Chapter 13 - Public Service, pp. 317-333

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Abstract

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CHAPTER 13
Public Service

AMERICAN SECURITY UNION

Address: 1717 K St., N. W., Washington

I. Chronology

1940 Organized by former members of Workers' Alliance of America (q. v.) as union of unemployed, part-time and relief workers.

II. Publications

1. Proceedings.
   1st, 1940

2. Constitutions.
   1940

   Published as: (Washington)
   Jul 1940-Apr 7, 1941: Security News (Ceased publication)

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF

Address: 10 Independence Ave., S. W., Washington

I. Chronology

1917 Organized by group of AFL federal locals. Affiliated with AFL.

1932 Withdrew from AFL. Seeding faction organized American Federation of Government Employees (q. v.).

II. Publications
   (Code Number: F2)

1. Proceedings.
   1st-7th ann., 1917-1923; 8th-16th bien., 1925-1941

2. Reports.
   Officers: ann. 1918-1920; 1922; 1923

3. Constitutions.
   ann. 1917-1919; ann. 1921-1923; bien. 1927-1931; 1935; 1939

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The Federal Employee was established in 1916 by the Washington local of the Federal Employees' Union, a federal labor union of the AFL. The Washington local continued to issue the magazine even after the organization of the National Federation of Federal Employees in September 1917, but in October 1918 the national union took complete charge of the journal.

The NFFE was formed primarily to prevent adoption of the Borland amendment to the 1917-1918 appropriations bill, which provided for an increase in the working hours of government employees. The battle against this amendment was the main concern of The Federal Employee from 1916 until President Wilson vetoed the bill in June 1918. During this period the journal consisted of brief editorials, which were concerned solely with issues affecting federal employees, such as wages, hours, and retirement provisions; speeches made by persons outside the labor movement to locals of the NFFE; letters from members; and, occasionally, book reviews. In 1919 The Federal Employee became a weekly. About half of its pages were occupied by reprinted material, particularly reports of government agencies and speeches made in Congress. Letters from members were discontinued. Financial reports occurred irregularly until 1922 and then disappeared. From 1922 through 1941 The Federal Employee was again issued monthly, the normal size of the journal being thirty-two pages. Except for editorials, news from locals, and a few articles on subjects of concern to federal employees, the journal consisted entirely of material reprinted from other sources.

The NFFE has confined itself to the problems of government employees. It has had little contact with other labor organizations, and became even more isolated after its withdrawal from the AFL in 1932. Since it is Congress which grants appropriations and
frames civil service regulations, the NFFE concentrates its efforts on securing favorable legislation. Its legislative council drafts bills to be submitted to Congress. It is evident from the journal that the president and secretary of the union spend the greater part of their time conferring with congressmen about forthcoming legislation.

The most important objective of the union has been to raise and standardize the wages of government employees by improving the classification of civil service positions. Beginning in 1917 the NFFE agitated for a reclassification act which would standardize salaries and duties to be performed in government service. In 1923 such an act was passed, and from that time until 1927 the union demanded satisfactory administration of this act. After 1927 reclassification became a less pressing issue but was still important enough to precipitate the secession of the NFFE from the AFL. At the 1931 convention of the AFL, the executive council and later the delegates condemned a proposed reclassification act establishing a personnel classification board which would have final authority in setting wages. Since this was an administrative reform which the NFFE had advocated, the union considered the position of the convention hostile to the interests of government employees and withdrew from the AFL. *The Federal Employee* constantly stressed the need for reforming and extending reclassification provisions.

Although reclassification was the chief means by which the NFFE hoped to increase the wages of federal employees, other methods were constantly proposed. From 1918 until 1921 it advocated the Nolan bill providing minimum wages for government employees, which was killed by a House filibuster. The NFFE was instrumental in securing bonuses for government employees in the early twenties. During the depression of the early thirties, the proposed government economy program, which included reductions in the wages of federal employees, was of great concern to the union.

