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UNIT 2 GUIDED NOTES: LABOR UNIONS, POLITICS & EDUCATION

1. Labor Unions ó a group of workers (laborers) all in the same industry (job) who organize their efforts to create better working conditions
 - a. Reasons for forming unions:
 - i. Long Hours/No Benefits (pg. 244): One of the largest employers, the steel mills, often demanded **a seven-day work week**. Seamstresses, like factory workers in most industries, worked **12** or more hours a day, **six** days a week. Employees were not entitled to **vacation, sick leave, unemployment compensation** or reimbursement for injuries suffered on the job.
 - ii. Unsafe Working Conditions (pg. 244): Yet injuries were common. In **dirty**, poorly ventilated factories, workers had to perform **repetitive**, mind-dulling tasks, sometimes with **dangerous** or **faulty** equipment. In **1882**, an average of **675** laborers were killed in **work-related** accidents each week.
 - iii. Ridiculously Low Wages (pgs. 244-245): In addition, **wages** were so **low** that most families could not **survive** unless **everyone** had a job. Between **1890** and **1910**, for example, the number of **women** working for wages **doubled** from 4 million to more than 8 million. **Twenty** percent of the boys and **10** percent of the girls under age **15** - some as young as five years old ó also held **full-time** jobs. With little time or energy left for school, child laborers forfeited their futures to help their families make ends meet. Not surprisingly, sweatshop jobs paid the **lowest** wages ó often as little as **27** cents for a child's **14** hour day.
2. Early Labor Unions (pg.245)
 - a. Skilled workers had formed **small, local** unions since the late 1700s. The **first** large scale national organization of laborers, the **National Labor Union** (NLU), was formed in **1866** by ironworker **William H. Sylvis**. The refusal of some NLU local chapters to admit **African Americans** led to the creation of the **Colored National Labor Union** (CNLU). Nevertheless, NLU membership grew to 640,000. In 1868, the NLU persuaded **Congress** to legalize an **eight-hour work day** for government workers.
 - b. NLU organizers concentrated on linking existing local unions. In 1869, **Uriah Stephens** focused his attention on **individual** workers and organized the Noble Order of the **Knights of Labor**. Its motto was "An injury to one is a concern for all." Membership in the Knights of Labor was officially open to **all workers**, regardless of race, gender or degree of skill. Like the NLU, the Knights supported an **eight-hour work day**- and advocated **equal pay for equal work** by men and women. They saw **strikes**, or refusals to work, as a last resort and instead advocated **arbitration**.
3. Main Types of Labor Unions ó As labor activism spread, it diversified. Two major types of unions made great gains under forceful leaders.
 - a. Craft Unionism (pg. 245-246): One approach to the organization of labor was **craft unionism**, which included **skilled** workers from one or more trades. **Samuel Gompers** led the Cigar Makers' International Union to join with other craft unions in 1886. The **American Federation of Labor** (AFL), with Gompers as its **president**, focused on **collective bargaining**, or

negotiation between representatives of labor and management, to reach written agreements on wages, hours, and working conditions. Unlike the Knights of Labor, AFL used strikes as a major tactic.

- b. Industrial Unionism (pg. 246): Some labor leaders felt that unions should include all laborers of skilled and unskilled - in a specific industry. This concept captured the imagination of Eugene V. Debs, who attempted form such an industrial union of the American Railway Union (ARU). Most of the new union's members were unskilled and semiskilled laborers, but skilled engineers and firemen joined too. í Though the ARU, like the Knights of Labor, never recovered from the failure of a major strike, it added to the momentum of union organizing.

