

The end of the Second World War had witnessed the labor unrest. In the winter of 1945-46, President Henry S. Truman convened a labor-management conference. Like the labor-management conference organized by President Woodrow Wilson, this conference also remained unsuccessful. The reason for this failure was, it was unable to find solution for the problem of union's objective to define the rights of management. On the other hand, this conference had agreed on the principle of collective bargaining between the labor and management. Further, the government had also shown its intention of not to withdraw its conciliation service between labor and management.

⁴ Taft, p.546.

The year 1946, along with the failure of labor-management, had witnessed series of strikes. Most of these strikes were concerned with wages. Auto and steel industries were the most affected ones in these strikes. President Truman appointed the fact-finding boards and based on the reports of these boards, both sides accepted the wage hikes of about eighteen and half cents per hour. The labor's unrest had spread to industries like coal and railroads also. Though the labor's unrest involved little physical violence, it had aroused the public concern because of the following reasons. Firstly, its impact upon the reconversion of the economy from war to peacetime production. Secondly, the operation of public services and finally the price level. The labor's unrest and the public concern were well used by the government to bring the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947. This act was also called as Taft-Hartley Act. The major provisions of this act were, it had balanced the restrictions on employers imposed by the Wagner Act of 1935, outlawed the closed shop, jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycott, union officials were required to file non-communist affidavits and the National Labor Relations Board was divided into separate prosecuting and judicial arms. Both A F of L and CIO had described this act as "slave-labor law"⁵. At this time, the common objective of both A F of L and CIO was the modifications of the Taft-Hartley act. This common objective had provided an opportunity for both the unions to merge. The several meetings had been made between A F of L and CIO aimed at unity

⁵ Johnson, p.153.

before 1946, but was unsuccessful. A F of L had favored the individual reunification of the CIO unions with the federation and merging organically with others in the same jurisdiction. The CIO unions favored functional unity. Functional unity meant merging with A F of L in an en masse and maintaining their identity as an independent industrial unions.

The motivating factors behind the merger were, firstly, the opposition to the Taft-Hartley Act and secondly, fighting for effective labor representation in governmental defense agencies during the Korean War⁶. In the year 1949-1950, CIO had expelled eleven national unions that were considered to be communist-led, and withdrawn its affiliation with the World Federation of Trade Unions. The World Federation of Trade Union was opposed by A F of L on the ground that it was an instrument of Soviet policy. Again in 1949, CIO had joined with the A F of L in forming International Conference of Free Trade Unions. This was established to counter the World Federation of Trade Unions. In 1953, followed by an investigation of the New York State Crime Commission into criminal activities on the New York docks, the A F of L expelled the International Longshoremen's Association on grounds of racketeering.

In 1953, for the first time the joint unity committee meeting took place. In this meeting, to avert the further warfare between the two unions, George Meany

⁶ Butler, p.64.

proposed the No-Raid Agreement and A F of L accepted this draft with minor changes and the respective conventions approved this agreement in the same year. The No-Raid Agreement provided that, the unions affiliated with each federation should not try to organize employees already in an “established bargaining relationship...between their employer and a union in the other federation.” Further, this agreement also provided that, each federation should urge its affiliates to become parties to the agreement and finally, the agreement had also provided that the disputes which were not solved by respective unions on their own, were to be referred for an arbitration to an individual designated as an impartial umpire.

The joint AFL-CIO unity committee in their meetings during October 1954 and February 1955 made basic plan for the unity. The important aspects of this plan were, equal recognition of craft and industrial unionism, acceptance of each national unions current jurisdiction, settlement of jurisdictional conflicts at a later date through negotiation, creation of a department of industrial unions, to which all the eligible unions could belong, prohibitions against racial discrimination and power of the central organization to eliminate corruption and communism within its affiliates. In December 1955, A F of L and CIO had held their last separate convention, the seventy-fourth and seventeenth respectively. In these conventions, they voted to merge and adjourned to meet together to

form the new American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) at the constitutional convention on December 5, 1955⁷.

⁷ Johnson, p.152.

CHAPTER -IV
AFL-CIO AFTER 1955

AFL-CIO AFTER 1955

The American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) is a federation of sixty-six national and international labor unions.¹ Today AFL-CIO represents thirteen million working men and women. AFL-CIO was the result of merger between American Federation of Labor (AFL) and Congress of Industrial Organisation (CIO) in 1955. AFL-CIO's first president was George Meany, who was succeeded by Lane Kirkland in 1979. Thomas R. Donahue completed Lane Kirkland's incomplete term. In 1995, John J. Sweeney became the president of AFL-CIO by election in biennial convention.

MISSION AND GOALS OF THE AFL-CIO

The mission of AFL-CIO is, bringing improvement in the lives of working families, economic justice in the workplace and social justice in the nation. To achieve this mission AFL-CIO to build and change the American labor movement. AFL-CIO pledges to build a strong movement of American workers by organizing workers into unions to build a strong political voice for workers in the nation, to change the unions to provide new voice for workers in the communities as well as in the changing economy.

HOW THE AFL-CIO WORKS

The AFL-CIO is governed by a biennial convention. Their elected

¹<http://www.aflcio.org/home.htm>.

delegates in the biennial convention represent the federation members. The biennial convention determines the policies and goals of the AFL-CIO. Every four years, the AFL-CIO officers, the president, secretary-treasurer, executive vice president and fifty vice-presidents will be elected by the biennial convention. The daily work of the AFL-CIO is guided by the Executive Council. The members of the Executive Council are the officers of the AFL-CIO.

AFL-CIO GENERAL BOARD

The function of this board is to take up issues referred to it by Executive Council, which traditionally include endorsements of candidates for U.S president and vice president during election time.² The member of the General Board includes the Executive Council members and a chief officer of each affiliated union and the trade and industrial departments created by the AFL-CIO constitution, as well as four regional representatives of the state federations.

STATE LEVEL

AFL-CIO has fifty-one state federations (including Puerto Rico's). These state federations coordinate with local unions. Officers lead the state federations and boards elected by the delegates from local unions and are chartered by the national AFL-CIO. The state federations give working families a voice in the state capitals.

² http://www.aflcio.org/about/meet_work.htm.

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS

Like state councils, the central labor councils are also chartered by AFL-CIO. There are five hundred and ninety central labor councils. These central labor councils give voice for workers in cities, towns and counties.

PROGRAMMATIC DEPARTMENT

Thirteen programmatic departments like Organizing Department and the Field Mobilization Department carry out the day-to-day work of the federation. The Organizing Department helps unions in their organizing activities and the Field Mobilization Department links the work of the state federations, the central labor councils and the national AFL-CIO. The other programmatic departments are Corporate Affairs Department, AFL-CIO Legislative Department, the Political Department, the Public Policy Department, the Education Department, the AFL-CIO Public Affairs Department, the Civil and Human Rights Department, the Working Women's Department, the International Affairs Department, the Safety and Health Department and the Administrative Departments.

CONSTITUTIONALLY ESTABLISHED DEPARTMENTS

AFL-CIO has seven constitutionally established trade and industrial departments. These departments unite unions with common interests and goals, including organizing, legislative and political work. These seven departments are Building and Construction Trades Department, Food and Allied Service

Department, Metal Trades Department, Maritime Trades Department, Department of Professional Employees, Transportation Trades Department and Union and Service Trades Department.

