

McKINNEY & ASSOCIATES

# VOICE MATTERS:

AN EBOOK SERIES ON  
PUBLIC RELATIONS  
WITH A CONSCIENCE

## Reimagining Labor Unions: Busting Myths, Building Movements

*By Bill Fletcher, Jr.*

*Author, longtime activist and co-founder  
of the Center for Labor Renewal*



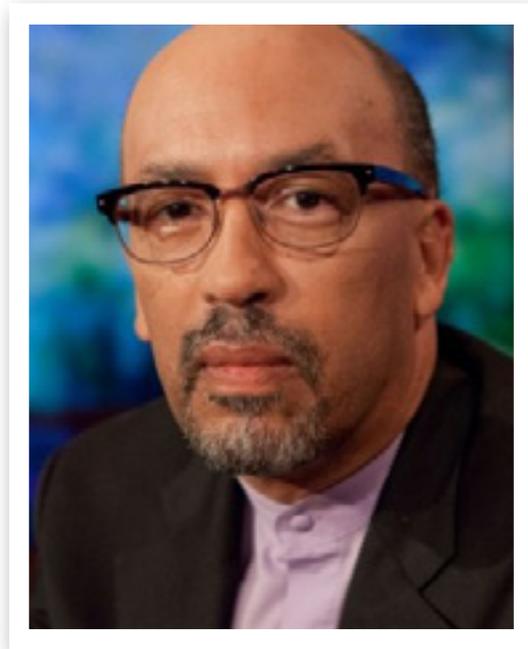
[McKPR.com/VoiceMatters](http://McKPR.com/VoiceMatters)



## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

### Bill Fletcher, Jr.

Bill Fletcher, Jr., is a longtime labor, racial justice and international activist. He is the immediate past president of [TransAfrica Forum](#), a national non-profit organization organizing, educating and advocating for policies in favor of the peoples of Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. Fletcher is also a founder of the Black Radical Congress and is a Senior Scholar for the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC. Fletcher is the co-author (with Fernando Gapasin) of *Solidarity Divided, The Crisis in Organized Labor and A New Path Toward Social Justice* (University of California Press).



Fletcher began his labor movement activism as a welder in a shipyard. He went on to engage in work to desegregate the Boston building trades, and later worked for several unions as well as the national AFL-CIO (at the AFL-CIO he served as Education Director and later Assistant to the President). He was formerly the Vice President for International Trade Union Development Programs for the George Meany Center of the AFL-CIO. Fletcher is a graduate of Harvard University and has authored numerous articles and speaks widely on domestic and international topics, racial justice and labor issues.

*To reach Fletcher, email [billfletcherjr@gmail.com](mailto:billfletcherjr@gmail.com).*

Biography courtesy of [Huffington Post](#).

# Reimagining Labor Unions: Busting Myths, Building Movements

*Bill Fletcher, Jr.*

*Bill Fletcher is a proud disruptor, someone who shakes up the status quo, to create social change. [McKinney & Associates](#) is honored to have partnered with Bill through the years. From our work together at TransAfrica Forum to today's labor movement activism, Bill has been an unyielding voice for justice and a steadfast ally. Bill's eBook Reimagining Labor Unions: Busting Myths, Building Movements details how the labor movement can once again be a catalyst for sweeping social change. This addition coincides with the release of his second book, ["They're Bankrupting Us!": And Twenty Other Myths about Unions](#) (Beacon Press, 2012).*

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

### **McKinney & Associates:**

As a labor expert, can you tell us if America is at war with her workers?

**Bill Fletcher:** The employer class has been at war with its workers, in some ways, from the beginning of this country, whether it was the enslavement of Africans or the indentured servitude of Africans, as well as European immigrants. If you look at the entire history of this country, it is the most abusive country when it comes to the treatment of its workers of any of the advanced industrial countries. You would have strikes in the 19th century, early 20th century, where the state militia was brought out. In [Louisiana](#), they brought out field artillery. So when people ask is this country at war with its workers? It's not a new phenomenon.



