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Organizing to Win: Introduction

Abstract

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Keywords

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Introduction

Kate Bronfenbrenner, Sheldon Friedman, Richard W. Hurd, Rudolph A. Oswald, and Ronald L. Seeber

The American labor movement is at a watershed. For the first time since the early years of industrial unionism sixty years ago, there is near-universal agreement among union leaders that the future of the movement depends on massive new organizing. In October 1995, John Sweeney, Richard Trumka, and Linda Chavez-Thompson were swept into the top offices of the AFL-CIO, following a campaign that promised organizing "at an unprecedented pace and scale." Since taking office, the new AFL-CIO leadership team has created a separate organizing department and has committed \$20 million to support coordinated large-scale industry-based organizing drives. In addition, in the summer of 1996, the AFL-CIO launched the "Union Summer" program, which placed more than a thousand college students and young workers in organizing campaigns across the country.

The events at the AFL-CIO are not happening in a vacuum. Simultaneously, some of the nation's other large unions, including the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), and the newly merged Union of Needle Trades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE), have made significant structural adjustments at local and national levels to shift resources into organizing. Other unions, such as the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers (OCAW), and the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU), have filled voids by establishing national organizing departments, reflecting newfound commitment to organizing from the top leadership of these unions. Many other unions, at both national and local levels, have increased their organizing activities significantly.

This influx of resources and commitment comes at a time when union density levels are at their lowest point since the 1930s and many scholars

and pundits have been prepared to write off American unions as relics of a bygone industrial era, important in their time but no longer relevant for the new workplace of the 1990s. Yet recently the familiar litany of union failures and defeats in the nation's media has also given way to coverage of the labor movement's heightened sense of purpose and organizing victories. Whether SEIU's organizing gains among thousands of home health aides on the West Coast, UNITE's string of victories in manufacturing plants in the South, or LIUNA's recent successful campaign with asbestos workers in New York City, some unions are winning and winning big, despite employer opposition and despite an adverse organizing climate.

Individually, each of the efforts we have cited would have been striking for its aggressiveness even a few years ago. They have yet to translate into significant improvements either in union win rates or in the number of workers being organized, but, in combination, these developments reflect a significant strategic shift in focus on the part of American labor. At the core of these union efforts is one overriding goal—to reverse several trends: the decline in membership, stagnation in the organizing effort, and steadily shrinking bargaining and political power. For today's labor leaders, the question is no longer whether they need to make organizing on a massive scale the number-one priority but how that can best be achieved.

Unfortunately, until recently, very little research examined the effectiveness of union organizing strategies and tactics. With this in mind, the AFL-CIO and Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations jointly sponsored a conference in April 1996 aimed at generating new research on the conditions contributing to union success in organizing the unorganized. The twenty papers in this volume, which were presented at that conference, represent a major leap forward in the body of research available to those scholars, practitioners, and members of the general public who want to develop a better understanding of the organizing strategies and issues currently being debated in the labor movement.

Labor's Challenge

The recent stirrings in the labor movement come at a time when private-sector union density levels have reached their lowest point since the early 1930s. A combination of aggressive organizing, economic expansion, and a favorable political, legal, and social climate allowed for unprecedented growth in union organizing and power in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, culminating in 1946, when the union share of the workforce peaked at 37 percent. Although membership continued to grow in absolute terms through the 1970s, unions failed to keep pace with the rapidly expanding workforce. After 1946, the percentage of the labor force belonging

to unions dropped slowly but steadily to 21 percent by 1980. Thereafter, the decline continued, and membership dipped below 15 percent in 1995 (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS] 1940-80; Bureau of National Affairs [BNA] 1996:D19).

With only 11 percent of the private-sector labor force now organized, the labor movement stands at a critical juncture. More than 300,000 new members must be recruited each year merely to keep up with the growth of the labor force and compensate for the thousands of union jobs lost each year as a result of layoffs and plant closings. Clearly, millions more must be organized if the labor movement is ever going to recover the membership base it enjoyed in the decade following World War II.

There has been extensive debate in both the labor and academic community over the reasons for the decline in union density.¹ Several explanations have been highlighted, including the changing economic and political climate, growing opposition to unions from employers, deficiencies in the law, and declining effort on the part of unions.

