

Collection #
BV2506-2511

**ASSOCIATED EMPLOYERS OF INDIANA
RECORDS, 1919-1966**

Collection Information	1
Historical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Contents	4

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 6 bound volumes

COLLECTION DATES: 1916-1966

PROVENANCE: Michael Jordan, Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Indianapolis Foundrymen's Association, BV2105

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1988.0682

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

This collection contains the records of two successive organizations (successors of a third) devoted to promoting the viewpoint of employers in labor relations. The first organization (whose records do not appear in the collection) was the Employers' Association of Indianapolis (1903 [1904?]-1914), founded at the behest of David M. Parry, a local wagon and carriage manufacturer and "virulently anti-worker businessman" who had been president of the National Association of Manufacturers two years before. Though it stated its purposes in somewhat broader and more benevolent terms, the main purpose of the association was to support the open (non-union) shop.

Indianapolis at this time was home for the headquarters of nine national unions, one of which (the Ironworkers) was involved in the dynamiting of the Los Angeles Times Building. A street railway strike in 1913 attracted national attention, and in the same year a Teamsters' strike caused the formation of a Commercial Vehicles Protective Association. In 1914 that association was combined with the Employers' Association and incorporated as Associated Employers of Indianapolis (1914- [?1939]). The executive secretary for many years was Andrew J. Allen, who maintained Parry's anti-union stance and wrote books on the subject in 1914 and 1920. Organization members included some of the city's best-known firms and business leaders. Associated Employers took credit for defeating labor-supported candidates in local elections in 1914 and for getting the city council to pass ordinances against boycotts in 1916 and picketing in 1919. "By 1920 [Associated Employers] could boast that 85 per cent of the manufacturing and business enterprises were conducted on open shop principles." The resulting industrial peace, it contended, was beneficial to employees and consumers as well as to employers. Meanwhile, secretary Allen was quick to report on threats of Communism and on challenging statements made by union leaders. Not all business leaders agreed with Allen: in December 1921 the board heard with concern that union leader Adolph Fritz had told manufacturer W.H. Insley, "I think Allen is just a plain nut," and that Insley had replied, "I know he is."

In 1929 Associated Employers unsuccessfully backed H.M. Glossbrenner for mayor, and investigated charges that the Union Trust Company had forced a barber shop to unionize before renting them space. In 1930 the organization backed "Made Work" as a solution for unemployment, and heard with pleasure about poor economic conditions in the USSR. In 1933, noting with alarm the increase of strikes under the National Recovery Administration, the Employers asked Indianapolis newspapers to suppress news about strikes; the Star and the News agreed, but Talcott Powell of the Times was "unable to comply."

Unable to stem the tide of New Deal labor legislation in the mid-1930s, the organization at the end of the decade changed its name to Associated Employers of Indiana. Records of the next twenty years are missing. By 1958 the association was "Specializing in Labor Relations and Personnel Practices and Policies," giving its members information about rates of pay, plant rules, and personnel practices, and also maintaining a list of qualified arbitrators. By 1966 the board was talking about liquidating the organization, and the minutes of the following meeting are the last in the collection.

Sources:

Materials in collection

Encyclopedia of Indianapolis (articles on Labor and Associated Employers of Indianapolis)

Clinton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 347-348

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains six bound volumes, the records of Associated Employers of Indianapolis for 1919-1937, and of Associated Employers of Indiana for 1958-1966. Particularly in the early volumes, the records include not only minutes but speeches, announcements, and publications. The collection gives a good sampling of the opinions of many employers.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

12-19-1919 to 1-23-1922

1-29-1923 to 12-17-1924

1-31-1925 to 11-17-1928

1-10-1929 to 12-10-1930

1-5-1933 to 8-23-1937

2-14-1958 to 3-16-1966

CONTAINER

BV 2506

BV 2507

BV 2508

BV 2509

BV 2510

BV 2511