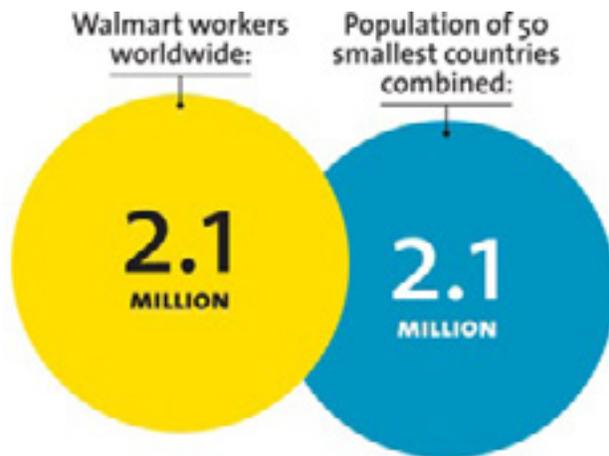
A boy works in a mill in Lincolnton, NC, in 1908. Photograph by Lewis Hine/Buyenlarge, courtesy of [Time Magazine](#).

There was a particular period of time, roughly from 1946 to the middle of the 1970s when unions were strongest and they had a significant influence over much of what happened in society. Things really started to change in the aftermath of the firing of the air traffic controllers in 1981 by Ronald Reagan, that is, in the response to the [PATCO strike](#). It's at that point, in the midst of a shifting economy, in the midst of a recession, that there's a different view that begins to be taken by significant portions of the ruling elite about how to deal with workers.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

It became a free fire zone against workers, and that's what we've been living through. So where we are right now, in this very moment, is what I call the final offensive against unions. Republicans, in particular, see this as a moment where unions have been weakened to the point that they can be annihilated, and if not annihilated, they can be minimized to the point of insignificance.

**McKPR:** Why are there such strong feelings toward the [Labor Movement](#) on both sides? There seems to be no middle ground.



Graphic courtesy of [Mother Jones](#).

**Fletcher:** It's about power. When you have a country that's been built on this myth of rugged individualism and worshiping of private property, then the notion that the people who construct things, the people whose ideas result in wealth for others, that those folks should have some sort of say, is unacceptable. The wealthy—the elite—believe they should be the sole recipients of the benefits of our labor.

When regular people say, "I want a share," "I want to live a decent life," for many of the wealthy this is unacceptable. Take a company like Walmart, where the family itself has more wealth than the [bottom 42 percent](#) of this country. The family! We're talking about six people! They have no interest in sharing their wealth. They are accumulating and gathering more and more. It's like the Borg in *Star Trek*, they just absorb and resistance is futile, at least as far as they're concerned. That's why this is very fundamental.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.



**McKPR:** Has the Labor Movement lost relevance beyond its members, and do people even know what they stand for any more?

**Fletcher:** There are two parts to that question. One is whether unions are relevant, and the second is whether people know that they're out there. I would say first, they're absolutely relevant because this is a fight for power. This is a fight for the power for regular working people. Even if we have been defeated by corporate America, my argument is in the face of defeat, you have two options: you can either surrender, live in defeat and misery or you change the way you fight. You can change your organization, you can change your strategy and you can adjust your tactics. I favor the latter. This is the argument Fernando Gapasin and I make in our book, *Solidarity Divided*.

