

The Lost City of Solidarity: Metropolitan Unionism in Historical Perspective

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The New Deal labor relations system, cobbled together between 1933 and 1947, was premised on the security of long-term “family wage” employment in the mass production core of a growing national economy. Into the 1960s (at least for those workers it reached), the mid-century innovations in labor law (the Wagner Act) and labor organization (the Congress of Industrial Organizations) delivered job security, stable wages, and an increasingly expansive system of private social provision. As the postwar era wore on, however, the economic and demographic and political foundations of the New Deal order began to fall apart. The relative position of the United States in the world economy has slipped as integration into that economy has grown. The productivity and profitability of American firms have fallen off dramatically. In a deindustrializing economy, relatively secure manufacturing employment has been increasingly displaced by high-turnover service employment. The postwar accord, by which labor narrowed its sights to “bread-and-butter” contractualism in exchange for its share of a growing economy, has come undone: since the early 1970s, wages have stagnated, and private benefits have been pared back. While “family wage” assumptions still cloud social policy, it is now both an expectation and a necessity that most women participate in the labor force.¹ American labor laws and labor strategy, in short, are designed for a world in which we no longer live. In one respect, at least, this leaves us where we were in the early 1930s—with a labor policy and a labor movement that are relics of an earlier era and that are ill equipped to meet the organizational needs and aspirations of most working people.

As a means of at least partially addressing the troubling incongruity between the institutions of the 1940s and the economy of the 1990s, we turn our attention to



the promise of “metropolitan unionism.” In practical and historical terms, “metro unionism” encompasses a range of practices and strategies—including conventional craft or industrial unions with a strong urban scope or focus, pre- or postindustrial occupational unions, or metropolitan clusters of unions (including central labor councils or federations). At its most ambitious, “metro unionism” denotes an organizing strategy which focuses political and economic attention on the nation’s long-neglected urban regions. Such urban regions offer a density of skills and resources that could and should facilitate sustainable economic development, high wages, and the provision of public goods. Instead, we are caught in a vicious cycle of antiurban political neglect, smokestack chasing by job- and tax-anxious cities, and further urban decay. Local organizing can, of course, make a difference—by building a “living wage” floor under the local economy, targeting tax incentives to “high road” development, adjusting tax policies in the interest of regional economic stability, and the like. In such efforts, urban locals and central labor councils or city federations are crucial—not only because working women and men have so much at stake but because (for reasons I touch on below) organized labor has long neglected its natural leadership in the urban political economy.²

In this essay, however, I employ the idea of “metro unionism” in a somewhat narrower sense: as a form of collective bargaining that groups workers by region and occupation rather than by work site and industry. I do this for three reasons, none of which involve any doubt or question about the broader project of grassroots urban renewal. First, my interest here is primarily in teasing out the history of labor’s urban experience and urban strategy. In that history, it is patterns of genuinely metropolitan bargaining by industry or occupation that stand out as the important (and useful) precedents. Second, it is important to underscore the strategic and legal tensions inherent in the “metro unions” or “union cities” approach, which follow from that history: as I suggest below, the New Deal collective bargaining model—sometimes in law and sometimes in spirit—has both discouraged new organization along unconventional (nonindustrial) lines and discouraged established unions from looking beyond the horizon of plant, firm, and industry. And third, it is important to underscore the promise (in some sectors at least) of forms of bargaining that pursue employment security in regional labor markets (rather than job security in internal labor markets), explode the assumption that collective bargaining is somehow irreconcilable with service employment, retrieve some of the natural solidarities that flowed across industrial and jurisdictional lines before vertically organized national and international unions dominated the landscape of both collective bargaining and labor politics, and, in doing all of this, meet the organizational needs of those workers (especially women) frustrated by both historical patterns of craft and industrial unionism and contemporary patterns of service employment.³

All of this, of course, raises a number of questions: what might such unions look like? What changes in the law would encourage and accommodate such

efforts? What would metropolitan unions accomplish? As a historian, the best I can do in answering such questions is to ask them in a different way. In what ways does the idea and practice of “metropolitan unionism” claim important historical precedents? Under what circumstances did metropolitan unions, of one form or another, flourish? How and why did these alternatives to the New Deal model founder?

1. METROPOLITAN UNIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

For the most part, the history of metro unions has been trumped by the core narrative of American labor history: the struggle between craft and industrial unionism before and after 1935. In this view, American Federation of Labor (AFL) unions are portrayed as bastions of skilled male workers, fiercely devoted to a masculine, racist, and voluntarist construction of labor relations and labor policy. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), by contrast, is the hero of the story: celebrated for its willingness and ability to jump at the opportunity presented by the Depression and New Deal and build a movement of socially conscious and politically engaged industrial unionism. But the CIO is also a tragic hero whose flaws include uneven attention to the rights of African American and female workers, a debilitating dependence on the federal state, an abusive relationship with the Democratic Party, and bureaucratic alienation from its own rank and file.⁴ While there is much to recommend this account, it loses sight of occupational and metropolitan patterns of organizing that resembled neither the aristocracy of skill nurtured by the AFL nor (to borrow Joel Rogers’s felicitous phrase) the “silos of solidarity” built by the CIO.

There are a number of patterns or examples of metro unionism in the American experience, some of which involve the structure and practice of collective bargaining and some of which involve broader, cross-sectoral political efforts. On the bargaining side, there have been three distinct patterns of metro unionism, dictated largely by the structure of the industries and labor markets in question. The first of these occurred in skilled service industries, especially construction. Unions in these industries were, in some respects, classical craft unions in terms of both their benefits (apprenticeship systems and control over labor markets) and their limits (a disdain for unskilled workers and an often systematic racism). But they were also distinct in two respects: they operated in discrete and bounded metropolitan markets, and they governed the terms of employment (through the contracting system) on an occupational rather than work site basis. Construction unions emerged as important political and economic players in the growing and urbanizing economy of the late nineteenth century (between 1897 and 1904, craft union membership generally exploded from under 500,000 to more than 2 million), and on the eve of World War I, membership in carpenters unions alone ran second only to coal mining. The political and economic clout of the building trades was most pronounced in large northern and midwestern cities, where they

formed the backbone of most central labor councils—and found themselves the primary target of the “open shop” movement of the 1920s. Although less important in terms of their numbers or economic impact, other unions of skilled workers, including musicians, followed roughly the same model.⁵

The second important pattern occurred in unskilled service trades, including municipal employees, teamsters, waitresses, and various building service trades. The distinction between skilled and unskilled, in this respect, is not clear-cut: the former certainly exaggerated their privileged position in the labor market, and the latter organized, in part, as a way of arguing for occupational or professional status. Such services were, like construction, naturally insulated from external competition. But unions of delivery drivers, janitors, elevator operators, and the like depended less on their craft status than on their ability or willingness to control their respective labor markets and their critical (and often closely related) positions in the infrastructure of the city. Unlike the building trades, in other words, these unions usually depended on the strength and mutual support offered by other metro unions. Accordingly, their presence and persistence were more scattered; one can point to specific and exceptional examples—such as the Chicago Flat Janitors Union between the wars or the San Francisco and Seattle waitress unions in the 1960s—but not to a general pattern across trades and cities.⁶

The third pattern occurred in local manufacturing—including baking, brewing, printing, and clothing manufacture—which served a distinct metropolitan market. These industries were largely insulated from external competition, usually because distribution (bread, keg beer) beyond city limits was impractical, because regional or national markets (for bottled beer or ready-to-wear clothing, for example) were not yet established, or because (as in printing) local production rested on close contractual ties with other local firms. These industries were also often intensely competitive within the metropolitan market, and unions (which could take wages out of competition and discipline cutthroat firms) often played an important regulatory role. In industries such as the needle trades, for example, unions regulated both local labor markets and competition among firms to the advantage of workers, the metropolitan economy, and all but the “sweatshop” contractors and employers. Again, the scope and strength of these unions varied considerably. The trades and industries in question represented close to a third of the manufacturing workforce and a half of total union membership on the eve of the New Deal; the practice of some form of metro unionism in these industries was more narrowly confined to northern urban settings in the twenty or thirty years before 1935.⁷