Retirement pensions was another important issue confronting government employees. From its inception, the NFFE urged liberalization of existing retirement arrangements. In 1930, the Retirement Act extended retirement coverage and increased the government’s contribution to pensions. The union desired still further extensions, however, and retirement remained an issue through 1941.

Reducing patronage appointments in government service and increasing the number of positions covered by the civil service system were important objectives of the NFFE, especially from
1934 to 1941. During this period the NFFE attempted to bring such government agencies as the Civilian Conservation Corps under the Civil Service Commission, but had little success.

The convention proceedings of the NFFE consisted mainly of resolutions passed by the convention. Although the proceedings included some of the convention discussion, more discussion of resolutions occurred in the journal. Until 1925 the president's report was the only other large item in the proceedings. After 1925, important speeches made at the convention by government officials and congressmen were printed verbatim. The secretary's report was printed separately and distributed to the delegates. A few extracts from the secretary's report were reprinted in the journal, but all references to the finances of the union were omitted.

FEDERAL WORKERS OF AMERICA, UNITED

Address: 1338 I St., N. W., Washington

I. CHRONOLOGY

1937 Organized by seceding faction of American Federation of Government Employees (q.v.). Affiliated with CIO.

II. PUBLICATIONS

1. Proceedings.
   1st, 1940

2. Constitutions.
   1940

   Published as: (Washington)
   1937-Sep 1938: Federal Organizer
   Oct 1938-1941+: Federal Record
FIRE FIGHTERS, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF, 1918

Address: 901 Massachusetts Ave., Washington

I. CHRONOLOGY

1918 Organized. Affiliated with AFL.

II. PUBLICATIONS

1. Proceedings.
   1st-7th ann., 1918-1924; 8th-15th bien., 1926-1940
2. Constitutions.
   1918; 1923; 1931; 1938
   Published as: (Washington)
   1918-1941+: International Fire Fighter

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF

Address: 900 F St., N. W., Washington

I. CHRONOLOGY

1932 Organized by seceding faction of National Federation of Federal Employees (q. v.). Affiliated with AFL.
1937 Seceding faction organized United Federal Workers of America (q. v.).

II. PUBLICATIONS

1. Proceedings.
   1st-8th ann., 1932-1939
2. Constitutions.
   1934; ann. 1936-1939; 1941
   Published as: (Washington)
   Dec 29, 1933-1941+: The Government Standard
LETTER CARRIERS, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF

Address: 901 Massachusetts Ave., N. W., Washington

I. Chronology

1889 Organized.
1917 Affiliated with AFL.

II. Publications

(Code Number: L3)

1. Proceedings.
   1889; 1st-14th ann., 1890-1903; 15th-33rd bien., 1905-1941
   (all with journal; 1889 with journal for 1909)

2. Constitutions.
   1892; ann. 1894-1896; 1899; ann. 1902-1905; bien. 1907-1939

   Published as: (Washington)
   1888-1941+: The Postal Record
   Editors:
   1891-Sep 1898: John Victory
   Oct 1898-Oct 1924: Edward Cantwell
   Nov 1924-1941+: Michael Finnan

III. Critique of Publications

During the first two years after its formation, the National Association of Letter Carriers sponsored a section of The Postal Record, a journal for all postal employees published by a private company in Boston. In September 1891 John Victory, secretary of the NALC, bought The Postal Record, and from that time it served as the official organ of the union. In 1893, the NALC purchased the journal from him.

The early issues of the Postal Record described the post offices of the country and sketched the careers of local postmasters. In 1893 it introduced government reports, digests of meetings of state associations, and letters from members, most of which dealt with overtime pay for letter carriers. After 1898, the government reports were almost all superseded by articles showing an interest in the general labor movement; but by 1910 they were again prominent, as were excerpts from the Congressional Record.

