



HoMMUNC

JCC: Unions

Chair: Jonathan Bleiberg
Moderator: Natasha Moolji

Dear Delegates,

Hi, I'm Jonathan Bleiberg and I'm thrilled to be chairing the Unions section of this year's Joint Crisis Committee. I'm a senior here at Horace Mann, and Model UN has been a big part of my high school experience since I joined the team four years ago.

Through Model UN, I've been able to explore my interest in international relations while improving my public speaking and problem solving skills.

Outside of Model UN, I participate on the Cross Country, Winter Track, and Spring Track teams and I serve as the Co-Editor-in-Chief and Founder of Voyager, Horace Mann's travel and culture publication. I also enjoy rock climbing and casual language learning.

Natasha and I are really looking forward to seeing the unique critical thinking and crisis response skills that you all will bring to committee as leaders of your respective unions and activist movements. We hope to see lively debate over potential responses to the numerous crises that will unfold over the course of the day. As a delegate, you should know your priorities and be prepared to defend them. That said, collaboration and diplomacy are key to the success of the committee as a whole, so do not be afraid to make concessions in the name of compromise. In addition, as a smaller, crisis-style committee, JCC: Unions will offer you ample speaking opportunities. A successful delegate will take full advantage of these opportunities to voice his or her opinions and propose new ideas.

We feel that this committee will be an excellent chance for you all to improve on your public speaking and critical thinking skills while making some new friends in the process.

However, for this committee to be as successful as possible, it is critical that each delegate comes prepared and well researched. The following background guide is an excellent place to start your research, but if you want to succeed in committee, you'll need to go beyond it and conduct your own research.

We hope that you are all as excited for this committee as we are; be prepared for a great day of productive discourse and collaboration.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bleiberg

The Origins of the Labor Movement

Labor disputes and strikes in the United States date back to the colonial period and the development of a free wage-labor market. Strikes occurred intermittently in colonies such as Maine in 1636 and in New York in 1677. However, these strikes did not result in the unionization of laborers or the formation of permanent groups for negotiation purposes. Labor unrest continued in the years leading up to the American Revolution and in 1768, New York journeymen tailors protested a reduction in wages.

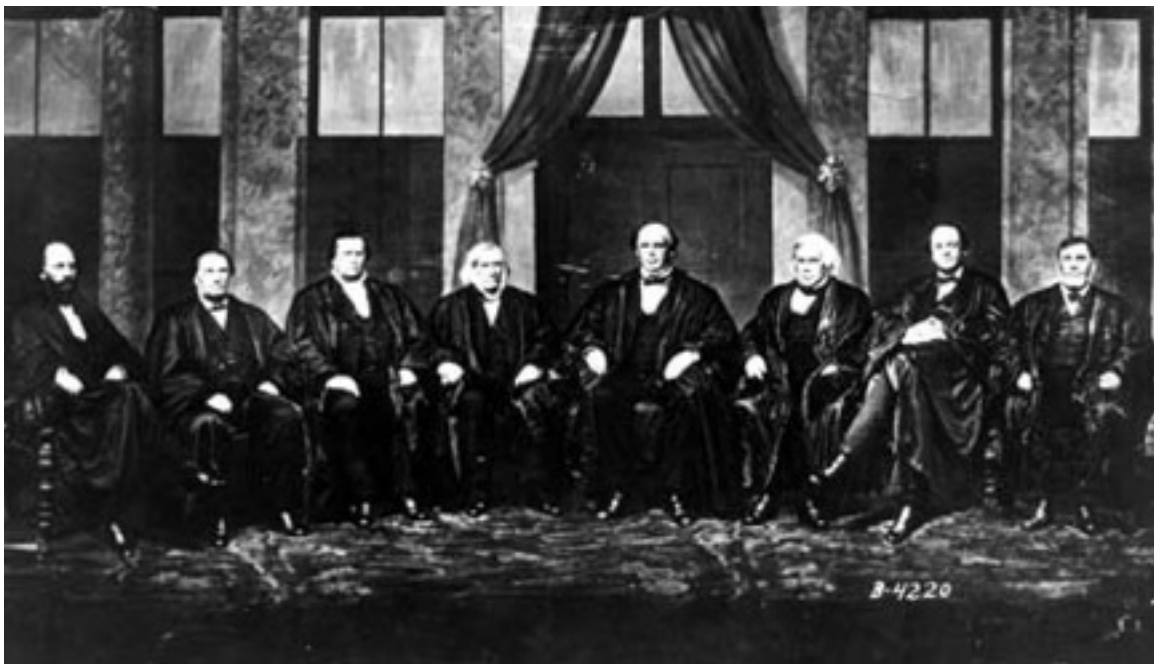
The formation of the first sustained trade union organization came 26 years after this protest, when the Society of Journeymen Cordwainers in Philadelphia was created. After this initial group came together, craft unions sprung up in different cities throughout the country. The creation of unions came with the large-scale migration to coastal cities that created a larger population of potential workers. Before the 1800s, many artisans considered themselves master workmen and the career path for artisans still involved apprenticeship under a master, and then independent production. With increased rural-urban migration, business owners could invest in mills and in larger-scale production.ⁱ

