

Creating an industrial society in the north



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Creating an Industrial Society in the North 18 Learning Outcomes After

reading this chapter, you should be able to do the following: LO 1 Describe the evolution of urbanization in the United States in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and the disparities of wealth that emerged within those cities. LO 2 Discuss immigration to the United States that took place in the last decades of the 1800s, including where most immigrants came from, why they came, and what their experiences were after they arrived. LO 3 Discuss the ways in which politics in American cities functioned during the late 1800s. LO 4 Describe the early labor unions that were formed in the United States, including their goals, their activities, and their situations at the end of the nineteenth century. 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization

Three developments- urbanization, immigration, and increasing disparities in wealth- were key components of the Industrial Revolution in the North. What do you think? " " . iStockphoto. com/Tunyaluck Phuttal Most of the massive industries of the Industrial Age emerged in the North. There, because there was work, cities ballooned into metropolises. If the government intervened to assist the weak and the They attracted worldwide incapable, it would pollute the business environment and attention, and, for a variety prevent economic growth. of factors, the wealth of jobs Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree in the industrializing North 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 helped spur and sustain large-scale immigration from Europe, in a wave that dwarfed the immigration of the 1840s and 1850s. As the cities of the North expanded, economic disparities between the wealthy and the poor became more pronounced; the corporations of the Industrial Age generated enormous fortunes for a handful of people, leaving most industrial laborers in

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poverty. These three developments—urbanization, immigration, and increasing disparities in wealth—were key components of the Industrial Revolution in the North. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the politics of the era were poorly equipped to handle all these challenges involved. In a society uncertain about the moral role of politics (especially after the bloody Civil War) and eager not to miss out on the economic possibilities of the new age, politics during the last third of the nineteenth century were characterized by high voter participation, extreme partisanship, and massive corruption. By the early 1900s, three waves of reformers had emerged to demand that the government intervene to curtail the most oppressive practices of big business: (1) the labor movement, (2) the Populists, and (3) the Progressives. The first of these reformers—the labor movement—was the most radical. It emerged concurrently with the Industrial Age and focused on the working classes. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, urban workers sought to establish a politics of class by means of an increasingly vocal labor movement. During its first years, this labor movement was raucous and provocative, questioning America's commitment to capitalism and democracy. Socialists flourished in this environment, as did communists and anarchists. Each challenge to American democratic capitalism stirred fear among the American upper and middle classes, but that, of course, was the point. This chapter examines the impact of the Industrial Age in the North, focusing on urbanization, immigration, and economic disparity, as well as the inability or unwillingness of politicians to manage these challenges. It concludes with an examination of the first grassroots demands for reform in the shape of the labor movement. LO1 Urbanization As businesses grew, manufacturers needed more workers. Displaced farmers, immigrants from <https://assignbuster.com/creating-an-industrial-society-in-the-north/>

Europe and Asia, and African Americans from the South all flocked to the job opportunities in northern urban centers. By 1900, more than a third of America's people lived in cities, and city populations were growing twice as fast as the population as a whole. Between 1870 and 1920, the number of Americans living in cities increased fivefold, from 10 million to 54 million. The population of New York City went from 800,000 in 1860 to 2 million in 1900. The population of Boston increased from 180,000 in 1860 to 600,000 in 1900. And Chicago grew from 109,000 in 1860 to 1.7 million in 1900. The cities were booming. Because few cities at the time had building codes, developers also carved up previously built single-family homes into multiple-unit dwellings called tenements, which often had thin walls and frequently lacked windows as well. These kinds of close quarters led to communal childcare networks, and they also pushed people out into the streets, creating a raucous, lively, and sometimes dangerous street scene. One effect of such rapid building was a dearth of parks in the new cities. Adequate plumbing was virtually nonexistent, and few pre-1900 workers' houses had an indoor water supply; most shared pumps and wells in back alleys. City governments began to build sewers after 1860, but these sewers were primitive; most ended at the nearest river or lake, where raw sewage was simply dumped into. Most of the people living in these growing cities drank the water. Typhoid epidemics swept through city workers working in the new factories of the Industrial Age. For them,

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manufacturers sometimes sewage and disease transmission was not widely provided company housing close to the factories so understood. In 1900, the city of Chicago reversed the that the entire workforce could walk to work. For direction of the city's main river, diverting it to the others, independent builders sought quick profits Mississippi River in order to send the city's waste and got away with throwing up inferior houses products away from Lake Michigan, its primary water source. The cities were growing tremendously, but the expansion was haphazard, and those at the bottom of the pay scale were often the most deprived of basic necessities. Factory life was equally perilous. Between 1865 and 1915, working conditions in the nation's factories deteriorated. Before that time, the typical factory was little more than a large shop, often run by the individual who owned the business. It was likely that the owner knew the two to three dozen workers in his shop. A halfcentury later, workers in many factories were considerably more anonymous. Huge steel and textile mills and meatpacking plants employed thousands of workers. Workers spent ten-hour shifts on assembly lines, where machines hurled unfinished products at them, to which they were expected to add some part or turn some bolts. They repeated the same boring task, hour after hour, until the whistle finally blew at the end of the shift. Between 1880 and 1900 an average of 35, 000 workers died each year on the assembly line. The work was grueling. Many employers callously ignored the basic needs of their workers, most notoriously illustrated by the 1911 Triangle Rival gangs of firefighting clubs sometimes fought each other while buildings blazed. Shirtwaist Fire, in the New York City garment . North Wind/North Wind Picture Archives-All rights reserved >> 302 C H A P T E R 18 Creating an Industrial Society in the North 9781133438212, HIST2, <https://assignbuster.com/creating-an-industrial-society-in-the-north/>

Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization district, near Washington Square Park. Foremen at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company had bolted the fire escape door shut to prevent female workers from taking breaks. When a fire broke out in the front of their sweatshop—located several stories above the street—hundreds of employees were trapped in the back of the shop. They faced two choices: sure death from the fire or probable death by leaping from the window to the pavement View an online below. Bystanders had life exhibit on the Triangle Shirtwaist long nightmares from the sight of falling bodies thud Company fire. ding to the ground. The final death toll was 146 workers, most of them poor women. Safety Hazards Factory districts were smoky, noisy, unsanitary, densely populated areas that were prone to fires. Built of wood or brick, powered by coal-fired steam engines, and lighted by kerosene lamps or gas flames, early factories were particularly vulnerable. Factory fires, in places where fire escapes, drills, and other precautions were neglected, often caused fatalities. Before 1900, few cities had municipal firefighters. Instead, they depended on firefighting clubs, in effect youth gangs, who would compete to be first at the scene of a fire in the expectation of being paid for extinguishing it. Rival gangs of firefighting clubs sometimes fought each other while buildings blazed, and even firefighters with the best intentions were often thwarted by the lack of a sufficient high-pressure water supply. Between 1880 and 1900 an average of 35, 000 workers died each year on the assembly line. Triangle Shirtwaist as the remaining 99 percent. Company In the cities of the North, New York City garment facthe leading industrialists tory; scene of a horrific fire in 1911 ostentatiously displayed their fortunes. The Newport, sweatshop Rhode <https://assignbuster.com/creating-an-industrial-society-in-the-north/>

Island, home of Crowded factory in an urban Pennsylvania coal magnate setting, often one where workers are exploited Edward Berwind, " The Elms, " cost \$1. 4 million to build- more than \$21. 5 million today. The Newport home of William Vanderbilt, the grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt, now called " Marble House, " cost more than \$11 million-a staggering \$169. 5 million today. " Diamond" Jim Brady, a wealthy New York City financier, was notorious for sitting two inches from his dinner table and continuing to eat until his expanding stomach touched the table. New York socialite Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish threw a party to honor her dog, which arrived wearing a diamond collar worth \$15, 000 (today, nearly \$350, 000). The wealthy of this era were extremely wealthy. This gross materialism did not go unnoticed. Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner published a novel called The Gilded Age (providing the era with its most notable label) that satirically described the greed, materialism, and political corruption that accompanied the growth of industry and cities. Economics professor Thorstein Veblen, in his book The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899), View pictures of called the behavior of the The Elms, Marble wealthy class " conspicuous House, and other consumption. " He argued Newport mansions. Wealthy Neighborhoods While successful industrialists neglected the safety of their factories and workers' housing, they devoted enormous resources to the building of cultural institutions and the development of wealthy neighborhoods. Many had amassed huge fortunes and found novel ways to showcase their wealth. Fifth Avenue in New York, for example, was lined with mansions and townhouses. On New Year's Day, hostesses drew back the curtains of their mansions to reveal views of opulent interiors. And this was just one symbol of their wealth. Successful businessmen made astonishing profits during this era. By <https://assignbuster.com/creating-an-industrial-society-in-the-north/>

1890, the wealthiest 1 percent of the American population owned as much property A boy stokes a coal stove in a metal shop filled with young immigrant workers. >> Urbanization 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization 303 © George Eastman House/Getty Images Coney Island that, ultimately, the selfishness of the rich harmed economic growth. Edith Wharton's novels, particularly *The House of Mirth* (1905), mocked the emptiness of the ball league, begun in 1876 with eight teams led by the wealthy and the stifling social American League conventions that ruled the professional their lives. Andrew Carnegie was one of the most conscientious World Series of the captains of industry, Baseball competition and he described the problem between the National League and the American League, of the Gilded Age as that of played for the first time in reconciling the wealthy and 1903 the poor in order to maintain a prosperous nation. In Read Andrew the burgeoning cities of the Carnegie's essay North, the two seemed to be " Wealth. " living worlds apart. Public amusement park opened in New York in 1895; it featured roller coasters, water slides, and fun houses New York socialite Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish threw a party to honor her dog, which arrived wearing a diamond collar worth \$15,000 (today, nearly \$350,000). >> Suburbs Often the middle classes would try to flee the polarities of the city, and in the late nineteenth century, suburbs began their initial growth. Street railways made it possible to live 4 or 5 miles from work (or farther), yet still get there fairly quickly each morning. Streetcar companies often built their lines beyond the edge of town in the confident expectation that housing developments would soon follow.

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They were often right; their lines formed the backbone of new suburban communities inhabited by the middle class. Slowly, city populations became increasingly stratified, with upper- and middle-class people living outside the noisy industrial districts, venturing as far away as bona fide suburbs, while the working classes and those enduring discrimination because of their race, religion, or country of origin lived in less desirable areas close to the industrial hubs. Entertainments Cities had long been spaces of public entertainment, and in the nineteenth LO2 Immigration Along with urbanization and the growing disparities of wealth, 304 C H A P T E R 18 Creating an Industrial Society in the North 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization . North Wind/North Wind Picture Archives-All rights reserved century they teemed with vaudeville houses, dance halls, and saloons. These spaces were often deemed immoral or improper by the upper classes. In the 1890s, entrepreneurs in the growing leisure industry found a more wholesome way to lure the city's masses: large, magnificent amusement parks. In 1895, New York's Coney Island opened, featuring roller coasters, water slides, and fun houses. Unlike other public amusements like vaudeville and saloons, amusement parks attracted both men and women because they were considered more respectable. For instance, Coney Island helped spur dating among working-class young men and women. Attending professional baseball games was another way to relax, and baseball became a source of urban pride during these years. It began in 1876, with the formation of the National League by the Cincinnati Red Stockings (America's first professional team) and seven others. The league's success depended on reliable, intercity rail transport to carry the <https://assignbuster.com/creating-an-industrial-society-in-the-north/>

