

# The positions of workers in the period from 1875 to 1900 essay sample

[Business](#), [Employment](#)



From the period of 1875-1900 organized labor enhanced the position of workers to a certain extent. Organized labor is defined as bunch of workers united as a single who would then bargain with employers to improve economic status and working conditions and through the use of organized labor political standings of workers. Organized labor had a good affect on workers since the hours at work was gradually decreasing due to labor unions while the wages were increasing. Labor groups such as the Knights of Labor and the AFL emerged seeking better rights of labors. The U. S government also passed laws preserving the rights of labors in most cases such as the two Sherman acts that were passed in 1890 but other laws passed were used to keep a stable monopoly of railroad transport.

Riots and strikes by labor unions were not a pivotal point to promoting the positions of workers as it actually did the opposite as hoped. Strikes and protests ended up bloody like the Haymarket riot and strike of 1887. It was in the employers best interest to make sure there workers were not participants of any labor unions and if a worker was found to be in one he/she was fired and new labor was brought in due to the mass numbers of immigrants to America from 1860-1920. Working conditions were still unchanged for employees and profits were being brought into employers due to the advancement in technology. Organized labor from 1875-1890 improved the positions of workers only to a certain level.

The success of organized labor and unions helped progress workers politically both to a certain degree. The success of labor unions that played a role on the workers was quite vital as it changed many things in the United

States from 1875-1890. Labor unions which evolved during this period are Knights of Labor and AFL some private as well as some non private unions. These unions went to a great extent to make sure workers would no longer be exploited and the result of organized labor on the positions of workers helped to a certain point. As seen in the Historical Statistics from 1875 to 1890 it is evident that the average daily hours were gradually decreasing while there was an increase in wages. Unions that were formed strived to make sure that the labors wouldn't be exploited. In some cases the unions were successful in helping workers. By the use of organized labor such as unions labors would be in the papers more often but there side of the story would be false by yellow journalist.

Muckrakers such as Jacob Riis attempted to show the bad conditions that the poor were living in simply because they didn't have enough money, which would be the employers fault for setting low wages. This is something that was a goal of the Knights of Labor and NLU, who sought to increase wages of labors, establish a eight hour work day, eliminate the use of child convicts, create an equal pay for women as well as men and make transportation and banking public. A court case Muller V Oregon clearly shows that by the use of organized labor's before this case existed it established a base for which the Supreme Court would judge Muller and his unfairness to women that he employed.

By the use of organized labor unions were able to get the Sherman silver purchase act of 1890, which helped the workers. Under this act the U. S government was required to purchase 4. 5 million ounces of bullion silver

every month. This would help miners get paid more since the buying of silver by the government was not in affect before unions existed. The national government also had the power to control interstate commerce of railroads, which would help workers through the use of organized labor. As time goes on technology improves and as a result more stuff in less time and less money so profits go to employers and harm goes to employees, Strike with unions or unions to bargain wages help workers get more money. This was all achieved by the use of organized labor that helped the workers. By the use of organized labor, unions helped progress workers positions to a certain level.

The success of labor unions is also seen politically from the period of 1875-1900. During the late 1870's workers became more active in politics and took a platform with the Greenback Labor Party who aimed to help farmers and workers by expanding currency and credit supply. Workers from Unions often ran for office constantly winning and implemented systems that would help the workers like a graduated income tax, government ownership of railroads, currency reforms, an end to child labor and control communications line such as the telegraph which created a monopoly. Populist were a political group who favored the majority of the people. Radical labors sought to create the Marxist Workingmen's Party of the United States, the anarchist movement and the Social Labor Party which wanted all equal rights and an overthrow of capitalism to a system in which government based companies would pay more sensibly unlike the private business owners.

Another political strategy of organized labor was the use of strikes. Strikes were often seen during the late 1880's. Many of the strikes which occurred were unorganized therefore the result of them involved bloody results and often discredited labor unions and made them look like the villains, although they were really the unfair business owners. Due to the political progress of labor unions, unions often went on strike in order for immediate change. The order of Knights of St. Crispin started out with 50, 000 members in 1867. The Knights of Labor organized in 1869 led crucial strikes that would change the status of workers. The Pullman strike and Haymarket Riot were two events supported by the Knights of labor in retaliation to employers dropping the wages of its workers.

During the Pullman strike members of the Knights of Labor and ARU. The use of organized labor in this event shut down railroads. The United States Marshals stepped in and killed 13 strikers wounding 57 and \$340, 000 in damages were done. The strike of 1877 called for reforms in wages and this was later established through the use of unions as well as a eight hour work day. The Sherman anti trust act 1890 oldest U. S anti trust law and limited cartels and monopolies that would benefit people if prices were lower on something they needed, and this is due organized labor. In 1899 Samuel Compers testified in the House of Representatives that the improvements in production made it easier to make goods, made it cheaper and faster which meant more profit would be coming in and it was argued that the employers were not being fair to workers about it and the use of strikes helped. The

political status changed significantly after the use of organized labor was established and the status of workers changed as well.

Organized labor only supported workers to a certain degree as labors didn't progress as much as hoped. It was evident in the document that employers were not happy about the use of unions in which there workers were. Labors would have to sign a contract, which meant that they couldn't bargain with a labor group for better wages or conditions. A reason why organized labor was not to successful is because if a group went on strike of 1877 people called for a higher wage after there wages dropped 2 times a year.

Employers were secured because of the mass number of immigrants who came to America. From 1860-1890 immigration was 10 million German, British and Irish immigrants and from 1890- 1920 18. 2 million immigrants like Italians, Jews and Slavs.

From 1860 to 1900 average of 57% was unskilled labor that means that they would work and if they worked they were most likely to join a union to support them. The working conditions did not greatly improve. It is evident that un-authorized strikes ultimately hurt labor groups. As seen in Nats cartoon capitalism was not accepted by workers because most of the profits went to employers. In some court cases the national government went against the unions as they were charged after riot because it went against a law and the businesses were affected since they were able to freely practice there rights. This Shows union didn't help all the time. The Military even went in and killed protestors. This shows that even though organized labor was used it wasn't successful in progressing workers.

From the period of 1875-1900 organized labor enhanced the position of workers to a certain extent. This is seen by the documents and from outside information. By the use of unions workers were able to progress themselves both economically and politically. Workers positions increased significantly by using organized labor. Although organized labor was used it was not successful all the time.