4. Strikes Turn Violent (pgs. 247-248)

- a. The Great Strike of 1877: In July 1877, workers for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O) struck to protest their second wage cut in two months. The work stoppage spread to other lines. Most freight and even some passenger traffic, covering over 50,000 miles, was stopped for more than a week. After several state governors asked President Rutherford B. Hayes to intervene, saying that the strikes were impeding interstate commerce, federal troops ended the strike.
- b. The Haymarket Affair: Encouraged by the impact of the 1877 strike, labor leaders continued to press for change. On the evening of May 4, 1886, 3,000 people gathered at Chicago's Haymarket Square to protest police brutality- a striker had been killed and several had been wounded at the McCormick Harvester plant the day before. Rain began to fall at about 10 o'clock, and the crowd was dispersing when police arrived. Then someone tossed a bomb into the police line. Police fired on the workers; seven police officers and several workers died in the chaos that followed.
- c. The Homestead Strike: Despite the violence and rising public anger, workers continued to strike. The writer Hamlin Garland described conditions at the Carnegie Steel Company's Homestead plant in Pennsylvania. The steelworkers finally called a strike on June 29, 1892, after the company president, Henry Clay Frick, announced his plan to cut wages. Frick hired armed guards from the Pinkerton Detective Agency to protect the plant so that he could hire scabs, or strikeholders, to keep it operating. In a pitched battle that left at least three detectives and nine workers dead, the steelworkers forced out the Pinkertons and kept the plant closed until the Pennsylvania National Guard arrived on July 12. The strike continued until November, but by then the union had lost much of its support and gave in to the company.
- d. The Pullman Company Strike: During the panic of 1893 and the economic depression that followed, the Pullman company laid off more than 3,000 of its 5,800 employees and cut the wages of the rest by 25 to 50 percent, without cutting the cost of its employee housing. After paying their rent, many workers took home less than \$6 a week. A strike was called in the spring of 1894, when the Pullman company failed to restore wages or decrease rents. Eugene Debs asked for arbitration, but Pullman refused to negotiate with the strikers. So the ARU began boycotting Pullman trains. After Pullman hired strikebreakers, the strike turned violent, and President Grover Cleveland sent in federal troops. In the bitter aftermath, Debs was jailed, Pullman fired most of the strikers, and the railroads blacklisted many others, so they could never again get railroad jobs.

- 5. Social Gospel Movement (pg. 266): An early reform program, the Social Gospel Movement, preached salvation through service to the poor. Inspired by the message of the Social Gospel Movement, many

19th century reformers responded to the call to help the urban poor. In the late 1800s, a few reformers established settlement houses, community centers in slum neighborhoods that provided assistance to people in the area, especially immigrants.

- a. Jane Addams - one of the most influential members of the movement and Ellen Gates Starr founded Chicago's Hull House in 1889.

6. Political Machines (pg. 268):

- a. An organized group that controlled the activities of a political party in a city, the political machine also offered services to voters and businesses in exchange for political or financial support. In the decades after the Civil War, political machines gained control of local government in Baltimore, New York, San Francisco, and other major cities. The machine was organized like a pyramid. At the pyramid's base were local precinct workers and captains, who tried to gain voters' support on a city block or in a neighborhood who reported to a ward boss. At election time, the ward boss worked to secure the vote in all the precincts in the ward, or electoral district. Ward bosses helped the poor and gained their vote by doing favors or providing services.....At the top of the pyramid was the city boss, who controlled the activities of the political party throughout the city. Precinct captains, ward bosses, and the city boss worked together to elect their candidates and guarantee the success of the machine.
- b. The Role of the Political Boss: Whether or not the boss officially served as mayor, he controlled access to municipal jobs and business licenses, and influenced the courts and other municipal agencies. Bosses like Roscoe Conkling in New York used their power to build parks, sewer systems, and waterworks, and gave money to schools, hospitals, and orphanages. Bosses could also provide government support for new businesses, a service for which they were often paid extremely well. It was not only money that motivated city bosses. By solving urban problems, bosses could reinforce voters' loyalty, win additional political support, and extend their influence.
- c. Immigrants & the Machine: Many precinct captains and political bosses were first-generation or second-generation immigrants. Few were educated beyond grammar school. They entered politics early and worked their way up from the bottom. They could speak to immigrants in their own language and understood the challenges that newcomers faced. More important, the bosses were able to provide solution. The machines helped immigrants with naturalization (attaining full citizenship), housing, and jobs and the newcomers' more pressing needs. In return, the immigrants provided what the political bosses needed - votes.