AFL-CIO: 1955-1990

George Meany became the first president of AFL-CIO. At the outset he concentrated more on clean unionism. AFL-CIO drew ethical practices code and George Meany used this for self-policing. The United States Senate Committee under the chairmanship of John L. McClellan of Arkansas revealed that the federation's biggest and strongest affiliate, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, was a hunting ground for organized crime³. This made AFL-CIO to opt for an independent inquiry, which culminated in a formal demand that the giant trucking union throw-off mob control or face ouster. When the Teamsters union under the head of Jimmy Hoffa failed to take any action, George Meany convened AFL-CIO second convention in Atlantic City in 1957. In this convention, International Brotherhood of Teamsters was expelled from AFL-CIO with a margin of 4-1 vote.

In 1959, the Landrum-Griffin Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act were passed. AFL-CIO had opposed this act because it had established bill of rights for union members. This act gave federal authorities an

³Taft, p.700.

extensive power over the internal affairs of unions⁴. Even though this act was passed and the eradicating crooks from unions came under the law enforcement agencies, the AFL-CIO continued to insist on the moral principles to be followed by unions beyond the market considerations through its resolutions. For instance in 1982, Lane Kirkland, the President of AFL-CIO testified in support of legislation which compelled union officials who were convicted of a crime which involved betrayal of union trust, to resign from the job. Lane Kirkland supported this legislation ignoring the objection from the leaders of union like Building Trades.

AFL-CIO AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Civil rights was another area where the scope of labor had expanded after the unification. Before unification, the AFL unions in the fields like construction, the railroads, and the skilled metal trades practiced discriminatory practices against Blacks through Jim Crow local or other methods. On the contrary there was less discrimination in CIO because, it had Blacks in its membership fold to the substantial level through the mass production industries. The AFL-CIO under the guidance of George Meany had adopted no discrimination policy against any race, creed or color. Further, he proved his dedication towards Blacks by seeing two Blacks, Philip A. Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Carporters and Willard Townsend of the United

⁴ Johnson, p.152.

Transport Service Employees, became vice-presidents of the merged federation, the first time Blacks had held such high rank in either A F of L or CIO.

Though AFL-CIO had adopted the policy of no discrimination towards Blacks and minorities, it could not end the racial exclusion immediately. In the 1960s when John F. Kennedy was the President of America, minorities with full swing demanded equality. This made Kennedy to give a top priority to an enactment of Omnibus Civil Right Act. This act was to remove the restrictions on access by Blacks and other minorities to public places – buses, railroads, soda fountains, public toilets, and town halls. George Meany had supported the bill but he was not satisfied with the bill, because this act had not contained the provision for providing equal opportunities in jobs for Blacks. He informed Kennedy but President was not interested in that, because to move the original draft itself, the administration faced a lot of opposition from the white members of the Congress especially from the South⁵. Nevertheless, George Meany was strong in his position, on the need for Fair Employment Practices clause. In 1963, George Meany told the House Judiciary committee that emphasizing the moral principles by AFL-CIO alone would not be sufficient to stop discrimination in unions as well as in jobs⁶and to do this effectively AFL-CIO, needed the support of law prohibiting discrimination.

⁵ Lipset, p.16.

⁶ *ibid*, p.17.

Due to the strong lobby of union leaders President Kennedy adduced Fair Employment Practices clause into the Omnibus Civil Rights Act but as expected this failed to pass through the Congress, but it was passed in Congress by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who came to the presidency after the assassination of Kennedy. Though AFL-CIO succeeded in getting Fair Employment Provision clause in the Omnibus Civil Right Act, it had to agitate for stronger laws against discrimination in voting, housing or education.

AFL-CIO received cooperation from unions and their white rank and file to abolish discrimination and enforce Fair Employment Practices Act. Additionally, AFL-CIO had also received cooperation from federal courts, which ordered reluctant unions to speed up their eradication of exclusionary policies. Labor's excuse is that the blame for the laggard pace of equal opportunity should be placed on government's failure to maintain full employment. Labor, as the most of the spokesman for the white middle class argued that the white workers and their families were unfairly pressurized to step aside for less qualified black and Hispanic job seekers as a means of compensating for the effects of historic injustices totally outside their control or culpability. This problem was well addressed by unions during the Jimmy Carter administration through the enactment of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978⁷.

⁷ *ibid*, p.18.

Although these sorts of acts were passed Blacks and other minorities didn't capture the high-ranking jobs in labor movement as well as in giant corporations. Yet, no union had a black president. Blacks were given vice-president post in most of the unions, but usually in a special assignment connected with race relations. Compared to Blacks, position of women was even worse. In women, both black and white communities faced a same treatment as for as high positions were concerned. Even in unions, where women were predominant members, women were not given the top spot.

In 1979, Lane Kirkland had become the president of AFL-CIO. He was interested and committed to increase the minority membership in AFL-CIO's top policymaking body, the thirty-five members Executive Council. When AFL and CIO merged, the Blacks were given two vice-president slots, but when Lane Kirkland had become the president of AFL-CIO, this number was declined to one. In August 1980, Lane Kirkland convinced his colleagues and made one woman as Vice-President for the first time in the history of AFL-CIO.

In 1981, at New York AFL-CIO convention, Lane Kirkland moved the resolution to double the minorities membership among the Vice-President, by backing election of a black woman to join the black man and white woman already aboard. In order to choose black women for the post of Vice-President, federation called on the caucus made up of black delegates to the convention for guidance. This caucus proposed a black woman, who was substituted by Federation, for a candidate of its own choice because she was a well-known rebel

in the normally conformist internal politics of labor. Caucus disliked this and the Frederick O' Neal of the Associated Actors and Artistes of America commented on the convention floor that he was tired of having people make decisions for him without considering his feeling. Further he said that, it was "like asking the people of New York to select a congressman for New Jersey." Frederick O'Neal of the Associated Actors and Artistes of America was the only black member in the Executive Council at that time.⁸

The 1985 convention in Anaheim, California elected a second black man to the council. In this year, four new Vice-Presidents were chosen. Among the four, no one was woman. From 1981 to 1984, eighteen people became the Vice-President's. Among this eighteen, the only minority representatives were one black woman and one black man. All the others were white males.

AFL-CIO AND PUBLIC POLICY

From 1955-1990, the interaction of unionism and public policy had been multiplied many times. In these interactions, the important determinant was the politics. Mainly trade unions tried to influence the public policy on two important areas, one were wages and another one was job's.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a steep rise in inflation. There was a high rise in consumer prices on the degree to which wage increases were more than the increase in productivity. All the initiatives taken by government to stop

⁸ *ibid.*

the wage increase were unsuccessful because of resistance from union, political gamesmanship and lack of conviction by their presidential sponsors. Finally, during the Jimmy Carter period, there was a negotiation between President Jimmy Carter and the AFL-CIO. This resulted in the “national accord”. Industrialist rejected this agreement because they considered it as a political ploy by Jimmy Carter administration, which was in its twilight period. The national accord had created a tripartite instrumentality. This was to ensure a co-operation among employers, unions and government, in order to revive sick industries.⁹

This national accord and the tripartite instrumentality died with the advent of Ronald Reagan to the Presidency. The philosophy of Ronald Reagan was to reduce the governmental intrusion in industrial affairs. This philosophy was called as Reaganomics. During this time, the steel, auto and other basic industries in the U.S.A were collapsing due to the heavy load of imports from other countries, which filled the U.S. markets. This had affected the unions in these industries. These were all the AFL-CIO strongholds and it was not happy over the negative attitude of White House to this. The U.S. government had ignored these happenings because it wanted to bring down the inflation. AFL-CIO was unhappy with government for another reason also, that is, the government economic policy had promoted more and more unemployment. Lane Kirkland, the AFL-CIO chief called it as a Reagan “counter-revolution”.

