

DBQ**ORGANIZED LABOR**

CHAPTER 18

Directions: The following question requires you to construct a coherent essay that integrates your interpretation of Documents A-H *and* your knowledge of the period referred to in the position. High scores will be earned only by essays that both cite key pieces of evidence from the documents and draw on outside knowledge of the period. Some of the documents have been edited, and wording and punctuation have been modernized. Be sure to:

1. Carefully read the document-based question. Consider what you already know about this topic. How would you answer the question if you had no documents to examine?
2. Now, read each document carefully, underlining key phrases and words that address the document-based question. You may also wish to use the margin to make brief notes.
3. Based on your own knowledge and on the information found in the documents, formulate a thesis that directly answers the question.
4. Organize supportive and relevant information into a brief outline.
5. Write a well-organized essay proving your thesis. The essay should be logically presented and should include information both from the documents and from your own knowledge outside of the documents.

Question: How successful was organized labor in improving the position of workers in the period from 1875 to 1900? Analyze the factors that contributed to the level of success achieved.

Document A

Source: Historical Statistics of the United States

HOURS AND WAGES OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS
1875-1891

	AVERAGE DAILY HOURS	INDEX OF AVERAGE DAILY WAGES (January 1860 =100)
1875	9.9	169.2
1876	9.9	158.6
1877	9.9	146.3
1878	9.9	140.7
1879	9.9	137.9
1880	9.9	142.7
1881	9.9	160.1
1882	9.9	165.1
1883	9.9	166.0
1884	9.9	168.5
1885	9.9	169.9
1886	9.8	170.3
1887	9.7	170.1
1888	9.7	170.9
1889	9.6	170.1
1890	9.6	172.7
1891	9.4	172.5

