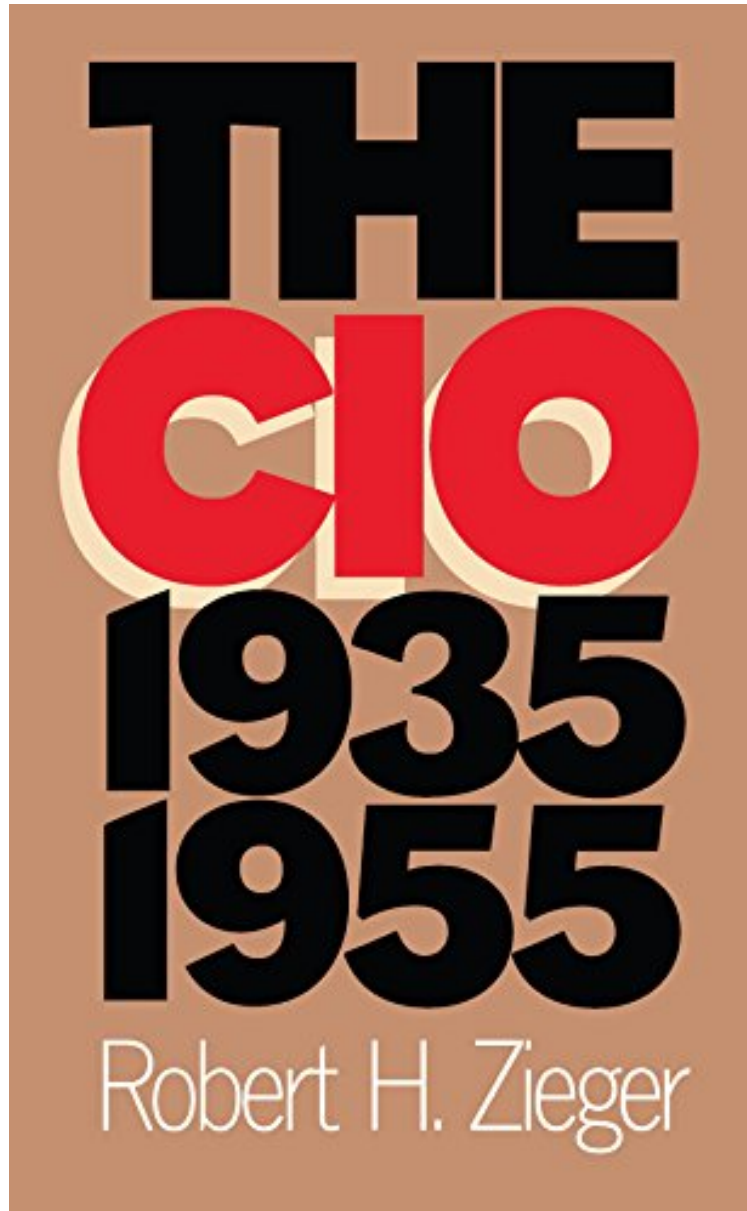


(Free and download) The CIO, 1935-1955

The CIO, 1935-1955

Robert H. Zieger

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Robert H. Zieger : The CIO, 1935-1955 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The CIO, 1935-1955:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Labor history as it should be written By Chris G This is a very readable book. The author's sketches of the principal leaders of the CIO are diverting. I can't say I completely agree with a few of its arguments but the clarity of the narrative along with the far reaching and fair minded analyses of the