⁹ *ibid.* p.20.

To him it had further enriched the larger corporations and the wealthy at the cost of poor and the wage earner. In protest to Reaganomics, Lane Kirkland was the prime mover of the 1981 massive protest march on the capital. This was a radical deviation from the George Meany's policy by Lane Kirkland who was anticipated to act as a mini-Meany, when he was moved to the top-spot. When AFL-CIO was under the leadership of George Meany, he didn't take the labor to the streets to force the changes in the government policy.¹⁰ In his policy of not taking labor to the streets, he had even angered Philip Randolph, Walter Reuther and other key unionists, when they made the plea to federation to endorse the 1963 civil rights mobilization at the Lincoln memorial. This was here Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., made the famous "I have a dream" speech. George Meany had rejected this plea. Another reason why he was against, this was due to the fact that AFL-CIO had a coalition with Congress for the passage of Omnibus Civil Rights Act.

Again the same sort of procession and demonstration took place at the same place but two decades later. But this time it was led by Lane Kirkland, who had considered George Meany as his mentor. This was called as the solidarity - day demonstration. This demonstration had brought a quarter-million unionists and their allies to Washington in mid-September 1981. This demonstration was to form a political picket line which stretched from the Washington Monument to the foot of Capitol Hill. When AFL - CIO Executive

¹⁰ *ibid.*

Council had criticized Ronald Reagan's economic message to Congress, Ronald Reagan had countered it by saying that the large vote he had just received from union members was the proof, to say that Moguls of labor were out of touch and out of step with their rank and file. In this demonstration, Lane Kirkland had replied to Ronald Reagan by saying that the President was wrong in telling Americans that "he alone speaks for the working people of this country and that we do not."¹¹ The AFL-CIO agenda before Ronald Reagan was, national industrial policy under tripartite direction to revitalize decaying industries, stimulate new one and rebuild cities, harbors, high ways and other public facilities and a law to ensure that goods sold in U.S. market contain high percentage of U.S. made components. This was to safeguard American jobs. This shows how much disinterest labor has over free trade and free trade was called by labor as "academic abstractions".

AFL-CIO and FOREIGN POLICY

During George Meany era, the AFL-CIO supported Vietnam War and also he had refused to have any détente with Moscow, Peking or Cuba or toward fraternal exchanges between AFL-CIO unions and the state-dominated unions of the Soviet bloc. Due to this, left intellectuals had been disenchantment with AFL-CIO. Lane Kirkland had also followed the same policy. Lane Kirkland attacked corporate America for their eagerness to have co-operation with

¹¹ *ibid*, p.21.

Kremlin on any venture where a prospect for a dollar or ruble exists. At the outset, the AFL-CIO was automatically supported every U.S. military excursion put forward in the name of anti-communism. But now, there was a change in AFL-CIO automatic support. By this Pentagon could not expect AFL-CIO to lobby in favor of giving it a blank check for limitless expansion of the defense budget. In 1985, there was a federal deficit mounting at an annual rate of around two hundred billion dollar. Though there was a deficit, President recommended for an extra twelve percent to be spent on arms and demanded a cut in social and economic programs. AFL-CIO was not in favor of this. Further, the AFL-CIO, Anaheim Convention rebuked Ronald Reagan administration for emphasizing military solution rather than political for conflicts in Central America.¹²

The change in AFL-CIO foreign policy was attributed to the change in the membership structure also. Previously, the employees from building trades and smokestack industries i.e. the blue-collar workers dominated AFL-CIO's membership. Now, white-collar workers especially from civil service union and other services overshadowed the membership in AFL-CIO. But the change in structure of membership and foreign policy stand did not alter the federation's basic posture of antagonism towards the Soviet regime. This can be explained by referring to AFL-CIO 1983 convention. In its 1983 convention at Hollywood, Florida, it had passed a resolution renouncing Russian patrol planes for shooting down the Korean airlines over pacific as an act of "barbaric mass murder" which

¹² *ibid*, p.22.

was a precise reflection of political system that lies in the Soviet empire. Further this resolution also criticized Ronald Reagan administration for its attitude of “big talk, small deeds” when communist government in Poland cracked down *solidarnosc*.

CHANGES WITHIN AFL-CIO

Lane Kirkland brought lot of changes in AFL-CIO. Lane Kirkland allowed openness and tolerance of dissent inside AFL-CIO. According to William W. Winpisinger, a socialist’s head of the IAM and Aerospace Workers (International Association of Machinist), “Lane has opened up dialogue to an unparalleled degree within the higher councils of the federation.”¹³ Further, to Victor Gotbaum of the American Federation of State, Country, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), “when you disagree with Lane, it’s not a mortal sin as it was with Meany.”¹⁴

In February 1985, at its Bal Harbor, Florida AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting came with a White Paper. This proved that how far AFL-CIO had come in its liberating effect. In the past or up to an end of George Meany period AFL-CIO was a closed society. Now there is a change in it. The white paper was an appraisal of AFL-CIO. This criticized AFL-CIO for its errors and shortcomings. The criticism was so severe, which AFL-CIO at no time received

¹³ *ibid*, p.23.

¹⁴ *ibid*.

it. Further, the White Paper also prescribed new approaches to its affiliate to take up in order to regain its lost momentum. The AFL-CIO went for self-examination as well as examined why today's employee averts unionization. It went for this because of the findings of the study conducted by Louis Harris and Associates for AFL-CIO. The findings of the study were, nearly two-thirds of all workers outside union ranks were believed that union leaders compel members to go along with the decisions which were not taken by them and not liked by them, especially when they were asked to go on strikes, and other issues. Secondly, according to the finding, over half of the non-unionists had a belief that unions increase the risk of companies go out of business, restricts individual initiative and fight change. Thirdly, in the population, generally fifty percent believed that most union leaders didn't represent the workers in their unions.

The White Paper pointed out that, the unionists had demanded for more positive opinions about their organisations.

Further, the Harris pollsters, in association with Professors James L. Medoff of Harvard and Thomas A. Kochan of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, came up with this profile of the contemporary work force:

Americans by and large see themselves as independent, self-confident, self-reliant, and skeptical of claims of authority. In line with that perception, workers are becoming more insistent on securing more freedom in the workforce. It is increasingly true that the measure of good jobs is high discretion as much as high pay. And despite claims to the contrary, the 'work ethic' - the personal need to do one's best on the job - is stronger in the U.S. than in other western democracies.¹⁵

¹⁵ *ibid*, p.24.

This survey cited that there was a shift in attitude of worker in seeing his work. Now he sees his work, not as means of survival but a means of self-expression and self-development.

In order to cater to the changes in workers attitude toward work and changes in their perception toward unions, the Bal Harbor Manifesto had called unions to show flexibility in both organizing and collective bargaining. This was a position, which was at variant of union practices from 1930s. From then they followed the policy of rigidity, now they were turned towards flexibility. The results of the pollsters and the Bal Harbor declaration had shown the change in the notion, from what unions did to workers to what workers could do through their unions. The Bal Harbor manifesto clearly acclaimed this change in notion and had tried to build strong rapport with their own rank and file. By this, the manifesto tried to tell the members that they are the organization and determiners of policy in fact as well as slogan, not their officials.