Most labor activists and scholars agree that several gradual but dramatic shifts in the economy have contributed to the challenges unions face today. The rise of global competition, capital flight to low-wage countries and the nonunion Sun Belt, and the transition from a manufacturing economy to a service economy all are interrelated changes and have resulted in significant job loss in unionized industries. These broader economic changes have been coupled with equally dramatic technological changes and changes in work organization that have resulted in both significant losses of union jobs and an increasing reliance on a more flexible and more transitory contingent workforce of part-time, temporary, and contract employees. These pressures have been reinforced by government economic policies, especially trade liberalization and deregulation.

In spite of the importance of these changes, they offer only a partial explanation for the decline in unionization. In their comprehensive article reviewing research on factors contributing to union growth and decline, Gary N. Chaison and Joseph B. Rose (1991) conclude that although the changes in the economic environment have been important, they are responsible for less than one-third of union decline in the United States.

One thing is clear—the contraction in union density does not stem from a lack of interest by America's workers. Many millions of unorganized workers desire the benefits of union representation. Recent polls consistently show that more than one-third of all nonunionized workers would vote in favor of union representation today if given the chance to do so in

1. See Chaison and Rose 1991, Lawler 1990, Freeman 1985, Block and Premack 1983, and Fiorito and Greer 1982 for summaries of research on union decline.

their workplaces. The percentages are even higher for women workers, people of color, and younger workers (Lipset 1986; Freeman and Rogers 1994; Hart Associates and the Mellman Group 1996).

Polls also show that millions of additional workers would vote for union representation were it not for employer opposition. After all, in the public sector, where aggressive employer opposition to unionization is extremely rare, union win rates and victory margins are well over 85 percent (Bronfenbrenner and Juravich 1995a). After reviewing evidence on the relationship between public attitudes toward unions and density rates, Chaison and Rose dismiss claims that “[worker] hostility towards unions may influence the ability of unions to recruit new members” (1991:30). They point instead to industrial relations policy and employer opposition as the most important explanations for union decline.

It is no accident that union density peaked in 1946, the year before enactment of the Taft-Hartley amendments to the Wagner Act. The amendments codified into law the decisions of an increasingly conservative National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and federal judiciary, as the national political climate shifted from the New Deal toward a more business-friendly orientation. Taft-Hartley included strict limits on union organizing and mutual aid tactics while granting employers greater latitude in opposing unionization. In the postwar years, employers became more aggressive in their efforts to contain unionization to already organized industries (Harris 1982). The labor movement failed to respond effectively to this attack. Instead of redoubling their organizing efforts, most unions concentrated energy and resources on servicing their current members.

Although expansion in union density halted after Taft-Hartley, the full force of the changes in the legal climate for organizing was not felt immediately because unions were at their peak of economic power. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, with union membership declining absolutely in the private sector, employers became more aggressive and union-avoidance strategies more sophisticated. In addition, open violations of the laws increased. As Richard Freeman found in his 1985 study of employer behavior in union organizing campaigns: “From 1960 to 1980 the number of all employer unfair labor practice charges rose fourfold; the number of charges involving a firing for union activity rose threefold; and the number of workers awarded back pay or reinstated into their jobs rose fivefold (53).”

In the 1970s and 1980s, this antiunion offensive spawned an entire industry of management consultants who advised corporate America on how best to remain “union free.” Employers and their consultants were emboldened in their union-busting efforts by a perception that they had support from the highest levels of government, especially after Ronald Reagan’s 1981 discharge and replacement of the striking workers in the Professional

Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO). Today, aggressive employer opposition to unions has become even more pervasive in the private sector. Workers who wish to form unions routinely encounter legal delays, intimidation, harassment, and discrimination. A recent study conducted by the labor ministries of the United States, Canada, and Mexico found that in the period 1992–95, more than one-third of U.S. employers faced with NLRB representation elections discharged workers for union activity, more than half threatened a full or partial shutdown of the company if the union succeeded in organizing the facility, and between 15 and 40 percent made illegal changes in wages, benefits, and working conditions, gave bribes or special favors to those who opposed the union, or used electronic surveillance of union activists during organizing campaigns (Commission for Labor Cooperation 1997).²

Even when an organizing campaign succeeds, employer opposition continues. Through a combination of legal and illegal bargaining strategies and management practices, including the discharges, threats, and intimidation so common in organizing campaigns, employers have succeeded in holding down the first contract rate to approximately two-thirds of all certification election wins (Cooke 1985; Bronfenbrenner 1994; Pavy and Smith 1996; Hurd 1996). In short, employer opposition and weak and poorly enforced labor laws have emerged as primary explanations for the decline of unions.