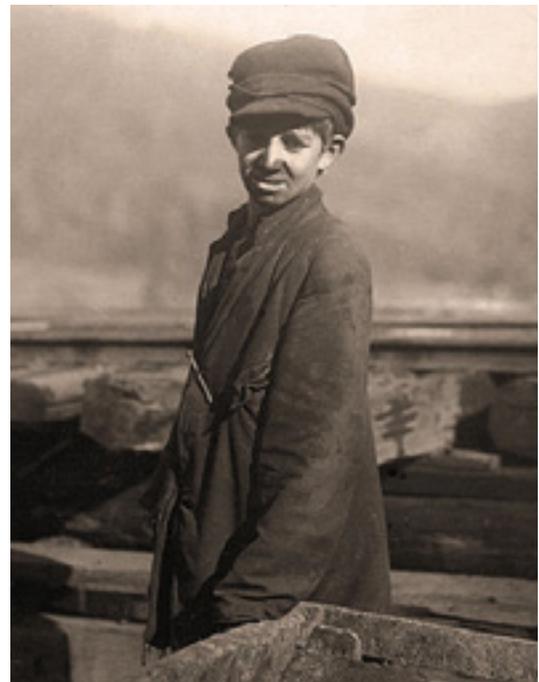
## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

You also question whether people now know about unions. This relates to my latest book, *They're Bankrupting Us: And 20 Other Myths about Unions*. Two years ago I was on an airplane and I was sitting next to a woman, probably in her 30s, very nice, very pleasant, and I was reading a book about global labor solidarity. She looked over and said, "I'm always very curious as to what people are reading." I told her the title and what the book was about and she asked, "What is a union?" At first I thought she was just playing with me, and then I realized she was serious. She didn't know what a union was. So I proceeded to explain to her what a union was and she nodded her head, but she nodded in a way that you know she had no idea what I was talking about.



Top: Young workers in an Alexandria, Virginia glass factory (1911). Photograph by Lewis Wickes Hine, courtesy of Tumblr user [Aunt Ada](#).

Right: A young mill worker. Photograph by Lewis W. Hine, courtesy of [The History Place](#).



## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

When I was asked by Beacon Press to write this new book, it was that woman for whom I was writing. She represents millions of people in this country who don't understand what unions are, and if they hear about a union via the media, they think the union is an insurrectionary organization or an arm of the mafia. Most people have no sense of unions as an instrument for social justice and social change.



*Rocky and Bullwinkle's Boris Badenov (left) is a member of the Villains, Thieves and Scoundrels Union. Photograph courtesy of [Wikipedia](#).*

To answer your question: yes, unions are absolutely relevant. And yes, millions of people don't understand what they are and what they do.

Part of that is because we lost power as unions. A striking example of this

is that you don't see references to unions in current popular culture. If you look at movies from the 1940s and 50s, it was not uncommon to see references to unions. Even the early 1960s television cartoon *Rocky and Bullwinkle* made reference to unions. But now, in most popular media, you don't see or hear references to unions. Therefore, it's common for people to grow up without a sense of the unions.

The other part is on us. In the aftermath of the Cold War, most unions abandoned the mission of being advocates for broader economic and social justice. They turned inward and became trade associations.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

While they did things for the larger society, such as when the [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations](#) (AFL-CIO) backed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and certain unions played an absolute important role in the Civil Rights Movement, by and large most of the unions sat out of the Civil Rights and Black Freedom movements; sat out of the Women's Rights Movement; sat out of the end the Vietnam War Movement; sat out of the emergence of the Environmental Movement and they did so at a tremendous cost. So that many people of my generation grew up knowing what unions were but being skeptical of a union as having the potential to be at the forefront of the fight for economic and social justice.

### *AFL-CIO*

The American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) is the nation's largest labor group, a federation of unions founded in 1955 by the merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. It claims 56 unions as members, which jointly represent about 11 million of the 15.7 million unionized workers in the United States.

Definition courtesy of [The New York Times](#).

**McKPR:** The Labor Movement has a wonderful history filled with great characters and legends, though you don't often see or read about it in popular culture. How have depictions of the movement changed over time, and why should people care today?

**Fletcher:** In order to answer that you have to first ask, "How did labor get into the popular media in the first place?" Here's an example: There's this film from the 1940s called [Action in the North Atlantic](#) with Humphrey Bogart.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.