Because of the industrial revolution and shift away from family-owned businesses, craft workers found they were experiencing increased competition. The combination of businesses and growing monopolies limited workers' opportunities and put them at risk for downward social mobility. As big businesses continued to grow, laborers came together and challenged their employers for increased wages, decreased hours, and improved conditions. In 23 different instances, the strikers were taken to court and their right to collective bargaining was challenged. In many of these cases workers were

convicted and fined, because unions were not legally recognized under English common law. Some courts upheld that groups formed to raise wages were not illegal, while others ruled that they were. There was no clear law about labor combinations.ⁱⁱ

In March of 1842, in the case *Commonwealth v. Hunt*, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that labor combinations were legal provided that they were organized for a legal purpose and used legal means to achieve their goals. This verdict put an end to the disputes about whether or not people could organize to petition corporations. This ruling allowed unions to become more prevalent and led to the combination of many smaller craft unions. Thus, many early federations began to form and articulate their goals for the common laborer. The federations are enumerated below. ⁱⁱⁱ

Early Federations



National Labor Union

The National Labor Union (NLU) sought to bring together all of the separate national labor organizations and the Eight-Hour Leagues that existed throughout the nation. United, the groups could successfully lobby for labor reforms and the eight-hour workday. They could also establish chapters in areas where no groups existed. The policy of the group was to use arbitration over strikes in order to pass their reforms. The NLU also supported the formation of a National Labor Party, instead of the Republican and Democratic parties. While the majority of NLU's supporters were from construction and other skilled employee unions, they also called upon farmers to join. The NLU's greatest success came in 1868, when Congress provided the eight-hour day for government workers. Similar legislation was also passed in New York and California. Despite this landmark success, corporations easily found loopholes in the legislation. As a result of its shift towards electoral politics, the creation of the Knights of Labor, and the economic depression of the 1870s, the NLU was dissolved in 1874. ^{iv}



Brotherhood
Locomotive
Firemen and
Enginemen



o _ f

Although locomotive firemen had difficult jobs, as they had to move heavy coal on a swaying platform and make sure that water was continuously in the boiler to avoid an explosion, they were lower paid and of lower status than railroad engineers. They were also subordinate to the train conductors. Locomotive firemen performed very dangerous jobs and the profession had an annual fatality rate of 9 per 1,000 workers. On December 1, 1873, Joshua Leach and 10 other Erie Railroad firemen founded the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. The main purpose of the organization was to be a mutual insurance association and each member would receive death benefit coverage of up to \$1000. v



Order of the Knights of St. Crispin

The Order of the Knights of St. Crispin was a labor union of shoe workers. The first lodge was organized in 1867 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The group was named after the Catholic Saint Crispin, who was the patron saint of cobblers. The Order gained popularity in Wisconsin, the Northeast, and into Canada. At its peak in 1871, it had 400 lodges and its membership totaled more than 60,000. However, the group was poorly managed. Many of the members did not pay dues. In 1872, when several eastern lodges went on strike and were defeated, the organization declined. The national depression of 1873 caused the layoffs of many factory workers and the Order lost their members quickly. ^{vi}