The right to form and join a union is a fundamental human and civil right. Its exercise should not require extraordinary personal heroism or subject workers to employer harassment and retribution. As the framers of the Wagner Act intended, the decision to form or join a union should be up to the workers, not their employers. Major overhaul of U.S. labor law and practice would be required to enforce this right.

At the same time, unions cannot simply look toward deficiencies in the law and other external conditions to explain their flagging fortunes. Unions themselves bear significant responsibility for the decline in unionization. In the decades after World War II, during a period when unions had both resources and bargaining power to launch massive organizing efforts, few unions organized aggressively. In 1970, unions organized 0.5 percent of the private-sector workforce through NLRB elections, compared with 1.5 percent in 1950. By 1980, this share had fallen to 0.25 and by 1985 to 0.10 percent (Freeman and Rebeck 1989:31). Whole sectors of the economy, particularly low-wage service and light manufacturing firms employing large numbers of women and people of color, were left nearly untouched by union activity. Nor were the growing ranks of professional, technical, and

2. For a thorough discussion of the range of practices by employers during organizing campaigns, see the four chapters in "Part II: Organizing and the Law," in Friedman et al. 1994.

white-collar employees, except for those in the public sector, targeted for organizing.

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a burst of new organizing among health-care and clerical workers, dominated by such unions as SEIU, District 65 of the United Automobile Workers (UAW), and Local 1199 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). Coupled with the rapid growth in public-sector organizing, these new initiatives brought thousands of women and people of color into the labor movement. During the last two decades, however, most unions have continued to run fairly low-intensity traditional campaigns that relied on gate leafleting, mass mailings, and a few large meetings. Although those tactics may have been enough to organize workers in the more friendly organizing climate of the 1940s, they are clearly inadequate to overcome the ever-more sophisticated and more aggressive employer opposition workers routinely face in attempting to organize in the private sector today (Hurd 1997; Bronfenbrenner and Juravich 1995c; Bronfenbrenner 1997).

By the mid-1980s, unions were running fewer and fewer organizing campaigns in smaller and smaller units. At the same time, the nation's largest industrial unions had lost hundreds of thousands of members as unionized companies shut down, "automated," or drastically reduced production. By 1990, as win rates continued to hover below 50 percent, many unions began to recognize that they seriously needed to reevaluate both the resources they were committing to organizing and the intensity and quality of their organizing campaigns. They understood that they could not wait for a less hostile climate but instead needed to focus their efforts on the one element of the organizing process that was within their control—their organizing strategies and tactics. As the new officers of the AFL-CIO have put it, "The most critical challenge facing unions today is organizing. . . . We must first organize despite the law if we are ever going to organize with the law" (Sweeney, Trumka, and Chavez-Thompson 1995:5).

Why Organizing Matters

The outcome of organized labor's revitalization efforts will have influence well beyond national union offices and local union halls. The economic impact of the decline in union bargaining power has been felt throughout the workforce. Although not the only factor, this decline is closely tied to the rising economic polarization in American society. As a vast academic literature attests, unions raise wages. Unions also reduce wage inequality, increase equity (through the principle of "equal pay for equal work"), reduce gender- and race-related pay differentials, and tend to reduce age- and tenure-related pay differentials (Freeman 1992; Spalter-Roth, Hartmann, and Collins 1994). In a nation in which the constitutional right of free

speech does not extend to the private-sector workplace, unions are also the only true vehicles for workplace democracy and the only means through which workers gain an independent voice regarding their daily working conditions.

According to the 1995 *Economic Report of the President*, a "significant portion of the increase in wage inequality during the last fifteen years" is due to the decline in unionization (President's Council of Economic Advisors 1995:182). Falling real wages, growing disparities in wealth, economic insecurity, and the erosion of the middle class are all tied in some way to the diminished presence of union representation. Even though unions most directly benefit those covered by collective bargaining agreements, the spillover to nonunion workers from a strong labor movement is substantial.

