Labor Hall of Fame

Samuel Gompers: a half century in labor's front rank

'I want to live for one thing alone—
to leave a better labor movement in America
and in the world than I found it
when I entered, as a boy. . .'

Irwin Yellowitz

In the formative years of the modern American labor movement, Samuel Gompers stood out as spokesman and advocate, organizer and leader, conciliator and promoter—and, above all, as a seemingly tireless representative of organized labor. For over a half century, he devoted himself completely to the labor movement, first within the Cigarmakers' International Union and after 1886 as president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL).

Gompers never accepted any problem as beyond solution, be it personal or political. Although he had a stammer as a young man, he learned to speak effectively, and although his formal education ended at age 10, he learned to write clear, if somewhat ponderous, prose. Gompers persisted where others lost heart. He believed that the weak and limited set of trade unions of the 1880's could grow in strength and become the means by which workers would significantly advance their interests. He also believed that the AFL could be the national organization of these often fractious unions—chartering trade unions, adjusting disputes among them, lobbying at the national and State levels, and, perhaps most important, legitimizing the institution of the trade union and its right to organize workers and bargain for them. Samuel Gompers became the personification of the AFL, and clearly the best known and most influential labor leader of his time.

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The formation of the AFL

Gompers was born in 1850 in London of a Jewish family who had emigrated from Amsterdam several years earlier. Although he attended the Jewish free school from age 6, the family's poverty forced him to begin work at age 10. His father was a cigarmaker, and Samuel quickly found his way into this trade as an apprentice. Although he did study further at a free night school, essentially his formal education had ended. In 1863, the Gompers family emigrated to the United States, settling in New York City. Samuel continued his work as a cigarmaker. His father had been a union member in London, and Gompers and his father soon joined a cigarmakers' local. However, Sam Gompers did not participate in any real way for almost 10 years. During this time, he married, sought to support his growing family, and devoted his free time to fraternal activities.[1]

Events in the early 1870's helped form several of Gompers' key lifelong beliefs. About 1870, the skill of the cigarmaker was threatened by the mold, a tool that allowed for some subdivision of the work and simplified a major step in the production process. Gompers joined in a futile strike against this innovation. Other strikes also failed, and in 1875, the Cigarmakers' Union allowed less skilled workers to join—an acknowledgment the mold was here to

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stay. Throughout his later career, Gompers accepted the inevitability of technological change. He believed workers had to respond to industrial change by mitigating its negative impact through work rules, and by ensuring that union members became the workers on any new machinery.

Gompers also joined in the 8-hour day demonstration of September 1871. From this time on, he believed in the primacy of shorter hours as an objective for workers. Not only would the 8-hour day provide more leisure, but it promised to offset the unemployment that almost every labor leader believed resulted from mechanization. Fewer hours of labor meant that more workers would be needed to maintain production. With full employment, wages would rise and union organizing would be more effective. It was not until the early 20th century that Gompers acknowledged that technological innovation might increase production per hour of labor, thus offsetting the gain in employment that he anticipated. However, throughout the last quarter of the 19th century, the 8-hour day was the most important demand of the labor movement. Gompers was a tireless advocate of eliminating the longer workday (often 10 hours) and of the benefits that would accrue to workers.

In the 1870's, Gompers met and turned away from socialism as the solution for the problems of workers. The socialists were prominent in New York in the early 1870's. Gompers attended their meetings and demonstrations, and he was drawn initially to their critique of capitalism. However, this influence on him was soon offset by the views of two fellow cigarmakers—Adolph Strasser, later to become president of the Cigarmakers' International Union, and Ferdinand Laurrell. Both men influenced Gompers to move toward trade unionism, rather than socialist political action, as the means to uplift workers. Gompers never gave up several basic ideas of Marxism, including the validity of class based on economic interest, and the influence of class upon the views and actions of everyone in society. However, he joined Strasser in emphasizing trade unionism.[2]

Over the years, Gompers developed an increasingly hostile attitude toward the socialists, in part, because of their constant challenge to his leadership of the AFL. Yet their differences also encompassed both objective and method. Gompers believed that the socialists' goal of radical reconstruction conflicted with the desire of American workers for immediate gains, and their acceptance of private property. Attempts to use unions to change these attitudes and advance radical aims through political action would not only fail, but in the process destroy the trade unions as a result of divisions within the ranks of the workers, or by repression from the government. Thus, Gompers believed the socialists were not merely wrong, but a real threat to the success of trade unionism.