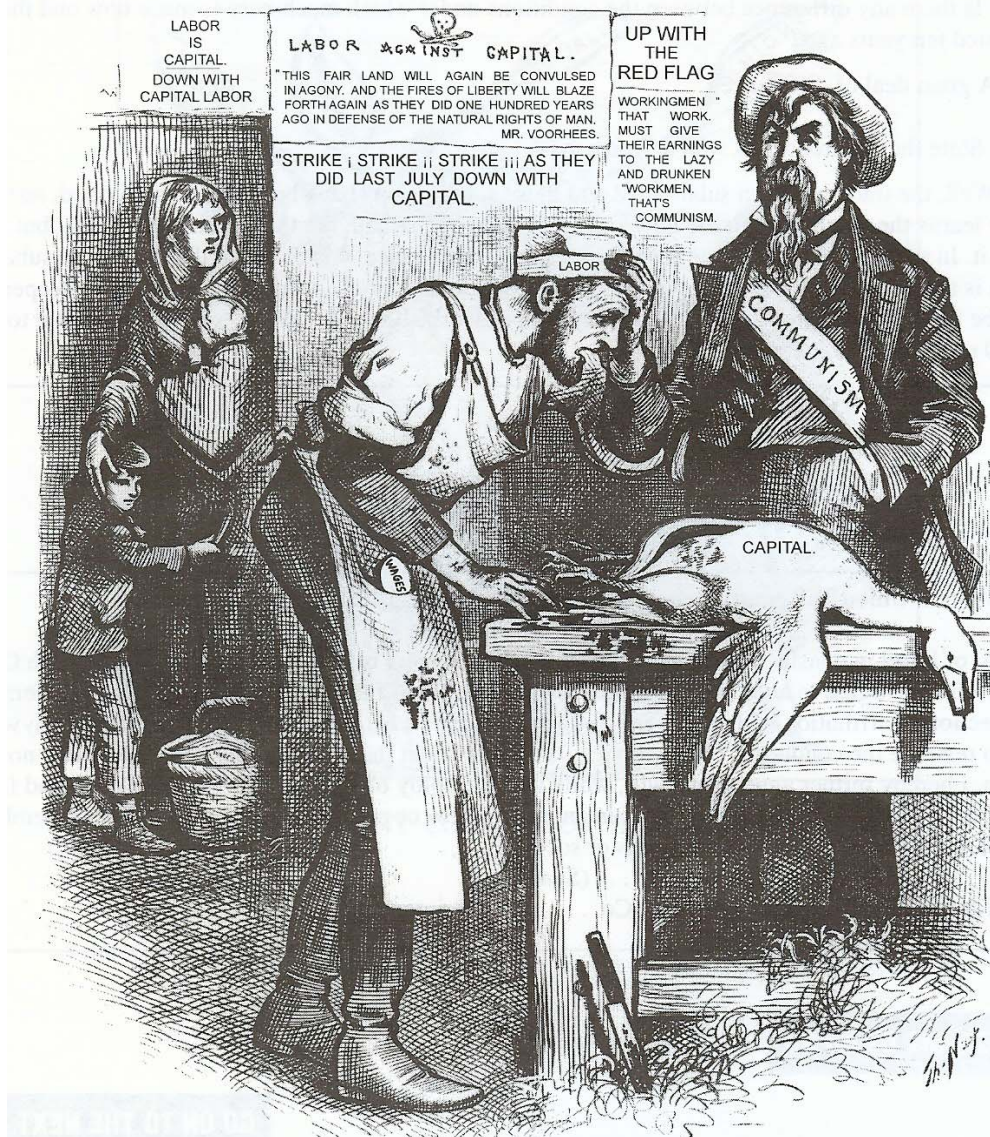
Document B

Source: Editorial, *The New York Times*, July 18, 1877

. . . [T]he strike is apparently hopeless, and must be regarded as nothing more than a rash and spiteful demonstration of resentment by men too ignorant or too reckless to understand their own interests. . . . But if the strike on the Baltimore and Ohio Road is a foolish one, its history up to the present time shows that those who are engaged in it are not only bold and determined, but that they have the sympathy of a large part of the community in which they live. . . .

Document C

Source: Thomas Nast cartoon in *Harper's Weekly*, 1878



ALWAYS KILLING THE GOOSE THAT LAYS THE GOLDEN EGG.

COMMUNISTIC STATESMAN (without responsibility). "Nothing in it, after all; it's too bad; now I thought he was just full of them."

Photo Courtesy of the Newberry Library

Document D

Source: The testimony of a machinist before the Senate Committee on Labor and Capital, 1883

Question: Is there any difference between the conditions under which machinery is made now and those which existed ten years ago?

Answer: A great deal of difference.

Question: State the differences as well as you can.

Answer: Well, the trade has been subdivided and those subdivisions have been again subdivided, so that a man never learns the machinist's trade now. Ten years ago he learned, not the whole of the trade, but a fair portion of it. In the case of making the sewing-machine, for instance, you find that the trade is so subdivided that a man is not considered a machinist at all. In that way machinery is produced a great deal cheaper than it used to be formerly, and in fact, through this system of work, 100 men are able to do now what it took 300 or 400 men to do fifteen years ago.

Document E

Source: Western Union Telegraph Company employee contract, 1883

I, [name] of [city] in consideration of my present reemployment by the Western Union Telegraph Co. hereby promise and agree to and with the said company that I will forthwith abandon any and all membership, connection or affiliation with any organization or society, whether secret or open, which in anywise attempts to regulate the conditions of my services or the payment thereof while in the employment now undertaken. I hereby further agree that I will, while in the employ of said company, render good and faithful service to the best of my ability, and will not in anywise renew or re-enter upon any relations or membership whatsoever in or with any such organizations or society.

Dated 1883. Signed Address (Seal)

Accepted for the Western Union Telegraph Co. , Superintendent

Document F

Source: Coroner's list of the killed, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, July 7, 1892 (*The New York Times*, July 8, 1892)

The following are the names of those killed yesterday as furnished by the Coroner:

J. W. KLINE, Pinkerton detective, of Chicago

JOSEPH SOTAK, a striker of Homestead

PETER FERRIS, a laborer at the Homestead plant

SILAS WAIN of Homestead, who was watching the battle from the mill yard

JOHN E. MORRIS, employed in the steel works at Homestead

THOMAS WELDON of Homestead

EDWARD CONNORS, a Pinkerton detective of New York

BORITZ MARKOWISKY of Homestead

PETER HEISE of Homestead

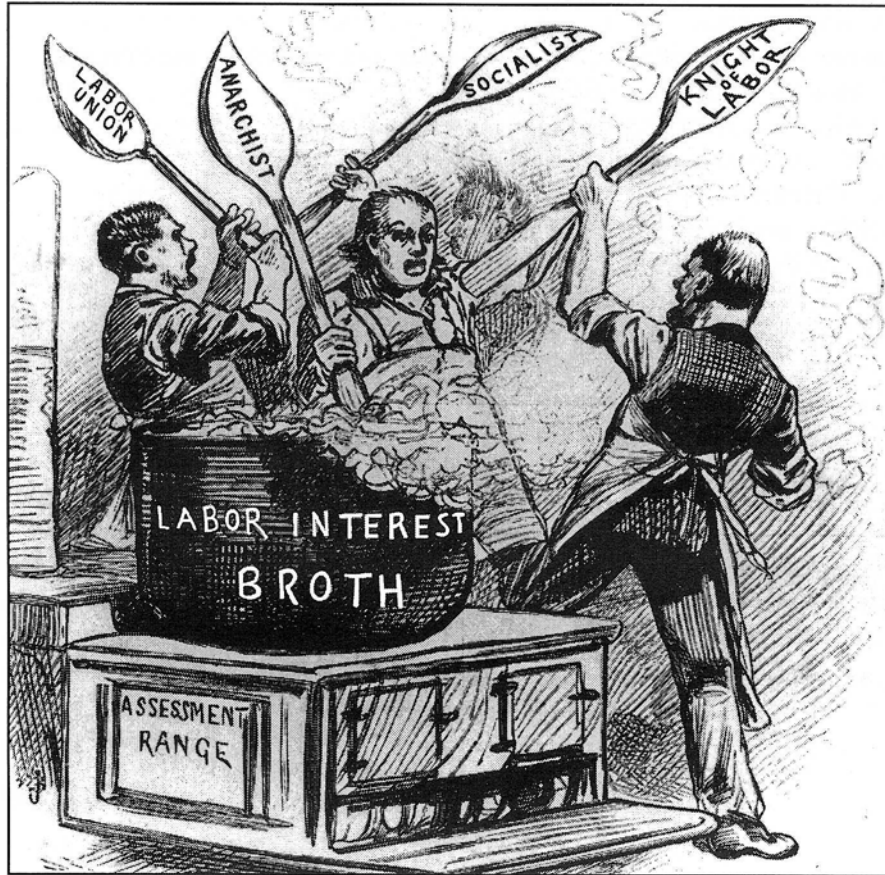
ROBERT FOSTER of Homestead

WILLIAM JOHNSON of Homestead

A number of others are reported dead, but the Coroner has no official notification of their death.

Document G

Source: *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, January 8, 1887



TOO MANY COOKS SPOIL THE BROTH

Culver Pictures

Document H

Source: United States Supreme Court, *In re Debs*, 1895

The national government, given power by the Constitution to regulate interstate commerce, has by express statute assumed jurisdiction over such commerce when carried upon railroads. It is charged, therefore, with the duty of keeping those highways of interstate commerce free from obstruction, for it has always been recognized as one of the powers and duties of a government to remove obstructions from the highway under its control. . . .

Document I

Source: Testimony of Samuel Gompers before a commission established by the House of Representatives on the Relations and Conditions of Capital and Labor, 1899

The working people find that improvements in the methods of production and distribution are constantly being made, and unless they occasionally strike, or have the power to enter upon a strike, the improvements will all go to the employer and all the injuries to the employees. . . . The American Republic was not established without some suffering, without some sacrifice, and no tangible right has yet been achieved in the interest of the people unless it has been secured by sacrifices and persistency.

Referencing the Documents:

1. John Smith, in *History of Virginia*, said: “. . . .”
2. In Document A, John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony agreed with. . . .
3. In the Wage and Price Regulations in Connecticut, . . . (Document E).