topic overwhelms any of its flaws. Zieger describes the very precarious state of the CIO in the late 30's. I was surprised to learn how extremely modest the victory of the United Rubber Workers was at the Goodyear Akron Ohio plant in early 1936. I always assumed it involved at least union recognition, increase in wages, etc. 10 CIO workers were shot dead and many injured by Chicago police in front of the Republic Steel plant on Memorial Day 1937. The police in that case opened fire without the slightest provocation as did the cops in Masillon Ohio who, in the midst of a wild shooting spree to break up a steelworkers gathering, killed 3. The Little Steel strikes were lost w/o gaining union recognition and anti-unionism at Ford's River Rouge Michigan plant was demonstrated by the ex-cons in Ford's security department who nearly beat to death Walter Reuther and Richard Frankensteen. The United Auto Workers was wracked by revolt against Homer Martin's incompetence at the same time the Reuther brothers, the communists and Richard Frankensteen fought each other and Martin. Zieger notes that polls of the period showed working class support for government regulation of corporate wealth and protection for unions. But in 1938 one poll showed a preference of two-thirds of workers for the A.F. of L.'s staid, conservative William Green over Lewis. Workers thought unions had too much power and supported efforts to clean leftist radicals from unions and restrict the constitutional rights of commies, etc. In particular most CIO workers were not at all supportive of the backing for African American civil rights that the federation's leader's expressed. This became particularly clear during the "hate strikes" of World War II when white CIO members struck or even rioted to protest desegregation or promotions given to fellow black workers. The leadership made reasonable efforts to oppose this racism according to the author. Such reactionary opinions of course made the workers vulnerable to manipulation by politicians seeking the cover of reactionary fear mongering in order to attack union viability. Zieger covers the attempts by the CIO leaders to restrain workers militancy defense industries during World War II. Government agencies tried to restrain the growth of workers' wages in the interests of containing inflation. Many workers felt compelled to go on strike to contest this. The government ordered many defense companies to give the unions of their workers some form of security in return for which workers were expected to obey intense work regimens. The union leaders were supposed to make sure that workers were firmly focused on production tasks. Zieger notes the zealotry that unions led by Communists and fellow travelers showed in adhering to the no-strike pledge. The CIO really did not have much choice but to stick to the limits the establishment put on it. That is at least the author's conclusion. That is to say the CIO had no choice but to stick to pushing for wage and benefit increases w/o really challenging corporate power while working to strengthen liberal Democrats in order to increase the welfare state and Keynesian economic policies. As the Cold War got under way, the CIO purged 11 of its communist inclined affiliates and the one million members belonging to those unions. The leadership centralized power in its executive committee..... The CIO leaders fervently supported the creation of the national security state and U.S. foreign policy; a few exceptions within the organization expressed criticism of actions like the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954. Beginning with their 1946 organizing drive in the South the organization downplayed its commitment to civil rights. Zieger describes the increasing bureaucratization of the CIO and dampening of rank and file activism as the Cold War got under way. I'm most impressed with the author's portrayal of communists within the CIO. He notes that communist CIO leaders had some virtues. They had an admirable record in organizing African American workers and organizing biracial unions. Moreover according to the author, even among their harshest critics, Communist led unions had a reputation for honest administration, efficiency in gaining better wages and other benefits, an egalitarian internal structure, good cultural and educational programs, etc. Zieger's portrayal of Communists in American labor in the main text is notable when contrasted with the seeming approval of the CIO's anti-communist purges he expresses in the book's conclusion. To Zieger it was important for the CIO to dissociate itself from people who supported Stalin's crimes (actually Communists tended to deny most of those crimes took place). It may have been a practical necessity given the environment of the late 40's to get rid of the Communists. But I think Zieger errs in trying to dissociate the purge from the processes that led to the CIO's increasing bureaucratization, the passivity of its rank and file and its support for military Keynesian based economic growth. The American elite that the CIO was trying to appease opposed a CP presence in American unions not because CP members supported the murderous Stalin but because Communists were seen as a source of labor militancy. Moreover, speaking from my own very left radical perspective I don't see any virtue in choosing the United States over the USSR. Yes Stalin killed millions of people. But the world capitalist system that the United States has overseen since World War II has millions of victims too, from starvation and disease to say nothing of carpet bombing in Vietnam, Central American death squads, etc. But the book is in the main well written and intellectually diverting. If only all labor history could be done as Zieger does this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. good book By Vivien bought it for my friends for her thesis. the book is in good condition, and my friend found it useful