There were, of course, peculiar and pervasive obstacles to organizing in such settings. The diversity of work sites and work experiences, the organizational disarray of employers, and the itinerant character of service work all worked against the natural solidarities that flowed from industrial employment. Yet such unions

did succeed, in part by serving the needs of their members and in part by serving the needs of employers. For workers, occupational unionism promised access to the labor market, portable employment rights and benefits, and a collective voice in their confrontation with employers.⁸ For at least some employers, metro unions served as a source of reliable (and often skilled) labor and proved useful in efforts to identify and regulate marginal or cutthroat firms.⁹

Beyond such patterns of local bargaining, metro unionism took political forms as well. In some respects, this meant little more than the fact that local unions could and would support each other by mutually respecting picket lines and ensuring that municipal goods and services flowed through union hands. More broadly, it often meant that local unions could and would pool their talents and resources in the provision of services to their members: perhaps the best example, in this respect, are the multiunion health centers established (before the triumph of pattern-bargained and privately insured health benefits) in cities such as Philadelphia, Milwaukee, and San Francisco.¹⁰ And in some settings, it meant that local unions could and would forge a distinct identity and agenda in local politics. Such efforts, as I suggest below, were complicated (and often frustrated) by the constraints of both local machine politics and national partisan politics. But they were nevertheless important episodes in the history of American labor and in the history of American cities.

By any measure, metro unions of one kind or another comprised an important fragment of the labor movement before and after the emergence of the CIO. Some, such as the construction trades, would remain important. Some, such as the garment trades, gradually lost their metropolitan focus. Some, such as the janitor and waitress unions, lost ground gradually after impressive organizational successes in at least some settings. Some, such as the meager retail clerks unions, closely reflected modern dilemmas in the organization of service workers.¹¹ And some, such as the local labor parties that flourished briefly in many cities (especially in the early 1930s), suggested how difficult it was to sustain meaningful local alliances in an era in which national unions, national politics, and national political parties offered compelling alternatives.¹² In any case, the uneven history and lost promise of such unions beg an explanation.

2. WHAT HAPPENED TO METROPOLITAN UNIONISM?

Historians have (not surprisingly) devoted much more attention to the development of New Deal labor law and the emergence of the CIO than they have to the legal and organizational paths not taken. This said, historians and others have—especially in light of the dramatic decline in labor's fortunes since the 1950s—devoted more and more attention to the limits of the New Deal collective bargaining system. While little of it is directly concerned with the issue of metro unionism, this scholarship can help us tease out some preliminary explanations for its failure to survive the reforms of the 1930s or take root in the decades after.

Labor Relations and Economic Change

Metro unions were, in some respects, simply casualties of economic and demographic change. Metro unionism depended on insulation from competition and succeeded in urban trades and services not subject to external competitive pressures. Through the early twentieth century, many metro unions were undermined by national markets in much the same way that national unions would be undermined by international markets fifty years later. While most of the service unions remained naturally insulated from competition, national markets gradually eclipsed urban markets in industries such as baking and brewing and clothing. Unions in these industries declined or shifted their organizational focus and strategy as the market widened. The brewing industry, for example, was predominantly local and saloon based before the onset of Prohibition, and cities such as Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Cincinnati boasted strong metropolitan brewing locals whose bargaining power rested, in part, on the threat of boycott in a “working-class” market. After repeal in 1933, the industry shifted its attention to the national market for bottled beer—at the expense of the brewing unions. Similarly, national “name brand” markets displaced local production and local unions in printing and baking.¹³ The clothing industry was a unique case because locals and leadership of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers (ACW) and International Ladies Garment Workers Unions (ILGWU) managed a rapid and successful transition to the very different organizational premises of the CIO. Before 1935, ACW and ILGWU locals had focused on local competitive conditions; after 1935, they absorbed the logic of the New Deal and turned their attention to the task of promoting consumption.¹⁴

The eclipse of urban markets was doubly damaging to the “regulatory unions” that had served both workers and employers in locally competitive markets. Leading employers in industries such as clothing and printing had promoted and supported unionization as a means of lifting wages out of competition and disciplining the cutthroat margins of the market. But such strategies rested on an “all-or-nothing” logic: if the best scenario (for some employers) was the competitive stability that came with the complete organization of urban markets, the second-best alternative was no union presence whatsoever, and the worst was partial organization and the prospect of paying union wages while others were not. This was clearly the situation, for example, that faced retail clerks, waitresses, and janitors—and their employers—as chain stores and chain restaurants and contract cleaning firms established a resolutely antiunion presence through the 1950s and 1960s, eroded the logic of existing multiemployer agreements, and demonstrated the feasibility of nonunion operation. In retail, national chains (and later catalog sales) eroded the logic and insularity of local markets. In restaurants, the markets remained local but were increasingly dominated by national firms.¹⁵

Alongside such changes in the market, service industries also drifted away from the full-time, vocational patterns of employment that had been promoted by

the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) and others. The service economy, which filled the vacuum left by deindustrialization, increasingly boasted a labor market bifurcated between relatively well-paid, well-educated knowledge workers at one pole and part-time, low-wage, no-benefit, high-turnover hamburger flippers at the other. In turn, service employment (which has accounted for nearly 90 percent of all job growth since 1980) never fit comfortably within the CIO–New Deal model of industrial relations: the very character of “service” work complicates the employment relationship with a third party (customers, patients). Many service jobs, by title or practice, involve some managerial or supervisory role. Service employment (as a consequence of both turnover and contracting patterns) often entails only cursory contact with employers. And much service employment is highly decentralized, characterized by many small work sites or (in the case of homework) no conventional work sites at all.¹⁶

Just as jobs no longer resembled the mass production, blue-collar, family wage model of the 1930s, industrial organization (marked by less vertical integration and complex patterns of contracting and subcontracting) increasingly blurred the boundaries of the firm and the logic of bargaining contained by it.¹⁷ Indeed, virtually the only industry to maintain some semblance of metropolitan organization through the middle decades of the twentieth century was the construction industry—which was naturally insulated, in some respects, from both the national markets that undermined metropolitan unions in manufacturing and the deteriorating labor markets that undermined metropolitan unions in other urban services.

The New Deal

As demographic and economic change made metropolitan unions increasingly harder to sustain, the “big bang” of New Deal–era labor policy also effectively encouraged sectoral organization at the expense of spatial or occupational organization. This, of course, was the *raison d’être* of New Deal collective bargaining policy, which gave CIO activists the legal room they needed to get past both the intransigence of most employers and the parochial craft unionism of the AFL. But, as the subsequent history of the labor movement suggests, this was not a simple and unambiguous victory. In some respects, the National Labor Relations Act amounted to little more than a “counterfeit liberty” that tied labor’s fortunes to the legal and political apparatus of state arbitration and allowed older constraints on collective action to “rule from the grave.”¹⁸ In some respects, the logic of New Deal labor policy reflected the microeconomic and macroeconomic benefits (as perceived by New Dealers and some employers) of labor organizations, which might both raise aggregate wages and even out labor costs across industries and regions.¹⁹ And in some respects, the consolidation of the CIO clearly came at the expense of many experiments in local “community” unionism that reached far beyond the factory gates of the core CIO firms and industries.²⁰