Within AFL-CIO, there was an attention to expand its membership. The primary target of this expansion agenda was the ex-union members. Their strength was double the total paid up membership of AFL-CIO. They were estimated to be twenty-seven million. Most of the ex-union members had left the unions only because they lost their unionized job. Union had adopted many approaches to expand their membership. They were, federation issuing credit-cards and studying the practicality of offering low-premium insurance, job

training and information, discount programs for purchasing consumer goods, or other services to workers. AFL-CIO had adopted these approaches to include in its membership fold the workers who were reluctant to take union cards. The AFL-CIO had adopted this so that in due course, they will become the full-fledged unionists.

Further, AFL-CIO had gone for changes in collective bargaining. The moderating paper had noted a change in the hate-the-boss attitude among the workers. Since it was a case, the White Paper had proposed to unions to go for mediation, arbitration or other devices in bargaining table, wherever employers show a good faith in dealing with the employees¹⁶. There existed a industry wide pattern, which forced all companies to have an identical wages, fringe benefits and other contract terms. The employers were not satisfied with this because of competitive pressure. On the other hand, the employees were also not satisfied because they had an itch for self-expression. The White Paper had recognized this and advised unions to go for models which suits the needs and concern of different groups.

Further, the report recommended labor to establish quality-of-work life programs in industries under joint union-company auspices. The purpose of these programs was to give worker a sense of partnership in the success of their companies through a participation in work place decision making. The unions

¹⁶ *ibid*, p.25.

viewed these as employer-fostered schemes to undermine collective bargaining. The report conceded that some programs had seen used for averting unions. At the same time, the report emphasized that, the positive results were possible only when unions make them effective vehicles for worker dignity and job satisfaction.

The Bal Harbor declaration had not only talked about the changed relations with the management but also dealt with the other side. The declaration estimated that seventy-five percent of all companies hire professional consultants at an estimated cost of hundred million dollar a year this was to guide them to keep unions out. To counter this, AFL-CLO urged its affiliates, to try to impose employer neutrality in union organizing campaigns through manipulation of public opinion and use of sophisticated new technique known as the coordinated corporate campaign¹⁷.

The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union had used this strategy in 1980. This was the first major application of this strategy. This strategy brought victory to this union. This was against J.P. Stevens Textile Empire. The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile workers had adopted traditional weapons like strikes and a global consumer boycott at the outset. But it remained unsuccessful. In the 1980, the union had used money power to isolate the J.P. Stevens company from the rest of the Wall Street community and thus

¹⁷ *ibid*, p.26.

forced it to settle. The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers union was fighting seventeen years to unionize J.P. Stevens company. In 1980 the Amalgamated, had a leverage of millions of dollars in employee pension funds under joint union-management trusteeship. The financial giants like Hanover Bank, Avon Products, New York Life and Metropolitan Life were major banks, insurance companies and corporations that helped J.P. Stevens by the loan arrangements or interlocking directorates. Amalgamated with the employee pension funds went after major banks, insurance companies, and corporations linked to J.P. Stevens. These banks and insurance companies gave a collective pressure on J.P.Stevens, which acted as a decisive element in J.P.Steven's decision to sign a first union contract. Moreover, the similar campaigns were used at Litton Industries and the Beverly Enterprises chain of nursing homes, which resulted in establishing amicable relations between union and management.

The AFL-CLO was believed in changes in basic labor law to make changes in unionization and collective bargaining. It also believed in change in basic labor law to reduce the danger of obstructionism by a new generation of employers who in the manifesto's words, "are best on avoiding unionization at all costs and who are left largely free to do so by a law that has proven to be impotent and a Labor Board that is inert."¹⁸

¹⁸ *ibid*, p.27.

In the 1950s and 1960s, due to union security arrangements, the employers open-heartedly permitted unionization. Now, the AFL-CIO had an element of paranoia in the blanket character of the federation's assessment of current employer attitudes. The report quoted an unspecified study, which revealed that ninety five percent of employers in private sectors resist unionization.

In 1978, in the Senate the labor reform law had been killed by an alliance of all sectors of business, big and small. This bill had been worked out through a compromise among AFL-CIO, the White House, and the leadership of the Democratic party in both, the House of Representatives and the Senate. AFL-CIO to soften employer hostility had agreed for repeal of section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which gave Right to work law precedence over the federal laws, permit for negotiation of union-shop contracts and certification of unions as sole bargaining representative on the basis of the signing of membership application, by sixty percent workers, as against the standard requirement for a majority pro-union vote in an NLRB election. AFL-CIO was shocked when it saw the companies who had twenty or thirty years of good union-management relations voted in Business Round table to join the NAM and the U.S Chamber of Commerce in denouncing it as a union power grab. The Business Roundtable was the Coordinating group of the biggest of big business.

The consequence of employer's unity against the labor law of 1978, which was killed in the Senate, was the break up of Labor Management Group.

This Group was a summit-level think tank formed under the auspices of John J. Dunlop of Harvard University when he was a secretary of Labor in the Ford Cabinet. This group had operated outside the framework of the government and provided an opportunity for private meetings in which leaders of industry and unions meet and express their views on matters of public policy as taxes, inflation, trade, unemployment, and energy. When the labor law reform failed to pass through the Senate, the AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland commented that, this is the proof to show that the employers use instrumentality's like Management Group as a mask to bring back the master-servant relationship in dealings with their work force¹⁹.

This break up of Labor Management Group was ended in 1981. In 1981, Dunlop capitalized on initiatives from the former industry members to convince Lane Kirkland to join in reviving the group, with Clifton C. Garvin, Jr., chief executive officer of Exxon as co-chairman. The AFL-CIO head fixed a pre-condition to join a group. The pre-condition was framing a formal charter to which both sides had to prescribe. They recognized the rights of other to exist, in the Charter. The Charter was aimed at assuring non-inflationary economic growth and full employment through a mutual trust and cooperation between the management and the unions. The Charter said, "a free labor movement and a free enterprise economy are essential to the achievement of social and political stability and economic prosperity for all." The Charter or joint pronouncement

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.28.

also listed the free unions, free collective bargaining and free enterprises as important factors out of which American greatness grew.

During the Ronald Reagan years, there was an agreement between captains of industry and the federation on recommendations for containing the cost of health care and for a fifteen-year program of governmental investment in highways, bridges, water supply, and sewage systems. Nevertheless, nothing concrete had been done to bargaining which were enlisted in the Charter.

RELIANCE ON POLITICS

The Bal Harbor White Paper made clear to unions to rely more on politics than on industry to generate a suitable climate for unionism. It had pointed out that there was a growth of union membership in all the branches of the civil service. A million public employees became members of AFL-CIO in the past twelve years. At the same time the AFL-CIO membership in private sector declined by two million. The reason for this was favorable legislation and executive orders. The report pointed out that from 1963 to 1983, the union membership in U.S.A. dropped from thirty percent to twenty percent.

Since Ronald Reagan had entered office, AFL-CIO faced a lot of political defeats and governmental rebuffs. Due to this in 1984 presidential election, AFL-CIO had decided to campaign against the incumbent president and be a decisive element in nominating and electing its favorite, former Vice President

Walter F. Mondale, as Ronald Reagan's successor²⁰. The tradition was AFL-CIO made its endorsement, only after two major parties held their respective nominating conventions. But in this election, AFL-CIO had broken the convention, and gave its official blessing to Walter F. Mondale four months before the first state primary and put its political apparatus the Committee on Political Education (COPE), in action to made his road to the White House easier.

The support by AFL-CIO to Walter F. Mondale before the respective parties nominating conventions had made Walter F. Mondale vulnerable to his primary opponents. They charged him that he had become a captive of the "labor bosses". This was denied both by labor and Walter F. Mondale. Though they denied the charges, it had damaged Walter F. Mondale's prospect in the early New England contests. So in the big industrial states like Illinois, Pennsylvania and New York, the federation had marshalled its legions.