teams to each other's fields, as well as the telegraph lines along which rapid news of scores and results could be carried. The National League's success prompted the creation of the rival American League in 1901, and the two leagues competed in the first World Series in 1903, all due to the transportation and communications revolutions of the late nineteenth century, as well as the creation of a middle class with enough disposable income to enjoy an afternoon at the ballpark. . iStockphoto. com/ Sarah Kennedy " Grimy, gloomy . . . more suggestive of an enclosure for animals than a receiving station for prospective citizens of the United States. " -New York Tribune, on Ellis Island, December 17, 1900 >> another important development in the industrializing North was immigration. Between 1880 and 1920, approximately 25 million people came to the United States. Unlike earlier arrivals, these new immigrants did not migrate from the British Isles or northern Europe; instead, they came predominantly from eastern, central, and southern Europe. They were Poles, Greeks, Italians, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Czechs, Serbs, and Croats; they were Orthodox Jews, Eastern Orthodox Catholics, and Roman Catholics. For the most part, these different ethnic groups had only three things in common: (1) their status as new immigrants, (2) their lack of money and education, and (3) their reasons for leaving Europe. This new immigration was the result of at least four factors (see " The reasons why . . . " box on immigration below). { The reasons why . . . } There were at least four reasons for the rise in immigration during these years: European population growth. Europe had experienced tremendous population growth during the nineteenth century, creating gaps between the number of workers and the number of jobs. Urban crowding in Europe. The Industrial Revolution in Europe drew people away from agricultural industries

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to cities, where the crush of newcomers made employment even harder to find. Antisemitism. A rise in antisemitism, especially within the Russian Empire, forced many Jews to flee. Economic opportunities. America served as a magnet because it promised economic opportunity and personal freedoms. Many who came planned only to acquire enough wealth to make a better life for themselves back in Europe. For example, between 1910 and 1914, more than 400,000 Italian immigrants left the United States. These immigrants were usually men who came to America alone, planning to return home and rejoin their families. Immigration 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization . FPG/Getty Images 305 greenhorns European newcomers to America The Immigrant Experience Ellis Island Immigrant gateway to New York City from 1892 to 1954 Most of these new immigrants, who were often called greenhorns, faced a hard life in America. After successfully passing through Explore the past well-known gateways like of Ellis Island. New York's Ellis Island, these immigrants struggled Take a virtual tour of a Lower against tremendous adversity. America itself provided East Side tenement. a tight labor market, and many immigrants came with limited knowledge of English, limited education, and limited work skills. Most stayed close to where they had landed, settling in such urban areas as New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Boston. They found themselves on the bottom rung of the industrial hierarchy, working low-paying factory jobs. By the end of the 1800s, immigrants made up a majority of the populations of most major American cities. By 1890, for example, New York's population was 80 percent immigrant. Chicago's population was a remarkable 87 percent immigrant. Most immigrants lived in crowded tenements that often

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lacked windows, heat, and indoor plumbing. Not surprisingly, poverty and overcrowding precipitated murder and other violent crimes, as well as theft. Some immigrant girls, driven by poverty and desperation, turned to prostitution. Working Conditions Beyond the hardships and hazards of tenement life, immigrants often faced much more serious threats in the workplace. Jobs in factories locked this working class into a rigid, exhausting schedule. At the mercy of powerful machines that required them to perform the same simple task again and again, they worked ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week. As mechanization continued to decrease the need for skilled labor, and as employers kept searching for workers who would accept low pay, women and children entered factories in increasing numbers. By the turn of the century, 20 percent of the industrial workforce was female. The textile industry in particular relied almost completely upon women and children. Many states passed child labor laws by the end of the 1800s, but employers routinely ignored these laws, and the number of child factory workers remained high. Ethnicity, Assimilation, and the American Dream Despite the struggle, immigrants also had their share of triumphs. Some even prospered, and many eventually gained a material stake in their new country by owning property. However, there was a fundamental tension at the core of the immigrant success story. Immigrants often sought to maintain a sense of connection to their native countries, but their status in America was inextricably tied to assimilation into American culture. New York and other major cities contained an amazing patchwork of different ethnic communities. These communities developed a variety of resources for comforting lonely and homesick immigrants, including foreign-language newspapers and fraternal and religious organizations. These were the years

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when America's cities evolved into complex mosaics of ethnic neighborhoods. . CORBIS " One of the sights which this coal side of our civilization has to show is the presence of herds of little children of all ages, from six years upward, at work in the coal breakers, toiling in dirt, and air thick with carbon dust, from dawn to dark, of every day in the week except Sunday. These coal breakers are the only schools they know. A letter from the coal regions in the Philadelphia ' Press' declares that ' there are no schools in the world where more evil is learned or more innocence destroyed than in the breakers. It is shocking to watch the vile practices indulged in by these children, to hear the frightful oaths they use, to see their total disregard for religion and humanity.' " -Henry Demarest Lloyd, " The Lords of Industry, " 1884 >> 306 C H A P T E R 18 Creating an Industrial Society in the North 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization LO3 Social Darwinism Social Darwinism The theory that " survival The Politics of the Industrial Age These kinds of dramatic changes required a new kind of politics to address growing economic disparities and the clannishness of the urban cities. But the politics of the late nineteenth century reflected the Industrial Revolution's devotion to business, not to the growing needs of the urban poor of the working classes. Indeed, politically, the devotion to the needs of business had two vital consequences: (1) It permitted a dramatic decline in attention to the treatment of African Americans, which had dominated the politics of the Reconstruction era; and (2) it sullied the image of politicians, who sometimes were guilty of blatant corruption as they prioritized the interests of business over those of other groups in the population. Federal, state, and local politicians gave massive