7. Municipal Graft and Scandal (pg. 269) and While the well-oiled machines provided city dwellers with services, many political bosses fell victim to corruption as their influence grew.

- a. Election Fraud & Graft and While the loyalty of voters was not enough to carry an election, some political machines turned to fraud. Using fake names, party faithfuls cast as many votes as were needed to win. Once a political machine got its candidates into office, it could take advantage of numerous opportunities for graft, the illegal use of political influence for personal gain. For example, by helping a person find work on a construction project for the city, a political machine could ask the worker to bill the city for more than the actual cost of materials and labor. The worker then "kicked back" a portion of the earnings to the machine. Taking these kickbacks, or illegal payments for their services, enriched the political machines and individual politicians. Political machines also granted favors to businesses in return for cash and accepted bribes to allow illegal activities, such as gambling, to flourish. Politicians were able to get away with

shady dealing because the police rarely interfered. Until about 1890, police forces were hired and fired by political bosses.

- b. The Tweed Ring Scandal: William M. Tweed, known as Boss Tweed, became head of Tammany Hall, New York City's powerful Democratic political machine, in 1868. Between 1869 and 1871, Boss Tweed led the Tweed Ring, a group of corrupt politicians, in defrauding the city. One scheme, the construction of the New York City Courthouse, involved extravagant graft. The project cost taxpayers \$13 million, while the actual construction cost was \$3 million. The difference went into the pockets of Tweed and his followers. Thomas Nast, a political cartoonist, helped arouse public outrage against Tammany Hall's graft, and the Tweed Ring was finally broken in 1871. Tweed was indicted on 120 counts of fraud and extortion and was sentenced to 12 years in jail. His sentence was reduced to one year, but after leaving jail, Tweed was quickly arrested on another charge. While serving a second sentence, Tweed escaped. He was captured in Spain when officials identified him from a Thomas Nast cartoon. By that time, political corruption had become a national issue.

- 8. Civil Service Replaces Patronage (pg. 270) ó The desire for power and money that made local politics corrupt in the industrial age also infected national politics.
 - a. Patronage Spurs Reform: Since the beginning of the 19th century, presidents had complained about the problem of patronage, or the giving of government jobs to people who had helped a candidate get elected. In Andrew Jackson's administration, this policy was known as the spoils system. People from cabinet members to workers who scrubbed the steps of the Capitol owed their jobs to political connections. As might be expected, some government employees were not qualified for the positions they filled. Moreover, political appointees, whether qualified or not, sometimes used their positions for personal gain. Reformers began to press for the elimination of patronage and the adoption of a merit system of hiring. Jobs in civil service ó government administration ó should go to the most qualified persons, reformers believed. It should not matter what political views they held or who recommended them.
 - b. Reform under Hayes, Garfield, & Arthur: Civil service reform made gradual progress under Presidents Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur.
 - i. Republican president Rutherford B. Hayes, elected in 1876, could not convince Congress to support reform, so he used other means. Hayes named independents to his cabinet. He also set up a commission to investigate the nation's customhouses, which were notoriously corrupt. On the basis of the commission's report, Hayes fired two of the top officials of New York City's customhouse, where jobs were controlled by the Republican Party. These firings enraged the Republican New York senator and political boss Roscoe Conkling and his supporters, the Stalwarts.
 - ii. When Hayes decided not to run for reelection in 1880, a free-for-all broke out at the Republican convention, between the Stalwarts - who opposed changes in the spoils system ó and reformers. Since neither Stalwarts nor reformers could win a majority of delegates, the convention settled on an independent presidential candidate, Ohio congressman James A. Garfield. To balance out Garfield's ties to reformers, the Republicans nominated for vice-president Chester A. Arthur, one of Conkling's supporters. Despite Arthur's inclusion on the ticket, Garfield angered the Stalwarts by giving reformers most of his patronage jobs once he was elected.