At the outset, the Ronald Reagan forces tried to soft pedal the issue of Walter F. Mondale's subservience to union bosses. The private polls had showed that union label was seen on the Walter F. Mondale name in the minds of independent voters. The union label was stamped on his name through the charge made by Senators Gary Hart of Colorado and John Glenn of Ohio when they were campaigning against the former Vice-President in the primaries. The election result was in favor of Ronald Reagan and he was in his second term.

²⁰ *ibid*, p.30.

The reason for Walter F. Mondale failure was, many independent voters had regarded him as a mouthpiece of big labor leaders. During election time the President of AFL-CIO Lane Kirkland had warned unionists that, “a vote for Ronald Reagan is a vote for the worst enemies of working men and women.”²¹

The warning went unheeded.

If AFL-CLO presidential choice had to win, they had to garner the support of minimum sixty-five percent in union households. But Walter F. Mondale had got only fifty-five percent. Within AFL-CLO, the upper-middle-class did not vote for Walter F. Mondale. They voted for Ronald Reagan. Among white male unionists under forty and amid workers in the \$25,000 to \$50,000 income bracket, the support for Ronald Reagan was stronger. There was a division within the AFL-CLO, which had racial overtones. According to an exit polls, among white union votes, Ronald Reagan got half or slightly above half. In this election, International Brotherhood of Teamsters was the only union, which endorsed Ronald Reagan. Teamsters were not affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

The Blacks heeded to the AFL-CIO leadership and voted for Walter F. Mondale. Ninety five percent of black unionists and their families voted for him. On the other hand in the primaries, the black unionists rejected the central leadership call to vote for Walter F. Mondale and registered their vote to Jessie

²¹ *ibid*, p.31.

Jackson. In the presidential election when Blacks had no other alternative, they had voted for W.F. Mondale.

Though the AFL-CIO candidate in the presidential race had lost, in the congressional and presidential contests, nearly two-thirds of the labor-endorsed candidates had won and among them, most were Democrats. The federations' own polls indicated that seventy-two percent of its members voted for Democratic Senate candidates and sixty-nine percent for Democratic House candidates. These results made union chiefs to believe that, Democrats with union help could get the control of both the houses of Congress in 1986. This expectation for the 1986 balloting had a difficulty. In 1980-82 there was an economic recession in U.S. In this, majority of unions in private sector affected and still they were unable to recover and if there was another recession, the sustainability of these unions were questionable. Another major hurdle for labor in being a national political force, which the Bal Harbor declaration failed to address, was the counter-productiveness of many of their efforts at the presidential level. The reason for this, as explained by A.H. Raskin was, at the local level, designations made by local city central bodies were viewed by both public and unionists as standard expression of civic involvement. But at the national level, the general electorate views labor as the monkey hurling wrenches at the White House and the Capitol²².

²² *ibid*, p.23.

POPULAR PERCEPTIONS

The labor leaders had done little to change the popular perception over labor establishment as a cabal of union bosses misusing their monopoly power to rule and ruin industry. During 1984 presidential election, many leaders of Democratic Party in the South and West tried to convince the voters that the party was not ordered by an organized labor. For instance, Paul G. Kirk, Jr., of Massachusetts, who had become Democratic National Chairman with labor's support, suggested publicly that AFL-CIO hold back its endorsement in 1988 election, unless all aspirants for the Democratic designation had an opportunity to demonstrate their popularity in the primary process²³. Though the Democratic Party had shown less interest in AFL-CIO backing of candidates before primaries (or) before the convention, the AFL-CIO and Lane Kirkland were unheeded. In a press conference in mid-March 1985, Lane Kirkland said that, the chances were "very good" for AFL-CIO to endorse a candidate before primaries if two-thirds or majority of its affiliates were united to support a particular candidate nominated and elected. The October 1985 Anaheim Convention endorsed this plan of action²⁴.

Lane Kirkland poured the criticism of 1984 election campaign not against labor but against the Democratic Party itself. He attributed the failure to the

²³ *ibid*, p.33.

²⁴ *ibid*, p.34.

reforms taken up by Democratic party in its party structure and rules under the influence of Vietnam War resisters, feminists and gay liberationists, who won the control of the convention machinery and had nominated George McGovern in 1972. “Kooks and crypto-communists” humiliated George Meany to see the capture of Democratic Party. In 1972 election, AFL-CIO remained neutral, which was resulted in the re-election of Richard M. Nixon. Since 1972, the AFL-CIO objective was to undo the 1972 reforms and increase the influence within the party of labor and professional politicians with whom the AFL-CIO political operations have been at ease. This stand of AFL-CIO had made difficult for it to make alliances to arrest the national politics moving towards the right. Further, the AFL-CIO needed an alliance and the current stand of AFL-CIO to undo the 1972 reforms, increased its influence inside Democratic party and endorsing candidates before primaries made it difficult for AFL-CIO to be in the hub of the coalition.

The aim of AFL-CIO in looking for an alliance was to arrest national politics moving towards right and to install a President and the Congress who were dedicated to increase the government voice in social needs and strengthen the economy. In its aim of making an alliance, the labor movement along with activists advocated faster governmental action in such fields as civil rights, environmental protection, and equity for the poor and exploited. This had created a conflict of interest within labor movement between the interest of rank and file and the ultra populist sentiments. This same inconsistency had prevailed

in the indecision of finding a distinction between antagonism and cooperative relations with their management, both at the bargaining table and in public affairs. The unacknowledged reality behind the Bal Harbor declaration was awareness among the labor that a need for entente -cordiale with management was necessary, due to the social and economic upheaval in the last decade. This detente between the management and the labor prevailed in the period from 1950 to 1975 without formal acknowledgement.

The unions were vulnerable when they failed to unite. This was evident in the PATCO air controller's union strike²⁵. During their strike, the President fired all their members. This was the first test after Bal Harbor declaration, which had resulted in another dismal collapse of the unity. Unionized mechanics struck against a second round of givebacks demanded by Pan American World Air attendants. When the airline threatened permanent replacements, the strikers themselves hoisted a white flag. This was evident to show that mechanics would scab on themselves if their union did not settle. In 1985, there was a dramatic development in airline industrial relations. Unions had switched away from picket lines and started exercising union influence to form alliances with labor favorites among competing factions in battles within management for corporate control. Thus, at Trans World Airlines and Frontier, the pilots and other unions

²⁵ Brecher, pp.311-312.

used promises of substantial concessions in wages and work rules to make themselves an important force in deciding the boss of the two airlines.

Early in 1986, the end of friendly relations between management and labor resulted in the collapse of power-sharing experiment at the Eastern Airlines. Due to this, the Eastern Airlines had come to the edge of bankruptcy. Because of this, labor had again involved itself in a struggle to determine dominance in the corporate executive suite.

All this showed the fundamental problem faced by labor, that was, its inability to define its mission, in terms that will take the place of “more” as a spur to unionization. “What is this union business all about if it’s not delivering the highest buck to our members and that’s what I do”, was the summary of union function that Jimmy Hoffa made his watchword²⁶.

But the Bal Harbor White Paper had pointed out that, the money had become a less adequate goal for new work force. The inflationary decade of 1970s’ had proved that higher wages were less useful when there was high prices for products in the market. The average wage nearly doubled from \$114 a week at the beginning of the decade to \$224 at the end, but in terms of purchasing power, the average worker had wound up 3.5 percent worse off, due to the increase in prices and the taxes.