New Deal labor policy was firmly rooted in the belief that federal protection of bargaining rights would simultaneously contribute to economic recovery, stability, and (ultimately) prosperity. The key legislative moment, in this sense, was not the passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935 but the collective bargaining provision (Section 7a) attached to the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933. The National Recovery Administration's (NRA's) principal task was the drafting of industrial "codes of fair competition" that hoped, by establishing enforceable price and production standards, to shake out marginal and cut-throat firms in what was generally considered a mature and stagnant and overproductive economy. Accordingly, the NRA approached both wage and hour standards and bargaining rights through the mechanism of the industrial codes. Wage and hour agreements varied widely by industry and reflected less a federal interest in workers rights than employers' interest in competitive regulation. Section 7a bargaining provisions were similarly cut to fit industrial circumstances and needs. For the most part, both the NRA and employers saw the creation of company unions as sufficient compliance. In some industries, Section 7a was used to strengthen established patterns of "regulatory unionism" in which employers relied on the union to enforce industry-wide agreements. Indeed, until the courts pressed the New Deal to some semblance of consistency, the NRA established discrete labor boards on an as-needed, industry-by-industry basis.²¹

The NRA experience was of enormous importance to the immediate and ultimate direction of labor policy and labor strategy in the United States. Collective bargaining law in the United States (as presented by Section 7a and preserved by the NLRA) was intertwined with the goals of competitive stability and economic recovery, which were the first priorities of both the First and Second New Deals. Early New Deal labor policy, in this sense, was less for or about labor than it was a complement to (and occasionally a means of enforcing) efforts to regulate competition. Some employers were willing and able to accommodate the NRA's Section 7a (and later the NLRA) because they assumed that such provisions would take wages out of competition and bring cutthroat, low-wage (and often southern) competitors to heel. This, in turn, shaped the priorities and strategies of the labor movement. Labor activists seeking to take advantage of the legal opening of 7a generally accepted or at least worked within the assumption that labor's gains depended on competitive stability. This was especially true for industries such as clothing, in which labor had already taken the lead in efforts to increase productivity and regulate local competition. After 1933, for example, the ACW and ILGWU focused less and less on the organization of local markets and more and more on the task of raising and regulating wages across the industry.²² More broadly, the NRA shaped the pace and scope of organization as organizing committees scrambled to use Section 7a to their advantage. In most cases, this meant pushing for national sectoral agreements to overcome the fragmented and tenuous

character of single-plant or single-firm bargaining.²³ In turn, the NRA did little to facilitate metropolitan agreements. The NRA was neither willing (given its constitutional uncertainty) nor able (given its limited resources) to consistently enforce its codes and leaned heavily on voluntary compliance or industry-led “code authorities.” As a result, it was ill equipped to facilitate agreements in local multiemployer industries and actually shoehorned many metropolitan or occupational agreements (such as the fledgling organization of retail clerks) into a national, sectoral pattern.²⁴

By 1935, the NRA was in disarray. Those who counted on it to bring about competitive stability resented the lack of enforcement. Those targeted by the codes resented even gestures at enforcement. Small business and consumers had turned congressional attention to law’s anticompetitive and inflationary effects. The Supreme Court was poised to declare the entire experiment an unconstitutional invasion of state prerogatives. And the New Deal itself was slowly jettisoning the “stagnationist” premises of competitive regulation for the “consumptionist” promise of “demand-side” labor and welfare policy. This was the atmosphere in which the NLRA (commonly referred to as “the Wagner Act”) was conceived and born. For labor, Wagner promised to clarify and protect those rights floated by Section 7a but, for the most part, flouted by employers during the NRA’s tenure. For (some) employers, Wagner promised to use labor law to accomplish what the NRA’s codes of fair competition could not: a level playing field in which cutthroat competitors were constrained from undermining industry standards and profits. For the New Deal itself, Wagner promised not only social stability but also competitive stability by other means; it avoided the constitutional limits on federal economic regulation by empowering another agent (the labor movement) to police competitive standards.²⁵

In meeting these overlapping demands, the Wagner Act (which specified both protection of “the purchasing power of workers” and “stabilization of competitive wage rates . . . within and between industries” as its goals) grafted the regulatory logic of the NRA to the consumptionist logic of the Second New Deal while retaining the former’s insistence that labor’s gains accompany and not threaten business recovery or prosperity.²⁶ While not explicitly privileging the CIO’s brand of industrial unionism, the New Deal effectively encouraged labor to frame all its demands—for wages, for work-based benefits, for job security—by industry and made the satisfaction of those demands conditional on industrial stability and (as it was put in the clothing industry) “co-managed microregulation.”²⁷ In the short term, Wagner was understood and interpreted—by all concerned—as a successor to the NRA, whose first task was to establish competitive stability and labor peace in basic industry. In the longer term, the Wagner Act’s focus on work site-based locals and industry-based pattern bargaining, the ways in which it defined employers and employees, and the ways in which it made it difficult to generalize

or extend union gains (by restricting multiemployer bargaining and prohibiting “secondary” job actions, for example) all worked to the disadvantage of both service workers generally and efforts to maintain or establish metropolitan and occupational bargaining units.²⁸

Just as Wagner confirmed the sectoral premises of NRA labor policy, the political and legal refinement of the Wagner Act after 1935 confirmed its preference for industrial unionism based on a combination of local, work site–based bargaining and a scattering of peak, sectoral agreements (most famously the 1946 “Treaty of Detroit” in the automobile industry). Wartime agreements (typified by the “Little Steel” formula) secured the gains of established CIO unions and committed them to a regime of tightly regulated, tripartite pattern bargaining that would also serve as a template for postwar agreements.²⁹ The 1947 Taft-Hartley Act both gutted the Wagner Act (especially with its right-to-work and anti-Communist provisions) and further confined its attention and protections to sectoral, shop-floor bargaining units. Alongside the Landrum-Griffith Act (1959), Taft-Hartley (whose provisions were extended to intrastate service trades in 1955) hit hard at the occupational and metropolitan basis of unions in restaurants, hotels, and similar services by opening closed shops, regulating control over the trades, stripping supervisory personnel from bargaining units, narrowing the definition of *employee*, mandating jointly run benefit plans, and outlawing practices of local solidarity (such as secondary pickets and boycotts) that had sustained the organization of many local service trades.³⁰

The CIO and the Dilemmas of Industrial Unionism

While New Deal labor policy was being assembled in Washington, its most important components were forged in local struggles between 1933 and 1937 and in the CIO’s challenge to the AFL after 1935. It is almost impossible to separate, in other words, the progress of law and policy without looking to the local and national institutions of industrial unionism that forced the New Deal’s hand at critical junctures in the 1930s. The fate of metropolitan unionism, in this respect, was also closely tied to the history and strategy of the CIO. Through its earlier history, the national CIO struggled with two overlapping premises of industrial unionism: the first focused on shop-floor concerns of control and supervision and security; the second focused on sectoral concerns of competitive stability and competitive equality. These concerns were not unrelated; indeed, CIO locals routinely found that shop-floor issues could only be addressed when both management and labor were assured that wages could be lifted out of competition and that marginal nonunion firms would not reap a competitive advantage. But the manner in which the CIO juggled these concerns had enormous implications for the survival and the character of local workers’ movements. Historians have increasingly recognized and lamented the ways in which the CIO’s preference for pattern bargaining, reliance on federal regulation, and alliance with the Democratic Party

came at the expense of diverse local experiments in general or community unionism and local labor politics. There is less agreement, however, on the causal elements of this story. This is a debate of more than purely historiographical interest because it revolves around the willingness and ability of the labor movement to accommodate or sustain alternative forms of organization or ways of organizing.