The Writers Guild of America (WGA) strike of 2007 sought increased monetary compensations for Hollywood writers. Photograph courtesy of [Folio Magazine](#).

It takes place during World War II and is set on ships that are taking supplies to the Soviet Union against the Nazis. At one point in the movie as the men are waiting for their next assignment, they are sitting in an office—a union office. The filmmaker didn't have to do that, but he figured out a way of weaving the union into the story line, and it made perfect sense because the National Maritime Union would have been the union for the sailors and seamen of those merchant ships. That idea came from more than the left-leaning thinking of screenwriters.

There was a movement of millions of people, who were turning this country upside down, and the media reflected it. You can't overlook the progressive people in Hollywood and other places who started writing about the courage, heroism and challenges of unions.

There is an argument I often get into with union people when they say, "Oh, we're not getting enough attention in the media, everything is falling apart, we're not being treated well," and so on. What do they expect when there isn't a vibrant movement? When you don't have a movement that's cutting edge?

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

When you're not shaking the table you are not going to get any media attention. To the extent to which we obsess about the question of whether we can get invited to the next White House dinner or whether we can get an opening with our congressman or congresswoman, we're finished. The question for us is can we be disruptive? Our movement didn't get anywhere by being "respectable." The Civil Rights Movement was disruptive.



Dr. King supported Memphis sanitation workers' fight for union rights. Photograph courtesy of [The Professional Staff Congress](#).

Martin Luther King was one of the greatest labor leaders of the 20th century. You get the sense from the way that mainstream histories of the Civil Rights Movement are told that he was passive, he was a nice guy, etc. King was

a trouble maker! He was disruptive. He made life uncomfortable, not only for the segregationists, but for many black leaders too. Social movements become what they are by being disruptive. King got the media's attention—not by begging for it—but by leading a movement. And that's what we have to do.

**McKPR:** That leads us to your first book *Solidarity Divided*. At the time you wrote the book, you asserted the Labor Movement was in crisis. Is that still the case?

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

### *Child Labor*

Although children had been servants and apprentices throughout most of human history, child labor reached new extremes during the Industrial Revolution. They often worked long hours in dangerous factory conditions for very little money. Children were useful as laborers because their size allowed them to move in small spaces in factories or mines where adults couldn't fit, children were easier to manage and control and perhaps most importantly, children could be paid less than adults.

Definition courtesy of [History.com](http://History.com).

**Fletcher:** Oh, absolutely! I have been saying—and some people don't like it—that the Labor Movement has been defeated, though we haven't been annihilated. Here's a metaphor I use: In 1940 the Germans crashed through the French defenses and they took over France. They had defeated the French. The Germans hadn't annihilated the French, they defeated the French. Now, at that point there were two courses of action, one: collaboration or two: resistance. French General Charles De Gaulle, the Communists and others chose the latter, though their approaches to resistance were, in many respects, quite different. Those who followed the path of resistance understood that they could not continue fighting the Germans as if they had a conventional army. They had to

create an army out of nothing; they had to create an army out of regular people and they had to engage their opponent using very different tactics because they understood the old strategy and tactics had failed.

We're in an analogous situation. Corporate America has overwhelmed us. Organized labor represents roughly 12 percent of the non-agricultural workforce.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.



Thousands filled the Capitol rotunda in Madison, Wis., in 2011 to protest a move to strip government workers of union rights. Photograph by Craig Schreiner/AP, courtesy of [The Christian Science Monitor](#).