The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) encompassed the largest sustained surge of worker organization in American history. Robert Zieger charts the rise of this industrial union movement, from the founding of the CIO by John L. Lewis in 1935 to its merger under Walter Reuther with the American Federation of Labor in 1955. Exploring themes of race and gender, Zieger combines the institutional history of the CIO with vivid depictions of working-class life in this critical period. Zieger details the ideological conflicts that racked the CIO even as its leaders strove to

establish a labor presence at the heart of the U.S. economic system. Stressing the efforts of industrial unionists such as Sidney Hillman and Philip Murray to forge potent instruments of political action, he assesses the CIO's vital role in shaping the postwar political and international order. Zieger's analysis also contributes to current debates over labor law reform, the collective bargaining system, and the role of organized labor in a changing economy.

From Library Journal Ziegler (history, Univ. of Florida) has written a comprehensive history of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) from its founding in 1935 as a break-away from the American Federation of Labor (AFL) until the merging of the two federations in 1955. He analyzes the stormy relations between the rival labor groups, the CIO's complex dealing with governmental authorities, and its successes and failures in organizing workers and negotiating labor contracts. Vivid warts-and-all portraits are painted of the CIO's leaders, notably founding father John L. Lewis and Walter Reuther, who dominated the CIO in its later years. Characterizing the CIO as a "fragile juggernaut," Ziegler deals with its internal problems of structure and finances and the debilitating effects of its battles with Communist elements in its ranks. Highly recommended for labor collections of academic libraries. Harry Frummerman, formerly with Hunter Coll., New York Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. This thorough, well-documented narrative, based on an array of archival records and oral histories, will benefit and interest a variety of readers.--Choice It is probably the best starting point for any effort to understand the twentieth-century labor movement. . . . Zieger's book is a welcome addition to the history of the labor movement, both for its balanced treatment of events and interpretative issues and for its potential to encourage new insights into a familiar but fascinating subject.--International Labor and Working Class History This is institutional history at its best.--Business History Will be standard reading for anyone interested in this crucial period of American labor history.--American Historical The CIO is a masterful work by a talented, mature scholar.--Ohio History A well-paced, definitive narrative.--Chicago Tribune Zieger's fine book provides us with an essential foundation for understanding the modern labor movement, its institutions, and its rank and file.--Industrial and Labor Relations Zieger has written an incomparable institutional history of the CIO that surpasses all previous such studies but, more importantly, one that makes extremely imaginative use of social and cultural history to elucidate working-class 'mentale.' The CIO combines the best of the old and the new labor history. It is a brilliant accomplishment.--Melvyn Dubofsky, author of The State and Labor in Modern America Extensively researched, solidly argued, and well-written. . . . A major achievement by a distinguished scholar and a welcome addition to the literature.--Journal of American History An enormously useful history of the tumultuous career of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, one bound to be treated as the definitive account for years to come.--Business History An excellent history of an important American institution. Zieger does a good job of setting the context in which the union developed and of stressing the difficulties inherent in organizing workers in capitalist firms. His work deserves attention from labor historians of all stripes.--Contemporary Sociology Can be relied upon as the most authoritative factual overview and the most detailed interpretive reading of the CIO's history we have.--Journal of Southern History A finely crafted volume that draws upon a wide array of archival sources and oral histories as well as the burgeoning secondary literature on labor in the 1930s and 1940s.--West Virginia History [A] comprehensive and illuminating new history.--In These Times This is a major book, the first full-scale account we have had of the CIO as a labor institution. Zieger has a true mastery of the vast scholarly and archival record and is amazingly sure-footed at negotiating his way through complex and much-controverted events. He writes with an intellectual balance that will keep his book in fashion for many years. It has all the earmarks of a classic work.--David Brody, University of California, Davis Sets a new standard for the study of the mid-twentieth-century labor movement Manages to strike that most elusive of balances between history from above and below. . . . A major accomplishment.-- s in American History About the Author Robert H. Zieger, professor of history at the University of Florida, is author of Rebuilding the Pulp and Paper Workers' Union and American Workers, American Unions