Historical assessments of the CIO range widely, in part because the literature is largely organized around urban or industrial case studies in which the emergence of industrial unionism and its implications played out in many different ways. Indeed, much of this scholarship argues (implicitly or explicitly) that the CIO's fate rested less on national labor policy or strategy than on the conditions or circumstances or challenges of particular organizing struggles.³¹ Those who have floated "global" explanations for the formation and fate of the CIO (to crudely simplify a rich and ongoing debate) generally fall into two camps. Some have suggested that the CIO fumbled a golden opportunity for radical change and that CIO leaders snuffed out a "community-based, horizontally-bonded culture of struggle" in the process of displacing the AFL, signing up basic industry, and sorting out its own sectarian squabbles. "From the beginning," as Staughton Lynd charges, the CIO "intended a top down, so-called responsible unionism that would prevent strikes and control the rank and file."³² Others have suggested that the CIO's pursuit of national bargaining and workplace contractualism was a more or less accurate reflection of workers' aspirations and that the labor movement was constrained not by its own leadership but by an economic and political setting in which all the serious alternatives to the CIO–New Deal model lay to the right.³³ But neither of these accounts flies very far as general explanations for the organizational and political choices made by the CIO and its locals during the formative years of the labor movement.

In part, both offer essentially functional explanations that derive the CIO's motives in the 1930s and 1940s from the state of the labor movement decades later: one damning national leaders for turning their backs on local efforts, the other praising national leaders for their pragmatic accommodation with management and politics. In part, both exaggerate the choices available to national and local labor leaders under difficult political, economic, and legal conditions: one assuming that the late 1930s was a truly "open" historical moment, the other assuming that labor got precisely what it wanted. And in part, both views are inattentive to the tremendous variation across localities, regions, and industries. In some instances and in some respects, dynamic metropolitan labor movements were distorted by the CIO's top-down industrial unionism; in some instances, local movements never floated much more than simple "job-conscious" appeals; and in most instances, the emergence of the CIO was marked by a complex pattern of material accommodation and consent.³⁴ By and large, local union activists saw affiliation with the CIO as a necessary prerequisite to organizational security and wage stability—especially given the sectoral logic of both the NRA and the

NLRA.³⁵ And while such a choice organized workers' aspirations and demands around the logic of sectoral bargaining, they did not necessarily force local activists to abandon local political or bargaining initiatives, which often persisted with the CIO's blessing or despite its indifference.³⁶

As to the future of metropolitan unionism, the CIO occasionally discouraged occupational or spatial organizing but—following the logic of the New Deal—more routinely neglected such efforts or proved unwilling or unable to accommodate them. The CIO chartered a range of service unions—including the United Office and Professional Workers (UOPWA), the United Federal Workers, and the State, County, and Municipal Workers (the forerunner of AFSCME) in the late 1930s—but, when faced with jurisdictional questions, invariably leaned to sectoral rather than occupational bargaining units. The national office, for example, forced the UOPWA to give up jurisdiction of clerical staff in the rubber and steel industries to the United Rubber Workers and the United Steel Workers, respectively, although neither industrial union had made any effort to include white-collar workers in their contracts. This left the UOPWA with a meager base in banking and insurance and in “paper factories” (such as press clipping services, direct mail firms, and commercial clearinghouses) that resembled conventional industrial work sites.³⁷ The urgency with which the CIO herded members into sectoral units (as we shall see below) also reflected the tug-of-war between the CIO and the AFL in the 1930s and 1940s. In this sense, the CIO was less hostile to community or occupational units than it was anxious (with some cause) that they would be snapped up by the craft-based AFL.³⁸

In turn, industrial unionism invariably undermined general or community unions not (as Lynd and others have charged) out of hostility to their premises but because neither the CIO unions nor their locals had the luxury of forgoing immediate security for the vague promise of broader solidarity. After the organizational flurry of the late 1930s, job security (the right to an individual job and its benefits) trumped employment security and distracted unions from new organizing to matters of contractual or procedural justice. Bargaining over employment-based benefits increasingly undercut the viability of union-sponsored or public alternatives.³⁹ The drift to sectoral bargaining had important gendered implications: women were more deeply rooted in community politics, and the rise of a hierarchical CIO came at the expense of their political engagement—as workers, as consumers, and as homeowners or tenants. Sometimes unwittingly, sometimes with a clear sense of loss, the CIO transformed a range of historically community concerns (such as health care) into fragments of work-based “breadwinner” entitlements, while leaving other working-class issues (such as housing) behind altogether.⁴⁰ And over time, a combination of legal constraints, managerial backlash, and bargaining strategy contributed to the evaporation of organized labor's local political, intellectual, and cultural presence as well.⁴¹

Bargaining Dilemmas

In large part, the decline of metropolitan unions reflected labor's material insecurity and the strategic logic of industrial unionism. Clearly, American workers, under extraordinary political and economic and legal constraints, had little choice but to forgo solidarity for security and pursue long-term economic and political goals (as best they could) through shortsighted bargaining.⁴² Over time, the necessary retreat to "bread-and-butter" industrial unionism further confined labor's reach and its grasp. As I have suggested above, all of this made it harder to sustain spatial bargaining and more tempting to follow the line of least organizational and political resistance to sectoral bargaining. As important, the postwar bargaining model proved ill equipped to accommodate service workers for whom "bread-and-butter" issues were often secondary to job conditions, autonomy in their interaction with customer or patients, professional respect and recognition, and a commitment to the quality and integrity of the services they provided (the latter is especially true today, for example, of the response of nursing unions to the spread of health maintenance organizations).⁴³

In turn (but much less commonly noted), the limits of the New Deal system of labor relations reflected the organizational disarray of the business community. Employers associations have always foundered in the United States, in large part because they have always lacked the organizational scope or clout (*vis-à-vis* labor or the state) to negotiate or enter into agreements. Indeed, with the collapse of the famous bilateral monopolies in the late nineteenth-century glass, pottery, and metal trades, most employers associations were "belligerent" associations designed not to engage in collective bargaining but to avoid it at all costs.⁴⁴ Through the 1920s and 1930s, employers struggled to maintain metropolitan employers associations with the ability and responsibility to enter into agreements. In many cases, it was never clear what the appropriate scope of an employers association should be: industries were notoriously hard to define and easy to split, and mimicking union organization proved next to impossible given the jurisdictional disarray and "strange bedfellows" (Teamster nurses, USW dry cleaners, UE graduate students) typical of the American labor movement.⁴⁵ Even when the relative insulation of metropolitan markets (in industries such as building, building services, clothing, and printing) made stable employers associations possible, it invariably fell to the unions they bargained with to enforce not only the terms of agreements but the fealty of individual employers.⁴⁶

While workers and some employers appreciated the benefits of organizing a given labor market, employers generally preferred (or at least fell back on) organization of a trade or industry. The disorganization of employers, in this respect, clearly shaped not only their ability to enter into occupational or metropolitan agreements but also the pattern of labor policy and law through the 1930s and beyond. The profusion of trade associations in the 1920s (during which the

Commerce Department encouraged associational efforts and promised antitrust relief) proved incapable of addressing either competitive standards or the labor problem. The early New Deal largely accepted the associational logic of sectoral stability and strove (with the NRA) to solve the compliance and “free rider” problems that plagued private trade associations. As we have already seen, the New Deal system never departed from the sectoral assumptions rooted in the NRA and, by extension, the ad hoc pattern of business organization that the NRA reflected. Indeed, the NRA both demonstrated the futility of trade associations and, by premising labor policy on industry-specific bargaining and standards, condemned employers to that path of organization.⁴⁷ Before and after the 1930s, trade associations set industry against industry and resulted in a profusion of organizations that, rather than rationalizing competition, politicized regional or competitive divisions. Without the standing or inclination to enter into labor agreements, trade associations invariably split on the issue: many local industries (such as construction or printing) boasted competing “open shop” and “closed shop” associations, while stable, representative, negotiatory associations were exceedingly rare.⁴⁸

Such patterns of business organization (and disorganization) reflected labor’s political and economic weakness. Business interests could afford (or could get away with) their persistent defense of managerial rights precisely because they did not have to confront labor as a political force. In turn, political weakness and decentralization exaggerated the stakes of private bargaining: American unions, at least for the middle years of this century, were strong enough to organize much of the core mass production economy but weak enough to fail at taking wages out of competition. In this sense, management confronted not only the competitive uncertainty of uneven unionization but also the fact that in the absence of strong national federation, let alone a “labor party,” all of labor’s demands—for wages, for benefits, for security—were made in local bargaining. The circumstances that made labor less of a political threat in the United States, in short, also made it more of a managerial threat.⁴⁹ This is the overarching irony of the demise of metropolitan bargaining. Such arrangements unraveled, in large part, because business had the political clout to confine federal labor policy (especially in 1933, 1935, and 1947) to a narrow ambit of decentralized bargaining in basic industry and then (especially after 1970) to ensure that labor’s fortunes remained tied to a declining industrial base. Yet the absence of such arrangements has clearly worked to the disadvantage of all but the marginal employers who have historically thrived on low wages and competitive instability.