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land grants to their friends, offered government contracts only to their supporters, and accepted bribes for doing all sorts of " public works. "

Justifications of the Industrial Order Three intellectual justifications for the social and economic order of the North emerged during the Industrial Revolution. Often they overlapped. Any reformer would have to overcome, or at least acknowledge, each of them before attempting to reform American politics. Mainline Protestant Morality First, many of the leading industrialists of the late nineteenth century were sons of ministers, and they relied on a hard-line defense of Protestant individualism, arguing that economic problems stemmed from a particular individual's actions (or inactions) and that these problems were therefore not social in nature. There was a good bit of nativism in this argument too, especially considering that the vast majority of immigrants were Catholics and Jews from southern and eastern Europe. Furthermore, the industrialists firmly believed that their actions were improving the lot of humankind, which, despite some obvious contradictions, they were in fact doing. It was easy to argue that power grids, electric light, better transportation, and improved communications had increased the convenience and comfort of modern living. of the fittest" extended to The second justification was the business realm: tycoons Social Darwinism. Railroad believed they were justified in their overbearing behavior tycoons like Charles Francis because they had shown Adams Jr. believed that they themselves to be the most were justified in their oversuccessful competitors in an open market bearing behavior because they had shown themselves to be the most successful competitors in an open market. Of course, because they had benefited from the federal government's actions to promote industrial growth through tariffs, subsidies, and cheap land sales, the

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successful capitalists' wealth was not as independently earned as they believed. English philosopher Herbert Spencer promoted this Darwinistic perspective. After reading Charles Darwin's theories on biological evolution, Spencer coined the phrase "survival of the fittest" and applied Darwin's concepts to the contemporary economic environment. Spencer was attempting to account for differences in human ability in the business world by suggesting that economic progress would continue if the government kept its hands off free enterprise and allowed businessmen to do as they wished. If the government intervened to assist the weak and the incapable, he argued, such "softheartedness" would pollute the business environment and prevent economic growth. Although very few Americans took Darwin's theory as far as Spencer did, businessmen occasionally borrowed those ideas that fit their needs. Later, Social Darwinism would be used by the Progressives to limit their willingness to challenge capitalism. Social Darwinism also had a racist tinge, providing intellectual justification for laws and social practices that kept African Americans, Indians, certain categories of immigrants, and women secondclass citizens who were often denied the vote and a basic right to property ownership. This notion of a racial or cultural hierarchy of peoples was widely espoused in Gilded Age America; even the African American intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois relied on it when he argued that the vast majority of African Americans were ill equipped to be full citizens and instead should rely on a "talented tenth" to lead the way. The Myth of Success Successful businessmen also perpetuated the belief that if you worked hard enough, you could become wealthy. This notion was popularized by many The Politics of the Industrial Age

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Crédit Mobilier Company A construction company set up by the directors of the Union Pacific in 1867 in order to build part of their transcontinental railroad—in essence, they were their own subcontractors and awarded themselves generous contracts tal railroad—in essence, they were their own subcontractors. In these dual roles, they awarded themselves generous contracts (receiving between \$7 million and –William Graham Sumner, in defense \$23 million). To avoid any of Social Darwinism interference from the government, officials at Crédit Mobilier awarded writers, none more ardently than Horatio Alger. congressmen stock in the company. The corrupAn admired and prolific writer (he produced 135 tion was so open and blatant that company proxpieces of fiction), Alger wrote virtually all of his ies handed out shares on the floor of the House of stories with the same plot: a good person works Representatives. Recipients included the Speaker of hard and, with a little luck, the House, the minority leader, and Schuyler Colfax, Read a defense inevitably succeeds. His provice president of the United States from 1868 to of Social tagonist, a young man with 1872. When the scandal became public, it led to a Darwinism. working-class roots, moves congressional investigation and sullied the image of from a farm or small town to the city. Once there, many of the era’s leading politicians. leading a morally upright life, wholly committed The Tweed Ring to hard work, and, above all, showing loyalty to his employer, the hero literally rises “ from rags to riches. ” Urban politics were equally corrupt, and none Alger’s formula was sometimes called “ pluck and more so than New York’s under “ Boss" William luck, " because the hero always benefits from some fortuitous event (such as rescuing the boss’s beautiful daughter from the path of a runaway fire truck).

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The (invariably handsome) young man sometimes then courts the daughter under her father's approving eye and advances swiftly up the company ladder. Where is the rich man who is oppressing anybody? If there was one, the newspapers would ring with it. " " Political Corruption Supported by these intellectual justifications, many businessmen brought their probusiness agenda to politicians. Business interests quickly became the strongest lobby in the nation. As was the norm for lobbyists, their requests usually came with reimbursements. In order to obtain land grants, protective tariffs, tax relief, and other " favors, " many businessmen exchanged cash or stock options with the era's politicians. The exchange of these favors occurred on both national and local levels. . Bettmann/CORBIS The Crédit Mobilier Scandal The most damaging of these scandals was the Crédit Mobilier Scandal. In order to ensure an abundance of subsidies and land grants for their railroad, representatives from the Union Pacific offered federal lawmakers stock in the Crédit Mobilier Company. The problem was that this construction company had been set up by the directors of the Union Pacific in 1867 in order to build part of their transcontinen- " He was above doing anything mean or dishonorable. He would not steal, or cheat, or impose upon younger boys, but was frank and straight-forward, manly and self-reliant. " -Horatio Alger, description of the hero from Ragged Dick >> 308 C H A P T E R 18 Creating an Industrial Society in the North 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization M. Tweed. Tweed's Tweed Ring of friends controlled Tammany Hall, a Democratic Tweed. political organization known as a " machine" whose members regarded politics as an opportunity to get rich while providing favors to the urban underclass. Through his connections <https://assignbuster.com/creating-an-industrial-society-in-the-north/>