The Postal Record changed little after 1910. Letters from members were published only before referendums, held on such questions as affiliation with the AFL and the adoption of biennial
conventions. News from branches and state associations occupied much space, and most of the remaining space was filled with reprinted material. By 1941, more than half of the journal consisted of reprinted articles, reports, and speeches.

The NALC has concerned itself solely with the problems of postal employees. Its affiliation with the AFL in October 1917 left unchanged its indifference toward the labor movement. Composed of government employees, it relies almost entirely on legislative tactics rather than on the usual collective bargaining processes.

Raising wages, reducing hours, and securing larger retirement pensions have been the main legislative objectives of the NALC. From 1917 to 1921 the union promoted the Nolan minimum wage bill, which was defeated. It was instrumental in securing a 1925 act increasing the wages of postal employees. During the depression of the thirties it opposed the governmental economy program, which entailed wage reductions for postal workers.

In the matter of working hours, it supported the Reilly Act of 1911, which provided that letter carriers should work only eight hours of the ten during which they were on call. In the same year a bill providing compensatory time for postal workers employed on Sunday was secured. The union has also campaigned against night work.

From 1893 to date the union has fought persistently for retirement pensions. In 1920, in response to the vigorous insistence of the NALC and other unions of government employees, the Retirement Act was passed. The union continued, however, to advocate amendments to the Act, and in 1930 the Retirement Act expanded benefits and enlarged the government’s contribution. After 1930 retirement did not figure so prominently in the journal, but the union did not cease demands for further extensions.

The Postal Record often detailed the advantages of the union’s benefit plans and urged members to subscribe to them. The NALC instituted a life insurance plan in 1893 which it maintained and for a time expanded. Its retirement benefits dwindled in importance, however, after the passage of retirement legislation. From 1910 to 1913 the NALC considered the establishment of a tuberculosis sanitarium, but finally rejected the project.

For the first ten years of its history the NALC suffered from a serious factional conflict. Since many second class post offices were not represented at the annual conventions, where policy was decided and officers elected, locals in these small post offices felt that the union was being run by a few large branches. They voiced their grievances in the journal and in conventions. By 1900,
a system of convention representation was devised which satisfied
the second class offices and practically eliminated this source of
conflict.

The union's convention proceedings are printed in its journal.
With the exception of the first four conventions, the proceedings
have been verbatim accounts, and include speeches to the conven-
tion, discussion of delegates, and officers' reports. The material
contained in the convention proceedings parallels, though in greater
detail, the subject matter of the journal.

LETTER CARRIERS, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF RURAL

Address: 323 N St., Elyria, O.

I. CHRONOLOGY

1920 Organized by seceding faction of National Rural Letter
Carriers' Association. Affiliated with AFL.

II. PUBLICATIONS

1. Proceedings.
   1931; 1935; 1938; 1939; 1940 (all with journal)

2. Constitutions.
   1920

   Published as: (Lamar, Col.; Mt. Morris, Ill.)
   1922-Apr 1930: The Message
   May 1930-1941 + : Rural Delivery Journal
   (Vs. 13-16 numbered vs. 3-6.)

MAIL ASSOCIATION, RAILWAY

Address: 901 Massachusetts Ave., N. W., Washington

I. CHRONOLOGY

1891 Organized primarily as social group under name of National
Association of Railway Postal Clerks.

1897 Established insurance department, becoming a mutual benefit
society.
1904 Adopted present name.
1911 Seeding faction organized Brotherhood of Railway Postal Clerks (q. v.).
1917 Affiliated with AFL.
1919 Absorbed railway postal clerks belonging to National Federation of Postal Employes (q. v.).

