

# Labor struggle

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workers in some federal installations represented about the only substantially unionized part of public sector employment. With increasing economic pressures, more public employees turned to unions — a trend spurred on by such developments as an Executive Order by President Kennedy in 1962 underscoring the right of federal employees to join unions and negotiate on many issues, and by various statutes in the states and cities providing for various forms of collective bargaining with their personnel.

Throughout the years after World War II, women entered the workforce in ever increasing numbers, and especially significant was their entry into "non-traditional" occupations. A long sought objective — equal pay for equal work — was passed by Congress in 1963, prohibiting economic discrimination on the basis of sex.

Five years later, the Age Discrimination Act was passed to assist persons in the older brackets of the workforce.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, strongly supported by the AFL-CIO, was a significant forward step toward equal rights for blacks and other minorities, at the workplace and in the community. President Johnson, in signing the act into law, acknowledged that it could not have happened without the affirmative support of the AFL-CIO.

The Civil Rights Act could trace its legislative history back to the days of World War II, when A. Philip Randolph, president of the AFL Sleeping Car Porters, persuaded President Roosevelt to issue an Executive Order establishing a Fair Employment Practices Commission. Randolph, a brilliant union officer and civil rights champion, managed to convince FDR that governmental action to stop discrimination in hiring and promotion was essential to the wartime production effort.

The words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. illustrate the common bonds among labor, blacks, Hispanics and other minority groups: "Our needs are identical with labor's needs — decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children and respect in the community."

Throughout these years, the AFL-CIO was forced to resist various efforts to limit the rights of unions. The so-called "right-to-work" bills, which in fact were aimed at outlawing contract language providing union security, arose in many states. In Congress there were continued efforts to expand the Hobbs Act to make every picket-line scuffle or act of violence a federal case, even though they are currently covered by state and local laws.

The increasing interest in safety on the job, heightened by the introduction of new and potentially dangerous materials used in a wide variety of industries, gave rise to labor's intensive support for a federal Occupational Safety and Health Act, which became law in 1970. Specifically, the act authorized the Secretary of Labor to establish health and safety standards, to enforce them, and to listen to employees' legitimate complaints about conditions at the workplace.

Full employment was and continued to be a first-rank concern of the AFL-CIO, with its vivid recollection of past unemployment. The unions have kept insisting that whoever is able and willing to work should not be denied this opportunity. The full employment concept was endorsed by labor in its successful drive for passage of the Employment Act of 1946, which had the support of President Truman. The Humphrey-Hawkins Act of 1978 re-expressed the need to direct full attention to the problem of unemployment in the United States.

This article is excerpted from the AFL-CIO publication, "A Short History of American Labor," prepared for the 1981 Centennial of American labor.



Machinist H.L. Walls

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

## Machinists

Machinists are skilled metal workers who can turn a block of metal into an intricate part like a gear or piston that meets price specifications. They set up and operate most types of machine tools to make metal parts for cars, machines and equipment. They know the properties of metals such as steel, cast iron, aluminum, brass and other metals used in industry.

Almost every factory that uses machinery employs machinists to maintain their equipment. In some shops machinists make large quantities of identical parts; in others they make one-of-a-kind.

A formal 4-year apprenticeship is the best way to learn the trade, but some companies train for single-purpose machines.

Persons interested in becoming machinists should be mechanically inclined and should be able to do highly accurate work that requires concentration and physical effort.

A high school vocational school education including mathematics, physics, or machine shop training is desirable. Typical apprentice programs include shop training in chipping, filing, hand tapping, dowel fitting, riveting, and operation of machine tools. In the classroom they study blueprint reading, mechanical drawing, mathematics and shop practices.

### Tool-and-Die Makers

Tool-and-die makers are highly skilled, creative workers whose products — tools, dies, and special guiding and holding devices — are used by other

machine workers to mass-produce parts.

Tool-and-die makers make jigs and fixtures (devices that hold metal while it is shaved, stamped or drilled), make gauges and other measuring devices used in manufacturing precision metal parts, construct forms (dies) to shape metal in stamping and forging operations. They also make metal molds for molding plastics.

They have a broader knowledge of machining operations, mathematics and blueprint reading than other machinists. They must be familiar with the properties of metals and alloys.

Most tool-and-die makers learn their trade through apprenticeships. Most employers prefer applicants with a knowledge of math and physics and considerable mechanical ability, finger dexterity and aptitude for precision work.

### Set-up Workers (Machine Tools)

These machinists specialize in preparing tools used in large volumes. Most set-up workers work on only one type of machine, such as a drill press. The set-up workers consult blueprints, written specifications or job layouts. From these they can determine how fast the material to be machined should be fed into the machine, operating speeds and the order in which the machine will perform its operations.

## Job hunting?

Some of the books which may be helpful to you in your search are listed here and are available for use at the Multnomah County Library, 801 S.W. Tenth Avenue (between Taylor & Yamhill).

Although some of these books are for reference use in the library only, others may be checked out on a library card which is issued free of charge to residents or property tax payers of Multnomah County. Others may obtain a card for a small fee. You may apply for your card at the registration desk, first floor.

In addition to the specific books mentioned in this list, you may find it worthwhile to consult the white and yellow pages of city and telephone directories for other cities, located in the Documents Room, second floor.

**Exploring Careers** (Documents Room). Describes general occupational groups in narrative form.

**Making Vocational Choices** (371.425 H735m). A theory of careers.

**What To Do With The Rest Of Your Life** (331.702 c357w). The Catalyst career guide for women in the '80s.

**Directory of Career Resources for Minorities** (R 331.6 D598).

**Directory of Career Training and Development Programs** (R331.702 D598). Describes programs offered by businesses, professional organizations and government.

**Getting Skilled** (R374.8 H537 1980). A guide to private trade and technical schools.

**Occupational Education** (R378 C68 1981 v. 3). Describes public and private trade, business & career schools by state; indexed by field of training.

**Examination Guides** (Ask the librarian). Books to help you prepare for civil services, armed forces, real estate, engineering and other examinations.

**Job Power** (650.14 H158j 1980). The young people's job-finding guide.

**International Jobs** (371.425 K76i). Where they are, how to get them; a handbook for over 500 career opportunities around the world.

**Marketing Yourself** (650.14 C357m). The Catalyst women's guide to successful resumes and interviews.

**The Professional Resume & Job Search Guide** (650.14 D551p). 5th edition.

**Sweaty Palms** (650.14 M491s). The neglected art of being interviewed.

**Working Outside** (331.702 H262w). A career and self-employment handbook.

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- Qualifications—Minimum of high school graduation or equivalent with written test results. Special qualifications (depending on position) • Typing 40 wpm • Shorthand/Briefhand, 80 wpm • Ability in drafting and/or mathematical computations.
- Send SF 171 to Ms. V. Finley at address below:



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