- iii. On July 2, 1881, as President Garfield walked through the Washington, D.C., train station, he was **shot** two times by a mentally unbalanced lawyer named **Charles Guiteau**, whom Garfield had turned down for a job. The would-be assassin announced, "I did it and I will go to jail for it. I am a Stalwart and **Arthur** is now president." Garfield finally died from his wounds on September 19. Despite his ties to the **Stalwarts**, Chester Arthur turned **reformer** when he became president. His first message to Congress urged legislators to pass a civil service law.
 - iv. The resulting **Pendleton** Civil Service Act of 1883 authorized a bipartisan civil service commission to make appointments to federal jobs through a **merit** system based on candidates' **performance** on an examination. By 1901, more than 40 percent of all federal jobs had been classified as civil service positions, but the Pendleton Act had mixed consequences. On the one hand, **public administration** became more honest and efficient. On the other hand, because officials could no longer pressure employees for campaign **contributions**, politicians turned to other sources for donations.
9. Business Buys Influence (pg. 271) ó With employees no longer a **source** of campaign contributions, politicians turned to **wealthy** business owners. Therefore, the alliance between government and big business became stronger than ever.
- a. Harrison, Cleveland, and High Tariffs: Big business hoped the government would **preserve**, or even raise, the tariffs that protected domestic industries from **foreign** competition. The **Democratic** Party, however, opposed high tariffs because they increased prices. In 1884, the Democratic Party won a presidential election for the first time in **28** years with candidate **Grover Cleveland**. As president, Cleveland tried to lower tariff rates, but **Congress** refused to support him.
 - b. In 1888, Cleveland ran for reelection on a low-tariff platform against the former Indiana senator **Benjamin Harrison**, the grandson of President William Henry Harrison. Harrison's campaign was **financed** by large contributions from companies that wanted tariffs even **higher** than they were. Although Cleveland won about **100,000** more popular votes than Harrison, **Harrison** took a majority of the **electoral** votes and the presidency. Once in office, he won passage of the **McKinley Tariff Act** of 1890, which raised tariffs to their highest level yet. In 1892, Cleveland was elected again ó the only president to serve two **non-consecutive** terms. He supported a bill for lowering the McKinley Tariff but **refused** to sign it because it also provided for a federal income tax. The Wilson-Gorman Tariff became law in 1894 without the president's signature. In 1897, William McKinley was **inaugurated** president and raised tariffs once again. The attempt to reduce the tariff had failed, but the spirit of reform was not dead. New developments in areas ranging from technology to mass culture would help redefine American society as the United States moved into the 20th century.
10. Expanding Higher Education (pg. 284) ó although the number of students attending high school had **increased** by the turn of the century, only a minority of Americans had high school **diplomas**. At the same time, an even smaller minority ó only **2.3** percent ó of America's young people attended colleges and universities.
- a. Changes in Universities: Between 1880 and 1920, college enrollments more than **quadrupled**. And colleges instituted major changes in curricula and admission policies. Industrial development changed the nation's educational needs. The **research** university emerged ó

offering courses in modern languages, the physical sciences, and the new disciplines of psychology and sociology. **Professional** schools in law and medicine were established. Private colleges and universities required entrance exams, but some state universities began to admit students by using the **high school diploma** as the entrance requirement.

