

allowed to continue will depend entirely on our current system's ability to continue its progress sufficiently to satisfy the increasingly high level of public expectation. There is still much room for improvement in the relations between organized labor and the management community, and this fact makes the whole system as it currently exists a vulnerable one.

Discussion Questions

1. "No one except union officers and union staff members would suffer one iota if unions were to be outlawed in the United States, and enormous numbers of people would gain immeasurably if this should happen." Discuss.
2. "There is no reason on earth why lower and even middle managers should not consider joining a labor union, and it is really just a fluke that they, at least to date, have not." Comment fully.
3. "From the labor point of view, there is an intrinsic unfairness in the fact that it is essentially only conflict that attracts attention from the media." How valid, in your opinion, is this statement?
4. "The blue-collar world is the only natural habitat of unionism in the United States, and union failures to date outside of this sector prove this statement conclusively." Do you agree? Why or why not?
5. "Managers resist unions for a variety of entirely logical and rational reasons, and, thus, they can be expected to continue this opposition indefinitely, since the reasons will presumably continue to be logical and rational." Comment with specifics.
6. More than a few public officials in recent years have argued that any police officer, firefighter, or sanitation worker who goes out on strike in defiance of the law should be fired on the spot. How does such a viewpoint accord with yours?
7. Under what, if any, circumstances would you personally consider joining a union?
8. It has occasionally been argued that the United States is experiencing the cult of the individual. Do you accept this position and, if so, do you think that its continuation would significantly hurt labor's efforts in the years immediately ahead?
9. Do you agree with the opinion of the AFL-CIO researcher cited in this chapter that unions are "somewhat a victim of [their] own success"? Why or why not?
10. "There is something distasteful about college faculty members becoming union members. Such situations should be made illegal, as should the unionization of student groups." Discuss.
11. Would you ever consider becoming a labor relations consultant for management? Why or why not?

Minicases

1. The White-Collar Union Organizer

"I have nothing against unions, mind you, but just give me one good reason why I should sign up with you," an office worker tells Office Employees International Union organizer Nancy Rogers.

"Any time the production workers in this company get more money through their union, we nonunion folks in the office do, too, simply because the management doesn't want us to be tempted to become unionists. In fact, we might even be getting just a little bit extra so as to guarantee that we don't get any funny ideas.

"And more than that, everybody knows that unions are really just for manual workers. It's not appropriate for

white-collar people like us to join them, which is why, except for a few malcontents, you just don't see office workers in unions. Maybe some day conditions will change here, but right now I don't see that it will help me in any way to be bargained for by some outside union lawyer or union leader. In fact, it might even hurt because unions, as we all know, want equal pay for equal work and have no rewards for individual merit. I don't want to boast, but I'm a very hard worker now. I'd be crazy to strain myself if we had a union contract."

If you were Rogers, what would you say in response to this employee? ■

2. An Overture from a Business Agent

"As you know, the labor contract for the three unionized taxi companies in this city expires on Saturday night," Taxi Drivers Union business agent Monty Everest reminds taxi company owner Ben Dover, "and since the

centralized negotiations with the three of you have now collapsed, it looks like a strike is inevitable.

"But we like you. You're a gentleman who's always treated us fairly and with sensitivity, just like your dad did. Tell you what. Just give me \$10,000 in cash and