As union density declined in the 1970s and 1980s, the influence of the union sector on the wages and working conditions of nonunion workers diminished. Paradoxically, this decline occurred while productivity was rising. Since 1979, productivity has increased by 21 percent. Over the same period, the average weekly earnings of America's production and nonsupervisory workers has fallen by 12 percent after adjusting for inflation (AFL-CIO Department of Economic Research 1996; President's Council of Economic Advisors 1996:330, 332). Without strong unions, workers have been unable to capitalize on those gains in productivity and turn them into wage and benefit improvements. Meanwhile, without the restraining power of unions, corporate leaders have been emboldened to expropriate an ever-larger share of profits for themselves. Fifty years ago, executives were paid forty times the earnings of average workers; today, executives' salaries are more than two hundred times those of workers (Jost 1996). Since 1979, 97 percent of the aggregate increase in income has gone to the richest 20 percent of households (AFL-CIO Department of Economic Research 1996; U.S. Department of Commerce 1995).

Lower levels of unionization have also led to a loss in political power. The labor movement has been able to contribute to the enactment of legislation that benefits workers generally, such as civil rights laws, wage and hour regulations, plant-closing legislation, family and medical leave provisions, and occupational safety and health laws. In the last fifty years, however, even during periods of relative strength, unions have not been able to press successfully for "pro-union" legislation, such as labor law reform or a ban on hiring replacements for strikers. Today, with union density at its lowest point in over sixty years, even the protective laws are under attack as never before. At federal and state levels, conservative legislators are attempting to roll back long-standing protections, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), the Davis Bacon Act, state workers' compensation, and the National Labor Relation Act's ban on company unions.

Labor's declining political power became starkly evident when the much-

heralded Dunlop Commission, established by President Bill Clinton in 1993, failed to recommend the kind of substantive labor law reforms necessary to guarantee workers and unions their rights to organize and bargain collectively with their employers.³ In the aftermath of the commission's recommendations, American labor leaders were faced with the grim reality that substantive labor law reform, no matter how badly it was needed or how well it was justified, could not be achieved without first significantly expanding labor's political power through massive new organizing of unorganized workers.

Research on Organizing

Given the prominence of the issue, it is surprising how little is known about the strategy, tactics, and process by which groups of workers form and join unions. Although there has been considerable macro-level research documenting the magnitude of labor's decline, there has been much less micro-level research that looks intensively at the organizing process itself, particularly the role played by union strategies and tactics. Furthermore, much of the academic research suffers because the samples are small, the databases are limited, and the researchers lack an understanding of how the union organizing process actually works. Most industrial relations research on private-sector organizing continues to focus primarily on the election, unit, and employer variables easily accessible from NLRB data. From this research we have learned much about the influence of environmental factors, the National Labor Relations Board, and worker attitudes toward unions. Despite the great volume of research, however, few studies examine the actual process of union organizing campaigns and the importance of union characteristics and strategies in determining election outcomes.

There are several different streams of quantitative research on organizing: studies of workers' and the public's attitudes toward unions, individual voter decision studies, bargaining unit-level studies, organizational-level studies, and time-series research. Complementing the quantitative research is a small body of qualitative case study literature.

The attitudinal research on organizing focuses primarily on the relationship between workers' attitudes toward unions and organizing success. This research includes studies that compare differences in attitudes and characteristics between union members and nonmembers and between unorganized workers "with a propensity to organize" and those who do not see any benefit in bringing a union into their workplace. Several of these studies, such as the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey conducted by the Univer-

3. For a summary of the problems facing the commission, see Friedman et al. 1994.

sity of Michigan, have relied on national surveys (Kochan 1979; Farber 1983; Jarley and Fiorito 1991) or on Gallup and Harris Poll data on workers' changing attitudes toward work and the labor movement (Bok and Dunlop 1970; Lipset 1986). This body of research can be helpful in determining which groups of workers have the most positive attitudes toward unions and which variables contribute most in determining their attitudes toward unions. Since these studies measure attitudes and not actual union votes, however, they do not necessarily tell us which workers would be most likely to vote for a union in an actual campaign. To date, none of this research has examined the role played by union organizing strategies in influencing and changing workers' attitudes toward unions.