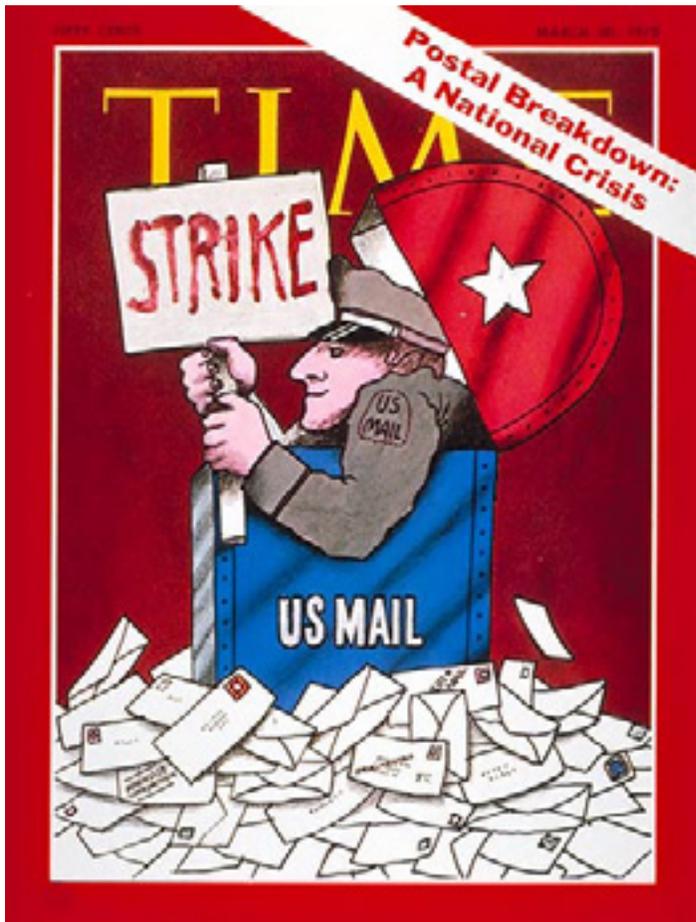
We're not dead, but we've been basically defeated. Therefore, the question is how do we rethink trade unionism—perhaps better understood as “labor unionism”—for the 21st Century?

How do we rethink how we go about organizing? How do we better understand the nature of our opponents?

Let me give you an example: The economy may be doing better than it was a few years ago, nevertheless, it is still in a great deal of trouble. A Labor Movement should be building resources to organize the unemployed. Yet, you have union leaders who take the position that organizing the unemployed is not a job for the Union Movement. They suggest that such organizing should be left to community-based organizations. They view the Union Movement as a vehicle to basically protect people who are already in unions or maybe want to come into unions. I say no! “Danger, Will Robinson!” That’s not the approach! We’ve got to think very differently.

And part of what I’ve been arguing is that organized labor needs to tap into the unemployed and help them get organized, help them fight. Fight for jobs and fight for different economic policies.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.



The Great Postal Strike of 1970 led to The Postal Reorganization Act and a 6 percent wage increase for postal workers. Photograph courtesy of [Time Magazine](#).

We, in organized labor, have to rethink how we operate, though you have people in labor who refuse to budge. Sometimes I have to remind them: as long as we have our meetings in these wonderful hotels with nice chandeliers and wonderful dinners, you can sometimes forget that we're getting our asses kicked in the outside world. The leadership has to be reminded that the situation is not temporary; it's not that the pendulum has swung one way and now it's going to swing back. We're in very deep trouble and we have got to rethink trade unionism. And that's what we were trying to

get at in our book *Solidarity Divided*, and in a different way, in *"They're Bankrupting us" — And Twenty other myths about Unions*.

**McKPR:** There are some sections of the Labor Movement that are growing. What are those unions doing that others aren't?

**Fletcher:** Yes, there is some growth occurring. The [American Federation of Government Employees \(AFGE\)](#), [Service Employees International Union \(SEIU\)](#) and [National Nurses United \(NNU\)](#) and a few others are all growing. What are they doing?

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

They are putting resources into organizing and repositioning themselves. The NNU has positioned itself publicly as a voice for national healthcare, and SEIU has put significant resources into organizing for years. The problem is it's not enough. It's not enough because you still have some parochial thinking focusing on how we grow our individual unions, as opposed to, how do we grow the movement?