Politics

The demise of metropolitan unionism had political causes and political implications as well—indeed, the CIO’s scholarly critics routinely identify labor’s drift to the Democratic Party and away from local and independent labor politics as a close parallel to its drift from local to national bargaining. Certainly, labor’s “barren

marriage” (as Mike Davis puts it) with the Democratic Party is an important part of this story—especially in those instances in which local labor leaders detected a “faint aroma of futility” in third-party efforts and saw close alliance with the national Democrats as the only means of cementing the gains of the New Deal. There is no need here to revisit the logic and consequences of labor’s role in national politics and political culture after the 1930s.⁵⁰ It is important, however, to trace their reflections in local labor politics.

Despite early male suffrage and labor’s substantial urban presence, local working-class politics have always floundered in the United States. In part, this reflects a pattern of civic “reform” (installing city managers, weak mayors, and nonpartisan elections, for example) designed explicitly to discourage class-based coalitions.⁵¹ In part, this reflects the racial and ethnic foundations of early century machine politics, in which ethnic patronage invariably trumped programmatic alliances.⁵² And in part, this reflects the persistent efforts of national labor leaders to discourage romantic independence and swing local labor movements behind the Democrats.⁵³ Without elaborating on what the relationship between municipal politics and municipal labor movements might have looked like, it is important to note that deference to Democratic machines (or attempts to confront Republican machines) foreclosed any serious pursuit of independent labor politics. For these reasons, urban politics have always been marked by a sharp disjuncture between workplace radicalism and electoral politics. In this sense, the material bases of consent—encompassing both the immediate rewards of political patronage and the prohibitive costs of political challenges—have historically driven workers into the arms of urban machine politics and service-oriented party politics.

Metropolitan labor movements were also hurt by the events of the early 1930s. Before 1929, the economic and political role of central labor councils (CLCs) varied widely; some were serious political and economic actors in their communities, and some were little more than exclusive fraternities of the local building trades. The onset of the Depression hit most CLCs very hard, in large part because it devastated the building trades that accounted for much of their membership and clout. In turn, the emergence of New Deal labor policy and the CIO immediately embroiled CLCs (which were dominated by AFL locals) in political and jurisdictional turmoil. In some settings, such as Chicago, CLCs cooperated with the CIO drive early on, although the national AFL eventually forced them to expel CIO locals. In some settings, such as San Diego, CLCs stuck to the national AFL line and gave little support to the CIO. In some settings, such as Columbus, Ohio, the AFL ultimately expelled entire CLCs that remained openly sympathetic to the cause of industrial unionism. In some settings, such as Milwaukee, CLCs themselves split along craft-industrial lines.⁵⁴ While the jurisdictional confrontation played out in a variety of ways, on balance it devastated the political aspirations and economic role of most CLCs. In turn, as sectoral bargaining displaced spatial and occupational forms of bargaining, it also undercut the very logic of local

political or economic organizing. Despite the explosion in labor's ranks, in most settings, CLCs were less important at the end of the 1930s than they had been at the tail end of the "open shop" 1920s. After 1945, CLCs forswore any substantive role in local organizing, save occasionally bringing unorganized work sites to the attention of sectoral unions.⁵⁵

The political role of AFL-affiliated CLCs was also shaped by the labor movement's uneven civil rights record in an era in which the racial composition of American cities was changing rapidly. In most respects, the fact that the working class was divided by race and ethnicity and gender would not be particularly important to the fate of metropolitan unionism because such divisions made sectoral organizing more challenging as well. But a couple of considerations are important. The metropolitan unions that thrived in the century's first decades included very few African Americans among their members—indeed, both the building trades and many emerging service trades were historically and notoriously racist in their hiring practices.⁵⁶ While the CIO's civil rights record varied widely after 1935, many locals and unions accepted the necessity (and occasionally the principle) of building a racially inclusive labor movement.⁵⁷ In this sense, industrial unions were (however imperfectly) able and willing to accommodate African American workers in ways that occupational or metropolitan unions were not. Accordingly, attempts to revive or rebuild urban/occupational unions have had to directly address a history of exclusive hiring practices (as in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' "COMET" initiative) or proceed (as in the Service Employees International Union's "Justice for Janitors" campaign) as both an organizing drive and a civil rights movement.⁵⁸

In turn, even the CIO's scattered successes were increasingly constrained by the economic and political crisis of the postwar city. In other words, the health of metropolitan unions rested, in some respects, on the health of the metropolis—and, by any measure, the nation's core urban-industrial centers began hemorrhaging jobs, investment, and tax revenues almost immediately after World War II. This played out in increasingly bitter confrontations between white workers and black workers over urban space, urban jobs, and urban politics. In cities such as Detroit, the combination of urban decline and sectoral bargaining increasingly eroded the natural solidarities of work and community, and white autoworkers (for example) increasingly reinforced patterns of residential segregation, turned away from community institutions in favor of work-based benefits, resented the meager redistributive premises of the Great Society, and supported conservative candidates for municipal office.⁵⁹

Finally, metropolitan unions and metropolitan labor politics were disproportionately affected by the politics and political culture of the cold war. The anti-Communist affidavits imposed by Taft-Hartley marginalized many unions and their members and forced others to make difficult choices.⁶⁰ The impact of the post-1947 purge was magnified in local labor politics because community-based

efforts—including the Unemployed Councils of the early 1930s, stabs at cross-sectoral organizing or independent politics, and the early successes of the CIO—all depended heavily on radical organizers and “militant minorities.”⁶¹ Some of the most dynamic urban service unions—such as the Transport Workers Union in New York City and elsewhere—were torn apart by the “loyalty” question.⁶² And, as I have suggested above, Taft-Hartley’s anti-Communism was reflected in its bargaining provisions as well, which made it harder to forge or sustain working-class alliances beyond the confines of a given work site or industry.

3. AND THE CONSEQUENCES . . .

In the formative years of the New Deal order, a system of labor relations and labor policy emerged that both closed off alternatives to simple industrial unionism at the time and have made such alternatives more difficult to pursue ever since. The logic and trajectory of New Deal labor policy were quite simple: in the context of the Great Depression, changes in labor law were always part and parcel of larger strategies of economic recovery. Through 1929 to 1933, many blamed the Depression on the chronic competitive disorganization of basic industry. The New Deal’s first recovery strategy (the NRA), accordingly, was to empower private trade associations to “shake out” marginal and cutthroat competitors; the labor policy that accompanied this was little more than another means to the same end. When the NRA was thrown out by the Supreme Court in 1935, its labor provisions were recast as the NLRA, and the regulatory premises of those labor provisions were expanded to include a broader “demand-side” support for consumption. But the basic assumption that the labor movement would organize by industry and protect its gains by taking wages out of competition remained largely unquestioned. Or at least it remained unquestioned until the late 1960s, when the “politics of growth” was turned inside out (steady gains in a growing economy suddenly turned into concessionary bargaining in a stagnant economy), and the limited utility of the New Deal model in a service economy became glaringly apparent. Despite postwar economic and demographic change, in other words, New Deal assumptions remained encrusted on both the nation’s labor laws and the organization of the labor movement.