²⁶ Lipset, p.36.

Today's situation is a two-tier pay-scale system, pitting young workers against the old, the building up of a second-class work force who are deprived of job security or fringe protection through increased use by businesses of part-timers and temporaries, to hold down the core force of regular employees, the contracting out or shipment of overseas work formerly done in the employers own facilities. These were all cost-cutting measures to check inflation, than to higher wages and living standards. The union confronts the above challenges. Further, the shakeout of facilities in declining industries or those industries in which there was a rapid shift in technology, the locals affiliate with the same parent union and compete with each other in sacrificing work rules or making wage concessions. This was due to the fear that the absentee decision-makers could give preference to their plant to be closed. The AFL-CIO's White Paper clearly coped up with these changes by ignoring its historic stand of separating the functions of management and labor. The White Paper clearly endorsed the quality-of-work life programs, which was to be jointly administered by both employee and employer. This represented a first-step towards making unions and their rank and file full-fledged partners in industrial decision making and sharing of gains at every level, from shop floor and office to corporate boardroom.

This showed the trend towards enterprise oriented brand of unionism. The features of an enterprise oriented brand of unionism were, profit sharing, bonuses in place of fixed pay increases, employee stock ownership, union

representation on company boards and a widespread dismantling of authoritarian command structures in favor of more participatory democracy in the workplace. The Bal Harbor White Paper had spoken for this transformation.

LABOR IN THE 1990S'

During the beginning of Bill Clinton's era in 1993 – 94, labor had failed to defeat NAFTA , failed to enact a ban on permanent replacements of striking workers and failed to move meaningful labor reforms through a Blue-Ribbon presidential commission and on to the floor of Congress. The Blue-Ribbon presidential commission was appointed in 1993 to look into the nation's labor laws and find ways to make them more efficient. This commission found that one out of every three workers in a private industry wants to join union, compared to one out of nine, which was the current status.

NAFTA AND AFL-CIO

In 1993, U.S.A signed a North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico. However this agreement was firmly opposed by AFL-CIO. It opposes NAFTA on the following grounds, firstly, in lieu of promoting jobs, it will export jobs and secondly, there is no provision for protecting consumers and workers rights. AFL-CIO at present proclaims that NAFTA is a failure one by quoting the following reasons. Firstly, as corporations shifted production to Mexico and Canada, America had lost 420,000 jobs. Secondly, with the help of NAFTA, employers use the threat of closure of plants to bring the wages down.

Thirdly, along the U.S.-Mexico border, the air and water pollution had become worse and finally, thanks to NAFTA, unsafe food and unsafe trucks cordon America from Mexico²⁷.

FIRST EVER CONTESTED ELECTION

In November 1994 congressional election, the Republican Party captured the control of both the houses of Congress. Contrary to expectations, AFL-CIO did not raise any voice against corporate downsizing, stagnating wages, declining unions and Republican dominating Congress. Due to this, there was a feeling within the AFL-CIO that, to stop the further decline of AFL-CIO, there is a need for change in the leadership. It was Gerald McEntee, the President of AFSCME, who forced the issue of Lane Kirkland retirement or replacement. In February 1995, AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting had taken place. In this meeting, there was a revitalization and re-examination of the federation program. It was expected that Tom Donahue would challenge Lane Kirkland but Tom Donahue declined because of his own loyalty to Lane Kirkland and intention to retire. The coalition which demanded retirement of Lane Kirkland was formed among, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the public employee union AFSCME, UAW, steel workers, machinists and building trades unions such as the laborers, operating engineers, sheet metal workers and

²⁷ <http://www.aflcio.org/publ/test2000/tm0211.htm>.

the carpenters²⁸. Subsequently, John J. Sweeney of SEIU was nominated for President by the above coalition. According to J. J. Sweeney, "I decided to run for president of the AFL-CIO because organized labor is the only voice of American workers and their families, and because the silence was deafening". J. J. Sweeney's running mates were Richard Trumka, president of the United Mine Workers for secretary-treasurer and Linda Chavez Thompson, Vice-President of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Union (AFSCME) for Executive vice president.

Lane Kirkland soon announced his retirement and Tom Donahue his candidacy with the backing of Lane Kirkland supporters. The AFL-CIO convention had taken place at New York city in October 1995. In this convention John J. Sweeney was elected as the President.²⁹ In the American Politics, voices towards working family's problems are lacking. Hence, there is a vacuum. John J. Sweeney's vision is to fill this vacuum. According to him, apart from finding new ways to represent current members and organize new members, AFL-CIO has to fight in the political arena for all working people. His aim is to revitalize labor movement by organizing campaigns, contract campaigns and political campaigns.

The 1994 elections were a wake-up call for the labor movement. In 1994, sixty-one percent of union members voted for Democratic Party, but in 1990 it

²⁸ John J. Sweeney, *America Needs A Raise* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), p.91.

²⁹ Sweeney, p.91.

was seventy percent. The mission of AFL-CIO is to empower working families to elect politicians who are interested in them and their values. Till now the AFL-CIO political action was, funding political candidates and party organization, lobbying members of Congress and shortly before Election Day, sending mails to union members informing them of the endorsement of AFL-CIO. This action doesn't fill a vacuum in American politics. Working people feel that no one is speaking out on issues like jobs, wages, social security, health care, education and training, which affect their lives and their children's future. Union member's wish AFL-CIO to kept them informed of what public officials are doing or failing to do on these issues. What labor movement should do is to speak for working Americans and keep union members' informed and not just writing checks. In 1992 and again in 1994, labor's political action committees had spent about \$42 million during each campaign. The labor movement had failed not in contributing money but in communicating messages to members and working families. According to AFL-CIO President J. J. Sweeney, even before they lost the 1994 Congressional elections, they lost some important battles in the Congress in 1992.

In the 1992 Presidential election, AFL-CIO supported Bill Clinton and helped in the return of democratic majority in both the houses of Congress. The family and medical leave, tax credits for working families and improvements in education, from head start to job training and college loans, all these are won by AFL-CIO and labor in Congress with the help of President and the Congress. On

the other hand, AFL-CIO had failed to gain enough democratic support in the U.S. Senate to enact a law prohibiting the permanent replacement of strike workers. One of the issue in the new voice campaign was how to build workers power in the political process. The leading strategist of AFL-CIO political program was Gerry McEntee, the President of the state and local government employees union, AFSCME. A plan for labor movement to speak for working families and help members learn about issues at stake was formed under Gerry McEntee's leadership³⁰. This plan was approved by AFL-CIO special convention in March 1996. According to this plan, AFL-CIO is to mobilize the working Americans around the problem that affect their lives and secondly, taking working American concerns to the attention of their elected representatives and finally, raising an issue-oriented standard by which they can measure candidates.

To achieve this plan, AFL-CIO is building a nation-wide grass roots network. This plan is to carry working people voices into political debate. AFL-CIO's new slogan is "America needs a raise". In thirty cities AFL-CIO held a town hall meeting, for starters, where working men and women addressed the most urgent issue in 1996 and beyond. The most urgent issue was the growing gap between working families and the wealthy in wages and the wealth. The AFL-CIO also raises these issues in national television and radio advertisements. By raising the worker's issue by various means, the message

³⁰ *ibid*, p.109.

AFL-CIO tried to project was that there was pressure on working families due to the attack on them by the Republican majority in Congress, who tried to cut Medicare, Medicaid, education, job safety, and health and pension protections, while giving new tax breaks to big business and the rich.