Knights of Labor

The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor was a secret union established by Uriah Smith Stephens and the Philadelphia tailors' union in 1870. After the NLU collapsed in 1873, workers were looking for an organization to join. During the economic depression of the mid-1870s, the KOL grew rapidly. Although Terrence Powderly opposed strikes to win concession from employers, local assemblies had a large amount of autonomy and were able to do as they chose. The Knights used strikes as well to help advance their goals of the eight-hour day, an end to child and convict labor, and graduated income tax. Their greatest victories were with the Union Pacific Railroad strike in 1884 and the Wabash Railroad strike in 1885. After the strike on Jay Gould's Wabash Line, Powderly was able to meet with Gould and get him to call off his campaign against the Knights of Labor. By 1886, the year in which our committee starts off, the KOL had over 700,000 members. ^{vii}

American Federation of Labor

The American Federation of Labor (AFL) was an association of trade unions. The AFL emerged after the Knights of Labor attempted to force craft unions to withdraw from their International organizations and only associate with the KOL. This led to the splintering of different international craft unions and in many cities craftsmen were not protected. The AFL formed as an alliance of craft unions outside the KOL to defend themselves against wage cuts and similar issues. The aims of the organization were better working conditions for laborers, including shorter hours, better pay, more jobs, and less dangerous conditions. The group was newly founded in 1886, when the committee starts off. ^{viii}

Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)

The Women's Christian Temperance Union was the first large-scale organization that brought women who were dedicated to social reform together. The WCTU was organized on December 23, 1873 in Hillsboro, Ohio. The purpose of the group was to create a "sober and pure world." The members of the union believed that alcoholism was the cause and consequence of larger social problems, instead of it being a personal weakness or failing. The WCTU also advocated for the overthrow of the tobacco habit. Other reform issues that members were interested in included, labor, prostitution, public health, sanitation, international peace, and suffrage. The union also allowed women to involve themselves in the reform movement. Frances Willard, the president in 1886, was more progressive than the first president Annie Wittenmeyer, and believed that the purpose of the temperance movement was more than just to save those of "lower moral standing." ^{ix}

"WET" OR "DRY"

"VOTE WET
FOR MY
SAKE!"



"VOTE DRY
FOR
MINE!"



**Shall the Mothers and Children
be Sacrificed to the Financial
Greed of the Liquor Traffic?**

IT IS UP TO YOU, VOTER, TO DECIDE

VOTE DRY



How the Committee Will Work:

The committee will start off in the beginning of 1886 and focus on the conflict between unions/laborers and large corporations. Each delegate will be assigned a union leader or activist in the labor movement. Though the members of the committee are from different parts of the country and belong to different groups, they will work together in a single group for the purpose of this committee. Each delegate will have access to the people who are part of the unions/organizations they are part of, and will be able to call upon them to strike or take action without approval of the entire committee. However, if two delegates are leaders of the same organization, they will have to collaborate with the other leaders in committee before taking any action. Despite this, the majority of resources will be concentrated under the leadership of the chair and moderator and will be controlled by collective committee actions.

List of Union Leaders:William H. Sylvis:

Born in Armaugh, Pennsylvania, William Sylvis was the second of twelve children. After marrying Amelia Thomas in 1852, Sylvis began working at the Cresson foundry. In 1857, he joined the Journeyman Stove and Hollow Ware Molders Union of Philadelphia and participated in a strike to oppose wage cuts. After his initial involvement in this strike, Sylvis became even more active in the labor movement and played a massive role in the organizing of unions. He worked to consolidate separate iron molder unions into a national organization, and later on, a single international body. He did not stop at

bringing just the iron molders together, and instead founded the National Labor Union: the first significant effort to organize all working people into a national union. ^x

Uriah Stephens:

From 1860 to 1890, the majority of workers were hurt by deflation and economic instability. Uriah Stephens had a goal that was similar to William Sylvis and sought to organize a national union, which would be open to every laborer, mechanic, and artisan who wanted to improve his or her working conditions. Stephens wanted his Union to be nondiscriminatory. On November 25, 1869, Stephens invited a few members of the Garment Cutters' Union to his house for a meeting about the creation of the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor. The group advocated many reforms, such as the eight-hour workday, equal pay for men and women, the restriction of child labor, and currency inflation. ^{xi}

Terence Powderly:

Terence Powderly was born in Carbondale, Pennsylvania and at 13 he began working for the railroad. Along with his early introduction to the workplace, Powderly also became involved in the Machinists' and Blacksmiths' National Union at an early age. He quickly gained power and recognition in the organization. In 1874, Powderly joined the Knights of Labor and five years later succeeded Uriah Stephens as leader. His vision was different from many labor leaders before him, as he disagreed with socialist ideals and the mentality that there was an inherent conflict between labor and capital. Under Powderly, the Knights of Labor reached its peak. ^{xii}

Eugene Debs:

As a young boy, Eugene Debs spent time reading the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, Dumas, Eugene Sue, and Victor Hugo with his father. In 1875, he became a member and secretary of Vigo Lodge, Brotherhood of Locomotive Fireman. He quickly ascended through the ranks of the group and served as editor of the Brotherhood's magazine and Grand Secretary of Vigo Lodge. His time at Vigo Lodge shaped his political views. Debs was a major advocate of the creation of an 8-hour workday at a fair wage and a firm believer that the only way to eradicate poverty from society was to decrease the workingmen's dependency on the elite. During 1885, Debs traveled the country and helped establish local unions and labor organizations.^{xiii}



Debs delivering a speech

Eugene

Samuel Gompers:

At only ten years old, Samuel Gompers had already begun working. He rolled cigars in his tenement apartment with his father. In 1864, he joined Local 15 of the United Cigar Makers. Through his local union, Gompers became close friends with older socialists and labor reformers, whose views that trade unionism was the essential vehicle for bringing about social reform influenced Gompers'. After 11 years as a member of his local union, Gompers was elected president of the reorganized Local 144 of the Cigar Makers' International Union. While he held this post, he was also instrumental in creating the Federal of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, which would later be reorganized as the American Federation of Labor. ^{xiv}

Louis William Rogers:

L.W. Rogers was trained as a teacher and spent his early professional years teaching in public schools in Iowa and Kansas. After a brief five years in the public school system, Rogers decided to pursue Freethought and Rationalism and became a public lecturer on the two subjects. This work, however intellectually satisfying, was not financially stable and Rogers moved to manual employment. He worked as a brakeman and in Colorado, joined the Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen. His time managing Union's magazine's in Colorado would inspire him to join Eugene Debs in the creation of the American Railway Union. ^{xv}

Harriet Hanson Robinson:

After the death of Harriet Robinson's father, the Robinson family experience financial difficulties. Seeking financial stability, Mrs. Hanson moved her family to the Lowell Mills and at age 10, Harriet began working in the textile mills. First as a bobbin doffer and eventually as a drawing-in girl, Harriet was empowered by her job and her education. She saw the mill, and in general factories, as a place where women could partake in organized labor and have a say in their situations. Harriet was able to participate in different strikes in the mills when the managers and owners announced that wages were going to be cut. She went on to participate in other unions and reform movements, and was a major proponent of women's suffrage.^{xvi}



Strike at

mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts

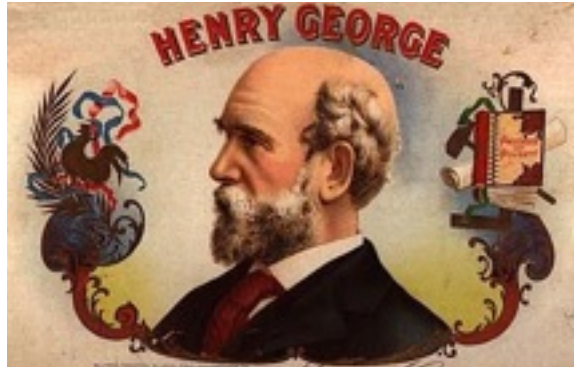
textile

Luna Kellie:

Luna Kellie, her husband, and their infant son moved to a homestead in Hastings, Kansas, to live as farmers. However, life on the prairie was more difficult than she had imagined. There were few schools in the area and Luna had to go out of her way to find a school for her children. Her husband tried to grow wheat, but the market value of wheat declined during this time period. This, coupled with high interest rates, made the situation on the farm abysmal and after 7 years the Kellies lost the farm. Luna Kellie turned to the Farmer's Alliance to help her achieve her goals of breaking down the isolation of rural life, bringing farmers together in cooperatives, and protecting them from price fluctuations. ^{xvii}

Frances Willard:

Frances Willard graduated from North Western Female College in 1859 and became an educator. She founded the Association for the Advancement of Women and then left teaching to work in the temperance movement. In 1874, she founded the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Willard saw the union as an opportunity for women to develop identities outside of the private domain and to see themselves as more than just wives and mothers. She also traveled throughout the nation to spread the union's message, as well as lectured, wrote books and edited WCTU publications. Under her leadership the WCTU became the largest organization of women in the US. ^{xviii}



Henry George:

Henry George was born in Philadelphia in 1839. His family was middle class and he did not have the opportunity to complete his formal education. However, in lieu of traditional education, George was able to travel around the nation and read many great works to help him understand the economy of the United States. In 1879, he published the book *Progress and Poverty*. In his best-selling book, he explained that only human labor could create anything of actual value and legitimate wealth. The elite bankers and stockbrokers made money based on the labor of others, and therefore their wealth was illegitimate. He supported Thomas Jefferson's early vision of independent working people. ^{xix}

James Weaver:

James Baird Weaver was born in Dayton, Ohio on June 12, 1833. He studied law in Bloomfield and starting practicing law there in 1856. After serving in the Iowa Volunteer Infantry, he was elected to be District Attorney for Iowa's second judicial district. He was a member of the Greenback party and served in the forty-sixth Congress. At Omaha, the People's Party nominated him for president. His platform, the Omaha Platform, demanded an inflationary currency policy and a subtreasury system. He also supported government ownership of railroads and telegraph lines.^{xx}

George E McNeill

George McNeill began working in a mill when he was ten years old and spent 14 hours each day at his post. At 14, McNeill and hundreds of other mill workers at the Woolen Company in Amesbury participated in a strike against the mill owners, who had tried to eliminate their daily breaks. McNeill organized all of the children who worked at the mill into a mutual benefit association. In 1869, he co-founded the Eight Hour League and served as its president until 1874. He brought workers, legislators, and civic leaders together to help win the passage of federal and state eight-hour laws. As director of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, he wrote, “Ignorance and poverty are twin monsters, and education is a means of removing both.” ^{xxi}

Mother Jones (Mary Harris)

After a yellow fever epidemic struck Memphis in 1867 and killed Mary’s husband and all four of her children, Mary moved to Chicago and entered commercial dressmaking. She opened her own shop and sewed for some of Chicago’s wealthiest families. The dichotomy between the people she worked for and the poor, shivering wretches she saw outside on the streets inspired her to join the union movement. After she lost everything in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, Mary decided to move from town to town in support of workers’ struggles. She participated in a march on D.C. to demand jobs, participated in a nationwide coal strike, and supported Debs after he spent 6 months in prison. ^{xxii}

Peter J. McGuire

As an apprentice to a piano maker in 1867, Peter McGuire was active in labor and radical circles, such as the New York branch of International Workingmen's Association. He continued to collaborate with unionists through the 1870s. In 1873, he helped form a Committee of Public Safety to push local authorities to help the unemployed. A year later, McGuire helped form the Social Democratic party and worked to organize chapters in New England, the West, the Southwest, and the Midwest. He advocated for a universal system of cooperative production and distribution. In addition to his success in unionizing carpenters, McGuire founded May Day, which is the international Labor Day.