Individual voter studies examine the factors affecting individual workers' decisions to vote for or against a union in a specific certification election. The primary factors analyzed in these studies include job satisfaction, attitudes toward unions, individual characteristics, campaign characteristics, and the organizing climate (Getman, Goldberg, and Herman 1976; LeLounarn 1980; Schriesheim 1978; Wheeler and McClendon 1991). Although these studies better reflect the propensity of workers to organize than do surveys of workers' attitudes, they suffer from serious methodological limitations. Particularly problematic is their limited scope and generalizability, since most involve small samples of workers employed at a single work site.

The largest body of quantitative research on organizing includes bargaining unit-level studies of NLRB certification elections (e.g., Cooke 1983; Seeber 1983; Lawler 1984; Reed 1989; Maranto and Fiorito 1987; Hurd and McElwain 1988). This research tends to focus on the effect that external economic and political factors, combined with union and employer characteristics and tactics, have on certification election outcomes or the percentage of votes for unionization. Most of this research has been based on NLRB election tapes, thereby limiting the data to such variables as unit size, election type, number of days between petition and election, industry, unit, and unfair labor practices. Researchers have supplemented these data with employer and organizing climate data collected from other sources for variables such as unemployment rates, firm versus industry wage differentials, corporate structure, and regional demographic and political variables. The NLRB data have given researchers easy access to comprehensive and representative samples. But, in return for the large sample, these studies sacrifice important insights into the organizing process because there is no way to acquire more than minimal information from the NLRB on bargaining unit demographics, employer tactics, and union characteristics and tactics.

A small number of studies have focused on the variance in organizing trends among specific unions, employers, or industries (e.g., Craft and Ex-

tejt 1983; Reed 1992). Although this research has the potential to provide important insights into the relationships among union characteristics, tactics, organizing resources, and organizing success rates, to date these studies are few in number and limited in scope.

The final category of quantitative research includes time-series studies that focus on factors contributing to changes in union density, percentage union votes, or union election win rates over a specific period of time (e.g., Ashenfelter and Pencavel 1969; Bain and Elsheikh 1976; Dickens and Leonard 1985; Rose and Chaison 1990). These factors include economic, political, and legal variables as well as changes in workforce demographics and employer and union structure and tactics. Although time-series research may give us a better understanding of the impact of a changing environment, it provides little concrete information that can aid unions currently attempting to revitalize their organizing strategies, since there are no data on organizing strategies that would enable us to track changes in strategy and tactics over time.

In combination, the quantitative research on organizing has taught us a great deal about the influence of environmental factors, the National Labor Relations Board, and workers' attitudes toward unions. More recently, a great many studies have focused on employers' behavior during certification elections and on the effectiveness of employer strategies in thwarting union organizing efforts. With the exception of recent research by Kate Bronfenbrenner (1997), Bronfenbrenner and Tom Juravich (1995b), and Richard B. Peterson, Thomas Lee, and Barbara Finnegan (1992), most of these studies fail to address the critical role played by union strategies in the organizing process.

When union strategies are included in certification election models along with organizing climate, bargaining unit demographics, and employer tactics and characteristics, union strategies have been found to play a greater role in explaining election outcomes than any other group of variables. As recent work by Bronfenbrenner has shown, in a climate of intense and pervasive employer opposition, union success in NLRB elections depends most on the quality and intensity of union organizing campaigns (1995b, 1997).

Although the role of union strategies in the organizing process has been largely ignored in the quantitative research, since the mid-1980s a small body of qualitative case study research has been developing that closely examines union campaigns (e.g., Green and Tilly 1987; Hurd 1989; Fetonte and Braden 1990; Lynn and Brister 1989). These studies typically contain descriptive analyses of one or more union drives, based primarily on interviews with organizers, bargaining unit members, and employers. Supplementing these sources are union and management campaign material,

NLRB records, BNA reports, and newspaper articles. Unlike other academic research, case studies rarely include statistical analysis and are often written by labor educators and union staff members rather than by industrial relations researchers. In fact, many of the authors of these studies are involved in the campaigns as participant observers. Because the authors are much more likely to have organizing experience or familiarity with organizing campaigns, these studies often do a much better job of capturing the reality of the organizing process, particularly the complex interaction of employer and union characteristics and tactics, than many quantitative studies.