II. PUBLICATIONS
1. Proceedings.
   7th-16th ann., 1898-1907; 17th-21st ann., 1909-1913; 22nd-35th bien., 1915-1941 (9th-35th with journal)
2. Constitutions.
   1906/1907; 1910/1911; 1915/1916; 1917/1918; 1919/1920; 1921/1923; 1923/1925; 1925/1927; 1927/1929; 1929/1931;
   1931/1933; 1933/1935; 1935/1937; 1937/1939; 1939/1941
   Published as: (Kansas City, Mo.; Washington)
   1898?-1941+: The Railway Post Office
   (NS, Aug 1899)

MESSENGERS, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF SPECIAL DELIVERY

Address: 301 1st St., S. E., Washington

I. Chronology
1932 Organized.
1937 Affiliated with AFL.

II. Publications
1. Constitutions.
   1937; 1939
2. Journal.
   Published as: (Washington)
   1936-1941: Special Messenger (Ceased publication)
POLICEWOMEN, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF

I. CHRONOLOGY
1915 Organized.
1929? Disbanded.

II. PUBLICATIONS
1. Proceedings.
   10th, 1924
2. Journal.
   Published as: (Washington)
   1924-Jul 1927: ... Bulletin
   Aug 1927-Sep 1930: Policewoman’s International Bulletin
   (Ceased publication)

POST OFFICE CLERKS, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF

Address: 14th and New York Ave., N. W., Washington

I. CHRONOLOGY
1906 Organized by seceding faction of United National Association of Post Office Clerks (q. v.). Affiliated with AFL.
1917 Merged with Brotherhood of Railway Postal Clerks (q. v.) to form National Federation of Postal Employes.
1919 Transferred railway postal clerks to Railway Mail Association (q. v.). Resumed original name.

II. PUBLICATIONS
1. Proceedings.
   1st-18th ann., 1906-1933; 19th-22nd bien., 1935-1941 (all with journal)
2. Constitutions.
   1907; 1908; ann. 1910-1913; bien. 1915-1939
   Published as: (Washington)
   1903-Sep 1917: Union Postal Clerk
   Oct 1917-Sep 1919: The Union Postal Employe
   Oct 1919-1941+: The Union Postal Clerk
POST OFFICE CLERKS, UNITED NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF

Address: Colorado Bldg., Washington

I. CHRONOLOGY

1890 Organized as National Association of Post Office Clerks.
1897 Seceding faction organized United Association of Post Office Clerks.
1899 Above organizations merged under name of United National Association of Post Office Clerks.
1906 Seceding faction organized National Federation of Post Office Clerks (q. v.).

II. PUBLICATIONS

(Code Number: P1)

1. Proceedings.
   1st-16th ann., 1901-1915; 17th-32nd ann., 1917-1931; 33rd-37th bien., 1933-1941 (all with journal; 3rd, 22nd omitted in numbering)

2. Constitutions.
   1901; 1902; ann. 1905-1909; 1914; 1915; 1919; 1925; 1935

   Published as: (Mt. Morris, Ill.; Chicago; New York)
   Dec 1901-Nov 1909: The Postal Clerk
   Dec 1909-1941+: The Post Office Clerk
   Editors:
   1901-1917: John T. Scott
   1918-Apr 1920: William F. Gibbons
   May ? 1920-1924: John Barrett
   1925-1941+: Thomas P. Bassier

III. CRITIQUE OF PUBLICATIONS

The Postal Clerk, later re-named The Post Office Clerk, was first published in 1901, eleven years after the formation of the United National Association of Post Office Clerks. The early issues consisted almost entirely of news from local branches. By 1903, however, the journal had begun to assume the form which it has retained with relatively little change since that time. Letters from members, dealing mainly with working conditions in post offices, postal legislation and union matters, formed a continuing element in the journal, though they were most plentiful before 1905 and
after 1930. Reports of state conventions appeared as early as 1903 and were particularly detailed between 1905 and 1923; after 1923 the space allotted to them was considerably curtailed. Reprinted material also appeared early and has appeared continuously since. Most of this material dealt with the employment conditions of postal clerks and was reprinted from newspapers, the Congressional Record, and government reports.