xxiii

Albert Parsons

Albert Parsons served in the military force of the Confederate States of America in Texas. After the war, he settled in Texas and became an activist for the rights of former slaves. When he and his wife Lucy Parsons moved to Chicago in 1873, he began working as a reporter for the Chicago Times. Parsons was first introduced to labor politics when different groups banded together to force the Chicago Relief and Aid Society to account for the relief aid raised by the group. Parsons studied the charges that working-class critics had against the group and said that his findings led him to believe that "the complaints of the working people against the society were just and proper." Parsons joined the Social Democratic Party and was involved in the Knights of Labor. In 1880, his views transformed and he became an anarchist. He participated in the strike at Haymarket Square in 1886. ^{xxiv}

August Spies

Although August Spies had a pleasant and privileged childhood, when his father died suddenly in 1871, he moved to America. He settled in Chicago, became an upholsterer, and was involved in trade union activities. The wealth disparity Spies saw in Chicago angered him and led him to join the Socialist Labor Party in 1877. Spies led the more radical branch of the SLP when the group split into two different factions. He refused to allow the radical faction to combine with the Greenback Labor Party, and eventually formed the Revolutionary congress as an alternative to the SLP. He helped rally strikers at Haymarket Square in 1886. ^{xxv}

Oscar Neebe

Oscar Neebe was born to German immigrants on July 12, 1850 in New York City. He moved back to Hesse so that he could be educated in Germany, but came back to the United States in 1864. In 1866, Neebe moved to Chicago and found work as a waiter in a saloon. From the McCormick workers, he learned of how workers were exploited. He also learned about the movement to limit the working day to eight hours. Ten years later, after having worked as a tinsmith and been introduced to communism, Neebe moved to Chicago with his wife and three children. He became interested in the labor movement and served as the office manager for the Arbeiter-Zeitung, ^{xxvi}



Drawing of the chaos that ensued at the Haymarket riot

Edgar Gardner Murphy

Edgar Murphy was born on August 31, 1869 in Fort Smith, Arkansas. After he recovered from rheumatic fever, Murphy swore to become an Episcopal priest. He studied at the University of the South and became an avid supporter of Reverend William Porcher DuBose. Once he completed his education, Murphy went on to serve churches in Texas, Ohio, New York and Alabama. He settled in Montgomery at St. John's Church and focused on social reform in the South. He held the first Conference on Race Relations, and also became a leading advocate for child-labor reform. Even though Alabama passed a law that forbade children under 14 from working, as the textile industry expanded, the law was repealed. Murphy tried to get another law passed and help limit the length of children's workdays. ^{xxvii}

Jane Addams

Jane Addams was born in Cedarville, Illinois and attended the Rockford Female Seminary in 1881. She was one of the first women to take the same courses that men would at other schools. After graduating, she went on to attend Women's Medical College, but dropped out due to her ill health and chronic back pain. Several years later, while visiting London with her friend Ellen Gates Starr, Addams saw the Toynbee Settlement Hall and was inspired to start an American equivalent. She and her friend created Hull House in Chicago, which was in a neighborhood full of immigrants. The house served people during the depression and members came together to work for legislation that protected immigrants, limited the working hours of women, mandated schooling for children, recognized labor unions, and provided for industrial safety. xxviii

Fred Makino

Fred Makino was born in Japan to merchant Joseph Higgenbotham and his wife Kin Makino. At 22 he moved to Na'alehu, Hawaii and then to Honolulu in 1901. Because he spoke English well, he was able to open up a drug store, which many poor Japanese plantation workers came to. Through his interactions with the poor and exploited plantation workers, he came to understand their plight. As a result, he became an advocate for Japanese rights in Hawai'i. Along with Yasutaro Soga, the editor of a Japanese newspaper, they formed the Higher Wage Association to protest the plantations' paying Japanese laborers less than workers of other races. Makino served as the chairman of the early Japanese Labor Union and led the first organized strike of Japanese sugar workers. xxix



Hawaiian laborers protest job discrimination

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