There are some major weaknesses associated with case study research, however. Without random sampling, the cases selected are often unrepresentative of the typical campaign. Many focus on major union victories, large and nationally known white-collar bargaining units, which are not representative of the majority of union organizing campaigns. Further, by focusing on one or two campaigns, the researchers may be unable to determine how much of what occurred was simply specific to the conditions prevailing in those campaigns. Too many of these studies lack critical analysis, neglecting or avoiding the weaknesses of the union campaign. Nonetheless, despite these limitations, case studies can play a very important role in clarifying the organizing process and in filling in the gaping holes in the quantitative research.

Origins of This Book

Despite the value of this organizing research, with few exceptions it has not contributed in a practical way to union efforts to confront the organizing challenge. What is missing from most of the studies is the critical role of union strategies and tactics in the organizing process and how those strategies interact with broader environmental factors, bargaining unit demographics, and employer tactics and characteristics to determine outcomes. The editors of this volume believe that the labor movement could clearly benefit from sound research that addresses these issues.

It was in this spirit that the AFL-CIO Department of Economic Research and the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University jointly set up the conference that led to the development of the research and papers on union organizing that has resulted in this book. In setting up the conference, we sought to encourage the presentation of both case studies and quantitative research on innovative union organizing strategies across all industries and sectors of the economy. In addition, we sought to encourage joint union and academic interaction on research projects. Often unions have information and data of great interest to academics but have neither the time nor interest necessary to analyze the information. Academics have

the necessary research tools but often lack access to concrete data and information. We sought to bring together these two groups to produce research that would provide fresh insights into the current state of union organizing in both the public and private sectors and to make that research accessible to both trade unionists and academics.

In our call for conference papers, we also sought to encourage research in previously neglected aspects of the union organizing process, particularly non-NLRB and community-based campaigns, industry-based studies, and both qualitative and quantitative studies that focused on innovative union organizing strategies and the relationship between those strategies and employer behavior, bargaining unit demographics, and workers' and the public's attitudes toward unions. We received more than sixty proposals for papers for our conference, reflecting the renewed interest and commitment to organizing in both the labor and academic communities.

The conference, which was held from March 31 to April 2, 1996, brought together more than two hundred trade unionists and academics from a wide range of disciplines who support workers' rights to organize and was opened by AFL-CIO president John Sweeney, who outlined his administration's agenda for organizing. Nearly forty papers were presented, all of which offered new and original research on factors contributing to union success or failure in organizing campaigns. In addition to generating new research that greatly expanded our knowledge and understanding of the organizing process, the conference provided a rare and valuable opportunity for dialogue between union organizers on the front lines and academics whose research has been dedicated to the study of organizing.

Outline of the Volume

This volume contains a selection of the papers from the Cornell University-AFL-CIO conference. We have grouped the papers into five parts, reflecting common themes. Part I, "Strategic Initiatives in Union Organizing," sets the stage for the volume by focusing on broad questions of strategy. Part II, "Overcoming Barriers to Worker Support for Unions," offers insight and a variety of tactical suggestions on the relationship of the labor movement to unorganized workers. Part III, "Community-Based Organizing," presents a series of case studies that share the common focus of union organizing rooted in a broader community-based strategy. Part IV, "Building Membership and Public Support for Organizing," contains case studies that analyze membership involvement and the development of alliances with clergy and other community groups. Finally, part V, "Organizing Initiatives by Industry and Sector," includes industry-based essays that analyze experiences from the coal mining, construction, and steel industries and from the public sector.