Gompers joined Strasser in efforts to develop an effective trade union alternative to socialism, beginning with the Cigarmakers. The two men decided to reorganize the Cigarmakers' Union—almost moribund because of the effects of the mold and the long depression of 1873-1877—on the model of the English trade unions. Gompers had personal knowledge of how these unions operated from his father's experience in London. Strasser helped him realize the importance of English practice as a model for American unions. This focused on high dues to build a strike fund, and to support a benefits program such as out-of-work, sickness, and death payments. The union also made loans to traveling members. Strikes were carefully con-

The Labor Hall of Fame

This is the third of several articles, comissioned by Friends of the Department of Labor, about members of the Labor Hall of Fame, which honors posthumously Americans who have contributed most to enhance the quality of life of American workers. The Labor Hall of Fame is an activity of Friends of the Department of Labor, an independent membership organization established in 1987 "to support the traditional programs and goals of the U.S. Department of Labor, and to generally support the cause of improved labor-management relations."

The first eight persons elected to the Labor Hall of Fame, were Samuel Gompers, John R. Commons, Cyrus S. Ching, Frances Perkins, John L. Lewis, A. Philip Randolph, George Meany, and James P. Mitchell.

A panel composed of national leaders from unions, industry, academia, and government, and chaired by Monsignor George Higgins, makes the selection to the Labor Hall of Fame. Former Secretary of Labor W. J. Usery, Jr., chairs Friends of the Department of Labor. The Hall of Fame is housed in the north lobby of the Frances Perkins Building, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20212. Friends of the Department of Labor invites Hall of Fame nominations. They may be submitted to Friends of the Department of Labor, Box 2258, Washington, DC 20013.

trolled, preferably by the national union. Attention centered on the interests and conditions of the members rather than broader concerns. The objective was to build unity based on a common form of skilled work, and then bind workers to the union through an elaborate benefit system paid for by high dues. This strong union could then improve the conditions of its members.

The strike was critical to the success of Gompers' type of trade unionism. Yet it was clearly a double-edged sword. When properly used, it was the ultimate weapon of the worker. However, uncoordinated, ill-planned, poorly financed, or violent strikes almost always failed, and they could destroy a union. Such strikes might be an emotional release for embittered workers, but they were dangerous for the organization. Gompers led the way within the Cigarmakers' Union in placing tight controls on strikes. Those that gained approval also received strike funds to maximize the chance of success. Many other trade unions developed similar policies.

Beginning in 1872, Strasser and Gompers set out to reorganize the Cigarmakers' International Union on these principles. They were aided by the weakness of the existing organization and their own clarity of purpose and energy. They initially instituted their English style of unionism in the New York local. In 1877, Gompers engineered Strasser's election as president of the national union, and by 1881, the major features of the Strasser-Gompers plan were in place for the entire organization. These practices became the model for many other craft unions.

Gompers continued to hold local union offices in New York City, but by the late 1870's he already had plans for a national federation of trade unions. In 1881, he was instrumental in creating the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada.[3] This organization survived until 1886, but it was ignored by many trade unions. However, controversy with another national labor body, the Knights of Labor, created the conditions for a true national federation of trade unions to emerge in 1886—the American Federation of Labor.

The Knights of Labor had been founded in 1869 and reorganized on a national basis in 1878.[4] The structure supposedly placed ultimate power in a General Assembly, with subordinate District and Local Assemblies organized geographically. Many of these bodies enrolled members of a single trade, and they operated like trade unions. However, the structure encouraged mixed assemblies that included different types of workers, and even members of the middle class. The Knights' official policy was to replace the wage system with a cooperative society, but this was never clearly defined, nor did the organization develop methods to advance toward such a goal. Instead, the Knights became an uneasy amalgam of trade assemblies and mixed assemblies with little unity of purpose.

For Gompers, the Knights posed a threat despite its chaotic internal arrangements. Instead of focusing on the working class and its needs, the Knights' objective of a cooperative society tempted workers away from solid trade unionism to the chimera of social reformation. Even more threatening to Gompers was the ability of trade assemblies to become potential competitors of the trade unions. In fact, such competition did develop as the Knights scored victories in several major strikes in 1885, and workers turned to a winner. The threat from the Knights led many trade unionists to become more interested in a stronger national federation that could help them turn back this danger.