at Tammany, "Boss" Tweed was appointed to supervise the dramatic rebuilding of New York City's infrastructure during the formative years of the Industrial Revolution. Tweed profited from this rebuilding because he or his associates owned or had access to many of the subcontractors who did the labor. He also typically overcharged contractors and took tidy sums off the top for himself. Tweed was eventually exposed as a fraud in 1871 and was subsequently jailed and fined. After a dramatic escape, he was returned to jail, where he died in 1878. But Tammany Hall continued to exert influence on local politics until the early 1900s. Learn more about Tammany Hall and "Boss" The Appeal of Tammany Despite its rampant corruption, Tammany appealed to recent Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants, who would provide Tammany politicians with their votes in exchange for preference in getting city jobs, free drinks on Election Day, and assorted social services. Tweed Ring One way local "bosses" established loyalty was to watch New York's corrupt "Boss" William Tweed care of short-term emergencies. George Washington Plunkitt, for example, a colorful Tammany boss whose members regarded politics as an opportunity came to power after the fall of Tweed, told journalists favors to the urbanist William Riordan that if a underclass family was made homeless by a fire, he went straight to Riordan's Plunkitt scene, found the family a temporary place to live, gave them money for immediate necessities, and ensured that they got back on their feet. What better way was there, he asked, to ensure voters' gratitude and loyalty? And what did it matter if, once empowered by the votes of those he "served," he took a little off the

top? Historians recognize that the machine system had its advantages, both in easing the transition to America for European newcomers and in dealing with short-term crises. But the system's reliance on above-the-law patronage also bred inefficiency, corruption, and cynicism, as unqualified people filled important government positions and as bribes raised prices for consumers.

Political Divisions Despite the corruption, or perhaps because of it, politics were vibrant at the national level, political parties dominated, and few major political programs were implemented (the battles were too fierce). Judging from presidential elections, the nation was almost evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans. But if the nation was evenly divided, the states were not, with Republicans controlling most of the northern states and Democrats controlling the South. Democrats also did well with urban immigrants. Rarely did the party of the president also control . North Wind/North Wind Picture Archives-All rights reserved " ' Who Stole the People's Money?' 'Twas him. " One of cartoonist Thomas Nast's famous cartoons on the corruption of the Tweed Ring. Boss Tweed himself is pictured, far left foreground, with the full beard. >> The Politics of the Industrial Age 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization 309 mugwumps The machine's mischievous nickname for Republicans who supported Democrat Grover Cleveland in the 1884 election only because Republican candidate James Blaine was considered a product of machine politics . Miramax/courtesy Everett Collection cal patronage. (Garfield's assassin had been fired from his post, not for incompetence, but based on the faction of the Republican Party he had supported during the election of 1880.) The act revealed divisions within the

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Republican Party, Congress, and between -George Washington Plunkitt, from which was split between 1876 and 1896, a series Plunkitt of Tammany Hall, 1905 idealist reformers on the of one-term presidents one hand and those supoccupied the White portive of machine poliHouse. More than 80 pertics and the spoils system on the other. Machine cent of eligible voters turned out for elections, politicians mischievously labeled their Republican mostly because of the dynamism of the parties and opponents mugwumps, meaning a Republican who their numerous supporting machines. Nevertheless, supported Democratic candidate Grover Cleveland for the most part, the nation's leaders were either in the 1884 election only because the Republican incapable of managing or unwilling to manage candidate, James Blaine, was viewed as a product of the many problems associated with the Industrial machine politics. Revolution. Moreover, after the trauma of the Civil War, the American people often shied away from such deeply emotional issues as social welfare or concern for 4 minorities. In a brutal reminder of the way politics For the first three decades after the Civil War, then, could inspire passion, in 1881, President James A. businessmen generally had their way in the politiGarfield was assassinated by a fellow Republican cal arena. They could count on friendly legislators to who disagreed with the president over the issue of provide subsidies for promising new industries, and civil service reform. Spurred to act by the assassimore mature industries might receive tariff protecnation, Congress passed the Pendleton Act in 1883, tion against foreign competition. When workers which for the first time created a class of federal went on strike, the government often intervened on jobs that was not entirely controlled by politithe side of management by ordering troops to protect strikebreakers. Nevertheless, workers still went on strike

and fought for better working conditions, and one of the most important developments of these years was the rise of organized labor. For workers, industrial life held few guarantees. Every day, industrial workers faced danger, uncertainty, and a crushing workload. By There's an honest graft, and I'm an example of how it works. I might sum up the whole thing by sayin': ' I seen my opportunities and I took 'em.' " " LO The Rise of Labor

Martin Scorsese's 2002 film Gangs of New York was set in the city presided over by Boss Tweed. >> 310 C H A P T E R 18 Creating an Industrial Society in the North 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization

the turn of the century, accidents had caused more than 20, 000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of injuries. Job security was nonexistent. Workers who became sick or injured risked being fired, and new inventions in machinery continually made certain jobs obsolete. And pay was minimal. Although the average wage for industrial work rose between 1870 and 1900, that wage in 1900 was still only 20 cents an hour, or less than five dollars today, hardly enough to pay for adequate food, clothing, and shelter. In the late 1800s, men were not the only ones facing these long hours of toil; women and children worked too. In many instances, poor families simply could not survive without the added incomes of all able-bodied members, and it was not uncommon for young children to work twelve-hour days. In a chain reaction that punished all three groups, working women and children exacerbated labor dilemmas because they worked longer hours and for less pay than their male counterparts, who thus lost bargaining leverage. The Struggle over Union Expansion As worker discontent grew, emerging unions of organized workers struggled to exert influence. But they faced an uphill