- b. Higher Education for African Americans: After the Civil War, thousands of freed African Americans pursued higher education, despite their **exclusion** from white institutions. With the help of the **Freedmen's Bureau** and other groups, blacks founded Howard, Atlanta, and Fisk Universities, all of which opened between 1865 and 1868. Private donors could not, however, **financially** support or educate a sufficient number of black college graduates to meet the needs of the **segregated** communities. By 1900, out of about **9 million** African Americans, only **3,880** were in attendance at colleges or professional schools.
 - i. The prominent African American educator, **Booker T. Washington**, believed that racism would end once blacks acquired useful labor skills and proved their economic value to society. Washington, who was born **enslaved**, graduated from Virginia's Hampton Institute. By 1881, he headed the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, now called **Tuskegee University**, in Alabama. Tuskegee aimed to equip African Americans with teaching diplomas and useful skills in agricultural, domestic, or mechanical work. "No race," Washington said, "can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem."
 - ii. By contrast, **W.E.B. DuBois**, the first African American to receive a **doctorate** from Harvard (in 1895), strongly disagreed with Washington's **gradual** approach. In 1905, DuBois founded the **Niagara Movement**, which insisted that blacks should seek a liberal arts education so that the African-American community would have well-educated leaders.

11. African Americans Fight Legal Decimation (pgs. 286-287)

- a. Voting Restrictions: All Southern states imposed new voting restrictions and **denied** legal equality to African Americans. Some states, for example, limited the vote to people who could **read**, and required registration officials to administer a **literacy** test to test reading. Blacks trying to vote were often asked more **difficult** questions than whites, or given a test in a **foreign** language. Officials could pass or **fail** applicants as they wished.
 - i. Another requirement was the **poll tax**, an annual tax that had to be paid before qualifying to vote. Black as well as white **sharecroppers** were often too poor to pay the **poll** tax.
 - ii. To reinstate white voters who may have failed the literacy test or could not pay the poll tax, several Southern states added the **grandfather clause** to their constitutions. The clause stated that even if a man failed the literacy test or could not afford the poll tax, he was still **entitled** to vote if he, his father, or his **grandfather** had been eligible to vote **before** January 1, 1867. The date is important because before that time, **freed** slaves did not have the right to vote. The **grandfather clause** therefore did not allow them to vote.
- b. Jim Crow Laws: During the 1870s and 1880s, the **Supreme Court** failed to overturn the poll tax or the grandfather clause, even though the laws undermined all federal **protections** for African Americans' civil rights. At the same time that blacks lost **voting rights**, Southern states passed racial **segregation** laws to separate white and black people in **public** and **private** facilities. These laws came to be known as **Jim Crow Laws** after a popular old minstrel song that ended

in the words "Jump, Jim Crow." Racial segregation was put into effect in schools, hospitals, parks, and transportation systems throughout the South.

- c. *Plessy v. Ferguson*: Eventually a legal case reached the U.S. Supreme Court to test the constitutionality of segregation. In 1896, in Plessy v. Ferguson, the Supreme Court ruled that the separation of races in public accommodations was legal and did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment. The decision established the doctrine of "separate but equal," which allowed states to maintain segregated facilities for blacks and whites as long as they provided equal service. The decision permitted legalized racial segregation for almost 60 years.

12. Discrimination in the West (pgs. 288-289)

- a. Mexican Workers: In the late 1800s, the railroads hired more Mexicans than members of any other ethnic group to construct rail lines in the Southwest. Mexicans were accustomed to the region's hot, dry climate. But the work was grueling, and the railroads made them work for less money than other ethnic groups.
 - i. Mexicans were also vital to the development of mining and agriculture in the Southwest. When the 1902 National Reclamation Act gave government assistance for irrigation projects, many southwest desert areas bloomed. Mexican workers became the major labor force in the agricultural industries of the region.
 - ii. Some Mexicans, however, as well as African Americans in the Southwest, were forced into debt peonage, a system that bound laborers into slavery in order to work off a debt to the employer. Not until 1911 did the Supreme Court declare involuntary peonage a violation of the Thirteenth Amendment.
- b. Excluding Chinese: By 1880, more than 100,000 Chinese immigrants lived in the United States. White people's fear of job competition with the Chinese immigrants often pushed the Chinese into segregated schools and neighborhoods. Strong opposition to Chinese immigration developed, and not only in the West.