Gompers led in this effort which promised to fulfill his long-standing plan for a national organization. With the cooperation of other labor leaders, such as Peter J. McGuire of the Carpenters, a meeting was arranged in December 1886 to scrap the existing Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, which was open to assemblies of the Knights of Labor, in favor of a new American Federation of Labor, limited to trade unions. Samuel Gompers became president of this new national federation of trade unions. It was little more than a paper organization; Gompers was to give it much of its life.[5]

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Reaping recognition

The concept of a national federation of trade unions was not new, and several earlier attempts to form such an organization had failed. Gompers believed that the AFL could succeed because the national unions that formed the constituent units were stronger organizations than unions in the past. In the main, they organized around the principle of craft and sought limited objectives. Gompers' task was to persuade these unions to affiliate with the new AFL. He achieved significant success in this effort because of his tireless activity, which included extensive travel, and persistent advocacy of the advantages of the AFL through letters and articles. Many of these pieces were reprinted in the journals of the national unions, or in labor newspapers. This helped make up for the lack of an official AFL magazine—the *American Federationist* not appearing until 1894. By that time, the AFL had more than 250,000 members.[6]

Prosperity from 1886 to 1893 helped Gom-

pers in his organizing efforts for the AFL. The test would come in a depression, and this was soon to occur with the financial panic of 1893 and the long depression that lasted into 1896.

In the past, labor unions and their national federations had collapsed in such hard times. However, the unions created in the 1878-1892 years survived the depression of the 1890's, and so did their national federation—the AFL. At the end of the depression in 1897, the AFL had more members than in 1893.[7]

The hardships of the depression did build the strength of the socialists within the AFL. It also increased calls for organized labor to support the Populists—a third political party formed by farmers from the West and South. Gompers continued his opposition to socialism, and he played the key role in defeating an attempt by the socialists in 1893 and 1894 to commit the AFL to "The collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution."[8] He also opposed any political alliance with the Populists. First, he feared that politics would once again become the road for workers and unions to take in the struggle for better conditions—a mistake made several times in the past with ruinious effects on organized labor. Second, he strongly believed that farmers were essentially small capitalists, whose ultimate interests, beyond their common alliance with workers against big business, were quite different.

The negative fallout from these positions, and the stresses of the depression, allowed Gompers' enemies to unseat him at the AFL convention in 1894. Gompers spent the next year lecturing, visiting European labor leaders and organizing for the United Garment Workers' Union. These activities continued to give him high visibility in the AFL, and in 1895 he was able to win reelection by a narrow margin. He was to hold the presidency of the AFL from this point until his death in 1924.

Defeat in 1894 made it clear to Gompers that he must cultivate the support of the larger craft unions in the AFL while working to weaken the influence of his enemies—principally the socialists. Gompers did this very well. He led the AFL according to a number of principles that suited the needs of the larger craft unions, and, in turn, these unions provided him with the support he needed to retain the presidency.

For Gompers, it was an ideal situation. He believed in these principles anyway, and by advocating them, he won the support necessary to keep his office while improving his personal reputation and standing. This gave his views even greater attention, not only within the AFL, but in the larger political world. It was this mixture of credo and careerism that marked Gompers' activities from the mid-1890's until his death.[9]

First, Gompers supported craft as the basis for the organization of workers. This accorded with the interests of the larger craft unions in the AFL that opposed the growth of industrial unions. Organization by industry could lead to the disappearance of craft unions as their members joined with other workers to challenge the major industrial corporations. However, jurisdictional issues did not end with the problem of industrial unions. Craft unions warred with each other for control of various jobs and groups of workers. The conflict was heightened by technological change that blurred traditional craft lines. Gompers spent innumerable hours trying to mediate these disputes, with varying success.

Second, Gompers argued that the labor movement first had to organize the most organizable—the skilled workers. Although committed in principle to organizing all workers, the AFL used most of its resources to support the organizing activities of its existing affiliates. Even though the AFL's membership was a small fraction of the total work force, Gompers claimed to speak for all workers. However, he did so in terms that reflected the needs of those already organized.

Third, Gompers advocated a controversial attitude toward the state and legislation. He reached back to the early 1870's and his initial exposure to Marxism to argue that all societies have a class structure based upon a person's economic situation. Accordingly, workers had a different set of interests from the middle class or the rich. This same view underlay Gompers' earlier argument against any alliance of the labor movement and the farmers within the Populist Party.