battle. Business owners opposed them, had ample resources to do so, and could take advantage of ethnic, religious, and racial divisions among the workers themselves to weaken the unity of the working classes. yellow dog contract Contract stipulating that an employee would not join a union blacklist A compilation of known union activists in a particular area; employers refused to hire anyone whose name appeared on one strikebreakers Workers who agreed to work while union workers were on strike Opposition of Business Owners On a practical level, employers considered unions bad for business. To stay competitive, business owners were constantly seeking to keep costs down. Labor was one such cost, and a company whose profits were dropping might cut jobs and wages. Most owners also saw their union-busting tactics as a defense of the American way of life. For them, union organizing ran counter to the American virtues of independence and self-reliance, and they often justified the pitfalls of the capitalist system by citing the theory of Social Darwinism or the fact that their industries were propelling the United States toward building the largest economy in the world. The Railroad Strike of 1877 Tensions caused by these conditions inevitably reached the boiling point, and the first labor conflict to come to national attention occurred in 1877, when railroad workers went on strike and froze most of the country's train traffic. The railroad industry had expanded enormously following the Civil War, and wage cuts during the Panic of 1873 created widespread resentment among workers. Government intervention fueled working-class unrest. Word of the strike reached President Rutherford B. Hayes while he was dining in a train car with the president of the B&O Railroad, who argued that the strikers posed a serious threat to public safety. Hayes agreed and authorized the use of the National

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Guard to put an end to the strikes. Violence soon erupted in towns and cities across the country, and battles broke out in Baltimore, Chicago, San Francisco, and Pittsburgh. In St. Louis, striking railroad workers were joined by all other industrial workers in the city, shutting down all manufacturing establishments for four days. The city's industry was at a standstill.

Eventually, the National Guard defeated the strikers, railroad workers took pay cuts, and strike leaders were jailed. But more than one hundred people were killed nationwide, and there was astronomical property damage.

Though the strike's carnage evaporated public sympathy for the workers, the conflict brought the issue of labor activism into the national consciousness.

Their Resources Regardless of motive, American business owners had several resources at their disposal to fight against unions. They fired workers who joined unions and denied jobs to union organizers. Many workers had to sign a yellow dog contract, in which they promised, upon pain of termination, not to join a union. Employers also used the blacklist, a compilation of known union activists in a particular area. Employers shared these lists and refused to hire anyone whose name appeared on them. Also, by hiring a mixture of native-born Americans and immigrants of different backgrounds, employers tried to exploit ethnic divisions to forestall any feelings of worker unity, and they did so with considerable success. Business owners were often just as successful in breaking strikes as they were in hindering union organization.

To keep their factories and mines running, they hired strikebreakers, often unemployed immigrant workers from other areas who were hungry for jobs and had no stake in the union struggle. The Rise of Labor 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved.

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Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) Major New York City union that often conducted its union meetings in five different languages simultaneously

Divisions among Workers In addition to stiff opposition from business owners, union organizers also faced obstacles within the labor pool itself. Workers did not share the same levels of skill and pay, or the same opportunities. More highly skilled workers enjoyed higher wages and better job security; for them, unions did not have much appeal. Immigrant workers also posed a problem to unity. They were isolated from one another by language and sometimes religion, and native-born Americans, who saw immigrants as a threat to their own jobs, often resented them. Many immigrants were in America only temporarily, to earn quick money to send back home; they had families to support and did not stand to benefit from a typical strike's long months of idleness. For these reasons, many labor unionists despised immigrants, seeing them as not committed to the cause. For example, it was the Workingman's Party of California that exerted political pressure for the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act. The Knights of Labor, led by Terence Powderly (center), sought to unite all the nation's "toilers," as indicated by the variety of laborers represented in each of the four corners of the image.

>> Labor Solidarity Despite the fractured nature of the American workforce, union leaders fought to create a sense of common purpose among its members. Arguing that it was the working class, not owners and managers, who produced America's wealth, union organizers tried to instill a sense of pride and camaraderie among union members. Some unions, especially those in urban areas with a large immigrant population, sought to overcome

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the inherent barriers between ethnic groups. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) of New York City, for example, often conducted its union meetings in five different languages simultaneously. Americans participated in charitable reform efforts that sought to improve workers' living conditions. As a result of these efforts, Congress in 1868 mandated an eight-hour workday for federal construction projects, and in 1885 it passed the Contract Labor Law, which prohibited employers from forcing immigrants to work to pay off the costs of their passage to America. But these laws were exceptions. For the most part, the middle class and the government remained supportive of industry leaders. The Knights of Labor At the national level, the Knights of Labor was America's first effective union, one that sought to unite all of America's "toilers" into a single organization that, through the power of its vast membership, could deliver workers from their plight. The Knights of Labor accepted farm hands and factory workers; it welcomed women, African Americans, and immigrants. (The union excluded lawyers, bankers, doctors, and liquor dealers, all of whom, from the union's perspective, were not toilers but white-collar workers.) Founded in 1869 by a Philadelphia tailor named Uriah Stephens, the Knights of Labor rose to prominence in 1879, when Terence Powderly assumed Roles of Government and the Middle Class To achieve their goals, union leaders needed more than solidarity among workers; they also needed support from government leaders and the politically influential middle class. Such support was hard to find. In the last two decades of the 1800s, some middle-class reformers did address labor issues, and the government did take some actions to improve worker conditions. For instance, many middle-class