FOCUS ON ORGANIZING NEW MEMBERS

On the other hand, during the same period, AFL-CIO had faced a decline in membership. To arrest this, there is a need for a change in trade unions style of functioning. The change is that, in the past decades, trade unions function was to work for the fulfillment of member's need. Now it's function is to organize new members. The first task of J. J. Sweeney after taking over the presidency of AFL-CIO was to convince the member unions to change their function from servicing the members to organizing the new members. To reorganize new members, the work that began during the last years of Lane Kirkland, the Organizing Institute (OI) trained new organizers. When J. J. Sweeney became the AFL-CIO president, he created organizing department within the federation. For this purpose, he appointed Richard Bensinger, the director of OI as the head³¹.

On account of J. J. Sweeney's efforts, number of internationals spending resources on organizing has increased. For instance, the steelworkers have appropriated \$40 million for organizing in the period 2000-02, and the American

³¹ Sweeney, p.126.

Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) has allotted \$35 billion. Though the unions are appropriating more money and giving more attention on organizing new members, they are not fully successful in their attempt, especially in private sector. According to National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the union's success rate in organizing is around 50 percent in private sector and 85 percent in public sector. The reason is that, the private sector employees violate National Labor Relations Act to suppress organizing drives. The unionization of 74,000 home care workers in Los Angeles in early 2000 was the notable organizing victory. This was due to the serious efforts taken by SEIU.

AFL – CIO AND WORLD TRADE

AFL-CIO under the J. J. Sweeney leadership has become a leader of anti-free trade forces, not only nationally but also globally. J. J. Sweeney delivered speeches against free trade forces in many forums and notable ones among them are, his speech at annual mega-capitalist conclave in Davos, Switzerland, to the council on foreign relations and to the Trilateral commission. In these forums, J. J. Sweeney demanded protections for the right to organize and for the stronger labor and environmental standards, in every trade agreement.

J. J. Sweeney calls on World Trade organization to make rules of global trade in open and transparent manner than making it in a back room and to develop its own global social protections. Further, the AFL-CIO stressed that the

minimum wage laws that are existing in U.S.A, due to the 1938 Federal Fair Labor Standards Act has to be extended globally. Apart from concentrating on organizing new members, and fighting against the free trade, AFL-CIO also paying attention towards social unionism. The social unionism means organizing and highlighting the plight of the poorest workers in American cities, promoting minimum wage hikes and living wage statutes and immigration rights. For these purpose taking the support of churches and campuses for campaigning.

AFL-CIO AND WTO

In November – December 1999 WTO ministerial meeting took place in Seattle. This ministerial meeting had faced lot of opposition from non-governmental organizations, religious groups, environmental groups and trade unions. Among the protesters AFL-CIO was an active participant. Speaking at the rally during protest demonstration AFL-CIO president J. J. Sweeney said, “here in the United States, we will continue to organize in the Congress and elsewhere against any trade accords that do not include worker’s rights and human rights and environmental and public health protections. And we will stop them.”³²

According to Richard L.Trumka, secretary-treasurer, AFL-CIO, in his testimony before the Senate-Finance Committee on the outcome of the WTO ministerial in Seattle, WTO to survive it should carry out the following reforms.

³² http://www.aflcio.org/globaleconomy/workers_07-summit.htm.

Firstly, the core workers right should be incorporated in WTO as an enforceable rules. The core workers right includes the freedom of association, the right to bargain collectively, prohibitions on child labor, forced labor and discrimination in employment. Secondly, the WTO should establish accession criteria within itself, so that it requires the new WTO members in compliance with the core workers rights. Thirdly, the WTO should ensure that the legitimate domestic regulations are not overridden by the WTO trade rules. Fourthly, the WTO should develop severe rules against the mandatory transfer of technology, production and production techniques. Fifthly, WTO should bring about institutional reforms, transparency, accountability and easy access to people, so that citizens can easily understand the basis of WTO decisions and finally, the developing nations should be provided with more technical and legal support by the WTO. These are all the agenda of AFL-CIO before the WTO.

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR UNIONS

All these campaigns and activities of J. J. Sweeney has increased the public support for unions. In a poll, conducted by Peter Hart research in early 2000, thirty nine percent of respondents viewed unions positively, compare to thirty four percent in 1993 and their negative view of unions had fallen from thirty four percent in 1993 to twenty three percent today.

AFL-CIO: 2000 IN 2000

In order to fulfill its mission, the AFL-CIO had adopted many programs and amongst them 2000 in 2000 program is the one. This program was launched in 1997. Its main agenda is to help the working families to elect candidates who understand them. Further, 2000 in 2000 program was to strengthen the voice of an American working families by identifying, training and recruiting 2000 union members to run for office in the 2000 election cycle-from school boards to city councils, from state legislatures to mayor offices and even the U.S. Congress³³.

This program showed its success in the November 1999 elections. Union members around the country ran for office and the results were encouraging. In Connecticut, the 46 Union members were elected to office around the state. More union members were elected to offices in Indiana, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Washington.

The last lap of the 2000 in 2000 program was the recent American presidential election. The October 2000, AFL - CIO convention, in its resolution numbers 37 had endorsed Al Gore in his offer for presidency. The AFL-CIO endorsed Al Gore on seeing his position on issues related to working families as well as his voting record in the legislature. According to AFL-CIO, Al Gore in his seven years as a Senator from Tennessee voted in support of the working families 88 percent of the time. Additionally, Al Gore record shows

³³ <http://www.aflcio.org/labor2000/2000in2000.htm>

that he stood with unions and their members to protect workplace health and safety, community wage standards, Medicare and social security. Al Gore fights attempts to destroy fourty-hour week and bring back company unions³⁴.

Al Gore received lot of appreciation from AFL-CIO when he had proclaimed that, "As president, I will be a voice for working families in everything. I do and say, I believe the right to organize is a basic American right that can never be blocked and that right needs to be strengthened today"³⁵. Inspired by Al Gore's pro-labor record, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said that, "he stood shoulder to shoulder with working men and women and our union in fighting off the attacks of a radical Congress and fighting for the needs of working people and our children." As giving approval to these words, the AFL-CIO resolution endorsing Al Gore States that, "more than any other national leader, Al Gore has used the power of his office to defend the freedom of workers to choose a union, free from interference by their employer's and he was repeatedly urged other elected officials to do so."³⁶

Nevertheless, though AFL-CIO had endorsed Al Gore, they did this not only by seeing his past record but also his position on issues related to working families. Issues related to working families which were figured in the recent U.S. election were, social security, educational, freedom to choose a union,

³⁴ http://www.aflcio.org/labor2000/wf_sup_gore.htm

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ http://www.aflcio.org/labor2000/wf_sup_gore.htm

Medicare and fair wages. By comparing each candidate's position on each issue the reason for an endorsement of Al Gore by AFL-CIO would be clear.

SOCIAL SECURITY

With related to social security, George Bush Jr., was to privatize social security by diverting between 16 and 24 percent of social security fund into individual accounts. This was not acceptable to labor because a study conducted by nonpartisan Century Foundation had pointed out that diverting funds would require cuts in social security benefits. Further, raising retirement age was also on the agenda of George Bush Jr. Again this too was not acceptable to labor. On the other hand, Al Gore position on Social Security was, not to divert social security benefit funds and he had promised more benefits to retirement for low and moderate-income families³⁷. The other differences between the two candidates was, increasing benefits for elderly widows and providing family service credit cards for parents who takes time out of the workforce to care for their children was on the Al Gore agenda. This was again a pro-labor stand from Al Gore but George Bush had offered nothing like this to women and the senior people.