Building on this concept, Gompers argued that the state was not an impartial agency, but the tool of those classes strong enough to seize political power. In the United States, Gompers believed workers not only lacked the political strength to control the state, and thus, determine what laws would be passed and what class interest would be served, but they were also unlikely to develop this control. Thus, the state was under the domination of other classes which would use it to further their interests, often at the expense of workers.

Gompers argued that workers should respond by turning to their trade unions for advancement. The unions were composed of workers, led by their elected representatives, who also were workers. Thus, the trade union was the only working class institution in American soci-

ety. Workers could trust the labor movement because trade unions were so clearly based in the working class.

Gompers' views on this subject became known as voluntarism. He wanted the government to do as little as possible because he distrusted it so intensely.[10] Even middle class reformers were suspect, including those who loudly claimed to want improvements in the conditions of life and labor for workers. Accordingly during the Progressive reform period of the early 20th century, Gompers and the AFL supported labor legislation only for children, and to some degree for women, but not for men. Women and children were not only unorganized, but often considered unorganizable.[11] Thus, the state could protect these groups. However, Gompers believed that men should rely on their own voluntary organizations—the trade unions—and not the government. The AFL thus opposed the efforts of the progressives to legislate for men on issues such as maximum hours, minimum wages, unemployment, and health insurance.

Gomper's hostility to the state even led him to oppose the popular call for anti-trust legislation. He tried to block passage of the Sherman Anti-Trust Bill of 1890 because it did not clearly exclude trade unions from the projected prohibition on conspiracies in restraint of trade. His fears soon became reality, as the Federal courts interpreted the Sherman Act to cover unions, which led to injunctions against strikes and boycotts. This threatened to drown effective unionism in a sea of legal actions and monetary damages.

Gompers and the AFL sought redress from the Congress, but they gained little until the passage of the Clayton Act in 1914 during the first administration of Woodrow Wilson. This law clearly stated that labor was not a commodity It further exempted from the anti-trust laws the lawful activities of union members in pursuit of legitimate objectives. However, such language was vague enough that in the years 1917 to 1922, the Supreme Court could continue to view the anti-trust laws as applicable to many activities of labor unions. Only the altered political climate of the 1930's ended this situation.[12]

For Gompers, these developments were further proof that the state was much more likely to prove an enemy than a friend. He urged that the response to trusts should be strong unions rather than weak laws. Thus, for their own reasons, workers should join conservatives in opposition to governmental intervention in labor affairs.

This position made sense to Gompers and the strong unions in the AFL that had enough bargaining power in their trades to improve conditions significantly. However, weaker unions, and the unorganized, lacked this power. Moreover, for many workers, strongly organized unions seemed a dim prospect. More inviting were the calls of reformers for legislation to improve the worst conditions now—not years in the future after unions had been built. Many union leaders, especially at the local and State level, split with Gompers on the voluntarism issue and favored legislation. These leaders often cooperated politically with interested progressive reformers. However, in Gompers' lifetime, the AFL never relented on its opposition to such activities, and this opposition certainly weakened the political momentum for labor legislation.[13] Not until the Great Depression of the 1930's and the New Deal did organized labor move away from the position of Gompers and the AFL on this key issue.

Fourth, Gompers' views on the related issue of political action constitute another of his basic principles. If the state was to be deemphasized in favor of trade unions, then political action became secondary to economic pressure. It was the strike not the ballot on which workers should rely. Yet, Gompers recognized all too well that the opponents of workers did turn to the state, and in some cases, labor had to defend itself. In addition, certain union objectives, such as safety and health regulations, required legislation to be effective. In this event, Gompers believed that the labor movement should reward its supporters and punish its opponents to achieve a limited and clearly defined goal. He also stressed that it should avoid partisan party politics.

Gompers cited the history of the labor movement in support of his contention that politics weakened the labor movement. Workers were mainly split between the Republican and Democratic parties, but a significant number were socialists. If the labor movement entered politics, it angered some of its members, no matter what the choice. Gompers believed this had destroyed unions in the past, and it would do so again if not carefully controlled. The AFL followed this policy throughout Gompers' life, and even though there was some intensification of political action in national elections from 1906 to 1916, Gompers' basic approach was not changed.[14]

There was significant opposition to this nonpartisan policy from those labor leaders who favored legislative reform, and thus needed to be active in party politics. Once again, the opponents were strongest in the cities and States. However, their political activities and influence were clearly limited by the policy of the AFL.[15]

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Fifth, Gompers recognized that the AFL was a federation of autonomous trade unions and that he could lead only so far as the unions would go. Gompers found this out clearly in a dispute over the decision of some unions to bar blacks from membership.