The Association of Post Office Clerks has been interested only in the fortunes of postal employees. It has had little contact with other labor organizations, and its isolation became more pronounced as its struggle with the American Federation of Labor intensified. In 1905 a group of locals withdrew in protest against the conservative policies of the national officers and the refusal of the Association to affiliate with the AFL. These locals formed the National Federation of Postal Clerks and joined the AFL in 1906. The Post Office Clerk had much to say about this secession. The question of affiliation with the AFL and amalgamation of the two postal clerks' organizations was particularly important from 1914 to 1921. Officers of the two unions met to discuss a merger, but neither union was willing to surrender its autonomy and the negotiations failed. The Post Office Clerks refused to affiliate with the AFL unless the National Federation of Postal Clerks was dissolved. Since the AFL would not agree to the dissolution, the Post Office Clerks drew farther away from the Federation. Discussions of affiliation and amalgamation continued to appear after 1921, but they were characterized by denunciations of the rival union and of the AFL.

The locals of the Post Office Clerks are not allowed to strike, and since it is Congress which grants appropriations and sets civil service standards, the union must look primarily to legislation to improve the condition of its members. The president and other national officers of the union have always spent a large part of their time on promotion of legislation, and the energies of local unions have been devoted almost entirely to organizing legislative pressure.

From the formation of the Association vigorous efforts were made to persuade Congress to increase the wages of post office clerks. From 1917 until 1921, the union worked unsuccessfully for passage of the Nolan bill providing minimum wages for government employees. During the early twenties the Association, in a joint campaign with other organizations of government workers, helped to secure bonuses for federal employees. During the depression of the early thirties, proposals to effect budget economies
by reducing the wages of government employees gave the union great concern.

Retirement legislation was a favorite project, particularly from 1910 to 1918. The enactment of the Retirement Act in 1920 did not completely satisfy the union, which soon renewed its efforts to obtain better retirement legislation. Despite the extension of the pension system by the Retirement Act of 1930, the union continued to agitate for further liberalization of the retirement provisions.

The union also sought to improve the working schedules of postal clerks. From 1901 on it campaigned for reduction in the number of hours worked and especially urged the passage of an eight hour law. In 1911 it helped to secure passage of the Reilly Act, requiring only eight hours of work out of the ten for which clerks were on call daily. From 1909 to 1911 the union worked for Sunday closing of post offices or compensatory time for those clerks required to work on Sunday. Although it obtained compensatory time in 1911, it continued to press for stricter regulations concerning Sunday work. Night work was another object of attack. From 1921 on the union urged prohibition of night work on the ground that it injured employees' health.

Until 1935, when discussion on resolutions which failed to pass was omitted, the convention proceedings of the Post Office Clerks were verbatim records. While the proceedings and journal cover the same range of issues, the journal provides a more compact exposition of the union's policies and history.

POST OFFICE AND RAILWAY MAIL LABORERS,
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF

Address: 13004 150th St., South Ozone Park, N. Y.

I. Chronology

1912 Organized as National Association of Post Office Laborers.
1937 Affiliated with AFL under present name.

II. Publications

1. Constitutions.
   1916

2. Journal.
   Published as: (Los Angeles; Philadelphia)
   May 1927-1937: The Guidon (Ceased publication)
   1938-1941+: Postal Laborer
POSTAL CLERKS, BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY

I. Chronology

1911 Organized on temporary basis by seceding faction of Railway Mail Association (q.v.).
1913 Reorganized on permanent basis. Absorbed several AFL federal locals.
1914 Affiliated with AFL.
1917 Merged with National Federation of Post Office Clerks (q.v.) to form National Federation of Postal Employes (q.v.).

II. Publications

   Published as: (Denver)
   1911-Jan 1917: The Harpoon
   (Absorbed by Union Postal Clerk, organ of National Federation of Post Office Clerks (q.v.). Privately published Jun 1909-1911.)

POSTAL EMPLOYEES, NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF

Address: 1944 9th St., N. W., Washington

I. Chronology

1913 Organized by Negro employees in railway mail service.
1923 Jurisdiction extended to include all Negro workers in the United States Postal Service.