I had a discussion about a year or so ago with the top staff member in a union that was growing. I suggested that there needed to be a united front of labor unions that were in the same sector of the economy. This person completely ridiculed the idea and said, "Why should we do that? We're the largest in this sector, these other unions don't amount to anything, and it's not going to help us." S/he did not get it. Rather than putting the future of the union in the context of what is happening to the Union Movement, this individual was quite content to view it all through the narrow prism of what was good for his/her own union. What we have to consider is how we build a movement.



During the 1937 Woolworth sit-down strike, employees demanded raises, time and a half for more than 40 hours, company pay for uniforms and breaks. Photograph courtesy of [United Food and Commercial Workers](#).

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

### *Respect DC Campaign*

In November 2010, Walmart announced plans to enter the Washington, DC market with four stores by 2012. The United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 400 asked McKinney & Associates to develop a campaign to advocate for a Community Benefits Agreement between Walmart and District residents that ensured liveable and fair wages.

Definition courtesy of [McKinney & Associates](#).

official and he said, “Fighting Walmart is really a UFCW thing.” I walked away from the conversation wondering, isn’t it all a labor thing?

**Fletcher:** Absolutely. The campaign around Walmart is the flashpoint for the struggle against economic injustice. It’s absolutely wrong for a union to say, that fighting Walmart is only for the [United Food and Commercial Workers](#) (UFCW). Walmart is the largest private sector employer in the country, and breaking through, that is, winning collective bargaining for workers, would make a world of difference for other private sector workers. So no, this is not just about Walmart.

Unions, when facing certain difficulties or challenges, may ask for support. SEIU, for example, might have a campaign and they may call upon people to support them. The question has to be asked, how does the campaign relate to building the rest of the movement? An AFGE campaign around organizing unrepresented workers in the Department of Defense may be a valid campaign, how does it relate to building the Labor Movement? Don’t get me wrong. This organizing needs to take place, but where are the larger issues of strategy and the fight for power? Few unions will actually talk about that aspect.

**McKPR:** I was discussing the [Respect DC campaign](#) with a union

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

What's interesting is when the Congress of Industrial Organizations was organizing in the 1930s, fighting to win unionization in the steel and auto industries, these were not looked at as campaigns of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee or the [United Autoworkers](#) exclusively. In fact, it was the United Mineworkers of America that devoted tremendous resources from their treasury to build up these other unions. It was also a broader social "cause" that was taken up by millions. We need that kind of conscience, not, "UFCW good luck and God bless you; call us when it's over." We need to think, how can we maximize our forces?

Continuing my military metaphor, in any sort of military situation you don't fight battles unless you have to, especially in situations that are less than optimal. You fight battles where you intend to win, and when you intend to win, you maximize the number of resources available on your side in order to crush an opponent. That's what we need to be thinking about when we're talking about Walmart. We have to maximize resources, and it's not just unions, its community-based groups as well. It's about making this a cause célèbre. Every so often you have these.

In the 1960s the struggle of the [United Farm Workers](#) (UFW) and the [grape boycott](#) became a movement, a cause célèbre in this society. Anyone who wanted to be on the "right side" of history knew you had to support the United Farmworkers. The Teamsters, who intervened at the behest of President Nixon in order to defeat the UFW, should have known they were on the wrong side. And that's the way we have to think about it today, we need to maximize our forces to surround our opponent [Walmart] and bring about a situation where they are compelled to recognize that the economic injustice they perpetuate is ending.

**McKPR:** Since we're discussing Walmart, talk to me about the Retail Justice Alliance.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.



Supporters of the United Farm Workers Grape Boycott (1968).  
Photograph courtesy of [Wayne State University](#).

