

MAJOR STRIKES 1875-1900

Great Railroad Strike of 1877

- First nationwide strike
- Triggered by wage cut by the B& O
- During the depression of 1873+
- Martinsburg, West Va., Pittsburgh, St. Louis
- Broken by local police, state militia & federal troops
- Also a general strike
- Many local militia refused to fire on strikers
- Large number killed (100) -- lots of destruction of property

Haymarket Riot 1886

- In Chicago - start as protest against killing of workers by police at McCormick strike on May 1
- Speeches given May 4 at Haymarket square - by anarchists - police called
- Bomb thrown & 7 police killed - then riot with both sides firing
- 8 anarchists found guilty of conspiracy to murder, although the evidence was flimsy - sentenced to death (3 later pardoned by Altgeld)
- Hysterical atmosphere - anti unions - Knights of Labor hurt since the most prominent union - collapsed
- Cities increased police forces, states built national guard armories near workers
- Hurt the labor movement -- tarnished with "radical" label
- Part of the eight hour day movement

Homestead Strike & Lockout 1892

- Industrial union struck at Carnegie plant - AFL affiliate and divisions between skilled and unskilled laborers
- Frick - manager for Carnegie - cut wages (beginning of depression 1893)
- Attempted assassination of Frick by an anarchist -- Alexander Berkman
- Use of Lockout technique
- Co. brings in 300 Pinkertons -- battle with workers -- tar & feather Pinkertons
- Bring in state troops, guard plant -- workers lose
- All fired, wages cut

Pullman Strike 1894

- Pullman - company town - wages cut, rents and prices still high
- American Railway Union (under Debs) helps strike by boycotting trains with Pullman cars
- Railroad Managers Association - adds mail cars & Pullman cars to all trains
- RR traffic paralyzed
- Gov. Altgeld refuses to send in state troops
- Pres. Cleveland sends in fed troops to guard the mail trains
- Riots break out (in part fueled by unemployed workers who came to build the Columbian Exposition)
- Attorney General Richard Olney used court injunction -- to protect the mails - Debs in jail (**tie to in Re Debs Doc H**)
- Strike failed -- Debs turned to Socialism

SMALLER STRIKES (unlikely to see)

- Knights of Labor assemblies against Jay Gould's railroad -- he caved - secretly selling RR --
- Led to other Knights strikes which failed (esp. Texas & Pacific RR)
- Silver mines - Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, coal mines -- Tennessee, Colorado

LABOR UNIONS 1875-1900

NATIONAL LABOR UNION (ORG BEFORE THE TIME PERIOD OF THE EXAM , DIES 1870'S)

- Org. after the Civil War by William Sylvis-- died depression of 1870's
- Craft unions, skilled & unskilled, reformers - 1st large national union
- Looked to earlier America -- workers controlled workday, decent living.
- Demand 8 hour workday
- "Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will"
- Formed a third party, lost heavily in the 1872 elections
- They excluded bankers, lawyers and liquor dealers
- Height - 600,000, failed in depression of 1870's

KNIGHTS OF LABOR 1860's-1890

- Start -- Uriah Stephens, small secret, very Protestant
- Terence Powderly - transforms 1879--
- Skilled, unskilled, men & women, natives & immigrants, all religions, all races
- Excluded liquor dealers, gambler, lawyers, bankers, stockbrokers and prostitutes
- Goal - utopian - cooperatives run by workers, sponsored political candidates
- 8 hour workday, regulate trusts, no child or convict labor, prohibition
- No strikes -- but local assembly struck against Jay Gould - trying to sell RR so gave in -- huge increase in membership, lots of strikes - most failed
- Destroyed by Haymarket riot - though Powderly supported trying the anarchists, people blame all unions as radicals; Failed by 1890

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR 1886-

- Founded by Samuel Gompers 1886
- Federation of skilled craft unions
- Once a socialist, Gompers now pro capitalism
- Bread & butter "pure and simple unionism"-- wages, hours, working conditions
- Bargain -- strikes & boycotts last resort
- No support for one political candidate or party
- Few women (only Cigar Makers Union & Typographers Union)
- Restrict African American membership through high fees & discrimination
- Survived depression of 1890's - though reduced in numbers

AMERICAN RAILWAY UNION 1893-1895

- Eugene V. Debs organized
- Industrial Union
- Debs ordered no violence - just used to justify troops
- Quickly got involved in Pullman strike -- union broken
- Debs became leading U.S. socialist

MOLLY MAGUIRES – 1870's

- Anthracite coal mining union – Pennsylvania - Reputation for violence – played up by mine owners