LABOR UNIONS AND THE SOUTH**

1. General Analyses and Background Material


Using data from ninety-three Bureau of Labor Statistics Area Surveys conducted in March 1973-February 1974, findings confirm a Southern pay differential among unskilled plant occupational groups. Earnings for plant workers appear to be higher in areas with larger populations, bigger plants, and greater levels of unionization.


Gilman presents a social-psychological examination of the interactions between workers and managers, factories and communities in the Piedmont Region of the Southeast. He traces the development of industrial relations in the textile industries and shows how this development served as a means of meeting basic human needs and preserving folkways, while furthering the industrialization process.


The authors point out that union security in America is being threatened by runaway Northern shops, Right-to-Work laws, and the emergence of new management strategies to contain unionism. In response to these threats, the AFL-CIO outlines tactics for new coordinated organizing with an emphasis on the Sunbelt. The authors assert that promising candidates for unionization include health, white collar and government personnel, and particularly the 850,000 textile workers, only 18% of whom are unionized.


In this thorough history of organized labor in the South, the author examines the political, social and economic factors which have furthered or inhibited the growth of unions in the region and in its various industries. Careful attention is given to the impact of industrialization, war, state legislation and race relations on labor economics and major or-

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* Prepared by Kevin Barry, Librarian, Industrial Relations Library.

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Addresses are given in connection with each reference.
ganizing strategies. Prospects for collective bargaining gains by Southern labor are considered.


By applying regression analysis to cross-section data, the authors gauge the influence of structural variables—labor force composition, occupational/industrial composition, degree of urbanization, public policy and regional factors—on current and potential union membership in the states. Some factors retarding union expansion in the South are identified.


The author investigates the overall effect of industrialization on southern economic activity, its impact on human relations, urban development, and traditional sources of employment. He also considers the proliferation of low wage, low growth industries which take full advantage of the low cost surplus of unskilled labor.


Spann argues that the strong spirit of individualism exhibited in the Southern laborer is a critical deterrent to unionization. He credits the civil rights movement, urbanization and the influence of national unionized company branches with inspiring successful organizing efforts, and projects a long period of disruption as the business sector responds and adjusts to increased organizing activities.


This report presents statistical tables that include historical work stoppage data, comparative union membership data and non-agricultural employment data for states and areas in the Southeast.


Relative to activity in the “Northern Industrial Tier” the Sunbelt is demonstrating healthier population and business growth, higher rates of employment and income increments, and lower production and labor costs. However, the South offers comparatively lower per capita incomes,
more unequal income distribution, laggard social welfare programs, and a higher proportion of poverty. The authors provide many charts, tables and maps.

2. ORGANIZING THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY


The author concentrates on the background of a pivotal case of successful organizing among textile workers at the Darlington mills, South Carolina, which involved the closing of the plant and a twelve year legal battle taking the case through the NLRB and the courts. The resulting decisions support the basic right of textile laborers to unionize and the NLRB's right to rule whether a plant shutdown constitutes an unfair labor practice motivated to "chill" unionism.


This article looks back over the bad publicity, strike and a damaging national boycott suffered by Farah Manufacturing Co. However the company is recovering and may profit from the “visibility” which comes with notoriety. Sales are improving and the style of management is more effective. In retrospect, the benefits reaped by the union appear to be marginal.


The author argues that "preventive labor relations," conservative "Divide and Conquer" politics, and the poor self-image held by the average textile worker have contributed to a hostile environment for the expansion of trade unionism. Improved education, better quality of leadership, in-migration, and greater participation by black workers in industry, may alter the pattern.


Mr. Stetin's statement seeks to substantiate the "extreme ineffectiveness of the [National Labor Relations] Act and the NLRB in protecting the rights of workers" with special reference to the experience of the Textile Workers Union with J. P. Stevens. The statement includes a report by Emil Malizia, et al., entitled "Earnings Gap in North Carolina: a study of the earnings of North Carolinians." Among the factors identified by Malizia as causing the lower earnings of workers in North Carolina were North Carolina’s Right-to-Work law and the fact that "fewer North Carolina workers belong to labor unions." Stetin includes a survey of the NLRB and court cases to which J. P. Stevens was a
party, and a prepared statement, "J. P. Stevens: a labor history" is appended.


On request from the Committee.

On August 9, 1977, the Subcommittee met in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina for hearings on labor law reform. A variety of state and local officials, special interest group representatives, union members, academicians, and citizens testified before the House in support of or in opposition to amendment of the National Labor Relations Act. A significant portion of testimony centered around the labor practices of J. P. Stevens Corporation. Witnesses from both sides of the Stevens campaign presented their cases. These included a body of Stevens workers associated with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers AFL-CIO and members of J. P. Stevens Employees Educational Committee—a group who oppose the unionization drive. Prepared statements submitted to the Committee and included in the printed hearings include a letter from the J. P. Stevens administration which defends the principles and policies which have dictated the labor relations practices of the Stevens organization.

3. Impact of Right-to-Work Laws


The author explains the basic premises and problems of Right-to-Work laws. Supporters of these laws are described and their activities examined. Major arguments against these laws—union security majority rule, "free rider," and power of discipline—are analyzed and challenged. Kovach concludes with a justification for adoption of a National Right to Work law. Currently, Rights-to-Work statutes or constitutional provisions are operative in 20 states; 12 of these are located in the Sunbelt.


Lumsden and Peterson explain that a much smaller percentage of the work force is organized in Right-to-Work states, but that the laws themselves are not the major deterrent to unionization. They suggest that community opinion and traditional anti-union attitudes seem to present the greatest obstacles.


After explaining the origins and forms of union security which have developed over time in American industry, this article discusses the critical role that union security agreements play in protecting and ensuring union survival. Taft-Hartley legislation, the "American plan" and the ongoing Right-to-Work movement are outlined. The author maintains that present federal labor laws already offer the protection for union dissenters which many Right-to-Work lobbyists are demanding.