Gompers believed that exclusion of any group of workers weakened a union by creating a pool of workers who exerted pressure to keep wages below the union scale, and who were available as strikebreakers. Most national union leaders agreed with Gompers, and thus, few union constitutions barred black workers. However, locals often restricted blacks, and national leaders generally had to accept such an action, especially in the South.

In 1888, a newly founded national union of machinists largely based in the South, and with a white-only membership clause in its constitution, applied to the AFL for a charter. Gompers tried to put his principle of an all-inclusive labor movement into practice by rejecting the application. He went so far as to charter a rival machinists' union that accepted all workers. However, Gompers was criticized by many trade union leaders, who supported his position on the color line, but rejected his effort to interfere with the internal policies of a national union. Ultimately, the Machinists removed the white-only provision from the constitution and they were admitted to the AFL in 1895. However, the color bar was retained in the union's practice. Gompers did nothing more. He realized that he had done as much as possible, and he accepted the limited victory of formal removal of the white-only clause from the national constitution. The incident clearly revealed the limits of his authority, and Gompers rarely found himself in such a position again.[16]

Impact of World War I

Gompers' attitude toward World War I reveals several basic elements of his approach to important issues. In this case, he modified opinions long and stoutly held to meet changing circumstances and the needs of the AFL.

Along with most labor leaders, Gompers called for neutrality when World War I began in 1914. This fit with past AFL resolutions that had condemned war. However, as the conflict dragged on in Europe, Americans generally became pro-Ally (Great Britain, France, and Czarist Russia) and hostile to Germany and her allies. Under Woodrow Wilson's leadership, the Nation also began to prepare for possible involvement in the war. Labor leaders, including Gompers, followed the same course. In the process, Gompers disavowed his earlier objections to war as impractical in the actual context of World War I, whatever their former cogency. When the United States entered the war in 1917, Gompers supported the effort wholeheartedly as did most union members and labor leaders. He headed the effort against opponents of the war within the labor movement, principally the socialists.[17]

Gompers' change of attitude on the war illustrates his manner of thinking. He always turned to the pragmatic alternative when a choice had to be made between what was possible and what was arguably right in theory or principle; he made sure his views were in agreement with those of the major leaders within the AFL; and he decided all issues on how they would affect the unions in the AFL. Thus, during World War I, Gompers temporarily set aside his fear of government to support a degree of state regulation of the economy unknown in American history. He did so because he was sure that the labor shortage produced by the manpower needs of the Army, and the demand for uninterrupted production, would create an ideal situation for unions to grow and improve labor conditions.

He was right on both counts as the membership of the AFL grew sharply in 1917 and 1918, and wages increased greatly as well. However, organized labor was unable to hold these gains once the war ended, and Gompers' last 6 years were spent fruitlessly trying to stop the loss of membership and influence as the labor movement slid into the long, sharp decline of the 1920's.[18]

Accomplishments despite obstacles

Throughout his long career, Samuel Gompers undertook enormous tasks that others often believed could not be achieved. Yet Gompers pursued them with zeal and skill. He accomplished a great deal despite the barriers of hostile employers, who often drew on the police powers of a sympathetic government; divisions within the labor movement—not only among unions over jurisdiction and structure, but also between those who viewed the labor movement as a step toward the ultimate goal of socialism, and those like Gompers who believed this to be unrealistic and self-destructive; and divisions within the labor force based on religion, ethnicity, and race, which often became more important than the unity of a working class. The creation and development of the AFL is a testament to Gompers' decision to move ahead, whatever the obstacles.

Although determined, Gompers was never far removed from reality. He always believed a small success was more important than a grand

defeat. The ideal was almost never attainable, and thus Gompers used his pragmatism to seek out what could be won. He gained leadership by virtue of personal commitment and effective advocacy; he kept it the same way. Ultimately, Gompers had only the power of persuasion, and an enormous network of friends and contacts in the labor movement upon which to draw. He was less the dictator than the indispensable executive.