II. Publications

1. Constitutions.
   1929
2. Journal.
   Published as: (St. Louis; Chicago; Detroit)
   1915-1941+: Postal Alliance
   (Volume enumeration irregular.)
POSTAL SUPERVISORS, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF

Address: P. O. Box 507, Louisville, Ky.

I. Chronology

1908 Organized as National Association of Supervisory Post Office Employees.
1922? Adopted present name.

II. Publications

1. Constitutions.
   1928; 1933
2. Journal.
   Published as: (Louisville, Ky.)
   1916-Aug 1922: The Post Office Supervisory Bulletin
   Sep 1922-1941+: The Postal Supervisor

STATE, CITY AND TOWN EMPLOYEES' UNIONS,
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF

I. Chronology

1907 Organized.

II. Publications

1. Proceedings.
   3rd, 1910; 9th, 1914
2. Constitutions.
   1908

STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES,
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF

Address: Federation Bldg., Madison, Wis.

I. Chronology

1936 Organized by group of AFL federal locals which had been briefly under the jurisdiction of the American Federation of Government Employees (q. v.). Affiliated with AFL.
II. Publications
(Code Number: S4)

1. Proceedings.
   1st-3rd ann., 1936-1938; 4th, 1940

2. Constitutions.
   1938; 1940

   Published as: (Madison, Wis.)
   1937-1941+: Journal of State and Local Government Employees
   Editor: 1937-1941+: Arnold Zander

III. Critique of Publications

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, chartered by the AFL in 1936, brought together a group of federal locals whose organization had begun ten or fifteen years before. These locals had originally been connected with the American Federation of Government Employees but had separated from it because of its primary concern with the problems of federal employees.

The Federation is organized as a multi-industrial union. State charters are authorized for each type of state, county, or municipal institution—for example, state hospitals—and all persons employed in similar institutions in the state belong to one group. It maintains closer ties with the labor movement than do most unions of government employees, and is less exclusively interested in problems peculiar to its members. Its journal has borrowed extensively from the American Federationist and has devoted considerable space to examining labor and social legislation. It has, however, the interest in civil service legislation and administration common to all unions of government workers. It has strongly advocated extension of civil service methods in state and local governments and has opposed political influence in appointments. It has also opposed legislation making state employees subject to federal income taxation, from which they had previously been exempt. Litigation involving state employees who refused to pay federal income taxes was reported and discussed in the journal.

The journal has relied very heavily on material reprinted from other sources, principally in American Federationist, government reports, and speeches by prominent individuals. Members of the Federation have contributed to the journal only infrequently.

The convention proceedings of the Federation contain officers' reports, speeches to the convention, and lists of resolutions passed.
Some of the discussion of resolutions by delegates is printed, but the proceedings are not verbatim. The issues which arise in the conventions are the same as those discussed in the journal and involve no new subject matter. The officers' reports, however, provide additional information on the activities and administration of the union.

STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS OF AMERICA

Address: 51 Chambers St., New York

I. CHRONOLOGY

1937. Organized by CIO.

II. PUBLICATIONS

1. Proceedings.
   1st, 1939

2. Reports.
   Officers: 1939

3. Constitutions.
   1939

   Published as: (Washington)
   Oct 1937-Mar 1938: The State, County and Municipal Employee
   Apr 1938-Jan 1939: Employee
   Feb 1939-Aug 1940: Government Guide (Ceased publication)

WORKERS' ALLIANCE OF AMERICA

I. CHRONOLOGY

1935. Organized as non-partisan union of unemployed, part-time and relief workers.

1940. Former members organized American Security Union (q. v.).

II. PUBLICATIONS

1. Proceedings.
   1st, 1935; 4th, 1938

2. Journal.
   Published as: (Washington; Chicago; Washington)
   Aug 1935-Aug 1936: The Workers' Alliance