### **Fletcher:**

Certainly. The UFCW is the principal union focused on Walmart, and they have explored different strategies for tackling the company. Over the last year there's been a growing awareness among the UFCW leadership that a successful

Walmart campaign will necessitate a broad front that includes engaging key opinion makers from different communities in helping to win over popular support.

Let's look at this from an historical standpoint. When the United Auto Workers organized Ford in 1941, Ford was the last of the major auto companies to go union. Henry Ford, a very outspoken right-winger, did everything he could to block unionization. And at the same time, he hired black workers when many other companies didn't, and he cultivated relationships with a number of black ministers to support the company against the UAW. The UAW couldn't break through. They eventually succeeded in 1941 through an alliance with the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#) (NAACP) and the National Negro Congress. The lessons there for organizing Walmart are fairly straight forward.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.



Women demonstrate in support of striking auto workers during the 1941 Ford Strike. Photograph courtesy of [Wayne State University](#).

The UFCW has come to a similar conclusion; success against Walmart necessitates building a broad coalition. One of the manifestations of this coalition will be the Retail Justice Alliance, which will bring together community-based organizations and leaders from

around the country to support justice for the Walmart workers and for the communities that Walmart impacts. I'm participating in the formation and I'm very proud to be connected with this initiative because this is what we have to do to win the war.

Efforts such as the Retail Justice Alliance are part of the larger re-thinking of unionization. It's thinking about unionization, not simply on the basis of sending in an organizer to distribute cards for people to sign, but it's also about organizing communities and organizing broader support. An important thing to remember when organizing workers is that they want to have a sense that the broader community supports them. Workers are less inclined to organize if they feel isolated.

**McKPR:** You've cited some examples of union "wins." What have been some of the Labor Movement's greatest accomplishments?

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

**Fletcher:** The Labor Movement's greatest accomplishments start from the very beginning—*it brought dignity to people*. It created leaders among people who were told that they had to rely on others. It brought tangible victories like the 8-hour work day, weekends, vacations and pensions. In some companies it brought an end to racial and gender discrimination. In many companies it brought a process for dealing with unjust practices. It brought an opportunity for workers to gain a voice in the workplace. And in some instances, the movement created an institutional framework to



A sign in favor of the 8-hour work day. Photograph courtesy of [Amoeblog](#).

support broader community struggles.

Democratic nation-states need strong unions, and wherever you have a weak union movement you have no democracy or you have a weak one.

**McKPR:** In your new book, *They're Bankrupting Us*, you outline 21 myths about the labor movement. What are some of the most striking myths?

**Fletcher:** It's hard for me to talk about the most striking myths in my book because they all have some level of importance. I deal with everything from the notion that unions are bankrupting us, to the allegation that unions are all racist and sexist, as well as the common attack that suggests all unions are corrupt. One of the myths that you hear a lot is about union corruption. Is there corruption in unions? There is definitely corruption in some unions. Is that the same thing as being [mobbed-up](#)? No.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

Are there some unions that are mobbed-up? Yes, there are. Does that mean that unions are fundamentally flawed? Not in the least! Part of what I say in this book, particularly on the matter of corruption, is that any time there are issues of money and power there will likely be the seeds of corruption. The question is what you do to prevent it or minimize its impact. I argue that a strong democracy within the union is the best way for dealing with corruption.

When people ask if unions are bankrupting us, the answer is of course not. Unions did not create the recession. Unions did not create the collapse of Wall Street. If you want to look at a useful explanation for what's happening in society, look at Wall Street and the way speculation has occurred. Look at the failure of industries to innovate. Look at what happens when state and local governments cannot tax the wealthy and corporations. Look at the overcapacity that has been created in many industries where there are more products than there are customers. Look at the overaccumulation of wealth on the part of the upper crust, such that they do not believe they have profitable places to invest their fortunes. These are some of the reasons we're "bankrupt," rather than unions.



American labor union leader Jimmy Hoffa was involved with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Photograph courtesy of [Dinge & Goete](#).

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.