Additionally, Al Gore was to extend social security trust fund till 2054. George Bush plan was to reduce its life span at least by 14 years, causing it to

³⁷ http://www.aflcio.org/labor2000/cand_comp_ss.htm.

run out of money in 2023. Further, the George Bush scheme might take the public debt to \$2.5 trillion in 2012, Al Gore plan is to completely pay off the public debt by 2012 and support setting aside two-thirds of the projected surplus to ensure social security and Medicare remain strong for worker's children and grandchildren. Moreover, a study by 2030 Center concluded that young workers could be more affected by George Bush scheme to privatize social security.

RIGHT OF WORKERS TO CHOOSE A UNION

The right to choose a union was another issue related to working families. In this issue also Al Gore was in favor of labor and George Bush on the other side. In the 1999 AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles, Al Gore told the delegates that “the right to organize is a basic American right. It must never be blocked. It must never be stopped. It must never, ever be taken away. Let me tell you what I’ll do as president: with out help, if they send any another-union bill to my desk, I’ll ink up that veto pen and I’ll hit them right between the eyes with a veto. You can count on that.”

It would be difficult for workers to join unions under the proposals supported by the George Bush. They were, firstly, George Bush would support the “pay check protection” to silence the political voice of workers and their unions, secondly, encouraging smooth passage to “right to work for less law” in the Congress, and finally, to support Federal Bills that would create “company unions” and limits who can join unions. On the other hand, the agenda of Al

Gore were work for tougher penalties for employers who interfere with workers seeking to join a union, seek to reform the nation labor laws to protect workers right and to create a more level playing field between workers and management and support banning the use of permanent replacement of workers during labor disputes.³⁸

FAIR WAGES

Fair wages was an another issue which had concerned to working families in the recent election. In U.S., on average women earn about 73 percent for every dollar men make. Due to this, America's working families lose \$200 billion of income annually to the wage gap. Al Gore supported the Paycheck Fairness Act to help working women. George Bush had been silent on the issue of equal pay. Apart from gender inequality in wages, another issue which had dominated here was, fair wages for building and construction trade workers. This was provided in the Davis-Bacon Act. There have been attempts in Congress to repeal this Act, but Al Gore had opposed this attempt and George Bush opposed Davis-Bacon Act itself. As for minimum wage was concerned, Al Gore always supported raising minimum wages but George Bush opposed this.

³⁸ http://www.aflcio.org/labor2000/cand_comp_voice.htm.

MEDICARE

Medicare was another issue, which had figured in the issues related to working families in recent U.S. election. George Bush had supported a plan framed last year, that would rise eligibility age and privatize part of Medicare by establishing a voucher system. AFL-CIO vehemently opposed this. In this issue, Al Gore depended on projected budget surplus. Al Gore was to set aside \$300 for Medicare in the projected surplus budget.³⁹

Since Al Gore had pro-labor stand on all the issues concerned to working families, it was obvious for AFL-CIO to endorse him. The endorsement of Al Gore was part of there 2000 in 2000 program, which was to fill the legislatures and elected posts by pro-labor persons. Further, another reason, for why AFL-CIO had endorsed Al Gore was traditionally Democratic Party was a pro-labor party and Al Gore had belonged to this party.

³⁹ http://www.aflcio.org/labor2000/cand_comp_medicare.htm.

CHAPTER -V

CONCLUSION

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American labor movement began in the late eighteenth century. Though the evidence showed that there were labor organizations that had existed earlier also, but the first formal organization started in 1792 only. The early trade unions were concerned with elevation of their wage levels. In 1806, organizing was branded as a criminal conspiracy by Philadelphia court. This affected the development of trade unions in the beginning but again in 1842, in *Commonwealth vs. Hunt case*, the court reversed its decision and recognized the workers right to organize. Further, at the outset, the workers had organized for a temporary period, to achieve a single purpose and when this purpose was achieved workers disbanded themselves as an organization. The early concern of the labor organizations were wages, working conditions, exclusive employment to union men, and collective bargaining. Another characteristic feature of the early labor organizations was they were confined to smaller areas and there was no connection or co-operation among different trade unions.

In 1820s and 1830s, the first formal co-operation among labor organizations took place. Another important development in this period was an attempt to gain a ten-hour workday. Additionally, to achieve their objective, the journeymen carpenters had formed a central labor organization in 1827 called as Mechanic's Union of Trade Association. Moreover early trade unions had showed interest in political action and formed their own political party like

Workingmen Party to achieve their objective. But involvement of labor in politics had proved costly to them.

The important turning point in American labor organization had taken place in the 1830s. In this period labor had witnessed the co-operation among the trade unions within the particular city. This was the development over the past in which there was no co-operation among trade unions. The formal co-operation among different societies took place in the year 1834 through General Trade union of New York City. When different trade societies succeeded in establishing a trade's union at the particular city, the trade's union of each city had decided to form a union at national level. This was culminated in 1834 as National Trade's Union. The National Trade's Union by bringing leaders of trade organizations from different communities together was the indirect promoter of the first national organization of trade's. Thus five national organizations were established in 1830s.

The major focus of trade unions in 1830s had been the emphasis on improvement in wages, shorter hours and control of the trade. The establishment of national unions by local organization had shown the changes in economy and the growth of pure trade consciousness. This was significant in demonstrating the permanence of trade union attitude, which had been called as business unionism. The 1837 economic panic wiped out many trade unions and again in 1850s, the national unions were revived and some of them continue to exist even today, for instance, the Typographer's National Organization. Most of the early

trade unions were the craft unions; the important exception to this was the Knights of Labor. The Knights of Labor had a heterogeneous membership, which itself, apart from other reasons resulted in its fatal end. The failure of Knights of labor due to its heterogeneous membership made the subsequent trade unions to focus only on craft unions. Most prominent among them was the American Federation of Labor (A F of L). A F of L had faced a lot of opposition from socialist circles like American Railway Union and Industrial Workers of the World. The A F of L met these challenges successfully.

During the First World War, an important turning point in American labor organization had taken place, that was the recognition of trade unions by the government. This had increased the growth of trade unions in this period. Nevertheless in the late 1910s and early 1920s American trade unions had faced the application of principles of scientific management by the employers. This affected the growth of trade unions in general and A F of L in particular. Further the growth of labor movement in this period was also affected by the Great Economic Depression. On the other hand, labor movement had also witnessed growth in this period due to New Deal policies of President Roosevelt.

In the 1930s, the main challenge to A F of L came from within in the form of craft versus industrial unions. Again this was an important event in American trade union history, because hitherto the American trades unions were focused only on skilled workers. The rise of craft versus industrial union debate focused attention over non-skilled workers also. This debate had resulted in the

split of A F of L and an emergence of Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO). CIO focussed both on industrial as well as craft unions.

Though there was a split in AFL, the Second World War, the anti-labor legislation and the change in the leadership of AFL and CIO resulted in the unification of AFL and CIO in 1955 and the present AFL-CIO was the child of this unification. From 1955 to till today, AFL-CIO is one of the major trade unions in the U.S.A and it is involving itself in almost all areas and reflecting the voice of labor. AFL-CIO is continuously raising the voice of labor in the areas like civil rights, foreign policy, fair wages, social security, health care, Medicare and politics. The major characteristic feature of American trade unions is that there is no separate party like labor party. From the beginning AFL-CIO avoided involving itself fully in politics but at the sametime, it actively influences the decision of government in all fields. Currently the AFL-CIO is focusing on increasing the membership with their new president and the new slogan of “America needs a raise.”

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