The consequences? By conservative estimates, about one-third of the private labor force is explicitly forbidden to organize by archaic, Taylorite definitions of *employee*. Legal limits on secondary picketing and prehire agreements are especially debilitating for service-sector workers who have always depended on the bargaining strength that followed from the close relationship among urban service trades. The narrowly contractual, work site bargaining units recognized by the National Labor Relations Board press both employers and employees into a mutually unsatisfactory pattern of short-sighted, low-density, decentralized bargaining. Generally, but especially for service sectors, this pattern imposes immense costs on both unions (who must devote considerable resources to basic

organizing) and unionized employers (who are likely to continue to face non-union competition).

The consequences are even more severe if one focuses on particular workers. Service workers, most broadly, were never fully accommodated by either the CIO or the Wagner Act and continue to face—for all of the reasons noted above—an inhospitable set of bargaining institutions and assumptions. Women workers, who were always underrepresented by the CIO and (in some respects) left behind by its national consolidation in the late 1930s, also make up the majority of service employees and began claiming a clear majority of new union members just as the movement began to decline. Workers of color and new immigrants, who are disproportionately represented among the poorest paid service trades, are arguably further removed from the benefits of union membership than similarly situated workers of the 1930s and 1940s. And, of course, the consequences spill beyond the circumstances of particular unions or workers. However one views the viability of the Depression-era experiments in “community unionism,” the political economy of the New Deal–CIO order clearly came at the expense of urban working-class politics and contributed to the collapse of labor liberalism and racial liberalism in the postwar city. As is more broadly true of electoral and party politics, collective action is stymied at the point where it is perhaps most immediate and most important—in urban politics and in urban economies.

At first blush, this seems an overwhelmingly dismal story—the fate of (and prospects for) metropolitan unionism crushed under the weight of economic and demographic change, the terms of labor law and public policy, and the union and managerial strategies forged under these constraints. Yet, as I have suggested above, the causal elements of this story are less a series of insurmountable hurdles than they are a single tangle of policies and strategies and assumptions. Relatively modest changes in labor law (including more flexible definitions of employment and representation) or union priorities (including a stronger commitment to “general” benefits such as national health insurance or local living wage laws) could—in much the same way that the New Deal made industrial unionism possible despite the entrenched status of craft unionism and the open shop—make postindustrial, metropolitan unionism possible despite the entrenched status of industrial unions and “unorganizable” service industries.

This is not to say, by the same token, that such changes can be easily accomplished. While many employers could accommodate a renewed labor movement and some might even benefit from its micro- and macroeconomic presence, there is little incentive—in the absence of a political push akin to the New Deal—for business to abandon its short-sighted recalcitrance. It is unclear, given the current political climate (and especially the current relationship between the Democratic Party and its historic base), where that political push might come from. And it is unlikely, at least on a national stage, that the labor movement could negotiate sweeping reform around employer resistance, political indifference, and its own

diminished status.⁶³ As in the New Deal era, legislative or labor leaders are more likely to respond to social change than to precipitate it. In this respect, local activists—most prominently in a raft of “living wage” campaigns and follow-up organizing drives (such as the SEIU’s recent victory in the Los Angeles home health care industry)—have made headway despite an inhospitable political, economic, and legal climate. We can only hope that such initiatives both encourage the labor movement in innovative and unconventional strategies of local organizing and lead to changes in labor law and policy that nurture a labor-led urban renewal.

NOTES

1. See Dorothy Sue Cobble, “Making Post-Industrial Unionism Possible,” in Sheldon Friedman, Richard Hurd, Rudolph Oswald, and Ronald Seeber, eds., *Restoring the Promise of American Labor Law* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 286-87; Joel Rogers, “Divide and Conquer: Further ‘Reflections on the Distinctive Character of American Labor Laws,’” *Wisconsin Law Review* 1990, no. 1 (1990): 1-147; and, on the larger collapse of the New Deal order, David Gordon, “Chickens Home to Roost: From Prosperity to Stagnation in the Postwar U.S. Economy,” in Michael Bernstein and David Adler, eds., *Understanding American Economic Decline* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 34-76.

2. See Daniel Luria and Joel Rogers, “A New Urban Agenda,” *Boston Review* 22, no. 1 (February/March 1997); Midwest Consortium for Economic Development Alternatives, *Metro Futures: A High-Wage, Low-Waste, Democratic Development Strategy for America’s Cities and Inner Suburbs* (New York: Sustainable America, 1996).

3. Dorothy Sue Cobble, *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 137-48; Cobble, “The Prospects for Unionism in a Service Society,” in Cameron Macdonald and Carmen Sirianni, eds., *Working in the Service Society* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1996); Howard Wial, “The Emerging Organizational Structure of Unionism in Low-Wage Services,” *Rutgers Law Review* 45 (1993): 680-92; Judy Fudge, “The Gendered Dimension of Labour Law: Why Women Need Inclusive Unionism and Broader-Based Bargaining,” in Linda Briskin and Patricia McDermott, eds., *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy, and Militancy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 231-46.

4. The historiography on metropolitan unionism is pretty thin, and what there is rarely addresses the issue directly. Historians have devoted some attention to local labor movements and the relationship between labor and machine politics, although much of this focuses on the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries. See Martin Shefter, “Trade Unions and Political Machines: The Organization and Disorganization of the American Working Class in the Late Nineteenth Century,” in Aristide Zolberg and Ira Katznelson, eds., *Working Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 197-276; Christopher Ansell and Arthur Burris, “Bosses of the City Unite! Labor Politics and Political Machine Consolidation, 1870-1910,” *Studies in American Political Development* 11, no. 1 (1997): 1-43; James Barrett, “Unity and Fragmentation: Class, Race and Ethnicity on Chicago’s South Side, 1900-1922,” *Journal of Social History* 18, no. 1 (1984): 37-55; Cecelia Bucki, “Workers and Politics in the Immigrant City in the Early Twentieth Century United States,” *International Labor and Working Class History* 48 (1995): 28-48; Julie Greene, *Pure and Simple Politics: The American Federation of Labor and Political*

Activism, 1881 to 1917 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (New York: Pantheon, 1981); Michael Kazin, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organized Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940," *Pacific Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (1986): 371-402; George Leidenberger, "'The Public Is the Labor Union': Working-Class Progressivism in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago," *Labor History* 36, no. 2 (1995): 187-210; Gwendolyn Mink, *Old Labor and New Immigrants in American Political Development: Union, Party, and State, 1875-1920* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Richard Oestreicher, "Urban Working-Class Political Behavior and Theories of American Electoral Politics, 1870-1940," *Journal of American History* 74, no. 4 (1988): 1257-86. The historical literature on the CIO is vast but generally follows the industrial logic of the CIO itself. Accounts that devote some attention to local bargaining and local politics include Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); Roger Horowitz, "*Negro and White, Unite and Fight*": *A Social History of Industrial Unionism in Meatpacking* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Steve Fraser, *Labor Will Rule: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Gary Gerstle, *Working Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). There is also a scattering of older work—much of it by institutional economists—that focuses quite usefully on labor relations in specific settings. See, for example, Barbara Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement: Metropolitan Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961); C. Lawrence Christenson, "Chicago Service Trades," in Harry Millis, ed., *How Collective Bargaining Works* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1942); Thomas Gavett, *Development of the Labor Movement in Milwaukee* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965); Juan Suarez, "Study of a City Central Body: Collective Bargaining Activities of the Minneapolis Central Labor Union, 1946-1957" (M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1966).

5. William Haber, *Industrial Relations in the Building Industry* (New York: Arno, 1971 [1930]), 3-11, 50, 127-96; Clarence Bonnett, *Employers' Associations in the United States: A Study of Typical Associations* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 170-73; Royal Montgomery, *Industrial Relations in the Chicago Building Trades* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 4-5, 8; Lloyd Ulman, *The Rise of the National Trade Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 345-48; Leo Wolman, *The Growth of American Trade Unions, 1880-1923* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1924), 110-19.

6. Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement*, 209-17; Christenson, "Chicago Service Trades," 806-7; and John Jentz, "Labor, the Law, and Economics: The Organization of the Chicago Flat Janitors' Union, 1902-1917," *Labor History* 38, no. 4 (1997): 413-31; Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, 61-112, 214.

7. See Jesse Carpenter, *Competition and Collective Bargaining in the Needle Trades, 1910-1967* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972); Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement*, 28-30, 210-14; and other examples in Colin Gordon, *New Deals: Business, Labor and Politics in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), chap. 3.

8. Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Organizing the Post-Industrial Workforce: Lessons from the History of Waitress Unionism," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 44, no. 3 (1991): 419-28.

9. Cobble, "Organizing the Post-Industrial Workforce," 429-30; Haber, *Industrial Relations in the Building Industry*, 3-11, 50; Bonnett, *Employers' Associations*, 170-73;

Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement*, 54-78; Christenson, "Chicago Service Trades," 848-49; Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, 86; Gordon, *New Deals*, chap. 4.

10. In 1952, the San Francisco Labor Council (141 AFL locals representing nearly half of the city's population) proposed a chain of neighborhood health centers, linked to the central union hospital, to be funded by bargained benefits; see Albert Deutsch, "A New Union Health Plan," *The Nation* 175 (20 September 1952): 232-33. A similar plan in Philadelphia was backed by 28 locals; see "Philadelphia Shows the Way," *American Federationist* 64, no. 4 (1957): 30. See also Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, "Labor and Social Welfare: The CIO's Community Services Program, 1941-1956," *Social Service Review* 70, no. 4 (1996): 613-34.

11. Jentz, "The Chicago Flat Janitors' Union"; Cobble, *Dishing It Out*; Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 269-70.

12. See Eric Leif Davin and Staughton Lynd, "Picket Line and Ballot Box: The Forgotten Legacy of the Local Labor Party Movement, 1932-1936," *Radical History Review* 22 (1979-1980): 43-63.

13. William Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1973), 97-154; Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement*, 219-21.

14. See Carpenter, *Competition and Collective Bargaining*; Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*; Gladys Palmer, "Job-Conscious Unionism in the Chicago Men's Clothing Industry," *American Economic Review* 20 (1930): 28-38; Kurt Braun, *Union-Management Cooperation: Experience in the Clothing Industry* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1947), 5-76; Stanley Vittoz, *New Deal Labor Policy and the American Industrial Economy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 34-46.

15. On "regulatory unions," see Gordon, *New Deals*, chap. 4. See also Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, 70, 92-93, 193-94; Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 269.

16. See Thomas Bailey and Annette Bernhardt, "In Search of the High Road in a Low-Wage Industry," *Politics and Society* 25, no. 2 (1997): 179-201; Cobble, "The Prospects for Unionism in a Service Society."

17. Howard Wial, "New Bargaining Structures for New Forms of Business Organization," in *Restoring the Promise of American Labor Law*, 304-5.

18. Christopher Tomlins, *The State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 103-47, 317-28; William Forbath, *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 165-66; Tomlins, "How Who Rides Whom: Recent 'New' Histories of American Labour Law and What They May Signify," *Social History* 20, no. 1 (1995): 19.

19. Vittoz, *New Deal Labor Policy and the American Industrial Economy*, 73-135; Gordon, *New Deals*, 194-239; Bruce Kaufman, "Why the Wagner Act? Reestablishing Contact with Its Original Purpose," *Advances in Industrial and Labor Relations* 7 (1996): 15-68; and Peter Swenson, "Arranged Alliance: Business Interests in the New Deal," *Politics & Society* 25, no. 1 (1997): 66-116.

20. See the essays collected in Lynd, *We Are All Leaders*; Elizabeth Fae, *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

21. On NRA labor policy, see Gordon, *New Deals*, 206-14; Vittoz, *New Deal Labor Policy and the American Industrial Economy*, 73-134; Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State and Labor in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 111-28; James Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy and the Southern Cotton Textile Industry, 1933-1941* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 43-140.

22. Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 259-348.
23. Schatz, *The Electrical Workers*, 73-76.
24. Jurgen Kocka, *White Collar Workers in America, 1890-1940* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), 167-75, 210-11; Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement*, 44-53.
25. See Gordon, *New Deals*, 194-214.
26. "The National Labor Relations Act," *United States, Statutes at Large*, vol. 49 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), 449-50; Kaufman, "Why the Wagner Act?"; David Brody, "The Breakdown of Labor's Social Contract," *Dissent* 39, no. 1 (1992): 36-37.
27. Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 209, 282-323.
28. Kocka, *White Collar Workers*, 227ff; Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, 192-93; Harold Levinson, *Unionism, Wage Trends, and Income Distribution, 1941-1947* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1951), 47-79, 82-92, 112-13.
29. Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); James Atleson, *Labor and the Wartime State: Labor Relations and Law during World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Lichtenstein, "Industrial Democracy, Contract Unionism, and the National War Labor Board," *Labor Law Journal* 33 (1982): 524-31.
30. Cobble, *Dishing It Out*; Everett Kassalow, "White Collar Unionism in the United States," in Adolph Fox Sturmthal, ed., *White Collar Trade Unions: Comparative Developments in Industrialized Societies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), 331-33; Cobble, "Making Post-Industrial Unionism Possible," 293-94; James Gray Pope, "Labor-Community Coalitions and Boycotts: The Old Labor Law, the New Unionism, and the Living Constitution," *Texas Law Review* 69, no. 4 (1991): 889-943.
31. See, for example, Schatz, *The Electrical Workers*; Horowitz, "Negro and White, Unite and Fight"; Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*; Gerstle, *Working Class Americanism*.
32. Quote from Staughton Lynd, "Introduction," in *We Are All Leaders*, 7; see also Staughton Lynd, *Solidarity Unionism: Rebuilding the Labor Movement from Below* (Chicago: Charles Kerr, 1992), 27-31.
33. See David Brody, "Workplace Contractualism in Comparative Perspective," in Nelson Lichtenstein and Howell Harris, eds., *Industrial Democracy in America: The Ambiguous Promise* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 176-203; Brody, "Section 8(a)(2) and the Origins of the Wagner Act," in *Restoring the Promise of American Labor Law*, 29-44; Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 251-90; Robert Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Dubofsky, *The State and Labor in Modern America*, 107-35.
34. See Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle*; James Lorence, *Organizing the Unemployed: Community and Union Activists in the Industrial Heartland* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 237-94; Peter Rachleff, "Organizing 'Wall to Wall': The Independent Union of All Workers, 1933-37," in *We Are All Leaders*, 51-71.
35. See Gerstle, *Working Class Americanism*; Schatz, *The Electrical Workers*, 53-101; Horowitz, "Negro and White, Unite and Fight," 47-52; Philip Korth, *I Remember Like Today: The Auto-Lite Strike of 1934* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1988).
36. Roger Horowitz, "What Did Workers Want in the 1930s, Anyway?" *Labor History* 38, nos. 2/3 (1997): 169-72; John Borsos, "'We Make You This Appeal in the Name of Every Union Man and Woman in Barberton': Solidarity Unionism in Barberton, Ohio, 1933-41," in *We Are All Leaders*, 238-93.

37. Sharon Hartman Strom, "'We're No Kitty Foyles': Organizing Office Workers for the Congress of Industrial Organizations," in Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work, and Protest: A Century of Women's Labor History* (Boston: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1985), 212-15.

38. Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle*, 127-28.

39. Alan Derickson, "Health Security for All? Social Unionism and Universal Health Insurance, 1935-1958," *Journal of American History* 80, no. 4 (March 1994): 1333-56; Colin Gordon, "Why No National Health Insurance in the United States? The Limits of Social Provision in War and Peace, 1941-1948," *Journal of Policy History* 9, no. 3 (1997): 296-304; Cobble, "Organizing the Post-Industrial Workforce," 430.