Yet he made a difference. As a weak and sick Gompers said at the AFL convention in November 1924: "I want to live for one thing alone—to leave a better labor movement in America and in the world than I found it when I entered, as a boy. . . ."[19] He was to live only a few weeks longer, but clearly Samuel Gompers had accomplished that objective. □

Footnotes

[1] On Gompers' early life, see Bernard Mandel, *Samuel Gompers: A Biography* (Yellow Springs, OH, Antioch Press, 1963). For Gompers' autobiography, see Samuel Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (New York, E. P. Dutton and Co., 1925), 2 v.

[2] For a discussion of the influence of Marxism on Gompers, see Stuart Kaufman, *Samuel Gompers and the Origins of the American Federation of Labor, 1848–1896* (Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1973).

[3] See Joseph P. Goldberg and William T. Moye, "Birth of a federation: Mr. Gompers endeavors 'not to build a bubble'," *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1981, pp. 23–26.

[4] On the Knights of Labor, see Norman Ware, *The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860–1890: A Study in Democracy* (New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1929) and Leon Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana, IL, University of Illinois Press, 1983).

[5] Indispensable for anyone interested in Gompers' career are the volumes in the Samuel Gompers Papers series, edited by Stuart Kaufman. Two volumes have appeared to date: v. 1, *The Making of a Union Leader, 1850—1886* and v. 2, *The Early Years of the American Federation of Labor, 1887–1890* (Urbana, IL, University of Illinois Press, 1986, 1987). A good, brief biography of Gompers is Harold Livesay, *Samuel Gompers and Organized Labor in America* (Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1978). For a recent evaluation, see John Laslett, "Samuel Gompers and the Rise of American Business Unionism," in Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine eds., *Labor Leaders in America* (Urbana, IL, University of Illinois Press, 1987), pp. 62–88.

[6] Leo Wolman, *The Growth of American Trade Unions*, 1880–1923 (New York, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1924), p. 32.

[7] The AFL retained its membership during the depression. The figures are: 1893—260,000; 1894—275,000; 1895—270,000; 1896—265,000. *Ibid.* In 1897, the membership stood at 272,000. See Leo Wolman, *Ebb and Flow in Trade Unionism* (New York, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1936), p. 138.

[8] For the action on this item of the political program, see American Federation of Labor, *Proceedings*, 1893, pp. 36–37 and 1894, pp. 38–43.

[9] For studies of Gompers' views, see Louis Reed, *The Labor Philosophy of Samuel Gompers* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1930) and Fred Greenbaum, "The Social Ideas of Samuel Gompers," *Labor History*, Winter 1966, pp. 35–61.

[10] *Ibid.* On voluntarism particularly, also see David J. Saposs, "Voluntarism in the American Labor Movement," *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1954, pp. 967–71 and Michael Rogin, "Voluntarism: The Political Functions of an Antipolitical Doctrine," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, July 1962, pp., 521–535.

[11] Carl Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 395–402, presents a brief and clear discussion of this issue. For a full account, see Alice Kessler-Harris *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1982).

[12] See Charles Gregory, *Labor and the Law*, Second Edition (New York, W. W. Norton and Co., 1961).

[13] On this point, see Irwin Yellowitz, *Labor and the Progressive Movement in New York State, 1897–1916* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1965), particularly pp. 132–138.

[14] For the enhanced political activity by the AFL after 1906, see Mark Karson, *American Labor Unions and Politics, 1900–1918* (Carbondale, IL, Southern Illinois University Press, 1958).

[15] An excellent study of legislative activity by a State labor movement is Gary Fink, *Labor's Search for Political Order: The Political Behavior of the Missouri Labor Movement, 1890–1940* (Columbia, MO, University of Missouri Press, 1973).

[16] Most works on Gompers discuss this subject. Arthur Mann, "Gompers and the Irony of Racism," *Antioch Review*, Summer, 1953, pp. 203–214, focuses on the issue. For the general relationship of American trade unions to black workers during Gompers' lifetime, see Sterling Spero and Abram Harris, *The Black Worker: The Negro and the Labor Movement* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1931).

[17] See Simeon Larson, *Labor and Foreign Policy: Gompers, the AFL and the First World War, 1914–1918* (Cranbury, NJ, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975); and Frank Grubbs, *The Struggle for Labor Loyalty: Gompers, the A.F.L. and the Pacifists, 1917–1920* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1968).

[18] On the 1920's, see Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920–1933* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960).

[19] American Federation of Labor, *Proceedings*, 1924, p. 281.