Cesar Chavez, leader of the National Farm Workers Association, used marches, non-violence and hunger-strikes to improve labor rights. Photograph by Ted Streshinsky, courtesy of [History.com](http://History.com).

In the book I try to go through a number of myths and broad-brushed criticisms in order to demonstrate that there are problems in the Union Movement, but no, the Union Movement and unions are not the source(s) of the problems in our economy and society. I've had

discussions with rich people who will tell me, well, you know if we didn't have a union we could be more productive. That's interesting because [for example] in the building trades, unionized construction projects are more productive, more efficient and produce greater quality goods than non-unionized construction. In any unionized firm the union does not exist to stop the introduction of new technology; they exist to ask, "What are the ramifications of innovation?" Enlightened unions will say to an employer: We want to be involved from the conceptual stage of new technology to assist in developing technologies that benefits workers and don't hurt them.

Employers frequently say, "We have bad employees and since we have a union we can't fire them." My response is that such an argument is ridiculous and false on its face. Of course an employer can terminate a worker who is either insubordinate or unqualified.

## VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

However, with a union there is a process that is aimed at ensuring that the termination is done for "cause" rather than being an arbitrary decision carried out by an employer (or their representative) who has an ax to grind against a particular worker. Unfortunately, in most workplaces in the USA, you have precisely the environment where arbitrary actions by employers take place every day because those workplaces are likely to be non-union. And with no union, the employer need not worry about accountability unless they break a specific law. Otherwise, the average worker enters into a workplace that is the equivalent of a mini-totalitarian environment, leaving your constitutional rights at the doorstep.

# VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

## *AFL-CIO Unions*

The 56 AFL-CIO unions listed here represent more than 12 million working people in every walk of life.

Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA)  
Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)  
American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)  
American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (AFM)  
American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA)  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
American Postal Workers Union (APWU)  
American Radio Association (ARA)  
American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA)  
Associated Actors and Artistes of America (4As)  
Actors' Equity Association (AEA)  
American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA)  
American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA)  
The Guild of Italian American Actors (GIAA)  
Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM)  
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS)  
California School Employees Association (CSEA)  
Communications Workers of America (CWA)  
Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA)  
Industrial Union of Electronic Workers (IUE-CWA)  
National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET-CWA)  
The Newspaper Guild (TNG-CWA)  
Printing, Publishing and Media Workers, CWA  
Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)  
Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers International Union (GMP)  
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada (IATSE)  
International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers (Ironworkers)  
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)  
International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers (AWIU)  
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM)  
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers (IBB)  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)  
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)  
International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)

# VOICE MATTERS: BILL FLETCHER, JR.

## *AFL-CIO Unions*

The 56 AFL-CIO unions listed here represent more than 12 million working people in every walk of life.

International Longshoremen's Association (ILA)  
International Plate Printers, Die Stampers and Engravers Union of North America  
International Union of Allied Novelty and Production Workers (Novelty and Production Workers)  
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC)  
International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC)  
International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE)  
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades of the United States and Canada (IUPAT)  
International Union of Police Associations (IUPA)  
Laborers' International Union of North America (LiUNA)  
National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)  
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA)  
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS)  
NFL Players Association (NFLPA)  
National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA)  
National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)  
National Nurses United (NNU)  
National Taxi Workers Alliance (NTWA)  
Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)  
Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association of the United States and Canada (OPCMIA)  
Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA)  
Seafarers International Union of North America (SIU)  
Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA)  
Transport Workers Union of America (TWU)  
Transportation Communications International Union/IAM (TCU/IAM)  
UNITEHERE! (UNITEHERE!)  
United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada (UA)  
United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America International Union (UAW)  
United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)  
United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial & Service Workers International Union (USW)  
United Transportation Union (UTU)  
United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers (Roofers and Waterproofers)  
Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA)  
Writers Guild of America, East Inc. (WGAE)

List courtesy of [AFL-CIO](#).