The essays we have included represent a diversity of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In combination, they make a significant contribution to filling the void in research on union organizing strategies and to addressing some of the methodological weaknesses permeating so much of the previous research in this area.⁴ The quantitative studies are representative of four of the major research streams, including studies on workers' attitudes toward unions, individual voter studies, bargaining unit-level election outcome studies, and organizational research. Yet, unlike so much of the earlier research, the essays in this volume provide a much richer portrait of the organizing process and the critical role played by union strategies. The essays by Jack Fiorito and Angela Young and by Dan Cornfield and his coauthors use population survey data to examine the potential role union strategies can play in influencing workers' attitudes toward unions before and during organizing campaigns in an atmosphere of anti-union employer tactics or when combined with community involvement, respectively. Similarly, the essays by Larry Cohen and Richard Hurd and by Roger D. Weikle, Hoyt N. Wheeler, and John A. McClendon examine the effect of employer opposition on workers' propensity to vote for a union but, unlike earlier individual voter studies, go on to examine the implications of their findings for union organizing strategies. The bargaining unit-level studies, including James Rundle's and the two essays by Kate Bronfenbrenner and Tom Juravich, build on Bronfenbrenner's earlier work on union strategies by focusing on new areas (Rundle's work on employee involvement) and new sectors (Juravich and Bronfenbrenner's public-sector study) and by tracking changes in employer and union behavior over time (Bronfenbrenner and Juravich). Organizational studies by Immanuel Ness and by Fernando Gapasin and Howard Wial lay the groundwork for future quantitative research on non-NLRB organizing strategies and the role of central labor councils, respectively, in the organizing process.

The qualitative research included in this volume also makes an important contribution by addressing some of the methodological and analytical weaknesses so prevalent in earlier case study research. These include the seminal essay by Roger Waldinger and his coauthors in which a group of scholars from a wide range of social science disciplines provide an in-depth critical analysis of the Los Angeles Justice for Janitors campaign; Gregor Murray's comparative analysis of the disparate organizing strategies of two districts of Steelworkers in Canada; Katherine Sciacchitano's comprehensive analysis of the United Electrical Workers' organizing and first contract vic-

4. The papers were chosen based on the quality of the research and analysis and the contribution they make to our understanding of successful union organizing strategies. The views and recommendations of the authors are not necessarily fully shared by the editors, the AFL-CIO, or Cornell University.

tory among African American workers at the Steeltech plant in inner-city Milwaukee; and Bill Fletcher, Jr., and Richard Hurd's important analytical work on the implications of the servicing and organizing models of unionism for union organizing success. Going well beyond the somewhat superficial pieces that constitute so much of case study research, these essays do an excellent job of expanding the framework of analysis beyond an individual union in an individual campaign to address critically the broader social, economic, and strategic issues that affect organizing success.

Other case studies follow a more traditional model by telling the story of one or more campaigns, but once again they greatly expand our knowledge and understanding of the importance of union strategies by focusing on new areas neglected in previous research. Included in this group are essays on the role of clergy in organizing, by Ronald Peters and Theresa Merrill; on rank-and-file participation in organizing, by Lowell Turner and by Bruce Nissen; on community-based organizing, by Ruth Needleman; and on organizing in specific industries such as coal, by Adrienne M. Birecree, and construction, by Janet Lewis and Bill Mirand and by Brian Condit and his coauthors.

Conclusion

The reemphasis in the labor movement on organizing presents a unique opportunity to conduct a critical analysis of which organizing strategies are most effective in rapidly and dramatically reversing labor's declining membership and power. Until now, there was a paucity of academic research that unions could use to aid them in their efforts. By significantly expanding this body of research and by encouraging research of a higher standard in both method and relevance, this volume provides union leaders with information and analysis to aid them in their current organizing efforts and, at the same time, lays the foundation for future research.

This volume is only a beginning, however. As the labor movement rapidly expands its organizing efforts and initiatives, there is a great need for continued research on effective strategies and tactics. It is our hope that this book will spawn more extensive research on areas first addressed here, such as non-NLRB organizing, industry- and community-based campaigns, and the role of central labor councils, community groups, and volunteer organizers. We also hope that this work generates research in critical aspects of organizing that are not addressed here, such as the role of race and gender in organizing, strategic targeting, training and recruitment of organizers, union commitment of financial resources, and large-scale multiunion campaigns. There is clearly a great deal of work to be done and many critical questions that still need to be answered.

Will the AFL-CIO and individual unions be able to help large numbers of unorganized workers attain union representation without labor law reform? Will unions be able to shift the necessary resources to organizing so as to overcome a hostile employer community and weak and poorly enforced labor laws? Will wider use of the best available organizing tactics and strategies help unions surmount their daunting challenges? Will these organizing initiatives play a significant role in reversing the deteriorating economic and social conditions of most American workers? These are among the questions that this volume leaves with the reader and the questions that face everyone who values and supports a strong and independent labor movement. The answers will be significant in shaping the labor movement, our system of industrial relations, and the fate of American workers for a generation to come.