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No distribution allowed without express authorization Copyright © The Granger Collection, New York / The Granger Collection Read the original leadership. Powderly opened Knights of Labor the union's doors to almost platform. all workers, and it became, for a brief time, the largest union in the country. In 1884 and 1885, the Knights of Labor entered the national spotlight when its members staged successful strikes against railroad companies in the Southwest. After the railroad strikes, membership in the Knights of Labor exploded; the union had approximately 100, 000 members in 1884, and by 1886 its membership rolls had swelled to more than 750, 000 workers. The Fall of the Knights As quickly as it had grown, the influence of the Knights of Labor faded away. Ultimately, the Knights simply could not coordinate the activities of its members, who came from a variety of regions, industries, and ethnic backgrounds. Also, although the union owed much of its growth to the success of strikes, Powderly resisted using strikes because he believed, correctly, that they would jeopardize the union's public standing. The Haymarket Riot Powderly's distrust of strikes proved to be well founded. Regardless of other problems plaguing the Knights of Labor, in the end it was a single event that caused the demise of the union. In spring 1886, workers demanding an eight-hour workday went on strike against the McCormick Harvester Company of Chicago. On May 3, four picketers were killed during a clash with the police. The next day a rally was held in Chicago's Haymarket Square to protest the police's actions. When police tried to break up this second gathering, someone threw dynamite at them. The explosion killed seven policemen and wounded dozens of others. Those police who were not injured then fired their guns into the crowd; four more

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people were killed, and more than a hundred others were trampled and shot at as they fled. The " Haymarket Affair, " as it was called in the press, was believed to be the work of anarchists (who believed governments were unnecessary and should be abolished), and the incident created a state of hysteria among middle-class citizens, who mistakenly feared that all laborites were anarchists. Eventually, eight reputed anarchists were arrested for conspiring to kill the policemen, and although none of the men could be tied to the actual bomb, they were convicted, and seven received the death sentence. After the Haymarket bombing, anti-union editorials appeared in newspapers across the country, and the Knights of Labor were a frequent target. One of the convicted men was a union member, and, although Powderly condemned the bombing, Read Terence his organization became Powderly's Thirty Years of Labor. synonymous with anarchist activity. It could not survive the mischaracterization, and by the early 1890s the union was gone, and, for a short time at least, its vision of a coalition of all workers disappeared with it. . North Wind/North Wind Picture Archives-All rights reserved Woodcut of dynamite exploding among police ranks during the Haymarket Square riot, Chicago, 1886. >> The Rise of Labor

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American Railway Union (ARU) Founded in 1893 by Eugene V. Debs; the first industrial union industrial union A union that sought to bring together all the workers in a single industry, rather than workers in a single occupation In many respects, the story of the Pullman -Eugene V. Debs, " How I Became a strike of 1894 is virtuSocialist, " 1902 Growth and ally the same as that of Frustrations the Homestead strike. Despite all the setbacks, Once again, the

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governin the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s, workment intervened in a hard-fought battle between a ers continued to organize, although usually on a powerful business owner and a determined, wellsmaller scale than the Knights of Labor. Particularly organized union, tipping the balance in favor of the after 1893, when the country experienced a severe owner. economic depression, union activity intensified. But In the town of Pullman, outside of Chicago, the labor movement was no match for big business. George Pullman owned a factory that manufactured In two important struggles, the Homestead strike of luxury railroad cars. Pullman was a company town; 1892 and the Pullman strike of 1894, business ownalmost every worker in town was employed by the ers successfully called upon the full weight of the factory, bought goods on credit at the Pullman comU. S. government to crush labor activism. pany store, and rented living quarters owned by the company. Pullman's adversary was the American The Homestead Strike Railway Union (ARU), founded in 1893 by Eugene V. Debs, a former train fireman from Indiana and a In 1892, the price of steel plunged. To reduce busiChristian socialist, defined as someone who believes ness costs, Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick, that the teachings of Jesus naturally lead to an advowho managed Carnegie's Homestead Steel Factories cacy of economic socialism. Debs believed that the outside of Pittsburgh, decided to cut wages and means of producing and distributing goods should break the local union, called the Association of Iron be owned by a centralized government that would and Steel Workers. When the union went on strike then plan and regulate the economy. The ARU was to protest the cutbacks, Frick fortified the plant America's first industrial union, meaning that it with barbed wire and guns. He then sent a barge sought to bring together all the

workers in a single filled with detectives from the Pinkerton National industry (such as the railroad industry), rather than Detective Agency down Read an excerpt the Monongahela River to workers in a single occupation (such as the brakefrom Andrew man's union, which organized only brakemen).

occupy the plant. Picketing Carnegie's In 1893, after a nationwide depression began strikers greeted the barge autobiography. shrinking the market for Pullman's luxury cars, with gunfire and dynamite, Pullman fired a third of his workers and lowered by and during the fourteen-hour battle that ensued, the 25 percent the wages of those who remained. But detectives were defeated and forced out of town. But he did not cut rents or company store prices. In May the union's success was short-lived. Responding to 1894, a local branch of the ARU struck the Pullman the violence, the governor of Pennsylvania brought factory in protest. The struggle soon escalated to out the state militia, which occupied the factory and national proportions. Because the ARU was an allowed strikebreakers to enter. The union cause industry-wide labor union, it paralyzed the nation's was further tarnished when an anarchist made an railroads when union members across the country unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Frick. My first step was thus taken in organized labor and a new influence fired my ambition and changed the whole current of my career. I was filled with enthusiasm and my blood fairly leaped in my veins. Day and night I worked for the brotherhood. " After four months, the hungry steelworkers abandoned the union and returned to the plant. The collapse of the steelworkers' union would mark the end of the labor movement in the steel industry for the next forty-five years. The Pullman Strike " 314 C H A P T E R 18 Creating an Industrial Society in the North 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage <https://assignbuster.com/creating-an-industrial-society-in-the-north/>

Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization refused to work on trains carrying Pullman cars. Pullman's managers challenged the strike by attaching U. S. mail cars to the Pullman cars, thereby making the strike an interference with the federal mail system. In response, President Grover Cleveland sent troops to break the strike's center in Chicago. In July, soon after the arrival of federal troops in Chicago, the union was in trouble. Violence between strikers and soldiers broke out, and Debs was arrested for contempt of court. With their union in tatters, the Pullman workers gave up their protests and returned to the factory. The Rise of the AFL At the time of these highly publicized strikes, another union, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), became the leading labor organization in America. Founded in 1881, the AFL gained momentum throughout the 1880s, as the Knights of Labor diminished, by pursuing a different strategy than the Knights of Labor and the ARU—one that made it more attractive to middle-class Americans. The AFL was a loose federation of roughly one hundred craft unions rather than a single national union. It was also avowedly antisocialist and anti-anarchist. Its leader, Samuel Gompers, coordinated the craft unions' actions without making any central decisions for them, and by arbitrating disputes, he ensured they stuck by each other. However, Gompers did not believe in organizing unskilled laborers, who were easily replaced by strikebreakers. The AFL's successes helped offset failures like the Homestead and Pullman strikes. Its most important early achievement took place in 1890, when Gompers's own cigar makers' union established the eight-hour workday. Up until then, the typical workday had been ten hours Read Samuel or longer. In a pattern typical Gompers's for the AFL, other AFL unions congressional also demanded the shorttestimony

regarding AFL unions. ended workday, and before long, printers, granite cutters, and coal miners were also working fewer hours per day. By the 1890s, the AFL had replaced the Knights of Labor as the most important labor lobby in the nation. American Federation cal solutions. But the labor of Labor (AFL) movement was far from The leading labor organizaunited in how to do this. tion in America, founded in 1881 by Samuel Gompers The AFL's Samuel Gompers and composed of craft argued that entering the unions rather than a single political arena was too costly national union and that labor's best stratcraft union egy was to focus on winning Union of skilled laborers, individual concessions from the type of union assemowners. bled under the American Federation of Labor Other laborites chose to enter the political arena American Socialist Party by creating new parties. In Political party formed in 1901 1901, socialists formed the and led by Eugene Debs that advocated replacing the American Socialist Party, led nation's capitalist system by Eugene Debs. The party fielded candidates in both International Workers national and local elections, of the World (IWW) A collection of militant minwith some success. It sought ing unions founded in 1905 in to help workers by replacColorado and Idaho; sought ing the nation's capitalist to use labor activism to overthrow the capitalist system system, but through involvement in the democratic anarcho-syndicalism process. A radical form of political More radical forms of poprotest that advocates the use of labor activism to overlitical protest also emerged, throw the capitalist system among them those employed by the International Workers of the World (IWW). Read Eugene Debs's " How Founded in 1905, the IWW I Became a grew out of a collection of Socialist. " militant mining unions in Colorado and Idaho, where workers scorned the AFL's exclusiveness. Under the leadership

of " Big Bill" Haywood, the " Wobblies, " as IWW members were called, pursued anarcho-syndicalism, which sought to use labor activism to overthrow the capitalist system. The Mainstream Most labor leaders, however, followed the AFL's example and avoided challenging the country's political establishment. Nonetheless, union leaders did begin to see that influencing government officials through the political process could be beneficial to their cause. For example, when President Theodore Roosevelt arbitrated a coal miners' strike in 1902, he forced mine owners to make concessions to the union. During the years following 1902, laborites became active participants in the nation's politics—a role they would continue to play throughout the twentieth century. Labor and Politics Despite the AFL's victories, by the turn of the century government favoritism toward big business had convinced many labor leaders of the need for politi-

The Rise of Labor 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization 315 And in the end . . . The development of the Industrial Age in the North during the last third of the nineteenth century was not always smooth. As new inventions and new ways of doing business expanded the power and purview of corporate leaders, wage disparities grew, urbanization introduced higher rates of crime and crowding in cities, and immigration provoked discussions about what it meant to be an American and about who belonged and who didn't. Meanwhile, the politics and politicians of the era were raucous, corrupt, and all too often unwilling to manage the transition into the modern industrial era. Those who attacked the new order most violently were usually shut down by the joint forces of industrial tycoons and national politicians. The labor movement would live on, and it would continue

to aid and assist in future movements for reform. But other calls for reform would be more successful during the turn of the twentieth century. Some of these calls would come from the South and the West, which had a completely different experience with the Industrial Revolution. It is to them that we now turn. What else was happening . . . 1876—1882 1884 The right arm and torch of the Statue of Liberty cross the Atlantic three times. N. Thompson, founder of Coney Island Luna Park, introduces the roller coaster, calling it Switchback. Statue of Liberty is dedicated. The statue, a gift from France intended to commemorate the two nations' founding ideal of liberty, will come to symbolize American freedom to millions of immigrants. Independent Labour Party founded in England. The first comic strip character—the "Yellow Kid"—appears in the New York Journal. Felix Hoffmann patents aspirin. 1886 1895 1896 1899 Visit the CourseMate website at www.cengagebrain.com for additional study tools and review materials for this chapter. 316 C H A P T E R 18 Creating an Industrial Society in the North 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage Learning. All rights reserved. No distribution allowed without express authorization { Learning Your Way } 89% of students surveyed found the interactive online quizzes valuable. We know that no two students are alike. HIST was developed to help you learn U. S. history in a way that works for you. Not only is the format fresh and contemporary, it's also concise and focused. And, HIST is loaded with a variety of supplements, like Chapter in Review cards, flash cards, a robust eBook, and more. At CengageBrain.com, you'll find plenty of resources to help you study no matter what your learning style! 9781133438212, HIST2, Volume 2, Kevin M. Schultz - © Cengage

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