40. Elizabeth Faue, "Paths of Unionization: Community, Bureaucracy, and Gender in the Minneapolis Labor Movement of the 1930s," in Ava Baron, ed., *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 296-319; Dana Frank, *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-1929* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Marie LaBerge, "'Closest to the Hearts and Interests of Women': Wisconsin Women's Housing Activism in the Post-World War II Period" (unpublished manuscript, 1998).

41. See Fones-Wolf, "Labor and Social Welfare"; Nathan Godfried, "The Origins of Labor Radio: WCFL, The 'Voice of Labor,' 1925-1928," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 7, no. 2 (1987): 143-59; Robert McChesney, "Labor and the Marketplace of Ideas: WCFL and the Battle for Labor Radio Broadcasting, 1927-1934," *Journalism Monographs* 134 (1992): 1-40.

42. Rogers, "Divide and Conquer," 29-43.

43. Cobble, "The Prospects for Unionism in a Service Society." On nursing, see Service Employees International Union, "Nurse Alliance Brochure" (1998).

44. See Colin Gordon, "Why No Corporatism in the United States? Business Disorganization and Its Consequences," *Business and Economic History* 27, no. 1 (1998): 29-46; Michael Wallerstein, Miriam Golden, and Peter Lange, "Unions, Employer Associations, and Wage-Setting Institutions in Northern and Central Europe, 1950-1992," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 50, no. 3 (1997): 379-401; Bonnett, *Employers' Associations in the United States*, 15-23; J. Windmuller and A. Gladstone, *Employer Associations and Industrial Relations: A Comparative Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Jesse Carpenter, *Employers' Associations and Collective Bargaining in New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950), 30-32.

45. Carpenter, *Employers' Associations and Collective Bargaining*, 42-44; Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement*, 135.

46. Gordon, *New Deals*, 87-121; Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement*, 28-30, 210-14; Harris and Williamson, *Trends in Collective Bargaining*, 26-27; Cobble, *Dishing It Out*, 94-96; John Bowman, *Capitalist Collective Action: Competition, Cooperation and Conflict in the Coal Industry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

47. Gordon, *New Deals*, 166-203.

48. The New York women's apparel industry, as one observer noted in 1950, had two competing shoulder pad associations and an "Adjustable Shoulder Strap Association" (Carpenter, *Employers' Associations and Collective Bargaining*, 38); in the 1940s, the Chicago motion picture industry had two competing trade associations (Christenson, "Chicago Service Trades," 813, 831-32). See also Robert Myers and Joseph Bloch, "Men's Clothing Industry," in *How Collective Bargaining Works*, 381-449; Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement*, 26-29.

49. Sanford Jacoby, "American Exceptionalism Revisited: The Importance of Management," in Sanford Jacoby, ed., *Masters to Managers: Historical and Comparative*

Perspectives on American Employers (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 174-86, 191-95; Joel Rogers, "Reforming U.S. Labor Relations," in Matthew Finkin, ed., *The Legal Future of Employee Representation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 95-105; Lloyd Ulman, "Who Wanted Collective Bargaining in the First Place?" *Contemporary Policy Issues* 5 (1987): 1-11; Howell Harris, *The Right to Manage: Industrial Relations Policies of American Business in the 1940s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 15-37.

50. On the Democrats and labor, see Frances Fox Piven, "Structural Constraints and Political Development: The Case of the American Democratic Party," in Frances Fox Piven, ed., *Labor Parties in Postindustrial Societies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 251-54; Joel Rogers and Thomas Ferguson, *Right Turn: The Decline of the Democrats and the Future of American Politics* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 40-61; Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream* (New York: Verso, 1986), 52-101; William Form, *Segmented Labor, Fractured Politics: Labor Politics in American Life* (New York: Plenum, 1995). Fraser uses the "aroma of futility" to characterize Sidney Hillmans's view of labor party efforts in New York (*Labor Will Rule*, 355-72, quote at 355).

51. Richard Schneirov, "Rethinking the Relation of Labor to the Politics of Urban Social Reform in Late-Nineteenth-Century America: The Case of Chicago," *International Labor and Working Class History* 46 (1994): 93-108; Samuel Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Governments in the Progressive Era," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 55 (1965): 157-69.

52. See Ansell and Burris, "Bosses of the City Unite!" 1-43; Bucki, "Workers and Politics in the Immigrant City," 28-48; Katznelson, *City Trenches*.

53. Eric Leif Davin, "The Very Last Hurrah? The Defeat of the Labor Party Idea, 1934-36," in *We Are All Leaders*, 117-71; Davin and Lynd, "Picket Line and Ballot Box," 43-63; Fraser, *Labor Will Rule*, 352-72.

54. Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement*, 183-84, 200; Frederick Ryan, *The Labor Movement in San Diego* (San Diego, CA: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, San Diego State College, 1959), 53-83, 128-29; Form, *Segmented Labor, Fractured Politics*, 114; Gavett, *Development of the Labor Movement in Milwaukee*, 164-66; Daryl Holter, "Sources of CIO Success: The New Deal Years in Milwaukee," *Labor History* 29, no. 2 (1988): 199-224; Louis Perry and Richard Perry, *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 270-77, 430-31.

55. Fernando Gapasin and Howard Wial, "The Role of Central Labor Councils in Union Organizing in the 1990s," in Kate Bronfenbrenner, Sheldon Friedman, Richard Hurd, Ronald Seeber, and Rudolph Oswald, eds., *Organizing to Win: New Research on Union Strategies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 54-55.

56. Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), chap. 4; Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 209.

57. On race and the CIO, see Bruce Nelson, "Class, Race and Democracy in the CIO," *International Review of Social History* 41, no. 3 (1996) and the responses by Faue and Sugrue; Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904-54* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Horowitz, "Negro and White, Unite and Fight"; Michael Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

58. Roger Waldinger, Chris Erickson, Ruth Milkman, Daniel Mitchell, Abel Valenzuela, Kent Wong, and Maurice Zeitlin, "Helots No More: A Case Study of the Justice for Janitors Campaign in Los Angeles," in *Organizing to Win*, 102-19; Janice Fine and Richard Locke,

"Unions Get Smart: New Tactics for a New Labor Movement," *Dollars and Sense* 207 (September/October 1996): 16-18; Steve Early and Larry Cohen, "Jobs with Justice: Mobilizing Labor-Community Coalitions," *Workingusa* 1, no. 4 (1997): 49-57; Steve Early and Larry Cohen, "Jobs with Justice: Building a Broad-Based Movement for Workers' Rights," *Social Policy* 25, no. 2 (1994): 6-18.

59. See Kenneth Durr, "When Southern Politics Came North: The Roots of White Working-Class Conservatism in Baltimore, 1940-64," *Labor History* 37, no. 3 (1996): 309-31; John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Thomas Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (1995): 551-86; Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 82-84 and passim.

60. See Steve Rosswurm, ed., *The CIO's Left-Led Unions* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992); Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 53-55; David Oshinsky, "Labor's Cold War: The CIO and the Communists," in Robert Griffith and Athan Theoharis, eds., *The Specter: Original Essays on the Cold War and The Origins of McCarthyism* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1974), 116-51.

61. Roy Rosenzweig, "Organizing the Unemployed: The Early Years of the Great Depression, 1929-1933," *Radical America* 10, no. 4 (July-August 1976): 37-56; Peter Rachleff, "Organizing 'Wall to Wall,'" 53-61; Horowitz, "Negro and White, Unite and Fight," 68-73, 85-86.

62. On the TWU, see Joshua Freeman, *In Transit: The Transport Workers Union in New York City, 1933-1966* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 286-317; Alex Lichtenstein, "Putting Labor's House in Order: The Transport Workers Union and Labor Anti-Communism in Miami during the 1940s," *Labor History* 39, no. 1 (1998): 7-23.

63. This assessment follows Rogers, "Reforming U.S. Labor Relations," 23-28.