

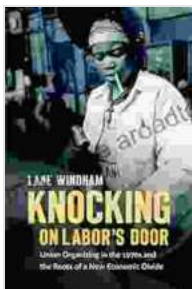
# Union Organizing in the 1970s: The Roots of the New Economic Divide and Justice

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The 1970s was a pivotal decade for union organizing in the United States. The labor movement experienced significant growth and momentum, leading to major gains for workers in terms of wages, benefits, and working conditions. However, this period also marked the beginning of a decline in union membership and power, which has continued to this day.

## The Rise of Union Organizing

The 1970s witnessed a resurgence of union organizing efforts in various industries, particularly in the public sector. Factors such as rising inflation, stagnant wages, and increasing job insecurity fueled worker discontent and spurred them to seek collective representation.



## Knocking on Labor's Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide (Justice, Power, and Politics)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 17579 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 302 pages



One of the most significant organizing campaigns of this era was the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). AFSCME successfully organized thousands of public sector workers, including teachers, nurses, and sanitation workers, across the country. Other unions, such as the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the United Farm Workers (UFW), also made significant gains during this period.

## **The Impact of Union Organizing**

Union organizing in the 1970s had a profound impact on the lives of workers. Unions fought for and won substantial wage increases, improved benefits, and safer working conditions. They also played a crucial role in promoting equal rights and opportunities for workers, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Unions also played an instrumental role in shaping public policy. They lobbied for legislation that benefited working families, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA).

## **The Roots of the New Economic Divide**

While union organizing in the 1970s brought about significant gains for workers, it also sowed the seeds of the economic divide that exists today. The decline in union membership and power in subsequent decades has

contributed to the growing inequality between the richest and poorest Americans.

One of the factors that contributed to the decline of unions was the shift towards a service-based economy. Service sector jobs are typically low-wage and difficult to organize, making it harder for unions to gain a foothold in these industries.

Another factor was the globalization of the economy. Companies began moving jobs overseas to countries with lower labor costs, further eroding the power of unions in the United States.

### **The Rise of Anti-Union Sentiment**

The decline of unions was also fueled by a rise in anti-union sentiment, particularly among business leaders and politicians. The Reagan administration in the 1980s actively sought to weaken unions through policies that made it more difficult for workers to organize and bargain collectively.

This anti-union rhetoric and policies have continued to this day, with some states passing laws that make it illegal for public sector workers to strike or even pay union dues.

### **The Fight for Justice**

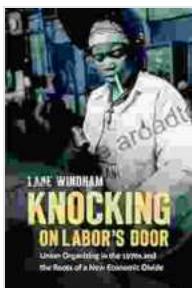
Despite the challenges faced by unions in recent decades, the fight for justice and economic equality continues. Unions remain an essential voice for working people, advocating for fair wages, safe working conditions, and equal rights.

The legacy of union organizing in the 1970s serves as a reminder of the power of collective action. When workers unite, they can achieve meaningful improvements in their lives and the lives of their families.

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The 1970s was a transformative decade for union organizing in the United States. Union organizing efforts experienced significant growth and momentum, leading to major gains for workers. However, the decline in union membership and power in subsequent decades has contributed to the growing economic divide that exists today.

The fight for justice and economic equality continues, with unions remaining an essential voice for working people. The legacy of union organizing in the 1970s serves as a reminder of the power of collective action and the importance of standing up for the rights of all workers.



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