Contents

List of Illustrations vii
Acknowledgments ix

Introduction: Back to the Future 1

1 “Everyone Was Ready For Unionism”: The Precursors, Promises, and Pitfalls of Industrial Unions in the 1930s 10
   Political Prelude: Industrial Democracy Betrayed, from Wilson to Hoover 12
   Corporate Prelude: The Unintended Consequences of 1920s Corporate Policies 25
   Working-Class Prelude: Activism 32
   A New Deal for Workers: A Failed and Flawed Start 41
   Fighting for Unionism in the 1930s Without Meaningful Federal Protection 44
   The Wagner Act and Industrial Unionism 48
   Corporate Resistance and Workers’ Unity 58
   Extending the New Deal for Workers 61
   Assessing Workers’ New Deal and Industrial Unionism 65
   Conclusion 68

2 Big Wars, Big Labor, Big Costs 70
   Wartime Mobilization, 1939–1941 73
   Government Intervention: War Industries and Labor Policies, 1941–1945 87
Contents

Wartime Demographic Developments 93
Crisis in Industrial Relations, 1945–1946 103
Political (Mis)calculations: Operation Dixie,
   CIO Purges, and International Alliances, 1946–1950s 114
Big Labor, Big Costs, 1955–1960s 120
Conclusion 127

3 Civil Rights Versus Labor Rights, 1960s–1970s 128
Expanding Public and Service Sectors 131
Public Sector Workers and Union Rights 133
New Laws and Workplace Challenges 141
Women and Workplace Rights 151
The Push and Pull of Changing Times: New Unionists,
   Rank-and-File Movements, AFL-CIO Leaders,
   and Nixon 157
Unionists Divided and Under Siege 169
Conclusion 172

4 Working More for Less and Other Troubles for
   Workers in the Late Twentieth Century 174
Profit Making in a Global World 176
The Human Price of Modern Capitalism 182
The Political Shaping of the Economy 189
The AFL-CIO Leadership’s Resistance to Change 199
Innovation and Possibilities 205
Change from the Bottom-Up 216
Conclusion 222

Epilogue: The Illusive American Dream:
   A Personal Journey 224
Bibliographical Essay 253
Index 278